

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF —

# Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18

— WE NEED TO FIND OUT

## FACTS ABOUT VISIONS AND DREAMS

**Some claim that they are having visions and dreams in fulfillment of Joel 2 and Acts 2. This study by the present author may at first appear to be teaching a new doctrine, yet it is only correcting a misconception which many of our people have had for years. Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18 do not teach that there will be many—or even several—divinely inspired prophets at the end of time. Both the facts of history and the statements of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy provide us with the needed clarification in this matter. —vf**

It is being said that, because of Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18, we should expect more prophets to arise and provide us with additional divinely inspired guidance from the Lord,—information which we will need to accept if we will be prepared for the future and have all the light God has for us, so we will definitely be saved.

We want to carefully analyze this entire matter in detail, for some of us could be led into great error if we misunderstood the meaning of those two passages.

In my earlier study, *False Dreams and Visions*, [WM-1429-1430], I provided you with an extensive collection of Spirit of Prophecy passages showing that we should be extremely guarded, indeed skeptical, about accepting the claims of those who say they are receiving dreams or visions from the Lord.

In my report, *Letter to Ernie Knoll* [WM-1439-1440], I reprinted most of an open letter by an individual who had very close and extended acquaintance with one of the latest individuals who claims to be a divinely inspired prophet of God and regularly receives dreams from an angel. We discovered that, without ever having experienced a genuine conversion, this man began receiving dreams from a spiritual being—after, the night before, having expressed his disgust with God and asking Him to slay him that night! Ernie's dreams are not from God, but from another source which we should have nothing to do with.

**In this present study, we will directly consider two Bible verses which are being interpreted by many sincere folk as implying that we must expect more divinely inspired prophets to arise and, through advanced light beyond that of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, to lead us to the Promised Land.**

***Here are these two verses:***

**Joel 2:28:** “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” **Joel 2:29:** “And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit.”

**Acts 2:17:** “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” **Acts 2:18:** “And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”

### THE CONTEXT OF JOEL 2:28 AND ACTS 2:17

Instead of just reading these two verses, and then running with our own interpretations of them, let us carefully consider what each entire passage is talking about.

**Thoughtfully reading Joel 2:28, and the verses surrounding it (Joel 2:27-3:2)**, we find that it is describing events which would occur “afterward.” The darkening of the sun and reddening of the moon speak of events which happened in the early part of the 19th century and help us date this.

Joel 2:31: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.”

We know that Ellen White became a fully inspired prophet only a few decades after that event in 1780. **But there is no indication that anyone else became a fully fledged prophet of God at that time—or since.**

Yet Joel 2:28 says that God's Spirit will be poured upon “all flesh”; and “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Frankly, it does not appear that this wording is referring to large numbers of men and women being called to become fully inspired prophets of God, for this did not happen in Ellen White's time or since then. It did not happen in the time of Joel, either. Later in this study we will find that the Spirit of Prophecy clearly supports this position.

**Next, we turn to Acts 2:17-18 and examine what the verses around it have to say. Reading Acts 2:6 to 24 carefully, we discover that Peter is applying Joel 2:28 to what was happening when he spoke that day to the multitudes.** The entire passage consists of a speech, pleading with the Jews to accept Christ as their Saviour. Yet no one became a prophet of God that day. Instead, it appears from the context (Acts 2:6-24) that **Peter meant that Joel 2:28 was fulfilled in that a massive number of people were hearing his and the other apostles' messages in a great number of different languages and, awakening as from sleep from this new light, were destined to begin spreading it to still others.** Notice that Peter's speech was given on the very day that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles. We will find that Spirit of Prophecy statements emphasize such an outpouring—for the purpose of future witnessing—as being the primary meaning of Joel 2:28.

***It is very important that we understand the meaning of Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17; this is because a number of Advent believers are using those two passages as the basis for their expecting more divinely inspired prophets in our time, prophets which will give us more light than is in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.***

***Is it not dangerous for us to be waiting in expectancy for more prophets to arise? Satan can send us prophets which can present some things similar to what is in the Spirit of Prophecy—and then gradually lead us off into dangerous error!***

*Here are these two passages again:*

**Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Joel 2:29: "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit."**

**Acts 2:17: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Acts 2:18: "And on My servants and on My**

**handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy."**

**It appears that (1) *the pouring out of God's Spirit* applies to empowering His people to give the message of truth more fully to the people; (2) *the sons and daughters prophesying* refers to their speaking forth that truth; and (3) *the dreams and visions* apply to being provided with guidance from the Lord as to ways to spread those truths even more widely.**

As a result of hearing those messages from a large number of individuals who have accepted the call of God to go out and share those special truths, both Joel and Peter tell us that this will be the result:

Joel 2:32: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

Acts 2:21: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

**It does not appear that we have here a prediction that large numbers of people would become divinely inspired prophets, either in Peter's time (when he said the Joel passage was fulfilled) or in our time.**

The verb, "to prophesy" (*propheteuo*) in the original Greek of the passage, can either mean to be a divinely inspired prophet, a predictor who gives predictions of the future, a divinely guided individual, or a speaker or preacher who speaks forth a special message. (Of course, it can also apply to satanically inspired false prophets as well.)

This verb, "to prophesy," comes from "**prophet**" (or prophetess) **and means "to be a spokesman for another,"** "one who speaks forth or openly for another." This can either be a divinely called and inspired prophet of God, or it can be a person who lets God use him to spread the message. According to Girdlestone, a standard Old Testament Hebrew authority, the Hebrew word is *nabi* which is "used of prediction, the announcement of a divine message, and the utterance of songs of praise."

**Thus, Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18 can apply to the large number who, from the very beginning of the Advent awakening in the early 19th century, began studying and proclaiming God's special messages for these last days;** these messages ultimately were so wonderfully clarified and amplified through the Spirit of Prophecy.

As we will learn below, Ellen White in her comments on the Joel and Acts passages consistently applied them to the Spirit-filled proclamation of the message by God's faithful people.

Joel 2:28 said that the events which it described would occur “afterward.” Yet they did not occur from the time of Joel onward to the end of the Old Testament. Only a few genuine predicting prophets (and no women among them) arose in those years. Nor did the large numbers, that Joel spoke of, give a special message under the guidance of God’s Spirit.

**But, just as Peter accurately predicted that very day, the promise of Joel did begin to be fulfilled in Peter’s time.** Only a few divinely inspired prophets arose in New Testament times, and none thereafter for nearly 18 centuries. —Yet, **beginning small on the day that Peter spoke and in the years and centuries which followed, multiplied thousands upon thousands of divinely guided men and women spread the message of obedience to God’s Word and salvation through Christ to nearly the entire world!**

#### THE LATTER-DAY FULFILLMENT AND THE DANGER OF DECEPTION IN OUR TIME

**Yet there was to be a second fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18 in the latter days.** It began to be fulfilled in the 19th century.

The passages in Joel and Acts help locate when that beginning would occur:

Joel 2:30: “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.” Joel 2:31: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.”

Acts 2:19: “And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.” Acts 2:20: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.”

*Great Controversy*, 308, applies Joel 2:31 to the Dark Day of May 19, 1780. That was the promised sign that Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18 were about to begin to receive their end-time fulfillment. We know that, by the time of the Dark Day, godly men on several continents were already beginning to discover the truth of the nearness of Christ’s Advent (*GC* 355-374).

**We next want to learn how those predictions of Joel and Peter are to be fulfilled in these last days.**

**We all know that one, just one, fully inspired prophet arose with special messages for everyone living in the end-time,—along with hundreds of thousands of Advent believers who, as they kept increasing in numbers, gradually spread those final messages to many parts of the world.**

Someone might ask, “Why was that one last-day true prophet needed?” The answer is that through Ellen White we received a remarkable number of special truths which we had not clearly understood in the Bible! As just one example, read *Great*

*Controversy* and you will find a wealth of them!

**But now back to the basic question: Will still more fully inspired prophets arise before the end of time?**

Well, let us face this fact: **If even one additional true prophet was to be called into action by God before the end to provide even more in-depth guidance to His people,—surely, God would have told us so!** This is because there is such danger of being deceived by false prophets in these last days.

**But He never did! It is only by a misinterpretation of Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18 that some think this will happen.** In reality, aside from those two passages, *we find no other hint in the Bible that a multitude of fully inspired prophets will arise in these last days.*

**Yet God in His divine wisdom knew that He must call that one prophet, Ellen White! There is a vast amount of information which we need;** this relates to Christian experience, healthful living, family and home, educational work, publishing, sanitariums, personal standards, principles of church organization, predictions of future events, and on and on.

**This matter of expecting more prophets to guide us to the heavenly Canaan (as though the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy is not adequate for the task)—is of such fearful dimensions, that I declare to you today that if God planned to send us more prophets in these last days—in addition to Ellen White—He would have clearly told us in the Spirit of Prophecy writings. But He never did.**

**The writings of Ellen White were given to safeguard us against deception. Surely, she would have told us if another prophet was to arise—but she never did!**

**“Perilous times are before us.** Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. **We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of Prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions.** God has spoken to us through His Word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. **The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?**

**“I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine.** Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theo-

ries receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth. **God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.**—8 *Testimonies*, 298.

Repeatedly, we have been guided to the Spirit of Prophecy writings, but **never have we been told by Inspiration to look for another living prophet before the end of time! Never, not once.**

**So we should stop expecting one to arise.**

It is so easy for someone to stand up and claim to be a prophet! So easy. All he has to do is say so, and hundreds of our people will be eager to believe him. Why? Because they are not reading daily in the Spirit of Prophecy, and as a result their lives are empty and they are anxious for some new excitement to fill the void.

If they were daily studying God's books, they would be filled with happiness, instead of feeling a vacancy of soul and a craving for some exciting new thing. **I promise you that if you will spend thirty minutes a day in thoughtful study of the Spirit of Prophecy, you will receive new light every day!** It will thrill your heart; and gratitude and praise to God for what you are receiving through that sacred gift from heaven will well up in your heart!

**ALL THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY  
STATEMENTS ON  
JOEL 2:28-29 AND ACTS 2:17-18**

**What does Ellen White say about Joel 2:28-29?**

In reference to the "pour out My Spirit" in both passages, *Evangelism*, 567, says it will be "poured out upon all flesh," and that this outpouring applies to God's people giving the messages.

"From His inexhaustible store of grace, God can endow all who come to Him. Looking upon humanity, fallen and degraded, He declares that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh. Many who have never heard the special truths for this time will feel the conviction of the Spirit as they listen to the message of startling importance."—*Evangelism*, 567.

*Evangelism*, 700, adds to this thought, emphasizing how large numbers of God's people will give these final messages. *Selected Messages, Volume 1*, p. 111, applies the outpouring to the latter rain.

**Great Controversy is a key book; what does it have to say?** GC 11 (xi) specifically says the last-day fulfillment of Joel 2:28 will be the latter rain. GC 464 describes its fulfillment. **Those are the only two passages in Great Controversy which refer to Joel**

**2:28-29; and Acts 2:17-18 is not mentioned.** This is significant! **If another prophet was to arise, we would expect that it would have been mentioned in Great Controversy.**

4 *Bible Commentary*, 1175, says Joel's prophecy refers to how God's people will powerfully spread the light to the world at the very end. We are not told that it is referring to more prophets arising with special messages to God's people. Nothing is said about new prophets, but only about spreading the light we have.

"If **this prophecy of Joel** met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. **He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness;** and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people."—*Manuscript 49*, 1908; 4 *Bible Commentary*, 1175.

**6 Bible Commentary, 1055, is a divinely inspired commentary on Acts 2. Read it.** We are there told that this is about the giving of the message to the world in His time and at the end of the world. **It is not talking about new prophets arising.**

*Acts of the Apostles*, 41, is another commentary on Acts 2. It explains that Peter said this to show that Joel's prophecy meant that power would be given to God's people to do a special work for God. Nothing is said about new prophets arising. (*Story of Redemption*, 244, says almost the same thing.)

While all the other Spirit of Prophecy references to those passages discuss the outpouring of the Spirit on God's people for witnessing, **one passage alone refers to Peter's statement about "visions in the last days"—and it is obviously applied to those given through Ellen White:**

"God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the 'last days'; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth."—*Early Writings*, 78.

The above passage is the only one in the Spirit of Prophecy which applies either of the two passages to prophetic guidance in the last days. It is highly significant that she only spoke in this way at the beginning of her work, thus applying it to herself. Never again, in the following 65 or so years did she again mention the "visions" aspect of either Joel 2 or Acts 2. She would have done so if she had wanted to mention that additional prophets were to arise, but that is a subject which she never mentioned. **The silence of the Spirit of Prophecy on the possibility of**

# Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18

**PART TWO  
OF TWO**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

more prophets arising is very revealing.

The emphasis in both Peter's message and Ellen White's comments on both passages is on God's Spirit being poured upon His people so they give the message.

**Where then do these other phrases fit in:**

"I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy."—Acts 2:17-18.

In view of what happened in Acts 2, and Ellen White's comments about Joel 2 and Acts 2, the above phrases would have to refer to devising ways to give those messages, discovering new localities to penetrate, and giving those messages as widely as possible.

But someone will object: "I think it means there will be more prophets in the last days."

If that is the meaning, then there is going to be an immense number of our sons, daughters, and older men arising as true prophets of God. Yet that is not happening.

But the next objection will be, "Oh, that prediction will not occur until the latter rain."

But that cannot be because, according to the prophecy in both Joel and Acts, these events must begin not long after the Dark Day of 1780. So very large numbers of genuine prophets have had to arise over the last 150 years. But that has not happened either.

According to Peter, Joel 2 began to be fulfilled in the events of Acts 2. According to Ellen White, both passages apply to the widespread giving of the message by God's people.

**Well, that covers it all. There is nothing more in the Spirit of Prophecy on Joel 2:28-29 or Acts 2:17-18.**

## **BIBLE WARNINGS ABOUT FALSE PROPHETS**

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **Ye shall know them by their fruits** . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—Matthew 7:15-16, 20.

"**Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many** . . . But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."—Matthew 24:11, 13.

"For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, **if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect**. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not."—Matthew 24:24-26.

"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, **if it were possible, even the elect**."—Mark 13:22.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, **who privily shall bring in damnable heresies**."—2 Peter 2:1.

"After My departing shall **grievous wolves enter in among you**, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves **shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples** after them. Therefore watch."—Acts 20:29-31.

## **SPIRIT OF PROPHECY WARNINGS ABOUT FALSE PROPHETS**

"Other false prophets arose to sow confusion among the people **by turning them away from obeying the divine commands** given through Jeremiah, but God's judgments were pronounced against them in consequence of their grievous sin of bringing rebellion against Him.

"Just such men arise in these days **and breed confusion and rebellion among the people who profess to obey the law of God**. But just as certainly as divine judgment was visited upon the false prophets, just so surely will these evil workers receive their full measure of retribution; for the Lord has not changed. **Those who prophesy lies encourage men to look upon sin as a small matter**."—4 Testimonies, 473-474.

"In one place, four in one family professed to have communications from the Lord, reproving wrong, **and they predicted things that actually did take place. This inspired confidence in them. But the things that did not take place were kept in the dark**, or were treated as something mysterious, which would be understood later. **Whence did these receive their inspiration?—From satanic agencies, which are many**."—2 Selected Messages, 76-77.

"My soul is made very sad to see **how quickly some who have had light and truth will accept the deceptions of Satan, and be charmed with a spurious holiness**. When men turn away from the landmarks the Lord has established that we may understand our position as marked out in prophecy, they are going they know not whither . . .

"**Those who have in any way been thus misled need to humble themselves before God, and sincerely repent**, because they have so easily been led

astray. They have not distinguished the voice of the True Shepherd from that of a stranger.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 393-394.

“Satan has come down in these last days to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. **His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets.**”—6 *Bible Commentary*, 1106.

“**There are many false prophets in these days, to whom sin does not appear specially repulsive.** They complain that the peace of the people is unnecessarily disturbed by the reproofs and warnings of God’s messengers. As for them, **they lull the souls of sinners into a fatal ease by their smooth and deceitful teachings.** Ancient Israel was thus charmed by the flattering messages of the corrupt priests. Their prediction of prosperity was more pleasing than the message of the true prophet, who counseled repentance.”—4 *Testimonies*, 185.

“**Many things in these visions and dreams seem to be all straight,** a repetition of that which has been in the field for many years; **but soon they introduce a jot here, a tittle of error there,** just a little seed which takes root and flourishes, and many are defiled therewith.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 87.

“To the end of time, men will arise to create confusion and rebellion among those who claim to be representatives of the true God. **Those who prophesy lies will encourage men to look upon sin as a light thing.**”—*Prophets and Kings*, 442.

“**If they belittle the law of God, if they pay no heed to His will as revealed in the testimonies** of His Spirit, they are deceivers.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 98.

“**Sometimes previous to a death or an accident he [Satan] gives a dream or, personating another, converses with the medium, even imparting knowledge by means of his suggestions. But it is wisdom from beneath and not from above.** The wisdom taught by Satan is opposed to the truth, unless, to serve his purpose, he apparently clothes himself with the light which enshrouds angels. **To a certain class of minds he will come sanctioning a part of what Christ’s followers believe to be truth,** while he warns them to reject the other part as dangerous and fatal error.”—2 *Testimonies*, 172.

#### SPIRIT OF PROPHECY WARNINGS ABOUT DREAMS

**Instead of encouraging God’s people to expect men and women to arise with divinely inspired dreams for the remnant,—she instead uttered many warnings about people claiming to have divinely inspired dreams.**

**Notice in the following statements, that Satan’s objective is to lead God’s people away from the Spirit of Prophecy.**

“In these days of delusion, every one who is established in the truth will have to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. **Every variety of error**

**will be brought out in the mysterious working of Satan,** which would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, and turn them from the truth . . . **There will be false dreams and false visions, which have some truth,** but lead away from the original faith.”—7 *Bible Commentary*, 952.

“The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his miracle-working power. He will assume to personate the angels of light, to personate Jesus Christ. Every one who teaches the truth for this time is to preach the Word. **Those who cling to the Word will not throw open the doors for Satan by making unguarded statements in reference to prophesying or to dreams and visions.** To a greater or less degree false manifestations have been coming in, here and there, since 1844.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 21.

“After a very solemn meeting with these deceived ones, **confessions were made that they threw themselves into attitudes resembling Sister White, as nearly as they could. It was all a farce, a deception. Yet many things they told came to pass as they predicted.**

“**I was asked how this could be if the visions were all false. I told them that it was Satan’s purpose to mingle truth with error,** that through these deceptive exercises **he might make of none effect the genuine work of God.** From that time all their many visions ceased. What has become of those who had the visions, and those who encouraged them? Several now living are skeptics, have no belief in the gifts of the church, no faith in the truth, no religion at all. Such, I have been shown, is the sure result of spurious visions.

“The manifestations of your daughter are a similar deception. And your encouraging these things in her will prove her ruin, and the ruin of others, unless something breaks the deception. **You called these false visions and meaningless dreams the wonderful light of God,** but it is like the chaff to the wheat. This is a serious matter. It will have a decided influence upon your family. While you regard your daughter’s words as spoken under the influence of the Spirit of God, it will be the same to you as though they were true. You are under strong delusion of Satan. You will claim to credit them, **and thus your confidence in the veritable, genuine messages from God will be uprooted.** And so will it be with all who believe as you do. **This is why Satan is so constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.**”—2 *Selected Messages*, 77-78.

“**We shall encounter false claims; false prophets will arise; there will be false dreams and false visions; but preach the Word, be not drawn away from the voice of God in His Word. Let nothing divert the mind.** The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented and presented. Through satanic delusions, wonderful miracles, the claims of human agents will be urged. Beware of all this.”—*Letter 12*,

1894; *2 Selected Messages*, 49.

“It is no light matter to substitute for God’s revealed will, opinions and assertions, dreams, symbols, and figures from human, finite beings. Our actions, words, spirit, and influence are watched and criticized. Those whom God has chosen to be His ministers are to settle solidly into His Word, and let the Word of God be their authority.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 93.

“All her fancies and dreams were written down as Anna’s visions. She had figures and symbols presented to her, and had reproofs for her mother and for her father. After a scathing reproof, there followed **the most flattering representations of the wonderful things the Lord would do for them.** These things I was pointed to as spurious, a deception. **They descended to the most minute and trifling matters, commingled common, cheap things with important subjects.** The imagination was largely developed, **there was a mingling of the sacred and the common.** The truth of God was belittled, and yet some received these pretended revelations, and carried out their teaching. A little party was formed who were apparently inspired by them, and **the visions were declared to be more spiritual than the visions of Sister White.**”—*2 Selected Messages*, 89.

“When the Lord has a genuine channel of light, there are always plenty of counterfeits. Satan will surely enter any door thrown open for him. **He will give messages of truth, mingling with the truth ideas of his own,** prepared to mislead souls, to draw the mind to human beings and their sayings, **and prevent it from holding firmly to a ‘Thus saith the Lord.’**”—*2 Selected Messages*, 96-97.

#### SPIRIT OF PROPHECY WARNINGS ABOUT VISIONS

You will find of special interest the stories of Anna Garmire’s false visions (2 SM 64-65, 72-79, 89); and Anna Phillips’ false visions (2 SM 85-95).

**Satan wants to catch you in his net. Remain solidly with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and you will be safe.**

“The writings [of Anna Phillips] have been so eagerly grasped and scattered broadcast with so little test and proving . . . **The great wonder to me is that our brethren should accept these writings because they could see nothing objectionable in them.** Why did they not consider what there is in them that is of a character to be endorsed and sent forth with the power of influence which gives them their force? . . .

“**If things of this nature are to be so eagerly grasped, you will have plenty of them,** varied in some respects, yet such as you could treat with as much confidence. I am so sorry, so sorry.

“You seem to think I should be able to point out just where the particularly objectionable sentiments lie. There is nothing so very apparent in that which has been written; **you have been able to discover**

**nothing objectionable; but this is no reason for using these writings as you have done.** Your course in this matter is decidedly objectionable. **Is it necessary that you should discern at once something that would produce harm to the people of God, to make you cautious? If nothing of this kind appears, is this a sufficient reason for you to set your endorsement to these writings? . . .**

“Do not spread abroad writings of this character without more consideration and deep insight as to the after consequences of your course of action . . .

“Fanaticism will appear in the very midst of us. **Deceptions will come, and of such a character that if it were possible they would mislead the very elect.** If marked inconsistencies and untruthful utterances were apparent in these manifestations, the words from the lips of the Great Teacher would not be needed. [“Beware of false prophets . . .”] It is because of the many and varied dangers that would arise, that this warning is given. The reason why I hang out the danger signal is that through the enlightenment of the Spirit of God I can see that which my brethren do not discern. It may not be a positive necessity for me to point out all these peculiar phases of deception that they will need to guard against. It is enough for me to tell you, **Be on your guard;** and as faithful sentinels **keep the flock of God from accepting indiscriminately all that professes to be communicated to them from the Lord.**

“**If we work to create an excitement of feeling, we shall have all we want, and more than we can possibly know how to manage . . .**

“**The people want a sign,** as in the days of Christ. Then the Lord told them that no sign should be given them. **The sign that should be manifest now and always is the working of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the teacher, to make the Word as impressive as possible.** The Word of God is not a dead, dry theory, but spirit and life. **Satan would like nothing better than to call minds away from the Word, to look for and expect something outside of the Word to make them feel. They should not have their attention called to dreams and visions.** If they would have eternal life, they must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God.”—*Letter 68, 1894; 2 Selected Messages*, 93-95.

“**There will be those who will claim to have visions . . .** The Lord wants His people to act like men and women of sense. **In the future, deception of every kind is to arise,** and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. **Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established . . . Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?**”—*Review, May 25, 1905; Evangelism*, 610.

“We need to be thoughtful and still, and to contemplate the truths of revelation. **Excitement is not favorable to growth in grace, to true purity and sanctification of the Spirit. God wants us to deal**

**with sacred truth** . . . God calls upon His people to walk with sobriety and holy consistency. They should be very careful not to misrepresent and dishonor the holy doctrines of truth.”—*Evangelism*, 612.

“A question has been brought to me concerning the attitude that we should take toward the work of a sister in Germany, **who claims to have visions**.

“The word given me by the Lord during the past night is that God does not direct His people to look to this sister for counsel. If we should encourage this sister in the work she thinks she is called to do and in the messages she bears, much confusion would be caused . . . **Teach the people to seek God individually for guidance, to study the Scriptures, and to counsel together**, humbly, prayerfully, and with living faith. But do not encourage this sister to think that the Lord has given her messages for the people. The light given me regarding this case is that **should this sister be encouraged to think that she has been given messages for others, the result would be disastrous, and the sister would be in danger of losing her own soul**.

“My message to the sister is, Walk humbly with God, and look to Him for yourself. God has not given you the work of pointing out the duty of others; but you can be a helper if you are a sincere Christian, seeking to encourage others, **and not claiming supernatural revelations**.”—*Manuscript 64, 1905; 2 Selected Messages*, 97-98.

“When I was first wrought upon by the Spirit of the Lord, **I was shown that I would be brought in contact with those who claimed to see visions**, but that the Lord would not permit me to be deceived. My work was to unveil this falsehood, and to rebuke it in the name of the Lord. **As the end drew near, I was to see more of these manifestations**.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 76.

“**I would say to our dear brethren who have been so eager to accept everything that came in the form of visions and dreams, Beware that you be not ensnared. Read the warnings that have been given by the world’s Redeemer** to His disciples to be given again by them to the world. The Word of God is solid rock, and we may plant our feet securely upon it. Every soul must needs be tested, every faith and doctrine must needs be tried by the law and the testimony. **Take heed that no man deceive you. The warnings of Christ on this matter are needed at this time; for delusions and deceptions will come in among us, and will multiply**

“**Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of prophecy. Repeatedly the word has come, Write the things that I have given you to confirm the faith of My people in the position they have taken. Time and trial have not made void the instruction given, but through years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to**

**as we near the end.**

“**‘Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.** Therefore watch, and remember.’ Bear in mind that trials of this character are to come upon us, not only from without, but from within our own ranks. **Our individual safety is in entire consecration to God.**”—*Manuscript 27, 1894; 7 Bible Commentary*, 952.

“**False theories, repeated again and again, appear as falsely inviting today as did the fruit of the forbidden tree** in the Garden of Eden. **The fruit was very beautiful, and apparently desirable for food.** Through false doctrines many souls have already been destroyed.”—*Manuscript 37, 1906; Evangelism*, 610.

“As the natural eyesight of persons becomes so impaired as to be almost useless, so in the case of religious fanaticism and extremists, **the eye of the soul through which good and evil may be discerned, becomes so perverted that nothing is distinguished clearly. A healthful discernment is ruined**, so the spirit of truth and righteousness cannot be distinguished from the spirit of error and fanaticism . . . **There is an inspiration, but not of God.** The mental faculties are perverted. Let every soul make God his trust and obtain an experience that is wholesome and healthy.”—*Manuscript 41, 1900; Evangelism*, 610-611.

“There is a class of people who are always ready to go off on some tangent, **who want to catch up something strange and wonderful and new**; but God desires us all to move calmly, considerately, choosing our words in harmony with the solid truth for this time. The truth should be presented to the mind as free as possible from that which is emotional, while still bearing the intensity and solemnity befitting its character.”—*Evangelism*, 611.

“**The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God** . . . Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony. **He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism**; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them.”—*2 Selected Messages*, 78.

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**be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days. Those who are indifferent to this light and instruction must not expect to escape the snares which we have been plainly told will cause the rejecters of light to stumble, and fall, and be snared, and be taken. If we study carefully the second chapter of Hebrews, we shall learn how important it is that we hold steadfastly to every principle of truth that has been given.**

—*Review, July 18, 1907*  
1 *Selected Messages*, 41