

# The Work of the Prophets



## Teacher's Guide

### Materials

images of Ellen G. White as available from an Adventist Book Center, online at <http://www.whiteestate.org/photos/photos.asp>, or other source(s) available to you; a lap top computer and access to the Internet

### Surveying the Source

Gen. 22:1–14; Isaiah 53; Matt. 3:7–10; Revelation 13.

### Plotting the Course

#### The students will:

- ▶ Recognize the role of a modern prophet.
- ▶ Evaluate how one can tell a true

from an untrue prophet.

- ▶ Apply biblical principles to test those who claim the prophetic gift.

### Preparing to Lead

When one envisions a prophet, images may include coarse, stringy hair; sandal-clad dusty feet; or rough-hewn hands. The time period that likely comes to mind is more than two millennia ago. However, the Bible makes it clear that God can raise a prophet at any time, from any

people. “It will come about after this/That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;/ And your sons and daughters will prophesy,/Your old men will dream dreams,/ Your young men will see visions” (Joel 2:28, NASB). Hmmm. Does this bring a different vision to mind?

### Getting Started

**A. Say:** “God used a physically weak, teenaged girl in a mighty way. Ellen Gould Harmon, who was disfigured by a rock thrown to her head, reflected God’s image to the world. She was willing to endure hardship and trials and to be taken in vision to the heavenly realm. Now, nearly 100 years after her death in 1915, many still turn to her writings seeking to know God better. Technological advances have made it amazingly easy to do so.” To demonstrate, go to <http://www.whiteestate.org/search/search.asp>, or show a printed page of this home page to show the class.

**B.** Because Ellen White lived in a different time and dressed in a manner foreign to us, there could be hurdles in viewing her ministry as relevant to us. After welcoming the students, discuss with them how people dress and wear their hair in your area compared to the images of Ellen White. Then share some photos of you or your parents wearing clothes and hair styles uncommon today. Point out that Ellen White looked appropriate for her place and time. Discuss what impact, if any, appearance or dress should have on how seriously people view you or what you have to say.

### Delving Into the Word

**A.** Explore biblical principles pertaining to the tests of a true prophet. Read with your class texts such as •Isaiah

8:20; •Jeremiah 28:9; •Matthew 7:16, 18–20; •1 Thessalonians 5:19–21; •1 John 4:2, 3. Helpful information about

these and related texts is found online at <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/books/27/27-17.htm> and at <http://whiteestate.org/books/mol/Chapt3.html#Tests%20of%20a%20Genuine>. Compare these texts to what is known about Ellen White's work and the fruit of her labor. Discuss how in the last days these tests will be a strong defense.

**B.** Tell your class that Ellen White's writings are generally understood and written in a straightforward manner. As an example, read to your class this description of the new earth as seen in one of her visions:

"With Jesus at our head we all descended from the City down to this earth, on a great and mighty mountain, which could not bear Jesus up, and it parted asunder, and there was a mighty plain. Then we looked up and saw the great City, with twelve foundations, twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We all cried out, 'The City, the great City, it's coming! it's coming down

from God out of heaven!' And it came and settled on the place where we stood. Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the City. There I saw most beautiful houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls, most glorious to behold, which were to be inhabited by the saints, and in them was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually offering praises to God."\*

Some prophetic writings are far less straightforward and not easily understood. Read Revelation 13 with your class, and discuss with them the interpretation of this chapter. Invite your pastor to participate or use the information found here: <http://www.tagnet.org/davenport/revbeast.htm>.

## Discussing the Ideas

1. Prior to Ellen's receiving the prophetic gift, God tried to bestow it upon William Foy and Hazen Foss. Ask the class how they would react had they been so chosen by God in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

2. During Ellen White's life, only printed materials comprised the mass media. How would things be different today if God were to raise up an early 21<sup>st</sup> century prophet?

3. Ask class members to share an experience about how an Ellen White writ-

ing affected them or someone they know.

4. Discuss why there seems to be so much interest in the tabloid media and some of the general public in Nostradamus, a so-called prophet who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, yet there is comparatively little or no interest in Ellen White.

5. What could the Seventh-day Adventist Church do to make Ellen White's life and writings more widely known and read by church members and the general public?

## Closing the Activity

Ask class members to consider what their reaction might have been had they been present during one of Ellen White's visions. Using the details found in the reproducible activity (p. 37), ask a stu-

dent to role-play Ellen in vision. Discuss the reaction of your class members. Were any frightened? Perplexed? Dismissive? Interview the role-player to determine his or her reaction to the situation.

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\**Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 52, 53.

## What were Ellen White's visions like? Are there any eyewitness accounts?

The work of anyone who claims to bear God's message must meet the sure tests of the Word of God, such as “ ‘you will know them by their fruits’ ” (Matt. 7:16, NKJV), “to the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8:20), etc. While the physical phenomena that sometimes accompanied the visions do not rightfully form a test, they did supply, in the minds of most eyewitnesses, confirmatory evidence of the working of divine power. Those who personally witnessed Ellen White in vision observed rather carefully what took place. From the eyewitness accounts available (<http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/eyewitns.html>), we can build the following summary:

1. Immediately preceding a vision, both Mrs. White and others in the room experienced a deep sense of the presence of God.
2. As the vision began, Ellen White would exclaim "Glory!" or "Glory to God!" at times repeated.
3. She experienced a loss of physical strength.
4. Subsequently, she often manifested supernatural strength.
5. She did not breathe, but her heartbeat continued normally, and the color in her cheeks was natural.
6. Occasionally she gave exclamations indicative of the scene being presented to her.
7. Her eyes were open, not with a vacant stare, but as if she were intently watching something.
8. Her position might vary. At times she was seated; at times reclining; at times she walked about the room and made graceful gestures as she spoke of matters presented.
9. She was absolutely unconscious of what was occurring about her. She neither saw, heard, felt, nor perceived in any way her immediate surroundings or happenings.
10. The close of the vision was indicated by a deep inhalation, followed in about a minute by another, and very soon her natural breathing resumed.
11. Immediately after the vision all seemed very dark to her.
12. Within a short time, she regained her natural strength and abilities.