

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 5 “Revelation *and* Inspiration”

Read for this week’s study

Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:18-21; Exodus 17:14; Revelation 1:19; Ezekiel 4:1-8.

Memory Text

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things he saw”
(Revelation 1:1, 2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. General and Special Revelation
- III. The Process of Inspiration
- IV. Oral Messages
- V. Written Messages
- VI. Drama, Symbols, Parables
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

- 1. This week’s lesson focuses on the revelation/inspiration process, with special attention to the oral, written, and dramatized ways the divine message has been communicated to human beings. (Sabbath Afternoon)
- 2. Read Revelation 1:1-3. The lesson author sees this passage as a “classic example of the revelation-inspiration process”. What is going on in this passage?
- 3. Read Hebrews 1:1-2. What does the string of adverbs in this passage tell us about God? Do an internet search on the concepts of “general” and “special” revelation. What is the difference between these two and why does it matter? (Sunday)

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17. What are these verses saying that impacts our view of inspiration? What are we saying when we call the Bible the Word of God?
5. Read 2 Peter 1:20-21. What assurance do we have that the oral messages delivered by God's prophets were as inspired and reliable as the written ones? Which kind of communication is more effective, oral or written? (Tuesday)
6. If an inspired writer or Jesus Himself was the author of a text, would it still be possible to misunderstand? (Tuesday)
7. What is the difference between a canonical and a non-canonical prophet? (Tuesday)
8. Seventh-day Adventists believe Ellen White possessed the same quality of inspiration as Bible prophets, though she never considered her writings to be equal in authority with Scripture. On the contrary, Ellen G. White always uplifted the Bible. But how did she herself understand God's prophetic revelations to her and the process of her inspiration?

First, Ellen G. White always considered the Bible as the authoritative and infallible revelation of God.

Second, Ellen G. White recognized that the process of inspiration involved divine-human interaction. God communicated His messages, but then the prophet would convey the divine instruction using his or her own words. As Ellen G. White put it: "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. . . . The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God"—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21.

Third, Ellen G. White noted that not all her human experiences and communications were inspired. "There are times when common things must be stated," she advised, "common thoughts must occupy the mind, common letters must be written and information given that has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 39. It is important to realize this distinction as we read and relate to her writings and experiences, particularly her correspondence and diaries.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now, a great key text, of course, is 2 Timothy 3:16. Is there any better known one, in the pastorals, than this one on the inspiration of Scripture? This is going to vary in the versions. First, I'll use the *Revised Standard*, which is in the *King James* tradition:

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Now, that way of translating it has been a temptation to people to use this verse as proof that the Bible is inspired. You have a question, how do we know that the Bible is inspired? Answer, 2 Timothy 3:16. Next question, how much of the Bible is inspired? Answer, 2 Timothy 3:16. Well, I should have brought along my Mormon Bible. It has the same verse in it. Or I should have brought along the Bible that contains the Apocrypha; the same verse is in it. So we can't use that verse. Do you remember in the very beginning of the year, I brought the *New Testament Revised by the Spirits*? That's a dreadful publication, in 1861, and it claims to be inspired. There's the *Inspired Version*. Joseph Smith took the *King James Version*, and he edited it all the way through, and introduced many ideas. And he says that this was revised under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Anybody could write a paper and claim that it's inspired. It might sell better.

Imagine if a student in class wrote a term paper and then said, "Everything in this term paper is inspired." How could you give him an "F"? But those claims are not worth anything, are they? Do you remember the older prophet who said, "I am a prophet of the Lord, and the angel of the Lord has told me thus and so . . . but he lied to him." Of claims, we are warned all through the Bible not to accept mere claims. I think it's a great mistake to use this verse to prove the inspiration of Scripture. Now, if you want to use it that way, beware of how our Roman Catholic friends use it. Do you know, this is their key text for the inspiration of the Apocrypha. You say, "You can't do that. That is the one we use for our sixty-six books." They say, "Oh yes we can."

Timothy's grandmother was a Jewess. He learned the scriptures. Did he learn them in Hebrew or in Greek? He would learn them in Greek. And so he would use the Greek Bible. This is the argument, if you were to sign up for the Knights of Columbus Radio Bible Correspondence Course, and they sent you the little book of doctrines, Father Smith Instructs Jackson, or is it Father Jackson Instructs Smith? It's one or the other. And in there there's a section on this. And it argues that when Paul said to Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired of God," Timothy would say, "Ah, that's my Bible that Paul is referring to." And Timothy's Bible was the Greek Bible, and it contained the Apocrypha. And so this is the Roman Catholic key text for the inspiration of the Apocrypha. So maybe we'd better not use it. Besides, it has no authority anyway, does it? How can you just put a verse in, and say that makes it inspired?

Then what was Paul's intention? Do you have a version that translates it some other way? Yes, do you have *New English*? It's going to read another way in there, isn't it?

COMMENT: “Every inspired scripture has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, or for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind.”

Now, you notice there, in the *New English Bible*, this verse is not a statement of the inspiration of Scripture. It’s a statement of the value of inspired writing. Now you could make that statement. And you see, if Timothy was aware of these other books that claim to be inspired, he needed this advice. And Paul is saying, “Timothy, there are lots of books claiming to be inspired, but only that writing,” and that’s what Scripture means, ‘writing’ “only that writing which is inspired of God is profitable,” not these others. So this is the best protection against the Apocrypha, rather than proving the Apocrypha is inspired. Now, did Ellen White ever use the verse? In the Introduction to *The Great Controversy*, page 6, or is it 7, she uses it precisely right. And to do it, she uses the *Revised Version*, “That scripture which is inspired of God is profitable.” It is not a verse that proves the inspiration of Scripture. It’s a verse that states the profitability of inspired writing. What do you think? Yes?

COMMENT: That still seems to leave you back where you started, because how are you to decide what came from God and what didn’t?

Oh, then you have that to do next. How do you determine the Scriptures which were inspired of God? But at least the verse has value then. With all the other things going around, Paul says, “Beware. Be cautious. That scripture which is inspired by God is profitable.” And he doesn’t take up the subject of how you decide which is and which is not.

COMMENT: But doesn’t that statement seem self-evident?

How do you mean?

COMMENT: Wouldn’t people figure that what God said, or what came from God, was obviously profitable, and what didn’t, you could reject.

Well, I think, apart from the setting of there being all these other books, there wouldn’t be the need for the statement. When you look at all the apocryphal and the pseudepigraphical books, which many accepted, and there are key texts used to this day, as you know, from Maccabees and Ecclesiasticus and so on; one needs this counsel. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/71MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/72MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Satanic agencies are always warring for the mastery over the human mind, but the angels of God are constantly at work, strengthening the weak hands and confirming the feeble knees of all who call upon God for help (RH July 4, 1899). {7BC 923.5}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. {FLB 142.2}

The Spirit of Christ, working upon the heart conforms it to His image; for Christ is the model upon which the Spirit works. By the ministry of His Word, by His providences, by His inward working, God stamps the likeness of Christ upon the soul. {TDG 46.5}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. . . . Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

The evidence of the truth of God's word is in the word itself. Scripture is the key that unlocks scripture. The deep meaning of the truths of God's word is unfolded to our minds by His Spirit. {8T 157.1}

God wants our minds to expand. He desires to put His grace upon us. We may have a feast of good things every day, for God can open the whole treasure of heaven to us. {Mar 23.3}

The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is “first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit,” “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us. {7BC 945.5}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {7BC 945.7}

The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue. {1SM 22.1}

The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident. {FE 187.2}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us how to reach the abodes of eternal happiness. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all—the knowledge of Christ. He is the Sent of God; He is the Author of our salvation. But apart from the Word of God, we could have no knowledge that such a person as the Lord Jesus ever visited our world, nor any knowledge of His divinity, as indicated by His previous existence with the Father. {LHU 130.5}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who

wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith. {Ed 169.2}

After His resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples on the way to Emmaus, and, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. The hearts of the disciples were stirred. Faith was kindled. They were “begotten again into a lively hope” even before Jesus revealed Himself to them. It was His purpose to enlighten their understanding and to fasten their faith upon the “sure word of prophecy.” He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not merely because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because of the unquestionable evidence presented by the symbols and shadows of the typical law, and by the prophecies of the Old Testament. It was needful for the followers of Christ to have an intelligent faith, not only in their own behalf, but that they might carry the knowledge of Christ to the world. {GC 349.1}

This Holy Book has withstood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven. {1SM 15.3}

Each law of God is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace [Psalm 119:165 quoted] (Letter 112, 1902). {3BC 1153.6}