



# **The Spirit Of Prophecy**





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## What is the Spirit of Prophecy?

The term “spirit of prophecy” occurs only once in the Bible, Revelation 19:10; but the readers in John’s day knew exactly what John meant by this phrase.



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For the early Christians the “spirit of prophecy” was a reference to the Holy Spirit who imparts the prophetic gift to God’s messengers.



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According to the principle of interpreting Scripture with Scripture, this leads to the conclusion that “the spirit of prophecy” in 19:10 is not the possession of church members in general, but only of those who have been called by God to be prophets. This is not purely an Adventist interpretation and can be seen from the writings of other scholars.



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## What is the Spirit of Prophecy?

We can say that one of the identifying signs of the remnant church, which according to prophecy exists after the 1,260-day period, i.e., after 1798, is the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy, or the prophetic gift. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, from its very beginning, has believed that in fulfillment of Revelation 12:17 the spirit of prophecy was manifested in the life and work of Ellen G. White.

# Should all Adventists Believe in the Spirit Of Prophecy?

The Bible says we should accept the Spirit of Prophecy (1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21). First Corinthians 12 also says there are many gifts in the church, including the gift of prophecy. All these gifts will be present in the church until Jesus comes (Eph 4:7-13). If we accept the other gifts of the Spirit, we must accept the gift of prophecy as well. In fact, as we have noted, the Bible singles out this gift as one identifying characteristic of the end-time church (Rev 12:17; 19:10). Whenever God gives a gift to His people, they must accept it.

# Should all Adventists Believe in the Spirit Of Prophecy?

Belief in the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, the body of doctrines identifying us as a church. Therefore, before one is baptized, it is important to be carefully instructed to subscribe to all 28 of the Fundamental Beliefs, including the teaching on the Spirit of Prophecy. If after baptism a member cannot conscientiously adhere to this or any other doctrine, the church should respect the right of that person to withdraw from membership.

# Should all Adventists Believe in the Spirit Of Prophecy?

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the writings of Mrs. White, as a genuine manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy, are a precious gift from God, to be cherished and appreciated. These writings, like the Bible, are to help prepare us for heaven. Even now, as they lift our gaze toward things eternal, they give us a foretaste of what God has prepared for those who love Him.







# Testing a Prophet

How do we know that the prophetic gift in Ellen White's case was genuine and not a counterfeit? The Bible provides several guidelines for testing the prophetic gift.


**1. *Dreams and Visions***—Numbers 12:6. In Scripture, genuine prophets received prophetic dreams and visions. During her 70-year ministry from 1844 to 1915, Ellen G. White received approximately 2,000 visions and prophetic dreams.

# Testing a Prophet

**2. Agreement With the Bible**—Isaiah 8:20. What a prophet claims to have received from God must be in harmony with the rest of God’s Word, because God does not contradict Himself (Ps. 15:4; Mal. 3:6). Although Ellen G. White was not a trained theologian, her messages are in harmony with Scripture.



# Testing a Prophet



**3. *The Witness to Jesus***—1 John 4:1, 2. Anyone familiar with the writings of Ellen White, such as the books *The Desire of Ages* or *Steps to Christ*, will have to admit that she not only accepted all that the Bible teaches about Jesus, but that she continually pointed people to Him as their Lord and Savior.

# Testing a Prophet

**4. *Fulfilled Prophecy***—Jeremiah 28:9. The proof of a true prophet lies, in part, in the fulfillment of their predictions. Although Ellen White's work did not primarily consist of predicting the future, she did make a number of predictions that have been fulfilled in a remarkable way.



# Testing a Prophet

**5. *The Orchard Test***—Matthew 7:20. The orchard test takes time. Ellen White lived and worked for 70 years under the critical eyes of millions of people, largely skeptical, doubtful, suspicious, and in some cases openly hostile. Any fault or inconsistency was and still is exposed with great satisfaction by her opponents. Nevertheless, the fruit of her life and labor attests to her sincerity, zeal, and Christian piety.





# The Spirit of Prophecy and the BIBLE

***The Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible.*** The writings of Ellen White are not a substitute for Scripture. They cannot be placed on the same level. The Holy Scriptures stand alone, the unique standard by which her and all other writings must be judged and to which they must be subject.



# The Spirit of Prophecy and the BIBLE

**1. *The Bible the supreme standard.*** Seventh-day Adventists fully support the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, the Bible as its own interpreter and the Bible alone as the basis of all doctrines. The founders of the church developed fundamental beliefs through study of the Bible; they did not receive these doctrines through the visions of Ellen White.



# The Spirit of Prophecy and the BIBLE

**2. *A guide to the Bible.*** She saw her work as that of leading people back to the Bible. "Little heed is given to the Bible," she said, therefore "the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light." "The Word of God," she wrote, "is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it."





# The Spirit of Prophecy and the BIBLE

**3. A guide in understanding the Bible.** Ellen White considered her writings a guide to a clearer understanding of the Bible. "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 written testimonies are not given to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed."



# The Spirit of Prophecy and the BIBLE

**4. A guide to apply Bible principles.** Much of her writings apply the Biblical counsels to everyday life. Ellen White said that she was "directed to bring out general principles, in speaking and in writing, and at the same time specify the dangers, errors, and sins of some individuals, that all might be warned, reprovved, and counseled."

# The Challenge to the Believer

By the close of her seventy-year ministry, her literary productions totaled approximately 100,000 pages, or the equivalent of 25 million words. They deal with a wide range of subjects--spirituality, theology, education, health, family, etc. Massive amounts of these materials are preserved as letters, diaries, interviews, sermons, general manuscripts, periodical articles, pamphlets, and published books. Based on the sheer volume and quality of her writings, Ellen G. White could have published some 250 doctoral dissertations of 400 pages each.

# The Challenge to the Believer

Revelation's prophecy that the "testimony of Jesus" would manifest itself through the "spirit of prophecy" in the last days of earth's history challenges everyone not to take an attitude of indifference or disbelief, but to "test everything" and "hold on to the good." There is much to gain--or lose--depending on whether we carry out this Biblically mandated investigation. Jehoshaphat said, "Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper" (2 Chron. 20:20). His words ring true today, as well.