

# Elfred Lee's Testimony about Ellen White's Writings

**"Who is this Ellen White?"**

**Elfred Lee's Testimony of Rabbi Joe Kagan's Endorsement of Ellen G. White**

I met Rabbi Joe Kagan at Weimar Institute in CA. His family had come from Eastern Europe, where his aunt had been raped while a priest stood over her with a crucifix saying, "This is what you get for killing Christ." So you can imagine the feeling of many Jews towards Christianity. American Christians are not at all like Europeans.

His family moved to the U.S. while he was young. At age 13 he debuted at Carnegie Hall as a cantor. He had a beautiful tenor voice. He received a very high education and became a rabbi.

I met him in his later years in 1978, after he had been on Ronald Reagan's staff in Sacramento as their research man. If there were any questions about any subject, he was the one that did the research and found the answers.

He had a very negative attitude towards Christianity. He would never touch the New Testament. However, he knew the Jewish Old Testament (Torah) extremely well, as a highly educated rabbi would. One day he got hold of a book called *Patriarchs and Prophets* by Ellen G. White. He read it with astonishment and wanted to know who this Ellen White was. That is when I met him. He was asking who is this Ellen G. White and what university did she attend. We told him she only had a 3rd grade education. "Then where did she learn Hebrew?" he asked. We told him that she never knew Hebrew, but was the most prolific female writer in history, and that this was only one of her books.

He was amazed at her knowledge, saying that the information in this book (*Patriarchs and Prophets*) is Mishnaic. The Mishnah is part of the Hebrew scholarship. He said the Mishnah had only been translated into English 30 years ago and that only high-level rabbis knew this information. "This is the history of my people and it is very, very accurate." He also said that you have to know Hebrew to be able to write like this, because her sentence structure is not English; it's Hebrew. The rhythm, the meter, the arrangement of words and expressions are not English. He said it's as if she wrote in Hebrew and it was translated into English.

My family and I developed a strong friendship

with Joe, his wife, and son. As we studied the Bible and some Ellen White books together one day, he said, "I am convinced that Ellen White was inspired by the same source that inspired the Hebrew prophets. I want to become a Christian. I accept Jesus Christ as my Messiah." Now, he would not have come to Christ through reading the Bible. Even though the Hebrew Bible is full of prophecies pointing to the Messiah, it took Ellen White's writings to prove to him that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all the Hebrew prophecies. And only then did he pick up the New Testament and read about his Jewish Messiah.

Many times I saw him cry. I was in the middle of a painting commission for a large mural called "*Christ the Way of Life*" for the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C. He became very involved with that painting. The painting had originally been inspired by James and Ellen White, who had commissioned an engraver to do a black and white drawing of the subject. He confirmed to me that Ellen White's concept was very accurate on the whole plan of salvation in both the Old and New Testaments, but that the engraver had misrepresented her concepts.

So he helped me, in many details, to make the painting historically and theologically accurate—especially regarding the sanctuary section, the Hebrew writing on the cross, and the last supper scene. He told me to paint Jesus and His disciples at an oriental style table, sitting on mats on the floor—not Roman couches as the medieval artists painted. Further, he said their heads would be covered and he made sure I painted the wine, the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs and their symbolism exactly as they would have been.

He approved of the whole painting; and we had an unveiling ceremony at the Auburn SDA Church in late 1979. He had written a song to go with the painting and sat at the organ as we unveiled the painting. He wept as he sang the words of Jesus on the cross quoting Isaiah, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" He sang and sang and wept and wept, his whole body shaking. There was not a dry eye in the whole church. His voice was so beautiful. The original painting hangs in the new SDA world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, where they have posters and Bible studies of the painting. I could

2 never have done it without the inspiration of Rabbi Kagan and Ellen White. I wish they were still alive!

We were at his secret baptism in the Bear River above Sacramento on Saturday night, December 22, 1979. There were four of us present. He could not even tell his wife and son that he was now a Christian. As he came up out of the cold water praising God and singing to his new Messiah, he said, "I am now a completed Jew. I have now accepted the Old and New Testaments and the Messiah that all Jewish prophets told us about!"

I was recently in Europe, giving some workshops on art and some of my archaeological work in the Middle East. I happened to meet a Jewish family from Israel. Shalom David was originally from Iraq and his wife from Chile. They were now attending a college in Europe, where I met with quite a bit of opposition to the writings of Ellen White. This Jewish family invited me to their home for Shabbat (Friday night supper). It was a most enjoyable occasion as his wife and beautiful children sang and celebrated the arrival of Sabbath, as Jews have done for thousands of years. I told them the story of Rabbi Kagan and he got very excited.

He said, "The same thing happened to me! I would have rather burned the Bible than touch it! I wanted nothing to do with Christianity, but I also read the writings of Ellen White and the Spirit of God was on that woman. Her writings are as if she

wrote in Hebrew. You can definitely hear the Hebrew rhythm, meter, and expressions in her books. I also believe she was inspired by the same source as the Hebrew prophets. And she has helped me fall in love with Jesus Christ, my Messiah."

I just met, yesterday, with a rabbi living here in California—Rabbi Ben. It was a follow-up to a Sabbath meal I was invited to this last Sabbath with him and a group of Adventists. He went through the whole ceremony at the meal, just like Rabbi Kagan and my new friend (Shalom David) in Europe had.

So, yesterday, we were talking over Hebrew ceremonies and how they are still effective in healing disease. Rabbi Ben told me that he has also had the same experience. He hated the Bible, but Ellen White brought him to Christ and helped him read the New Testament and fall in love with the Messiah. He also told me that he had gone to visit one of the most influential rabbis, in America, who is in his 90s, and who must remain unnamed. While in this rabbi's library talking, he was scanning the many, many books on his walls; and there he saw the book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, by Ellen White.

Rabbi Ben asked him about it and where he had gotten it. "Why do you have this book by a Christian author?" The rabbi said, "This is a very authoritative source on our history."

**"God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe;** but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith."—4 *Testimonies*, 232-233.

**"Soon every possible effort will be made to discount and pervert the truth of the testimonies of God's Spirit.** We must have in readiness the clear, straight messages that since 1846 have been coming to God's people.

"There will be those once united with us in the faith who will search for new, strange doctrines, for something odd and sensational to present to the people. **They will bring in all conceivable fallacies, and will present them as coming from Mrs. White, that they may beguile souls.**"—1 *Selected Messages*, 41.

**"Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light** and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings. The cares of the world, the love of fashion, and the lack of religion have turned the attention from the light God has so graciously given, while books and periodicals containing error are traveling all over the country. Skepticism and infidelity are increasing everywhere. **Light so precious, coming from the throne of God, is hid under a bushel. God will make His people responsible for this neglect.** An account must be rendered to Him for every ray of light He has let shine upon our pathway, whether it has been improved to our ad-

vancement in divine things or rejected because it was more agreeable to follow inclination."—4 *Testimonies*, 391.

**"Those who have most to say against the testimonies are generally those who have not read them,** just as those who boast of their disbelief of the Bible are those who have little knowledge of its teachings. They know that it condemns them, and their rejection of it gives them a feeling of security in their sinful course."—1 *Selected Messages*, 45-46.

"Let ministers and people remember that **gospel truth ruins if it does not save.** The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As laborers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. **The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened.** . . . Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the *Testimonies* of His Spirit.'"—5 *Testimonies*, 134.

**"Repentant sinners have no cause to despair because they are reminded of their transgressions and warned of their danger. These very efforts in their behalf show how much God loves them and desires to save them.** They have only to follow His counsel and do His will, to inherit eternal life. God sets the sins of His erring people before them, that they may behold them in all their enormity under the light of divine truth. It is then their duty to renounce them forever."—4 *Testimonies*, 15.

**3** The following quotations are taken from the present author's book, *Defending the Spirit of Prophecy*, pp. 235-249, which is available at very low cost for widespread distribution. An abundance of additional quotations will be found in that book (for example, pp. 249-270). —*vf*

"In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. **There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.**"—4 *Testimonies*, 147-148.

"The first number of the *Testimonies* ever published contains a warning against the injudicious use of the light which is thus given to God's people. I stated that some had taken an unwise course; **when they had talked their faith to unbelievers, and the proof had been asked for, they had read from my writings instead of going to the Bible for proof.** It was shown me that this course was inconsistent and would prejudice unbelievers against the truth. The *Testimonies* can have no weight with those who know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases."—5 *Testimonies*, 669.

"There are matters in the testimonies that are written, not for the world at large, but for the believing children of God, and it is not appropriate to make instruction, warning, reproof, or counsel of this character public to the world. The world's Redeemer, the Sent of God, the greatest Teacher the children of men ever knew, presented some matters of instruction, not to the world, but to His disciples alone. . . He also had some special light and instruction to impart to His followers which He did not impart to the great congregation, as it would neither be understood nor appreciated by them. . . The Lord Jesus thought it necessary to make many things clear to His disciples which He did not open to the multitudes."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 34-35.

"[In his evangelistic meetings to non-Adventists] Elder Haskell enters into no controversy with opponents. **He presents the Bible** so clearly that it is evident that anyone who differs must do so in opposition to the Word of God. "Friday evening and Sabbath forenoon **he spoke upon the subject of spiritual gifts, dwelling especially upon the Spirit of Prophecy.** Those who were present at these discourses say that he treated the subject in a clear, forceful manner."—*Evangelism*, 257 (1906).

"In his teaching Elder\_\_\_ showed that the Spirit of Prophecy has an important part to act in the establishment of the truth. When binding off his work, he called for me . . . to speak to the people."—*Evangelism*, 257 (1906).

"**The volumes of Spirit of Prophecy should be in every family, and should be read aloud** in the family circle. . . The *Testimonies* contain instruction which meets the case of all, both parents and children."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, 178.

"Parents, your children are in danger of going contrary to the light given of heaven, and **you should both purchase and read the books, for they will be a blessing to you and yours. You should lend Spirit of Prophecy to your neighbors and prevail upon them to buy copies** for themselves. . . Many are going directly contrary to the light which

God has given to His people, because **they do not read the 3 books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings.**"—4 *Testimonies*, 391.

"If you really believe that the voice of God has spoken to you, pointing out your dangers, do you heed the counsels given? **Do you keep these testimonies of warning fresh in your minds by reading them often** with prayerful hearts? . . . You will be held accountable for every one of these appeals and warnings."—3 *Testimonies*, 362-363.

"**Do all you can to have my writings placed in the hands of the people in foreign lands.**"—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 549.

"The volumes of *Spirit of Prophecy*, and also the *Testimonies*, should be introduced into every Sabbathkeeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. . . **They should be in the library of every family and read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many, and let them be worn out in being read by all the neighbors.**"—4 *Testimonies*, 390.

"At this time there was fanaticism among some of those who had been believers in the first message. Serious errors in doctrine and practice were cherished, and some were ready to condemn all who would not accept their views. **God revealed these errors to me in vision and sent me to His erring children to declare them;** but in performing this duty I met with bitter opposition and reproach."—5 *Testimonies*, 655-656.

"We are to be established in the faith, in the light of the truth given us in our earlier experience. At that time one error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. **The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error.**

"**As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation. We accepted the truth point by point, under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me.** I was given illustrations of heavenly things, and of the sanctuary, so that we were placed where light was shining on us in clear, distinct rays."—*Gospel Workers*, 302.

"The searching testimony of the Spirit of God will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. **Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name.** All of God's people should come nearer to Him. . . Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God."—5 *Testimonies*, 676.

"**The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people** as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins."—3 *Testimonies*, 269.

"**Never was there greater need of faithful warnings**

**4 and reproofs . . . than at this very time.** Satan has come down with great power, knowing that his time is short. **He is flooding the world with pleasing fables, and the people of God love to have smooth things spoken to them.** . . . I was shown that God's people must make more firm, determined efforts to press back the incoming darkness. The close work of the Spirit of God is needed now as never before."—3 *Testimonies*, 327-328.

"Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. **The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.** 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Prov. 29:18). **Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony.**"—1 *Selected Messages*, 48.

"God is either teaching His church, reproofing their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. **This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter.**"—5 *Testimonies*, 671.

"As the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy, past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?"—5 *Testimonies*, 671.

"**If you lose confidence in the Testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth.** I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the *Testimonies*, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? **That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed.**"—5 *Testimonies*, 98.

"A wealth of moral influence has been brought to us in the last half century. Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of prophecy. Repeatedly the word has come: Write the things that I have given you to confirm the faith of My people in the position they have taken. **Time and trial have not made void the instruction given,** but years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. **The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these, its closing days. Those who are indifferent to this light and instruction must not expect to escape the snares which we have been plainly told will cause the rejecters of light to stumble, and fall, and be snared, and be taken.** If we study carefully the second chapter of Hebrews, we shall learn

how important it is that we hold steadfastly to every principle of truth that has been given."—1 *Selected Messages*, 41.

"**It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies.** Satan knows how to make his attacks. . . **The gifts are next questioned;** then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded."—5 *Testimonies*, 672.

"**Next follows skepticism** in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, **then doubt** as to the Holy Scriptures, and **then the downward march to perdition.** When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction."—4 *Testimonies*, 211.

"I was shown that many had so little spirituality that they did not understand the value of the *Testimonies* or their real object. **They talked flippantly of the Testimonies given by God for the benefit of His people, and passed judgment upon them, giving their opinion and criticizing this and that, when they would better have placed their hands upon their lips, and prostrated themselves in the dust;** for they could not appreciate the spirit of the *Testimonies*, because they knew so little of the Spirit of God."—5 *Testimonies*, 672-673.

"**God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired.** . . . The testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this."—1 *Selected Messages*, 23.

"There are some in Battle Creek who have never fully submitted to reproof. They have taken a course of their own choosing. **They have ever, to a greater or less degree, exerted an influence against those who have stood up to defend the right and reprove the wrong.** The influence of these persons upon individuals who come here, and who are brought in contact with them . . . is very bad. **They fill the minds of these newcomers with questionings and doubts in regard to the Testimonies of the Spirit of God.** They put false constructions upon the *Testimonies*."—4 *Testimonies*, 513-514.

"My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. **The Word of God is plain and close in its restrictions. It interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it.** The *Testimonies* of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. **And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the Testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin.** Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand."—5 *Testimonies*, 234.

**Keep studying, keep praying, keep working. Conditions in the world and in nature testify in thunder tones that we are very near to the end of time!**

—Vance Ferrell