

His messenger to the church, and by His Holy Spirit endow her with the gift of prophecy. – *Review and Herald*, June 9, 1946, p. 62.
Even though the prophets of old were human, the divine mind and will of an infallible God is adequately represented in the Bible. And the same God speaks through the writing of the Spirit of Prophecy. These inspired books, such as *Desire of Ages*, *Great Controversy*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, are indeed divine revelations of truth upon which we may place full dependence.

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE IN THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

THE PROPHET DELIVERS THE INSPIRED MESSAGES

Test Questions – Lesson 5

1. Give two Bible references for the inspiration the Bible.
.....
.....
.....

2. Fill in the missing words:

The.....book of the bible were written by..... prophets andover a period of aboutyears.

3. Name the Bible characters indicated below:

1. Two prophets whose messages are not included in the Bible canon were.....and

2. Two women through whom God spoke were..... in the Old Testament, and..... in the New Testament.

4. Complete the four steps by which the Word of God was transmitted:

1. God gave His message to.....
.....
2. Jesus gave His Message to.....
.....
3. The prophet spoke or wrote it out for the.....

5. Supply the missing statement of Mrs. White:

"When the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into a presence of..... and....., and I'm entirely.....to earthly things."

6. Cross out the incorrect completion in parentheses:

The Bible prophets written messages (and also) (but nut all of) their spoken messages were inspired of God.

7. Answer the following questions:

1. By whose authority did Ellen G. White communicate her messages to the church and/or to individuals?
.....
.....
.....

2. Who bade her to “write the things that are revealed” to her?
.....
.....
.....

3. Did Ellen G. White claim to be the "originator" of her hooks?
.....
.....
.....

8. Circle the correct completion for these statements:

1. In everyday contacts and personal correspondence, Mrs. White obviously (was) (was not) under special inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. In presenting counsel and instruction she was (often) (careful to avoid) setting forth her own views.

9. Complete the following statements:

1. The truths of the Bible were usually expressed in the words of.....

2. There were times when the very words

Have the experience o the Remnant church proved that of a weak fallible human being may receive from God infallible revelations of His will and pass them on intact to the church?

- of..... were recorded by the prophet.

10. Mrs. White stated that when she described the visions given her –

1. The words were.....unless they were the exact words of the.....
.....

2. She always indicated byt he words..... to her by the angel.

11. Write “True” or “False” after the following statements:

Testimonies borne b Mrs. White were sometimes based on one specific vision; sometimes upon many visions given over a period of years.

THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answers)

How would people’s confidence in the Scriptures be affected by the belief that only certain parts of them were inspired?

Would the faith of Seventh day Adventists be strengthened or weakened by a similar conception of Ellen G. White’s messages of counsel?

Can you count on the Bible and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy to carry you safely through the days of crisis that lie ahead of the Advent people?

The Prophet Delivers the Inspired Messages

5

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

***GUIDING TEXT:** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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 1:20,21.*

Note: for an excellent preview of this lesson read the author’s introduction to the book *Great Controversy*, pp. v to xii. Keep on mind that the Introduction as well as the book itself was written by Ellen White. See also *Selected Messages*, Book 1, pp. 15-19.

Origin and Purpose of the Scripture
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

The Goodspeed translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 reads: “All Scripture is divinely inspired...” and in our guiding text above, Peter says the Bible writers, Holy men of God spake as thy were moved by the Holy Ghost.” It is the inspiration of the Bible that marks it as the Word of God, so it is distinguished from the literary or religious works of men like John Milton or Uriah Smith.

The inspiration of the Bible is altogether different from either genius or piety. It is not at all the same as the inspiration of the poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, or the writer. It is true that God endows men of genius with gifts which distinguish them from their fellows. The Bible, however, is inspired in such an exceptional way as to remove it altogether out of the class of the highest of merely human compositions. – Carlyle B. Haynes. *The Bible, Is It True?* p.43.

Prophets and apostles claimed that the Bible came directly from God. Bible writings are known as the “oracles of God.” Romans 3:2. That is, as Cruden says, “a place of communication from God.” In Acts 7:38 they are called the “lively [living] oracles.” So the Scripture become a living center from which the will and purposes of God are communicated to man.

This revelation from heaven is called also the “word of God.” This term is used in both Old and New Testaments. In addition to the expression “word of God,” the divine revelations are called “the word of the Lord” (Psalm 18:30), and “the word of the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 5:24).

When the prophets described the divine communications given though them, they sometimes spoke of them as “the world of the Lord came unto me, saying.” There are many variants of this expression, as will be seen: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts.” 2 Samuel 7:8. “As God hath said,” 2 Corinthinas 6:16. “God spake,” Genesis 8:15. “The Holy Ghost saith,” Ezekiel 21:17. “The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake,” Acts 1:16. “The scripture saith,” James 4:5.

To whom the word of God came
The word of the Lord came unto the prophet...saying, Go and say... Thus saith the Lord. 2 Samuel 24:11,12.

The appointed agent of revelation, the one who declared “Thus said the Lord,” was the prophet. The 66 books of the Bile were written by some forty prophets and apostles over a period of about 1600 years. A prophet, whose speaks on behalf of the Supreme Ruler, is more worthy to be heard than any great man of earth. In the Hebrew the word prophet suggests an “announcer” or “declarer” of God’s will for men.

The prophets of God are “tellers of truth.” They speak for and on behalf of the truth. Hence prophets are more than predictors of future events. As God’s chosen messengers, they speak for Him with divine authority. And they speak forth the warnings and will of the Lord with power that must be obeyed.

Not All Prophets in Bible Times Contributed to Bible Canon
Several prophets of Bible times are mentioned whose public utterances and writings were never included in the sacred canon of Scripture. Typical are Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo, who recorded the acts of Solomon, but their writings are not included in the collection of Biblical books. On this point Ellen White wrote:

During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not case to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn and comfort the children of God. – *Great Controversy*, Introduction p. viii.

Think, too, of the women who God used as prophetesses to bring His word to the church. These notable women included Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah of the Old Testament, and Anna and Philip’s four daughters as mentioned in the New Testament. Consult the dictionary of proper names in the back of your Bible to find reference to Bible texts which record the work of these notable characters of Old and New Testament times.

How the Word of God was Transmitted to John

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he send and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. Revelation 1:1-3.

Here are noted four steps in the transmission of God’s message:

- God gave His message to Jesus Christ.
- Jesus gave that message to His angel.
- His angel brought it to the prophet, in holy vision.
- The prophet wrote it out and sent it to the people.

Note the steps again. The prophet was “in the Spirit” (Revelation 1:10), that is, in a prophetic vision. He saw himself perhaps engaged in conversation. With the angel of the Lord or with Christ Himself. In the course of the interview he received “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:12. Next, he wrote out the message and sent it to the churches.

How the Lord’s Message was Transmitted to Ellen White

Frequently Mrs. White was asked concerning the visions she received, and the duty to communicate the light. Of this she wrote:

As inquiries are frequently made as to my state of vision, and after I come out, I would say that when the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to scenes transpiring upon earth. At times I am carried far ahead into the future and show what is to take place.

Then again I am shown things as they have occurred in the past. After I come out of vision I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as it was presented in vision, and I can write with freedom. Sometimes things which I have seen are hid from me after I come out of vision, and I cannot call them to mind until I am brought before a company where that vision applies, then the things which I have seen come to my mind with force. – *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 292,293; *Selected messages*, Book 1, p. 36.

Prophets’ Spoken as Well as Written Words Inspired of God

The divine oracles were spoken: “by Daniel and prophet” (Matthew 24:15); “of the Lord by the Prophet” (Matthew 1:22); “by the prophet Isaias” (Matthew 3:3); “by Jeremiah the prophet” (Luke 1:70). In the larger sense the words “spoken” and “spake” in the texts here quoted may represent the messages of the prophet in written as well as oral form – in written manuscripts as well as sermons.

The messages were also written: “Things which are written may be fulfilled.” Luke 21:22. “Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.” John 1:45. It is written in the book of Psalms.” Acts 1:20. “That the scriptures (writings) of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Matthew 25:56.

Mrs. White’s Own Statement Relative to Oral and Written Messages

Mrs. White stated, “I speak that which I have seen, and which I know to be true.” – *Letter 4, 1896*. She was instructed, “In all your communications, speak as one to whom the Lord has spoken. He is your authority.” – *Letter 186, 1902*. Both in *Notes and Papers, p.57*.

Concerning her call to write she declared:

Early in my public labours I was bidden by the lord, “Write, write the things that are revealed to you.” At the time this message came to me, I could not hold my head steady. My physical condition made it impossible for me to write. But again came the word, “Write the things that are revealed to you.” I obeyed; and as the result it was not long before I could write page after page with comparative ease. Who told me what to write? Who steadied my right hand and made it possible for me to use a pen? - It was the Lord. – *Review and Herald. June 14,1906*.

She gave God the credit for message borne in her books:

Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world. – *Colporteur Ministry, p. 125*.

Was Every Word Mrs. White Spoke or Wrote Inspired?

As a member of the human family, EG White was privileged to think ordinary thoughts and to converse on ordinary topics. She was able also to write to her friends and to record accounts of her experiences, travels, and labours in her articles or her books. In every day contacts with men and women, in personal correspondence with church people, she discussed some subjects of a secular nature, obviously not under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God.

However, she carefully avoided setting forth her own ideas when she discussed religious subjects or presented counsel and instruction, as she did almost exclusively in her published messages. If is clear that then she was passing on the counsel God had given her. On this extremely vital point, F.M.Wilcox made the thoughtful observation in a morning devotional at the General Conference Session, Jul 7, 1946:

Some have made unwarranted distinctions between the various writings of Mrs. White. They have claimed that articles written by her for different periodicals should be regarded merely as we regard articles from any other writer, and that they should not be received with the same appeal as her printed books; that many of her communications should be classed merely as letters. We have the utmost confidence in the honesty and sincerity of the one whom God appointed as His special messenger to His church. Assuredly, if she was true to her sacred trust, she would not write out her own personal ideas and send these as messages from the Lord. To credit her with doing this would be to charge her with rank dishonesty and gross misrepresentation. – *“The Testimony of Jesus” Review and Herald, June 9, 1946 (General Conference Report No. 3), p. 62*.

Divine Message Not Always Presented in Very Words of God

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the . . . churches. Revelation 1:10,11

In vision the prophet John was shown certain scenes, but he employed his own words in describing the scenes. Only in certain cases were exact words dictated to the inspired writes of the Bible, as a business man would dictate to his stenographer. In most instances the prophets used their own words in recording or reporting what had been shown them in vision. As an example of how the message of Bible writers might have been as well expressed in a little different language, yet have conveyed the same divinely inspired thought or idea, is noted by Uriah Smith:

When John says, in verse 12, “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me,” he might have said, “And I turned to see who was speaking with me,” and this would have been just as much inspiration as the former. . . . The words may not be inspired, while at the same time the ideas, the facts, the truths, which these words convey, may be communicated. – *Review and Herald*, March 13, 1888.

Of the Bible Ellen White wrote:

The truths revealed are all “given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language. – *Great Controversy*, Introduction, pp. v, vi.

Keep in mind, however, that there were many cases in which a prophet did speak forth the very words of the Lord. See Zechariah 1:1.

How Mrs. White Indicated Exact Words Spoken to Her in Vision

Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation. – *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1867. Quoted in *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 37. Italics supplied.

Here three important points are made clear:

- In her writing Mrs White chose the words by which she could convey to her hearers or readers the truth revealed to her in vision.
- At times exact words were given to her by the angel, and these she always enclosed in marks of quotation.
- She was as dependent upon the aid of God’s Spirit in presenting the message to the people as in received the vision. While she was not a mechanical instrument of writing or speaking, and must employ her own skill in selecting appropriate words by which to convey the messages, yet she ever worked under the special guidance of the Spirit of God.

During the 1883 General Conference Session, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination made this official affirmation:

We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightening of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed. – *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1887. Quoted by F.M. Wilcox in *Testimony of Jesus. p 85*.

Communications Spoken or Written Not Always From a Single Vision

In Many cases Mrs. White’s messages could not be traced to any one specific vision, but were based upon many visions given her over a period of time. The bases for her testimony, borne in either oral or written form, were as follows:

- The direct account of a single vision:* In *Early Writings*, page 59 and 60, appears a message entitled “Mysterious Rapping.” This statement on spiritualism is the account of a single vision. The articles begins, “Aug. 24, 1850 I saw . . .”
- A composite account of many visions:* Writing of the numerous visions that formed the basis of the age-long story of the conflict between good and evil, Mrs. White stated: “From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ, the Prince of life, . . . and Satan, the prince of evil.” – *Great Controversy*, Introduction, p. x. From these many visions which had been given over a period of five decades came the five books of the familiar Conflict series.
- Vital counsel for the church based on a specific vision, but not recounting the vision:* An example is counsel regarding our publishing work: “In the night of March 2, 1907, many things were revealed to me regarding the value of our publications.” – *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 65.
- Counsel based on many visions:* Counsel for parents on how to treat their children: “God has given me a testimony of reproof for parents who treat their children as you do your little one.” – Letter 1, 1877. Counsel regarding our relation to false reformers: “This matter has been brought before my mind in other cases where individuals have claimed to have messages for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of a similar character, and the word has been given me, ‘Believe them not.’” – *Selected Messages*, Book II, pp. 63, 64.

The Bible writers – Paul for example – received visions at various times containing light for the church. But there was no fixed, formal pattern: no inflexible and unchanging mode of operation. The apostle wrote inspired letters to churches, for which there had been no specific vision, but the counsels were based on many visions given over many years.

Paul was an inspired apostle, yet the Lord did not reveal to him at all times just the condition of His people. Those who were interested in the prosperity of the church, and saw evils creeping in, presented the matter before him, and from the light which he had previously received he was prepared to judge of the true character of these developments. Because the Lord had not given him a new revelation of that special time, those who were really seeking light did not cast his message aside as only a common letter. No, indeed. The Lord had shown him the difficulties and dangers which would arise in the churches, that when they should develop he might know just how to treat them.

He was set for the defense of the church. He was to watch for souls as one that must render account to God, and should he not take notice of the reports concerning their state of anarchy and vision? Most assuredly; and the reproof he send them was written just as much under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles. – *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 65, 66. Italics supplied.

And what Mrs. White wrote about Paul’s visions applies with equal force to her own. It is very important that we have a clear concept of the relationship of the vision to the testimony borne by the prophet.

The Humanity of God’s Special Messengers

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 2 Corinthians 4:7.

Elder F.M. Wilcox, for thirty-five years editor of the *Review* wrote:

In the great plan of salvation and in the work of God in the earth, there is a union of the human with the divine. God, in His wisdom, has seen fit to connect with Himself poor, fallible humanity, in the carrying out of His divine purpose. As the most valuable gems of n jewels are sometimes placed in comparatively worthless caskets, so the Infinite One has seen fit to express His divine will through instruments of clay. And He has chosen this plan regardless of the frailties and limitations of the human agency. These human instrumentalities have been fallible men and women; sometimes even children, as in the case of Samuel; they have been men and women, as was Elijah, of “like passions as we are.” But in the choosing of such instruments the greater glory redounds to the High and Holy One. – *Testimony of Jesus*, p. 74.

There is a distinction between the divine message and the human messenger, which should be borne in mind. Truthful indeed are the further words of Elder Wilcox:

Ellen White made no claims of infallibility. She was compassed about with human limitations the same as all mankind. But notwithstanding her human frailties, God was pleased to choose her as