

# Bible Studies for Adventists



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January 24–30, 2009

## Commentary on “The Inspiration of the Prophets”

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### Day 1: Sabbath Afternoon, January 24, 2009

The lesson for today begins by posing several questions that will be addressed later in the week. Among them are:

- What does it mean when we say that the Bible is inspired?
- What is the difference between inspiration and revelation?
- What is the difference between verbal and thought inspiration?

The questions of the mechanics of how the Bible was inspired and whether it can be taken as the inerrant word of God are essential and foundational. The question of whether the Bible is acceptable and valid based on outside evidence, and therefore not just self-validating and dependent on circular reasoning, is a valid question, but this is not the study to explore it. Suffice it for now to say that there are many good resources available to address this question. For now, however, we'll look at what the Bible says about itself. Scripture speaks of itself regarding all the questions we will address. If we are to accept the Bible at all and in any way, we must accept it on its own terms, not on our terms. There is no middle ground regarding Biblical inspiration and interpretation: we can either accept or reject what the Bible says about itself, which is the same as accepting or rejecting the Bible itself.

Before we think about the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is important to know what is the purpose of Scripture. Hebrews 1:1-2 says:

**God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, who He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**

Hebrews was written primarily to Jewish Christian believers who were very familiar with the Old Testament. Let's pull some observations out of the passage:

- God spoke long ago to the fathers (referring to men who lived long ago—men of Israel)
- God spoke to these fathers in the prophets – meaning that the prophets themselves communicated God's word to the fathers
- God spoke in the prophets in many portions and in many ways
- God has spoken to us in these last days in His Son (identified as Jesus Christ later in the book of Hebrews)

The writer of Hebrews is clearly drawing a contrast between God's manner of speaking in the prophets and his manner of speaking in Jesus Christ:

Prophets	Jesus Christ
long ago	in these last days
to the fathers	to us
in the prophets	in His Son
in many portions and in many ways	implied: in one portion and in one way

While God spoke in various ways through the prophets in the past, he spoke finally to us through His Son. How are we to respond to God's speaking, both in the prophets and in His Son? Well, incidentally, God the Father Himself has given us the answer, verbally, to remove all question and make His intent and our obligation eminently clear. On the mount of transfiguration, when Jesus appeared in glory along with Moses and Elijah, the figureheads of the Old Testament (symbolizing the Law and the Prophets, respectively, which collectively constitute the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures), Peter wanted to make Jesus equal to Moses and Elijah:

**Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Matthew 17:4).**

But God spoke clearly to them:

**While he [Peter] was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5)**

God the Father identifies Jesus as His beloved Son, a title given to no one else. He also gives us a command: "listen to Him!" In the presence of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament, in whom God had revealed himself to his people, God the Father says of Jesus, "listen to Him!" The Father's command to listen to Jesus correlates to Jesus' title as the beloved son of God the Father. We are to listen to Jesus, over against anyone else, because Jesus has this title, which is elsewhere referred to as the "name that is above every name" (see Philippians 2:5-11). No one else has a name or title as high as Jesus, the beloved son of God the Father: therefore, we are not to listen to anyone else over against Jesus himself.

Now that we have clarified how God has spoken to us and our proper response, let's address God's purpose in speaking to us. Jesus speaks of himself and of God's eternal purpose in the gospel of John. This is the last public statement that Jesus makes in the gospel of John before he is arrested, tried, and crucified. This statement comes in the context of the unbelief of some and the belief of others in Jesus. John the writer repeatedly covers the topic of belief in Jesus in his gospel.

**And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" (John 12:44-50).**

Let's pull some observations from this passage regarding God's purpose in speaking to us in His Son.

- God reveals himself to us in Jesus: "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me." To believe in Jesus is to believe in God the Father. Jesus says elsewhere, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."
- God shines his light on us in Jesus. John says in his epistle, "God is light. In him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Light is a symbol of truth. Elsewhere, Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me" (John 14:6). Jesus himself is truth personified; thus, he himself is the light of God that "shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (see John 1:1-14).
- Jesus came to save the world. In chapter 3, Jesus says of himself: "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world..." (John 3:18-19).

God's primary purposes in speaking through Jesus his Son are to reveal himself, to reveal truth, and to save us as we believe in the truth (there are others as well, discussed elsewhere in scripture, but these are the most important).

What about God's purposes when He spoke "long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways?" First, it's important to note that the primary purpose of the Old Testament, both the Law and the prophets, is to point forward, or testify, to Jesus, who is God's full and final word to man. The theme of the Law and the Prophets pointing to Christ is repeated throughout the New Testament. Here are a few examples:

- "For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (Matthew 11:13 – see the context for more information). John was the greatest of the prophets up until his time, because he pointed to Jesus and directly testified to him: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) The prophets before John "made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11), but John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb and recognized Mary, pregnant with Jesus, even before he was born. Moreover, he directly witnessed Jesus, and he testified to Him.
- "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Galatians 3:24-25). The law here refers to the Old Covenant law given to Israel at Sinai, as opposed to the New Covenant, which is given to believers in Christ (See Hebrews 9).
- "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe..." (Romans 3:21)
- "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

Perhaps Isaiah 55 most beautifully sums up God's redemptive purposes in speaking to us. God speaks tenderly and compassionately to those he loves:

**Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
And you who have no money come, buy and eat.  
Come, buy wine and milk  
Without money and without cost.**

**Why do you spend money for what is not bread,  
And your wages for what does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,  
And delight yourself in abundance.**

**Incline your ear and come to Me.  
Listen, that you may live.  
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,  
According to the faithful mercies shown to David. (Isaiah 55:1-3)**

## **Summary**

- We must accept the Bible on its own terms.
- Jesus is God's full and final revelation of Himself to us.
- God the Father commands us to listen to Jesus over against everyone else.
- The Law and the Prophets point to Jesus; that is their primary purpose.
- God's purposes in speaking are to reveal himself, to reveal truth in Jesus, and to save those who believe in Jesus. These are identical to the purposes of the Bible.

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## Day 2: Sunday, January 25, 2009

Today's lesson covers the Seventh-day Adventist answer to the question, "What is the difference between revelation and inspiration?" regarding how God spoke through the prophets in the Bible. The Seventh-day Adventist beliefs regarding Biblical prophecy (which come from Ellen White) are:

- Revelation: the Holy Spirit revealed truth to prophets via "visions and dreams, symbols and figures" (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 222).
- Inspiration: prophets interpreted what they were given and "embodied the thought in human language" (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 222), while being "moved upon by the Holy Ghost", thus creating words of scripture.
- The Bible is not in "grand superhuman language", but rather in "the language of men." Therefore, the Bible is imperfect, since "Everything that is human is imperfect" (Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 945).

These teachings are designed to devalue the Bible, and they disagree with what the Bible says about itself. As stated in yesterday's notes, we must accept the Bible on its own terms if we are to accept it at all. Let's look at what the Bible says regarding prophets and their words.

In Deuteronomy 18, God speaks to Moses regarding prophets he would later send to Israel:

**I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.** (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

Let's pull some observations from this passage.

- God himself "will raise up a prophet." No one will raise himself or someone else as a prophet; this work belongs to God alone.
- God will put His words in the prophet's mouth.
- The prophet will speak God's words in obedience to God's command.
- The prophet will speak God's words in God's name, and therefore in God's authority (but also in submission to God's authority, since he is acting in obedience to God's command).
- God Himself will hold accountable those who do not listen to His words.

God's prophets spoke in God's name, and therefore in His authority. Remember from yesterday's notes, that God commands us to listen to Jesus (Matthew 17:5), and that this command to listen is directly tied to the title the Father gave to Jesus as His beloved Son, in whom He is well-pleased. In the gospel of John, Jesus says he only speaks the words the Father has given him to speak:

**Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.** (John 14:10)

Just as we are commanded by God the Father to listen to Jesus and held accountable for listening to Him, God held the Israelites accountable for listening to His words spoken through the prophets of old. And just as Jesus' words were not His own, so the words the prophets spoke were not their own:

**But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** (2 Peter 1:20-21)

The Sabbath School lesson for today places emphasis on the phrase "carried along by the Holy Spirit" (NIV) which renders as "moved by the Holy Spirit" in the NASB. But the emphasis of the sentence is that men spoke from God. The moving of the Holy Spirit was the means to that end, not the end in itself. How the Holy Spirit moves in imperfect people is a mystery, but that is not the issue at all. The point is that the end result, the words, were from God and carried the authority of God Himself.

Consider the following passage as an example, when God gave a command to king Rehoboam and his men:

**But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "You**

**shall not go up or fight against your relatives; return every man to his house, for this thing is from Me.””  
So they listened to the words of the LORD and returned from going against Jeroboam.**

The word of God spoken through God's prophet to Rehoboam and the men of Israel carried the authority of God, and the men listened to God's words and obeyed them.

In other places, God commanded that His words be written down, so that they would be preserved for people in the future. He told Isaiah, regarding words Isaiah had spoken to rebellious Israel,

**Now go, write it on a tablet before them  
And inscribe it on a scroll,  
That it may serve in the time to come  
As a witness forever. (Isaiah 30:8)**

He spoke similar instructions to Jeremiah:

**The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book. For behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.' The LORD says, 'I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers and they shall possess it.'” (Jeremiah 30:1-3)**

The written words of God are just as authoritative as the spoken words of God. Scripture is clear regarding the words of God:

**Every word of God is tested;  
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.  
Do not add to His words  
Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar. (Proverbs 30:5-6)**

The Hebrew word translated as tested here can also be translated as refined or pure (Strong's number 6884). The Psalter also speaks about God's words:

**The words of the LORD are pure words;  
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. (Psalm 12:6)**

**As for God, His way is blameless;  
The word of the LORD is tried;  
He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (Psalm 18:30)**

**For the word of the LORD is upright,  
And all His work is done in faithfulness. (Psalm 33:4)**

**By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,  
And by the breath of His mouth all their host. (Psalm 33:6)**

**Forever, O LORD,  
Your word is settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)**

It is abundantly clear, then, that God's words are as perfect and holy and unchanging and unfailing and powerful as God Himself. As Jesus says: “For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34). God's heart is expressed and revealed in His words, and to assign any flaw to His words, no matter his vehicle of speaking, would be to assign flaw to God Himself.

A question arises: what about places in the Bible where God is not being directly quoted? Prophets and others often spoke what appear to be their own words. Indeed, the historical accounts of scripture were not always dictated word-for-word by God to prophets. Paul addresses the authority of Scripture as a whole:

**All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

Words inspired by God have the authority of God: they are profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness—things that require the authority of God if they are to be listened to.

The New Testament writers also spoke and wrote with God's authority. The book of Acts records Jesus' last words to His disciples before He ascended into heaven:

**He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth."**  
(Acts 1:7-8)

Jesus also said to them,

**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.** (Matthew 28:18-20)

The apostles went and spoke and taught and baptized and witnessed and wrote in the name and authority of Jesus. Paul, not one of the original apostles, also spoke and wrote in the name and authority of Jesus. Personally called by Jesus to the work of apostleship (see Acts 9), he began most of his letters identifying himself as one who speaks by the authority of Jesus:

**Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake...** (Romans 1:1-6)

**Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...** (1 Corinthians 1:1)

**Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)...** (Galatians 1:1)

Peter, one of the twelve apostles who had been with Jesus during His entire earthly ministry, spoke of the authority of Paul's writings—that they are indeed classified as Scriptures:

**...just as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

The Bible is indeed trustworthy. It is the words of God, spoken through men, but in no way imperfect or diluted. We can put our full trust and hope in the words of God, for they are just as trustworthy as God Himself is. So we can say with the psalmist:

**I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait,  
And in His word do I hope.** (Psalm 130:5)

And now, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

## Summary

- Prophets spoke God's words with God's authority, and people were held accountable by God Himself for listening to them.
- Jesus also spoke from God; in fact, none of His words were His own, but the Father's.
- All prophets spoke *from* God; how the Holy Spirit moved within them is a mystery. What matters is that their words were *from* God and carried God's authority.
- God's words are perfect, just as God Himself is perfect.
- All scripture is inspired by God and carries His authority—both the Old and New Testaments.

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## Day 3: Monday, January 26, 2009

The lesson for today presents the Seventh-day Adventist viewpoint that the thoughts of Scripture, not the words, are inspired (“except when the words of God or an angel are quoted, or when God speaks directly through a prophet”). Like the teachings presented yesterday, the Adventist teaching of “thought inspiration” constitutes a devaluing of Scripture and a distraction from the important issues.

Before we study further, let's remind ourselves of God's infinite knowledge and understanding, the sanctity of His words, and our proper response to Him when he speaks.

**He counts the number of the stars;  
He gives names to all of them.  
Great is our Lord and abundant in strength;  
His understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:4-5)**

I encourage you to pause and meditate on verse 5: His understanding is infinite. There is nothing that God does not know, nothing he does not understand. Such a statement implies absolute perfection, to a level that completely defies description and inspires humility and worship. David expresses this humble attitude in Psalm 8:

**When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;  
What is man that You take thought of him,  
And the son of man that You care for him?**

...

**O LORD, our Lord,  
How majestic is Your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:3-4,9)**

**God speaks in Isaiah about our proper response to Him and to His word.  
But to this one I will look,  
To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. (Isaiah 66:2b)**

When we approach the Bible, the inspired word of God, we must come humbly, and with trembling—especially when we are discussing the validity of His word. God will not tolerate devaluing or tampering with His word. With that in mind, let's discuss the issues at hand.

Today's lesson sets up a false dichotomy between verbal and thought inspiration. The issue is not whether “all the words” are inspired or whether “primarily the thoughts” are inspired. The real issue is whether the Bible is inerrant and whether it is authoritative. Again, we must accept the Bible on its own terms:

**All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**

The doctrine of the inerrancy of Scriptures is paramount and foundational to the Christian faith. If there is any belief that the Scriptures have errors of any sort, then we have license to come to Scripture without submitting ourselves to it.

The doctrine of “thought inspiration” subtly introduces the possibility that errors exist in the scriptures. Whether each word is inspired, and whether some words could have been changed, is the wrong question and a dangerous direction of thinking. If “all scripture is inspired by God,” then the whole body of Scripture constitutes God's word to us, and our proper response is not to question it, but to “tremble at His word,” listen to it, and submit ourselves to it.

### Summary

- God's understanding is infinite; therefore, our proper attitude to Him and to His words is to listen, tremble, and submit.
- The dichotomy between “verbal inspiration” and “thought inspiration” is false and misleading.
- The important issue is that Scripture is inerrant, since it was inspired by God. God cannot lie, nor can he inspire lies.
- Since Scripture is God's inerrant word, our obligation is to humbly submit to it.

For further reference, I recommend the following books:

- Lindsell, Harold. *The Battle For The Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1994.

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## Day 4: Tuesday, January 27, 2009

This lesson focuses primarily on anecdotes from Ellen White's life regarding visions. There is a clear agenda: to encourage people to believe that Ellen White was a true prophet of God by comparing her experience to the experience of Biblical prophets.

The questions given at the bottom (and their answers) are far more important than the anecdotes given above.

- Why must we not base our belief in her gift on them [E.G. White's physical manifestations]?
- What ultimately must be the final test of Ellen White's prophetic calling?

The answer to the first question is because the Bible is clear that physical manifestations (and even miracles and great signs) never necessarily imply truth. The Bible refers to false prophets who saw false visions, and it warns the church about false prophets who will perform great miracles with the intent to deceive. Consider the following passages:

**Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds" (Jeremiah 14:14).**

**Your prophets have seen for you  
False and foolish visions;  
And they have not exposed your iniquity  
So as to restore you from captivity,  
But they have seen for you false and misleading oracles. (Lamentations 2:14)**

**They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, "The LORD declares," when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word. (Ezekiel 13:6-9)**

**The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)**

False prophets throughout scripture perform miraculous signs and have various physical phenomena, but these things are not an authoritative indication of truth or falsehood. Rather, the New Testament gives us stern warnings to watch out for false prophets.

**Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. (Matthew 24:23-25)**

**But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (1 Peter 2:1)**

**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)**

There are many tests we can apply – and if Ellen White or any other modern prophet fails any of them, then we must surrender to Jesus and renounce our belief in the prophet. Scripture gives several tests for false prophets; here are some of the more prominent examples.

1. Failed prophecy: Have any of Ellen White's prophecies failed?

**You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'**

**When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)**



2. Correct teaching about Jesus Christ: Does Ellen White's doctrine about the nature of Jesus Christ disagree with Scripture?

**By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1 John 4:2-3)**

3. Teaching the true gospel of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ: Does Ellen White teach a false gospel?

**But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:8-9)**

Paul rebuked Peter publicly for not acting in line with the true gospel. How much more should we hold accountable anyone who teaches a false gospel!

**But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"**

**We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. (Galatians 2:14-16)**

Ellen White can only be accepted as a true prophet if she does not fit any of the Scriptural tests for a false prophet. Considering the frequency and earnestness of the warnings about false prophets and teachers in the New Testament, she carries the burden of proof. We must require proof beyond a reasonable doubt, not simply a preponderance of evidence.

In fact, considering that "All scripture is inspired by God... so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (1 Timothy 3:16-17), we would do quite well to never accept any extra-Biblical authority – if indeed we do trust in the adequacy of Scripture alone.

Finally, let us remember Christ's unfulfilling promise to us, given when he named Peter:

**And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18)**

Let's pull some relevant observations out of this:

- Jesus will build his church. It is ultimately His work.
- Jesus does the active work of building His church – with "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5).
- There is an implication of completion of His work. "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).
- The church belongs to Jesus. It is under His ownership and care—which can never fail.
- Evil cannot prevail against Jesus' church. There is an implication that the gates of Hades will attempt to overcome it, but they cannot succeed.

Let us trust, then, in the Lord of the church, being "having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude" (Colossians 2:7). May he deliver us from deception as we love the truth.

## Summary

- The anecdotes in the Sabbath School lesson are given to suggest Ellen White's authenticity, but they are inconclusive.
- Physical manifestations and visions do not necessarily imply truth: false prophets in scripture had them as well.
- We must "test the spirits" using Biblical tests for false prophets. Ellen White can only be accepted if she does not fit any Biblical test for a false prophet. She carries the burden of proof.
- Scripture alone is adequate; we would do well never to accept any extra-Biblical authority.
- Jesus is the Lord of the church; the gates of Hades cannot overcome it.

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## Day 5: Wednesday, January 28, 2009

The lesson for today is a response to criticism that Ellen White has received for her use of editors and “literary assistants” in her published works. The argument goes that if she were truly inspired as a prophet, she would not need editors. This lesson responds to that criticism by attempting to compare Ellen White to Biblical authors who dictated to scribes, who then wrote down what they said. The comparison is contrived and is designed to put doubts to rest regarding the integrity of Ellen White's process of authoring and publishing.

Before we go further, let's ask the Lord to renew our minds and help us see these things from His perspective, in the light of truth. *Lord Jesus, thank you for your promise to send the Holy Spirit, who is our counselor. Thank you, Lord, that the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. Thank you for the freedom that comes from knowing the truth. Lord Jesus, make our ears open and our eyes to see what is real. Help us to know you and to know Your word, and to treasure You, and thus treasure Your word. Thank you in Jesus' name, amen.*

The comparison between Ellen White's process and Bible writers' use of scribes is distracting from the real issue: are Ellen White's writings true? How they came into being may or may not be a problem, but it is certainly a problem if we read and trust in words that are untrue and untrustworthy. What they are is the most important issue, not how they came into being.

There are two tests for truth for any system of belief:

- Correspondence to reality
- Internal consistency

Applied to Ellen White's writings, the tests become these two questions:

- Do her writings contradict Scripture in any way?
- Do her writings contradict themselves in any way?

As you consider these questions, remember the promises of God regarding truth and our relationship to it:

**So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”** (John 8:31-32)

- Continuing in His word is the ongoing activity of true discipleship
- If we do so, we will know the truth. What a wonderful promise!
- The truth will make us free. Again, what a wonderful promise! (Conversely, lies put us in bondage—and these bonds are what truth breaks when it makes us free.)

**“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me [Jesus].”** (John 14:1)

- We are to put our faith in Jesus.
- Our hope is to be rooted in God and in Jesus – He is real, He is good, He rewards those who seek Him, He gives rest to those who come to Him. (see Hebrews 11:6 and Matthew 11:28-30)
- When our heart begins to be troubled, we are to actively put our faith in Jesus. The psalmist sets a great example: “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence” (Psalm 42:5).

**Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.** (John 14:6)

- Jesus Himself is the way: He will lead us as our shepherd. “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:17). Jesus not only made the way open for us to come to God through His death and resurrection, He himself is the way, and will continue to be so throughout all eternity. We will never be without Jesus, and will never come to God apart from Jesus. “...but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24-25).
- Jesus Himself is the truth. Therefore, anything false necessarily contradicts or denies Jesus. Conversely, anything that contradicts or denies Jesus is false. To know Jesus is to know the truth. To love Jesus is to love the truth (and conversely, to love the truth is to love Jesus).

- Jesus Himself is the life. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). He is the life. There is no other source of life. To know Him is to truly live. “We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)**

- If we know and trust in Jesus, then God has given us the Holy Spirit.
- If we have been given the Holy Spirit, he will be with us forever. “He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. what will man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5b-6)
- The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth. How wonderful! “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13a).
- We know the Holy Spirit primarily by His presence with us and in us.

Finally, let's remember Paul's word of exhortation to the Colossians:

**So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.**

**See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.**

**For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. (Colossians 2:6-10)**

### Let's Pray

*Lord Jesus, we acknowledge Your lordship and headship over all things. Thank you again for your promise that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. Jesus, you are the truth—keep us from straying, we ask. Guide our hearts and minds as we seek to know truth and as we continue in Your word. We praise you for the profound mystery that you are—the fullness of Deity in bodily form. May our hearts find rest in You alone. Thank you for Your rest—we ask for it in Jesus name, amen.*

### Summary

- The comparison between Ellen White and Bible writers is contrived and designed to distract from the important issue.
- The important issue is whether Ellen White's writings are true, not how they were put together.
- There are two tests for truth: correspondence to reality (Do Ellen White's writings contradict Scripture in any way?) and internal consistency (Do Ellen White's writings contradict themselves in any way?).
- Several scripture passages and promises are listed. The points of emphasis here are that Jesus is the truth, we are to put our faith in Him, and if we continue in Jesus' word, the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth, and we will be set free.

For further discussion of the criticism Ellen White has received, I refer you to [www.lifeassuranceministries.org](http://www.lifeassuranceministries.org) – there are links to many good resources there.

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## Day 6: Thursday, January 29, 2009

Believing in Ellen White as a prophet and trying to keep faith in that belief is an arduous task. The Seventh-day Adventist church and many of its members put countless hours of reasoning, thinking, writing, and researching to keep themselves convinced in her status as a prophet. I was just reading an article from the White Estate in which someone had categorized various forms of Biblical inspiration and then shown how Ellen White fits into those categories. The Sabbath School lessons continue to revisit the various arguments people have come up with for supporting her status as a prophet. What a lot of frenzied activity!

Today's lesson attempts to justify the fact that Ellen White lifted material (many would say “plagiarized”) from many contemporary authors and presented it as her own, often without citation. The argument is that she acted similarly to Bible authors, because several Bible writers relied on third-party sources for what they wrote:

- Luke relied on the accounts of eyewitnesses and “servants of the word” as he wrote his gospel
- Paul responded in some of his letters to information he had heard from someone else
- Paul quoted from a Greek poet as he preached about God to the philosophers of Athens at Mars Hill
- Paul quoted people in a couple of other places in the New Testament

However, comparing Ellen White to Bible authors simply cannot mitigate the problem that she took the work of others and put her own name on it—thus calling it her own. Even the content of some visions prefaced by “I was shown...” is lifted from third party sources.

How are we to respond when we are confronted with the findings of research on Ellen White? Even beyond Ellen White, what do we do when we're presented with a cold, hard truth that threatens to turn our world upside down and rob us of all that is familiar and comfortable? We could ignore it as best we can and hope it will go away, or perhaps fight it with as much strength as we can muster. We can live in frenzied activity, or we can isolate ourselves in the most comfortable setting we know. But what does God call us to do?

Jesus has said to us:

**Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.** (Matthew 11:28-30)

Remember from the commentary yesterday, that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through Him. If you aren't trusting Jesus to save you or to help you or to handle the difficulties in your life, He invites you to come to Him and pour out your heart to Him, and find rest.

**Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.** (Psalm 62:8)

Instead of hiding and running and resorting to frenzied activity, God calls us to repentance and rest:

**This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength"** (Isaiah 30:15).

In the following verse, God responds to those who continue in rebellion. As a loving Father, he pursues His beloved who run from Him.

**“You said, 'No, we will flee on horses.'  
Therefore you will flee!  
You said, 'We will ride off on swift horses.'  
Therefore your pursuers will be swift!**

**A thousand will flee  
at the threat of one;  
at the threat of five  
you will all flee away,  
till you are left  
like a flagstaff on a mountaintop,  
like a banner on a hill.”**

**Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;  
he rises to show you compassion.  
For the LORD is a God of justice.  
Blessed are all who wait for him!** (Isaiah 30:16-18)

To repent means to turn. In this context it means to stop running from God and turn around—He will be right there!—and fall at His feet. He longs to be gracious to you.

No matter what the situation that confronts you, no matter what the cold, hard reality is, we can rest in God's sure promise to those who know him:

**God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5b-6)**

And so, we can have the courage we need to step out into the unknown, like Peter walking on the water toward Jesus, leaving behind the boat of our "safety zone" and all that is familiar, and walking towards Jesus with our eyes fixed on Him. The truth may be scary beyond imagination at first, but it is ultimately the best, most wonderful place to be: it is where Jesus is. He promises to give us rest for our souls when we come to Him. And He is more trustworthy than the boat!

Let me pray for you.

*Father in heaven, you know the burdens, you know the fear, you know the pain, and all the things that are in the hearts of those who are reading. You love and care for them. Lord, I pray for those who are facing difficult truths in their lives. I ask that they would have the courage to come to Jesus and lay these things down and receive His rest and His comfort. Deliver them from the evil one and from deception. Set them free by the truth. Help them to know how much they are loved, and the extent that you went to to save them – "He who did not spare His own son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" Thank you for graciously providing. Please bring comfort and healing to those who need it; provide the encouragement and support they need; and give them the courage they need to surrender to you and follow where You're leading. I praise you for your power to save us completely and to deal perfectly with whatever issues are in our lives. We lay them at your feet now and trust you with them. In Jesus name, amen.*

### Summary

- Comparing Ellen White to Bible authors cannot mitigate the problem that she took other peoples' work and called it her own.
- When faced with difficult truths, Jesus calls us to come to him, pour out our hearts to Him, find rest in him, and trust in Him.
- God gives us salvation in repentance (turning to Him), rest, quietness, and trust. He pursues His own until they stop running from Him and turn to Him and find rest in Him again.
- Knowing that God will never leave or forsake us, we can courageously face difficult truths—they are where Jesus is!

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## Day 7: Friday, January 30, 2009

Today's lesson is a quotation from Ellen White in which she commends herself as a prophet and her writings as her record of what the Lord has presented to her – which is not "merely the opinion of Sister White"—and that those who say so have "insulted the Spirit of God." She also gives a list of accomplishments throughout her life.

### Problems with Ellen White (by Colleen Tinker and Jeremy Graham)

Yet a true prophet of God will never speak things that are opposed to the gospel or contradict the Bible. No matter how much we may attempt to justify her by comparing her to Bible writers, the fact remains: her writings oppose the gospel.

A handful of examples from her later years will illustrate her opposition to the gospel and the finished work of Jesus that guarantees our salvation completely apart from our good works:

**"His [Jesus'] example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God." (The Desire of Ages, page 122, paragraph 2.)**

In the context of this passage, Ellen White emphasizes that Jesus' fasting and victory during His 40 days in the wilderness are directly linked, that His refusal to indulge His temptations thwarted Satan. Jesus' example of restraining his appetites, therefore, is our example as to how we achieve righteousness that qualifies us for salvation.

The Bible, however, teaches that the condition for entrance into the kingdom of heaven is being born again.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6, NASB). The new birth is possible only by believing in—placing one's complete trust in—the Lord Jesus and His finished work and thus being saved (Acts 16:31). When we believe, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) and made alive with Christ, even while we are dead in our sins, and seated in heavenly places with Him (Ephesians 2:4-6). This spiritual resurrection and consequent salvation has nothing to do with our own works, not even the work of bringing our "appetites and passions into subjection" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We are saved entirely by God's miraculous work in us through Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection (Romans 3:21-30). Our self-discipline does not play a part in our salvation or our true victory over sin. Romans 8 teaches that believers

overcome temptation not primarily by self-denial but by submission to the Holy Spirit. We surrender our desires to the Lord Jesus and release to Him our “right” to indulge in sin. We interact with Jesus in surrender instead of interacting with temptation by rationalizing and self-denial.

**"Every one who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression." (The Signs of the Times, 07-23-1902, paragraph 14.)**

First, nowhere does the Bible support this statement. On the contrary, Paul describes his own struggle with sin in Romans 7:14-24. Our bodies, he says in Romans 8:10, are dead because of sin, but our spirits are alive because of righteousness. We have living spirits inside mortal, dead bodies.

Second, in Romans 8:1 Paul states that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. He proceeds to explain that our deliverance from bondage to sin is accomplished by living by the Spirit (Romans 8:2-14).

Finally, commandment-keeping is never a component of being saved. Salvation is apart from the law (Romans 3:21). It is a gift of God's own grace, not by our works (Romans 3:23-28; Ephesians 2:8-9).

The Bible never says the saved will attain sinlessness prior to the resurrection. What we do gain, however, is a Mediator who intercedes “always” for us and is “able to save forever those who draw near to God through him” (Hebrews 7:25).

**"But in the struggle for immortality we have a part to act. [...] We can never be saved in inactivity and idleness. We might as well look for a harvest from seed which we have not sown, and for knowledge where we have not studied, as to expect salvation without making an effort. It is our part to wrestle against the evil tendencies of the natural heart." (The Youth's Instructor, 03-05-1903, paragraph 4.)**

This statement is unbiblical. The Bible is clear that our effort has nothing whatsoever to do with our salvation: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Our trust in the Lord Jesus is what God counts as our righteousness: “But to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

Moreover, we are saved the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24).

We have no “part to act” in our salvation. Our activity of wrestling “against the evil tendencies of the natural heart” does not produce any movement toward salvation. Salvation is entirely an act of God bringing us to life through Jesus. We do not contribute to our salvation by any effort or struggle.

**"He came to this world and lived a sinless life, that in his power his people might also lead lives of sinlessness." (Atlantic Union Gleaner, 01-17-1906, paragraph 5.)**

Again, “sinlessness” is not God's intention for us on this earth. His intention for us is to be credited with righteousness which is alien to us (Philippians 3:9, “...not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith”).

His purpose in sending Jesus was to break the power of sin and to open a new, living way by which we can approach the Father freely (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Jesus' sinless life was not for the purpose of being our example so we could live without sin as He did. Rather, His sinless life qualified Him to be our “merciful and faithful high priest” and “to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17). His sinlessness qualified Him to offer “Himself without blemish to God” (Hebrews 9:14) as our Substitute, the perfect Sacrifice for all our sins.

Jesus' sinlessness qualified Him to purchase our salvation by dying in our place and to bring us into His life when we believe—even while we are still in mortal, sinful bodies. Our spirits are alive because of Christ, but our bodies are dead because of sin (Romans 8:10).

**"Christ came to this earth and lived a life of perfect obedience, that men and women, through his grace, might also live lives of perfect obedience. This is necessary to their salvation." (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 03-15-1906, paragraphs 8.)**

Ellen White gives no Bible passages to support this statement. In fact, the Bible does not teach that “perfect obedience” on our part is necessary for salvation.

The only thing necessary for salvation is to believe in the Lord Jesus (John 5:24). Anyone who believes “is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already” (John 3:18a). “Perfect obedience” is not required for salvation.

**"Man is no passive being, to be saved in indolence. Let no one think that men and women are going to be taken to heaven without engaging in the struggle here below. We have a battle to fight, a victory to gain. God says to us, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' How?—'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Man works, and God works. Man is called upon to strain every muscle, and to exercise every faculty, in the struggle for immortality; but it is God who supplies the efficiency." (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 04-28-1910, paragraph 3.)**

The text which Ellen White uses in this passage is Philippians 2:12-13: "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for {His} good pleasure."

In its context, this text is not referring to how one is saved. Rather, Paul is writing to people who are already saved. He is saying that believers must persevere and express their salvation—their new birth—by honoring the Lord Jesus and dedicating themselves to spiritual growth and obedience to the Lord Jesus.

Paul never addresses unbelievers by telling them to "work out their own salvation" in a joint effort with God whereby they may be saved. On the contrary, unbelievers are always admonished to "believe in the Lord Jesus" (see Acts 16:31). Only believers have any salvation to "work out", or share, from within themselves—and that is a gift from God.

Ellen White is misusing this text and is using it to instill guilt and fear into those who are not confident they are saved. Instead, this text is a statement of how to live from a position of victory, of knowing one is saved. Those who are saved are admonished to express their salvation in the ways they live and interact with others.

**"He died a shameful death upon the cross, that we might have eternal life; and shall we dare to flatter ourselves that we may follow a course of sin, choosing our own way, shunning the cross, avoiding reproach and self-denial, and yet have a home in the kingdom of heaven?—No; through faith in Christ we must render obedience to all requirements of God; through his merits we may be elevated to keep God's commandments." (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 05-08-1913, paragraph 4.)**

Once again, Ellen White says that obedience to all the commandments is the requirement for our salvation. This is not a biblical requirement.

Jesus' sinless life, His death and resurrection were not merely "down payments" on our salvation. They were not arbitrary requirements He performed to motivate us to emulate Him. His entire life, death, and resurrection purchased us for God.

The Bible never asks us to keep God's commandments as our proper response to beholding Jesus' suffering. On the contrary, we are asked to believe (John 5:24) and be born again (John 3:5-6). No one is justified by the works of the law (Romans 3:20). Rather, the righteousness of God that becomes ours when we believe is completely "apart from the law" (Romans 3:21, 28).

The righteousness God gives us is His blessing to us in response to our faith in Him (Romans 4:5, 13).

Jesus' work on the cross was not for the purpose of "elevating" us to keep the commandments. His death and resurrection accomplished complete payment for our sin and give us His own righteousness and direct access to God when we believe. Salvation is not a "maybe". Salvation, if we place our faith in the Lord Jesus, is a certainty, and our works are not part of our being saved.

**"The great crisis is before us, and every one is to act as if his own soul was at stake. The most important question of all is, How shall I save my soul, for which Christ died? How shall I be holy as he is holy?" (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 05-15-1913, paragraph 2.)**

The Bible never instructs us to ask how we may save our souls. Christ's death and resurrection guarantee our salvation when we believe. We become holy by receiving Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We are totally covered with His own personal righteousness which is alien to us. We do not begin to become saved or to achieve holiness; rather, when we place our trust in Jesus, we are at that moment sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) and made alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:5).

We are made holy, or "set apart" for God's use, from the moment we believe, for we are His own workmanship, created for the good works which He prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

God saves us; we do not participate in that salvation.

### **Jesus is all we need** (by Roy Tinker)

Let me commend to you Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate prophet, the one who speaks for God, the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18 (God speaking):

**I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. (Deuteronomy 18:18)**

Jesus said of himself:

**Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.** (John 14:10)

And Jesus is much, much more than a prophet. He is the Son of God. Think of the authority his status and his title give to His words! God the Father spoke to us over Jesus: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. *Listen to Him!*" (Matthew 17:5)

**God, after He spoke to the fathers long ago in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom He made the world.** (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Jesus comforts us with his words, as Isaiah prophesied: "The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word" (Isaiah 50:4). He is our "wonderful counselor," and the Holy Spirit continues this ministry to our hearts, as Jesus promised: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Finally, let us heed the words of the writer of Hebrews regarding Jesus:

**See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking, for if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.** (Hebrews 12:25)

Jesus also warns us regarding His words:

**There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.** (John 12:48)

In light of these things, God the Father is making an appeal to you, to listen to His Son, Jesus Christ. He has left the words of Jesus and the testimony about Him as a witness to us, and we will be held accountable for listening. Jesus wept over Jerusalem and spoke these words:

**Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.** (Matthew 23:37)

Jesus longs to gather us, to love us, to be gracious to us. Let's sit at His feet and listen to Him as He speaks, as Mary did, instead of hustling and bustling about in activity. "Only one thing is necessary," Jesus said, "for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42; emphasis mine). So with Mary and all true disciples, let us come to Jesus, listen to Him, continue in His word, and find true life and freedom in Him.

**The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.** (Revelation 22:17)

## Summary

- Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up a prophet to speak His words.
- Jesus is more than a prophet; He is the son of God. His words are God's words to us: words of truth, comfort, instruction, and life.
- We must heed the words of Jesus; we will be held accountable for listening to Him.
- Let us come to Jesus and listen to Him – this is the *one thing* that is necessary.