

Study Guide #19: The Remnant Church

Introduction

Ancient Israel was God's chosen group to fulfill a specific spiritual mission to the world. When literal Israel rejected their Messiah, God turned to the Christian Church to continue that mission as *spiritual* Israel. With all of the spiritual confusion within Christianity today, it's only reasonable that God should raise up a *specific* Christian group to give the clarion call from God to the world. This Study Guide examines 3 prophecies in Revelation, that in the context of Christian history, point to God's last-day church: (1) Revelation 14:6-11; (2) Revelation 10; and (3) Revelation 12:17.

Question #1: At what time in history are the 3 Angels' Messages in Revelation 14 to be given to the world?

Answer: Revelation 14:6-11 depicts 3 angels delivering heavenly messages to everyone on earth (v. 6) just before the return of Jesus (vv. 14-20). These messages particularly pertain to Daniel's "time of the end" because one of them is a warning against Babylon, who will have **"made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication"** (v. 8, NKJV). This is the time when spiritual Babylon will have illicit relations with **"the kings of the earth"** (Revelation 17:2, NKJV; 18:3, 9). Moreover, the 3rd message is a warning against receiving the mark of the beast (vv. 9-11), which concerns the final crisis in world history (Revelation 13:11-18). [NOTE: See Explorer III, Study Guides #10 and #16 for further information.]



Question #2: Are those messages delivered by 3 literal angels from heaven?

Answer: No. The Hebrew and Greek words for **"angel"** mean "messenger" and can refer to angelic beings, human beings, or God Himself. [NOTE: Malachi 3:1's 1st **"messenger"** is human, and its 2nd is Jesus.] The context must determine the nature of the **"messenger."** Part of the 1st angel's message is the **"everlasting gospel"** (Revelation 14:6, NKJV). According to Matthew 24:14, Acts 16:10, and Romans 15:16-20, it's the responsibility of Christians to preach the gospel. Therefore, we conclude that the Three Angels' Messages are to be proclaimed by Christians.

Question #3: What is the First Angel's Message?

Answer: The 1st angel's message centers on the gospel (Revelation 14:6). The Greek word for **"gospel"** means "good news" and is principally used in the New Testament to refer to that which saves people—the good news of salvation by grace through faith alone in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (see Explorer

II, Study Guides #4 and #5). This is to be proclaimed to **“every nation, tribe, tongue, and people”** (Revelation 14:6, NKJV), indicating a global mission.

The 1st angel’s message commands people to do 3 specific things: (1) **“Fear God”** (Revelation 14:7, NKJV); (2) **“give glory to Him”** (v. 7); and (3) **“worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water”** (v. 7). To fear God is to recognize His authority and submit to it, which describes someone in a right relationship with Him. To give Him glory is the result of fearing God and is reflected in a life of praise and obedience (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 6:18-20). Note that worship is emphasized here in the context of avoiding the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11), which constitutes a specific form of false worship. It’s significant that the 1st message commands true worship of the Creator, especially at a time in world history where even so-called Christian lands are enamored with the theory of evolution. Note also that the command to worship is a paraphrase of part of the Sabbath Commandment—**“who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water”** (Cf. Exodus 20:11).

Question #4: What judgment is referred to in Revelation 14:7?

Answer: *First*, it’s called **“the hour of His [God’s] judgment”** and not the hour of *people’s* judgment about the gospel. *Second*, the judgment hour doesn’t come because the gospel is being preached, but rather the gospel is being preached with greater urgency because the hour of God’s judgment **“has come”** (NKJV). Some view this judgment as equivalent to God’s wrath—as in His executive judgment—whose hour has come, that is, it’s about to be poured out on the wicked. But *first*, the Greek word for **“judgment”** here indicates a *process* of judgment rather than the execution of the sentence of a judgment. *Second*, whenever a particular **“hour”** is said to have come in the book of Revelation, the events associated with it have come as well (see Revelation 3:3, 10; 9:15; 11:13; 14:15, where the same Greek word is **“time”** in the NKJV; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19). It’s *not* used in the sense of *anticipation* of an event. Therefore, this judgment must be a process of judgment going on in heaven while the gospel is being preached on earth and people still have an opportunity to be saved. [NOTE: Although the exact nature of this judgment isn’t specified in this prophecy, the section’s sanctuary scene is of the Ark of the Covenant (Revelation 11:19), which is located in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary. This points us to the Day of Atonement Judgment (Leviticus 16). See Explorer III, Study Guides #12 and #13 for a complete discussion of this Pre-Advent Judgment and Explorer III, Study Guides #14 and #15 for discussion on how the book of Revelation is outlined.]

Question #5: What is the Second Angel’s Message?

Answer: The 2nd angel’s message is that spiritual Babylon has fallen because it has entered into illicit relationships with the nations (Revelation 14:8). In other words, this false religious power, along with her daughter churches (Revelation 17:5), will unite with the nations (Revelation 17:2; 18:3, 9) to enforce her religious mark to honor Sunday at the expense of the Bible Sabbath. In so doing, the nations of the world will become drunk on Babylon’s “wine.” This metaphor suggests that the wine represents her false teachings that have an intoxicating effect and lead others into spiritual confusion. In the context of announcing the fall of Babylon, the 2nd angel’s message implies what is explicitly stated in Revelation 18:4, a call for God’s people to come out of Babylon before it’s too late. [NOTES: (a) The



name “Babylon” means “confusion”; and (b) see Explorer III, Study Guide #10 on the mark of the beast issue.]

Question #6: What is the Third Angel’s Message?

Answer: The 3rd angel’s message is a warning not to receive the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11). Because we explained in Explorer III, Study Guide #10 that this mark is the enforcement of Sunday worship, the positive side of this message is to urge people to keep the 7th-day Sabbath. At that time, the Sabbath will be “present truth”—that is, truth that will *then* be a *testing* truth of people’s loyalty to Jesus.

Question #7: What else will God’s end-time movement be known for?

Answer: According to Revelation 14:12, God’s movement that proclaims the 3 Angel’s Messages will be known for 3 specific things. *First*, they will have “**patience**” (NKJV), from a Greek word better translated as “perseverance,” which is something they *exercise* more than what they *have*. *Second*, they will “**keep the commandments of God.**” This is of particular importance in light of the fact that the Sabbath Commandment will be the point of contention in the final crisis. Finally, they will “**keep...the faith of Jesus.**” In the context of “perseverance,” we should understand the expression “**faith of Jesus**” as the fact that they will keep their faith in Jesus.

Question #8: What is the “little book” in the angel’s hand in Revelation 10:2?

Answer: *First*, note that it’s a “**little book**” in contrast to the scroll in Revelation 5. *Second*, it’s a book of prophecy, for when the apostle John “eats” it in vision and has a *bitter* experience, he’s told to “**prophesy again**” (Revelation 10:10-11). *Third*, there’s an interesting parallel between the instructions to John to seal up this book (v. 4) with the instruction given to Daniel to seal up his book (Daniel 12:4, 9). It was the time prophecies, especially of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14, that were sealed until “**the time of the end**” (Daniel 12:4, 9, NKJV; cf. 8:17). [NOTE: The 7 thunders were speaking while the little book was open in the angel’s hand. So when John is told to seal up what the 7 thunders are saying, it was the same thing as telling him to seal up the “**little book.**”] For all these reasons, we conclude that the little book in Revelation 10 is the book of Daniel and that John’s experience with it in vision means that he represented God’s end-time movement who will have the same experience with the book of Daniel.



Question #9: What did the angel mean when he said that “there should be delay no longer” (Revelation 10:6, NKJV)?

Answer: The Greek word translated as “**delay**” in all the modern English translations is the normal word for “time” and is never translated as “delay” elsewhere in the New Testament. There was a Greek word for “delay,” but that word isn’t used here. Note the context in Revelation 10: (1) John is told to seal up the book; (2) then the angel announces there would be “**delay**” [“time”] **no longer**; and (3) after that John is told to “**eat**” the book and then to “**prophesy again**” (vv. 10-11). Thus, there would have to be some time

between the unsealing of the book and prophesying “again.” All this evidence points to the interpretation that it could *not* be historical time that was meant. Therefore, it must be *prophetic* time that would be no more. When we search the prophecies of Daniel to find the longest time prophecy that stretches toward the 2nd Coming of Jesus, we find that it’s the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14.

Question #10: Was there a Christian group that experienced bitterness concerning the prophecy of Daniel 8:14?

Answer: Yes. As discussed in Explorer III, Study Guides #12 and #13, the followers of Baptist preacher William Miller proclaimed their understanding of the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Miller taught that the cleansing of the sanctuary there would be the cleansing of the earth by fire when Jesus returned in glory. When Jesus didn’t return in 1844, the bitter experience was known as the Great Disappointment. While some in Miller’s movement gave up on God and His Word altogether, others returned sheepishly to their former Protestant churches which had expelled them, and still others continued to set dates for the 2nd Coming of Jesus. But one group reexamined the 2,300-day prophecy and discovered that the event foretold there was the beginning of the Pre-Advent Judgment in heaven.



Question #11: How does Revelation 12:17 apply to God’s last-day Church?

Answer: See Explorer III, Study Guide #8, Question #9 for the evidence that Revelation 12:17 applies to the Late Church Era, closest to the 2nd Coming of Jesus. Here is how Revelation 12:17 reads: “**And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**” (NKJV). The Greek word for “**offspring**” can also be translated as “remnant,” as in the King James’ Version. The word for “remnant” refers to the last portion of something, like the last portion of a bolt of cloth. In the Old Testament, the 3 common Hebrew words variously translated in a similar way are used to refer to a relatively small, organized group who form the nucleus of God’s nation again. Given the context in Revelation 12:17, we can refer to the “remnant” there as Jesus’ remnant church—His last church on earth proclaiming the last major 3-fold message. It exists for a specific purpose, which, like ancient Israel, *doesn’t* make its members better than anyone else.

Question #12: What are the 2 characteristics of the remnant church?

Answer: They are the ones who (1) “**keep the commandments of God**” and (2) “**have the testimony of Jesus Christ**” (NKJV). It’s not surprising that keeping God’s commandments is emphasized since the final crisis will concern God’s Sabbath Commandment. But what is “**the testimony of Jesus Christ**”? The Greek allows it to be either the testimony *about* Jesus *or* Jesus’ testimony to His people. Revelation 19:10 identifies “**the testimony of Jesus as the spirit of prophecy**” (NKJV). Note the following outline:

- A **the testimony**
- B **Jesus**
- B¹ **spirit**
- A¹ **prophecy**

Since “**Jesus**” and “**spirit**” are parallel terms, so “**testimony**” and “**prophecy**” are also parallels. This makes the “**spirit**” a Person, namely, the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the words “**testimony**” and “**prophecy**” must also be parallel to each other. The expression “**the spirit of prophecy**” refers to the Holy Spirit as the inspirer of prophecy. In other words, the phrase can be translated as prophecy *from* the Spirit or as the Spirit’s prophecy. Likewise, then, “**the testimony of Jesus**” can mean the testimony *from* Jesus or Jesus’ testimony. Thus, it doesn’t mean the testimony of believers about Jesus. According to the same verse, those who have the testimony of Jesus, or the spirit of prophecy, are John’s “**brethren**” (NKJV). In the same context, Revelation 22:9 identifies John’s “**brethren**” as “**prophets**”: “**For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets**” (NKJV). Therefore, the term “**spirit of prophecy**” is another term for the “gift of prophecy.”

Question #13: Does the remnant church possess the gift of prophecy in the Scriptures or is it a church full of prophets?

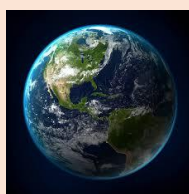
Answer: It would hardly be distinctive to simply say that the remnant church possesses the Scriptures, for even false churches possess the Scriptures. On the other hand, not every member of any church is going to be a prophet, for the Lord has never operated that way in Biblical times. Therefore, we understand Revelation 12:17 as teaching that the remnant church will have the prophetic gift present in it, at least at some point in its history.

Question #14: Didn’t the prophetic gift end with the end of the New Testament?

Answer: That has been the centuries-old belief among Christians. But please see Explorer II, Study Guide #13 for evidence that the prophetic gift is particularly prophesied to exist in the very last days. Moreover, there’s a pattern in Biblical history in which all the great time prophecies concerning some specific judgment of God and/or deliverance of His people had a prophet who predicted the judgment/deliverance and a prophet associated with the event itself. See Appendix A to this Study Guide for details.

Question #15: Can you identify the remnant church?

Answer: From the 3 prophecies examined in this Study Guide, along with Christian history, we can now identify the remnant church of Bible prophecy. Here are the following 10 characteristics that this church must exhibit:



- *First*, it must be a global church in order to be sufficiently organized to proclaim these heavenly messages globally to “**every nation, tribe, tongue, and people**” (Revelation 14:6, NKJV).—There are many global Christian churches in existence today, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as small as it is in the

Western world, is the Protestant church with the most presence through its evangelistic, medical, educational, and publishing work on a *global* basis. Only the Roman Catholic Church has a larger presence in the world.

- *Second*, it will proclaim the everlasting gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone (14:6).—Many churches do this quite well, but so does the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its critics claim it is legalistic only because it teaches the necessity of keeping the Sabbath Commandment. [NOTE: It is strange that no one accuses any believer of being legalistic for obeying the commandment against murder, stealing, or lying. But when it comes to the Sabbath, then obedience suddenly and strangely becomes legalistic. Again, that prejudice has everything to do with Christian history.]
- *Third*, it will teach that all that we do should glorify God in the context of being awed in His presence.—Other churches also do a good job of this. But unlike most churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church also applies this to our diet in abstaining from unclean meats. [NOTE: See Explorer II, Study Guide 20 for a discussion of clean and unclean meats.]
- *Fourth*, it will teach the necessity and privilege of observing the seventh-day Sabbath.—There are a few other Protestant churches that observe the Bible’s seventh-day Sabbath. In fact, Seventh-day Adventists learned this truth from a Seventh-day Baptist. But the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest Sabbath-keeping church.
- *Fifth*, by its emphasis on worshiping God as the Creator, it will uphold the fiat creation by God *ex nihilo* (*out of nothing*) in specific opposition to the world’s view of evolution.—Most conservative, evangelical Protestant churches teach the Bible version of Creation in opposition to the theory of evolution. But Seventh-day Adventists view their keeping of the Sabbath as most consistent with the Creationist position since it believes the Bible Sabbath is a memorial of Creation (among other things).
- *Sixth*, it will proclaim the truth of God’s Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment going on in heaven while people still have an opportunity to be saved.—The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only organized Christian body that teaches this doctrine.
- *Seventh*, it will teach that spiritual Babylon is apostate Christianity and call people out of Babylon and into the Lord’s remnant church.—Although the 16th-century Protestant Reformers identified end-time Babylon as Papal Rome, Seventh-day Adventists are the only organized denomination of believers who *still* teach that view. [NOTE: The “protest” has largely gone out of the Protestant movement.]



- *Eighth*, it will warn against receiving the mark of the beast by observing the 7th-day Sabbath. In other words, it will teach the Sabbath truth, not only for its own sake, but also as the specific means to avoiding the mark of the beast.—While a few other churches teach the seventh-day Sabbath, only the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches that the Sabbath will be the test of loyalty in the final crisis. This gives greater urgency to the Sabbath message.
- *Ninth*, it will persevere in keeping the Ten Commandments and their faith in Jesus regardless of what is threatened against them by the wicked forces who will be controlling the world at the end-time.—In other words, the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches the importance of faithfulness and enduring to the end, in contrast to the popular view of “once saved, always saved.”
- *Tenth*, it will possess the gift of prophecy in its midst, especially in one prominent individual around the year 1844 at the beginning of the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment.—A few other churches accept a member as having the prophetic gift, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only one whose prophet could not exist and it would still teach all the doctrines that it teaches today. [NOTE: See Appendix B to this Study Guide for a brief overview of the prophetic gift in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.]

Question #16: Does this mean that Seventh-day Adventists believe that their members will be the only ones saved?

Answer: No, absolutely not. In fact, we teach that most of God’s saved people are in other churches, and that most people who will be in heaven will have probably never even heard of the 7th-day Sabbath, for example. God saves people on the basis of the truth they are convicted of as long as they are not willfully ignorant. On the other hand, since the Bible teaches that God expects more from people with greater knowledge, we believe God holds Seventh-day Adventist Christians more accountable than any other Christians in this *time of the end*. Undoubtedly, that means that many Seventh-day Adventists will be eternally lost. Therefore, to be called the “remnant church” is *not* a badge of honor, but a call to greater responsibility and accountability to God. The history of ancient Israel should keep any member of the remnant church humble.

Appendix A—The Judgment/Deliverance Pattern

There's a fascinating pattern in Scripture in which all the great time prophecies concerning some specific judgment of God and/or deliverance of His people had a prophet who predicted the judgment/deliverance and a prophet associated with the event itself. This can be seen as follows:

- **The Flood Epoch**—In Genesis 6:3, God told Noah that He would destroy the earth by a great Flood of water in 120 years. Many scholars think that the reference to 120 years was to man's average lifespan. However, given the ages of many who lived after the Flood (see Genesis 11:10-32), the 120 years must apply to a period of probation just before the Flood. Noah and his family were saved in the Flood through the ark. Therefore, Noah was both the prophet who predicted the coming judgment and the prophet who lived at the time of the Flood.
- **The Exodus Epoch**—In Genesis 15:5-14, God's judgment against Egypt and the deliverance of the Israelites after 400 years at the time of the exodus was predicted through Abraham. Abraham is called a prophet in Genesis 20:7, and God did speak with him directly and sometimes in dreams. Moses was the prophet at the time of the exodus (Exodus 12:31-42).
- **The Exile Epoch**—Jeremiah was the prophet who predicted the divine judgment of the Babylonian Captivity of the Jewish nation and that it would last for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10). Daniel was the prophet associated with the beginning of that deliverance (cf. Daniel 6:28 with Ezra 1:1-3).
- **The Messiah Epoch**—Daniel was the prophet who predicted the time that the Messiah would appear, after the 69 weeks of Daniel 9:25. John the Baptist was the prophet associated with the Messiah's appearance (Matthew 3).
- **The Pre-Advent Judgment Epoch**—Daniel was the prophet through whom the prophecy of the pre-advent judgment in heaven would occur at the end of the 2,300 symbolic days (Daniel 8:14), which we showed in Explorer III, Study Guide #12 was in 1844. Given the pattern shown above for all other time prophecies involving a judgment and/or deliverance, we should expect a prophet to be called by God around 1844. Indeed, we believe that was the case. See Appendix B to this Study Guide for a brief overview of that individual.

Appendix B—The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen White

Ellen Gould Harmon was born on November 26, 1827, in Gorham, Maine. The Harmon family included eight children, the youngest of whom was Ellen and her twin sister Elizabeth. At the age of 9, Ellen was hit in the face by a rock thrown by a classmate, an event that ended her formal education in the third grade.

Ellen was baptized into the Methodist Church in 1840 when she was 12 years old. In 1842 the entire Harmon family was convicted of the soon 2nd Coming of Jesus after attending meetings conducted by the Baptist preacher William Miller in Portland, Maine. For their support of the Millerite movement, the family was disfellowshipped from the Methodist Church the next year (1843). Ellen Harmon was not yet 17 when the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, came, and Jesus had not returned as expected. But with several friends, she determined to remain faithful while earnestly searching the Bible. Then in December 1844, Ellen had her first vision, which gave assurance that if the believers remained steadfast in the hope of the 2nd Coming, victory would be theirs. Her lifelong prophetic ministry thus began at the age of 17.

On August 30, 1846, Ellen married a young Millerite preacher named James White, and the couple had 4 children—Henry, Edson, William (Willie), and John Herbert. She and her husband labored for what became the Seventh-day Adventist Church until his death on August 6, 1881. Ellen remained a widow for the rest of her life, although she continued in her teaching, preaching, and writing ministry. She traveled often in the cause of God, including 2 years in Europe (Fall 1885-Summer 1887) and nearly 9 years in Australia (late 1891-1900). She spent the last 15 years of her life at her home called Elmshaven near St. Helena in northern California. A broken hipbone caused by a fall in her home confined Ellen White to her bed or wheelchair for the last 5 months of her life. Finally, on July 16, 1915, Ellen White passed away at the age of 87. She was buried beside her husband James in the Oak Hill Cemetery at Battle Creek, Michigan. Thousands mourned her death, including both church members and others.

During her 70 years of public ministry, it is estimated that she received approximately 2,000 visions and prophetic dreams. On at least 2 occasions, Ellen White in vision exhibited remarkable phenomena involving a Bible. In one case, she held up a large, heavy family Bible for almost 30 minutes in her left hand, although when out of vision she could barely hold it in that hand. Then in the other case, she turned the pages of a Bible and correctly pointed and read verses even though she could not see anything in the room during the vision. By the mid-1880s, the public visions diminished and were largely replaced by prophetic dreams during her sleeping hours. The length of her visions varied from about 15 minutes to as long as nearly 4 hours.

Ellen White was one of the most prolific writers in world history, having written by hand approximately 25 million words on about 100,000 pages. Literary experts who have examined the claims usually agree that she wrote more books that have been translated into more languages than any woman in history. In fact, today Ellen White appears to be either the 2nd or 3rd most translated writer of all time and the most translated American writer of either gender. Her writings include about 130 books, 4,600 periodical articles, and thousands of pages of sermons, letters, diaries, and other materials. Ellen White also did much public speaking, although writing continued to be her primary method of providing spiritual leadership to the church.

Appendix C—Modern-Day Prophets

Despite a very old tradition among almost all Christians that the gift of prophecy ended with the New Testament, some Protestant churches have recently accepted some of their believers as genuine prophets. This movement gained attention in the 1980s and is especially present in the Pentecostal and charismatic parts of Protestant Christianity. Even though many believers accept these prophets as true prophets of God, both the prophets and their followers acknowledge that they are sometimes wrong in what they say.

Wayne Grudem, a Baptist theologian in the Calvinist tradition, has perhaps offered the most famous Biblical defense for these modern-day prophets. He distinguished the New Testament writings from the messages of prophets in the New Testament Church and today by stating that the writings of the New Testament were *verbally* inspired, but that the New Testament prophets' messages were not. Instead, the inspiration of the latter resulted in these prophets declaring in their own words what God had brought to their attention. His position is that the New Testament writings are therefore completely inerrant, while the non-canonical prophets in New Testament times and modern-day prophets can be wrong even about major things at times.

Among Seventh-day Adventist scholars, the Australian theologian Graeme Bradford echoed much of Wayne Grudem's view. Although Bradford didn't subscribe to verbal inspiration, he did state that the New Testament *apostles* were the successors of the Old Testament prophets, and that New Testament prophets therefore have less authority than either group.

First, we acknowledge that all non-canonical prophets are *functionally* subordinate to the writings of the Holy Scriptures because the canon ("rule") of Scripture, by definition, is the rule by which we judge all spiritual matters and counsels to God's people. Christians correctly recognize that the New Testament was written by apostles of Jesus or their close associates. The word "apostles" means "ones sent forth" as official ambassadors for Jesus. Like a political ambassador who *officially* speaks for the nation he or she represents, so the apostles of Jesus *officially* spoke for Jesus. Therefore, when Jesus chose certain followers to also be His *apostles*, He was providing for the writing of the New Testament—because anything they said or wrote in their capacity as an apostle would naturally be considered the same as if Jesus Himself had personally said or written it. But that doesn't make non-canonical prophets any less reliable or accurate than the apostles or the prophetic writers of the Old Testament. David certainly did not regard the prophet Nathan's messages as something he could safely ignore (II Samuel 12). [NOTE: See Explorer I, Study Guide #13 for the rationale defending the idea that Jesus' apostles' writings were part of Scripture.]

Second, Jesus Himself gave testimony that placed the New Testament apostles *and* prophets on a par with the Old Testament prophets. In Luke 11:47-51 (cf. Matthew 23:31-36) Jesus accused the forefathers of the Jewish leaders of His day as having killed the prophets. The use of the past tense "**killed**" clearly refers to some of the prophets in the Old Testament. Then He declared that God "**will send**" (future tense) "**prophets and apostles,**" and the Jewish leaders will kill some of them also (Luke 11:49). In this general way, Jesus elevated non-canonical New Testament prophets on a par with His apostles in a way that He did not elevate other followers of Himself.

In Ephesians 2:19-22 the apostle Paul declared that the **“foundation”** of the Church consists of **“apostles and prophets”** (v. 20). In Ephesians 3:5, just seven verses later, Paul again refers to **“His holy apostles and prophets”** in his own day. Then in 4:11 he lists **“apostles”** and **“prophets”** among the Christians who would be recipients of those spiritual gifts. The letter’s entire context also means that Paul was referring to Christian prophets in the New Testament era. Clearly, then, if the New Testament prophets were equally part of the Church’s foundation as the apostles were, then it’s impossible to plausibly argue that the New Testament prophets were less reliable than the apostles in what they taught.

Finally, the notion that non-canonical prophets are either less inspired or reliable than canonical prophets and apostles just does not pass the proverbial “smell” test. If the Holy Spirit inspires a prophet, it only makes sense that He would also ensure that the revelation-message would be accurately related to His people because that is the reason for the inspiration in the first place.

The evidence makes it impossible for us to conclude that non-canonical prophets, including Ellen White, are any less reliable in their passing on of God’s revelation to His people than the writers of Scripture. As we have learned in Explorer I, Study Guide #16, even the writers of Scripture occasionally made some discrepancies or errors in *incidental details*. But there is no good reason to doubt the core messages and counsels from either the Bible writers or Ellen White’s writings.