

Interpreting the Prophetic Writings



Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

John 16:5–13; Col. 1:9; 2 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 5:12, 13.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Gain a better understanding of the terms *prophecy* and *prophet*.
- ▶ Realize the importance of the writings of the modern-day prophet Ellen G.

White.

- ▶ Understand that there are some prophecies in the Bible that must be fulfilled before Christ's second coming.

Preparing to Lead

Do an Internet search for the word *prophecy*. What do you come up with? Who is a prophet? A prophet is said to be one who speaks for God. In the Old Testament, a prophet was one who had the

Holy Spirit upon him or her and who could speak the Word of God. Look in at least three dictionaries for the definition of *prophecy*. Be prepared to share these definitions with the class.

Getting Started

A. Distribute index cards. Ask the class to come up with a definition for the term *prophet*. Allow each student to share his or her interpretation of the term. Record each definition on a flipchart or chalkboard. Then compare the definitions. Discuss any differences or similarities. Have volunteers read aloud Luke 21:25–28 and Matthew 24:14.

B. Distribute index cards. Ask the class to come up with a definition for the term *future*. Allow each student to share his or her interpretation of the term. Record

their interpretations on a flipchart or chalkboard. *Ask:* •“Do these definitions seem biblical?” •“Why or why not?”

Say: “The Bible is our guidebook to the future, just as it is our handbook for the present. It alone will show us what God wants us to do. From it, we can learn God's purpose and promises. The first thing is to understand and believe those things that are true. We shall then come to appreciate the need for obedience to God, and thus we shall be doing what Jesus commanded.”

Delving Into the Word

A. Share dictionary definitions of the term *prophecy*. Then have someone read John 16:5–13. *Ask:* •“What does the Bible say is the work of the Holy Spirit?” •“Why should we as Christians be guided by the Holy Spirit?”

Have someone read aloud Colossians 1:9. *Ask:* “What does the Bible say we should ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with?”

Have volunteers read aloud the following texts: •2 Peter 1:20; •1 John 5:12,

Materials

dictionaries; pencils or pens; chalkboard or flipchart; chalk or markers; index cards; copies of *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*

13. Then discuss why it is necessary to search the Scriptures in order to understand God’s leading and purpose for our lives. Determine how this can help us to become better followers and representatives of Christ.

Have someone read Acts 2:16–18. *Say*: “The term *spirit of prophecy* refers both to the Holy Spirit, and to the prophetic gift as manifested through the ancient biblical prophets, but also to the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Say: “Our present lifestyle often fails to satisfy or bring us peace, even during times of happiness. Sometimes we feel hollow. So we look outside of ourselves for satisfaction. There are always those who, for a price, are ready to offer us a quick fix to satisfy this feeling of emptiness. Humanity is so preoccupied with ‘wanting and getting’ that we seem to

have lost sight of who we are and why we are here. Predicting and interpreting the future can only be done by asking the God in heaven who holds the future.”

B. Say: “Ellen G. White (1827–1915) was a cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a prolific writer on religious matters. Her prophetic ministry was highly valued. It provided counsel, guidance, exhortation, and encouragement to the growing Seventh-day Adventist Church; and it left a legacy of writings still cherished today.”

Distribute the activity on page 41. Have the students select the books that were written by Ellen G. White from the table provided. Then, on a flipchart or chalkboard, record the names of these valuable writings.

Ask: •“What are some of the major themes of these writings?” •“How have these writings shaped our current lifestyle choices as Seventh-day Adventists?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why is it important to remember that a prophecy is not necessarily a *prediction* of the future, but a *promise* about the future?

2. How would you share the hope you have in God’s prophecies and their fulfillment with someone who looks to astrology to tell them their future?

3. A good friend of yours goes to a palm reader so she will know what her future holds. The palm reader, however, “prophesies” trouble. What biblical texts and Ellen G. White quotes can you share with your friend about the true nature of

prophets and prophecies?

4. Why does God give us prophecies?

5. The news is full of bad happenings. However, the fulfillment of prophecies help us understand that God is in control and that we are moving toward a future He has planned for us. How should this make us feel?

6. The fulfillment of some Bible prophecies point to the Second Coming. Discuss why this should discourage setting specific dates for Jesus’ return.

7. We talk about the *gift* of prophecy. In what ways is prophecy a gift?

Closing the Activity

As a wrapup to this week’s lesson, have class members share the reading of Daniel 2:31–44. Then sing hymn number 596, “Look for the Waymarks,” in *The*

Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal.

You or a volunteer should offer a word of prayer inviting the Holy Spirit’s guidance for the week ahead.

Samantha Bullock, St. Vincent and Grenadines, West Indies

Free at Last

The Adventist Home

Christ's Object Lessons

The Acts of the Apostles

Prophets and Kings

Bible Readings for the Home

To Have and to Hold

Messages to Young People

The Great Controversy

Steps to Christ

The Desire of Ages

God Sent a Man

Lesson 11

Copyright 2009 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®