

# BY THEIR FRUITS...

A CLOSER LOOK AT ERNIE KNOLL



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# By Their Fruits...

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“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.” Proverbs 24:16

“The pen of inspiration, true to its task, tells us of the sins that overcame Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David, and Solomon, and that even Elijah's strong spirit sank under temptation during his fearful trial. Jonah's disobedience and Israel's idolatry are faithfully recorded. Peter's denial of Christ, the sharp contention of Paul and Barnabas, the failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles, are all laid bare. . . . There before us lie the lives of the believers, with all their faults and follies, which are intended as a lesson to all the generations following them. If they had been without foible they would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But seeing where they struggled and fell, where they took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged, and led to press over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way.” *Conflict and Courage*, p. 368.2

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# Introduction

In the early part of 2005, a man named Ernie Knoll began receiving what he claimed were messages from God through vivid dreams that he at times experienced. These dreams bore a common theme related to end time events, encouraging scenes of heaven and clarion calls to repentance and purity. These messages echoed sections of the book of Revelation and repeated or amplified what an earlier messenger of God, Ellen G. White (EGW) had written. The messages also stated that in addition to the Scriptures and the writings of EGW, that God's end time people should read and follow the book, *Creeping Compromise* by Joe Crews of the Amazing Facts ministry (1977). This book was a clarification of the standards of Christian attire and behavior that God wanted His end-time people to adhere to. Many copies of both Ernie's dreams and the book *Creeping Compromise* were sent out free of charge.

These messages powerfully affected many who longed for the coming of the Lord, and the messages spread quickly among a number of Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) communities. This brought about a revival of "primitive godliness" that other messages and sermons had been unable to do and led to a hungering after the Word and the end time messages contained in the writings of EGW. The messages also met with substantial opposition from leaders within the organized SDA church as well as from some independent ministries. Yet, none of the critics of the messages could prove any error within the messages from the Bible or EGW, generally resorting to unfounded claims or biased or illogical arguments to make their case, at times provided to them by individuals of questionable credentials. And so the messages continued to go out.

But the opposition, stress and fatigue began taking its toll, not only on Ernie but also the board of a non-profit 4 His People Ministry that had been formed to help take these messages to the world. Satan works hard to discourage God's people, and often we fail to pray for and support those emotionally who are in the trenches of spiritual warfare. To create additional credibility for the messages, Ernie created a character, a former prostitute

named Candace, who lent her testimony to his messages. When some began challenging her existence, Ernie created a group called the Great Commission Council (GCC) who claimed to have visited Candace and verified that she was indeed real. It wasn't long after this that the frequency of the dream messages dropped and God appeared to give a tacit warning to Ernie. Ernie longed to be free of the burden of this deception he had been carrying, as Satan was using it as a tool to further discourage him and as a foothold for implanting his own messages. Ernie, for that matter as a reluctant messenger, longed to be freed from delivering the messages. After all, being a messenger for God is a tiring, thankless job.

It wasn't long after this that David Starkey, Ernie's webmaster and a board member, noticed that the Internet Protocol (IP) address from which comments made by Ernie and Candace were the same, giving strong evidence that the same person was creating the messages. When accosted with the evidence (around July 17, 2009), Ernie admitted his deception regarding Candace and the GCC. At a meeting with a number of the board members on or around July 22, 2009 in Ohio, the board members confiscated the ministry equipment, materials and vehicle, leaving Ernie and his wife Becky stranded. David Starkey also broadcast an email stating "I believe the dreams were shown Ernie by Satan. He did this knowing that in the end, truth would be discredited and God would be dishonored. I also believe Ernie is possessed by a demon." With the fatigue, stress and shock of all these sudden changes, Ernie in a response email several hours later also echoed that sentiment, stating that "the dreams were also not from God."

At that time, I questioned this sudden finding and confession under duress and knew deep in my heart that Ernie could not have made up the messages, although he was the penman for the messages, and that the messages as published could not have been given by Satan. Satan would never call God's people to a soul-searching repentance, to Bible study and prayer. By August 5, 2009, Ernie had recanted this "under duress" admission reavowing that the dreams were indeed from God. He also mentioned his genuine repentance and God's forgiveness of him. This has been reinforced in some personal emails as well as a number of phone conversations with him. And let me say that I love Ernie and the messages deeply, even against pressure to reject him from those close to me. The messages have led to a lot of deep soul searching, confession and repentance in my own life.

That being said, there are many who only read of his original recantation of the dreams, since that is what his pervasive critics and former supporters are only willing to disseminate. Many label Ernie as a false prophet, a liar and a fraud, and that they will never believe him again. Others stated that while they will forgive him, they will never forget his deception or trust him again. Yet others state that only the messages as published through the second coming of Christ scenario are valid, and everything else is suspect.

The challenge is that Ernie has again begun receiving messages that I can attest have strong evidence that they are coming from a spiritual source, either God or Satan. In examining the messages and sharing them with other qualified people to examine, it is our conclusion that they cannot be from Satan and thereby must have a heavenly origin.

Knowing what the Scriptures teach about forgiveness, has God forgiven Ernie and called him back to the ministry of delivering end-time messages for God's people? Has a merciful God, that is so willing to forgive sin, reinstated the sinner back into His grace? I believe so, especially for one chosen by God. Romans 11:29 (KJV) states, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God doesn't change His mind; He changes the person. He molds the clay to His liking, to what He wants.

There are those who will argue that prophets should be infallible, that they are not entitled to make the same mistakes that those "unchosen" are susceptible to. But is this what the Scriptures teach?

The study that follows looks at quite a number of significant Bible characters that at one time or another sinned against God through the sins of deception, disobedience, and doubt and yet were still loved and used by God for His Almighty purposes. It also will look at more details regarding Ernie's sin and address some of the arguments against him and the messages.

It is my prayer that you will realize that God has forgiven Ernie and reinstated him as a messenger, and more importantly, that you will take the time to read the messages God has given him and take them to heart. The time is short. It is time for God to prepare for Himself a people that He will



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seal for the end times. Are you such a person? Can God use you? May you be blessed as you read and study the following materials.

“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.” (Numbers 12:6)<sup>1</sup>

May “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All Bible quotations are from the King James Version (KJV) unless stated otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:14

# What fruit did they bear?

One of the major identifying marks of a true prophet is their fruits.<sup>3</sup> Jesus said in Matthew 7:20 “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” When we see or hear of someone who claims to be a Christian acting contrary to what the Bible teaches, we naturally judge them as bearing bad fruit and write them off. However, is this what Jesus meant when He spoke those words in Matthew 7?

In the case of Ernie Knoll, we and many of his former supporters for a time concluded he was a false prophet because of his dishonesty in fabricating the story of Candace and the Great Commission Council. However, how does his life compare with many of the prophets and leaders in the Bible?

“The pen of inspiration, true to its task, **tells us of the sins that overcame** Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David, and Solomon, and that even Elijah's strong spirit sank under temptation during his fearful trial. Jonah's **disobedience** and Israel's idolatry are faithfully recorded. **Peter's denial of Christ**, the sharp contention of Paul and Barnabas, the **failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles, are all laid bare**. . . . There before us lie the lives of the believers, **with all their faults and follies**, which are intended as a lesson to all the generations following them. If they had been without foible they would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But seeing where they struggled and fell, **where they took heart again and conquered through the grace of God**, we are encouraged, and led to press over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way.” - *Conflict and Courage*, p. 368.2

With this thought in mind, let us take a closer look at some of these prominent Bible characters. We will divide them into three categories - deception, disobedience and doubt.

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<sup>3</sup> This is not the only test of a prophet, but it is what we will focus on in this study. There are other tests such as a prophet must not contradict the word of God (Isaiah 8:20) and their predictions must come to pass in due time. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

# Deception

Deception is the “act of deceiving or misleading.”<sup>4</sup> It is the “use of deceit.”<sup>5</sup> When someone lies, they are deceiving. Jeremiah writes “How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy *lies*? yea, they are *prophets of deceit* of their own heart.”<sup>6</sup> We see therefore that whenever someone lies, they are being deceitful, which is deception.

## What does the Bible say about deception or lying

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” - Exodus 20:16

“He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.” - Proverbs 12:17

“My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.” - Job 27:4

“He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” - Psalm 101:7

“Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.” - Psalm 119:118

“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,” - Romans 1:29

Obviously one who regularly practices deception cannot be trusted. However, as we are about to see, some of the most well known patriarchs, prophets and

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<sup>4</sup> Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/deception>

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 23:26

<sup>7</sup> Some feel that the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment applies only in a legal sense to bearing false witness, but God’s messenger writes “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309

kings at one time or another practiced deception and still obtained a good report from God.

## Abraham

Of all the characters in the Bible, Abraham is the only one that is called “*the friend of God.*”<sup>8</sup> He is the father of the faithful.<sup>9</sup> He obtained a good report as one “*who obeyed my [God’s] voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws,*”<sup>10</sup> who “*believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”<sup>11</sup> But even with all of these recognized evidences of his faith, inspiration records that Abraham did not always walk by faith. There are two points we can learn from the life of Abraham that relate to this study. Abraham lied on two separate occasions to protect his own life and by doing so potentially put his wife Sarah in danger and on another occasion he thought he could take matters into his own hands to fulfill God’s promise.

### Lying and deception practiced

“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, **thou art my sister**: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.” -Genesis 12:11-13

“During his stay in Egypt, Abraham gave evidence that he was **not free from human weakness and imperfection**. In concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a distrust of the divine care, a lack of that lofty faith and courage so often and nobly exemplified in his life. Sarah was fair to look upon, and he doubted not that the dusky Egyptians would covet the beautiful stranger, and that in order to secure her, they would not scruple to slay her husband. He **reasoned** that he was not **guilty of falsehood** in representing Sarah as his sister,

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<sup>8</sup> James 2:23

<sup>9</sup> Romans 4:16

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 26:5

<sup>11</sup> Galatians 3:6

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for she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. **But this concealment of the real relation between them was deception.** No deviation from strict integrity can **meet God's approval.** Through Abraham's **lack of faith**, Sarah was placed in great peril. The king of Egypt, being informed of her beauty, caused her to be taken to his palace, intending to make her his wife. But the Lord, in His great mercy, protected Sarah by sending judgments upon the royal household. By this means the monarch learned the truth in the matter, and, indignant at the **deception practiced upon him**, he reproved Abraham and restored to him his wife, saying, "What is this that thou hast done unto me?...” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 130.1

“God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations. **But his faith had not been perfect.** He had **shown distrust of God** in concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, and **again** in his marriage with Hagar.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 147.2

On another occasion Abraham fell into the very same sin. One would have thought he would have learned from the previous incident.

“And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, **She is my sister:** and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is **a man's wife.**” - Genesis 20:2-3

### **Distrusting God's power to fulfill His promises**

“Both Abraham and Sarah **distrusted the power of God**, and it was this **error** that led to the marriage with Hagar.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 147.1

“God did not rebuke Sarah for the course she pursued. Abraham was reproved by the angels for distrusting God's power, which had led him to take Hagar as his wife, and to **think that through her the promise would be fulfilled.**” - *The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1*, p. 98.2

### **Abraham still God's prophet even while he willingly resorted to deception**

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“But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, **She is my sister?** and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; **for he is a prophet**, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.” - Genesis 20:3-7

Despite his shortcomings, the life of Abraham was a testimony of his faith in God. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, at the end of his life, he willingly offered his promised son in obedience to God’s command. Like all of us, Abraham’s faith was tested, and if we focus only on the times when he failed, then we might conclude that his fruits were not of God. But when we examine his entire life, his works testify that his fruit was of God. This teaches us that we should not be quick to judge others, because we do not know their hearts and motives.

Even though Abraham chose to deceive both Pharaoh and Abimelech, he did so because he feared for his life. A person who is deceitful will continually bear fruit of deceit, and by their fruits, you will know they are not walking in the light of God’s word. But Abraham fell prey to temptation and reasoned from a human point of view that what he was doing was not really that bad since Sarah was his half sister. It was not his practice to deceive people. He was in fact a man of great integrity.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to note that on both occasions, there is no record that God was displeased with Abraham, and this may be the reason why Abraham resorted to the same lie the second time with Abimelech. This shows that

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<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 11:8

<sup>13</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 368.2

God doesn't always bring swift judgment on those He has chosen to represent Him.

### **Points to remember**

1. Abraham is known as the father of the faithful, the friend of God, one who kept His laws.
2. Distrusting God's power to save his life, Abraham deceived Pharaoh, encouraged his wife to partake of the deception, and brought judgments upon the Egyptians.
3. Again Abraham listened to his wife's suggestion and married Hagar thinking he could fulfill God's promise. We can still see the results of that marriage in the continuing conflict between the the Israelites and the Arab world.
4. Abraham again distrusted God and deceived Abimelech regarding his wife. This was the second time he fell into this sin. As a result of this sin, the king almost lost his life despite his innocence.
5. Abraham's sin was more than a half truth. We are told it was plain deception.
6. Despite not being truthful and choosing to willingly deceive the king, God still calls Abraham a prophet.
7. There is no record (from what we have found) that Abraham repented of this sin or that God brought judgment upon Abraham for committing this deception.

## **Jacob**

Jacob, who eventually became known as Israel, is best known for his struggle with the covenant angel and gaining the title "prince with God." Inspiration tells us that "Jacob and Esau represent two classes; Jacob the righteous, and Esau the wicked."<sup>14</sup> From his youth, Jacob had been taught by his mother "that the birthright should fall to him."<sup>15</sup> To possess the birthright meant not only possessing his father's wealth, but "to commune with God as did righteous Abraham, to offer the sacrifice of atonement for his family, to be the progenitor of the chosen people and of the promised Messiah, and to inherit

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<sup>14</sup> Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3, p. 131.1

<sup>15</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 178.2

the immortal possessions embraced in the blessings of the covenant.”<sup>16</sup> This blessing was always on Jacob’s mind.

### Jacob’s deception

Unlike Abraham’s deception, which was done out of concerns for his life, the reason for Jacob’s deception was more selfish.

“Jacob thought to gain a right to the birthright **through deception**, but he found himself disappointed.” - *Christ Triumphant*, p. 86.3

“No sooner had Esau departed on his errand than Rebekah set about the accomplishment of her purpose. She told Jacob what had taken place, urging the necessity of immediate action to prevent the bestowal of the blessing, finally and irrevocably, upon Esau. And she assured her son that if he would follow her directions, **he might obtain it as God had promised**. Jacob did not readily consent to the plan that she proposed. The thought of **deceiving** his father caused him great distress. He felt that such a sin would bring a curse rather than a blessing. But his scruples were overborne, and he proceeded to carry out his mother’s suggestions. **It was not his intention to utter a direct falsehood**, but once in the presence of his father he seemed to have gone too far to retreat, and he obtained by **fraud** the coveted blessing.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 180.2

“Rebekah was acquainted with Isaac’s partiality for Esau, and was satisfied that reasoning would not change his purpose. Instead of trusting in God, the disposer of events, she manifested her lack of faith by persuading Jacob to **deceive** his father. Jacob’s course in this was not approbated by God. Rebekah and Jacob should have waited for God to bring about his own purposes, in his own way, and in his own time, **instead of trying to bring about the foretold events by the aid of deception**.” - *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3*, p. 115.1

Like Abraham’s actions in marrying Hagar to try and fulfill God’s promise, Jacob thought that he needed to take matters into his own hands so that foretold events might be fulfilled. He probably reasoned that Esau didn’t appreciate and deserve the birthright like he did.

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<sup>16</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 178.2



## Was Jacob a prophet of God when he deceived his father?

Inspiration doesn't tell us whether Jacob was a prophet of God when he chose to deceive his father, but we are told that God came to him in a dream immediately after his deception.

“And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran.” - Genesis 27:42, 43

“And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and beheld a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, **I am with thee**, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” - Genesis 28:10-15

“In the **vision** the plan of redemption was presented to Jacob, not fully, but in such parts as were essential to him at that time. The mystic ladder **revealed to him in his dream** was the same to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 184.2

“He thought he had lost everything, his **connection with God**, his home and all; and there he was a disappointed fugitive. But what did God do? He looked upon him in his hopeless condition, He saw his disappointment, and He saw there was material there that would render back glory to God. **No sooner does He see his condition than He presents the mystic ladder, which represents Jesus Christ.** Here

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is a man **who had lost all connection with God**, and the God of heaven looks upon him and consents that Christ shall bridge the gulf that sin has made.” - *Christ Triumphant*, p. 86.3

One wonders how God could have appeared to Jacob and comforted him with the promise that “I am with thee” when he had just willingly deceived his father. If we were to judge him by his fruit, we would conclude that God couldn’t possibly bless someone who had deceived his own father. We would wonder how could he be trusted. Yet God still blessed him, promised to be with him, and made him a prophet. He had mercy on Jacob.

Many years later, Jacob received another dream from God telling him to return to the land of his fathers.

**“In a dream his prayer was answered:** “Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 193.1

At the end of Jacob’s life, he prophesied the history of his children and the coming of the Messiah.

“The Messiah was to be of the royal line, for in the **prophecy uttered by Jacob** the Lord said, ‘The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.’ Genesis 49:10.” - *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 223.1

“Nearly seventeen hundred years before the death of Christ the dying **Jacob uttered this prophecy**. Christ Himself threw back the veil, that with **prophetic eye Jacob could trace the history of his descendants...**” - *Christ Triumphant*, p. 93.6

### Points to remember

1. It was predicted that Jacob, the second born, would receive the birthright.
2. Jacob cherished the thought of obtaining the birthright.
3. Jacob obeyed his mother and although it was not his intention to deceive, he nevertheless did so when he realized he had gone too far.
4. Jacob sought to fulfill the prediction that he would receive the birthright by deception instead of allowing God to fulfill it.

5. God did not forsake Jacob, even though he had deceived his father. He appeared to him in a dream and comforted him.

## David

David was a “chosen messenger of God.”<sup>17</sup> When God sought for a king to replace Saul, the Bible tells us “the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart.”<sup>18</sup> That man was David as the book of Acts records: “And when he had removed him [Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, *a man after mine own heart*, which shall fulfill all my will.”<sup>19</sup> And David did fulfill God’s purpose for him. Regarding David, we are told:

“He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the **integrity of his heart**; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.” - Psalm 78:70-72

But sadly, like so many before him, David started to lose his faith in God. When on the run as a fugitive from king Saul, David turned to the Philistines, the enemy of God, for protection.

“David and his men had not taken part in the battle between Saul and the Philistines, though they had marched with the Philistines to the field of conflict. As the two armies prepared to join battle the son of Jesse found himself in a situation of great perplexity. It was expected that he would fight for the Philistines....

David was caused to feel that he had **missed his path**. Far better would it have been for him to find refuge in God's strong fortresses of the mountains than with the **avowed enemies of Jehovah** and His people. But the Lord in His **great mercy** did not punish this error of His servant by **leaving him to himself** in his distress and perplexity; for though David, **losing his grasp on divine power, had faltered and turned aside from the path of strict integrity, it was still the purpose of his heart to be true to God**. While Satan and his host were busy

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<sup>17</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, p. 575.1

<sup>18</sup> 1 Samuel 13:14

<sup>19</sup> Acts 13:22

helping the adversaries of God and of Israel to plan against a king who had forsaken God, the angels of the Lord were working to **deliver David from the peril into which he had fallen**. Heavenly messengers moved upon the Philistine princes to protest against the presence of David and his force with the army in the approaching conflict...

Thus Achish was forced to yield, and calling David, said unto him, "Surely as Jehovah liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day. Nevertheless the lords favor thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines."

David, fearing to betray his real feelings, answered, "But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 691.4

The reply of Achish must have sent a thrill of **shame and remorse through David's heart**, as he thought how unworthy of a servant of Jehovah were the **deceptions to which he had stooped**. "I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God," said the king: "notwithstanding, the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart." Thus the snare in which David had become entangled was broken, and he was set free." - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 690.1 - 691.5

Having been set free from one problem, David quickly found himself in another problem:

"After three days' travel David and his band of six hundred men reached Ziklag, their Philistine home. But a scene of desolation met their view. The Amalekites, taking advantage of David's absence, with his force, had avenged themselves for his incursions into their territory. They had surprised the city while it was left unguarded, and having sacked and burned it, had departed, taking all the women and children as captives, with much spoil.

Dumb with horror and amazement, David and his men for a little time gazed in silence upon the blackened and smoldering ruins. Then as a sense of their terrible desolation burst upon them, those battle-scarred warriors "lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep."

## BY THEIR FRUITS...

Here again David was chastened for the **lack of faith** that had led him to place himself among the Philistines. He had opportunity to see how much safety could be found among the foes of God and His people. **David's followers turned upon him as the cause of their calamities.** He had provoked the vengeance of the Amalekites by his attack upon them; yet, too confident of security in the midst of his enemies, he had left the city unguarded. Maddened with grief and rage, his soldiers were now ready for any desperate measures, and they threatened even to stone their leader.

David seemed to be cut off from every human support. **All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him.** Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city; his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar **friends had banded against him,** and threatened him even with death. In this hour of utmost extremity David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances, **looked earnestly to God for help.** He "encouraged himself in the Lord." He **reviewed his past eventful life. Wherein had the Lord ever forsaken him?** His soul was refreshed in recalling the **many evidences of God's favor.** The followers of David, by their discontent and impatience, made their affliction doubly grievous; but the man of God, having even greater cause for grief, bore himself with fortitude. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Psalm 56:3), was the language of his heart. Though he himself could not discern a way out of the difficulty, God could see it, **and would teach him what to do.**" - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 692.1 - 692.4

### David's sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah

Of all the sins of God's people that are recorded in the Bible, David's sin of committing adultery with Bathsheba and facilitating the death of her husband would have to be the most well known. Just when he thought all was well in his kingdom, David yielded to the devil's temptations and found himself far from God's high standard.

"Every **effort which David made to conceal his guilt proved unavailing.** He had betrayed himself into the power of Satan; danger surrounded him, dishonor more bitter than death was before him. There appeared but one way of escape, and in his desperation he was **hurried on to add murder to adultery.** He who had compassed the destruction of Saul was seeking to lead David also to ruin. Though the

temptations were different, they were alike in leading to transgression of God's law. David **reasoned** that if Uriah were slain by the hand of enemies in battle, the guilt of his death could not be traced home to the king, Bathsheba would be free to become David's wife, suspicion could be averted, and the royal honor would be maintained." - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 718.3

"His crime in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba was **heinous in the sight of God**. A just and impartial God did not sanction or excuse these sins in David, but sends a reproof, and heavy denunciation by Nathan, his prophet, which portrays in living colors his grievous offense. David had been **blinded** to his wonderful departure from God. **He had excused his own sinful course to himself, until his ways seemed passable in his own eyes. One wrong step had prepared the way for another**, until his sins called for the rebuke from Jehovah through Nathan." - *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4A*, p. 86.2

"This experience was most painful to David, but it was most beneficial. **But for the mirror which Nathan held up before him, in which he so clearly recognized his own likeness, he would have gone on unconvicted of his heinous sin**, and would have been ruined. The conviction of his guilt was the saving of his soul. He saw himself in another light, as the Lord saw him, and as long as he lived he repented of his sin (Letter 57, 1897)." - *S.D.A. Bible Commentary, Vol. 2*, p. 1023.3

"The guilty may attempt, as David had done, **to conceal their crime from men**; they may seek to bury the evil deed forever from human sight or knowledge; but "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13)." - *Conflict and Courage*, p. 179.4

"David often triumphed in God, and yet he dwelt much upon his own unworthiness and sinfulness. His conscience was not asleep or dead. "My sin," he cries, "is ever before me." He did not flatter himself that sin was a matter with which he had nothing to do, and that should not concern him. As he saw the **depths of deceit in his heart**, he was deeply disgusted with himself, and prayed that God would keep him back by his power from the presumptuous sins, and cleanse him from secret faults." - *The Youth's Instructor, July 5, 1894 par. 1*

## What led David to sin?

“But when in ease and self-security he let go his hold upon God, David yielded to Satan and brought upon his soul the stain of guilt. He, the Heaven-appointed leader of the nation, chosen by God to execute His law, himself trampled upon its precepts. He who should have been a terror to evildoers, **by his own act strengthened their hands.**” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 718.1

“It was the spirit of **self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall.** Flattery and the subtle allurements of power and luxury were not without effect upon him.... All this tended to lessen David's sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he **began to trust to his own wisdom and might....**” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717.2

“David had enjoyed precious experiences of the love of God, and had been richly endowed with His Spirit; in the history of Saul he had seen the utter worthlessness of mere human wisdom. And yet worldly success and honor so weakened the character of David that he was **repeatedly overcome by the tempter.**” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 746.2

The history of David has many lessons for us. As a man who started out with a heart after God's own heart, he eventually fell into some of the worst crimes recorded in the Bible. Yet God did not forsake David. He revealed David's deception through Nathan the prophet and it is revealed that:

“God in His mercy did not leave David to be lured to utter ruin by the deceitful rewards of sin.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 720.3

If we lived back in David's time, what would we have thought of him? Would we have thought that God could not be with such a wicked man? And yet after David's repentance, he walked ever so humbly with God and he wrote many of the Psalms, some of which predicted events associated with the Messiah and His death. Through David's life we see God's love and mercy, and it gives us hope and faith that God can save us from our sins.

## Points to remember

## BY THEIR FRUITS...

1. David was a man after God's own heart.
2. Before reigning as king, David distrusted God's care and sought help from God's enemies, leading them to believe he was an enemy to Israel. This deception put him in a very difficult situation.
3. Even though David made these mistakes, it was *still his heart's desire to be true to God*.
4. David sinned by committing adultery.
5. David tried to conceal his sin by murdering Uriah.
6. One wrong step led to another.
7. Once Uriah was dead, David thought all would be well.
8. David got to a stage where he didn't think his sin was really that bad after all.
9. It wasn't until God sent Nathan the prophet to reprove David that he repented.

## Peter

When we think of Peter, we often think of his bold impetuous character. Peter was greatly blessed when Jesus asked him to follow Him. We are told:

“Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as **His witnesses**, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. **Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called**, and was second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world. As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stand as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles were to stand as representatives of the gospel church.” - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 291.3

### Peter's sin

Peter was a man full of self-confidence. When he was warned that he would deny Jesus, Peter confidently boasted “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”<sup>20</sup> And again he said “Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 26:33



disciples.”<sup>21</sup> Sadly, the prediction of Jesus was correct. When brought under condemnation, poor Peter failed his Master.

“Peter was startled and confused; the eyes of the company instantly fastened upon him. He pretended not to understand her; but she was persistent, and said to those around her that this man was with Jesus. Peter felt compelled to answer, and said angrily, “Woman, **I know Him not.**” This was the first denial, and immediately the cock crew. O Peter, so soon ashamed of thy Master! so soon to **deny thy Lord!**” - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 710.5

“Attention was called to him the second time, and he was again charged with being a follower of Jesus. He now declared with an oath, **“I do not know the Man.”** Still another opportunity was given him. An hour had passed, when one of the servants of the high priest, being a near kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked him, “Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?” “Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.” At this Peter **flew into a rage.** The disciples of Jesus were noted for the purity of their language, and in order fully to **deceive his questioners**, and justify his **assumed character**, Peter now **denied his Master with cursing and swearing.** Again the cock crew. Peter heard it then, and he remembered the words of Jesus, “Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.” Mark 14:30.” - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 712.3

“He [Peter] reflected with horror upon his own ingratitude, **his falsehood, his perjury...**” - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 713.2

“He witnessed again the scene in the judgment hall. It was torture to his bleeding heart to know that he had added the heaviest burden to the Saviour's humiliation and grief. On the very spot where Jesus had poured out His soul in agony to His Father, Peter fell upon his face, **and wished that he might die.**” - *The Desire of Ages*, p. 713.3

Peter learned a valuable lesson that night, one he never forgot. However like Abraham, Jacob and David, Peter had resorted to deception and falsehood in a time of weakness, and if we were to judge him according to the grievous denial he committed that night, then surely we would conclude that he was no better than Judas, who betrayed Jesus. At a time when Jesus needed the

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew 26:35

sympathy and prayers of his disciples, Peter denied him. Thankfully “the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”<sup>22</sup> He knows the end from the beginning. We only “...know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”<sup>23</sup>

### **Peter was forgiven**

Jesus loves us too much to leave us in our fallen condition. After His resurrection, Jesus sought Peter and assured him that he was forgiven and gave him another opportunity to bring forth the fruit of good works.

“Peter, when brought to the test, **sinned greatly**. In denying the Master he had loved and served, he became a cowardly apostate. **But his Lord did not cast him off; He freely forgave him.** . . . Henceforth, remembering his own weakness and failures, he would be patient with his brethren in their mistakes and errors. Remembering the patient love of Christ toward him, **affording him another opportunity to bring forth the fruit of good works**, he would be more conciliatory toward erring ones. . . .” - *That I May Know Him*, p. 180.3

“In prospect of this fearful death, the apostle remembered his great sin in denying Jesus in the hour of His trial. Once so unready to acknowledge the cross, he now counted it a joy to yield up his life for the gospel, feeling only that, for him who had denied his Lord, to die in the same manner as his Master died was too great an honor. **Peter had sincerely repented of that sin and had been forgiven by Christ**, as is **shown by the high commission given him to feed the sheep and lambs of the flock.** . . .” - *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 537.3

“Then he received his commission. A work broader and more delicate than had heretofore been his was appointed him. Christ bade him feed the sheep and the lambs. In thus committing to his stewardship the souls for whom the Saviour had laid down his own life, **Christ gave to Peter the strongest proof of confidence in his restoration.** The once restless, boastful, self-confident disciple had become subdued and contrite. Henceforth he followed his Lord in self-denial and self-

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<sup>22</sup> 1 Samuel 16:7

<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12

## BY THEIR FRUITS...

sacrifice. He was a partaker of Christ's sufferings; and when Christ shall sit upon the throne of His glory, Peter will be a partaker in His glory." - *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 154.3

### Points to remember

1. Peter was greatly honored in being called to be a disciple of Christ.
2. When Peter's faith was tested, he faltered and denied his Lord three times.
3. To ensure he had *deceived* his questioners, Peter denied Christ with cursing and swearing.
4. His denial was characterized by *falsehood and perjury*.
5. After realizing his true condition and what he had done, Peter wished that he might die.
6. Despite his terrible sin, Jesus did not cast Peter off, but instead forgave him.
7. Peter was not only forgiven, but greatly honored and commissioned to feed the sheep and lambs.

## Disobedience

Disobedience is "neglect or refusal to obey; violation of a command or prohibition; the omission of that which is commanded to be done, or the doing of that which is forbid; breach of duty prescribed by authority."<sup>24</sup> Every person that has ever lived, except for Jesus, has fallen into disobedience.<sup>25</sup> No one is without sin, without any failings. All of us need saving. We are all growing in the Christian life and are at different stages. Yet often our conception of a prophet of God is someone who has attained perfection, and is free from sin. As we have already seen in the previous section, and we will see with Noah, Moses, Solomon and Jonah and the list could go on, God's prophets are no different than us.

## Noah

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<sup>24</sup> Webster's 1828 dictionary

<sup>25</sup> Romans 3:23

Noah was “*a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*”<sup>26</sup> In fact, inspiration goes so far as to tell us that “... **Noah was the most pious and holy of any upon the earth.**”<sup>27</sup> God used such a man to warn that wicked generation of coming destruction. Noah suffered a lot of humiliation because of the message God had given him, but he was faithful in giving it. As a result, only he and his immediate family were saved. But sadly, “the pen of inspiration, true to its task, tells us of the *sins that overcame Noah...*”<sup>28</sup>

### What sin did Noah commit?

“And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was **drunken**; and he was uncovered within his tent.” - Genesis 9:20-21

When we think of disobedience, we often think of sins such as murder, adultery, deception, etc. Yet the Bible clearly reveals that drunkenness is just as sinful and Noah fell prey to this sin.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and **whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.**” - Proverbs 20:1

“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him **drunken also**, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” - Habakkuk 2:15

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, **nor drunkards**, nor revilers, nor extortioners, **shall inherit the kingdom of God.**” - 1 Corinthians 6:10

“Envyings, murders, **drunkenness**, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things **shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**” - Galatians 5:21

### Did Noah’s fall into sin stop him from being a prophet?

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<sup>26</sup> Genesis 6:9

<sup>27</sup> Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3, p. 65.1

<sup>28</sup> Conflict and Courage, p. 368.2

“Noah, **speaking by divine inspiration, foretold the history** of the three great races to spring from these fathers of mankind. Tracing the descendants of Ham, through the son rather than the father, he declared, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." The unnatural crime of Ham declared that filial reverence had long before been cast from his soul, and it revealed the impiety and vileness of his character. These evil characteristics were perpetuated in Canaan and his posterity, whose continued guilt called upon them the judgments of God.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 117.2

One wonders how the world’s most pious and holy man could have been deceived by alcohol, especially after witnessing the destruction of the world. Of course we do not know for sure if Noah set out to get drunk, but inspiration does record that Noah was overcome by sin.<sup>29</sup> Yet even though he did fall, there is no record of Noah being reproved by God, and as soon as he woke up, Noah gave a prophecy, indicating God had not left him.

### **Points to remember**

1. Noah was a prophet of God.
2. He was the most righteous man living before the flood.
3. After the flood he planted a vineyard and become drunk.
4. After waking from his drunkenness, Noah, speaking by divine inspiration prophesied the history of three great races.
5. It would appear that even though Noah sinned, he did not stop being a prophet of God, which would indicate that God did not leave him.

## **Moses**

The Bible has many good things to say about Moses. He “...was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”<sup>30</sup> To be meek means to be “humble, submissive to the divine will, not proud, self-sufficient or refractory.”<sup>31</sup> Of Moses it is written:

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<sup>29</sup> Conflict and Courage, p. 368.2

<sup>30</sup> Numbers 12:3

<sup>31</sup> Webster’s 1828 dictionary

“Moses was **greater than any who had lived before him**. He had been **highly honored of God**, being privileged to talk with the Lord **face to face**, as a man speaks with a friend. He was permitted to see the bright light and excellent glory that enshrouded the Father. The Lord **through Moses delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage**. Moses was a mediator for his people, often standing between them and the wrath of God...” - *Early Writings*, p. 162.3

### **Taking matters into his own hands**

As Moses saw the affliction of his people the thought came to him that he would be the one who would lead them out of bondage.

“Prior to gaining this experience, Moses **thought that his education** in the wisdom of Egypt had **fully qualified** him to lead Israel from bondage. Had he not had the greatest advantages of the best schools in the land? Was he not learned in all things necessary for a general of armies to know? He **felt that he was fully able to deliver Israel**.

Moses set about his work by trying to obtain the favor of his people by redressing their wrongs. He killed an Egyptian who was ill-treating an Israelite. In this he manifested the spirit of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and proved himself unfit to represent the God of mercy, love, and tenderness. **He made a miserable failure of his first attempt**. Like many another, **he immediately lost confidence in God and turned, his back on his appointed work**. He fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. He **concluded that because of his mistake, his sin in taking the life of the Egyptian, God would not permit him to have any part in the work of delivering His people** from their cruel bondage. But the **Lord permitted him to make this mistake** in order that He might be able to teach him the gentleness, goodness, longsuffering, that is necessary for every worker for the Lord to possess.” *Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1905 par. 2-3

Moses learned an important lesson, that trying to take matters into his own hands was not the way God worked. Notice the quote above says “he made a miserable failure of his first attempt.” This led him to loose confidence in God and conclude that God hadn’t really raised him up with a special purpose to deliver his people from slavery. This is just what Satan wanted. He was trying to discourage Moses and lead the children of Israel to reject him. But God, even in this dreadful act, had a purpose. He “permitted” Moses to kill another man in order to teach him an important lesson.

## An even greater sin

Many years later, Moses again committed an even greater sin. A sin that would keep him out of the promised land.

"The two brothers went on before the multitude, Moses with the rod of God in his hand. They were now aged men. Long had they borne with the rebellion and obstinacy of Israel; but now, at last, **even the patience of Moses gave way.** "Hear now, ye rebels," he cried; "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" and instead of speaking to the rock, as God had commanded him, he smote it twice with the rod.

The water gushed forth in abundance to satisfy the host. But a great wrong had been done. Moses had spoken from irritated feeling; his words were an expression of human passion rather than of holy indignation because God had been dishonored.... His lack of patience and self-control was evident. Thus the **people were given occasion to question whether his past course had been under the direction of God,** and to excuse their own sins. Moses, as well as they, had offended God. **His course, they said, had from the first been open to criticism and censure. They had now found the pretext which they desired for rejecting all the reproofs that God had sent them through His servant.**

Moses manifested distrust of God. "Shall we bring water?" he questioned, as if the Lord would not do what He promised. "Ye believed Me not," the Lord declared to the two brothers, "to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel." At the time when the water failed, their own faith in the fulfillment of God's promise had been shaken by the murmuring and rebellion of the people....

By his **rash act Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach....**

More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God... When they angrily cried, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" they put themselves in God's place, as though the power lay with themselves, men possessing human frailties and passions. **Wearied with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, Moses had lost sight of his Almighty Helper, and without the divine strength he had been left to mar his record by an exhibition of human weakness.** The man who might have stood pure, firm, and unselfish to the close of his work **had been overcome at last.** God had been dishonored before the congregation of Israel, when He should

have been magnified and exalted.” - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 417 - 418

“When Moses came down from the mount with the two tables of stone and saw Israel worshipping the golden calf, his anger was greatly kindled, and he threw down the tables of stone and broke them. I saw that Moses did not sin in this. He was wroth for God, jealous for His glory. But when he **yielded to the natural feelings of his heart and took to himself the honor which was due to God, he sinned**, and for that sin God would not suffer him to enter the land of Canaan.

**Satan had been trying to find something wherewith to accuse Moses** before the angels. He **exulted at his success** in leading him to displease God, and he told the angels that he could overcome the Saviour of the world when He should come to redeem man.” - *Early Writings*, p. 163.3, 164.1

Moses was certainly a meek man. Few men would have been able to put up with the murmuring children of Israel. Fewer still would have put their own eternal life on the line when God told Moses He was going to destroy that wicked people. Yet finally his patience failed and Satan exulted at his success. This one sin kept Moses from entering the promised land, but it didn't stop Moses from being God's prophet. On his very deathbed, God gave Moses a wonderful revelation of the future.

“As he looked back upon his experience as a leader of God's people, **one wrong act marred the record**. If that transgression could be blotted out, he felt that he would not shrink from death. He was assured that repentance, and faith in the promised Sacrifice, were all that God required, and again Moses confessed his sin and implored pardon in the name of Jesus.

And now a **panoramic view of the Land of Promise was presented to him**. Every part of the country was spread out before him, not faint and uncertain in the dim distance, but standing out clear, distinct, and beautiful to his delighted vision...

Moses **saw** the chosen people established in Canaan, each of the tribes in its own possession. He had a view of their history after the settlement of the Promised Land; the long, sad story of their apostasy and its punishment was spread out before him....

He was **permitted to look down the stream of time** and behold the first advent of our Saviour....



## BY THEIR FRUITS...

He followed the Saviour to Gethsemane, and beheld the agony in the garden, the betrayal, the mockery and scourging--the crucifixion. Moses saw that as he had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of God must be lifted up, that whosoever would believe on Him "should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:15.... He saw Him lying in Joseph's new tomb. The darkness of hopeless despair seemed to enshroud the world. But he looked again, and beheld Him coming forth a conqueror, and ascending to heaven escorted by adoring angels and leading a multitude of captives. He saw the shining gates open to receive Him, and the host of heaven with songs of triumph welcoming their Commander. And it was there **revealed to him that he himself would be one who should attend the Saviour, and open to Him the everlasting gates....**" - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 472, 475

Moses' sin may seem inconsequential to us, but we need to remember that Moses was the mouthpiece of God to His people. From the very beginning the people had rejected Moses.<sup>32</sup> At each step of the way toward the promised land, the people rose up against him and accused him of leading the people into the desert to die. Moses' sin therefore gave the people an "occasion to question whether his past course had been under the direction of God."<sup>33</sup> The people had been looking for any excuse to reject Moses, and now they had "found the pretext which they desired for rejecting all the reproofs that God had sent them through His servant."<sup>34</sup>

A prophet of God bears incredible responsibilities. Not only do they have to give their message, which in most cases is not popular, but they also have to stand up under the close scrutiny of all who would try to find fault with them. As we have seen in our study so far, even the greatest of God's prophets failed Him at times.

### Points to remember

1. God had a special plan for Moses and preserved his life at his birth.
2. At the age of forty, Moses believed that God had raised him up to deliver His people.

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<sup>32</sup> See Exodus 5:19-21

<sup>33</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 417.3

<sup>34</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 417.3

## BY THEIR FRUITS...

3. In attempting to deliver Israel from slavery, Moses killed another man.
4. Moses fled from Egypt when his sin was found out and concluded that God had not raised him up after all.
5. God permitted Moses to make this “mistake” in order to teach him.
6. Moses was greater than any man that had lived before him.
7. He was permitted to see the glory of the Father.
8. God used Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt.
9. Moses endured a lot of hardship in leading Israel.
10. Wearied with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, Moses finally lost sight of his Almighty Helper.
11. Without the divine strength, he blemished his record by an exhibition of human weakness.
12. In rage Moses sinned against God and took God’s glory to himself.
13. Moses’ sin was committed in a rash act, and took away the force of the lesson that God wanted to teach.
14. Moses’ sin gave the children of Israel occasion to question whether his past course had been under the direction of God or not.
15. The children of Israel had now found the pretext which they desired for rejecting all the reproofs that God had sent them through Moses.
16. Because of his sin, Moses was barred from leading Israel into Canaan.
17. Since Satan had been trying to find something to accuse Moses with, he exulted at his success.
18. Despite his fall and punishment, Moses still remained God’s prophet and leader of Israel. He was permitted to see not only the history of God’s people, but the coming Saviour and his reception of the risen Saviour into the heavenly city.

## Solomon

Solomon was not your average person. In answer to his prayer, “God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.”<sup>35</sup> It is said of Solomon that:

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<sup>35</sup> 1 Kings 4:29-30

“The **name of Jehovah was greatly honored during the first part of Solomon's reign.** The wisdom and righteousness revealed by the king bore witness to all nations of the excellency of the attributes of the God whom he served. For a time Israel was as the light of the world, showing forth the greatness of Jehovah. Not in the surpassing wisdom, the fabulous riches, the far-reaching power and fame that were his, lay the real glory of Solomon's early reign; but in the **honor that he brought to the name of the God** of Israel through a wise use of the gifts of Heaven.” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 32.3

Solomon was even blessed with visions. We are told:

“Twice during Solomon's reign the Lord had appeared to him with words of approval and counsel--**in the night vision** at Gibeon, when the promise of wisdom, riches, and honor was accompanied by an admonition to remain humble and obedient; and after the dedication of the temple, when once more the Lord exhorted him to faithfulness.” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 75.1

“The divine beauty of the character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection; of whom **Solomon by the Spirit of inspiration wrote**, He is "the chiefest among ten thousand, . . . yea, He is altogether lovely" (Song of Solomon 5:10-16)..." - *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 49.2

## Solomon's sin

“But after a morning of great promise his life was **darkened by apostasy.** History records the melancholy fact that he who had been called Jedidiah,--"Beloved of the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:25, margin),--he who had been honored by God with tokens of divine favor **so remarkable** that his wisdom and uprightness gained for him world-wide fame, he who had led others to ascribe honor to the God of Israel, turned from the worship of Jehovah to bow before the idols of the heathen.” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 51.2

“For a time God in His compassionate mercy overruled this terrible mistake; and the king, by a wise course, could have checked at least in a large measure the evil forces that his imprudence had set in operation. But Solomon **had begun to lose sight** of the Source of his power and glory. As inclination gained the ascendancy over reason, **self-**

**confidence increased**, and he **sought to carry out the Lord's purpose in his own way...**" - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 53.3

"So **gradual was Solomon's apostasy that before he was aware of it**; he had wandered far from God. Almost imperceptibly he began to trust less and less in divine guidance and blessing, and to put **confidence in his own strength**. Little by little he withheld from God that unswerving obedience which was to make Israel a peculiar people, and he conformed more and more closely to the customs of the surrounding nations..." - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 55.1

"Engrossed in an overmastering desire to surpass other nations in outward display, the king overlooked the need of acquiring beauty and perfection of character. In **seeking to glorify himself before the world, he sold his honor and integrity...**" - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 55.2

Few in the Bible could equal Solomon's fall into disobedience. His life started out with so much promise, but tragically for a large part of it, he served Satan and set into motion an element of rebellion that would eventually bring utter ruin to the children of Israel. Yet even after falling so far into sin, God still accepted Solomon when he chose to repent at the end of his life.

"Solomon's repentance **was sincere**; but the harm that his example of evil-doing had wrought could not be undone... Though the king confessed his sin and wrote out for the benefit of after generations a record of his folly and repentance, he could never hope entirely to destroy the baleful influence of his wrong deeds..." *Prophets and Kings*, p. 84.2

If God could forgive Solomon for all his wickedness, surely He will forgive each of us who repent. And if He can forgive us, we need to learn to forgive one another no matter how badly someone has sinned.

### **Points to remember**

1. Solomon started out by honoring God.
2. In his early years Solomon was blessed with at least two visions/dreams.
3. Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon under divine inspiration.
4. Solomon's fall started when he began to lose sight of the source of his power and glory.

5. Self-confidence increased and Solomon sought to carry out God's purpose in his own way.
6. Solomon's fall was gradual.
7. Solomon was led to seek glory for himself before the world and as a result he sold his integrity.
8. Toward the end of his life, Solomon saw his folly and repented and God accepted his repentance. It was then that Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. Thus we see that God can even use someone who had given up most of their life to sin but who eventually turned from their wicked ways.

## Jonah

Jonah is one of the few examples in the Bible where we learn of a prophet who willingly chooses to disobey God and lives to tell the story. When commissioned by God to warn the Ninevites of their impending destruction, Jonah instead fled by boat to Tarshish.

### Jonah's disobedience and repentance

"As the prophet thought of the **difficulties and seeming impossibilities of this commission**, he was **tempted to question the wisdom of the call**. From a human viewpoint it seemed as if nothing could be gained by proclaiming such a message in that proud city. He **forgot for the moment that the God whom he served was all-wise and all-powerful**. While he hesitated, **still doubting**, Satan **overwhelmed him with discouragement...**" - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 266.2

"In the charge given him, Jonah had been **entrusted with a heavy responsibility**; yet He who had bidden him go was able to sustain His servant and grant him success. **Had the prophet obeyed unquestioningly, he would have been spared many bitter experiences**, and would have been blessed abundantly... Yet in the hour of **Jonah's despair the Lord did not desert him**. Through a series of trials and strange providences, the prophet's confidence in God and in His infinite power to save was to be revived." - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 266.3

One wonders why God didn't send a lion to kill Jonah as he did with the man of God who was disobedient.<sup>36</sup> After all, his disobedience was far greater than the man of God who went and ate a meal before returning home. But, instead, God pursues Jonah and works strange miracles to preserve him in the belly of the fish and then repeats to Jonah the mission he was first given. This would seem to suggest that God is still able to use a disobedient prophet, even though we would naturally judge him as not being fit to be a prophet.

After completing his mission, Jonah's and probably every prophet's worst fears came true:

“When Jonah learned of God's purpose to spare the city that, notwithstanding its wickedness, had been led to repent in sackcloth and ashes, he should have been the first to rejoice because of God's amazing grace; but instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of **his being regarded as a false prophet. Jealous of his reputation**, he lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city...” *Prophets and Kings*, p. 271.1

Jonah was more worried about his reputation than the welfare of Nineveh's inhabitants. He knew what Moses had written in Deuteronomy that “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”<sup>37</sup> Jonah's reaction shows us how easy it is for a prophet to put his own reputation above the work of God.

### Points to remember

1. God called Jonah the prophet to warn the city of Nineveh of coming destruction.
2. Jonah was afraid of being regarded a false prophet if God didn't destroy the city.
3. Jonah wondered what the point was in warning the wicked city, since he could not imagine that they would repent.
4. Jonah forgot that God was all-wise and powerful.

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<sup>36</sup> See 1 Kings 13

<sup>37</sup> Deuteronomy 18:22

5. Satan overcame Jonah with discouragement when he began to doubt his calling. He decided to flee in the opposite direction.
6. Even though he was in rebellion against God, God did not forsake him. Jonah was still God's prophet and he was called the second time to go and warn Nineveh.
7. Jonah allowed his own reputation to rise above the work of God.

## Doubting or lack of faith

Doubt is the result of a lack of faith and is a sin. Without faith it is impossible to please God.<sup>38</sup> Paul tells us in Romans “and he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth *not of faith*: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”<sup>39</sup> Peter was rebuked for his doubt when he took his eyes off Jesus when walking on the water. Jesus said to him “... O thou of *little faith*, wherefore *didst thou doubt?*”<sup>40</sup> The disciple Thomas, also known as doubting Thomas, was gently rebuked by Jesus for his lack of faith. At another time when Jesus was teaching His disciples about faith, He said “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall **not doubt in his heart**, but **shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass**; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”<sup>41</sup>

Faith and doubt cannot coexist. We cannot believe God and yet disbelieve Him. We cannot have faith in His word and yet doubt it. Often the result of those who marry a nonbeliever ends in a shipwreck of faith and in its place doubt takes over:

“The believing one reasons that in his new relation he must concede somewhat to the companion of his choice. Social, worldly amusements are patronized. At first there is great reluctance of feeling in doing this, but the interest in the truth becomes less and less, and **faith is exchanged for doubt** and unbelief. No one would have suspected that

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<sup>38</sup> Hebrews 11:6

<sup>39</sup> Romans 14:23

<sup>40</sup> Matthew 14:31

<sup>41</sup> Mark 11:23

the once firm, conscientious believer and devoted follower of Christ could ever become the **doubting**, vacillating person that he now is. Oh, the change wrought by that unwise marriage!" - *The Adventist Home*, p. 66.1

If we are honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that all of us have experienced doubt at one time or another in our Christian walk. Yet, what about God's prophets? Did they ever fall prey to this sin and doubt God?

## Joshua

Joshua was a faithful leader for God. His faith had stood the test of time and after Moses died, God spoke to him and said "as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."<sup>42</sup>

While the children of Israel were still wandering in the wilderness and preparing to enter Canaan, they distrusted God and falsely accused Him of leading them out of Egypt to die at the hands of their enemies.

"And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" - Numbers 14:2-3

At that time, Joshua proved himself faithful to God, and he along with Caleb were the only ones who had the faith to believe that all things were possible with God.

"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are

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<sup>42</sup> Joshua 1:5



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bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.” - Numbers 14:6-9

Yet sadly, even Joshua’s faith failed at one point and he doubted God.

“And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, **wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?** would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?” - Joshua 7:5-10

“Joshua manifested a true zeal for the honor of God, yet his petitions were mingled with **doubt and unbelief**. The thought that God had brought His people over the Jordan to deliver them up to the power of the heathen **was a sinful one**, unworthy of a leader of Israel. Joshua’s feelings of **despondency and distrust** were **inexcusable** in view of the mighty miracles which God had wrought for the deliverance of His people, and the repeated promise that He would be with them in driving out the wicked inhabitants of the land.” - *S.D.A. Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 996.2*

One wonders how Joshua, now the leader of God’s people, could have so quickly turned and falsely accused God, just like the children of Israel many years before. By his lack of faith, Joshua was echoing the murmuring of those who perished in the wilderness and this greatly dishonored God. But God did not forsake Joshua. Instead He revealed to him why He had not protected.

### Points to remember

1. Joshua did not doubt God's protection as did the children of Israel when they rose up against Moses and falsely accused God of leading them into the hands of their enemies to die.
2. Because of Joshua's faithfulness, he not only was able to enter the land of Canaan, but was appointed the position Moses once held as leader of God's people.
3. Joshua witnessed many mighty miracles from the time of the Exodus to the fall of Jericho. He had full assurance that God was with him.
4. Despite his faithfulness for so many years and the assurance that God was with him, under duress Joshua fell prey to the sin of doubt and greatly dishonored God.
5. God did not forsake Joshua and appoint a new leader. Instead He revealed to him the reason for their defeat and used him to rectify the problem.

## Elijah

Elijah was a "chosen messenger of God"<sup>43</sup> and stands out in the Bible as one of the great prophets. In a time of great apostasy, Elijah stood firm for God and caused a great reformation to start in Israel. Yet sadly, even this great prophet was led to doubt God at one point and hindered the great work he had begun.

"At the gate of Jezreel, Elijah and Ahab separated. The prophet, choosing to remain outside the walls, wrapped himself in his mantle, and lay down upon the bare earth to sleep. The king, passing within, soon reached the shelter of his palace and there related to his wife the wonderful events of the day and the **marvelous revelation of divine power** that had **proved** to Israel that Jehovah is the true God and Elijah His chosen messenger. As Ahab told the queen of the slaying of the idolatrous prophets, Jezebel, hardened and impenitent, became infuriated. She refused to recognize in the events on Carmel the overruling providence of God, and, still defiant, she boldly declared that Elijah should die.

That night a messenger aroused the weary prophet and delivered to him the word of Jezebel: "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I

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<sup>43</sup> Prophets and Kings, p. 159.1; The Review and Herald, August 14, 1913 par. 3

make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

It would seem that after showing **courage so undaunted**, after triumphing so completely over king and priests and people, Elijah **could never afterward have given way to despondency** nor been awed into timidity. But he who had been **blessed with so many evidences of God's loving care** was not **above the frailties of mankind**, and in this dark hour his **faith and courage forsook him**. Bewildered, he started from his slumber. The rain was pouring from the heavens, and darkness was on every side. Forgetting that three years before, God had directed his course to a place of refuge from the hatred of Jezebel and the search of Ahab, the prophet now fled for his life. Reaching Beersheba, he "left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness."

Elijah **should not have fled from his post of duty**. He should have met the threat of Jezebel with an appeal for protection to the One who had commissioned him to vindicate the honor of Jehovah. He should have told the messenger that the God in whom he trusted would protect him against the hatred of the queen. Only a few hours had passed since he had witnessed a wonderful manifestation of divine power, and this **should have given him assurance** that he would not now be forsaken. Had he remained where he was, had he made God his refuge and strength, standing steadfast for the truth, he would have been shielded from harm. The Lord would have given him another signal victory by sending His judgments on Jezebel; and the impression made on the king and the people would have wrought a great reformation." - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 159.1 - 160.1

"...While under the inspiration of the Almighty, he had stood the severest trial of faith; but in this time of discouragement, with Jezebel's threat sounding in his ears, and Satan still apparently prevailing through the plotting of this wicked woman, he **lost his hold on God**. He had been exalted above measure, and the reaction was tremendous. **Forgetting God, Elijah fled on and on**, until he found himself in a dreary waste, alone. Utterly wearied, he sat down to rest under a juniper tree. And sitting there, **he requested for himself that he might die**. "It is enough; now, O Lord," he said, "take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." A fugitive, far from the dwelling places of men, his spirits crushed by bitter disappointment, he desired never again to look upon the face of man. At last, utterly exhausted, he fell asleep." - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 161.1

We wonder in amazement how such a man of faith could have ended up so destitute of faith! How could someone have stood fearlessly on Mount Carmel before all the false prophets of Baal and yet at the word of Jezebel flee for his life? How could someone who had been protected by God in times of danger, have asked to have his life taken?

“Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement--days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many **lose their hold on God** and are brought into the **slavery of doubt**, the bondage of unbelief. Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being.” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 162.1

### Not forsaken of God

“Did God forsake Elijah in his hour of trial? Oh, no! He loved His servant no less when Elijah felt himself forsaken of God and man than when, in answer to his prayer, fire flashed from heaven and illuminated the mountaintop.” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 166.1

Despite Elijah's doubt, God did not forsake him. Rather He sent an angel to feed him not once but twice.<sup>44</sup> Those meals strengthened him to continue for another forty days without food. Eventually God revealed himself to Elijah and gave him a mission.

“The Lord answered Elijah that the wrongdoers in Israel should not go unpunished. Men were to be especially chosen to fulfill the divine purpose in the punishment of the idolatrous kingdom. There was stern work to be done, that all might be given opportunity to take their position on the side of the true God. **Elijah himself was to return to Israel, and share with others the burden of bringing about a reformation.**” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 169.3

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<sup>44</sup> 1 Kings 19:5, 7

Not only was Elijah sent on a mission for God, but eventually God translated Elijah so that he would not see death.<sup>45</sup> Isn't God good? Imagine what Elijah would have missed out on if God had answered his prayer when he asked for his life to be taken or had rejected him for his failure when his life was threatened.

### Points to remember

1. God used Elijah to fearlessly stand up and declare judgment upon His people for their wicked lives.
2. When Elijah's life was in danger, God saw to it that he was protected.
3. So great a faith did Elijah have that he stood up to all the prophets of Baal single handedly on Mount Carmel.
4. Despite his victory, Elijah lost his faith when his life was threatened by Jezebel.
5. Discouraged and feeling forsaken of God, Elijah asked God to take his life.
6. God did not forsake Elijah for his lack of faith, but continued to use him and then translated him to heaven.

### Ellen White

Although Ellen White was not a Bible prophet, God nevertheless raised her up as a special last day messenger for His people. Her lifelong service to God and the countless dreams and visions she had testify to the good fruit that she bore. However, early in her ministry, she was led to doubt the visions she was having.

“All these things weighed heavily upon my spirits, and in the confusion I was sometimes **tempted to doubt my own experience**. While at family prayers one morning, the power of God began to rest upon me, and the thought rushed into my mind that it was mesmerism, **and I resisted it**. Immediately I was struck dumb and for a few moments was lost to everything around me. I then **saw my sin in doubting the power of God**, and that for so doing I was struck dumb, and that my

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<sup>45</sup> 2 Kings 2:11

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tongue would be loosed in less than twenty-four hours.” - *Early Writings*, p. 22.2

At another time early in her ministry, Ellen White was afraid to relate to people the message God gave her to give to them. This lack of faith led her to doubt and unfaithfulness, and thus caused her a lot of distress.

“It was a great cross for me to relate to the erring what had been shown me concerning them. It caused me great distress to see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages, I would often soften them down, and make them appear as favorable for the individual as I could, and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who seemed to have only their own souls to care for, and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons reproofed rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that **I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger**, and the grave a sweet resting-place.

I did not realize that **I was unfaithful in thus questioning and doubting**, and did not see the **danger and sin** of such a course, until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown, and turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the **terror and agony** I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.’ Revelation 6:16.” - *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 78, 79

Again Ellen White writes of a time when she shrank from her duty and disobeyed God.

“After I had the vision and God gave me light, He bade me deliver it to the band, **but I shrank from it**. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me. **I disobeyed the Lord**, and instead of remaining at home, where the meeting was to be that night, I got in a sleigh in the morning and rode three or four miles and there I found J.

T. He merely inquired how I was and if I was in the way of my duty. **I said nothing, for I knew I was not.** I passed up [to the] chamber and did not see him again for two hours, when he came up, asked if I was to be at meeting that night. I told him, No. He said he wanted to hear my vision and thought it duty for me to go home. I told him I should not. He said no more, but went away. I thought, and told those around me, if I went I should have to come out against his views, thinking he believed with the rest. I had not told any of them what God had shown me, and I did not tell them in what I should cut across his track.

All that day **I suffered much in body and mind.** It seemed that **God had forsaken me entirely.** I prayed the Lord if He would give me strength to ride home that night, the first opportunity I would deliver the message He had given me. He did give me strength and I rode home that night. Meeting had been done some time, and not a word was said by any of the family about the meeting.” - *Manuscript Releases, Vol. 5, p. 95.3 - 96.1*

Ellen White lacked faith and struggled with the task of delivering a clear message when she was first called to serve as God’s messenger, but this in no wise proves she was a false prophet. Each of us at times in our Christian walk have taken our eyes off Jesus and have failed to trust in God. But if we come to God with contrition of heart and “confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

If we were to summarize what we have learned in this chapter, we could say that:

1. Abraham willingly lied in order to save his life because he lacked faith in God. God did not condemn him for it but instead God **still called him a prophet.** This happened not once, but twice.
2. Jacob lied to his father to gain the birthright he had coveted all his life and by doing so, **thought he was helping God out in fulfilling the promise.**

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<sup>46</sup> 1 John 1:9

3. David resorted to deception because he lacked faith in God. Later in life he committed adultery, murder and pretended nothing had happened. **Only when God revealed his sin through Nathan the prophet did David repent.**
4. Peter lied by denying Jesus with cursing and swearing. **Yet even after this betrayal, Jesus forgave Peter and used him** in a mighty way in the early church.
5. Noah was the most righteous man on the earth and yet after the flood, he disgraced himself by getting drunk. Yet even after doing this, he still remained God's prophet.
6. Moses killed another man thinking he was doing God's will and then lost confidence that God had called him to deliver Israel. God allowed this to teach Moses an important lesson. Later, after leading Israel out of Egypt, Moses fell into sin again and **gave the children of Israel an excuse to reject him as God's messenger**, thus greatly dishonoring God. Yet God did not forsake Moses. He **still remained God's prophet** and was greatly honored when Jesus resurrected him and took him to heaven.
7. Solomon was blessed with divine inspiration, but later in his life he turned from God to become one of Israel's worst kings. Yet in his old age he repented and was used of God to write the book of Ecclesiastes.
8. Jonah willingly disobeyed God by fleeing in the opposite direction when asked to go to Nineveh and warn the wicked city of impending destruction. Yet God did not forsake Jonah. Instead God arrested his flight and again asked him to do what he was first commissioned to do.
9. Joshua lost his faith in God's leading and falsely accused Him of leading Israel into the promised land to die at the hands of their enemies, yet God did not forsake him.
10. Elijah started a great reformation in Israel, but lost his faith in God when his life was threatened by Jezebel. So discouraged was he that he asked God to take his life. Yet God continued to use Elijah and then translated him to heaven.
11. Ellen White was young and feeble when God called her as a prophet and in the early years she struggled with doubt and was led to discouragement. She even disobeyed God, yet she was not forsaken. Her lifelong ministry testifies to God's leading in her life.

All these people did mighty things for God and they all fell into sin, some worse than others. Yet each one of them was forgiven and reinstated to the



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position they held before. Therefore we conclude that when Jesus told us “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them,”<sup>47</sup> this does not give us a right to judge people as unworthy of salvation simply because at one point or another they commit a sin such as deception, disobedience or doubt. Nor does it give us a reason to reject God’s messengers simply because they fell when tempted. Instead, it gives us a principle that if used correctly, will help us to identify false Christians and prophets by the way they conduct their life overall. A deceitful person practices deceit habitually whereas a righteous person may fall into sin at times.

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<sup>47</sup> Matthew 7:20

# Ernie Knoll

We have now reached the purpose of this study. Most reading this are probably aware of Ernie Knoll and the events that occurred in July 2009. But for those who are not aware, let's recap what happened.

## History of Ernie Knoll

1. Ernie received two dreams in 2005.
2. Ernie received his third dream where he was commissioned to his work in December 2006.
3. Up until October 25, 2007, Ernie had published 25 dreams in total. The last one was called "Pray for Protection."
4. In November 2007, an amazing testimony of a prostitute named Candace was published on Ernie's website. Supposedly this prostitute had a visit from an angel who told her to read Ernie's dreams and as a result she was converted.
5. Ernie published another eight dreams up to July 12, 2008.
6. In September 2008, another testimony from Candace is published explaining that three men from the Great Commission Council had come to see if she was true or not.
7. In October 2008, the Great Commission Council sends out an email rebuking those who had rejected the dreams and claiming they found no problems with them.
8. On November 12, 2008, Ernie published another dream entitled "Repent, as I am coming." This dream was to be his last posted dream until his deception was found out.
9. On July 17, 2009, Ernie and Becky sent out the following email (Note that this was done at Becky's initiative – see e-mail dated August 9, 2009 later in this study):

*Dear Ones,*

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*We know this will come as a shock, but we have come to believe that the dreams are not of God. Even though there was truth in them, there was also error. We believe that Candace may have been an evil angel. I also received personal dreams that were obviously not from God. We will be putting a notice on our website soon. Our future meetings have been canceled.*

*Satan knows his time is short and is working to deceive even the very elect.*

*We are so sorry and pray that the Lord will guide us into all truth.*

*Love & prayers...Ernie & Becky*

*P.S. For those of you that have websites about the dreams, please take them down asap. Thank you.*

10. Then on July 18, Ernie and Becky sent out the following email:

*Dear brothers and sisters:*

*I write to you to apologize for the email about the dreams that was sent to you. I ask you to understand that we are very tired and have been under a lot of stress. I believe we have "jumped the gun" in sending out the email. We did not communicate with our board before sending it out. For this we apologize to our board. We will be meeting with them to go over our beliefs and ask for your prayers. Our board disagrees with what we have done and feels we should not have addressed you with the private decision we have made. We ask that those that have a web site to please put the information back (if you have made changes or taken the site down), and to those that have read and supported the dreams to please be patient with us. The constant daily travel, different motels every night and then ending with the presentation each weekend has made us both exhausted.*

*Asking for your continued prayers,  
Ernie*

11. On July 23, David Starkey, one of the board members and the website designer of Ernie's website ([www.4hispeople.com](http://www.4hispeople.com)) wrote the following:

*All,  
While there is much truth in the dreams, Ernie Knoll has proven to be a liar and a fraud.*

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*Ernie made up the character known as Candace on the website and has been using this character to steer the ministry. We did some investigation using email IP tracking and discovered this. He is also the Great Commission Counsel. He admitted to this after being caught. It didn't sound like repentance, only admitting after being caught. Even worse, he is involved in a sexually deviant life style which we just learned of. The deeper you go, the worse it gets.*

*We are all very disturbed over this. All any of us ever wanted to do was to help people get ready for Jesus return. I believe the dreams were shown Ernie by Satan. He did this knowing that in the end, truth would be discredited and God would be dishonored. I also believe Ernie is possessed by a demon. If you knew what we now know, you would believe this also. Please throw away all dream books as we have found that they contain elements of mind control referred to as NLP or Neuro Linguistic Programming. I heard this from one of our board members who spoke to someone who has worked in the secret service and is familiar with it. This person said that he had intended to contact us about it but never did. I am so sorry it is ending this way.*

*May God help us all heal and work through this.  
David*

NOTE: For a comment on this email, please see the answers to Ernie's deception below.

12. On July 23, a few hours after David's email, Ernie and Becky wrote the following email:

*Dear Ones,*

*By now you may have heard or read that Candace was a hoax. I created "her" to try to deter some of the negative things that people were saying about the ministry and it went downhill from there. (Becky did not learn about it until a couple days ago.) The dreams were also not from God. I want to say I am truly sorry and want to ask for forgiveness. Becky wants to ask for your forgiveness as well that she was deceived.*

*We have repented of our sins and pray that healing will come to you and all those we have affected. On a positive note, we are glad that the Creeping Compromise book has gone out to many people.*

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*If you have sent donations to us, we plan to pay it back if and when we are able.*

*In His mercy and gracious love...Ernie and Becky*

*P.S. We hope to get a public confession up on the 4 His People website very soon.*

13. Later on July 23, Ernie and Becky sent out another email. It would appear this email might have been written only by Becky:

*Dear Ones,*

*I believe that the main objective for Ernie's actions was to boost a low self-esteem. He also sincerely wanted to make a difference in the SDA church. It was just done in the wrong way. I had hoped that the 4HP Board would have given Ernie at least a few days to show true repentance and reformation before assuming that it had not happened, because I am now witnessing the drastic changes that Ernie has been making. He is not in the process of a "sexually deviant lifestyle." That is in the past. I know that the reason for that and the low self-esteem was due to problems with family while growing up. How true the biblical statement "unto the third and fourth generation." I do not believe that Ernie has a demon and he is no longer receiving dreams.*

*I praise God that I was impressed to stay with Ernie to help him through this difficult time. I know that you all have been deeply hurt and we have asked for your forgiveness. Remember that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Please know that Ernie is hurting even more deeply and has truly repented and is reforming. We hope you will understand as we try to pick up the pieces and get back to a "normal" life.*

*When Ernie "came clean" what he did not share was that he was greatly traumatized at a motel when the 4HP Board came completely unannounced and demanded the car we were driving in, any ministry equipment and money (which we planned to give to them anyway). We had to quickly put everything into a hotel room without knowing what was going on. Then we were told that we were to go home and that we were now financially on our own. How would anyone else feel at this point? Being "ambushed" puts a person in shock so that they cannot think logically. We are told to love one*

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*another unconditionally. We have asked for forgiveness and we have not received that from the Board. We so appreciate the emails from those who say they understand what we are going through, forgive us, thank us for the confession and that they still love us and pray for us. We pray for that from everyone, because that brings healing to all of us.*

*We hope to see you all in God's kingdom very soon! With deepest regards and prayers for your healing as well as ours as we watch for that small black cloud and that long awaited bug. In Christ's amazing love...Becky (and Ernie)*

*P.S. I know many have tried to call us. I ask you please to understand that neither Ernie or I can handle talking with anyone at this time. If you want to communicate with us, please do it by email. Thank you!*

14. On August 9, Ernie and Becky sent out a long email providing an update of their ministry:

*Dear Ones,*

*This is a blanket email to many. Please pray for the Holy Spirit first before reading.*

*We hope this finds you well in the Lord. First of all, to those who we never had time to answer your emails, phone calls or letters, we apologize. We also apologize for those of you who ordered material from the 4 His People Ministry but for one reason or another you did not receive it. We are all human and mistakes happen.*

*For those who are not aware of what has happened with the 4 His People Ministry, we would like to give a brief history.*

*About two years ago, Ernie was reading comments posted on a forum, which were condemning his dreams. It bothered him greatly that people were making statements without knowing all the facts. Decisions as to the dreams were made by individuals whom others looked up to instead of each looking to God and searching the matter out on their own. However, Ernie sinned by not taking the matter to God. He was impressed to create a testimony of someone's conversion due to the dreams. He logged into the forum and posted the testimony of "Candace." Ernie noticed as he created the story that the*

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*words flowed easily. So he reasoned that it must have been inspired by God and that it was like a parable.*

*We also need to be aware that Satan could even be inspiring individuals on a forum or they could even be evil angels. Please read the following from the Spirit of Prophecy.*

*“I have been shown that evil angels in the form of believers will work in our ranks to bring in a strong spirit of unbelief. These powers of evil will assemble in our meetings, not to receive a blessing, but to counterwork the influences of the Spirit of God. In this time evil angels in the form of men will talk with those who know the truth. They will misinterpret and misconstrue the statements of the messengers of God.” Selected Messages, Book 3, pp. 410–411*

*“There will be seducing spirits and doctrines of devils in the midst of the church, and these evil influences will increase; but hold fast the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end. Satan and his angels will appear on this earth as men, and will mingle with those of whom God’s Word says, ‘Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’ (1 Timothy 4:1).” Manuscript Releases, Vol. 8, No. 345*

*“The enemy works untiringly to deceive human beings, and lead them away from God. He and his angels will in the future assume the shape of human beings, and work to make the truth of God of no effect. Spalding and Magan Collection (1985), p. 307.*

*After posting the testimony, Ernie was sorry that he did it but did not know how to get out of it. He tearfully begged God to stop the dreams and that he did not want to have to share them anymore. He felt he was not worthy and that the dreams should be given to someone else. He felt it as a burden and that he could not share as he was asked to do. Yet as time went on Ernie justified that God was inspiring him to write the things he was as “Candace.” We can now see that it was a battle going on between good and evil. We have certainly all experienced that.*

*After some time, Ernie was again reading a forum and saw the things that people were stating about him as well as the messages. Then many of the detractors published their beliefs about the dreams. This is when Ernie was “inspired” to create the Great Commission Council.*

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*We have learned of at least three reasons for Ernie being deceived and deceiving. First it was because of the opposition on the forums that caused him to get discouraged. We have since learned to ignore opposition and use the “white cloth” to “wipe off our shoes” as Ernie was instructed to do in his dreams. If he had done that in the beginning, the deception would never have occurred. Secondly, it was a lack of faith that God would take care of His ministry and last of all, because of a low self-esteem.*

*We want to point out the last paragraph in the “Repent, As I Am Coming” dream of November 12, 2008 (the last dream that was posted on the web site).*

*“God wants His people to know that now is the time to get ready. Now is the time to put away self-importance and each must crawl to the throne of God, to repent and ask for forgiveness. Each must decide to follow God and to walk in that new way. Each must put away jealousy. Each must know that they will stand alone before God. He asks if each will stand as one of God’s or ask to be covered with rocks and be as dumb dogs. You have been shown the correct path to follow. If the Holy Spirit that God said He would send does not come over the cold heart then that heart will remain cold. If the naysayers and the discontented walk in a path to cause discontent and spread lies, they will each stand before God to answer for their deeds. This especially applies to those whom God has anointed who spread lies without verifying what they have been told. These are dumb dogs and God will turn His face from them. When He does this, Satan will take God’s place and will have them doing his work. So today you must decide if you will repent and turn from your ways or allow Satan to lead you hand in hand to eternal damnation.”*

*It was not just a call for repentance for others but for us as well, however for Ernie especially. He had not noticed that last paragraph before and how it applied to him. God was asking Ernie to repent as well. Becky would like to apologize for putting out the notice that the posted dreams are of Satan. It was her idea, not Ernie’s. We are so grateful that God has shown us our sins and that we have repented of them. We are learning the importance of letting go of self and relying only on God.*

*We are reminded of Saul who was persecuting the Christians, but became Paul—one of the mightiest witnesses for God. We are thankful for the Bible examples of those who were used of God and then proceeded to fall into sin, recovered and were used by God again—Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon,*



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*etc. Think of Elijah who just witnessed God's power on Mt. Carmel, then proceeded to run from Jezebel. No wonder our Lord keeps reminding us, "Will I find faith?" James 5:17 tells us that Elijah was subject to the same temptations as other men, yet God continued to use him. It's interesting to note the following from the "Watch, as I Am Coming!" dream: "My angel smiles at me and says, 'You which are they are together Hliwa.'" Hliwa is the original Hebrew word for Elijah. Elijah's work was a type of the closing message. Reference Malachi 4:4-6; Luke 1:17; Matthew 17:10-13; Prophets and Kings, p. 227*

*Genesis 20 relates the experience of Abraham when he lied to Abimelech about Sarah. Notice that after that experience, God sent Abraham his biggest test of faith when asked to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. He is now known as a great man of faith.*

*For the last few months, Ernie has been praying that God would free him from what he had created. In emails as "Candace" sent to the board as well as friends, he would encourage them to hold up Ernie and Becky in prayer as Satan was "attacking" them and they needed God's help. It was a subtle cry for help. We now fully understand how Satan is subtle and deceives the very elect. We must remember that he deceived one-third of the angels in heaven.*

*We see now that the dreams and the presentation we were sharing were working a change in our own lives as well as many others. Satan does not want us to repent and reform. Ernie fell into sin because of issues stemming back from childhood that were never resolved until now. Please remember that God is not finished with any of us. Focus on the messages, not the messenger. For we have all sinned and come short of God's glory.*

*We wanted to share a part of our presentation because of its importance in our day. It relates to a doctrine that is rarely being taught. It is on the subject from the dreams about standing on the wood. It states, "Some have asked why the Herald says that the wood is truth. First, the cross is made of wood and he is stressing the importance of the cross. More importantly, the Lord is showing us the importance of the humanity of Christ when He was on this earth. The wood reminds us of what the Sanctuary has taught us. The furniture of the tabernacle was made of wood and covered with gold. That wood represented Christ's humanity. The gold represented His divinity which remained unchanged by His contact with sin. Therefore, the truth of His humanity is that His people can be overcomers in the same flesh He had*

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*(the fallen nature of Adam) and in the same way He did—in union with His divinity by His faith in ‘it is written.’”*

*The Spirit of Prophecy states, “The Son of God came to our world in human form to show man that divinity and humanity combined does not commit sin. He is our Pattern. Through Him we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Ms 16, 1898, p. 6*

*From the Review and Herald, February 24, 1874: “The King of glory proposed to humble himself to fallen humanity! He would place his feet in Adam’s steps. He would take man’s fallen nature....”*

*From Selected Messages, Book 3, p. 134: “Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity. By thus taking humanity, He honored humanity. Having taken our fallen nature, he showed what it might become, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and by becoming partaker of the divine nature.”*

*Let’s remember that Satan is saying that God’s law is too hard to keep. We may vindicate God’s character by showing that it can be kept—not on our own but by taking hold of divinity. Christ in you, the hope of glory. It will take effort and discipline. The messages of the dreams are for a people who long to be part of the 144,000—the last remnant people who must give up all sin because they must live for a short time without a Mediator in the Most Holy Place. They will learn to hate sin and to fight it even in our churches. They would rather die than sin. They love God’s church and do not criticize it. However, they must call sin by its right name. Please know that as soon as God’s people do this, they will be met with opposition.*

*We may take comfort in these words from Jeremiah 31:33–34. “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

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*We understand now that God is sending the dreams, because we all so desperately need encouragement, instruction, rebuke, and love. Please know that the dreams and the ministry are answers to many of our prayers, even from years ago.*

*Along with others, we had been praying that if these dreams are not from God that He would stop them and He has not stopped them. Please read the last two dreams at the end of this email.*

*We are recommitting ourselves to these dreams, trusting that they are from Him. With the few parts that we don't understand, we will lean on the weight of evidence.*

*"As with the Bible, so with the Testimonies. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit; and all should decide from the weight of evidence." Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, p. 255*

*"God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith." Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, pp. 232, 233*

*Someone brought to our attention that if these dreams were from Satan, why would he inspire Ernie to make up "Candace"? Satan does not fight against himself. It only makes sense that Satan is fighting these dreams because they are from God.*

*Some have asked about the fact that "Candace" is mentioned in the dream "A Great Work" as follows: "It is the Herald. He comes up to me and I tell him that I have missed him and that it has been a while. He says that they (the angels) have been busy with much preparation to be done. I ask if he was the one that spoke to the lady named Candace (testimony on Divine Interventions of the 4hispeople web site). He answers no but that many angels are preparing many individuals for the King's return and that he has been sent to show me something very important." Ernie knows that he was asking that of the Herald in hopes that he could get help in ending the "Candace" deception. The answer the angel gave was correct. He was not the "Candace's" Herald because there was no "Candace." Also the Herald and*

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*other angels truly are working with many individuals today as in the past. We can be assured that they will work in a mightier way as this earth's history finishes. We believe the Herald did not come right out and state that "Candace" was made up because he was waiting for Ernie to confess on his own. We understand now that God allows certain situations to teach us lessons and to bring us to true confession and repentance.*

*Others have brought out the fact that in the "Much to Do" dream it was stating that there was no error in the dreams, correspondence or the web site. However, that was before the "Candace" testimony was posted on the site. We now know that God allowed it to be there for a reason. We have learned a valuable lesson from it. God knows the beginning from the end.*

*We have received emails and phone calls stating that we were wrong in our decision that the posted dreams were from Satan. It has been pointed out that no error can be seen in these dreams because they all agree with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and that we were "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." We agree and invite you to join us in prayer as many begin to re-evaluate the dreams. After taking time to pray, study, and assess the dreams, we have come to the conclusion that they are still truly from God for His people. If you need a copy of the dreams, please send us an email with your request.*

*We also need to clarify that the posted dreams were NOT made up. They are real. Becky observed Ernie in several dreams as well as when he was waking up from them.*

*Even though most of our Board has forsaken us, we are not surprised. About two years ago, Ernie had a dream (which was shared with some of the board members) where he saw Becky and the Board walking away from the ministry. That is one reason why Ernie felt so alone. Becky has come back to believe in the dreams and we pray the same for the Board as well as others. We miss them.*

*We know that rumors have and will continue to abound and opposition will always be. Many fail to see the divinity in the messages of the dreams because it is delivered through a fallible human instrument. However, we praise God for a remnant who still believes in the dreams. It is a big step of faith for us to continue this ministry. We will continue on the path He has laid out. Satan dealt a mighty blow. He won a battle but we don't have to let him win the war. Truth will triumph!*

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*Some have mentioned to us the parallel of our “great disappointment” with what has happened to our ministry to that of the Great Disappointment of 1844. Many abandoned the new Advent movement and only a remnant was left. They went back to the Bible and prayer until the answers were found. God cannot use those who give up so easily. If we cannot handle trials and seeming defeat now, how can we go through greater trials ahead? From James 5:11, “Behold, we count them happy which endure.”*

*Let us rejoice that He is in the process of purifying His people as gold tried in the fire. We must live each day as if it is our last. We must focus more on getting our hearts ready than on events. This is a testing, sifting and purifying time, a time in which the dross is separated from the gold. Are we content to be the dross or do we long to be the gold?*

*“The purification of God’s people cannot be accomplished without suffering. God permits the fire of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, in order that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. God is the refiner and purifier of souls. He places us in the heat of the furnace, that the dross may be forever separated from the true gold of Christian character. Jesus watches the test. He knows just what fire of temptation and trial is needed to purify the precious metal, in order that the radiance of divine love may be reflected.” Review and Herald, April 10, 1894*

*As we begin again, it is in God’s strength, in His time and in His way. We must leave the results with Him. If He be for us, who can be against us? As we have turned away from our sins, we are already experiencing little miracles from God. We will be singing His praises forever!*

*“Great had been David’s fall, but deep was his repentance, ardent was his love, and strong his faith. He had been forgiven much, and therefore he loved much (Luke 7:48).” Conflict and Courage, p. 187*

*We are in the process of making a new ministry web site ourselves. It will be called ([www.formypeople.org](http://www.formypeople.org)). However, we will not be a tax-exempt organization. Please note that the [www.thispeople.com](http://www.thispeople.com) web site is no longer our official web site.*

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*Also we were commissioned by God in the dream "The Work Now Begins" to distribute free of charge the book Creeping Compromise. As soon as possible, we will continue to offer this book on our new web site. Please check back for updates.*

*The Lord has a thousand ways to rebuild this ministry. With God all things are possible. As someone stated, we must turn our stumbling blocks into stepping stones. The Lord has a way of bringing good from bad. We praise Him for His continued patience, forgiveness, guidance and love. He knows that we are so defective after 6,000 years of sin.*

*We have heard God's call. We are back, regrouped, ready for war and stronger than ever—in the Lord's strength. We pray that each one of you will join us in the battles. The enemy is trying to divide and conquer us. We must unite and face the enemy with God at our side. We must unite on truth, not error. So many have stated that when they doubt the dreams it brings sadness but when the dreams are believed, it brings them true joy and peace. We have experienced the same.*

*We pray that each one of you will receive the blessings that God is waiting to pour out upon us. What a privilege we have to strive to be that last generation.*

*We have learned the following lessons through our ministry and experiences:*

- *Trust only in God and His Word, not man.*
- *Be patient and let all be in God's time and in His way.*
- *Have faith that God will take care of us if we are doing His will.*
- *Forgive others as God has forgiven us.*
- *Study to show ourselves approved.*
- *Don't go by hearsay; go straight to the source.*
- *Ignore the bad and focus on the good.*
- *Don't give up so easily; let trials perfect us. God will be with us in all our tests and trials.*

*We each need to understand and share the messages of these dreams. Jesus IS coming, we ALL need to repent, we ALL need to reform and know that EACH must stand before God – ALONE. Then, and only then, can the latter rain fall. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.*

*We love you all. For a finished work...Ernie & Becky*

15. On September 12, 2009, Ernie published another dream entitled “In the Heart of Jesus.” To date, he continues to receive additional dreams and messages. Visit his website at [www.formypeople.org](http://www.formypeople.org) to access the dreams.

## Why did Ernie make up Candace?

Below is a list of events and reasons as given by Ernie and Becky in their August 9, 2009 email:

1. Ernie could not handle the fact that a large number of people were rejecting the dreams.
2. It especially bothered him when he read the false statements that people were saying about him.
3. Instead of taking these issues to God he became discouraged.
4. Discouragement led to a lack of faith.
5. Ernie claims he has suffered from a low self-esteem which impacted the situation.
6. As a result, Ernie then made up the testimony of Candace.
7. As Ernie created the story, he noticed the words flowed easily. This led him to believe that God must have inspired him to write it like a parable.
8. Once he had posted the testimony, Ernie was sorry he did it, but he didn't know how to get out of it.
9. He then began to beg God to stop giving him the dreams as he felt unworthy.
10. As time went on, Ernie began to justify that God was inspiring him to write about Candace.
11. When opposition to the dreams grew and websites started to appear that were against the dreams, Ernie made up the Great Commission Council.
12. For a few months before Ernie was found out, he had been sending emails to friends and the board of the ministry as “Candace” asking them to pray for Ernie as Satan was attacking him and Becky.

We need to remember this is Ernie's (and Becky's) account of why Ernie resorted to the deception. We are not able to verify all these details, but believe the foregoing is an accurate account based upon e-mails and phone

calls with Ernie and several members of his former board, both by the authors and editor of this study. We can also compare his actions to that of Jacob and David.

## Jacob's example

1. Jacob coveted the birthright and had been taught it would fall to him, according to the prophecy in Genesis 25:23.
2. Isaac was determined to pass the birthright onto his eldest son Esau despite the prophecy that the youngest would rule.
3. After finding out Esau was about to be blessed with the birthright, Rebekah convinced Jacob to follow her instructions to deceive his father in order to obtain it.
4. Instead of consenting to this deception, Jacob should have trusted that God would see to it that he obtained the birthright.
5. At first he didn't like the idea, but he proceeded to carry out his mother's suggestion.
6. It was not Jacob's intention to utter a direct falsehood, but once he had begun, he could not get out of it.
7. He reasoned that by deceiving his father for the birthright, he would be bringing about the foretold events.

See footnotes for reference<sup>48 49</sup>

## David's example

1. Satan led David to commit adultery with Bathsheba.
2. Once David had betrayed himself into the power of Satan, he then faced the prospect of dishonor.
3. In an effort to avert dishonor, David conceived a plan to conceal his crime.
4. He called Bathsheba's husband back from the battle and tried to get him to sleep with Bathsheba.
5. This plan failed, so David went to plan B. He had Uriah murdered by placing him at the battlefield.

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<sup>48</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 180.2

<sup>49</sup> Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3, p. 115.1



6. Instead of repenting of his heinous sins, David began to excuse them until his ways seemed plausible in his own eyes.
7. One wrong step had prepared the way for another.
8. David only confessed his sin when it was publicly revealed by Nathan the prophet.

See footnotes for reference<sup>50 51 52</sup>

Of course we cannot excuse Ernie's actions, but we can see similar examples in the lives of Jacob and David. Both failed to trust in God, and then used human reasoning to justify their deceptions and sins.

## Answers to Ernie's deception

Below are some answers to some common rejections of Ernie since it was found out he had made up Candace.

### 1. Ernie made up the dreams

This is only an unproven rumor that is floating around the Internet. Ernie has never admitted that he made the dreams up and Becky claims she has witnessed on different occasions Ernie either having them or his condition after having them. In his email on July 23, Ernie rashly admitted the dreams were not from God, just as many of his former supporters did, but later he retracted this after assessing the situation and seeking God's guidance.

### 2. A prophet would not willingly deceive people

In the previous chapter of this study we clearly saw how Abraham, Jacob, David and Peter all lied under different circumstances and yet all of them were still used by God *after* they committed their deception.

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<sup>50</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 718.3

<sup>51</sup> Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4A, p. 86.2

<sup>52</sup> Conflict and Courage, p. 179.4

### 3. If Ernie was a prophet, how could he receive personal dreams from the devil?

Although it is hard to comprehend how a true prophet can receive dreams and visions from the devil, we need to remember that when a prophet or anyone for that matter turns from the truth, they can easily be used of the devil, especially since they have at one time been a prophet. The devil then has someone people trust and can easily manipulate them. Balaam is a good example of a prophet used of God and of Satan.<sup>53</sup>

“Truth is of God; **deception in all its myriad forms is of Satan**, and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is **betraying himself into the power of the wicked one**. Those who have learned of Christ will “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” Ephesians 5:11. In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true, for they are preparing for the fellowship of those holy ones in whose mouth is found no guile. See Revelation 14:5.” - *Prophets and Kings*, p. 252.3

“The Bible condemns in the strongest terms all **falsehood, false dealing, and dishonesty**. Right and wrong are plainly stated. But I was shown that God's people have placed themselves on the enemy's ground; they have yielded to his temptations and followed his devices until their **sensibilities have become fearfully blunted**. A slight deviation from truth, a little variation from the requirements of God, is thought to be, after all, not so very sinful, when pecuniary [financial] gain or loss is involved. **But sin is sin**, whether committed by the possessor of millions or by the beggar in the streets. Those who secure property by false representations are bringing condemnation on their souls. All that is obtained by deceit and fraud will be only a curse to the receiver.” - *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4*, p. 311.3

Although not exactly the same, we might also ask how the Devil managed to get into one of Ellen White's dreams.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See Numbers 22; Joshua 24:9,10; Revelation 2:14

<sup>54</sup> We did not mention this point to imply in any way that Ellen White received messages from Satan. It is mentioned simply to show that Satan can get into the dreams God gives His prophets.

“James was counting the angels, and I stood trembling with fear. My life came up before [me] and looked so full of wrongs I could not see how I should be able to stand. Just then **Satan came where I was and said to me, “You are lost; you are now my property [and] will go with me to the dark regions.”** My feelings I cannot describe. To be separated from the Jesus I had loved and to take up my abode with those that I abhorred looked dreadful to me. At the same time, I felt unworthy to be with the lovely Jesus.

While in this dreadful perplexity one of the angels came where I was and said to Satan, “She is not your property, for she has been redeemed unto God by the precious blood of Jesus. She is the purchase of His blood.” Satan fled. My feelings changed. My soul was overflowing with gratitude and thankfulness to God. I saw the saints as there fell [on them] and was reflected from the face of Jesus, light. Their faces would light up as they rose to meet the angels.” - *Manuscript Releases, Vol. 16, p.171.4*

We should note that this dream does not appear to be like others where Ellen White sees Satan.<sup>55</sup> In this dream, Satan is allowed to come and talk to her and leads her to feel as though she cannot be saved. One wonders how this could happen to a prophet who receives a dream/vision from God. If Satan was able to get into Ellen Whites dream, why can't he get into some of Ernie's unpublished private dreams? In God's mercy and grace, He did not allow any messages of questionable origin to be published with the other messages.

#### 4. Ernie's dreams up until Candace are from God, everything else is not

Some are willing to accept Ernie's dreams up until he made up Candace, especially since no fault can be found with them, but are not willing to accept that God could have given him any dreams after that time, leaving us with the only option that Satan inspired them. There are problems with this view.

1. Throughout the dreams, Ernie frequently states that the Herald calls him by his heavenly name. In Dream 19, “If You Love Me,” Ernie used this as a test to see if the first three angels that came to him were from God

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<sup>55</sup> See Early Writings, p. 152 for a description of Satan.

or Satan. There is something about them that doesn't quite fit in with his past experience with good angels. The three are unable to call him by his heavenly name and subsequently they leave when some good angels appeared in response to Ernie's call for help. If we accept that this dream is from God (being before Candace was made up), then we have to accept the fact that Satan and his angels do not know Ernie's heavenly name. The dreams after Candace was made up also contain Ernie's heavenly name. This would indicate that whoever gave Ernie his dreams before he made up Candace, also gave him the dreams afterwards.

2. The dreams, after Candace was made up, appear to have the same author as the ones before.

## 5. How could God have given Ernie dreams while he was lying about Candace?

This objection is based upon *our* idea of what a prophet should be like. However, if we honestly read the Bible, we have to admit that God does not work like this. In fact, God's ways can be very unpredictable to us finite humans that do not know the whole picture. Take for instance the unusual story told in 1 Kings 13. There we read of a man of God who delivered a message from God to King Jeroboam which was accompanied by a wondrous sign. The man of God had been clearly instructed by God not to eat or drink anything before he had returned home. When another prophet lied to him and told him that God had sent him to bring him back to his house and eat (v. 18), that same lying prophet then revealed to the man of God his disobedience (vs. 21, 22). The man of God was then slain by a lion soon after he left. And yet when we read about Jonah, God does not deal with him as he did with the *man of God*. Let us remember Abraham. While in the very act of deceiving Abimelech, God calls him a prophet.<sup>56</sup> What about Jacob? Instead of being punished for his great deception, he instead is given a dream and told God would be with him! And what about Balaam? He was a prophet of God who had apostatized.<sup>57</sup> Yet when he sought divine direction, God came to him and revealed His will. If God could continue to use them, along with all His other prophets who fell into sin, then why couldn't He use Ernie?

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<sup>56</sup> Genesis 20:7

<sup>57</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 439.2

## 6. Ernie's repentance was not genuine as he only admitted his sin when he was found out.

Some have questioned whether Ernie's repentance was genuine, since he never confessed his sin until he was found out. They find a parallel with the sin of Achan and his forced confession. However we need to be very careful regarding this, because no man is able to judge another person's heart. David is a good example of this. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, had her husband killed and then acted like nothing had happened. It was only after Nathan the prophet confronted him that he admitted his guilt. So we have two similar stories with complete opposite endings. Achan is stoned while David is forgiven. The difference was, David was sorry for his sin while Achan was not. In regards to Ernie, none of us knows his heart, so we are really not qualified to judge his repentance. Let God be the judge and let us follow his counsel regarding this point:

“When one who has **wandered far in sin** seeks to return to God, he will **encounter criticism and distrust**. There are those who will **doubt whether his repentance is genuine**, or will whisper, "He has no stability; I do not believe that he will hold out." These persons are doing not the work of God but the work of Satan, who is the accuser of the brethren. Through their criticisms the wicked one hopes to **discourage that soul**, and to drive him still **farther from hope** and from God. Let the repenting sinner contemplate the rejoicing in heaven over the return of the one that was lost. Let him rest in the love of God and in no case be disheartened by the scorn and suspicion of the Pharisees.” - *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 190.2

## 7. God always rebukes His prophets when they fall into sin. Why wasn't Ernie rebuked?

Some quote the fact that early on in Ellen White's ministry, she experienced the frown of God when she failed to deliver a message of rebuke properly. They question why Ernie was not rebuked. One could ask the same of Abraham when he lied to Pharaoh and Abimelech. It is quite possible that because God did not rebuke Abraham the first time, he thought it was alright

the second time. We could also ask the same of Jacob. There is no Scriptural record of whether or not God rebuked him.

Even though God does not always rebuke His prophets when they fall, is it right to suggest that Ernie was not rebuked? According to Ernie and Becky in their August 9 email, they believe there is evidence that God has rebuked him.

“We want to point out the last paragraph in the “Repent, As I Am Coming” dream of November 12, 2008 (the last dream that was posted on the web site).

“God wants His people to know that now is the time to get ready. Now is the time to **put away self-importance** and each must crawl to the throne of God, to **repent and ask for forgiveness**. Each must decide to follow God and to walk in that new way. Each must put away jealousy. Each must know that they will stand alone before God. He asks if each will stand as one of God’s or ask to be covered with rocks and be as dumb dogs. **You have been shown the correct path to follow. If the Holy Spirit that God said He would send does not come over the cold heart then that heart will remain cold.** If the naysayers and the discontented walk in a path to cause discontent and spread lies, they will each stand before God to answer for their deeds. This especially applies to those whom God has anointed who spread lies without verifying what they have been told. These are dumb dogs and God will turn His face from them. When He does this, Satan will take God’s place and will have them doing his work. So today you must decide if you will repent and turn from your ways or allow Satan to lead you hand in hand to eternal damnation.”

It was not just a call for repentance for others but for us as well, however for Ernie especially. He had not noticed that last paragraph before and how it applied to him. God was asking Ernie to repent as well. Becky would like to apologize for putting out the notice that the posted dreams are of Satan. It was her idea, not Ernie’s. We are so grateful that God has shown us our sins and that we have repented of them. We are learning the importance of letting go of self and relying only on God.”

## 8. Wasn't Ernie supposed to be corrected if any error slipped in?

Someone has said that Ernie was told that if any error slipped in, he would be corrected. However they did not give a reference for this. We have searched Ernie's dreams, and the only statements that come close to this are the following:

"Hold your courage and know I will not let you go. You shall not share the details of this, but you may describe it briefly. If you give details in your description, **I will correct you.**" - 19. If You Love Me

"The angel states that Jesus and the Father are very well pleased with how we share the dreams. **If there is something wrong He will tell me** and to remember not to get caught up in the trivial things and not to worry about those we share with that have doubt or cause discontent. God will take care of them in His own way." - 7. Angel On a White Horse

"Again I am shown the dream, "Angel on a White Horse." I remember thinking how I was not sure if Becky and I **were correct in how we were sharing the dreams** and if we were **doing something wrong in the way we were sharing what I had been shown**. I recalled how I had been praying silently that God would show me if I was correct in doing what I had been doing. I watch as an observer as I inquired if Jesus is upset with **how we share the dreams**. The angel jumps off the horse from the left side and comes around to the right side of the horse where I stand. He touches my left shoulder and says my heavenly name. He states that Jesus and the Father are very well pleased with **how we share the dreams. If there is something wrong He will tell me** and to remember not to get caught up in the trivial things and not to worry about those we share with that have doubt or cause discontent. God will take care of them in His own way." - 31. Testing the Spirits

As you will notice, the first quote is *only* relevant to sharing the details of what Ernie had been shown. If he wrote those details, Ernie was told that he would be corrected. We also notice with the second and third quotes that they relate to the way Ernie shares his dreams (through the website, etc.).

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The context in the last quote reveals that Ernie was worried that he and Becky were not sharing the dreams correctly. He was told that if there is something wrong in the way they share the dreams, Ernie would be told.

These three quotes hardly support the idea that God would correct Ernie if any error slipped in. We would like to point out (since this question implies it) that none of the published dreams contain error.

## 9. David Starkey's email

Earlier we quoted David Starkey's email sent out on July 23, 2009. The email contained three main points to it:

1. Ernie was involved in a sexually deviant lifestyle.
2. Ernie was shown his dreams by Satan.
3. The dreams contain NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming).

We should remember accusations made without providing evidence is gossip.

“Gossip is idle talk or rumour, **especially about the personal or private affairs of others**. It forms one of the oldest and most common means of sharing (**unproven**) facts and views, but also has a reputation for the introduction of errors and **other variations into the information transmitted**. The term also carries implications that the news so transmitted (usually) has a personal or trivial nature, as opposed to normal conversation.”<sup>58</sup>

Ellen White wrote of gossiping:

“The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan's special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our positions.” - *The Adventist Home*, p. 441.1

We need to remember that Satan is the “accuser of our brethren.”<sup>59</sup> With this in mind, we wrote to David and asked if he could send us evidence and

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<sup>58</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gossip>

<sup>59</sup> Revelation 12:10



examples to support what he wrote. We received an email from the chairman of the 4 His People Ministry which gave us no information regarding these, except a Spirit of Prophecy quote regarding the nature of dreams, which we will quote below and another accusation that Ernie and Becky were guilty of “embezzling ministry funds by their deceptiveness and practices.”

### **Was Ernie involved in a sexually deviant lifestyle?**

We understand the sensitive nature of the first accusation, but if the board of 4 His People Ministry was not willing to share the evidence they had, we believe they should have remained silent on that point. Spreading rumors around the internet regarding such information is certainly not wise, and we wonder what the motivation was in doing so?

Even if Ernie was involved in some sexually deviant practice, does this automatically exclude him from being God’s prophet? When we consider the life of David, wasn’t he guilty of adultery? And did God exclude him from being a king and a prophet? No, because as we have already seen, God knew his heart, and David repented. What about the woman who was caught in adultery? How did Jesus treat her? Didn’t he say He didn’t condemn her? And what was her reaction? She became a follower of Jesus. Imagine what the outcome would have been if He had rejected her? Why then do we automatically assume that if someone is guilty of some sexually deviant sin that they are beyond saving?

### **Was Ernie shown his dreams by Satan?**

The email from the 4 His People board provided only one Spirit of Prophecy quote in regards to this question, which we quote.

“I would call especial attention to the remarkable dreams given in this little work, all with harmony and distinctness illustrating the same things. The multitude of dreams arise from the common things of life, with which the Spirit of God has nothing to do. There are also false dreams, as well as false visions, which are inspired by the spirit of Satan. But dreams from the Lord are classed in the word of God with visions and are as truly the fruits of the spirit of prophecy as visions. Such dreams, taking into the account the persons who have them and the circumstances under which they are given, contain their own

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proofs of their genuineness.” - *Testimonies For The Church, Vol. 1*, p. 569.2

As we have seen in this study, we need to be careful how we use quotes like this to prove people are possessed by Satan. What would we have said about people such as the following?

- The apostle Paul who was on his way to kill and imprison Christians when he received a vision.
- Abraham who was called a prophet even while lying to Abimelech.
- Balaam who received prophetic messages from God even though he had apostatized.
- Samson who maintained his great strength while he willingly walked contrary to God’s will.
- Jonah who refused to obey God and yet remained God’s prophet.

Satan managed to lead each of these people into sin, and apart from Balaam, all of them went on to fulfill God’s purpose. Even Samson at the last moment of his life accomplished what he was born to fulfill and is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as someone who had great faith. These examples teach that we really need to be careful in how we label people.

### **Do the dreams contain NLP?**

The email from the board also stated “No, I cannot give you proof about NLP.” We then wonder why this rumor was spread without any proof?

### **Did Ernie and Becky embezzle ministry funds?**

We wrote to Ernie and asked him if he embezzled any ministry funds and his answer was no. He stated he never had direct access to ministry funds except the monthly wage he received. Considering Ernie never set out to deceive people, but fell prey to this sin, receiving a just wage is not embezzlement. In fact, there are many pastors who no longer teach the straight truths, or who like Ernie, fall into temptation and they are not accused of embezzling tithe money. Why then is Ernie accused of this?

## Interesting points to consider

### No errors

In dream 23, “Much To Do” of October 21, 2007, Ernie is told that “There is no error in anything we have done.” This was before Ernie made up Candace. So it would appear up until that point in time, there was no error in what Ernie had done.

### Pray for protection

The last dream Ernie had before he made up Candace was dream 25, “Pray for Protection.” In the dream he was being tortured. When he wakes, he finds that he is pinned down and cannot speak. It is only when Becky wakes and offers to call on the name of Jesus that he is released. When we first read this, we thought, like many others, that Satan was trying to discourage Ernie from the work God had given him. However in hindsight, it would seem to suggest that Satan may have been or was about to get access to Ernie.

### Repent, as I am coming

As pointed out in the previous section, Ernie’s dream on November 12, 2008 is a call for repentance. This was not only a message to those who have been rejecting the dreams, but it appears it was a message to Ernie as well. Ernie had only just the previous month fabricated the Great Commission Council and the month before that made up another testimony from Candace, so it seems that the dream was directed to him especially as well as to everyone else. It was also Ernie’s last posted dream that God gave him until he had repented of his deception.

## Conclusion

When Jesus warned his disciples about false prophets and how they can be identified, he told them that by their fruits they could discern the true from the false. Some have concluded that Ernie Knoll is a false prophet because he made up Candace the prostitute and the Great Commission Council. They think that anyone who could deceive people with such lies is not bearing good fruit but bad fruit.

However, we have seen in this study that many of God's prophets fell into sin in varying degrees and still managed to obtain a good report and were used of God. This shows us that a prophet is no different than us. We all struggle against sin, and at times we fail our Lord. God doesn't forsake us, but gently speaks to our hearts and encourages us to confess, repent and forsake our sins. If God can forgive us, can't He forgive His prophets when they too fail Him?

We therefore need to keep in balance what Jesus said regarding fruit bearing, and the examples we find throughout the Bible of real life situations. If a prophet falls into sin and repents, then we don't have enough "evidence" to prove them "false." We would therefore need to consider other areas to validate our conclusion. For example, this should include:

1. Is their repentance genuine? If it isn't, they will probably keep repeating the same and other sins. (1 John 1:9)
2. What is the message they bear? Does it lead us away from God or closer to Him? (Deuteronomy 13:1-4)
3. Does the message agree with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy? (Isaiah 8:20)
4. Does what they say come to pass? (Deuteronomy 18:20-22) This point can sometimes be hard to prove because often God's predictions don't happen in the timeframe we would like them to happen, and sometimes they can be conditional.

When we learned what Ernie had done, we were discouraged. So we studied the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and this study is the result. We felt we needed to find an answer and we believe we have. We have learned that a prophet is not some superhuman that is incapable of sinning, but is just like all of us with our inherited and cultivated weaknesses. We therefore believe that Ernie is still God's prophet and that all of his published dreams are messages from God. Because of what has happened, we believe we need to be cautious and like the faithful Bereans, carefully compare what Ernie says with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. If his dreams are of God, then nothing will be able to stand in their way. But if they are not, then they will eventuate into nothing.

We realize a study like this can seem to give the impression that since many of the great Bible prophets fell into sin and were still blessed by God, then sin may not be such a bad thing after all. This is not the purpose of this study. The Bible clearly shows us the dangers of sin. The results of Jacob's sin shows how he feared his brother for many years after he cheated him of the birthright and was himself cheated by his father-in-law Laban. David also lost much of his authority with the people and his own household when people found out about his sins. This study was not written to excuse Ernie of his sin. It was simply written to show that those who God calls to work for Him, who through lack of faith fall from their calling, can be reinstated. It shows God's willingness to forgive. Praise God!

To conclude this study, we would like to leave you with this warning from the Spirit of Prophecy.

"In these days of peril **we are not to accept everything that men bring to us as truth.** As professed teachers from God come to us declaring that **they have a message from God, it is proper to inquire carefully,** How do we know that this is truth? Jesus has told us that "false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). But we need not be deceived; for the Word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet says, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

From this statement it is evident that it becomes us to be **diligent Bible students,** that we may know what is according to the law and the testimony. We are safe in no other course of action. Jesus says,

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"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.** Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matthew 7:15-19).--The Review and Herald, Feb. 23, 1892." - *Selected Messages Book 2*, p. 99

It is our prayer that you will realize that God has forgiven Ernie and reinstated him as a messenger, and more importantly, that you will take the time to read the messages God has given him and take them to heart. The time is short. It is time for God to prepare for Himself a people that He will seal for the end times. Are you such a person? Can God use you? May you be blessed as you read and study the messages as given by God for you. May the messages lead you to a deeper love for the Bible, the messages given to Ellen White and preparing to meet your God.