

The Gift of Prophecy



THE ROLE OF ELLEN WHITE

“The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.”

Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Belief #18

DECODING THE DECEPTION

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY THE ROLE OF ELLEN G. WHITE

2 Chronicles 20:20 (NKJV) “Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

Ellen G. White (1827–1915)

Ellen Gould White was a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is recognized as one of the most influential Christian authors in history. Born in Gorham, Maine, in 1827, she received her first vision at age 17, confirming her prophetic calling. At just 9 years old, Ellen Harmon’s school years ended due to a devastating injury, yet God transformed her weakness into a prophetic strength that touched millions.

1. Divine Call Despite Human Weakness

- Moses – reluctant, slow of speech (Exodus 4:10).
- Jeremiah – claimed he was too young (Jeremiah 1:6).
- Paul – acknowledged his “fear and trembling” (1 Corinthians 2:3).
- Ellen White: Called at 17, weak in health, little formal education.
- “I am only a weak girl... but God has chosen me to give His message.”
- God often calls the unlikely, because the power is His voice.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV) “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”

Ellen Harmon married James White on August 30, 1846, in Portland, Maine.

- She was 18 years old, and James was 25.
- Together they helped establish the Seventh-day Adventist movement through preaching, publishing, and organizational leadership.
- James White died in 1881; they shared ministry for 35 years.
- In the organization of the SDA Church, were, James White, Ellen White, Joseph Bates, J.N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, J.N. Loughborough, Hiram Edson, Stephen Haskell, George I. Butler, John Harvey Kellogg.

Over her lifetime, she wrote more than 100,000 pages—including books, letters, and articles—covering theology, health, education, family life, and prophecy.

Just as God guided Israel through Moses, the early church through Paul, He has guided His end-time church through the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. God has never left His people without a prophet’s voice.

Amos 3:7 says, ‘Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.’

Every prophet in Scripture faced doubts, criticism, and rejection:

Matthew 23:37 (NKJV) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!”

Those looking for reasons to criticize Ellen White’s works, will find it. My understand of her writings is still increasing. Such is the case with the Bible.

There are always things that are difficult to understand and hard to explain:

No human saw God create the world; since the dawn of humanity millions still don’t believe He “spoke” and the world came into existence. Scientific, Atheists, and many schools of intellectual thought still can’t explain, a talking snake in the garden of Eden, The flood, Tower of Babel, Plagues of Egypt, Crossing the Red Sea, Fall of the Walls of Jericho, Jonah being swallowed, Sun standing still, Elijah calling down fire, Daniel in the Lion’s Den, Hebrew surviving the Fiery Furnace, giants on the earth, the burning bush, Balaam’s talking donkey, Elijah swept away in a chariot of fire, the destruction of Sodom, a floating axe head, all the Miracles of Jesus, His own chosen people deny His Resurrection from the dead. Summarizing, how can a book written over 1500 years by authors that never met, still harmonize? Millions still call the Bible a hoax. Yet, I believe all of that without any scientific evidence, other than belief and Faith.

To reject Ellen White, because she made statements that are not clear, is what has been happening since the dawn of human reasoning.

The more we read and study the more we understand:

Proverbs 4:18 (NKJV) “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.”

2 Peter 3:3 (NKJV) “Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts.”

- **1. Moses – Rejected by His Own People**
Numbers 14:10 – “All the congregation said to stone them with stones.”
- **2. Elijah – Hunted and Despised**
1 Kings 18:17 – Ahab called Elijah the “troubler of Israel.”
- **3. Micaiah – Imprisoned for Speaking Truth**
1 Kings 22:26–27 – Micaiah was thrown in prison for his prophecy.
- **4. Jeremiah – Beaten, Imprisoned, and Mocked**
Jeremiah 37:15 – “They struck him and put him in prison.”
- **5. Zechariah – Killed in the Temple**
2 Chronicles 24:20–21 – “They conspired against him... and stoned him.”

From Moses to Jeremiah, from Elijah to Zechariah, the pattern is the same—God’s prophets were rejected, persecuted, and silenced. And yet their message lived on, because it was God’s message, not man’s.

Why should it surprise us that Ellen White also faced criticism and rejection? She simply stands in the long line of faithful prophets who spoke truth no matter the cost. Ellen White’s ministry is attacked today in the same way Bible prophets were in their time.

2. Establish the Right Foundation:

Point to the Biblical Standard: Prophets are not directed to satisfy curiosity in science, but to uplift Christ and Scripture (2 Peter 1:19–21; Revelation 19:10).

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NKJV) “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; (20) knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, (21) for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Revelation 19:10 (NKJV) “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.’”

Key Principle: Inspiration is about reliability in spiritual truth, not infallibility in every incidental detail.

Analogy: Just as the Bible records round numbers, varying perspectives, and cultural expressions, so too Ellen White wrote within her time’s language and knowledge.

3. God’s Prophets reveal Human + Divine Element in Inspiration

Ellen White herself wrote: “The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented... Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself” (Selected Messages, 1:21).

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Response: Variations in wording, style, or cultural assumptions are not contradictions but marks of genuine human instrumentality.

4. Scientific & Historical must be examined in Context

Health and Science: Many of Ellen White’s statements on diet, sanitation, and lifestyle

have been powerfully confirmed by modern science (plant-based diets, exercise, alcohol/tobacco dangers).

Apparent Errors: When she made statements reflecting 19th-century understanding (e.g., certain medical theories), emphasize that her core authority was not medical detail but divine principles of health reform.

Guiding Principle: Where she gave specific instructions, test them by their fruit. Matthew 7:20 (NKJV) “Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”

5. Ellen White was consistent on Core Doctrines

On salvation, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the great controversy theme, the second coming, her writings are internally consistent and powerfully scriptural. Critics often magnify peripheral details but ignore the prophetic accuracy in the grand themes of truth. A diamond is called flawless because its internal and external imperfections are invisible up to 10x magnification. There are no flawless diamonds, we decide what level of imperfection to accept.

Do perceived imperfections make a diamond disingenuous?

Things difficult to understand don't lead to the abandonment of all:

2 Peter 3:16 (NKJV) “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

6. Distinguish Between “Contradiction” and “Growth of Expression”

Over 70 years of writing, Ellen White clarified, expanded, and refined ideas. This is not contradiction—it's progressive revelation.

Example: Early writings may be brief, but later works (e.g., *Desire of Ages*) show fuller development, so also, Paul's letters built upon each other.

Such was the case in Christ's day. There were truths not clarified by Jesus that He left to the work of the Holy Spirit to make plain.

John 16:12-13 (NKJV) “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

7. What about the Fruits of Her Ministry:

Education: Adventist schools worldwide.

Health Reform: Hundreds of hospitals and clinics.

Mission Work: Global reach in nearly every nation.

Evidence #1: Her Written Accomplishments: How could God accomplish so much, through a woman, that only had a 3rd grade education?

- Published during her lifetime: ~36 books
- Posthumously compiled (from her letters, articles, and manuscripts): more than 100 additional volumes.
- Total available today: over 130 books in print, including Steps to Christ, The Desire of Ages, The Great Controversy, Education, and the Conflict of the Ages series.
- **Personal letters & manuscripts written:** More than 5,000 (many compiled in the Testimonies for the Church 9 vols. and Selected Messages 3 vols.)
- **Published correspondence collections:** about 21 volumes of letters and manuscripts are available through the Ellen G. White Estate.

Articles: Journal and periodical articles: approximately 5,000–6,000

- Printed in Adventist papers such as The Review and Herald, Signs of the Times, Youth's Instructor, and Health Reformer.
- Her articles covered spiritual instruction, prophecy, health, education, practical Christian living, and counsel to the church, social issues, organization and leadership, Theology, medicine, family, science, diet, agriculture, mission, church leadership

Overall Output:

- Ellen White is the most translated female author in history and the most translated American author (male or female).
- Her writings amount to over 100,000 pages books, letters, articles, diaries.
- Did I mention, she only had a 3rd Grade Education?

8. Every prophet of God must pass the “Christ Test”:

Every genuine prophet points us to Jesus. Gospel Workers, page 160: “Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people. Lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer.”

Here council about the Bible: Darkness before Dawn, p. 37.2: “But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support.”

Here is the critics challenge: With all the controversies over the details of Ellen White works, has any critic produced a body of work more Christ-centered, more life-changing, and more globally impactful?

9. Consistency with Scripture as the Ultimate Authority:

- **Isaiah:** “To the law and to the testimony!” (Isaiah 8:20).
- **Paul:** “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable.” (2 Timothy 3:16).
- **Ellen White:** “The Bible, and the Bible alone, is our rule of faith.”
The Great Controversy, p. 595.
- **Cadence Point:** True prophets point beyond themselves to God’s Word.

Though some may reject Ellen White’s inspiration, the enduring fruit of her ministry speaks for itself. Her writings have consistently uplifted Christ, led multitudes back to the Bible, and borne the test of time in their power to comfort, correct, and guide. The very harmony of her counsel with Scripture, the global influence of her work, and the countless lives transformed through her message lend credibility to her calling. As Jesus said, ‘By their fruits you shall know them’ (Matthew 7:20). We need not fear the doubts of men when the evidence of God’s hand is so clear. Her writings have shaped schools, hospitals, missions, and millions of lives—which is clear evidence that the same God who spoke through the Bible prophets also spoke through her to prepare a people for Christ’s soon return.