

## **The Story of Great Controversy And the Spirit of Prophecy**

### **03. How To Recognize a True Prophet**

If the person is a genuine prophet called by God, he or she will show the signs of one. We have a right to expect them to be provided; for, since every word a prophet writes is important, we have definite evidence from God that a new prophet is among us!

Especially important, are two factors: (1) The person will be taken into vision in public meetings, in view of many people. (2) While in vision (and some of them rather lengthy), he or she will not breathe. Repeatedly, both evidences occurred with Sister Ellen during the 1840s and 1850s. That was enough time for the believers to recognize that she was a true prophet. In later years, public visions were not so much needed. Here are several examples; the first occurred on June 26, 1854:

"I [D.H. Lamson] was then 17 years old. It seems to me I can almost hear those thrilling shouts of 'Gl-o-r-y!' which she uttered. Then she sank back to the floor, not falling, but sinking gently, and was supported in the arms of an attendant.

"Two physicians came in, an old man and a young man. Brother White was anxious that they should examine Sister White closely, which they did. A looking glass [mirror] was brought, and one of them held it over her mouth while she talked; but very soon they gave this up, and said, 'She doesn't breathe!' Then they closely examined her sides as she spoke, to find some evidence of deep breathing, but they did not find it.

"As they closed this part of the examination, she arose to her feet, still in vision, holding a Bible high up, turning from text to text, quoting correctly, although the eyes were looking upward and away from the Book.

"She had a view of the seven last plagues. Then she saw the triumph of the saints, and her shouts of triumph I can seem to hear even now. To these facts I freely testify." Elder D.H. Lamson, Hillsdale, Michigan, Feb. 8, 1893; Great Second Advent Movement, 207-208.

Here are the words of two other witnesses who were there that night:

"I remember the meeting when the trial was made, namely, to test what Brother White had frequently said, that Sister White did not breathe while in vision, but I cannot recall the name of the doctor who was present. . . . It must have been Dr. Fleming, as he was the doctor called sometimes for counsel. He is, however, now dead. I can say this much, that the test was made, and no sign of breath was visible on the looking glass." Drusilla Lamson, quoted in Great Second Advent Movement, 208.

"This is to certify that I have read the above testimonials of David Lamson and Mrs. Drusilla Lamson, concerning the physician's statement when examining Mrs. E.G. White while she was in vision, June 26, 1854.

"I was present at that meeting, and witnessed the examination. I agree with what is stated by Brother and Sister Lamson, and would say further that it was Doctor Fleming and another younger physician who made the examination. After Mrs. White rose to her feet, as they have

stated, quoting the texts of Scripture, Doctor Fleming called for a lighted candle. He held this candle as near her lips as possible without burning, and in direct line with her breath in case she breathed. There was not the slightest flicker of the blaze. The doctor then said, with emphasis, 'That settles it forever; there is no breath in her body.' " David Seeley of Fayette, Iowa, testimony dated August 29, 1897; Great Second Advent Movement, 208-209.

The following incident occurred three years later in March 1857:

"We were present when Sister E.G. White had a vision in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. Dr. Lord made an examination, and said, 'Her heart beats, but there is no breath. There is life, but no action of the lungs. I cannot account for this condition.'"—Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Fowler, Hillsdale, Michigan, Jan. 1, 1891; Great Second Advent Movement, 209.

In the above examinations, notice that, while in vision, Ellen spoke without breathing out. It is impossible to speak without exhaling, yet she would do it for over an hour. A person cannot normally stop breathing more than a few minutes without passing into unconsciousness and death.

"I was present when Sister White had the above-named vision in Waldron's Hall, Hillsdale. In addition to the above statement, I heard the doctor say that Sister White's condition in vision was 'beyond his knowledge.' He also said, 'There is something supernatural about that.'" C.S. Glover, Battle Creek, Michigan, Jan. 19, 1891; Great Second Advent Movement, 209.

In June 1857, the Whites had driven to Buck's Bridge, New York, for weekend meetings. As James White spoke to a full house, Ellen was taken off into vision. In the audience that morning was a young man, 22-year-old Daniel Bourdeau from Vermont, who would later become one of our leading evangelists. He helped pioneer the work in California, and (because he was fluent in French) later in Switzerland, France, and Italy. I like his statement about Ellen in vision the best—because what he did was a test which cannot be faked!

"June 28, 1857, I saw Sister Ellen G. White in vision for the first time. I was an unbeliever in the visions; but one circumstance among others that I might mention convinced me that her visions were of God.

"To satisfy my mind as to whether she breathed or not, I first put my hand on her chest sufficiently long to know that there was no more heaving of the lungs than there would have been had she been a corpse. I then took my hand and placed it over her mouth, pinching her nostrils between my thumb and forefinger, so that it was impossible for her to exhale or inhale air, even if she had desired to do so. I held her thus with my hand about ten minutes, long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances. She was not in the least affected by this ordeal.

"Since witnessing this wonderful phenomenon, I have not once been inclined to doubt the divine origin of her visions." D.T. Bourdeau, Battle Creek, Michigan, Feb. 4, 1891; Great Second Advent Movement, 208.

God will not send another genuine prophet, without providing us with evidence, during many public meetings, of no breathing for an extended period of time. Nowhere in the Spirit of Prophecy were we ever told that there would be another prophet. We now have all the light

needed to give the final message and prepare our lives for heaven. Here are three additional descriptions of Ellen's condition while in vision.

The first statement is by J.N. Andrews who first saw her in vision in 1852 and said that he had seen her in vision fifty times.

"In passing into vision, she gives three enrapturing shouts of 'Glory!' which echo and re-echo, the second, and especially the third, fainter but more thrilling than the first, the voice resembling that of one quite a distance from you, and just going out of hearing.

"For about four or five seconds she seems to drop down like a person in a swoon, or one having lost his strength; she then seems to be instantly filled with superhuman strength, sometimes rising at once to her feet and walking about the room. There are frequent movements of the hands and arms, pointing to the right or left as her head turns. All these movements are made in a most graceful manner. In whatever position the hand or arm may be placed, it is impossible for anyone to move it.

"Her eyes are always open, but she does not wink; her head is raised, and she is looking upward, not with a vacant stare, but with a pleasant expression, only differing from the normal in that she appears to be looking intently at some distant object.

"She does not breathe, yet her pulse beats regularly. Her countenance is pleasant, and the color of her face as florid as in her natural state." J.N. Andrews statement; Great Second Advent Movement, 204-205.

Mrs. Martha Amadon, who knew Ellen for many years, gave this description: "There was never an excitement among those present during a vision; nothing caused fear. It was a solemn, quiet scene, sometimes lasting an hour . . . When the vision was ended, and she lost sight of the heavenly light, as it were, coming back to the earth once more, she would exclaim with a long-drawn sigh, as she took her first natural breath, 'D-a-r-k.' She was then limp and strengthless." Martha Amadon, Documentary File 373.

Here is how James White described the visions in his 1868 book, Life Incidents: "1. She is utterly unconscious of everything transpiring around her, as has been proved by the most rigid tests, but views herself as removed from this world, and in the presence of heavenly beings.

"2. She does not breathe. During the entire period of her continuance in vision, which has at different times ranged from fifteen minutes to three hours, there is no breath, as has been repeatedly proved by pressing upon the chest, and by closing the mouth and nostrils.

"3. Immediately on entering vision, her muscles become rigid, and joints fixed, so far as any external force can influence them. At the same time her movements and gestures, which are frequent, are free and graceful, and cannot be hindered nor controlled by the strongest person.

"4. On coming out of vision, whether in the daytime or a well-lighted room at night, all is total darkness. Her power to distinguish even the most brilliant objects, held within a few inches of the eyes, returns but gradually. . .

"She has probably had, during the past twenty-three years, between one and two hundred visions. These have been given under almost every variety of circumstance, yet maintaining a wonderful similarity." James White, Life Incidents, 272.

**Identifying Basic Bible Truths.** Encountering many problems and difficulties, Ellen Harmon began traveling and speaking regularly to groups of Advent believers. Yet she kept at her task. She met and, on August 30, 1846, married a young Advent preacher, James White. In early 1848, the decision was made by the early believers to hold several meetings and gather together these new truths that were being discovered into one body of basic Bible beliefs.

There was the danger that the light already given to Ellen would be ignored, or that, in trying to study out Bible truths and needing guidance from heaven, they might reject the light she could give. Another danger was that their mutually conflicting positions would fracture them into separate groups.

The meetings were called the “Sabbath Conferences.” Five were held in 1848, between April and October. The possibility of success was somewhat doubtful. At one of the earlier meetings, “hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views” (2 Spiritual Gifts, 97).

Without the light which came from Heaven at each meeting through Ellen, the meetings would have ended in almost total failure. Here is how the Lord solved the problem very effectively:

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce [an affectionate name she applied to several aged gentlemen], Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure.

“I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power.

“When they came to the point in their study where they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively.

“Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.

“During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God.

“The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given.” 1 Selected Messages, 206-207.

So the true Bible foundation of the Advent believers were studied out and all could agree they were correct.