The Gift of Prophecy
The Call of a Prophet

Lesson #2 for October 10, 2026

Scriptures: Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6-9; 1 Kings 18:19-39; Isaiah 6:8; 53; Daniel 2:46-48; Mark 1:2-5; Matthew 11:1-6.

1. What is a "call" of a prophet? How can one know God is "calling" and not the Devil?

> [From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] In biblical times, prophets often played key roles in the history of God's people. Sometimes they were center stage, taking powerful, if not crucial, positions in the life of the community.
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> However, being a prophet was a difficult calling. Their lives were often not easy but filled with sorrow, rejection, misunderstanding, and frustration.
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> Often God's prophets did not readily accept their call to the prophetic office. And no wonder. Many prophets were strongly opposed by those who should have welcomed their messages. God's prophets were ignored, ridiculed, beaten, or jailed. Others were stoned or hunted like wild animals. Several were martyred.
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> Today, in a generation flooded with violence, greed, immorality, exploitation, and all manner of satanic influences, the prophetic voice is often rejected or simply ignored. We are called to heed the voice of God's prophets and to be messengers of the hope given to us through the prophets.
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> [In the prior lesson,] … we learned that, after the Fall in Eden, God worked to reestablish communication with human beings. [In this study,] … we will examine some monumental times in history when God called prophets to realign His people with His messages for a fallen world.—*BSG** for Sabbath Afternoon, October 3.‡
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> [From the *Adult* ***Teachers*** *Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=**T**-BSG:] **A biblical prophet's call is a divine summons in which God directly appoints an individual to speak on His behalf**, often through a revelatory experience such as a vision, dream, or audible voice. This call typically involves a commission to proclaim God's message, to confront sin, and to guide His people, sometimes at great personal cost, as seen in the lives of such prophets as Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. This … lesson focuses on the prophetic call in various historical settings and how **the prophets' messages generally addressed the themes of judgment, salvation, and restoration**. The discussion culminates in Ellen G. White's calling as a manifestation of God's desire to continue communicating with His people in a sinful world.—*T-BSG** 26.†‡
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> [T-BSG:] Old Testament scholar Willem A. VanGemeren effectively captured the divine nature of the prophetic calling and its mission to convey God's message when he **defined an Old Testament prophet** as "an Israelite, called by God, and empowered by the Spirit[,] who serves as God's spokesperson[,] who has received authority and a revelation from God[,] who is a good shepherd over God's flock[,] who demonstrates God's Word and mission by signs."—VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic*

Word (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), p. 32. Several features of this definition stand out. First, God gave the prophet a divine revelation, and the Spirit empowered the prophet to deliver that revelation. Second, the prophet functioned as a shepherd over the Israelite people, nurturing, guiding, rebuking, and correcting them. Finally, signs such as miracles, special events, and object lessons verified the prophet's divine credentials.

The prophetic call was a life-transforming moment for the prophet. It arrived unexpectedly, with force and power, but "was not experienced as the prophet's long-coveted opportunity to attain knowledge which is otherwise concealed. **He does not seize the moment, he is seized by the moment.** The word disclosed is not offered as something which he might or might not appropriate according to his discretion, but is violently, powerfully urged upon him."—Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets*, part 2 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), p. 224. "I am filled with power," declared Micah, "with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" *(Micah 3:8, ESV)*.

In numerous prophetic books, the authors declare that **the "word of the LORD came" to them** *(Hos. 1:1, Jon. 1:1, Jer. 1:11, ESV; see also Joel 1:1)*, or that **"the hand of the LORD was upon" them** *(Ezek. 1:3, Ezek. 3:22, ESV)*, and they introduce or conclude their oracles with **"thus says the LORD"** *(Amos 1:3, Obad. 1:1, Hag. 1:7, ESV; see also Zech. 12:1, Isa. 7:7)*. These repeated prophetic formulas leave a distinct impression that the seers had no doubt they were speaking God's words. This prophetic "word" or revelation often carried a message of judgment, as Ezekiel declared: the LORD "said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.' And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me" *(Ezek. 2:1, 2, ESV)*. Later, the LORD says, "And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house" *(Ezek. 2:7, ESV)*.—*T-BSG** 26-27.†‡Ω§

[T-BSG:] **The prophets delivered God's message to an audience in a particular historical situation.**

Prophets were "chosen by God to receive his message and then to proclaim it to an audience in a particular historical situation."—Eric J. Tully, *Reading the Prophets as Christian Scripture: A Literary, Canonical, and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022), p. 58….

God's call to **Abraham** *(Gen. 12:1)* occurred in the aftermath of the confusion of languages, in Genesis 11, when paganism, idolatry, and warfare had won the day. Interestingly, the first time the term "prophet" occurs in Scripture applies to Abraham *(Gen. 20:7)*, who functioned as an intercessor. **Elijah** ministered during a great spiritual crisis in the northern kingdom of Israel, during the reigns of kings Ahab and Ahaziah. Elijah thundered against Baal worship and called Israel to repentance. **Isaiah** prophesied during the reigns of the four kings of Judah, in the ninth century, when the great challenge was the rise of the empire of Assyria, the greatest threat to Judah during this time. **Daniel** played a significant role in the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia. **John the Baptist** heralded the coming of

the Messiah in the first century. In postbiblical [*sic*] times, **Ellen G. White** received her first vision in antebellum America, following the Millerite disappointment.—*T-BSG** 27.†‡§

Abraham and His Calling

[BSG:] From Genesis to Revelation, God has had a faithful remnant who have accepted the call to obedience in response to His grace *(see Jer. 31:7, 31–34)*. For example, years after the dispersion from Babel, God chose Abram (later Abraham) to be an example of covenant faith, not just to his family but for all future generations. Surrounded by apostasy and moral ambivalence, Abram proved faithful to God's call. *(See Gen. 12:1–9.)*—*BSG** for Sunday, October 4.‡§

2. **Read Genesis 12:1-9**.

[BSG:] God communicated the terms of the covenant to Abraham and showed him how humanity's salvation would be accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ *(Gen. 15:6–17)*. **To test Abraham's faith and to illustrate the future sacrifice of God's Son, Abraham was called upon to offer Isaac, his son, as a sacrifice to God** *(Gen. 22:1–17)*. What an excruciating test for the father of the faithful. Think of all the reasons Abraham could have used to disregard God's explicit command, yet he faithfully obeyed. God stayed the hand of Abraham from killing Isaac and provided a ram in his stead.—*BSG** for Sunday, October 4.†‡§

3. **Read Genesis 15:6-17; Genesis 22:1-17; and Hebrews 11:17-19.**

[BSG:] Not all prophets were called by God to warn of impending doom. All were called, however, to restore the people to faithfulness and often to warn against apostasy, against oppression of those who were poor and needy, and against violation of the covenant and its stipulations.

Most important of all, however, **the prophets were to reveal the promise of salvation found in the Messiah.** The enduring testimony of the biblical prophets and of His Spirit in our post-apostolic era calls us to recognize and to warn others of the impending crisis that will come upon the world. Yet central to that warning is the good news of redemption for Jesus' faithful people, those who have remained in covenantal relationship with Him *(Rev. 12:17)*.—*BSG** for Sunday, October 4.†‡§

Revelation 12:17: The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*®* [*GNT*] (*Today's English Version*) [*TEV*], Second Edition (Revelation 12:17). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].‡

[BSG:] **Read Genesis 15:6,** [*sic*] **Galatians 3:6–9,** [*sic*] **and Hebrews 11:8. What about Abraham's life and character qualified him for God's service, even though he was, clearly, a flawed man?**—*BSG*,* Sunday.*‡

[BSG:] There are many parallels between Abraham's day and ours. **As**

paganism and idolatry ran rampant in Abraham's day, so today many of the world's competing ideologies aim to eliminate or marginalize Christianity. In contrast with much of the prevailing culture, God's people today are called to reflect His image faithfully in their daily interactions with others, including their proclamation of the three angels' messages *(Rev. 14:6–12).—BSG** for Sunday, October 4.†‡§

4. **Read Revelation 14:6-12.**

Elijah and "The Elijah Message"

5. **Read 1 Kings 18:19-39**. This is the story of Elijah at Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal. What can we learn from his story?

> [BSG:] Elijah's calling and manner of speech reflected his role as God's messenger. To stop Israel's apostasy, God sent Elijah to King Ahab in order to announce a multiyear drought. God used this affliction to turn His people away from idolatry and back to obedience. **King and country blamed the prophet Elijah for their woe and sought his death.**
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> **On Mount Carmel, Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal and Asherah.** God's messenger made a Spirit-filled appeal to idolatrous Israel to denounce their false gods and return to the Lord. The people knew that their choices had led them into national apostasy….
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> Just prior to Christ's second coming, God commands His church to proclaim the Elijah message again, and for people to turn away from their "idols" and be ready to stand in the great day of the Lord. God still communicates with His people through channels that He has selected. His Word and the gift of prophecy provide admonition, warning, counsel, and encouragement.—*BSG** for Monday, October 5.†‡
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> [T-BSG:] The prophetic message in the Old Testament often revolved around three central themes: **judgment, salvation, and restoration**. These themes were interconnected and formed the core of the prophets' ministry, addressing the covenant relationship between God and His people. The prophets consistently called Israel and Judah back to their covenantal obligations to God, warning them of the consequences of their rebellion, idolatry, and social injustice. **Judgment** was portrayed as a divine response to the breaking of the covenant *(Deuteronomy 28)*. Despite their warnings, the prophets offered hope, pointing to God's willingness to save a remnant of His people who would repent. **Salvation** often involved God's intervention to rescue His people from their enemies or from dire circumstances. **Restoration** involved the return of the exiles to their land, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, and a spiritual renewal in the people's relationship with God, culminating ultimately in the coming of the Messiah.—*T-BSG** 28.†‡§
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> [From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] …. The world today has its Ahabs and its Jezebels. **The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—after riches, fame, pleasure, and the**

pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart. Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 177.1.†‡
[Underlining of text is added for emphasis.]‡
[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.768&index=0]‡

[EGW:] **A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children.** But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,* Book 1, 121.1.†‡
[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p98.742&index=0]‡

6. ***Do you think the Elijah message has anything specific to say about people today?***

Malachi 4:5-6: 5 "But before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will send you the prophet Elijah. 6He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

[BSG:] True revival starts in the heart and the home. The family is the cornerstone of the church and an indispensable building block of community. Revival in the home spreads a heavenly love to the church, the community, and the nation. This is God's purpose for the Christian home. Revival also motivates God's people for mission.

What kinds of idols, if any, exist in our homes, hearts, and churches today?—*BSG** for Monday, October 5.‡

Isaiah: The Gospel Prophet

[BSG:] Isaiah, a major prophet of the Old Testament, received His call to prophetic ministry directly from God *(see Isa. 6:1–8)*. Overwhelmed by God's holiness and majesty, Isaiah realized his unworthiness. In that moment, a seraph flew to Isaiah with a live coal from the heavenly altar and "purged" his sins. God then asked, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah's response should be ours: **"Here am I; send me"** *(Isa. 6:8)*.—*BSG** for Tuesday, October 6.†‡§

7. **Read Isaiah 6:1-8.**

[BSG:] Isaiah's call came at a pivotal point in Israel's history. Despite his own failings, the task of warning Israel and its leaders of their sins was very important. Isaiah's prophecies are key Scripture passages, providing profound insight on God's nature, the nature of humanity, and the unfolding

plan of salvation. In fact, what is unquestionably the most powerful prophecy depicting not only the death of Jesus but what His death did for the world is found in Isaiah 53.—*BSG** for Tuesday, October 6.‡

Isaiah 53:4-6: [**The Suffering Servant**] [**Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12.**]

4 "But he endured the suffering that should have been ours,
the pain that we should have borne.
All the while we thought [notice: *we thought*] **that his suffering**
was punishment sent by God….
6But the LORD made the punishment fall on him,
the punishment all of us deserved."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†‡

8. What can we learn from Isaiah 53? Was it predicting what would happen to Jesus? Notice carefully that the people ***thought*** that God was punishing Jesus. But, it is true that Jesus died the death that sinners will die in the end, separated from God, the only Source of life.

> [BSG:] Isaiah's prophecies foretold the Messiah's purpose and mission *(Isa. 53:3–5)*. They explained why Christ was "led like a lamb to the slaughter" *(Isa. 53:7, NIV)* and how His atoning sacrifice saved His people from their sins. **The substitutionary aspect of Christ's death is so explicitly depicted there, showing the foundation of the atonement made on behalf of all humanity.** [What does the term *substitutionary aspect of Christ's death* mean?]
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> "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" *(Isa. 53:6)*. The universal nature of sin is depicted here; the universal nature of the Cross, the solution to sin, is depicted here as well. This chapter, perhaps more than any other in both the Old and New Testaments, shows the plan of salvation in such clear and unambiguous terms.—*BSG** for Tuesday, October 6.†‡§

9. ***What are we supposed to learn from the life and death of Jesus?*** **In the broadest possible context, we can say that the life and death of Jesus give us a choice. We can choose to live a life patterned after the life He lived; or, we will die the death which He died, "separated from God, the only Source of life."**

10. **This is not a process whereby Jesus as a Substitute somehow pays the price for our sins so we can go out and do them again. <u>It was a demonstration of what will happen if we refuse to "turn away from our sins" and follow Jesus</u>.**

John the Baptist: Preparing the Way for the Messiah/Savior

11. **Read Matthew 3:1-3.**

> [BSG:] Isaiah's prophetic calling was not easy. People found his dire predictions of their destruction preposterous, as many do today when warned about the consequences of sin *(Rom. 6:23)*. Isaiah's prophetic voice for his time and ours is clear *(see Isa. 2:4, Isa. 5:20)*. **It was the refusal of the nation to practice justice and reform that led to Jerusalem's destruction. The same sin will mark the destruction of earth's wicked inhabitants when Christ returns**.—*BSG** for Tuesday, October 6.†‡§

Romans 6:23: For sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†

12. ***Jesus made it clear that instead of loving sin and hating God, we need to love God and hate sin, turning away from it completely. God's forgiveness takes place when we change and turn away from our old sins! See Jeremiah 31:33-34.***

Daniel: Prophet and Government Official

> [BSG:] Most Christians know the story of Daniel 1, in which he stood for the health principles [Or, was it for religious principles?] that he had learned as a child. Daniel was a model of faithfulness *(Dan. 1:8)*. When presented with royal delicacies, he insisted on eating a plant-based diet and drinking only water instead of partaking of the diet offered him from the king's table *(Dan. 1:12–16)*. This was a small test in contrast to what would come later, such as in Daniel 6, when his faithfulness could have easily meant death for him.—*BSG** for Wednesday, October 7.‡§

13. To follow through with Daniel's personal history, we need to read Daniel 2:46-48; Daniel 4:18; Daniel 5:13-14; and Daniel 6:25-27. Contrast 1 Corinthians 10:25-33.

> [BSG:] Look at the testimony from these pagans to the power of Daniel's God. However unique these stories, they all reveal a crucial principle: by our lives, by our faithfulness, and by the power of God working in and through us, others can and should learn about the God of heaven, and know that He is "a God of gods, and a Lord of kings."
>
> Also, because the recurring theme of Daniel's prophecies is judgment, culminating in Christ's second coming (God's ultimate victory), the meaning of Daniel's name, "God is my judge," is quite appropriate. His writings deserve careful study and attention as they are relevant today. Daniel's prophecies serve as a reminder always to remain vigilant and keep God's commandments, even in the "little" things of life. [Both John the Baptist and Jesus also preached that we must "turn away from our sins." (Matthew 3&4)]
>
> **Also, as a prophet, Daniel foretold the rise and fall of nations and the consequences of their disobedience to God. Through his prophetic visions, Daniel revealed God's plan and the ultimate victory of God's kingdom *(Dan. 7:13, 14)*.**—*BSG** for Wednesday, October 7.†‡§

14. ***Why do you think God chose to reveal all of that history to Daniel way back in the 6th century B.C.? Only the true God can predict the future far in advance.***

> [BSG:] Think, for example, about Daniel 2, written half a millennium before Christ. Daniel so accurately depicted the rise and fall of these four great world empires, even coming up to our time (that of the feet and the toes of the statue), clearly referring to nations of modern Europe, which, as the prophecy so clearly teaches, "shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" *(Dan. 2:43)*. What an amazing prediction about Europe, even to this day, in which, despite intermarriage and all attempts at unity, the continent would remain as separate nations with separate laws, customs, and traditions. When even a few years before the fall of the Soviet Union, no intelligence agency saw that fall coming, Daniel's prediction gives us powerful reasons to trust God's prophets.

All the kingdoms in Daniel 2 came and went as predicted. What should this tell us about trusting the prophecy, which talks about God's eternal kingdom coming next *(Dan. 2:44)***?**—*BSG** for Wednesday.‡§

John the Baptist: Preparing the Way for Jesus

15. Think of John the Baptist as he prepared people for the coming of the Messiah. **Read Mark 1:2-5** including **1:4b**: **"Turn away from your sins and be baptized."**—*GNB-TEV*.*†

    [BSG:] The Gospel of Mark informs us that the arrival of John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy *(Isa. 40:3)*. John's development from childhood to manhood was marked by faithfulness to God. Satan feared losing his dominion over humanity after hearing John's voice in the wilderness.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 8.‡§

    [EGW:] The childhood, youth, and manhood of John had been characterized by firmness and moral power. When his voice was heard in the wilderness saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" (Matthew 3:3), Satan feared for the safety of his kingdom. **The sinfulness of sin was revealed in such a manner that men trembled**. Satan's power over many who had been under his control was broken. He had been unwearied in his efforts to draw away the Baptist from a life of unreserved surrender to God; but he had failed. And he had failed to overcome Jesus. In the temptation in the wilderness, Satan had been defeated, and his rage was great. Now he determined to bring sorrow upon Christ by striking John. The One whom he could not entice to sin he would cause to suffer.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 224.1.†‡ [https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1039&index=0]‡

    [BSG:] The wickedness of John's listeners was unmasked in a manner that caused Satan to quake. Satan's grip over Israel was being threatened. He repeatedly tried and failed to dissuade John the Baptist from his faithful lifestyle and trust in the Messiah.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 8.‡

16. **Read Matthew 11:1-6.**

    [BSG:] Satan was unable to tempt Jesus into sin, and his defeat in the wilderness enraged him. **He [Satan] then changed tactics by having John, Jesus' cousin, thrown into prison**. John's imprisonment hurt Jesus, even though Satan could not entice Him to sin. This was Satan's way of breaking John, while emotionally burdening the heart of the Savior. But John received a word of encouragement from Jesus. And despite his terrible conditions, and certainly not understanding why he remained in prison when Jesus was so powerful, John nevertheless stayed faithful, even unto death.

    Like the prophets of old, we, too, are called to proclaim a message of repentance [turning away from our sins] and faith and the totality of Christ's righteousness *(Rev. 14:6–12)*. As he did with John the Baptist, Satan may use uncertainty to make us doubt God's mission for our lives. We need not become despondent if we remember God's leading in our lives, especially when things don't go well for us, as happened with John, who was imprisoned and then killed by the actions of an evil woman and a weak-willed man. Whatever humans may do to us, we can reach out to God in

faith, and He will answer us. He has promised us power to do His will *(Acts 1:8)*. In the post-Christian and non-Christian world, it is imperative that we be faithful witnesses for Christ, whatever our circumstances.—*BSG** for Thursday, October 8.†‡§

17. ***Do you believe that the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit will be larger and more successful than the outpouring at Pentecost? See Revelation 18:1.***

    Acts 1:8: "But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

18. Could some of us be in positions like John was, confined to prison until he was beheaded?

Ellen G. White: Called to Prophetic Ministry

[BSG:] God calls prophets at specific times for special purposes. They were there with the messages needed for that time. In this context, Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White was one such person who demonstrated a modern manifestation of the prophetic gift, functioning much like a noncanonical prophet *(more on this in the lessons to come)*. Ellen Harmon (White) received her first call in December 1844, a few weeks after Millerite Adventists [*sic*] had expected Jesus to return based on Daniel 8:14: *"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."*

Although William Miller never set an exact date, his followers eventually looked to October 22, 1844, based on the biblical time reckoning for the Day of Atonement as the date Christ would return to the earth. This belief brought tremendous anticipation to thousands upon thousands in North America and other regions of the world. Soon they would be united with their Savior in heaven. Miller, too, became filled with excitement and enthusiasm as the expected Advent [*sic*] approached.

But Christ did not appear, and the Millerite believers experienced one of the most devastating historical events, the Great Disappointment.

This is the setting in which God gave Ellen Harmon (White) **her first vision. Its primary message was to encourage both her and the disappointed believers that God was still with them in spite of their mistaken interpretation.** The vision pointed to a path heading from this earth to the heavenly Jerusalem. On this path were Advent [*sic*] believers traveling to the Holy City. And "if they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe."—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 31.

This vision was good news. God was beginning to create a new movement out of the confusion of the disappointment. Jesus was still with them. He was still returning. He was still leading them on the path of salvation. They just had to keep their eyes "fixed on" Him. They had great reasons not to give up hope, even amid so much turmoil and disappointment.

Thus, Ellen G. Harmon (White), a 17-year-old teenager, was called to her prophetic ministry. Hers was not an easy path, especially in the beginning.

Although this gift was gradually accepted as genuine, Ellen G. White was fearful to be God's messenger. Being a prophet of God had never been easy or prestigious. So, how would she submit to God's call?

[In the next lesson] … we will take a closer look at the special work and challenges faced by Old Testament prophets, some of which are also echoed in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White….

To discover more, visit https://whiteestate.org/absg/2.—*BSG** for Friday.†‡§

[T-BSG:] **Ellen G. White's inaugural vision was the beginning of her prophetic calling and brought hope and encouragement to the confused believers after the Disappointment.**

In December 1844, Ellen G. White received her first vision in the historical context of the Millerite disappointment. It was a transitional time as the followers of William Miller were in disappointment and disarray. A young Ellen emerged on the scene with a message of hope and encouragement. While praying with a group of discouraged Millerite women, she felt surrounded by light. To her mind was opened a scene in which she saw the "advent people" traveling on a narrow path toward heaven, with a great light behind them and Jesus ahead of them. If they kept their eyes on Jesus, they stayed on the path, advancing forward. When some took their eyes off Jesus, they fell off the path into the dark world below (see Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 13–15). The vision surprised her and was a force she could not control. As the biblical prophets before her, she was "seized by the moment."

Several themes emerge from this first vision, which is foundational to Ellen's future prophetic ministry. **First**, it points to her lifelong passion for the second coming of Jesus. **Second**, Seventh-day Adventists should never forget their place in prophetic history. **Third**, all Christians, especially Adventists, must keep their lives focused on Jesus as Lord and Savior (see George Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2nd ed. [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004], pp. 35, 36).

Ellen called this her "first vision," as her heavenly transports became a repeated experience. Thus, her prophetic identity formed around the frequently used phrases, "God has shown me," "I saw," or "I was taken off in vision," which conveyed her prophetic self-consciousness and authority. These revelations brought comfort and consolation to the scattered, distressed band of faithful believers who went through the Millerite experience. She was called to travel and share her visions with the various groups of Millerites spread throughout Maine and, later, other parts of New England. Eventually, she put these revelations, and the many to come, in writing for circulation among the developing believers who would eventually become Seventh-day Adventists.—*T-BSG** 28-29.†‡§

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