

The Message of the Prophets



Teacher's Guide

Materials

pens or pencils

Surveying the Source

Exod. 20:1–17; Leviticus 16; Matt. 24:24–31; Rom. 3:21–28; Heb. 8:1, 2; 9:23.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Understand prophecy as an important communication tool in the hands of God.
- ▶ Be familiar with one or more tests of a true prophet.
- ▶ Appreciate prophecy as a gift to

God's people (not so much to the prophet) and their role, as youth, as one of obedience to the words of the prophet and, especially in these last days, of sharing the news that prophecy provides.

Preparing to Lead

The following is a well-known quote from Ellen G. White: "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!" (*Messages to Young People*, p. 196). Consider it alongside this equally well-known biblical promise:

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, / Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7, NKJV). Surely the training of our "youth army" must include grounding in the importance of the prophetic message. After all, Seventh-day Adventists are "people of the Book," and our church is a church of prophecy.

Getting Started

A. Arrange with a student in advance to role-play a Muslim youth. Have that student stand up and say that she (or he) believes that Jesus Christ was a prophet. Then ask the other students which of the following three statements best expresses their feelings: •Yes. That's what Jesus is—a prophet. •No. That's an insult. Jesus is not a prophet. He's the Son of God. •Yes. Jesus is a prophet; but He Himself says that He is God.

Guide the class to a reaffirmation of Christ as God. But also draw attention to His prophetic warnings (Matt. 24:24–31), His role as a spokesperson for the Father (John 12:49), and His description of Himself, at least by implication, as a prophet

(Matt. 13:57).

B. Discuss: "Does a prophet talk or write about the past, the present, or the future?"

To assist the discussion, read Ezekiel 16:1–7, and ask whether the prophet is talking about the past, present, or future. Now read Isaiah 3:12–15, and ask the same question. Finish by reading Matthew 24:24–27 and asking the same question.

Help the class to see that what is common among prophetic statements is not the time period they represent, but whether the prophet is serving as an authentic spokesperson for God. To that end, you may want to use both A and B,

Delving Into the Word

A. Read the “Six Honest Serving Men” poem at the top of the reproducible activity (see page 40). Then distribute the activity. Depending on the size of the class, you can have one student or a small group of students responsible for filling in each of the six sections. Then they can share their answers during the discussion that follows.

B. Tell your class about an imaginary Ellen White basher who says she’s not a true prophet because (1) she’s a woman, and the Bible requires that women be

kept in their place; (2) almost everything she writes is in the Bible anyway—no prediction there; and (3) the prophets all lived before Christ, not like Mrs. White, in the 19th and 20th centuries. Ask the class to develop a defense showing that Mrs. White is a true prophet. These texts should help: •Isa. 8:20; •Amos 3:7; •Joel 2:28–32; •Acts 21:9; •Rev. 19:10.

You may divide the work by distributing the texts among different students or groups of students, and then put the argument together during the discussion.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What is prophecy?
2. Why does the world need prophets?
3. What was the difference between priests and prophets in Old Testament times?
4. Would you accept as a true prophet someone who can consistently predict the lottery numbers? If so, why? If not, how then would you know that someone is a true prophet?
5. Explain why a woman could be a prophet both in New Testament times and now.
6. Are you convinced that Ellen White is a true prophet? If so, why? If you still have lingering uncertainties, what are the sources of those uncertainties?
7. Is prophecy the most important spiri-

tual gift? Why or why not?

8. How does prophecy compare with other spiritual gifts?

9. Is the gift of prophecy a gift to the prophet, to the church, or to the world? Explain your answer.

10. As a young person who may not have the gift of prophecy, do you nonetheless have a role in fulfilling the prophetic mission? Explain your answer. (See 2 Chronicles 20:20; Proverbs 28:9; and the Ellen White quote in the “Preparing to Lead” section.)

11. How was the delivery of the commandments in Exodus 20:1–17 and of Moses’ message from God to Pharaoh examples of prophecy (for example, Exodus 5:1–6)?

Closing the Activity

Encourage class members to spend two or three minutes in quiet reflection on one or more of these questions: •What does this prophecy discussion have to do with me? •What more do I need to learn about prophecy, especially in relation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church? •What

am I going to think, say, or do differently after what I’ve learned today?

Let students know that they don’t have to share their thoughts. However, if time permits, a few of those willing to do so may each share their reflections on one of the questions.

Frank A. Campbell, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



SIX HONEST SERVING MEN

Here are the opening lines of a famous poem by Rudyard Kipling that you probably already know:

I keep six honest serving men.
(They taught me all I knew.)
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.

Let us use Kipling's "six honest serving men" to organize what the Bible says about prophecy and prophets. Look at the questions below. Read the texts. Then write your answers in the space provided.

1. **What** is prophecy? (Ezek. 2:1; 3:4, 10, 11, 16–21; 37:4–7, 18–22)
2. **Why** do we, or God, need prophets? (Gen. 3:8–11, 23, 24; Exod. 20:18–22; Amos 3:7)
3. **When** did prophets walk the earth? (Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:17, 18; 21:9)
4. **How** do we know a true prophet from a false one? (Deut. 13:1–4; 18:21, 22; Isa. 8:20)
5. **How** do prophets work? (Gen. 20:2–7; Isa. 38:1; Jer. 27:1, 2; 34:6; Matt. 2:5; 21:4)
6. **Where** do prophets work? (Exod. 17:9; Judg. 4:4, 5; Jer. 32:1, 2; Luke 2:36, 37)
7. **Who** could God select as prophets? (Exod. 7:1; 15:20; 1 Sam. 3:1–4, 9, 10, 19, 20; 2 Chron. 34:22; Acts 21:8, 9)
8. **Who** were some prophets in the Bible? (Gen. 20:2–7; Judg. 4:4; 1 Sam. 3:20; 1 Kings 18:36; 2 Kings 6:12; 22:14; Isa. 37:2; Luke 7:28; 11:29)