

## Prophecy: God's Guiding Gift

When God warned the ancient world of the coming judgment, He used prophets. For example, in the time of the Exodus, God used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt to Canaan.

Moses was more than a prophet, he was also the leader of the people. Moses had to prepare a people for their entry into the Promised Land and this great event serves as a type for the final gathering of God's people and their entry into the heavenly Canaan. Surely, if a prophet was deemed necessary for the preparation for earthly Canaan, how much more so for the heavenly Canaan. The Bible predicts that the remnant will possess the Spirit of Prophecy and that the restoration of this gift would be one of the issues that Satan would war against:

*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17).*

*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10 NKJV).*

God's remnant must thus possess the Spirit of Prophecy in order to qualify as the remnant. There is nothing more dangerous to Satan than the clear revelation of God's will, which is why Satan tries to cast doubt on or counterfeit God's truths.

It is therefore vital that we understand the Biblical criteria for the manifestation of the gift of prophecy, and that we understand the reasons why God grants this gift in the first place, so that we will not be swept away by Satan's deceptions. The following articles are to help you understand the issues involved so you will not be deceived.

### Why Prophecy?

#### Sin Separated Us From God

When Adam and Eve sinned, their first impulse was to hide themselves from God (Genesis 3:8). They hid because they recognized their nakedness. When God called Adam, Adam answered, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).

Adam and Eve were stripped of their cloak of righteousness and stood naked before God. Sin caused a separation between God and humankind (Isaiah 59:2), and only in Christ are we reconciled to God. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10).

The message of reconciliation has been entrusted to the Church—to the Old Testament Church in type, and the New Testament Church in truth.

*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).*

In Christ we are reconciled with God. But as long as sin exists, face-to-face communication with God is not possible. The brightness of His glory would consume us. Whenever God has revealed Himself to humans, it was either in a dream or God veiled His glory. When God spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai, He warned them that they would die if they came too close.

The presence of God, although veiled in thick clouds, was so impressive that the people requested Moses to speak to them the words of God, lest they should die from the voice of God (Exodus 20:19). Even in vision, the prophets felt that they would die in the presence of God.

*So I said, 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts (Isaiah 6:5 NKJV).*

*In New Testament times, the situation was no different. When John saw Jesus in vision, he fell as dead (Revelation 1:17).*

*One day it will be possible again to stand before God and speak to Him face to face, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face: Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12 NKJV).*

*Our communication is hindered, but it will be restored. "For we know in part and we prophesy in part: But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:9-10 NKJV).*

## **How God Communicates with His People**

The greatest gift to fallen people is the gift of God's own Son, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The greatest words ever spoken were the words of Christ when He walked on the earth. God did not leave His children without words of life *before* the incarnation of the Son of God, and neither did He leave them orphans *after* the resurrection. Throughout the ages, God communicated His will through His servants the prophets:

*Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).*

*These prophets did not speak their own words, but revealed God's will to people:*

*...for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).*

Prophets, chosen by God, have been used by God since the fall (Acts 3:21).

Enoch was the first prophet mentioned in the Scriptures:

*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of saints (Jude 14).*

Since Enoch, there have been numerous prophets, both male and female. Some prophets were instructed by God to write His words on a scroll, and some of these writings form a part of the Scriptures. Other prophets and prophetesses are mentioned in the Bible whose writings were not taken up in the canon. Old Testament examples include Nathan, Gad, and Huldah the prophetess. How did the Early Church choose what to include in the canon?

In New Testament times, the prophets included Simeon, Anna, Agabus, Barnabas, and Philip's four daughters. God used both men and women to communicate His will to His people, and although not all the prophets' writings or sayings were included in the Bible, they are still significant messages. Neither is there any reason to argue that male prophets were in any way different from female prophets in terms of the prophetic gift. Prophetesses mentioned in the Bible include Miriam, Huldah, Deborah, Anna, and the four daughters of Philip.

## **The Role of the Prophet**

The gift of prophecy is given to the people of God to maintain the integrity of the Church throughout all the ages. The ancient prophets were given messages of warning and reproof, as well as visions of future and past events to keep the people of God on track. The prophets were, as it were, the eyes of the Church:

*For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12).*

Just as the human body is a highly organized structure with many parts working in unity, so the people of God form a unit with different components. Among the gifts given by Christ to the Church, the gift of prophecy features prominently. Not everyone receives the same gifts (1 Corinthians 7:7 NKJV).

Of all the gifts, the greatest is love, which God will sow in all who accept His call. The gifts all serve a common purpose, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of

the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

The prophetic gift has always had a position of prominence within the Church throughout the ages, and has played a major role in keeping God's people on the path of truth. Truth is eternal, and the New Testament Church is built on this truth, which includes the truth revealed through the Old Testament prophets. In the Dark Ages, truth was thrown to the ground and the law of God was changed by the papal power. Since the prophet Amos declares that visions cease when the law is no more, this gift of prophecy could no longer operate during this period.

In New Testament times, the gift of prophecy is equally as prominent as it was in Old Testament times, and still offers words of encouragement, warning, and reproof from God. The apostle Paul tells us this:

*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:20-21).*

It was through prophets that the fledgling Christian Church initiated its mission outreach (Acts 13:1; 16:6-10). Prophets ensured the safety of the believers by warning them against impending dangers such as famine. Moreover, the prophets confirmed doctrines and practices (Acts 15:1-15) and encouraged the Church.

The gift of prophecy will remain until the end of time, "so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:7-8 NKJV).

In light of Christ's warning against false prophets (Matthew 24:24) and the admonishment to "test the Spirit" (1 John 4:1), it is vital that we discern between the true and the spurious.

## Testing the Prophets

If God communicates His intention through His servants the prophets, and Satan counterfeits the messages of God through false prophets, then it is vital that we test the prophets to see if the message is indeed from God. On one hand, the Scriptures admonish us to "Despise not prophesyings" (1 Thessalonians 5:2) and to "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20).

On the other hand, there are warnings against false prophets:

*For false christs and false prophets will rise and will show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24 NKJV).*

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1 NKJV).*

False prophets claim to have dreams and to see visions, so the Scriptures must provide criteria whereby the authenticity of the prophets' statements may be tested.

*Do not despise prophecies, test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 NKJV).*

The Bible lists a series of tests that can be applied to prophets to determine whether they are genuine or not. Many of these tests can be individually counterfeited, but collectively, they provide an impassable barrier to false prophets. False prophets can quote Scripture or have some of their prophecies come true, but they can still be false prophets—subtly using every opportunity to lead God's people astray.

A true prophet of God will meet **all** the Biblical criteria, which can be summarized as follows:

### **1. A true prophet's message will be in complete harmony with the word of God and the law of God.**

*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).*

Most modern-day prophets would fail this test. A prophet cannot negate what God has revealed in His Word, and all the precepts of the law are binding (James 2:10). When the law is not observed, the gift of prophecy is withdrawn (Lamentations 2:9).

### **2. A true prophet's predictions must come to pass.**

*...when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22 NKJV).*

A word of warning: A prophet's predictions may occur, and may even be accompanied by miracles. But if they do not pass the other tests, the prophet is still false.

*If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him (Deuteronomy 13:1-4 NKJV).*

Signs and wonders alone do not prove a prophet's validity. As in the above Scriptural example, prophets' words are not always in harmony with the law of God. Satan will work miracles in the last days to deceive many (Revelation 16:14).

### **3. A true prophet prophesies to edify the Church, counseling and advising in religious matters.**

*But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation, and comfort...but he that prophesieth edifieth the church (1 Corinthians 14:3-4).*

A true prophet will not condone sin (1 John 3:4). True prophets will exhort the church to a higher standard, and will exemplify God's principles in their own lives. False prophets, such as 16<sup>th</sup>-century seer Nostradamus, do not live according to God's Word and do not build up the Church with their prophecies.

### **4. A true prophet will exalt Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of humankind.**

*No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us...Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God (1 John 4:12,15 NKJV).*

*After His resurrection, Jesus expounded the Scriptures to His disciples, revealing to them the prophetic proclamations regarding Himself (Luke 24:27).*

Again a word of warning regarding this test: many false prophets will say to Jesus in the last judgment, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works" (Matthew 7:22)?

The Lord will not recognize them as His, as they practiced iniquity (Greek: *anomia* — against the law of God). They seem to pass the test, but fail in regard to the law.

### **5. The true prophet will speak with authority (Matthew 7:29).**

Jesus is the supreme example, and He spoke those things which He had seen and heard from the Father (John 8:26,28,38). A prophet will likewise reveal those things with authority that have been revealed to him by God.

### **6. The true prophet will bear good fruit.**

*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:20).*

This test is compelling. Does the prophet live a life in harmony with the will of God and are the lives of those touched transformed so that they too live godly lives? Once again, a word of warning: No one is without sin, and all fall short of the glory of God.

*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months (James 5:17 NKJV).*

Although Elijah had faults and passions just like us, he strove to live a godly life and the fruits of his labor testify that he was truly a prophet of God.

## 7. The true prophet, when in vision, will exhibit physical signs.

In vision, the prophet's eyes will be open.

*The utterance of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, with eyes wide open (Numbers 24:4 NKJV).*

Daniel 10 describes the physical state of the prophet Daniel while in vision.

*And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words; and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face to the ground (Daniel 10:7-9).*

Daniel had "no strength," and he must have fallen to the ground as he lay with his "face to the ground." The prophet does not, however, remain in this helpless state on the ground, but he is lifted up by God, and while still in vision, stands up on his feet (Daniel 10:10-11).

In vision, the prophet will have no breath in him, and no strength.

*And suddenly one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, My Lord, because of the vision, my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. For how can this servant of my Lord talk with you my Lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me. Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me (Daniel 10:16-17 NKJV).*

No mention is made of the restoration of breathing while in vision. The prophet is sustained by God while in vision. In summary, a prophet in vision shows these signs:

- i) Falls down weak
- ii) Is raised up and strengthened by God
- iii) Has the eyes wide open during the vision
- iv) Does not breath, even when speaking

These signs cannot be readily counterfeited. In fact, modern so-called visionaries tend to fall down with their eyes closed, and they have breath in them, because only God can sustain life without breath.

## The Gift of Prophecy in the Time of the End

In the book of Revelation, God gave us a picture of His true Church in our time, also called the remnant:

*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17).*

The remnant keeps the commandments of God, and the law is therefore restored in its fullness. As prophets of God need to live and speak in harmony with God's law, the true gift of prophecy can only occur if the law forms an integral part of the theology of the prophet. One of the identifying features of the remnant of God is the Spirit of Prophecy. The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.

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

Christ warns against false prophets in the last days who will mislead God's people. As we are also admonished to test the spirits and to hold on to what is good, it is vital that we apply the criteria provided to test the prophets in our time.

### The Recent History of the Gift of Prophecy

After the death of the apostles, prophets enjoyed respect in many circles until 300 AD, but the decline of spirituality in the Church and the resulting apostasy led to a diminishing of both the presence and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, false prophets caused a loss of confidence in the prophetic gift.

The decline of the prophetic gift during certain periods of Church history did not mean that God had withdrawn the gift permanently. The Bible indicates that as the end approaches, this gift will be present to assist the Church through these difficult times. More than that, Scripture even points to an increased activity of this gift.

Before the First Advent of Christ, God gave the gift of prophecy to John the Baptist to prepare the way for His coming. In a similar way, the prophetic gift must be restored before the Second Advent, so that everyone will have the opportunity to prepare to meet their Saviour.

Christ mentions the rise of false prophets as one of the signs that His coming is near (Matthew 24:11, 24). If there were to be no true prophets during the time of the end, Christ would have warned against anyone claiming that gift. His warning against false prophets implies that there would be true prophets as well.

### The Former and Latter Rain

The prophet Joel predicted a special outpouring of the prophetic gift just prior to



Christ's return:

*And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come (Joel 2:28-31).*

Pentecost saw a remarkable manifestation of the Spirit. Peter, citing Joel's prophecy, pointed out that God had promised such blessings (Acts 2:21). However, Joel's prophecy did not reach complete fulfillment at Pentecost, as the "great and terrible day of the Lord" is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ.

Pentecost, then, was a foretaste of the full manifestation of the Spirit before the Second Advent. Like Palestine's early rain, which fell in the autumn shortly after the crops were planted, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the spiritual early rain, which was to nurture the fledgling Church. The complete and final fulfillment of Joel's prophecy corresponds to the latter rain, which, falling in the spring, ripened the grain (Joel 2:23). Likewise, the final bestowal of God's Spirit will take place just before the Second Advent after the predicted signs in the sun, moon, and stars:

*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come (Joel 2:31, see also Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-17).*

Like the latter rain, this final outpouring of the Spirit will ripen the harvest of the earth (Matthew 13:30, 39), and "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32).

Joel's prophecy regarding the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars was fulfilled in the unexplained Dark Day of New England of May 19, 1780. Then, on November 13, 1833, the world witnessed the greatest meteoric event in recorded history when meteors lit up the sky, falling at an estimated rate of 200,000 per hour.

These unusual signs signified the beginning of the time of the end. It was during this time that the Millerites were studying Bible prophecy and discovering the truth about the end of time. As the Millerites studied Scripture, and especially the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel, they realized that these phenomena were linked to the prophecies about last-day events.

### **Movements Arising in the Mid-1800s**

As the world neared the final years of Earth's history, God was not the only one awakening in many an interest for His Word. Satan was also at work to detract from the significance of the times ahead. Satan has always been an ardent student of the Bible. He has had ample opportunity to learn God's plan for His people and to devise a counterstrategy.

During the 1800s, there was a resurgence of prophetic claims and many movements were founded by various false prophets. It has always been Satan's strategy to confound true issues by creating numerous diversions to hide the truth. God has always used prophets to support His people and to lead them into a fuller understanding of His truth. God's prophets are never sent to start new movements that contradict God's truths already given. Nevertheless, many such movements arose in and around 1844:

1. **The Mormon movement**, headed by their prophet Joseph Smith (1805-1844), who claimed to have received many revelations from God. Some of these revelations led to abhorrent practices, such as baptism for the dead and polygamy. Joseph Smith was murdered by a mob in 1844 while he was waiting trial.
2. **The Shakers** featured prominently during this period and followed their prophet, Ann Lee, who claimed to be Christ incarnate in woman's flesh. They believed in the dual (father-mother) personality of God and practiced a communal form of life in which spiritism formed an integral part. Read about Christian Science, another movement that sprung up in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and held to spiritism and a father-mother view of God
3. **Modern spiritism** commenced in 1848 with the Fox sisters and made communication with the dead fashionable.
4. **The modern New Age movement** traces its roots to many so-called prophets who also arose during this crucial time period.

All these movements are based on revelations that modify the Word of God to suit their needs. But God does not change:

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created (James 1:17-18 NIV).*

So did a true prophet arise in preparation for the time of the end that fulfills the Biblical criteria of the prophet and upholds the true Word of God? Read the next article, A Prophet for the Remnant, to find out.

## A Prophet for the Remnant

The year 1844 is familiar to Seventh-day Adventists as the year that a group of Millerites mistakenly expected the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.

On October 22, 1844, these men, women, and children longingly expected to see their Saviour and their loved ones that had passed away. They waited for the signs

of Christ's appearing. As night fell, they faced their dashed expectations with bitter disappointment. Many turned their backs on God when He didn't deliver on their understanding of Scripture. This day became known as the Great Disappointment. But some did not give up.

Just prior to 1844, two men received similar visions regarding the Advent movement. The first was William Foy, a member of the Freewill Baptist Church who was studying for the ministry. In 1842, in Boston, he witnessed the reward of the faithful and the punishment of the wicked, and the great scenes of the judgment in three steps, the books of record in heaven, the coming of Christ, and the reward of the faithful in that sequence. Foy related these visions to audiences, but when he received a third vision, which he did not understand, he ceased his public work.

Hazen Foss also received a vision regarding the experience of the Advent people, but refused to make it public after the Great Disappointment, which had severely affected him.

Two months after the Great Disappointment in December 1844, a young girl by the name of Ellen Harmon was given a vision of the trials of the Advent people. The vision did not reveal the reasons for the Disappointment, but did offer comfort and greater understanding of the events as they had, and would be, unfolding.

The vision showed Adventists traveling to the city on a narrow path with the bright light of the "midnight cry" behind them, and the path lighted to its end so that they would not stumble. Those who kept their eyes on Jesus would not stumble but enter into the city, the New Jerusalem. She witnessed the events of the Second Advent and the sealing of the 144,000, the ascent to the New Jerusalem and the reward of the faithful.

When Ellen Harmon related her first vision early in 1845, Hazen Foss was present and was overwhelmed because the vision was the same as he had received, but which he had refused to reveal.

"After I had the vision, and God gave me light, He bade me deliver it... but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me."

From 1844, when Ellen Harmon was 17 years old, until 1915, when she died, she had more than 2000 documented visions. During this time, she lived and worked in America, Europe, and Australia. Her work was often met with skepticism and ridicule, particularly since she was a woman and had not had much formal schooling. At the age of nine, Ellen was seriously injured when a classmate hit her with a stone. For three weeks she was unconscious, and it was thought that she would not recover. After her initial recovery, she returned to school, but never got beyond the early grades. Ellen was a member of the Methodist Church and was baptized on June 26, 1842. She was an ardent student of the Bible, and after attending meetings held by William Miller and his associates, she was impressed by the message she had heard.

On August 30, 1846, Ellen married James White, a young Adventist preacher, and they had four sons: Henry, Edson, William, and Herbert. After the death of her husband on August 6, 1881, Ellen labored alone for another 34 years, during which time she produced some of the most profound writings on God's Word. Her ministry and visions did several things:

1. Guarded the Church against fanatical influences and the inroads of non-Biblical doctrines.
2. Confirmed the pillars of the Adventist faith. These pillars included the role of the law of God, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the Second Coming of Christ, the Three Angels' Messages, and the identity and role of Babylon in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. She had dreams from God confirming the results of ardent Bible study by a host of Advent believers. She also corrected those who were straying from the truth.
3. Established church order and directed the ministry on the spreading of the final message of hope and reproof—the Three Angel's Messages.
4. Established a worldwide health message that recognizes that people have physical as well as spiritual needs.

Despite her physical frailness and debilities that made it impossible for her to write, Ellen White became one of the most prolific authors for our time. No other female author has produced as much published religious material.

Numerous books, magazine articles, tracts, pamphlets, and letters have flowed from her pen. Her writings cover a wide field of issues from doctrinal practices to Christian living, diet and health, parental care and guidance, education, medical ministry and the illumination of Biblical prophecies and historic events. This work was, according to her, made possible by the direct intervention of God. After being instructed to write down the things she had seen in vision, she had felt it an impossible request. She relates the experience as follows:

*The Lord has said, "Write out the things, which I shall give you." And I commenced when very young to do this work. My hand that was feeble and trembling because of infirmities became steady as soon as I took the pen in my hand, and since those first writings, I have been able to write. God has given me the ability to write...That right hand scarcely ever has a disagreeable sensation. It never wearies. It seldom ever trembles. I wept, and said, "impossible, impossible." The words came, "Nothing is impossible with God." The effort was made and my hand commenced to write the things that had been given me.*

## Applying the Test to Ellen White

There is nothing worse than deception, yet deception is Satan's greatest weapon. While we must be aware of false prophets, we are counseled to take heed of the word of the prophets ([2 Peter 1:19](#)). The only way out of this dilemma is to test the prophet by applying the Biblical criteria. If Ellen White truly was a prophet of God, then all the criteria must apply.

### Did Ellen White Exalt God's Word and Law?

#### The Word of God

Ellen White wrote, "The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience" (*Manuscript 88a*, 1900).

Her writings, which collectively are referred to as the Spirit of Prophecy, were never intended to give new light, but were always intended to illuminate the greater light, [the Scriptures](#). She wrote, "Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."<sup>i</sup>

*The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken, and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse...The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all (*Great Controversy*, 7).*

To those who criticized the Word of God, she wrote, "Cling to your Bible as it reads and stop your criticism in regard to its validity and obey the word, and not one of you will be lost...The Bible and the Bible alone is to be our creed, the role bond of union...God's word is infallible...lift up the banner on which is inscribed the Bible, our rule of faith and discipline" (*Colporteur Ministry*, 125).

Just as the great Reformers, Ellen G. White lifted up the Bible banner against false doctrines and practices. She wrote, "As darkness thickens and error increases, we should obtain a more thorough knowledge of the truth, and be prepared to maintain from the Scriptures the truth of our position" (*Selected Messages Book 1*, 18).

Her position regarding the Word of God is the same as that held by Protestants since the beginning. Protestants have always rejected the claim of Roman Catholicism that [tradition](#) as well as Scriptures should dictate beliefs.

The Westminster Confession underscores this point:

*The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*<sup>ii</sup>

Ellen G. White clearly recognizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture as outlined in the Westminster Confession. She wrote this:

*We can attain to an understanding of God's word only through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given...The fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the Word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings (Review and Herald, August 11, 1853, 53; Medical Ministry 88, 1904).*

### The Law of God

Ellen White repeatedly pointed to the binding claims of God's law. Joseph Bates, an Adventist pioneer had introduced the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to her. Although she was first skeptical, she and her husband studied the Scriptures and were confirmed in the view that the Sabbath was as binding as the other nine commandments.

One Sabbath, April 3, 1847, Ellen White was given a vision confirming the binding claims of the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath. Concerning the Law of God, she writes this:

*But it is ever the purpose of Satan to make void the law of God and to pervert the true meaning of the plan of salvation. Therefore, he has originated the falsehood that the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross was for the purpose of freeing men from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God. He has foisted upon the world the deception that God has abolished His constitution, thrown away His moral standard, and made void His holy and perfect law. Had He done this, at what terrible expense would it have been to Heaven! Instead of proclaiming the abolition of the law, Calvary's cross proclaims in thunder tones its immutable and eternal character (Early Writings, 118).*

Likewise she stated that it was the duty of God's children to enlighten others regarding the prophecies and the law of God.

The writings of Ellen White are based on the twin pillars of faith in the merits of Jesus Christ and obedience to His righteous law. Jesus said, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). In Ellen White's writings the relationship between law and grace is clearly expounded. Never does she present a legalistic view of the law of God and never does she belittle its claims. Never does she claim that the law has saving merits. We are saved by grace and grace alone, but a consequence of being saved is that through the merits of Jesus Christ one is once more brought into

a right relationship with God, which includes obedience to His law.

### Did Ellen White's Predictions Come True?

Most of Ellen White's predictions are related to Biblical prophecy, which is to be fulfilled in the last days. She wrote extensively on events as they would unfold in the future, and also issued some personal warnings as to disasters that would strike the inhabitants of the world. She also wrote on issues of health and made astounding predictions in this field—way ahead of the time she lived in. Most of her prophetic words are only being fulfilled at present.

### Disasters and Wars

In 1902, she warned that the cities around the bay area of California would suffer disaster. She wrote this:

*Not long hence, these cities will suffer under the judgment of God. San Francisco and Oakland are becoming as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord will visit them in wrath (Evangelism, 403-404).*

Those who heeded Ellen White's warning left this area and avoided the earthquake of April 18, 1906, which devastated the cities mentioned! In 1890, when peace was prevalent, she wrote this:

*The tempest is coming... We shall see trouble on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down and human lives will be sacrificed by millions (Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890).*

In 1904, she wrote this:

*Soon great trouble will arise among nations—trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes (Review and Herald, February 11, 1906).*

The world has seen two world wars and numerous skirmishes since then. Currently, it is a sad fact that over 200 wars between ethnic nations are raging across the globe, leading to what is often called "ethnic cleansing." Besides these global warnings, Ellen White made a number of personal predictions regarding individual church members who refused to heed the counsel of God. These too were all fulfilled to the letter.

### Health

Regarding the establishment of the health ministry, Ellen White received numerous visions with detailed instructions as to what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The information that was brought to light was way ahead of its time, mostly contradictory to the views held by the scientific fraternity of her time. Her predictions concerning future health hazards are currently unfolding.

The health message was designed to lift humanity out of the quagmire of erroneous ideas on the issue of health and to provide a bulwark against disease. The health message was also designed to prepare a people spiritually to withstand the stresses and spiritual warfare predicted for the time of the end. God intends, through the health message, to lead humanity step by step back to that lifestyle that He had originally intended for us.

When God called the Israelites, through His prophet Moses, out of Egypt and led them to Canaan, He also changed their lifestyle and diet so that they would be prepared for the rigours of this experience. Many were dissatisfied and rebelled against God's plan, even wishing to return to Egypt. Those that rebelled turned from their allegiance to God and by their own choice severed their connection with their Creator.

When God called His remnant out of the slavery of sin to prepare them for their journey to the heavenly Canaan, He also used a prophet to communicate His will to His people. God in His wisdom provided the information that would fit His people physically and spiritually for the journey, and we are free to accept or reject His counsel.

Ellen White was herself very frail and ill when she received her first visions on health, but by adopting the counsels given, was gradually restored to health and lived to a ripe old age. Space does not allow a detailed discussion on her health counsels, but a few issues are worthy of note. As far back as 1864, when the medical world was unaware of the dangers of tobacco, and indeed often prescribed it as a cure or preventative measure against certain lung ailments, Ellen White wrote this:

*Tobacco is a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind, having an exciting, then a paralyzing influence upon the nerves of the body. It is all the more dangerous because its effects upon the system are so slow, and at first scarcely perceivable. Multitudes have fallen victims to its poisonous influence (Counsels on Health, 84).*

Not until 1957 did a committee of scientists appointed by the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association conclude that smoking was a causative factor in lung cancer. Counseling physicians on how to regard the issue of smoking, she wrote this:

*The physician should be a strictly temperate man. The physical ailments of humanity are numberless, and he has to deal with disease in all its varied forms. He knows that much of the suffering he seeks to relieve is the result of intemperance and other forms of selfish indulgence. He is called to attend young men and men in the prime of life and in mature age, who have brought disease upon themselves by the use of the narcotic tobacco (Counsels on Health, 321-322).*

The fact that Ellen White calls tobacco a narcotic is indeed surprising, since the narcotic effects of nicotine have only been established in recent times. Given this fact, and the present knowledge that the use of tobacco is a recognized precursor for



the development of cravings for stronger stimulants such as drugs, to which the youth is particularly susceptible, it is indeed astounding that she wrote about these issues in her time.

*The use of tobacco and strong drinks has a great deal to do with the increase of disease and crime. Tobacco is a slow, insidious, but most malignant poison, and its use is working untold harm...Boys begin the use of tobacco at a very early age. The habit thus formed, when body and mind are especially susceptible to its effects, undermines the physical strength and corrupts the morals (Manuscripts Releases, 115).*

The Bible teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that we are admonished to preserve our bodies as living sacrifices:

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2).*

This call would include the avoidance of harmful substances, as Ellen White explains:

*Men can do much more for God and his fellow-man, if he is in the vigour of health, than if he is suffering from disease and pain. Tobacco using, liquor-drinking, and wrong habits of diet, induce disease and pain which incapacitate man for the use he might be in the world (Health Reformer, October 1, 1877).*

Ellen White counseled that the use of animal products in the diet was harmful and that their use would become even more harmful as time progressed. The following statements, so contradictory to the views of her day, are a brief extract of what she wrote on the issue.

*The meat diet is the serious question. Shall human beings live on the flesh of dead animals? The answer, from the light that God has given, is No, decidedly No. Health reform institutions should educate on this question. Physicians who claim to understand the human organism ought not to encourage their patients to subsist on the flesh of dead animals. They should point out the increase of disease in the animal kingdom. This testimony of examiners is that very few animals are free from disease, and that the practice of eating largely of meat is contracting diseases of all kinds—cancers, tumours, scrofula, tuberculosis, and numbers of other like affections (Counsel for Diet and Foods, 338).*

This counsel is only now being proved by the scientific fraternity. The link between meat consumption and the diseases listed is well documented. Worldwide this link has been established beyond doubt.<sup>iii</sup>

Vegetarian societies have a much lower risk of contracting the diseases listed than omnivorous societies. Ellen White also warned that the time would come when, for

the sake of health, one would have to dispense with all animal products, including milk and eggs. Never did she, however, advocate fanatical views on this issue and even cautioned that circumstances should be taken into account when counseling those who did not always have access to alternative foods. In 1901, she wrote this:

*We see that cattle are becoming greatly diseased, the earth itself is corrupted, and we know that the time will come when it will not be best to use milk and eggs. But that time has not yet come. We know that when it does come, the Lord will provide. The question is asked, meaning much to all concerned, Will God set a table in the wilderness? I think the answer may be made, Yea, God will provide food for His people (Counsel for Diet and Foods, 359).*

*Milk, eggs, and butter should not be classed with flesh meat. In some cases, the use of eggs is beneficial. The time has not come to say that the use of milk and eggs should be wholly discarded. There are poor families whose diet consists largely of bread and milk. They have little fruit, and cannot afford to purchase the nut foods. In teaching health reform, as in all other gospel work, we are to meet the people where they are. Until we can teach them how to prepare health reform foods that are palatable, nourishing, and yet inexpensive, we are not at liberty to present the most advanced propositions regarding health reform diet (Counsel for Diet and Foods, 351).*

She counseled that God would prepare the way for the substitution of harmful foods with healthier alternatives. This prediction has been fulfilled with the introduction of new cultivars, such as the soybean and its by-products, as well as the expansion of trade and communication routes.

*In all parts of the world, provision will be made to supply the place of milk and eggs. And the Lord will let us know when the time comes to give up these articles. He desires all to feel that they have a gracious heavenly Father who will instruct them in all things. The Lord will give dietetic art and skill to His people in all parts of the world, teaching them how to use, for the sustenance of life, the products of the earth (Counsel for Diet and Foods, 359).*

The time will come, however, come when these items were to be discarded from the diet:

*Soon butter will never be recommended, and after a time, milk will be entirely discarded, for disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. The time will come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream or butter (Manuscript Releases Volume 8, Letter 14, 1901, 3).*

In our time, these predictions have been fulfilled in a manner that has astounded both the scientists and the general public. Indeed, even governments are in a panic over the modern flood of diseases striking the farming industry.

In Britain, the entire stock of cattle needs to be exterminated in view of BSE (mad cow disease). The chicken and egg industry has been reeling under the exponential

increase in transferable infectious diseases caused by bacteria such as Salmonella, forcing governments to introduce legislation restricting the sale of uncooked eggs in restaurants.

The modern animal husbandry industry has produced a new breed of antibiotic resistant bacteria that are threatening the outbreak of worldwide epidemics of food poisoning from the consumption of animal products. The outbreak of food poisoning is no longer confined to countries or institutions with poor hygiene, but has become universal.

The predictions made by Ellen White regarding political, personal, religious, and health issues have been so accurately fulfilled that she certainly satisfies the prophetic criterion that the prophet's predictions must come true. Moreover, her counsels are not given to satisfy idle curiosity, but are given for the benefit of not only the Church, but the whole of humankind.

### Did Ellen White Edify the Church?

The visions given to Ellen White were intended to lead the Church into a greater understanding of the Word of God, and to correct wrong paths that were sometimes taken by God's people.

Just as the letters of Paul were addressed to the Church in his day, and often contained strong words of reproof even to individual members, so the testimonies of the Spirit of Prophecy were also intended for the remnant Church. Only a group of people fully equipped with the weapons of warfare—a right understanding of the Word and the good fruits springing from their relationship with God—could bring the saving message of grace to a dying world.

As in the days of Paul, the message addressed to the Church is often misapplied to suit the ends of those who would wish to pervert the truth. Ellen White clearly warns against such distortions:

*It will be found that those who bear false messages will not have a high sense of honour and integrity. They will deceive the people, and mix up with their error, the Testimonies of Sister White, and use her name to give influence to their work. They make such selections from the Testimonies as they think they can twist to support their positions, and place them in a setting of falsehood, so that their error may have weight and be accepted by the people. They misinterpret and misapply that which God has given to the church to warn, counsel, reprove, comfort and encourage those who shall make up the remnant people of God. Those who receive the Testimonies as the message of God will be helped and blessed thereby; but those who take them in parts, simply to support some theory or idea of their own, to vindicate themselves in a course of error, will not be blessed and benefited by what they teach (Testimonies to Ministers, 42-43).*

Individual messages were often written to those who had strayed from the truth, not in some condescending way, but to assure them of God's love. Those in the Church who felt no need to work to tell others about Christ were also reproved:

*We found that we could do nothing for the scattered sheep near us until we had first corrected the wrongs in many of the members of the church. They had let these poor souls wander. They felt no burden for them. I wrote out pointed testimonies, not only for those who had erred greatly and were out of the church, but for those members in the church who had erred greatly in not going in search of the lost sheep.*

The fact that the Spirit of Prophecy is intended for the Church does not imply that it must be hidden under a bushel, just as the writings of Paul were not to be hidden. The world needs to know the truth as communicated by God through His servants the prophets. However, while the truth is for all, reproof and correction is for the Church.

*There are some occupying positions of responsibility who have had little experience in the working of the Holy Spirit. They do not appreciate the light in warnings, reproofs and encouragement given to the church in these last days, because their hearts and minds have not been receiving the Spirit of divine grace. These persons are disposed to conceal the fact that in connection with the work of the third angel's message, the Lord, through the Spirit of Prophecy, has been communicating to His people a knowledge of His will. They think that the truth will be received more readily if this fact is not made prominent. But this is a mere human reasoning. The very fact that this light coming to the people is not presented as having originated with human minds will make an impression upon a large class who believe that the gifts of the Spirit are to be manifested in the church in the last days. The affection of many will thus be arrested, and they will be convicted and converted. Many will thus be impressed who would not otherwise be reached (The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials).*

Ellen White herself never claimed the title prophetess, but referred to herself as God's messenger. She did not, however, correct those who referred to her as prophetess. Her testimonies to the Church were so extensive that all people will find content that concerns them. If accepted, this counsel will bring about that change of character, which God intends for all His children. Ellen White wrote this:

*I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. I have not stood before the people claiming this title, though many called me thus. I have been instructed to say, 'I am God's messenger, sent to bear a message of reproof to the erring and of encouragement to the meek and lowly.' With pen and with voice, I am to bear the messages given me. The word given me is, 'You are faithfully to reprove those who would mar the faith of the people of God. Write out the things which I shall give you, that they may stand as a witness to the truth till the end of time (Review and Herald, January 26, 1905).*

Considering the lines of work which she initiated, Ellen White was indeed a prophet

for the Church and beyond.

### Did Ellen White Exalt Christ as the Son of God?

Jesus Christ is the all-pervading theme of all the writings of Ellen White. She wrote four specific books on the life and teachings of Christ, and her book on the life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, has been hailed the best devotional book ever written on the life and ministry of Christ.

Her writings draw readers to Christ and produce a longing to commune with Him, as we see in the book *The Youth's Instructor*:

*Jesus Christ, the Majesty of Heaven, was not discerned in the disguise of humanity. He was the divine teacher sent from God, the glorious treasure given to humanity. He was fairer than the sons of men, but his matchless glory was hidden under a cover of poverty and suffering. He veiled his glory in order that divinity might touch humanity, and the treasure of immense value was not discerned by the human race, "but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The man who finds Christ, the man who beholds the treasure of salvation, has found the field and the hidden treasure. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth...And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." The treasure indeed is hidden under the garb of humanity. Christ is the unsearchable riches, and he who finds Christ, finds heaven. The human agent who looks upon Jesus, who dwells by faith on his matchless charms, finds the eternal treasure. In the parable, he who finds the treasure is represented as so well satisfied with his discovery that he sells all that he has to purchase that field.*

In a further statement, Ellen White explains the development of the relationship with Christ and how through His grace we can once more become children of God and laborers with God:

*All spiritual life is derived from Jesus Christ. 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' John 1:12 But what is the sure result of becoming a child of God? The result is that we become labourers together with God. There is a great work to be done for your own soul's salvation, and to qualify you to win others from unbelief to a life sustained by faith in Christ Jesus. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me (with a casual faith?—No, with an abiding faith that works by love and purifies the soul) hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life...I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world...Except yet eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (Selected Messages Volume 1, 137).*

The writings of Ellen White place our relationship with Christ in the right

perspective. There are those who believe that to know Christ is sufficient in itself to be saved. Christ came to save that which was lost, and He came to restore us to the image of God. We cannot claim justification and then refuse sanctification, which are both offered as gifts from God through the merits of Jesus Christ. Ellen White tells us this:

*In this age, the word of God is not considered reliable. The word of Christ, that cuts directly across human desires and indulgences, and condemns popular habits and practices,—the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us,—is ignored and despised. The teachings and example of Christ are not made the criterion for the life of the professed follower of Christ. Many who name the name of Christ are walking in the light of the sparks of their own kindling, rather than following in the footsteps of their professed Master. They do not represent the same character that Christ represented in His pure, sincere love to God, and in His love for fallen man. They do not take God at his word, and identify their interests with Jesus Christ. They do not form the habit of communing with Jesus, of taking him as a guide and counsellor, and thus learn the trade of living a well-defined Christian life. Those who not only hear but do the words of Christ, make manifest in character the operation of the Holy Spirit. The result of the internal operation of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in the outward conduct. The life of the Christian is hid with Christ in God, and God acknowledges those who are his, declaring, "Ye are my witnesses". They testify that divine power is influencing their hearts and shaping their conduct. Their works give evidence that the Spirit is moving upon the inward man; those who are associated with them are convinced that they are making Jesus Christ their Pattern (Review and Herald, January 12, 1896).*

Throughout her writings, Christ is exalted as our Redeemer, the only One through whom we can be saved:

*The world's Redeemer was treated as we deserve to be treated, in order that we might be treated as He deserved to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins upon His own divine soul, that we might receive His imputed righteousness. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. The world's Redeemer gave Himself for us.*

*Who was He?—The Majesty of heaven, pouring out His blood upon the altar of justice for the sins of guilty man. We should know our relationship to Christ and His relationship to us. We are to trust God fully, and ask Him to supply the least as well as the greatest want. The Lord encourages our confidence; and the great proof of our union with Christ, and the best manifestation of our love to Him, is in yielding obedience to His claims. If you have love to Jesus Christ, which is an expression of the life of Christ in the soul, then you will do what He commands you. This is practical religion. Redeemed by the ransom money paid for your souls, you will go forth and how much you love Jesus by obedience to His commandments. You are to bring forth fruit by doing His commandments, because you are branches of the living Vine. It is His prayer that His joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full (Review and Herald, March 21, 1893).*

Truly Ellen White exalted Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

### Did Ellen White Speak with Authority?

Ellen White had to wage a constant battle against those who maligned her and ridiculed her message.

She faced her toughest challenges when she was still young and frail. Humanly speaking, there is no way in which she could have exercised the authority she did without the direct intervention of God. God chose the weakest of the weak to confound the strong.

The authority she had was the authority of God. The Word of God did the cutting. Without this authority, the pillars of the Advent faith would have long ago been torn down, but they are sustained by the Word and will stand until the end of time. Ellen White explains this:

*I am instructed to say to those who endeavour to tear down the foundation that has made us Seventh-day Adventists—we are God's commandment keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teachings of the word—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the message of heaven of these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His word and the testimonies of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority (Manuscript Releases Volume 4, 246).*

### Did Ellen White Bear Good Fruit?

Ellen White's life and work was dedicated to the service of God. In each of her 55 published volumes, there is the fruit of one who has known and loved Jesus. In her thousands of letters to individuals she always spoke the truth in love even if the message was one of reproof.

She went out of her way to uplift others and practiced what she preached, as we see in her book *Education*:

*Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. Yet the race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This*

*is the object of education, the great object of life (Education, 15-16).*

Ellen White was not only a messenger, but worked as a missionary. She helped establish missions in several places in the world and encouraged everyone to take part in the great work of spreading the Gospel.

Today the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the single most widespread Protestant denomination in the world. It sponsors over 5000 schools and 350 academies and colleges, and has established a worldwide health ministry that supplies healthy foods to millions of people and sponsors over 200 hospitals in cities and areas that are often inaccessible. In addition, the Church runs a worldwide relief organisation—ADRA—which has played a major role in bringing relief to areas stricken by natural disasters and wars.

These great achievements in such a short time would have been impossible without Ellen White's council and labor. These are the fruits of her labors. Ellen White died at 87 on July 16, 1915. She was buried next to her husband in Oak Hill Cemetery at Battle Creek, Michigan. Shortly after her death, the *New York Independent* carried an article stating this:

*She showed no spiritual pride and she sought no filthy lucre. She lived the life and did the work of a worthy prophetess, the most admirable of the American succession.<sup>iv</sup>*

The press made these statements on the life and death of Ellen White:

*The life of Mrs. White is an example worthy of emulation by all... She was a humble, devout disciple of Christ and ever went about doing good... She was honoured and respected by all who appreciate noble womanhood, consecrated to unselfish labour for the uplifting and betterment of mankind. Her death marks the calling of another noted leader of the religious thought and one whose almost 90 years were full to overflowing with good deeds, kind words, and earnest prayers for all mankind.<sup>v</sup>*

*In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, no better overall guide is available today.<sup>vi</sup>*

### **Did Ellen White Exhibit the Physical Signs?**

The physical signs associated with a true prophet of God are so astounding, that they can only be explained by supernatural intervention.

False prophets have always been a plague to the people of God and the world at large. True prophets of God were severely persecuted, tortured, and even put to death in the most cruel fashion. False prophets, on the other hand, mostly make sensational prophecies of prosperity or promise redemption on the grounds of exclusivity rather than redemption in Christ and obedience to His requirements.

God in His wisdom has deemed it necessary to associate physical signs with the true gift of prophecy—signs that cannot be counterfeited. Because of all the criteria



applicable to a prophet of God, we will have no excuse if we to ignore His prophets.

### The Physical Signs of a Prophet in Vision

The physical signs associated with a prophet in vision, as discussed previously in Testing the Prophets, are as follows:

1. The prophet falls down weak
2. The prophet is strengthened by God and raised up
3. The prophet's eyes are wide open during the vision
4. The prophet does not breathe during the vision

In the case of Ellen White, God saw fit to establish the authenticity of her visions publicly. In the early years of her ministry, she frequently went into vision at public meetings where many skeptics and physicians could examine her while she was having a vision. Eyewitness accounts prove beyond doubt that Ellen G. White exhibited all the physical criteria specified in God's Word.

After her ministry and authenticity had been established, particularly in the later years, Ellen White received most of her vision in the night, as was also the case with the prophet Daniel.

### Eyewitness Accounts of Ellen White in Vision

J.N. Loughborough, a long-standing acquaintance of Ellen White who saw her in vision 50 times, describes the events as follows:

*In passing into vision, she gives three enrapturing shouts of "Glory!" which echo and re-echo, the second, and especially the third, fainter but more thrilling than the first, the voice resembling that of one quite a distance from you, and just going out of hearing. For about four or five seconds **she seems to drop down like a person in a swoon, or one having lost his strength; she then seems to be instantly filled with superhuman strength**, sometimes rising at once to her feet and walking about the room. There are frequent movements of the hands and arms, pointing to the right or left as her head turns. All these movements are made in a most graceful manner. In whatever position the hand or arm may be placed, it is impossible for anyone to move it. **Her eyes are always open, but she does not wink**; her head is raised, and she is looking upward, not with a vacant stare, but with a pleasant expression, only differing from the normal in that she appears to be looking intently at some distant object. **She does not breathe, yet her pulse beats regularly**. Her countenance is pleasant, and the colour of her face is florid as in her natural state (emphasis added).<sup>vii</sup>*

All four of the criteria mentioned in the Scriptures, in the right sequence, are listed here, and were verified by numerous reputable eyewitnesses. A further eyewitness, Nellie Sisley Starr, reports the events associated with a vision that Ellen White had

on June 12, 1868 at a prayer meeting held at Battle Creek:

*She [Ellen White] walked back and forth and talked to us, and as she walked, **she fell right down. She fell down gently.** She went down as if an angel's hands were under her...We thought she had fainted, but Brother White said "Cause yourselves no alarm. Wife has not fainted, but has fallen in vision." I wish I could describe the feeling that we all had. It was perfect quietness; even the children made no noise...It seemed as though heaven was settling down upon us and closing us in...Sister White lay perfectly quiet and unconscious. Oh, the feeling that was sensed in that building.*

*Brother White said, "There may be some in the congregation that may have doubts in regard to my wife's inspiration. If there are any such we would be glad to have them come forward and try the physical tests given in the Bible. It may help some of you." I knew my mother had some doubts. We had come over from England and she had come from the Church of England, and she could not quite understand it, so I said, "Mother, let us go right up and stand right by her head". In the meantime, Brother White had knelt down, and raised Sister White's head and shoulders on his knees.*

*Others came up, and there were two unusually large men. They stood one on each side of her shoulders. "Now", Brother White said, "we all saw Sister White fall; we know she lost her natural strength. Now we will see if she has supernatural strength." She was lying with her hands gently folded over her chest. She was lying quietly and looking up in the corner of the building. **Her eyes were open**, with a pleasant expression on her face. Nothing unnatural or unusual.*

*Brother White said to these large men, "Take her hands apart. You have two hands to her one. Just pull her hands apart." So they tried. They pulled and pulled till some of us got anxious that they would hurt her. Brother White said, "Don't be anxious; she is safe in God's keeping, and you can pull until you are perfectly satisfied." They said, "We are satisfied now. We don't need to pull anymore."*

***He said, "Take up one finger at a time." That was impossible. They could not do so much as move a finger. It seemed like a block of granite.** There was no change in appearance, but it just couldn't be moved. We looked to see if her eyes were closed and see if she was breathing. Then she took her hands apart and waved her hands. We said, "We will see when she comes out of vision that she has been flying." Brother White said to these men, "Now hold her." I think they thought they could. They grasped her by the wrists, but they could not retard the motion. It looked like any child could hold her, but she went on just the same.*

*Elder White said, "Now we are satisfied with that. Now we must see if her eyelids will close." There was a large Rochester (kerosene) lamp close by on the stand. He removed the shade and put this light right in front of her eyes. We thought she would move her eyes to protect them. She didn't. She was perfectly unconscious. The expression of her countenance changed at times. Sometimes she look pleased. At other times we could see that there was something distressing her, but **the eyelids did not close.***

*“Now,” Brother White said, we must see if there is any breath in her body.” There didn’t seem to be any. Everything looked all right, only there was no breath. Brother White said, “No we will send out and get a mirror, and we will test it.” So someone went to the next door and got a mirror, and it was held close to her face, but no moisture gathered. **So there was no breathing** (emphasis added).<sup>viii</sup>*

It is noteworthy that the sequence of events is again exactly in agreement with the Scriptures. Ellen White had to often contend with aggressive opposition. On one such occasion, she was taken into vision at a gathering of people who were opposed to her visions. The opposers shouted, interjected, read loudly from the Scriptures and tried every means possible to interrupt her, but she continued to speak from about midday to sunset with a voice that cut through the din until those who opposed her were exhausted.

At one stage, they placed a heavy Bible in her hand from which she began to quote. She held the Bible up above her head with the one hand, and paged to the passages with the other without looking where she pointed. Otis Nichols, an eyewitness at the meeting describes the events as follows:

*Then Thayer took a heavy, large quarto family Bible which was lying on the table and seldom used, and opened it, and laid it open upon the breast of Ellen while in vision, as she was then inclined backward against the wall in one corner of the room. Immediately after the Bible was laid upon her, she arose upon her feet and walked into the middle of the room, with the Bible open in one hand and lifted up as high as she could reach, and with her eyes steadily looking upward, declared in a solemn manner, “The inspired testimony of God” or words of the same import, and then she continued for a long time, while the Bible was extended in one hand and her eyes [were] looking upward and not on the Bible, to turn over the leaves with the other hand and place her finger upon certain passages and correctly utter their words with a solemn voice. Many present looked at the passages where her finger was pointed to see if she spoke them correctly, for her eyes at the same time were looking upward. Some of the passages referred to were judgments against the wicked and blasphemous; and others were admonitions and instructions relative to our present condition. In this state, she continued all the afternoon until nearly sundown when she came out of vision.<sup>ix</sup>*

### **Doctors' Accounts of Ellen White in Vision**

Note the testimony of these medical doctors who examined Ellen White while in vision. Two well-documented occasions will be discussed here. The first was at a conference held in June, 1854, where representatives from numerous churches were present. The second was at a conference held at Hillsdale, Michigan, where there were also numerous people present.

At the first meeting, Ellen White went into vision on June 26, 1854 and David Seeley, corroborating the testimony of other eyewitnesses writes as follows:

*I was present at that meeting and witnessed the examination. I agree with what is*

*stated by Brother and Sister Lamson, and would say further that it was Doctor Fleming and another younger physician who made the examination. After Mrs. White rose to her feet, as they have stated, quoting the texts of Scripture, Doctor Fleming called for a lighted candle...He held this candle as near her lips as possible without burning, and in direct line with her breath in case she breathed. There was not the slightest flicker of the blaze. The doctor then said, with emphasis, "That settles it forever, there is no breath in her body."<sup>x</sup>*

At the second meeting, James White called for a doctor to examine his wife. On this occasion, Dr. Lord was in the audience and also found no breath in her while she was having a vision. Two reports are available regarding this event. The first is from the Fowler couple, who testify as follows:

*We were present when Sister E.G. White had a vision in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. Dr. Lord made an examination, and said, "Her heart beats, but there is no breath. There is life, but no action of the lungs. I cannot account for this condition."<sup>xi</sup>*

The second testimony is from C.S. Cover, who states this:

*I was present when Sister White had the above-named vision in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. In addition to the above statement, I heard the doctor say that Sister White's condition in vision was "beyond his knowledge". He also said, "There is something supernatural about that."<sup>xii</sup>*

### **A True Prophet**

Ellen White is the only prophet in modern history who satisfies all the Biblical criteria of a prophet of God. She wrote pointed testimonies and received instructions from God that were to provide the necessary guidance for God's remnant at the end of time. Those who take this instruction to heart will develop a greater understanding of the will of God and will be led into a closer relationship with God.

She wrote this:

*Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people. But my strength is yet spared, and I hope to continue to do much useful work. I may live until the coming of the Lord, but if I should not, I trust it may be said of me, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Selected Messages, 55-56).*

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- iv *New York Independent* (August 23, 1915).
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- vi Clive M. McCay, "A Nutrition Authority Discusses Mrs. E.G. White," *Review and Herald* (Feb 26, 1910).
- vii. J. N. Longborough, as quoted at [WhiteEstate.org](http://WhiteEstate.org)
- viii *Biography of E. G. White* Volume 2: 232-233.
- ix *Biography of E. G. White* Volume 1: 104.
- x Ibid: 303.
- xi Ibid: 351.
- xii Ibid: 351-352.