

# The Inspiration of the Prophets



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**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).**

# The Journey of Ink

## INTRODUCTION

2 Tim. 3:16

During our missionary communication workshop seminar, we were to interview people in the mall and give them some pamphlets. I asked one person what she thought about Jesus and the Bible. “Jesus is just a prophet, and the Bible is just an ordinary book like novels, and I believe it was written by people who just want to sell books.”

“If men would but study the word of God with earnest prayer that they might understand its teachings, they would not be left in darkness to receive false doctrines.”<sup>1</sup>

God bestowed different gifts to every Christian—talents and intelligence to be used in His vineyard. Read 1 Corinthians 12:7, 8, 10, 11. Having been given the gift of prophecy, the writings of Ellen G. White continue to promote courage and faith and to spread God’s love to the world. Her books, first written with ink and a quill feather pen, have been printed in many languages and have led many people out of darkness. While visiting her home in Napa Valley, California, United States, I felt joined to each bit of her work.

**Suffering nations are begging  
for the peace of yesteryear.**

The apostle Paul, John the Baptist, and other prophets awakened God’s people during Bible times. Who is doing so now? Suffering nations are begging for the peace of yesteryear. People are comparing religions to find out what suits them best. Some depend on the Scriptures, while others look at the bad way some Christians behave, causing them to discount God’s truth. It’s amazing that, occasionally, some Seventh-day Adventists still doubt the writings of Mrs. White and other prophets appointed by God. This doubt sometimes leads unbelievers to wrong ideas about the Scriptures.

“The vitality of the Scriptures is due to the life breathed into them by God Himself. The endurance of their charm and their adequacy to satisfy every need of man testifies to their divine authorship.”<sup>2</sup>

Learn how to cruise the storms of these last days by studying this week’s lesson about the inspiration of prophets, and be able to say as a result, “I know whom I have believed” (2 Tim. 1:12, NIV).

1. *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 347.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 344.

# The Prophecy and the Gifts of Prophets

## LOGOS

Jer. 28:9; 36:1–4; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; Titus 1:10–15; 2 Pet. 1:1–4, 20, 21

The prophetic work of Ellen G. White was more a work of giving instruction and guidance than of prediction. Yet throughout her writings one finds striking predictions that have been or are being fulfilled. For example, chapter 36 (“The Impending Conflict”) in the book *The Great Controversy* contains remarkable predictions concerning events that are to happen just before the end of time. These events center around two of Satan’s greatest deceptions—Sunday sacredness and the immortality of the soul.

Following are examples of other interesting predictions Ellen White has made and the years in which she made them:

1894—“The Lord is removing His restrictions from the earth, and soon there will be death and destruction. . . . Those who are without God’s protection will find no safety in any place or position.”<sup>11</sup>

**“The prophetic gift was indispensable to the founding of the church in NT times, and is the appointed guide of the remnant church.”**

1903—“A storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.”<sup>12</sup>

1904—“Soon great troubles will arise among the nations. Trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes.”<sup>13</sup>

1909—“In the visions of the night a very impressive scene passed before me. I saw an immense ball of fire fall among some beautiful mansions, causing their instant destruction.”<sup>14</sup>

One cannot but be sobered by words such as these. How good it is to know that

“He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. . . . When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands.”<sup>15</sup>

## The Purpose of the Gift of Prophecy (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7–14)

The main purpose of spiritual gifts is to make possible through the church the continuation of Jesus’ earthly ministry in every land (Acts 3:1–10, 5:12–16; 6:8;

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8:5–7).

All of the gifts are in perfect accord with Paul's statement of the threefold purpose of the gifts in Ephesians 4:7–14:

1. For the perfecting of the saints
2. For the work of the ministry
3. For the instruction of the body of Christ

“Prophets were expounders and explainers of the will of God that had been made known to them by supernatural means. They are mentioned along with apostles in Eph. 2:20; 3:5. The idea of foretelling is not essential to the meaning of the word, nor is the predictive element found in all prophetic utterances (Acts 1 5 : 3 2 ; 1 Cor. 14:3). The prophetic gift was indispensable to the founding of the church in NT times, and is the appointed guide of the remnant church (Rev. 19:10).”<sup>6</sup>

“It is God's will and plan that His church shall be empowered by gifts till the end of time (Eph. 4:8, 11–13; AA 54, 55). The gifts are all from God; therefore there can be no possible ground for the human agent to boast over his fellows because he has been favored of Heaven as an instrument for the manifestation of the power of God in a special way for the benefit of the church as a whole (see 1 Cor. 12:11).”<sup>7</sup>

## **REACT**

1. List the spiritual gifts that appear in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:1–16.
2. Which of these gifts do you see as being particularly active in your local church and in our denomination at large?
3. Which of these gifts have made the most positive difference in your life and in your local church? How would you explain that difference to someone who is not a Christian?

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1. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 50.
  2. *Education*, pp.179, 180.
  3. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Feb. 11, 1904.
  4. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 28.
  5. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 121.
  6. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1023.
  7. *Ibid.*, p. 768.

# The Divine Gift

## TESTIMONY

2 Pet. 1:20, 21

“In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.’”<sup>1</sup>

Our physical being is under the supervision of God. We are not robots to be set in motion by some other power. “In God we live and move and have our being. Each heartbeat, each breath, is the inspiration of Him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life—the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM.”<sup>2</sup>

Today people think varying thoughts about the Bible due to all their varying backgrounds. They read Scripture according to what they desire it to say and according to any preconceived ideas about it that they might have. However, Scripture was not written by people who were inspired by their own thought and ideas. “The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

The Lord is the True Author of the Bible. Let Him take care of His own Book, as He has done for ages. There always will be people who strive to be original and famous, but often their knowledge is foolishness. “Brethren, let not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible. It is a work that Satan delights to have any of you do, but it is not a work the Lord has pointed out for you to do.”<sup>4</sup>

## REACT

Read a famous passage of Scripture such as Psalm 23, 1 Corinthians 13, or Luke 2:1–20. As you read, think about the fact that the human authors of these words were inspired by God’s Holy Spirit. How does this fact help you to view these familiar words?

1. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 661.

2. *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 294, 295.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

# “Arise, Nehemiahs of Today”

Tuesday  
January 27

## EVIDENCE

Nehemiah 2; 4–6; 1 Thess. 2:13

The prophet Nehemiah is a good example of how a person becomes an inspirational prophet. Enthusiastically working in cooperation with God, he was used of God to bring about the seemingly impossible within a short time.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, delayed by the indifference of the people as much as by the opposition of enemies, apparently would never be finished. Then Nehemiah, by inspiration, appeared on the scene with firm and eager purpose. “His holy purpose, his high hope, his cheerful consecration to the work, were contagious. The people caught the enthusiasm of their leader, and in his sphere each man became a Nehemiah, and helped to make stronger the hand and heart of his neighbor.”<sup>1</sup>

“Nehemiah did not wait long before going into action. The day after his night survey of the walls, a representative body of the village and town elders assembled to hear his report. In his address he reminded them of the disgraceful state of affairs existing in the nation, recounted the divine help he had experienced in dealing with the king, and set forth the extent of his authority. His speech had the desired effect, and resulted in an enthusiastic and apparently unanimous resolution to ‘rise up and build.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

“Nehemiah did not wait long before going into action.”

“There is need of Nehemiahs in the church today.”<sup>3</sup> They should arise and inspire thousands. They should teach that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can finish our task on earth.

God saw the need to give special guidance to His church amid the confusion of these last days. He chose Ellen White to help Him give this guidance. From the beginning of our denomination, Seventh-day Adventists have believed that the testimony of Jesus is another name for the biblical Spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10), which God gives to men and women to guide His children on earth.

1. *Conflict and Courage*, p. 264.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 398.

3. Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1137.

# Our Inspirations

## HOW-TO

Pss. 12:6; 119:105; Matt. 6:33; 1 Thess. 2:13

Anyone who likes to do something finds time to do it. A computer analyst thinks deeper before installing a new program. A writer does research to gather ideas before composing a meaningful story or article, and a musician needs inspiration before composing a sweet song.

Prophets are inspired by God in many different ways so they can deliver God's messages. As Christians, we also need to be inspired while doing His work and while waiting for His second coming. For us to overcome trials and accept the messages God sends through His prophets, we need to trust Him. Here's how:

*T—Take time with Jesus.* We will not be at a loss if we take a few minutes of our day to pray. Through prayer, we build faith and trust in God during every moment of our life (Matt. 6:33).

**For us to overcome trials and accept the messages God send through His prophets, we need to trust Him.**

*R—Remember that we are living in prophetic time.* We need to realize that signs are coming to pass. God inspired the prophets to warn us and to guide us in the Christian life. Reading the Bible and meditating upon it will help us to walk with Him each day and to

prepare for His return.

*U—Understand that God's words are pure.* We need to understand that God is the author of our lives. His promises are true. Though failures, worries, and pains may at times cause us to doubt, we need to understand that His words are pure (Ps. 12:6).

*S—Seek God.* Life without God is miserable and empty. Seeking God in everyday life inspires us to live happily through many times of trouble. We need to focus on God's leading to live our lives to the fullest (Ps. 119:105).

*T—Thank God for lessons to be learned.* Thank Him for the trials you experience. They help you learn how to grow closer to Him.

# “Believe It!”

## OPINION

1 Thess. 1:2–7

“The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding, we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to Him.”<sup>1</sup> Sooner or later each mind will question prophetic inspiration, because the Holy Spirit that convinces the heart is no longer present.

Studying deeply with an open mind is important. You cannot believe the words of God through the prophets if you are not convinced; and you will never be convinced if you don’t have faith and are not constantly searching for the truth. Our attitudes and beliefs regarding the inspiration of the prophets determine in part what type of Christians we will be. Consistent Bible study convinces us that the prophecies are indeed God-inspired.

“We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface, to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure, find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life.

“Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.”<sup>2</sup>

Studying deeply with an open mind is important.

## REACT

1. Why do you think believers and unbelievers question the inspiration of the prophets?
2. What do you think are the motives of people who are questioning?
3. How will you determine or evaluate the prophecies, signs, and everything else that is written under inspiration?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 459.

2. *Steps to Christ*, pp. 90, 91.

Friday  
January 30

## Inspired to Action

### EXPLORATION

2 Tim. 1:6, 7

### CONCLUDE

When individuals were chosen by God to be prophets, they were not limited to foretelling the future. Most of their work was focused on directing people's hearts and minds back to God. The same Spirit that inspired them to action is guiding us today as we study the Scriptures to know God and His will for our lives. He also empowers us to use our spiritual gifts so that the church can be strengthened to finish its final work of preparing the world for judgment and Jesus' soon return.

### CONSIDER

- Making a collage of pictures and/or headlines from newspapers and magazines that point to the nearness of Jesus' second coming. Include the title, "Spiritual Gifts—For Such a Time as This," or another title of your own choosing.
- Taking a spiritual gifts inventory to discover where God has gifted you. An inventory found at <http://www.churchgrowth.org/analysis/intro.php> evaluates your strengths and explains in detail.
- Learning more about the life of Ellen G. White, God's prophet for the last days. Some books you may want to read include, *Messenger of the Lord*, *His Messenger*, *Ellen White: Woman of Vision*, and *Ellen White: Trailblazer for God*. (All books are available at the Adventist Book Center.)
- Singing all three verses of the song "Open My Eyes That I May See," number 326 in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, and asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the special work He has given you to do.
- Interviewing a number of church members to find out their favorite method of studying the Bible and sharing the results with your Sabbath School class.

### CONNECT

Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, "Departing From the Word," pp. 101–194; George W. Reid, editor, *Understanding Scripture*.