

Sermon Notes from Pastor Ian Cotton
("Meting the Messenger Not the Myth")

453, John 15:1-5, 452 Meeting the Messenger not the myth

Her favourite hymn 530- "When peace like a river" and 489 - "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Our Opening hymn 453 "We Have Heard" based on her vision in 1850

Last time I preached on understanding the prophets and gave you 4 tests of a true prophet HALF. Today we will look at the life of a true prophet - Ellen White - who did not consider herself a prophet but rather a Messenger.

If you search the internet you will find out just how many myths have been circulated about this Godly lady and how much opposition there is in regard to the role God placed upon her. She has been called a false prophet, a liar and a plagiarist and probably much more by those who oppose her prophetic calling. The GC asked a RC (Roman Catholic) lawyer whether she was a plagiarist and his answer after much research was "No."

Her pictures often seemed to portray her as a somewhat prim and proper lady dressed in sombre black clothes but, in reality, she was a very warm and caring person with a sense of humor. Remember, in those days you had to sit still for a minute or so to get a picture.

In December 1844 while praying with a small lady's group, a 17-year-old girl, Ellen Harmon, was given a vision. She did not understand it and only with the greatest hesitation did she share it.

The same vision was given first to two men, William Foy, a Millerite preacher, and Hazen Foss and both of them refused to share the vision they received from God. God then gave the vision to a weak, sickly 17 year old girl because He knew she was both humble and obedient.

Ellen and her twin sister, were the youngest of 8 children. At the age of 9, she was hit in the face by a rock thrown by a classmate - an accident from which she almost died. This resulted in her experiencing poor health for much of her life but she found comfort from that early age in her relationship with Jesus. This accident left her unable to finish her formal education.

The very fact that she did not have the opportunity for an advanced education shows that her writings were not the result of her own scholastic abilities but the result of a life open to

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the leading of the Holy Spirit.

And this is confirmed in **2 Peter 1:21** "*For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*" NIV

Today, 100+ years after her death in 1915, there are more than a 100 of her books in circulation and she has been translated into more than 150 languages. According to one web site she is the most widely translated woman writer in the entire history of literature and (E. G. White) is the most translated American author of either gender.

During her life she wrote more than 5,000 periodical articles but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English.

Ellen White's life-changing masterpiece on successful Christian living, *Steps to Christ*, has been published in nearly 150 languages, with well over 100 million copies in circulation. Her crowning literary achievement is the five-volume "Conflict of the Ages" series, PP, PK, DA, AA, GC. It traces the conflict between good and evil from its origin to its dramatic, soon-to-unfold conclusion.

Millions believe that Mrs. White was appointed by God as a special messenger to draw the world's attention to the Holy Scriptures and help prepare people for Christ's second advent. From the time she was 17 years old until she died 70 years later in 1915, God gave her an estimated 2,000 visions and dreams. The visions varied in length from less than a minute to nearly four hours. She wrote and shared with others the knowledge and counsel she received from God.

God has given a prophet for these last days to prepare a people to meet Jesus in peace. We believe that it is E. G. White. Her writings cover a broad range of subjects, including religion, education, health, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, publishing, nutrition, and management. She meets all the requirements of H.A.L.F.

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 . .*

*****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.*

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***FULFIL **JER. 28:9; 1 SAM. 3:19** *Did what they prophesied come to pass?*

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

- 1 **DANIEL 10:8** Lack of natural strength
- 2 **10:18** Supernatural strength
- 3 **10:17** Lack of breathing
- 4 **NUMBERS 24:16** Eyes open
- 5 **2 COR. 12:2 – 4** Oblivious to surroundings

What is the "Spirit of Prophecy"?

Rev.12:17"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Rev.19:10"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See [thou do it] not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The sign of the church of God is that it has "the testimony of Jesus".

The testimony of Jesus is further defined as "the spirit of prophecy".

Let me be crystal clear - the Bible is the result of the SOP.

The S.D.A. church accepts her as being inspired by God and thus her writings are correctly called the SoP. And she always points out the her writings are to lead to the Bible.

God's messenger for these latter days of this earth's history was a humble lady - E. G. White. She never claimed to be God's prophet. She called herself a messenger, for her work comprised more than just prophecy. Any and all tests of a prophet applied to her life and teachings have the ring of truth.

She gives all glory to God.

Her counsel on religion, She upholds the Bible as the guidebook to be followed today.

She upholds the 10 C's as the standard of judgement.

Health and nutrition: recommends a plant based diet. Smoking is a slow insidious poison,

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exercise in the fresh air daily and the list goes on.

Education: parents should be the first teachers.

Social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, management and mission work is still applicable so long after her death and, as she put it, 'Her writings are the lesser light which points to the greater light, the Bible.'

Description of her in vision:

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 often exclaim "Glory!" or "Glory to God."
3. She experienced a loss of physical strength.
4. Subsequently, she often manifested supernatural strength. She held an 18lb Bible at arm's length during one vision for over 1/2 an hour and no one could move her arm. Volunteer??
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 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 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.

God has given a prophet for these days because He wants a people ready to meet their God when Jesus returns for the second advent.

These passages seem to appear frequently in her preaching:

2 Peter 1:4-8 *And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature. ⁵ So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral*

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excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better. ⁶ Knowing God leads to self-control. Self-control leads to patient endurance, and patient endurance leads to godliness. ⁷ Godliness leads to love for other Christians, and finally you will grow to have genuine love for everyone. ⁸ The more you grow like this, the more you will become productive and useful in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:3-6 *We are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We are writing these things so that our joy will be complete. ⁵ This is the message he has given us to announce to you: God is light and there is no darkness in him at all. ⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness. We are not living in the truth.*

And she was a prophet with a sense of humour too. Often Mrs. White's writings reveal a touch of humor. In 1882 she had just moved from Oakland to Healdsburg. One of her horses she named Dolly—a horse that seemed allergic to work. Ellen White wrote, "She stares at the mountains and hills as if she was a tourist viewing the scenery.

A few months later in Italy, she was enjoying some sunny days after a stretch of rain and wrote in her diary: "We drove very slowly, for the horse, although strong, had no idea of hurting his constitution."

In 1885 she was sailing for Europe which was to depart on Sabbath. Her party planned to embark on Friday afternoon in order to be settled for the Sabbath. She noted in her diary, "We accomplished this, nearly."

After a boat trip, she penned, "When I got off the boat, when I walked up through the streets, it seemed to me as though I was still on the boat, and I would step so high that people must have thought I was drunk."

Mrs. White knew how to handle potentially embarrassing public moments. One Sabbath afternoon, EGW was speaking in the local church in St. Helena, California. It was a warm August day. The building was filled to capacity. There were few windows in the structure, and the ventilation was exceedingly poor.

Willie, her son, was sitting upon the platform behind Mrs. White. While she was speaking, she noticed that a number in the congregation were unsuccessfully trying to stifle smiles upon their faces. As the meeting had worn on, Willie had become drowsy, and nodded off,

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with his chin-whiskers now resting fully upon his shirt-front.

EGW took the entire situation in at a glance. She stopped speaking, smiled, and in a confidential tone and admonished the congregation, "Don't blame Willie. If anyone is to blame, it is me-- his mother. For I was the one who taught Willie to sleep on the rostrum on the Sabbath!

When Willie was a baby, I had no baby-sitter; so I had a Battle Creek carpenter make me a cradle on rocker-arms, just exactly the width of the pulpit in the Tabernacle. I would then place Willie in the cradle before the worship service began; and while I was preaching, I would use my right foot to rock the cradle, to keep him asleep, lest he awaken and disturb the service. So, don't blame Willie; blame me. I was the one who taught him to sleep in church on the platform on Sabbath!"

(Roger W. Coon interview with Arthur L. White, August 1959, Washington, D.C.; cited in Coon Ph. D. thesis, pp. 306-307)

In her late years at Elmshaven, Ellen White was given cold-mitten friction treatments. That meant standing in a tub while someone applied cold water and then rubbed her with mittens to increase circulation. Twice a week she was given a salt rub ("salt glow"). One day, sensing a difference in the liquid, she wet her finger and tasted it. The worker had used sugar by mistake! With good humor, Ellen White observed: "Just trying to sweeten me up, huh?"

Today, 180 + years after EGW had her first vision, there is still controversy, as those who resist God's Spirit are opposed; for others there is a settling into God's truth and an understanding that EGW's ministry has only strengthened God's people in the Bible and for the preparation needed to be ready to meet Jesus in peace when comes. Are you ready?

Let us now sing, 452, "What Heavenly Music"