

Understanding God's Prophets

413; ISA. 8:20; 2 Chron. 20:20; 272

*** Understanding God's Prophets

There are many who have claimed to be a prophet of God. Including the Watch Tower Society, or the Jehovah Witnesses. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or Mormons. One needs to check the claims of Islam against the Bible too.

Or what about a Televangelist, Kenneth Copeland, and a \$760 million fortune who asked his congregation to buy his 4th jet because "God told him to!"

Then we have a lady by the name of Ellen G. White who never claimed to be a prophet. She called herself a messenger of God and millions, including me, believe that she was called of God and had a prophetic ministry.

How can we be certain that a prophet is a prophet? Some time ago, I preached a sermon on the test of a true prophet. If you were there then, you may remember that I used the acronym HALF - Harmony, Authority, Life and Fulfillment.

This test establishes the fact that Ellen White possessed the gift of prophecy which has been disputed by many over the years.

The word is *** **HALF** and >90% of all those who claim to be prophets can be eliminated by this simple test.

*****HARMONY ISA. 8:20** *To the law and to the testimony.* Joseph Smith fails multiple wives, Mohammad fails same reason

*****AUTHORITY 2 PETER 1 : 20, 21** *Spoke as they were moved by HS*

*****LIFE MATT. 7:15- 21** *By their fruits you shall know them.*

*****FULFILMENT JER. 28:9; 1 SAM. 3:19** *Did what they prophesied come to pass?* JWs fail predictions 1925, 1975 fail

JWs fail on prediction, end of world 1874/5, 1914, 1925, 1975: Joseph Smith fails on multiple wives and concubines, as does Islam!

If you apply these tests to anyone who claims to be a prophet whether man, woman or an organization then you can eliminate all the false claimants.

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***There are five additional tests that can be applied:-

- 1 **DANIEL 10:8** Lack of natural strength
- 2 **10:18** Supernatural strength EGW family bible at arm's length
- 3 **10:17** Lack of breathing non believing Dr checks with mirror – flees saying this from God
- 4 **NUMBERS 24:16** Eyes open looking into distance
- 5 **2 COR. 12:2 – 4** Oblivious to surroundings Eyes almost poked o no flinching

All of these are shown in EGW's experience – holding a large family bible for about 20 (?) minutes at arm's length. Not breathing and a Doctor who did not believe, fleeing as he checked with a mirror, etc

But just as important as it is to accept the Bible and Ellen White's prophetic gift is the need to understand how to relate to the Bible and her writings and how to correctly use them both.

Ellen White had much to say in regard to this: ****"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."* Please notice where the emphasis is to be given - not to her writings but to the Bible.

Unfortunately, all sides of the debate about her relevance to the S.D.A. Church, have misused her writings by picking and choosing the quotes that best suit their position. All too often, these have been taken out of context. For this reason, I have reservations about the compilations of her writings which focus on quotes relating to the chosen topic that, in many cases, should be viewed in a wider context.

***Ellen White herself explained that her function was *"to exalt" the Word and "attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all."* 5T 665 if people really read her writings they will find themselves being driven back to the study and authority of the Bible.

*** *The Lord loves us yet. Let us praise Him for this. Let us take hold of the work in a new way, with heart, and mind, and strength. Do not any longer pick flaws in your brethren. I see enough vultures watching for dead bodies. Let us have nothing of this nature in our work. Let there be no picking flaws. Attend to yourselves, and you will have all you can do. When you purify your souls by obeying the truth, you will have something to impart. 13MR 207.1*

*** *May God help you all and help me. I want help and strength and power. But **do not quote Sister White till you stand on vantage ground, where you know what you are doing. Take the Word of God. It is full of meat and drink. Study the Bible, and you will know more of God than you do now. You will have something fresh to impart to others. You will not go over the same ground again and again.***

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You will realize that there is a world to save. I ask you to put on the whole armor, and be sure that your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.--Manuscript 43, 1901.

There was report of a man who wanted to do God's will and he knew the answer was in the Bible but not knowing it well he thought that he would just let the Bible open on its own, put his finger on a text and know that it was God's will for him

He opened the Bible, closed his eyes and put his finger on a text.

It read "Judas went out and hanged himself"

Now, he knew that could not be God's will so he tried again and this time the text he put his finger on read "Whatsoever you do, do quickly!"

He slammed the Bible shut!

S.D.A.'s can be like that with EGW's writings too - a sentence here and a paragraph there and lo, you have what she wrote on a particular subject. No, No, No!

One of my pet hates is a compilation of her writings to prove a point. A sentence here and another one there and I can make the Bible, and EGW, say anything I want. This is a wrong use of the Bible and her writings. Those who compile dozens of EGW quotes on a topic but neglect the Bible are NOT following EGW's counsel! We must understand how to understand the Prophets.

Having said that, I want to make it clear that EGW herself asked that compilations be made on different topics For example, Patriarchs and Prophets and Christ Object Lessons.

***Read her writings in context of the day and age in which she lived. Get the principle and follow it. And make correct application to today.

For example, what about EGW's advice to shorten the hems on ladies dresses about 8 or 9 inches. What if ladies read that when the mini skirt was all the rage? Why did she give that advice? Because skirts were long and swept along the road where the animals had defecated.

And what about the advice that all young ladies should be taught to hitch up and drive a horse and buggy! Very appropriate for the day and age when she wrote it but in 2019? Obviously not. Again, what was the principle involved? Being able to drive a car and change a tyre if needed.

For example, she wrote to say that money should not be wasted on buying a bicycle.

Why? Because it cost more than year's wage when she wrote it.

A couple of years later her messenger boy was riding one to deliver messages from her.

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Why? Because the costs had dropped significantly and was now common in that society.

Always put her writings in their historical perspective and literary context. What was the principle involved? Why did she give the advice she gave at that time and place?

Answer that and get the principles from the writings just as we should do with the Bible.

Going back as to how to distinguish the true prophet from the false - do not rely on signs alone for Satan is skilled at showing signs and he will at the end to deceive, if possible, even the very elect.

*****Deuteronomy 13:1-4** *"Suppose there are prophets among you, or those who have dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, ² and the predicted signs or miracles take place. If the prophets then say, 'Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations,' ³ do not listen to them. The LORD your God is testing you to see if you love him with all your heart and soul. ⁴ Serve only the LORD your God and fear him alone. Obey his commandments, listen to his voice, and cling to him.*

*******A sign alone is not enough proof

REV. 16:14 *They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs,*

The devil is capable of performing miracles to deceive And he does. UFO'S, Images of Mary all over the place. Miraculous healings. New Age philosophies.

MARK 13:22 *False Christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the very elect.*

*******There would be no point in warning about a false prophet unless the true was to be expected.

2 CHRON. 20:20 *Believe in the Lord your God and you shall be established; believe His prophets and you shall prosper.*

Invest your time in reading the Bible and then Conflict of the Ages series. PP, PK, DA, AA, and GC and other books.

Where the Bible texts are given at the beginning of each chapter take the time to read them before you read the books.

******* DA Ch 34

That way you have an immediate check on her writings and whether they agree with the Bible.

And you will find that, always, her writings are never in any disagreement with the Bible but rather what she wrote was but an expansion of the Bible and in total agreement with the grand central theme of the Bible.

To understand the Bible or the writings of EGW we must study all that we can on that topic. A familiar poem which I have abbreviated illustrates the point:-

There were 6 blind men in Indostan who went to see an elephant that each by observation might satisfy their own minds

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*** Elephant picture

***The first approached the elephant and felt its side - Ah, he said it was a wall!

***The second felt the tusk and said the elephant was like a spear!

***The third got hold of the trunk and said, an elephant is much like a snake!

***The fourth felt a leg and said, an elephant is like a tree!

***The fifth man chanced upon the elephant's ear and said, an elephant is much like a fan!

***The sixth man chanced upon the elephant's tail and declared an elephant is much like a rope!

The six men all disputed loud and long as to their own opinion and being blind could not see another's point and though each was partly right, they were all wrong!

This poem illustrates how easy it is to be partly right, and totally wrong. When reading either the Bible or EGW research all there is on any subject and allow for some difference of opinion too..

For example: EGW wrote that the proper position for prayer was to kneel both in public and in private prayers. But then she says that we should be talking to God when we walk or go about our normal duties - I would paraphrase it as at work, rest or play!

EGW was always one for balance and not extreme in diet, dress, work or exercise. When we study either the Bible or EGW we must base our conclusion on the entire spectrum of the writings on any topic and must harmonize with the whole of the Bible or EGW writings.

Bias, unsound premises, faulty reasoning or the misuse of the written materials will, of necessity, lead to a faulty conclusion and wrong practices.

Unlike many so called prophets EGW always pointed away from her writings and exalted the Bible as the final authority. *** *"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."* **Isaiah 8:20.** The people of God are **directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness.** Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the **true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.** GC 593

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*** Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God **as revealed in His word**; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have **fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible** will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on **the rock of God's immutable word**? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? GC 593

Remember that the Bible and the writings of EGW reveal our human hopelessness and then point us to the solution of salvation through Jesus. Both the Bible and EGW point the reader and glorify Jesus.

With everything that we read we need to come back to this premise **Isaiah 8:20** *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

***“You must **search the Scriptures to learn the mind of God, not to prove your theory.** ..The only true way to search the Scriptures is to lay down every prejudice, every preconceived opinion, at the very door of investigation, and then enter into the work with an eye single to the glory of God, with an understanding open to conviction, and a heart softened to believe what the Lord says to you.” 2SM 82

In conclusion, I would say that we need to be honest with ourselves. Either God has used EGW or He hasn't. If He has, and I believe He has, then we must be honest with ourselves and seek to apply her counsel to ourselves in every area we are aware of and not go to extremes in anything but we must be consistent.

We need to read in such a way that the Bible, and the writings of EGW, speak to our hearts and not make us critical of others who do see things the way we do. That takes honesty, dedication and the guidance of the HS every moment of every day. Not placing EGW above the Bible, nor rejecting her either. God has a blessing in store for us as we read both the Bible and the writings of His messenger for these last days.

Amen.

Hymn 272 Give me the Bible