

## ***The Prophetic Gift***

# ***The Blessings of the Prophetic Gift***

Lesson #12 for March 21, 2009

Scriptures: Exodus 17:14; 34:27; Leviticus 11:1-12; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Isaiah 44:8; 49:6; Amos 3:7.

1. This lesson is about the impact that the prophetic gift of Ellen White has had on the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the impact that it should have on our individual lives today. To any serious student of church history, it is clear that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would not exist—certainly would not exist in its present form—without the writings and prophetic gift of Ellen G. White.
2. Why did God choose “a special people” to represent Him in the times of the Old Testament? Has God chosen a special people today? What provisions did God make for the education of Israelite young men in order to promote that mission? What specific guidance was given through Moses that was intended to help the children of Israel to be a healthier, holier, and happier people? (Deuteronomy 6:1-3; *Evangelism* 695-696; *1SM* 68-69) If Seventh-day Adventists today were “healthier, happier, and holier,” would we attract—in a good way—the world’s attention? Seventh-day Adventists who follow the health advice of Ellen White live up to 10 years longer than people of the world. So, why isn’t the world joining us in these practices? Even the *National Geographic Magazine* has recognized Loma Linda as one of the four healthiest places in the world. Do they recognize that our religion has anything to do with our healthy longevity?
3. God chose the Israelite people not just so they could live healthier, happier lives but in order to be a “witness” to the entire world. (Deuteronomy 7:7,8; Isaiah 44:8; 49:6; Isaiah 43:21; 66:19) God certainly intended that Christians—including Seventh-day Adventists—should do the same thing. (Matthew 28:19,20)
4. Historically, the Christian church has had two periods of great expansion. The first occurred in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and was spearheaded by the apostles. The second occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century shortly following the French “experiment” with revolution and atheism. It quickly became apparent to people aware of what was happening in France that Christianity was far superior. Especially in Britain, Bible societies were formed and money was raised to “send out” missionaries. Within 100 years, the percentage of Christians in the world population increased from 18 to 34%. During that time there was also a great expansion in the number of churches, especially in North America. It came to be known as a time of great religious “awakening.”
5. In their early years, Seventh-day Adventists believed that God had called them to spread the gospel to all nations (Matthew 24:14) through a ministry to immigrants who came to America. They believed that it was impossible for such a small group as they were to reach out to other parts of the world. In 1871, Ellen White received a message suggesting that young men should be trained to speak other languages and then sent forth to other parts of the world. In 1874, she had an additional impressive dream saying that the third angel’s message should go to the world. That same year J. N. Andrews was the first official Seventh-day Adventist

missionary sent to Europe. Three years later John G. Matteson and his family were sent to Scandinavia. Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has “work” in all but a few of the countries of the world. Why have we had so little success in reaching the “10/40 window” around the middle of the world?

6. How has it been possible for a relatively small group of Christians to sponsor and operate such an incredible missionary adventure? What percentage of church members does God expect to be involved in “missions”—either locally or internationally? What are each one of us doing to promote the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Can you be a missionary across the street?
7. What would you say is the current status of belief in the writings of Ellen White in our church? How would you respond to the young person who recently said to her parents living near Loma Linda, “Ellen G. White will die with your generation”? Has the Seventh-day Adventist Church failed in passing on to our children the essential role of the prophetic gift in our church? How can we do better? **Why do many of our young people reject or ignore Ellen White?** Why are some picking and choosing what they want to believe from her writings? Why are our young people becoming so polarized with regard to Ellen White? Some groups (Advent Hope; Generation of Youth for Christ) seem to be very devoted to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church while many others seem to be running from it as fast as they can! How many are just looking for any excuse to be more like the world? Are our young people “attacking” Ellen White because that is more “acceptable” than attacking the Bible and Christianity? Are the young people rejecting our message because we are not living it faithfully? Do they see a double standard in our lives? Do our actions match our profession? Are we so afraid to offend anyone that we are becoming “buried” in “political correctness”? If our young people do not see the truth lived out in our lives, shouldn’t we challenge them to do better? **Do we and our young people ignore or reject the teachings of Ellen White primarily because we just do not want to live that way?** Are we comfortable rejecting all of the mounting scientific evidence that supports what Ellen White advised more than one hundred years ago?
8. Are the writings of Ellen G. White becoming out of date? Are her messages on health becoming irrelevant? Have any of the messages on health given by Ellen White been disproven by modern science? Can we still trust the messages given to us by Ellen White even though she lived and died nearly 100 years ago? If God speaking through Ellen White in relatively recent times is going out of date, what about the Bible?
9. What methods did God intend for the Israelites and for modern Adventists to use to pass on their/our trust in God’s messages and His messengers? Abraham was commended by God because he passed along his faith and trust in God to his son and grandchildren. (Genesis 18:19) Moses instructed the children of Israel to teach their children the commandments and instructions from God in all their daily activities. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9,20-25) How can these instructions be appropriately applied by the Adventist community in our day? What is the best way to teach our children? Isn’t it to “walk the talk,” doing what we tell them to do? If our children see us living better lives because we are following the advice given to us, won’t they want to follow it also?
10. In 1872, Ellen White received a vision about the need for an educational program. A short time

later, a school was established in Battle Creek that soon had 100 students in attendance. Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates the second largest parochial educational system in the world with more than 6000 schools. Why is the number of Adventist schools growing rapidly in other parts of the world while in North America there have been recent votes to close down schools?

11. What are the distinctive characteristics of Seventh-day Adventist education? Why should Adventists be concerned enough to send their children to Adventist schools? Is it easier or harder to live an Adventist lifestyle when attending an “outside” university?
12. The Bible gives some very interesting instructions about diet. Ancient Israel was told not to eat the fat of animals or their blood, and furthermore, not to eat animals that had died of natural causes. Leviticus 11:1-8 and Deuteronomy 14:3-21 give additional instructions about which meats are “clean” and which are not. Have those instructions become irrelevant in our day? Why are so many Seventh-day Adventists abandoning a strict vegetarian or even vegan diet while at the same time many health-conscious people in the world are becoming vegetarian or vegan? **So why do people eat meat? “It’s the flavor!” Do we clearly understand what that flavor comes from? It is the waste products in meat that give it the flavor! Try boiling a small piece of meat and squeezing out all of the “juices” and see how much flavor is left! The protein has essentially no flavor.** How many of these changes in diet are a result of peer pressure? Why are youth in our day, in general, becoming so rebellious against virtually any authority? Can we help our young people “grow up” before they destroy themselves? Mark Twain is quoted as saying at the age of 27, “I can’t believe how much my father has learned in the last ten years!”
13. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not officially organized until 1863, most historians recognize that it had its beginnings in the “1844 movement.” It was not until 1848 that God gave a vision to Ellen White suggesting that tobacco, tea, and coffee were harmful. At the famous “Sabbath conferences” of 1848 where Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were largely worked out, pork chops were most likely a significant part of the diet. It was not until 1863 that Ellen White was given additional instructions about health. In some parts of the world, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is known especially for its health message. Why is health such an important part of our total belief system? Why has the church become so involved in providing health care to the rest of the world? If we live healthier lives, we can think more clearly about what is really important! If health is so important, why did God wait so long before giving specific instructions about many aspects of health? Today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates more than 300 hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries around the world. What are we doing to vigorously promote the Adventist “lifestyle”? People and nations around the world are asking Adventists to help them run their hospitals and clinics better.
14. Millions of dollars have been invested in research on Seventh-day Adventists. “Adventist Health Study 1” cost about \$17 million. “Adventist Health Study 2” has cost more than \$10 million so far. Loma Linda—the center of our health message today—has been picked out even by *National Geographic Magazine* as one of the four healthiest spots in the world. Why is it that people who carefully follow the instructions of Ellen White on average live 10 years longer than others? There are many different contributing factors.

15. With all the research going on today, can we set aside the health guidance of Ellen White and simply follow modern research? Do we still need the health messages which we received through Ellen White? Which is more compelling in your mind: the prophetic advice given through Ellen White or the scientific research being worked out in modern times?
16. Ellen White grew up and wrote her messages at a time when medical science was just getting a foothold in our world. Medical science was just discovering that vitamins existed. Quinine and arsenic were used regularly to treat human ailments. “Bloodletting” was considered to be an essential medical practice. In that setting a number of health reformers arose suggesting that we should go in new directions to promote health. Ellen White was acquainted with and visited some of those health reformers. How does her advice compare with theirs? Two well-known health reformers in her day, Sylvester Graham and James Jackson, taught that we should not eat salt. Other health reformers said that we should never cut our hair or drink regular water but should use only fruit juices. Some even suggested that when eating meat, we should eat mostly the fat! Overweight people were thought to be the healthiest people of all. Others suggested we should not use soap.
17. What percentage of the health guidance given by Ellen White has since been confirmed by modern medical science? Two relatively recent books have come out discussing those issues, *The Prophet and Her Critics* by Leonard Brand and Don S. MacMahon and *Acquired or Inspired?* by Don McMahon. Careful research has demonstrated that at least 98% of Ellen White’s guidance has so far proven to be correct. It is true, however, that Ellen White was a human being and a creature of her times. Remember that Ellen White was giving her messages at a time when those around her believed and practiced health in very different ways from the modern advice we know about today. Sometimes, the explanations she gave for why we should follow certain health practices were not the best explanations. Does that lessen the correctness of her health guidance? The chance that she could have picked out all of the right principles of health from among all of the things that were being taught in her day is so remote it boggles the mind.
18. Ellen White and her husband, James, started most of the major Seventh-day Adventist institutions in North America. They started both of our major publishing houses. They started many of our major educational institutions. As we know, the Bible is the most widely published and the most widely read book in history. The ancient Israelites were instructed to familiarize themselves with God’s words—even to write them on the door posts of their houses and “tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder.” (Deuteronomy 6:8, *GNB*) What was God suggesting by those words?
19. Today, we are bombarded by a glut of media. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than 50 publishing houses around the world. Television, radio, and the Internet provide a constant stream of all kinds of material. Much of that material is truly not fit for human consumption. How do we protect ourselves and our children from being overwhelmed by that onslaught from the Devil? The Devil understands very clearly that “by beholding we become changed,” (*GC* 555) and he lines our roads and freeways with advertisements for alcohol, tobacco, unhealthy foods, and sexually explicit materials. How can we protect our young people from being attracted and drawn into those vices? Is the advice written in the Bible still

applicable today?

20. Ellen and James White dedicated much of their lives to publishing. As we know, she wrote many books and thousands of articles. Have those materials become obsolete, or have they become even more important in our day of media glut? I have been working on a project for several years of recording in audio form all of the writings of Ellen White. I have already finished all of her original books. I am now working on the compilations. I hope soon to make them available in one way or another. I listen to them for more than an hour every morning as I run. I would not exchange them for anything!
21. When God does something important to promote His cause, you can be sure that the Devil will “jump in with both feet” as soon as he can. John Harvey Kellogg—who grew up in Ellen White’s home—drifted off into pantheism. A. F. Ballenger—and more recently, Desmond Ford—came up with different ideas about the sanctuary. The church in general slid into legalism. In 1888, Ellen White, with the help of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, had to speak out decisively on the subject of “righteousness by faith.” In our day some of our leading thinkers are being drawn into evolutionary ways of thinking, suggesting that it took a long time for this earth to be formed. Do we still need the guidance so generously provided by God through Ellen White to stay on the “straight and narrow” way?
22. Don’t we have plenty of prophetic guidance that things will only get worse before they get better? How can we individually stay close to God’s will for us through study and application of the messages of the prophetic gift in recent times?
23. **The most important teaching that we have obtained through the writings of Ellen White is the “great controversy” teaching. Without her guidance it is doubtful that we would have discovered this most important truth even though it is spread out on the pages of Scripture. (See the handout entitled “The Great Controversy Described in Scripture” which is posted in the “General Topics” section of the Teacher’s Guides on the website, [Theox.org](http://Theox.org)) No other church has it. Although many do not recognize or acknowledge its existence, it is the cardinal doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Are we ready to put God first in our thinking and our teaching? Do we clearly understand the accusations that Satan has made against God? Do we understand how God has answered those accusations and how much it has cost Him?**
24. **After all that Ellen White has given us, it would be a terrible loss to forget about her!**

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