

**Notes on Two Resolutions to Be Considered by the  
2022 Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
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**RESOLUTION ON THE HOLY BIBLE**

As delegates to the 2022 General Conference Session in St Louis, Missouri, we express our conviction that the Bible is the inspired and revealed Word of God.<sup>1</sup> Through the Holy Scriptures, God has revealed Himself and His will to humanity. The whole Bible is inspired and must be understood as a whole in order to arrive at correct conclusions as to the truth on any revealed topic.<sup>2</sup> The Bible is reliable in what it affirms.<sup>3</sup> Its record of creation in six literal days,<sup>4</sup> the fall of human beings, a global flood to destroy wickedness and preserve a remnant, Christ's earthly life, death, and resurrection, as well as God's numerous interventions in history for the salvation of human beings are trustworthy reports of God's acts in history (Luke 24:27; Heb 1:1, 2; 2 Pet 1:21). Prophetically, the fulfillment of predicted events in accordance with prophetic time periods establishes confidence in the Bible<sup>5</sup> as a unique witness to divine truth unlike any other religious book (Isa 46:9, 10; Dan 2, 7, 8; Luke 24:44; 2 Pet 1:19, 20).

We believe that the Bible is the prophetic Word of God and through the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New Testament, and especially through His Son, Jesus Christ, God has revealed how He will act for the salvation of human beings and execute judgment on wickedness.

We commit ourselves to prayerfully study and follow the Bible, the living and effective Word of God. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It stands forever as a witness to God's will, His law, His thoughts, and His purposes for human beings and for our world, and contains the treasures of eternal wisdom and grace (Isa 40:8; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16, 17). Its principles and teachings are applicable in all times, all places, all languages, and

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<sup>1</sup> That the "delegates" believe this about the Bible is likely, paralleling Christian dogma throughout history, and that the session will overwhelmingly vote this is certain. That these statements about the Bible are actually true is not nearly so certain. We have only the self-testimony of the Bible itself, with no external controls or evidence, especially not the fulfillment of biblical prophecies, as alleged below.

<sup>2</sup> This is a weak and unsupported declaration. For one thing, it implies that a reader cannot establish the meaning of a specific sentence or paragraph of scripture with its own language and within its own context without considering its place in the whole Bible. In fact, the opposite is true. The meaning of the whole Bible is established by the meanings of all its parts. The result is that there is no single meaning of the Bible regarding any particular topic or issue; there is no biblical theology, OT theology, or NT theology; there are instead multiple theologies within each corpus.

<sup>3</sup> This is a standard dictum of biblical inerrancy advocates. The implication here, and especially in what follows, is that "reliable" means true, historical, and scientific.

<sup>4</sup> This reference to Gen 1 is a monstrous example of eisegesis. The text speaks of six days consisting of evenings and mornings but no indication of how they are to be understood – literally or figuratively.

<sup>5</sup> One cannot help thinking about the Millerite prelude to Seventh-day Adventism and its wild and unsubstantiated ruminations on biblical prophecies, all interpreted backwards from "fulfillment" to "announcement," i.e., all manipulated to end in 1843!

all cultures for all people. It speaks credibly and relevantly today as it has in the past and will continue to speak as long as time shall last.<sup>6</sup>

We also believe that the Bible leads us to a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And by the Holy Spirit the Bible speaks directly to each person to reveal the plan of salvation and restore believers into the image of God.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the Bible stands as the norm for all religious experience<sup>8</sup> inasmuch as it reveals and teaches the truth and explains how its effects are manifested on the intellect, feelings, and affections (Heb 4:12; Gal 5:22-23).

We express our deep gratitude to the Lord because in the Scriptures we find hope to live amidst the challenges of the world. The Bible tells of God's plan to bestow immortality on His people at the second coming of Christ and ultimately, after the millennium in heaven, to put an end to sin and sinners forever and establish righteousness in the new earth (Ps 119:105; Rom 15:4; Heb 4:12; James 1:18).

### **STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE**

As delegates to the 2022 General Conference Session in St Louis, Missouri, we express our deep gratitude for God's prophetic guidance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>9</sup> Aiming to live "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4, NKJV; cf. Luke 10:16), we take seriously the biblical passages that teach the abiding nature of the gift of prophecy (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10, 28; Eph 4:11-14) and promise its end-time manifestation (Joel 2:28-31; Rev 12:17;

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<sup>6</sup> This lyrical declaration of the universal and timeless meaning of the Bible is typical of faith statements but is unsubstantiated in reality. Most of the issues of the Pentateuch are unrecognizable and meaningless to Christians. Even parts of the NT, like the arguments of Paul about food laws and circumcision and the dense symbolism of Revelation make little or no sense to anyone today in any part of the world.

<sup>7</sup> This may generally be arguable for the view of Jesus throughout the NT – although the portraits of him in Q, the individual Synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, Paul, Hebrews, James, and Revelation are all very different – but it is certainly not what one would conclude from an isolated reading of the OT.

<sup>8</sup> This is easy to declare but difficult to justify. Many "religious" experiences, e.g., sacrificial rituals and defilement situations, described and promoted in the OT and even some in the NT, e.g., glossolalia and baptism for the dead, are no longer considered by Christians or even Adventists to be normative.

<sup>9</sup> This, like in the resolution on the Bible, is essentially a faith statement, i.e., a declaration of belief that God has uniquely provided "prophetic guidance" to the Adventist Church. This is not only unsupportable but arrogant.

19:10; 22:9).<sup>10</sup> We recognize the gift of prophecy in the life and ministry of Ellen G White (1827-1915).<sup>11</sup>

We believe that the writings of Ellen G White were inspired by the Holy Spirit and are Christ centered and Bible based.<sup>12</sup> Rather than replacing Scripture, they uplift its normative character, safeguard the Church from “every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14), and offer an inspired guide to Bible passages<sup>13</sup> without exhausting their meaning or preventing further study. They also help us to overcome the human tendency to accept from the Bible what we like and to distort or disregard what we do not like.

We commit ourselves to prayerfully study the writings of Ellen G White with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions found therein. Whether individually, in the family, in small groups, in the classroom,<sup>14</sup> or in the church, we believe that the study of her writings brings us closer to God and His infallible Word—the Scriptures—providing us a transforming and faith-uplifting experience.

We rejoice in the Lord for what has already been accomplished in the global and local circulation of the writings of Ellen G White in both printed and electronic formats, including [egwwritings.org](http://egwwritings.org) and related apps. We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation and study of her writings in as many languages as possible. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare God’s people to face the challenges of these last days as we approach Christ’s soon return.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This biblical litany looks impressive until one actually reads the cited texts and discovers that they either have nothing to do with “prophecy” in the end times or offer no convincing reference to Adventism.

<sup>11</sup> I am sure the framers of this resolution believe they “recognize the gift of prophecy in the life and ministry of Ellen G White,” although I would have thought they would at least mention, if not actually emphasize, her writings here – after all the resolution is about “THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE.” Of course, this comes in the next paragraph. However, not everyone – not even all Adventists – “recognize” this. In fact, there are actually some very good reasons to deny this affirmation, e.g., her early shift on the “Shut Door” theology and her false claims about being shown things in visions that she actually got through her reading the writings of contemporary authors.

<sup>12</sup> As stated, White’s inspiration “by the Holy Spirit” is simply a matter of the framers’ belief, which is certainly not the view of others who credit her writing to more terrestrial origins. Although her writings clearly purport to be “Christ centered,” they are only very loosely based on the Bible.

<sup>13</sup> The relationship of her writings to the Bible is, in fact, often so tenuous that it is best to describe her biblical writings, like *The Desire of Ages (DA)*, as biblical fiction. This is evident from the extensive content inflation of biblical texts, especially narratives, by nonbiblical details, by background materials, and by devotional applications. E.g., White recounts a narrative from the Synoptic Gospels, the “Story of the Transfiguration,” in *DA* in such a way that over 90% of her material is not found in any of the Synoptic Gospels. That’s biblical fiction. I document this in an unpublished paper entitled, “The Biblical Writings of Ellen White.”

<sup>14</sup> This seems to be a call for using White’s writings in formal courses. I can only imagine how ineffective it would be to use *DA* in a college course on the Gospels, if over 90% of her material on the Transfiguration is actually from outside the biblical texts of the story and, in fact, harmonistically combines elements from all the narrative accounts.

<sup>15</sup> There is a serious theological disconnect here. How can White’s writings “strengthen and prepare God’s people” for “Christ’s soon return” when they are not entirely available in the native languages of all Adventists? Either they are very important, nah indispensable, for Adventists to prepare for the Advent OR, because they are not all accessible to every Adventist, they are actually not all that important. Of course, a third option would be that only those Adventists that have access to her writings can be ready for the Advent. That would certainly have a negative impact on the church’s international mission.