



LESSON #23 - THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Revelation 12:17: *“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

In order to **better understand** the expression “testimony of Jesus” we must go back to the days of **John the Baptist**

Great religious revival at the end of the 70 week prophecy

Matthew 3:5-6: *“When Jerusalem, all Judea and all the region around the Jordan went out to him⁶ and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. “*

John was asked if he was the prophet and he said no

John 1:19-21: *“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”²¹ And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”*

Who was he then? The messenger of the Lord

Luke 7:27: *“This is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face who will prepare Your way before You.’*

Prepare a people to receive Jesus at His first coming

John 1:23: *“He said: ‘I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said.”*

Matthew 3:1-3: *“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.”*

Luke 1:16, 17: “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Restore all things. Elijah is the great restorer

Matthew 17:11-13: “Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.¹² But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise [if you reject the Lord’s messenger you will end up rejecting the Lord as well] the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”

He was more than a prophet

Luke 7:26: “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.”

He performed no miracle but what he said about Jesus was true

John 10:41, 42: “Then many came to Him and said, “John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.”⁴² And many believed in Him there.”

He had the testimony of Jesus

John 5:31-33: “If I bear witness [testimony] of Myself, My witness [testimony] is not true.³² There is another who bears witness [testimony] of Me, and I know that the witness [testimony] which He witnesses [testifies] of Me is true.³³ You have sent to John, and he has borne witness [testimony] to the truth.”

He was not the greater light but was a lesser light

John 1:6-8: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.⁷ This man came for a witness [testimony], to bear witness [testimony] of the Light that all through him might believe.⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness [testimony] of that Light.”

John 5:35: “He [John the Baptist] was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.”

John 5:36: “But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish — the very works that I do — bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

John was the **lesser light** who was raised up to guide men and women to the **greater light**

"The prophet John was the connecting link between the two dispensations. As God's representative he stood forth to show the relation of the law and the prophets to the Christian dispensation. He was the lesser light, which was to be followed by a greater." Desire of Ages, p. 220

The Scriptures are also a lesser light

John 5:39-40: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

John 5:45-47: "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you— Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Why two lesser lights?

So you have **two lesser lights**: The Scriptures and John the Baptist. One of the lesser lights is canonical and the other is non-canonical.

The question that begs to be asked is this: If the people had a canonical lesser light, why did they need a non canonical one?

Or even a more pointed question: Why would they even need a lesser light if they would soon have the Greater Light in their midst?

Let me ask another question: Could the Jews have discerned Jesus as the Messiah simply by studying the written Scriptures? The answer is a resounding yes.

Every event of the life of Jesus was previously choreographed in the Scriptures:

- He would be born in **Bethlehem: Micah 5:2**
- He would be born of a **virgin: Isaiah 7:14**
- His birth would be announced by a **star: Numbers 24:17**
- Children would be **massacred** when He was born: **Jeremiah 31:15**
- He would be called from **Egypt: Hosea 11:1**
- He would be **baptized** or **anointed** when the **69th week** of **Daniel 9** ended: **Daniel 9:25**
- He would perform **marvelous works** and be a powerful preacher: **Isaiah 61:1-4**
- The **Jews would reject** His message: **Isaiah 6:9, 10**
- The Jews would only serve him **with their lips: Isaiah 29:13**
- He would enter Jerusalem on a **donkey** in the midst of **great acclamation: Zechariah 9:9**
- He would **cast the money changers** out of the temple: **Jeremiah 7:11**
- **Zeal for God's house** would consume him: **Psalms 69:9**

- He would be sold for **30 pieces** of silver: **Zechariah 11:13**
- His **disciples** would all **forsake** Him: **Zechariah 13:7**
- He would die a **vicarious death**: **Isaiah 53:3-6**
- He would say on the cross: ‘**My God, My God**, why have you forsaken Me’: **Psalm 22:1**
- His **hands and feet** would be **pierced**: **Psalm 22:16**
- **Lots** would be cast upon His **garments**: **Psalm 22:18**
- His **heart** would be **poured out like water**: **Psalm 22:14**
- His enemies would **spit in His face**: **Isaiah 50:6**
- His enemies would **dare Him to come down** from the cross: **Psalm 22:7, 8**
- None of His **bones** would be broken: **Exodus 12:46**
- On the cross He would say: ‘**I thirst**’: **Psalm 22:15; 69:21**
- His passion would last for **three days and three nights**: **Jonah 1:17**
- His **burial** would be with the **rich**: **Isaiah 53:9**
- He would **resurrect** from the dead on the **third day**: **Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:9-11**
- He would **ascend to heaven**: **Psalm 24**
- He would **sit on the Father’s right hand**: **Psalm 110:1, 4**

I ask once again: **Could the Jews have been ready** to receive Jesus as the Messiah simply by studying the **written Scriptures**? The answer is a **resounding yes!**

The people were in darkness

The problem is that they were **misinterpreting the Scriptures**, especially the **prophecies** according to the desires of their **selfish hearts**. In fact, during the **period between the testaments** the people came to be under **great darkness**:

Matthew 4:16: “*The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.*”

Luke 1:78-79: “*Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; ⁷⁹ To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*”

The people **needed a lesser light** to guide them to the **greater light**.

The role of **John** was not to bring **new light** but rather to turn the attention of the people to the **light already given**. He was to **awaken interest** in the study of **Old Testament prophecy**.

After all, **John fit perfectly** with the **description of the forerunner** who would **prepare the way** for the Messiah. People should have **gone to the Scriptures** then to find **details** on how to expect the Messiah to come.

You see, those who **claimed to be God's people** and boasted of having the Old Testament were violating every principle of the Word of God. They **professed to be waiting** for the Messiah. They **professed to love God**. They claimed to have a close relationship with Him and yet they **would crucify Christ** because they **misunderstood the Old Testament** and rejected the clarification by the lesser light.

The **Jews said**: "**We have Moses**." But they **did not understand Moses** because they did **not see Jesus** in His writings. They **boasted** of their knowledge of the Scriptures and yet did not understand them at all. John was called to **attract their attention** to the Scriptures **already given**. By seeing John **dressing** like Elijah, **eating** like Elijah, **speaking** like Elijah, **living** in the **desert** like Elijah their attention would be **attracted to the prophecy of Malachi 3 and 4** and they would have **searched the Scriptures** to know more about the coming of the Messiah.

John **lighted up the Old Testament prophecies** about the Messiah. He presented Jesus as the **Lamb of God**, a clear reference to the **sanctuary sacrifice** and the prophecy of **Isaiah 53**. He took from the Old Testament and showed how it was fulfilled in Jesus. He **exalted the Old Testament** and made it **vivid, alive, present truth**. He **rebuked, reproved, corrected**. He was a **fly** in the ointment, a **pain** in the neck, a **speck** in the eye. He was no **pushover**.

The role of John was to **prepare** a people for the first coming of Jesus (**Luke 1:17**). For this he needed to restore the truth. By **revival** (repentance) and **reformation** (bearing fruit) the people were to wait expectantly for their **bridegroom**. John was the **liaison** or **go-between**, between Jesus Christ (the groom) and Israel (the bride). He was to prepare the way for **the wedding (John 3:28-30)**. In New Testament times, the **friend of the bridegroom** was responsible for making all the **preparations** for the wedding so that all was **ready** when the groom should come. The friend of the bridegroom was not to take the glory for himself. The **glory was for the groom** who was marrying the bride. The best man does not want all eyes centered on himself at the wedding. **He decreases so that the bridegroom can increase!** In other words, he blends into the woodwork so that all can see the bridegroom. He was the restorer of all things and the one to prepare a people for the Lord.

The Old Testament had **prophecies** about the coming of the bridegroom to marry his bride. The **matchmaker** (John the Baptist) has come to set up all the arrangements. Yet **the bride rejected her husband**. By rejecting the work of the **matchmaker**, they rejected the bridegroom as well. Let's see how John the Baptist was treated.

He was rejected by God's own people

Matthew 11:18: "*For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'*"

He was rejected by the leaders

Luke 7:29, 30: *“And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.³⁰ But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.”*

They **knew Him not** (same expression as **John 1:10-11**). Because they did with John as they pleased, they also did with Jesus as they pleased. And **these were the people who claimed to go by the Scriptures!!** By rejecting the **lesser light**, they rejected the **greater light!!**

Matthew 17:12, 13: *“But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”*

He grew in understanding

Prophets are not **omniscient** or **infallible**. They were **human**. They **grew** in their understanding of truth. John, for example, thought there would only be **one coming** of the Messiah (**Matthew 3:7, 10, 12**). When Jesus **did not appear to measure up** to his preaching, he sent a message to Jesus asking whether He was the one to come or whether they should **expect another** (**Matthew 11:1-3**)

“During the weeks that followed [the baptism of Jesus], John with new interest studied the prophecies and the teaching of the sacrificial service. He did not distinguish clearly the two phases of Christ's work,--as a suffering sacrifice and a conquering king,--but he saw that His coming had a deeper significance than priests or people had discerned.” **Desire of Ages**, p. 136-137

Was **John a false prophet** because he did **not fully understand** the work of the Messiah? Was his work as a prophet **any less trustworthy** because his knowledge and understanding were **limited**? After Jesus healed the sick, etc., John **finally understood!!**

Now let's turn to the life and work of Ellen G. White

At the end of the **2300 day prophecy** there was a great revival (**Daniel 8:14; Revelation 10, 14:6, 7**)

No claim to being a prophet

“During the discourse [given in Battle Creek on October 2, 1904], I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself.” **I Selected Messages**, p. 36

“When I was last in Battle Creek, I said before a large congregation that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Twice I referred to this matter, intending each time to make the statement, “I do not claim to be a prophetess.” If I spoke otherwise than this, let all now understand that what I had

*in mind to say was that I do not claim the title of prophet or prophetess.” **I Selected Messages**, p. 35*

Ellen White was the Lord’s messenger

*“But my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out.” **I Selected Messages** p. 34*

*“Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Savior declared me to be His messenger.” **I Selected Messages**, p. 32*

Accused of not performing miracles

*“Some declare their unbelief in the work that the Lord has given me to do because, as they say, "Mrs. E. G. White works no miracles." But those who look for miracles as a sign of divine guidance are in grave danger of deception.” **II Selected Messages**, 53, 54*

Ellen White had the Testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:9)

Revelation 12:17: *“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

Revelation 19:10: *“And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me: "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”*

Revelation 22:8, 9: *“Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.”⁹ Then he said to me: "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant and of your brethren the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

The work of Ellen White was far **greater than that of a conventional prophet**

*“... my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies.” **I Selected Messages**, p. 32*

*“My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.” **I Selected Messages**, p. 36*

*"My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people." **1 Selected Messages** p. 36*

Ellen White was a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light, Jesus Christ

*"Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light." **3 Selected Messages**, p. 30*

Two lesser lights

As with John, **two sources** give witness to Jesus, **one canonical** (the Bible) and the other **non-canonical** (the writings of Ellen G. White). As with John, the purpose of her writings is to bring attention to the **written Scriptures** which had been trampled upon and misinterpreted during the **dark ages**. If God's people had studied the Word of God with the sincere desire to obey it, Ellen White would never have been called by God.

"You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings.

*"The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse." **5 Testimonies to the Church**, p. 664, 665*

Why Ellen White if we have the Bible? For the same reason that the Jews needed John even though they had the Old Testament. They did not **understand or obey it so God, in His mercy, gave them a helping hand by simplifying and amplifying the truths already given**. Ellen White is not a source of new light but rather one who amplifies and simplifies the old light. Ellen White amplifies, magnifies, explains, clarifies, corrects, enlightens, simplifies.

Around the same time and place that God raised up Ellen White, another person also arose who claimed to be a prophet. He purportedly found some gold plates in **Palmyra, New York** written in ancient **Egyptian** which he translated into English. This document is known as **The Book of Mormon**. This book is referred to as **Another Testament of Jesus Christ**.@ [why not in contemporary English and why no manuscript trail?] It is considered a **supplement** to the Word

of God (along with the *Pearl of Great Price* and *Doctrine and Covenants*). In other words, they unapologetically affirm that these books contain truths which cannot be found in the Bible.

When the Latter Day Saints pay a visit, their **first task** is to try and convince the prospective student that **Joseph Smith** was a true prophet. As the studies continue, the **Book of Mormon** and the Bible are used together.

With Seventh-day Adventist the process is **reversed**. The student is taught the **truth from Scripture alone** and once all the doctrines have been clearly presented from Scripture, **then** the Spirit of Prophecy is presented last as a **complement** (not **supplement**) of the Bible. This is not done because the Spirit of Prophecy is of **secondary importance** but rather because the function of the writings of Ellen White is not to supplement Scripture but rather to complement it! Ellen White **magnifies, explains, amplifies, simplifies** and **highlights** the great truths of Scripture but does not add any new truth!! Ellen White is like a **telescope** or a microscope. The telescope does not create stars but rather helps us see them more clearly.

Is it just possible that many in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today who say: “**I don’t need Ellen G. White, because I have the Bible**,” are really violating every principle of God’s holy Word? The fact is that Ellen G. White is despised by many within the church as much as was John the Baptist.

Former pastors write books such as *The White Lie* and *Ellen G. White: Prophetess of Health* and certain **internet sites** lambast Ellen White with **vitriolic hatred**, all under the **pretense that because we have the Bible**, we do not need Ellen G. White!! Sounds familiar, doesn’t it?

Ellen White foresaw all of this. Notice her words in **II Selected Messages, p. 48**. If this is Satan’s very **last deception**, then we must be close to the end because we are seeing this hatred now!!

*“The **very last deception** of Satan will be to make of **none effect** the testimony of the Spirit of God. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (**Prov. 29:18**). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to **unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony**.” **1 Selected Messages, p. 48 (1890)**.*

I found out something long ago and it is this: I never form an **opinion** of a **person** or a **church** on the basis of what its **enemies say** (because the enemies **distort** what they believe) or even on the basis of what their **friends say** (because they often **embellish** the truth). If you want to know the truth about Ellen White, **go directly to the source, read her writings for yourself**. Get your information first hand!!

Ellen White was **not perfect, infallible** or **omniscient**. She **grew** in her understanding. If you compare **Early Writings** and **The Great Controversy** you can see her **phenomenal growth**.

The fact is that God has raised up Ellen White to **prepare God's people for the Second Coming** as John was to prepare a people for the first coming. Will there be as few faithful ones prepared for the Second Coming as there were for the first coming?

The book ***The Great Controversy*** is meant to map out all the dangers we must face as we prepare to enter the heavenly Canaan. Ellen White describes a group of Adventists who are found without shelter in the time of trouble.