

When someone tells me that they are a prayer warrior, I admire them.  
 When someone tells me that they are a pastor or teacher, I am interested in their ministry.  
 When someone tells me that they are a leader, I am thankful for them.  
 When someone tells me that they are a prophet, I get nervous.

Most of the spiritual gift's others share, I receive with gratitude. For a few of them, prophecy, faith healing, tongues, my first response is to be skeptical and on guard. Why do we get nervous about the gift of prophecy? It is not that I don't believe that these are gifts, I do. I just know that these are gifts that have often been misused or false in their claim to be from God.

I once visited a "prophet". I didn't actually know that she considered herself a prophet until I was already in her house, and she had a word from the Lord for me. Actually, she had a lot of words from the Lord. She was strong, even forceful when I attempted to leave about an hour into hearing these words from the Lord. She was equally forceful when I rose to leave 2 hours into her prophetic monologue. I stayed for a couple of reasons. There was a fair bit of pressure. When I told her that I needed to go she demanded I tell her why. I told her I had a family I needed to spend time with she rebuked me for choosing my family over God. I stayed thinking I was being polite. I stayed simply waiting for her to pause long enough for me to excuse myself. The pause never came. I stayed to possibly have the chance to reason with her. I consistently tried to turn it into a dialogue, but she was confident that the Lord didn't need a word from me. Eventually I got up and said a few words to excuse myself, but they were more for me than her because she never stopped talking. Leaving was the in-person version of hanging up on a persistent telemarketer. I was invited back, but I haven't gone.

There was another time that a mom and a daughter met me in my church office. They told me that they liked my colors. I was thinking red and white. Maybe they were attracted to red hair or they thought exceptionally white skin was nice. Or maybe they were admiring my tan, which, at its best turns a pronounced shade of pink. They explained that they could see people's auras, which I learned are the supposed energies that radiate out of people. They explained auras and chackras. And wanted me to know that they saw something special in me. So they liked my colors. How do you respond to that? I looked for the quickest way to get them out of my office.

There was this other time that I remember visiting with a woman who came by the church. It was the first time I had seen her. After a few minutes of strange conversation she mentally jumped out of our conversation into some other place and she would narrate what she was experiencing. She would say things like, "I see what's going on here" or "oh this is interesting". I would tell her something and she would inform me that she already knew, she could see into me. In mysterious terms she explained her prophetic gifts and proceeded to prophecy over me with complete confidence. I don't remember what she said but only that it sounded like complete nonsense. I was mostly focused on taking occasional steps toward the door so that we could be outside where others might be able to see me if things got any weirder. What do you do? Do you thank them? Do you rebuke them in Jesus' name?

These are some of the experiences that have made me skeptical of anyone who says they are a prophet. If you share my prophetic skepticism, what are your reasons for it? I am going to maintain my skepticism because there are false prophets and strange spirits. Jesus told us to "beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15), and we should. We should also recognize that he didn't say "beware of prophets". He said "false" because there are true prophets. We must balance our appropriate

skepticism of prophets with the clear Biblical teaching of the gift of prophecy. God calls prophets to communicate his word to us. There is a place for the skepticism but when he really speaks we should receive it as a gift. ***We open ourselves to the devil's deception when we receive all prophets. We close ourselves off from God's truth when we refuse to receive any prophets.*** Receive the gift of prophecy as a gift.

### **Jehoshaphat and the Gift of Prophecy**

Jehoshaphat had a dramatic reaction to a prophetic word. His experience illustrates the importance of the gift of prophecy and the various ways we might receive it.

After the prophet spoke (2 Chronicles 20:15-17) Jehoshaphat bowed down, along with all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah he fell down and worshipped (v.18). This is not how I responded when people have shared a "prophetic word" with me. Then he said to the people, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed (v.20)." If it seems like a dramatic moment at first glance, consider a bit more of Jehoshaphat's story and you will see even more texture to the significance of this moment.

Jehoshaphat had an intimate history with the gift of prophecy. Jehoshaphat was king of Judah and the great, great, great, grandson of King David. It went like this Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam (divided kingdom), Abijah, Asa, and Jehoshaphat. You can read his story in 2 Chronicles 17-20 or consider the outline form below. Notice in his story his experience with prophecy.

- **17:1-6** He became king, sought God and became great.
- **17:10** The lord made the surrounding kingdoms too afraid to make war with him.
- **18:1-4** Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahab, king of Israel, and agreed to join him in attacking Ramoth Gilead, but only with a favorable word from the prophets.
- **18:5** 400 lying prophets told them to go to war. Do you really need a 401<sup>st</sup> opinion?
- **18:6-8** Jehoshaphat asked for the 401<sup>st</sup>. Ahab knew of one, Micaiah, but hated him. Jehoshaphat summoned him.
- **18:12** The messenger who called Micaiah tried to persuade him to also give a prophecy of success.
- **18:13** Micaiah said, "I say what the lord tells me to say". This is the crucial difference between a true and false prophet. This illustrates the incredible value of a true prophet. Think how much good might be done and bad might be prevented by having one person who is committed to speaking only what the Lord tells them.
- **18:14** Micaiah gives a surprising positive prophecy.
- **18:15** Jehoshaphat continues to confirm that it really is the word of God.
- **18:16-22** It wasn't. Micaiah told the truth. They would be slaughtered. Then he told of the lying spirit in all the prophets.
- **18:23-26** Being a prophet wouldn't be fun. He was slapped, mocked, and imprisoned. If you punish the messenger for sharing God's message, do you really want to know the truth?
- **18:27** Micaiah reasserted his confidence by saying, "If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me."

- **18:28** The kings attacked. What? Why would you push for the 401<sup>st</sup> opinion only to act against the word of God? Jehoshaphat cared enough about the gift of prophecy to seek it but not enough to obey it.
- **18:29** Ahab planned to disguise himself and convinced Jehoshaphat to wear normal attire. This was not a fair plan. If I were Jehoshaphat I might speak up at this point, “Wait a minute, the king has been decreed to destruction, in this battle. I don’t want to go out there looking like a king.”
- **18:30** Enemies were ordered not to fight anyone but Ahab. So, Jehoshaphat, in his royal robes, was the only target.
- **18:31-32** So they saw Jehoshaphat, attacked him, but he cried out, and God turned them away.
- **18:33-34** An archer drew an arrow at random and hit Ahab between the plate of armor, and he died. That was a striking and fearful example of God’s ability to do his will and of the validity of his word through his prophets. Especially for Jehoshaphat, who almost died and who lost men in the battle he should never have fought.
- **19:1-3** The Lord waited until he got home safely and then spoke to him through a prophet, Jehu. The message was both rebuke and affirmation.
- **19:4-11** He seemed to learn his lesson and lived more consecrated. He encouraged the people to follow God (v4), appointed judges and told them to be accountable to God (vv6-7), appointed priests and instructed them to be consecrated and obedient (vv9-10). His message was, obey what God says!
- **20:1-4** Then three armies came to fight Judah. Jehoshaphat was afraid and led Judah to seek God.
- **20:5-12** They prayed, affirming the power of God, calling for justice and ending with (v12) “for we are powerless against this huge army that attacks us. We don’t know what we should do; we look to you for help.”
- **20:13-17** That is when the prophetic word came. The one that would lead to that dramatic response of worship (vv18-19)

They received it as a gift. This larger story adds to our understanding of this moment. Jehoshaphat had almost gotten himself killed by not listening to the prophetic word. Now, when he admits he is powerless, God comes to his aid with another prophetic word. Jehoshaphat had to have seen God’s grace in this. And he wasn’t about to disregard the gift of prophecy this time. When he said, “believe his prophets and you will succeed”, he was speaking from a deeply personal experience.

And the prophetic word saved them. If they didn’t have regard for the prophetic word they might have run, retreated, or marched out to fight by their own strength. But they had faith in the prophetic word. They marched out in praise (v21). God fought the battle for them (vv22-25). God restored to him peace and his enemies once again feared him (v30).

The gift of prophecy is a good gift! I still carry my skepticism, but I want to receive it as a gift.

It is Biblical that God speaks through prophets and that this is a gift to humanity!

- **Amos 3:7**- Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.
- **Numbers 12:6** "Listen to my words: 'When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams.'" (This text has a dramatic larger context)
- **Ephesians 2:19-20** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.
- **Ephesians 4:11-16** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
- **Matthew 7:15-20** "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

**The various Biblical roles of prophet are well represented in the prophetic word of Jahaziel the story we have been following in 2 Chronicles 20.**

- The prophet gave comfort and encouragement (v 15)
- The prophet pointed them toward the greatness of God (v 15)
- The prophet gave them instructions about what they should do (vv16-17)
- The prophet predicted what would happen (vv16-17)

Our church believes in the gift of prophecy. Here is how we articulate our belief.

**The Gift of Prophecy Fundamental Belief- 18** 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. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

First, we believe in the gift of prophecy independent of Ellen White. We believe in the Biblical prophets. We believe that God can call a prophet today. God can speak through anyone. We believe in the gift of prophecy.

Second, most of the words in our fundamental belief are about Ellen White. We believe that she had the gift of prophecy. The statement of belief clarifies how her gift is a gift to the church. So, now this message will shift to focus specifically on the gift of prophecy as it was given through Ellen White.

I am encouraging us to receive the gift of prophecy through Ellen White as a gift. We might receive it like Jehoshaphat received Micaiah, listen then disregard. We might receive her like Ahab received Micaiah, hat her because she says things we don't like. Or we might receive her like the people of Judah did in their time of need, worship God for the gift.

### **Early History of Ellen Harmon (maiden name)**

In the 1440's there was a group of advent believers that were forced to wrestle with a question, what were they to make of the young girl having visions. They appeared to be prophetic visions. But you know about our skepticism about prophets.

Ellen's first vision, is now referred to as Christ of the Narrow Way. She saw a narrow path. The path was only traveled by looking to Jesus. The vision served to confirm that light behind them was true and would lead them all the way into heaven. God used this vision to help those disappointed advent believers have confidence that they were on the right path. It was a gift! (see Life Sketches 64-67)

Ellen's second vision came a few weeks after. God showed her the trials she would pass through. She wrote, "I prayed that this burden might be removed from me, and laid upon someone more capable of bearing it. But the light of duty did not change, and the words of the angel rang continually in my ears, 'Make known to others what I have revealed to you.'" (Life Sketches p. 60) She added, "I coveted death as the release from the responsibilities that were crowded upon me." Ellen's reluctance to take the responsibility of the gift of prophecy is a positive indication of the credibility of the gift. She was not seeking this!

Her visions gained acceptance as being from God because of the Christ-centered Biblical message and the supernatural manifestations that accompanied the visions. She had inordinate strength, once holding out the large family Bible on her outstretched arm for 20-30 minutes. Her voice would be strong, but only when there was a message to share. Otherwise, the strength of voice would leave her. One occasion some people tried to avoid meeting her by giving the wrong location for a meeting. She was shown the right location and showed up and went into vision. During one vision a physician examined her. He remarked, "this is an unusual phenomenon". Her eyes stayed open, she had supernatural strength, she didn't breath, and then her strength would leave her when the vision was over.

We come to Ellen White just like the early Adventists came to young Ellen Harmon. We have to test her to see if she is from God. You can find online evidence of her failing the tests, but in my honest view, she passes. The Bible teaches the continued gift of prophecy. The question is whether or not she is a true prophet.

We are instructed to test the prophets.

- **1Thessalonians 5:19-21** Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good,

- **1 John 4:1** Dear friends, 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.

Let's test her. This is not meant to be a decisive test. The results depend on who is grading and what evidence they look at. But I will highlight these areas as an expression of how I understand her to be trustworthy as a messenger of God.

### **Ellen White Lifts up Jesus**

**1 John 4:2** This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

One test is the prophets acknowledgment of Jesus. Of Ellen's first vision she wrote, "If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus we are safe".

She wrote beautiful books on Jesus:

- Desire of Ages
- Steps to Christ
- Christ's Object Lessons
- Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings

Consider her words in Gospel Workers page 160.

*Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people, lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer. Let all your powers be directed to pointing souls, confused, bewildered, lost, to "the Lamb of God." Lift Him up, the risen Saviour, and say to all who hear, Come to Him who "hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us." [Ephesians 5:2.] Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ, the wisdom and power of God. Hold forth the word of life, presenting Jesus as the hope of the penitent and the stronghold of every believer. Reveal the way of peace to the troubled and the despondent, and show forth the grace and completeness of the Saviour.*

In her writings Ellen speaks of Jesus 37,038 times, Christ 69,277 times, and the Savior 11,583 times.

### **Ellen White Lifts up and Agrees with Scripture**

The Bible presents the truth that we are to measure all other messages by.

Isaiah 8:19-20 makes the case that we should not listen to those messengers that do not agree with the Bible.

And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? <sup>20</sup>To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

In the introduction of the book The Great Controversy (vii-viii), Ellen White Wrote, ""In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. 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. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, R.V.).

Yet 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. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the Word.

The Spirit was not given--nor can it ever be bestowed-- to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the Word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1)."

She then quoted Isaiah 8:20. In the next paragraph she said, "This following of impressions, to the neglect of Scriptures, can lead only to further the designs of the evil one."

Ellen White was careful to clarify the relationship of her writings to the Bible in her first book. *"I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the "last days"; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth. Thus God dealt with Peter when He was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles."* (A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White, p. 64 [1851]. Reprinted in Early Writings, p. 78.)

Frequently her writing points us to the Bible with strong and direct language. I have included just a few more examples of these many occurrences.

"The Lord desires you to study your Bibles. He has not given any additional light to take the place of His Word. This light is to bring confused minds to His Word, which, if eaten and digested, is as the lifeblood of the soul. Then good works will be seen as light shining in darkness." (Letter 130, 1901.)

"In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle - the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty." The Great Controversy (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), p. 204, 205.

"In public labor do not make prominent, and quote that which Sister White has written, as authority to sustain your positions. To do this will not increase faith in the testimonies. Bring your evidences, clear and plain, from the Word of God. A [p. 30] "Thus saith the Lord" is the strongest testimony you can possibly present to the people. Let none be educated to look to Sister White, but to the mighty God, who gives instruction to Sister White." (Letter 11, 1894.)

Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light. (The Review and Herald, Jan. 20, 1903. Quoted in Colporteur Ministry, p. 125.) . . .

### **Ellen White Made Accurate Predictions**

The role of a prophet is not only to give predictive prophecy. But when they do, it should be accurate. **Jeremiah 28:9** As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.

Note that there are some Biblical examples of conditional prophecies that didn't come to pass (like Jonah's prophecy about Nineveh).

Nostradamus is known for his predictive prophecies. Some appear to have happened the way he predicted. But many others didn't. This standard does not cut it for God's prophets.

**Deuteronomy 18:22** "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."

Ellen White was not primarily a predictive prophet. However she did do a bit of that. And it all checks out in strikingly credible ways. Here are a few of them.

### **Civil War Prediction**

After the succession of South Carolina Ellen White had a vision. At that time the popular opinion was that if there would be a civil war it would be quick and small. Months before war broke out she predicted that there would be a carnage and that many lives would be lost. She added to her audience that there were those in the house who will lose sons in that war. 22 years later a researcher tracked the families in that house and found that 5 of them had lost sons in that war.

She had 4 total visions about the Civil War. In one vision she saw an angel change the course of the battle of Bull Run. The Battle account tells of a sudden, unexpected and dramatic retreat of the Union Army.

### **Counsels on Health**

Ellen White's counsels on health are predictive in that they are remarkably accurate and far in advance of modern science. Dr. Clive McCay, a former biochemist and nutritionist from Cornell University who made significant discoveries in the relationship between a low calorie diet and longevity, wrote, "In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, no better over-all guide is available today."<sup>i</sup>

Contrary to the science of the time she wrote about the dangers of tobacco, sugar, grease, meats, and fine white flour. She promoted simple foods, good ventilation, lots of grains and fruits and many other health related ideas that were out of step with her time but confirmed by science today.

### **World War 1**

In 1910 Mrs. White warned, "Soon strife among the nations will break out with an intensity that we do not now anticipate."—The Review and Herald, Nov. 17, 1910, p. 8.

### **San Francisco Earthquake Predicted**

On April 18, 1906, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake devastated the San Francisco Bay area and caused 3000 casualties. Two days earlier Ellen White was given a vision about the earthquake. She wrote, "*While at Loma Linda, Cal., April 16, 1906, there passed before me a most wonderful representation. During a vision of the night, I stood on an eminence, from which I could see houses shaken like a reed in the wind. Buildings, great and small, were falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theaters, hotels, and the*



*homes of the wealthy were shaken and shattered. Many lives were blotted out of existence, and the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified. Life Sketches 407.2*

### **September 11**

One of her visions sounds a lot like the events of September 11, 2001. "On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be fireproof, and they were erected to glorify the owners and builders. Higher and still higher these buildings rose, and in them the most costly material was used. . . .The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fire-proof buildings and said: "They are perfectly safe." But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines.—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 12, 13

### **Ellen White had Good Fruit**

After telling us to beware of false prophets. Jesus assures us that we will know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:16). Ellen White has good fruit.

At the age of 12 she gave her heart to the Lord. At the age of 14 she would stay up all night praying for her friends. She received over 2000 visions and dreams in 70 years of public ministry. She wrote over 100,000 manuscript pages and 60 books. She is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most translated of all time, most translated woman of all time, and most translated American Author of all time.

Her many writings focus on the best possible themes.

- Believers response to God
- Second Coming
- 3rd angels message
- Word of God
- Conflict between Christ and Satan
- Love of God
- Jesus' Sacrifice, intercession
- Health
- Education
- Missions

She helped to establish a church that had outlived her. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is in more countries than any other denomination. It operates the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest educational and medical programs in the world, next to the Catholics. The SDA Church has over 92,000 churches, over 21 million members, and 323,072 employees. It is in 212 countries, published in 516 languages, and supported through 419 conferences around the world. It runs over 9,000 schools educating over 2 million students. The church operates 23 food industries, 227 hospitals, 133 nursing homes, 673 clinics, 15 orphanages, 16 media centers, and 60 publishing houses.<sup>ii</sup> It is a huge movement doing amazing work!

In a 1980 study done by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University (ICM), they surveyed more than 8,200 Seventh-day Adventists attending 193 different churches throughout the North

American Division. In the results below, the first number is the percentage for those who read Ellen White's writings and the second number represents those who don't.

- Relationship with Jesus Christ. 85/59
- Assurance with God. 82/59
- Certainty of spiritual gifts. 65/49
- Prepared for witnessing. 49/24
- Personal Bible study. 82/47
- Prayer for souls. 85/51
- Financial support for local soul winning. 76/46
- Daily family worship. 70/42
- Witnessing in everyday activities. 76/48

The surveys conclusion says, "Seldom does a research study find the evidence so heavily weighted toward one conclusion. In the church growth survey, on every single item that deals with personal attitudes or practices, the member who regularly studies Ellen White's books tends to rank higher than does the member who reads them only occasionally or never. On a few items the difference is small only 3 or 4 percentage points. But on most items the spread is large in the tens, twenties, or thirties."

Here is how the secular press described her fruits after her death, "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 honored and respected by all who appreciate noble womanhood consecrated to unselfish labor for the uplifting and betterment of mankind. Her death marks the calling of another noted leader of religious thought and one whose almost ninety years were full to overflowing with good deeds, kind words, and earnest prayers for all mankind." Star (St. Helena, California), July 23, 1915.

One Barna study polled ministers under 40 years old from various denominations. It asked them to share the top authors they read. Ellen White appeared among the top 4. We shouldn't be so ashamed of her. Her ministry is a gift.

**God loves to make himself known to his people:**

- Theophany's-(Gen, 17:1,22; 18:1; Exodus 33:11)
- Visions and Dreams (Numbers 12:6; Dan. 2:19)
- Angels (Gen. 32:1; Dan. 10:11)
- Casting Lots (Numbers 26:55, 56; 1 Samuel 14:41)
- Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28:30; Num. 27:21)
- Divine Speech (Gen. 6:13; 12:1-4; Ex. 20:3-17)
- Miracles and signs (Gen 6-9, Exodus 7-10)
- Jesus Christ (The Gospels and Hebrews 1:1)

He also makes himself known by the gift of prophecy. God loves us enough to lead us and communicate to us. He is doing that through the ministry of Ellen White.

Receive the gift of prophecy as a gift! To do this we need to ask the tough question, how do we use Ellen White's writings as the gift they are meant to be? I will briefly outline some ways she has been used that are not helpful, then some ways that she should be used.

### Not Helpful

- ***Out of context***- You can make anyone say anything if you pick their words apart with no regard for the context they were shared in. This is a danger of compilations and isolated quotes.
- ***As the final word in an argument***- We see her writings as "authoritative". The interpretation of this word is a tricky one. We can trust the work of the Holy Spirit through her. We should not use her to shut down conversation and limit growth. Having a good EGW Quote does not excuse me from critical thinking, seeking God, listening, and searching scripture. The Bible gets the final word.
- ***To hurt people***- The overall tone of Ellen White's writing is not critical. It is full of hope and life. But people have used her words to speak condemnation to people. This would make her sad.

### Helpful

- ***For Spiritual enrichment***- Read her. You'll be blessed.
- ***For better understanding God's character and his truth***- God used Ellen White in the early years of the advent movement, not as a revealer of doctrine, but as a confirmation that they were going the right way in their study of scripture. Her writings can be trusted to confirm the convictions we come to in our study of Scripture.
- ***To fall in love with the Jesus Ellen White loved!***
- ***For trustworthy instruction***- God spoke wisdom through Ellen White. Much of that is available to us in her writings.

Let's not throw out the gift because it has been used in unhelpful ways. Receive it as a gift!

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<sup>i</sup> <https://amazingdiscoveries.org/on-record-outsiders-reflection-on-ellen-g.-white>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.adventist.org/statistics/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2020/>