Who is Ellen White?
The Mini-Fundamentals series
by Chris Famisaran

Thank you to our worship team. Are you not blessed as well? Thank you, Ben. You're awesome. I hope I didn't scare anybody off last week. When we started the service, it was like, oh, boy, it's really sparse today. But thank you for coming today. I know it's gonna be a hot one. So there's still time, folks, you still have 20 minutes to get here. Before we close with prayer.

Let's pray. God, we thank you for the opportunity to gather together today. And especially as about what I'm about to talk about today. Help us have further context as we build for next week in Jesus name, Amen.

So, this month, we're focusing on a couple of topics that essentially kind of sets us apart from some of our brothers and sisters and other denominations. And some of the things that really set us apart is number one. We obviously talked about Sabbath last week, two weeks ago, Bill mentioned, he did a great job. Last week, I talked about the idea of death. Now, there's a few other topics that we could talk about, but we just don't have time. But one of the things I want to talk about as a prophetic gift, and associated with that closely is that of Ellen White, who is Ellen White? Well, Ellen White, has played a huge pivotal role in the formation really, and has had a huge influence even beyond her death, which was many, many years ago. And so today, I kind of want to set today as a primer to help better understand next week when we go even deeper into what we consider the prophetic gift.

So who was Ellen White, she was an author. She was a church pioneer. She was a leader in the church. You probably will not find her name across many magazines or books, outside of her own writing, but she is highly regarded as a pioneer of the Adventist church. In fact, if Ellen White didn't exist, I don't know that the denomination would have been able to move forward. And so yet, her writings especially have had a huge influence. In fact, Smithsonian Magazine named her as one of the most 100 most significant Americans of all time. She is the most

translated female non-fiction author in the history of literature, as well as the most translated non-fiction, author of either gender. By the time that she had passed, she was close to writing over 100,000 pages. Pre keyboard, folks, pre keyboard, think about that. All right, she all she published over 24 books, 5000 articles, and over 200 informational leaflets. I wonder if she had carpal tunnel or arthritis in her hands. Right. But she was a leader. She was a shaper. She was an advocate. And she didn't just focus on theology and spirituality. But she also focused on practical matters. She focused on health. We'll talk a little bit more about that as well in education, but she was also making sure that the church would have good leadership, but she was also an advocate for justice. Did you know that the early roots of our church they were strong, staunch believers of ending slavery. She helped. They all played a part in the Underground Railroad, not much as mentioned, but there there are. There is some mentions of the early church was making sure that right would be done. She spoke out against slavery.

So again, Ellen White was a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was born November 26 1827, to the Harmons. And so she was the youngest of eight children. And when she was born, they lived on a very small farm in rural Maine. And eventually, some years later, they moved I believe, was to Portland, Maine. Growing up she was raised a very faithful and devout Methodist and in fact, her faithfulness. Her desire for others to know Jesus was huge. Okay. And yet, Ellen, was just like many of us, she struggled in her walk With God at times. For instance, Early on she, she might probably many of us felt like she had to be good or even perfect before God could even accept her. Or this idea that if she was truly saved, she would feel this wonderful euphoric feeling all of the time. Those of you who've walked along, and Christ hasn't always been puppies and ice cream. So it's up and down right? Now, eventually, unfortunately, she was she and her family were kicked out of the Methodist church because she accepted William Miller's preaching about the imminent return of Jesus, we talked about this last year. And so she was so impacted though by this message, she felt compelled to do everything she could to share Jesus with others.

Now kind of a little bit of a quick overview. Miller was a farmer turned preacher, he was also a soldier early on in life, who he studied the Daniel and Revelation concluded that the Second Coming of Jesus would be a literal event, okay. And then. And so they they made the mistake of saying Jesus is coming at a certain

point. And then when Jesus didn't come, they said, Oh, by the way, we realize we were off a little bit, he's gonna come in 1844. Now eventually, as 1844 passed, what became known as a great disappointment. Many people were dissuade people literally had given everything up their livelihoods. Some of them, they were, they were so torn, they left the faith. And then yet out of that, there were four groups that popped out, and one of them being what was the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So even though, you know, she was crushed, when Jesus did not, quote, return, she still joined a group of Adventists faithful, faithful Christians, who went to where? The word, the Bible, this was a constant theme, a central theme in her life, to always go back or point to Scripture, okay. And so they wondered what had gone wrong. And then, when she was 17, she became inspired by a message from God, after the great disappointment. In fact, it's she writes, while I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me and I seem to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world I looked to, I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them when a voice said to me look again and look a little higher. At this, I raised my eyes and saw straight and narrow path cast up high above the world. And on this path, the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the further end of the path. And so these are some of the early words, this was a heavenly vision that God gave to Ellen early on as a 17 year old. Can you imagine experiencing something like that at 17 years old? Oh, crazy.

Now, again, Ellen White, would eventually become what we would call a prophet. And to be honest, she was never comfortable with that idea. Why? Because it gave her an elevated status. And yet she was a normal person. And yet she had been chosen by God to help move the church forward. Now, later on, she was traveling. And she eventually met a man by the name of James White, who would also be a pivotal figure in helping to lead and grow and organize the church. And so these two they joined together, they would study their Bibles together. And eventually they realized they loved each other, they got married. And so together, they traveled around and eventually had two children, sharing the gospel. And it was not a wonderful, lavish experience. It was meager. They were living by faith for many years. Eventually, however, she would continue to write. And she frequently, as its, I'm just quoting here, she frequently made it clear that her words to others were only serving their true purpose. If they reminded people to

study their Bibles, though she was considered, quote, a prophet. She always looked to go back to pointing to the Scriptures. She never said, I have come out with this. I think of this, she never use this gift for her own gain. Can you think of anybody who's tried to proclaim themselves as a prophet and tried to to gain from that?

And so yeah, troughout life, she would go and some of the themes that she focused on now was, for instance, the idea of the great controversy. What is the great controversy? The battle between what? Good and Evil. All right, essentially, who you're going to give your allegiance to the world? Or are you going to give it to God? One of the things that she also emphasized was later in life, there was a big meeting, the 18th, SDA General Conference. And the church was divided by the idea of some felt we needed to, quote, keep the law, it was a very legalistic frame of mind. And there are two other guys at Jones and second guy, he's escaping my head. But they fought valiantly for the fact of we are saved by grace, righteousness by faith. And after they went back and forth, fighting, sometimes the younger guys, they thought they knew better, and unfortunately, they're wit got the best of them. They were right. In a sense, you can be right, and you could also still be dead wrong. You know what I mean? At the conclusion of those meetings, Ellen White, this is a paraphrase essentially said, This is what I've been trying to tell you all, for so many years. And you look at her life in her writings, and the direction and the tone of her writing, and her voice changes. After that she fully focused on sharing Jesus with others, and especially uplifting and focusing on Jesus, for instance, one of the books that she wrote, and if you ever, if I can only recommend at least one book that was written by Ellen White is this Steps to Christ. How many of you have read this book? Okay, it's short, it's only 122 pages, it's not hard to understand. If you ever want to know how to grow, and how to develop, develop a relationship with Jesus read this book. But you also have another book called The Desire of Ages, books that focused on the centrality of how Jesus should be central should be the focus of our faith. She was also committed to making sure that we would focus on others our relationship as we minister to people, she wrote, I have a deep burden for souls. And so oftentimes, one of the things that she would do is she would write letters to people, and it would be it could be as have spiritual undertone, it could be practical, maybe God, will God bless her with wisdom on on nutrition and all health and everything. And

so she'd be inspired to write these letters to other people to help them you know, for instance, get better. No, not everything we have to remember to and I'll talk about this more next week. Everything that not everything that Elon write, about everything that Ellen White wrote, was spiritual [divine inspired]. Okay, and we'll we'll deep dive deep into that next week. Sometimes she would just give some advice. And yet we sometimes some of our zealous brothers and sisters would try to think what can we take from this? Sometimes she would just write a recipe. And often times, she would give good guidance. She believed that the Bible was also the best way to help guide for human relationships, because in Scripture, does it not profess to show how we should love one another, how we should get along with one another. And when we're fighting, how we should try to fix that.

And then she also wrote one of the most famous quotes in Adventism, and I hold this to my heart, and you've heard it is before is this and this is how we should minister to people. This should be the crux Christ method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed his sympathy for them, who ministered to their needs, and one their confidence and then he bade them follow me. Meaning Jesus made sure that he ministered to people to make sure that they could be okay physically, mentally, spiritually, perhaps even financially, before he said, Hey, Come, follow me. It was important to Ellen White. That in being faithful to God meant also looking out for others, and also sharing the word with others passionate.

And I mentioned already how early on in life, how committed she was to sharing pamphlets. No, okay. So when she was younger, actually even five have forgotten. Now, Ellen White her life I was challenged physically, because early on those of you who know at nine years old what happened or yeah, she got hit by a rock. The rock didn't just appear out of nowhere, somebody threw it at her face. And it hit her in the face. And for many for a long time, it affected her. But yet, she still was committed to sharing Jesus with others. And I love this one. I don't know how old she was, but she would literally have to be propped up. And she would knit stockings for other people guess how much she made a day. 25 cents, and then the 1840s 25 cents. Today, you can't buy anything for 25 cents that I can think of nothing significant, right? Maybe one stick of gum. 25 cents today now is probably about roughly $9. But what can you get with $9? Not a lot, you can get a burger fries and sprite. But you really can't get much you get maybe you maybe could get

one book for that. But that's how committed she was she didn't feel good. So they would prop her up. And she would knit stockings. That's how committed and how passionate she was. To share Jesus with others. I read that I thought, Whoa, man, I need to really reevaluate my idea of what commitment is. Okay, $9 a day. Course it was also different back then and she was a kid.

But Ellen White was committed to and I think that experience helped her understand that we can't just go out and share Jesus with others by saying something. They people have to be able to hear the word in a way that not only they can receive it, but they have to physically, mentally and spiritually be ready to hear the Word. Amen. So one of our emphasis was making sure that health would in other people would be good. And she she helped to share many tips and ideas of how we can get better. And in fact, the health message was so strong and her ministry that you have the White Memorial Church, you have Loma Linda University Hospital, and many other hospitals throughout the country and all over the world is in a way, it's an homage to her, her her fight to make sure people could get well, she wasn't interested in just having people hear the Gospel, she wanted them to be, well, holistically.

Education, she fought for the idea of everyone needed to have a good education. And then finally, the the last area that she worked in, we probably most most number four is the idea of writing and heeding the call of the Second Coming, because she was a part of that early Advent movement. And so while that was very important, she knew that big picture that we needed to have a broad understanding, and also be able to have people ready to receive the gospel. So one of the things that we have to remember about Ellen White was she was an imperfect person, though, if you read her writings and some of the challenges, she was not perfect.

So God used the faithful, imperfect person to do great things. How many of us here are perfect? No one's perfect here. If you dare to raise your hands, I'm gonna call shenanigans. That's pride right there. Oh, I'm kidding. But God use the faithful, imperfect person. Now, not everyone, God's not going to call us all to have a role like Ellen White. But yet, we can all make a difference somewhere. So this is kind of just as a primer next week, because while Ellen White has made many contributions, there has been some challenges in struggling with her role that will

we'll dive deep into I think she has a very important place. But we have to understand her in the right context. Amen. So, next week will be part two of Ellen White's role in the church. So also remember, God can use anybody to fulfill God's mission.

Now, Ellen White's ministry, I'm sorry, I forgot to point this out. But her her ministry is practical and spiritual. She wanted to make sure everybody was whole holistically, but also that they would have their spiritual needs met.

Now just like Ellen White. Okay, she knit stockings, maybe she wasn't passionate about already, but yet she did something. What is it that you're passionate about? Because this idea of the Lord coming consumed Ellen White? What is something that you are passionate about? That can be a bridge? It can be a tool to sharing Jesus with others. Was it last month we talked about the idea of hey, What are some of your talents? Some of the things that you love, whether it's photography. okay, we have people who maybe want to join our Deacon Deaconess ministry, Our AV unit. Teaching and it doesn't even have to be church related, what is something that you love to do? That can help you to meet other people, that you might be able to share Jesus with others.

And this week, okay. This week, every day, I want you to prayerfully take that passion to God in prayer and ask for opportunities to serve others through that passion. Amen. Oh, that's scary. But you know, what I've learned is this. It may be scary at first. But as you start to do it, learn, but also, I believe God will also give you the words to be able to share with others.

Let's pray. Father in Heaven Lord, we've only done a super brief we could have gone on hours and even days for this topic alone. But Lord, just just a quick snapshot of what we're going to talk about next week, we pray that you will help us learn from Ellen's fierce, fierce devotion to you. And also, Lord, may we have the same passion and conviction for the things that you've blessed us with to be able to go and share the good news with others. Thank you, Lord, for everyone who is here. keep us safe until we meet again next week in Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.