

# The Prophetic Gift



Week Four

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Revelation 14:14–17



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## ACCEPTING THE CALL

God gave three people the gift of prophecy when the Millerite movement was just gaining traction. The first was William Foy, an eloquent African American preacher from Boston who faithfully shared the four visions he received.

The second was Hazen Foss. His story is not only heart-breaking but also serves as a warning. Shortly before Ellen White had her first vision, Foss had the same vision and was instructed to tell others. Unfortunately, he was upset after the Great Disappointment and refused. The Lord told him he would have one more chance, after which the vision would be given to someone else. He refused again and heard a voice say, “You have grieved away the Spirit of the Lord” (Letter 37, in *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 6 [1890]).

Frightened and horrified, he changed his mind and called a meeting of Advent believers. He explained what had happened but when it came time to share the vision, he couldn’t remember a single word. Those present later described it as a most sobering scene. He later heard Ellen White share the same vision he had been given and implored her to be faithful in doing the work set before her. He lived into his seventies but never again showed any interest in spiritual matters.

The third person to receive the prophetic gift was Ellen White, who was called at the young age of seventeen. She initially hesitated to share in public what she had been shown, but she eventually surrendered and went on to be God’s faithful messenger to the Advent movement for the next seventy years.



## **inScribe**

Write out Revelation 12:14–17 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out a portion of the primary passage. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.

## inGest



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What things in our lives make it hard for God to communicate with us? How can we receive more guidance from Him?

What are the two key ingredients of the remnant in Revelation 12:17 and how do they work together?



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## THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

Throughout the Bible, we see a consistent correlation between the law and the prophets. When Israel followed God, accepted His counsel, and obeyed His law, He spoke to them through prophets. However, when they turned away from Him, the prophetic voice was heard less (Neh. 9:26; Lam. 2:9; Ezek. 7:26). Solomon outlined this cause and effect in Proverbs 29:18: “where there is no vision, the people perish” (KJV). The word “vision” here refers to the visions given to prophets (the gift of prophecy). The second half of the verse establishes a strong link between keeping the law and receiving prophetic vision. Revelation 12:17 confirms the principle that law keeping and prophetic ministry go together when it identifies the two most significant identifying qualities of the remnant as keeping God’s commandments and having the testimony of Jesus, which we learn later is the Spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10).

Historically, we can see this connection at play in the last three hundred to four hundred years of the Old Testament, when there was no prophet in Israel. Instead of engaging in open rebellion like they did before the Babylonian captivity, the nation had instituted a rigid legalistic outward show. The gift of prophecy was restored with John the Baptist and the apostles, but shortly after the death of the apostle John, when paganism swept through the church, we see a seeming absence of the prophetic gift until the mid-1800s. “The law of God and the Spirit of Prophecy go hand in hand to guide and counsel the church, and whenever the church has recognized this by obeying His law, the spirit of prophecy has been sent to guide her in the way of truth. . . . As the third angel’s message arose in the world, which is to reveal the law of God to the church in its fullness and power, the prophetic gift was also immediately restored. This gift has acted a very prominent part in the development and carrying forward of this message” (*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 33). It is no mere coincidence that the rediscovery of the truth of God’s law, including the seventh-day Sabbath, and the restoration of the gift of prophecy happened around the same time; the two complement each other.

God called two people after the Great Disappointment, but only Ellen White heeded the call. Because she shared the light that she had been given and remained humble while doing so, God entrusted her with more visions and responsibility. She is the most translated female author of all time. She was given hundreds of visions in her lifetime, which yielded more than forty books and over five thousand periodical articles. These works addressed a wide variety of topics spanning from biblical history to church governance, from health and finance counsel to advice on relationships and education.

God is just as eager to guide His church in the 21st century as any previous age. Let each of us be diligent to follow all the instructions that God has already given us so that we can be open to further leading. Unless we implement the knowledge we already have, it will be very difficult for God to lead us further. As Jesus said, “Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you” (John 12:35).

## AN IDENTIFYING MARK OF GOD'S MOVEMENT

Rejecting all modern-day prophets out of supposed loyalty to the Bible is a common happening in the church today. However, the Bible is clear that God will send the gift of prophecy again in the last days, so to be truly loyal to the Bible we must be open to the possibility of true prophets in the modern age. Jesus warned that there will also be many false prophets in the last days (Matt 24:11, 24). If we can expect to see many false prophets and some true prophets, it is especially important for us to remain cautiously open-minded to the idea of the prophetic gift and to test prophets according to Scripture's standards (1 Thess. 5:19–21).

Revelation 12 is one chapter that clearly predicts a return of the prophetic gift in the last days. Just before the prophetic gift appears in verse 17 (called the testimony of Jesus), verse 14 introduces the 1,260-day timeline (though expressed in different terms, it's important to note that 3 ½ "times" or years is the same as 1,260 days when using a 360-day calendar). When applying the biblical principle that one day represents one year (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6), the 1,260 prophetic days symbolizes 1,260 literal years. We understand that this time period refers to when Rome ruled as a religiopolitical power between A.D. 538 and A.D. 1798. During this time, the church faced serious persecution. The Celtic Christians were massacred in the British Isles, the Waldenses were hunted in Northern Italy, and the Albigenses were slaughtered in southern France. The end of the 1,260 years of persecution was to be immediately followed by the appearance of the remnant church described in verse 17.

Verse 16 provides the geographical location of the event in verse 17, for it says, "the earth helped the woman." Throughout Revelation, water or seas represents a populated area with established countries and languages (Rev. 17:15). Around 1798, this would have been the "old" world—Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The earth in verse 16 therefore represents the opposite of this old world, which in 1798 would have been the Americas. At this period in history, the United States of America had become a haven for religious liberty. It was a young nation, sparsely populated, and firmly advocated for the separation of church and state. These combined factors provided a refuge for the thousands of persecuted Christians fleeing Europe.

By the time we get to verse 17, we've already been given two identifying qualities of God's end-time people: first, it would arise after 1798, and second, it would arise in a less populated part of the world. Revelation 12:17 adds to those qualities, saying the remnant would keep God's commandments and have the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 19:10 tells us two things about this testimony: first, it's also known as the spirit of prophecy, and second, this spirit of prophecy is something given to the "brethren." Revelation 22:9 tells us that the brethren are also known as the prophets. So, combining these verses together we can see that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy or the gift of prophecy given to the prophets. Knowing this, we can be assured from (cont. on p. 37).



## inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Should we or should we not be skeptical of prophets? Why?



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## inSpect



What relationship do the following verses have with Revelation 12:14–17?

Prophets in the last days:

Revelation 19:10

Revelation 22:9

Joel 2:28–31

Matthew 24:24

1 Corinthians 1:5–7

Prophets in the early church:

Acts 13:1

Acts 15:32

Acts 21:8, 9

Correlation of law and prophets:

Lamentations 2:9

Ezekiel 7:26

Tests of a prophet:

Deuteronomy 18:21, 20

Isaiah 8:20

Jeremiah 28:9

1 John 4:1, 2

What other verses come to mind in connection with the primary passage?

Review your memorized verse from Revelation 12:14–17.

(Cont. from inTerpret, p. 36):

Revelation 12:17 that God will have a remnant people on the earth who have the spirit of prophecy and keep all His commandments, including the Sabbath. God raised up such a movement when people from many different church backgrounds came together convicted of the Sabbath truth and open to the prophetic gift.

This gift of prophecy was manifested through the ministry of Ellen White over a seventy-year period. There is no evidence to suggest that she was the last prophet, but whether we will have another one with the same breadth of counsel and advice is not clear. May we always be both vigilant in differentiating between the true and the false and humble in following God's leading and heeding His counsel.

# THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Revelation 12:17 uses the phrase, “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” an expression that appears four other times in the book (1:2, 9; 19:10; 20:4) and could grammatically be translated two ways. It could either be the testimony about Jesus, meaning what Christians witness about Jesus, or it could be the testimony from Jesus, meaning what Jesus witnesses to His church through His Word. When we look at each of the times the phrase is used in Revelation, the latter option seems the most plausible; it is a testimony from Jesus to His church.

In Revelation 1:1, 2, the phrase “testimony of Jesus” describes a revelation that Jesus gave to the apostle John who bore witness to the seven churches concerning things “which must shortly take place” (Rev. 1:1). The book of Revelation reveals Christ’s mind regarding future events. Revelation 19:10 says, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” The people who receive this spirit of prophecy in this verse are “the brethren,” which is a term Revelation later uses for prophets (Rev. 22:9). In other words, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy given to the prophets. The prophetic message gives the church a clearer picture of Jesus’ mind, heart, and plans for the future. Studying the prophetic writings will cause the morning star (Jesus) to arise in our hearts (2 Pet. 1:19). It is popular to attempt to embrace the Jesus of the gospels while ignoring the Jesus of Revelation, but it is the same Jesus in both the gospels and the book of Revelation. To resist the Jesus of Revelation is to resist the Jesus of the gospels. The book of Revelation encompasses both Jesus’ character and His plans for the future through prophetic symbolism. The opening phraseology of the book, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” refers not only to who Jesus is but how He plans to help His people navigate the coming apocalyptic crises. Revelation is the testimony of Jesus to His church about the road that lies ahead.

The promise from Revelation 12:17 that the testimony of Jesus will be alive in His last day church assures us that Jesus will not leave His people in darkness. He gives the prophetic gift to equip His end-time church to face significant challenges that previous generations have not had to endure. The testimony of Jesus is given to guide, direct, and carefully lead. Revelation promises that Jesus will send the gift of prophecy to help His people navigate the hazards of the last days, when God’s people will face the last showdown between good and evil. Just like a pilot boat may enter deeper waters to meet a larger vessel and guide it safely into harbor in places where the coastline is particularly rocky and dangerous, so Jesus gives prophetic insight to safely guide the figurative ship of the church into port as the Second Coming approaches.



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Meditate on the primary passage again and look for where Jesus is.



How should the fact that Jesus gave us His testimony affect how we act in our daily lives?

What is Jesus saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer Response:



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Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

After this week's study, what are  
some personal applications you  
are convicted of in your life?

What are some practical  
applications you must make in  
your school, family, workplace,  
and church life?



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## EARLY VISIONS

“As the end draws near and the work of giving the last warning to the world extends, it becomes more important for those who accept present truth to have a clear understanding of the nature and influence of the *Testimonies*, which God in His providence has linked with the work of the third angel's message from its very rise. In the following pages are given extracts from what I have written during the last forty years, relating to my own early experience in this special work, and also presenting what God has shown me concerning the nature and importance of the *Testimonies*, the manner in which they are given, and how they should be regarded.

“ ‘It was not long after the passing of the time in 1844 that my first vision was given me. I was visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth.’ ” (*Testimonies for the Church* 1:58.) At this time I had a view of the experience of the advent believers, the coming of Christ, and the reward to be given to the faithful.

“ ‘In a second vision, which soon followed the first, I was shown the trials through which I must pass, and that it was my duty to go and relate to others what God had revealed to me. It was shown me that my labors would meet with great opposition and that my heart would be rent with anguish, but that the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain me through all. The teaching of this vision troubled me exceedingly, for it pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth.’ ”

“ ‘One great fear that oppressed me was that if I obeyed the call of duty and went out declaring myself to be one favored of the Most High with visions and revelations for the people, I might yield to sinful exaltation and be lifted above the station that was right for me to occupy, bring upon myself the displeasure of God, and lose my own soul. I had before me several cases such as I have here described, and my heart shrank from the trying ordeal.

“ ‘I now entreated that if I must go and relate what the Lord had shown me, I should be preserved from undue exaltation. Said the angel: “Your prayers are heard and shall be answered. If this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction He will draw you to Himself and preserve your humility. Deliver the message faithfully. Endure unto the end, and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life.” ’ ” (*Ellen White, Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5 [1889], 654, 655.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



How would the church react today if a seventeen-year-old claimed to have the gift of prophecy?

How can we test a prophet to know if the prophet is true or false? (See Deut. 18:22; Jer. 28:9; Isa. 8:20.)

What can we learn from Ellen White's hesitancy to share her prophetic gift in public?

What is God's purpose in sending the gift of prophecy to His people in the last days?

God didn't send prophets when His people didn't follow His laws. What does this say about how He operates and how He treats us?

How can we avoid only accepting a prophet's counsel when it agrees with our current lifestyle and beliefs?

In what ways could the writings of a modern, non-canonical prophet be misused in church?