

Adult
Sabbath School
Bible Study Guide
Oct | Nov | Dec 2026

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY



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The Gift of Special Messages

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THE GIFT OF SPECIAL MESSAGES

Neuro scientists study how nerves, the brain, and spinal cord work. They are starting to understand better how the brains of babies work. At 6 months old, a baby can understand many sounds that are part of the English language. If babies hear another language at that time, they can learn that language, too. During this time, babies can understand the 40 or more sounds that are part of their parents' language. They can tell these sounds apart from the 800 other sounds they can understand when they are born. But for babies to develop this special skill, something important must happen first. People must speak to the babies. So, you can say that speaking to a baby is the same as 'voice lessons' for newborns!

Why would God give us this wonderful skill to understand words and language if He didn't want to talk with us? Of course, He wants to talk with us! The Bible tells us, "Many years ago, God spoke to our ancestors by [with] his prophets. He spoke many times and in many different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us in his Son. In the beginning, God worked through [with] his Son to make the whole universe [everything in the skies, on the earth, and in outer space]. He decided that everything should belong to his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2, EASY).

After Adam and Eve sinned, their face-to-face communication with God stopped. But God did not reject Adam and Eve or destroy them. God went to look for them both! The Lord asked Adam, " 'Where are you?' " (Genesis 3:9, NKJV). God also gave Adam and Eve a special message. He announced that the Savior would be born. The Savior would save people from sin (Genesis 3:15). That first special message, or prophecy, from God honored Jesus. Jesus is the sinner's only hope.

This quarter, we will study God's gift of special messages. The Bible talks about the gift of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Corinthians 14; Ephesians 4; and Romans 12. God uses these special messages to talk to us, now that we no longer can talk with Him face-to-face. The Holy Spirit gives us this special gift and all other gifts. The Holy Spirit "decides which gifts he will give to each person" (1 Corinthians 12:11, EASY). God chooses people to speak for Him. Then God sends these messengers to warn or preach to His people.

God's messages help make our lives and relationship with Him new again.

We will learn how God chooses His messengers. We will learn how we can test messengers, too, to know if they really are from God. We will study about God's messengers in the Old and New Testaments. How are these messengers different? We will try to understand how God shares His messages with them. Some messengers only preached. Others wrote. Some messengers did both. We will look at their sermons, warnings, and promises. We will ask: "What does God promise the people who obey His messages?"

**God wants to
talk with us!**

God uses the gift of prophecy for five important reasons: (1) to show Himself, Bible truth, and His saving plan to sinners. (2) To give advice to people during hard times. (3) To help the church do its work for Jesus. (4) To encourage His followers. (5) To help sinners come back to God. Also, the gift of prophecy is one of two things that help us to know who is God's end-time church (Revelation 12:17; Revelation 19:10).

God wants to save His people and bring them back to Him. That's why He gave the church the gift of prophecy in the end-times (Joel 2:28–31). Seventh-day Adventists believe that God gave the gift of prophecy to Ellen G. White. That is why each Friday we will study about Ellen G. White's work for God. Her writings are a wonderful gift from God. How do we, as a church, best use this gift?

Yes, from the time we were born, God made us to be spoken to. So, we must pay special attention to what His messengers tell us!

The team from the White Estate office in Silver Spring, Maryland wrote this Bible study guide. The White Estate, Incorporated, shares information about Ellen White and her work for God. The Ellen G. White Estate supports the worldwide work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in sharing Jesus and Bible truth.

God Talks to Us



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 26

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 3:1–8; Luke 15:11–32; Genesis 3:14–24; Hebrews 1:1, 2.

MEMORY VERSE: “Many years ago, God spoke to our ancestors by his prophets [messengers]. He spoke many times and in many different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us in his Son. In the beginning, God worked through [with] his Son to make the whole universe [everything that God made on earth, in heaven, and in outer space]. He [God] decided that everything should belong to his Son” (Hebrews 1:1, 2, EASY).



Many of God's messengers wrote parts of the Bible.

WE USE COMPUTERS and other scientific inventions to communicate with friends in faraway places. Of course, that's wonderful. But don't you like meeting in person much better? For sure, something special happens when we get together, hug, and talk in person.

As humans, we were made for a face-to-face relationship with Jesus. Sin destroyed that face-to-face connection long ago. Because God loves us so much, He made a way to communicate with us again. He chose messengers to share His words with us. Another name for messenger is prophet. Many of these messengers wrote parts of the Bible.

God wants to make us new. God will finish this work when He makes “a new sky and a new earth. . . . That will be a home for everything that is good and right” (2 Peter 3:13, EASY).

Until that day, God continues to talk to us. He uses His messengers to do just that.

COMMUNICATION IN EDEN (Genesis 1:27, 28)

Genesis 1 and 2 tell us that God made the skies and the earth. God made the earth very beautiful for Adam and Eve. Humans were different from everything else God made. That's because God "made them to be like [much the same as] himself" (Genesis 1:27, EASY). The Bible doesn't say that about anything else God made. Because we are like God in many ways, He made us to be happy. He made us to love and be loved, too. He made us to communicate with Him.

Also, we read in Genesis 2:18–23 that God made Eve for Adam. Why? Because God said that man should not "live alone" (Genesis 2:18, EASY). From the start, God made us to live with other people. Today, scientists teach that people need relationships. Relationships help us grow. They keep us healthy. On the other hand, when we feel lonely, we may not think that our lives are really worthwhile.

Adam understood this feeling. That's why he made this announcement after God makes Eve for him: " 'Finally, this [person] is someone who is right for me. She has bones that are taken from my bones. Her body comes from my body. I will call [name] her "woman" because God used me, a man, to make her' " (Genesis 2:23, EASY). God made marriage and families in the Garden of Eden. The Bible teaches us that marriage is a relationship between a male and a female. God gave us marriage as a gift. In this relationship, we learn how to love and communicate. Satan wants to destroy God's plan for marriage and the family!

How did God communicate with humans in the Garden of Eden? Read Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 2:15–17; and Genesis 3:9 for the answer.

Adam and Eve communicated with God face-to-face. They listened to His teachings. God made Adam and Eve the managers of the Garden of Eden. As managers, Adam and Eve learned how to care for the plants and animals. Each day they had special time with God. The Sabbath day was a very special time between God and His children, too (Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:8–11). On that day, God showed our first parents His love and care for them in a special way.

Imagine in your mind a picture of Eden in its beauty before sin changed it. That's hard to do, right? How does nature continue to show us Eden's beauty?



God made marriage and families in the Garden of Eden.

HIDING FROM GOD (Genesis 3:1–8)

After Eve's talk with the snake, she ate the forbidden fruit.

God is love (1 John 4:8). Because God is love, He gives us free choice. He made us free to love Him and other people. Without free choice, we have no brains, the same as robots.

We see God's gift of free choice in His command not to eat the forbidden fruit (read Genesis 2:15–17). Why warn Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit if they can't choose?

"God made our first parents innocent and holy. God also made them free to choose between good and evil. Adam and Eve respected God's wisdom. They knew that God was love and that His law was fair. God made them free to obey Him. . . . But what if God didn't make Adam and Eve free? Then they are forced to obey Him."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 48, 49, adapted.

Why did Adam and Eve hide from God after they sinned? Read Genesis 3:1–8 for the answer. Compare with Jeremiah 23:24 and Hebrews 4:13.

Genesis 3 tells an awful story: the sin of Adam and Eve. After Eve's talk with the snake, she ate the forbidden fruit. Satan used powerful words and feelings in a sneaky way to trick Eve. Then Eve convinced Adam to join her in sinning against God. Eve saw "that the tree was beautiful and the fruit looked so good to eat. She also liked the idea that it [eating the fruit] would make her wise" (Genesis 3:6, ERV). Satan promised Eve, " 'When you eat the fruit from this tree, you will understand things. You will become like [the same as] God himself. You will know about good things and evil things' " (Genesis 3:5, EASY).

Satan's sermon was filled with lies. He lied to Adam and Eve about what would happen if they chose to sin. After they sinned, they understood right away that they broke God's law. They saw that they weren't wearing any clothes. Before they sinned, God covered them with clothing made from light (Psalm 104:1, 2). Adam and Eve lost this clothing when they sinned. No wonder they hid from God! (Of course, we can't really hide from God, right?!) Why did Adam and Eve try to hide? They hid because they felt guilty. When we feel guilty, we want to escape from God.

Think of a time when you sinned against God. Did you try to hide, too? What made you want to hide? Did you feel shame or guilt? What did your experience teach you?

GOD COMES LOOKING FOR US (Luke 15:11–32)

Genesis 3:9, 10 teaches us that God goes looking for His lost children. God makes the first move. He doesn't wait for us to come back to Him first. Look at God's question to Adam, " 'Where are you?' " (Genesis 3:9, ERV). Did God need to ask this question? Of course not! God knew where Adam and Eve hid. He also knew what they did. So, why then does God ask this question? Because sin cut off communication between God and Adam and Eve. God asks the question because He wants to communicate with His children again. God wants to meet with them and give them hope. That's why "the Lord God called to the man. The Lord said, 'Where are you?' " (Genesis 3:9). Do you see the word "called"? In the Hebrew language, this word often shows us God's wish to start communicating with His people.

Read the story in Luke 15:11–32. How does it help us better understand what happened in Genesis 3:9, 10?

The Lord goes looking for Adam and Eve because He loves them. God never gives up on us (read Luke 15), even when we hide from Him. Jesus will do everything He can to bring us back to His Father. Before Jesus died, three times Peter acted as if he didn't know Jesus. Then Jesus "turned and looked" (Luke 22:61, NKJV) at Peter. Jesus' look cut Peter's heart. With that look, Jesus tried to bring Peter back to God.

Notice in Genesis 3:11–13 that sin changed Adam and Eve's relationship with God. At first, Adam and Eve didn't confess their sin or guilt. They blamed each other. First, Adam blamed Eve. Next, Adam blamed God for giving him Eve (Genesis 3:12)! Then Eve blamed the snake (Genesis 3:13). Not much has changed with us in 6,000 years, right?

For sure, sin has hurt all of us. Paul explains the sin problem in Romans 7:15–24. He talks about the pain he feels when he wants to do what is right but then does bad things: "I do not do the good things that I want to do. Instead [but], I do the things that I hate to do" (Romans 7:15, EASY).

Everyone feels this way. Who hasn't?

Paul's words are powerful. We are all broken people. We keep doing things we know we shouldn't do. Our only hope is Jesus (Romans 7:25). God continues to look for us so He can lead us to Jesus. Only Jesus can save us from sin.



The Lord goes looking for Adam and Eve because He loves them.

FORCED TO LEAVE THE GARDEN (Genesis 3:14–24)

**Adam and Eve needed
to leave Eden.**

Adam and Eve's sin separated them from God. God forced them to leave the Garden of Eden. They no longer could talk to God face-to-face. Isaiah talks about how sin separates us from God: "But your sins have separated you from your God. They have caused him to turn his face away from you. So he won't listen to you" (Isaiah 59:2, NIV).

Of course, Adam and Eve were God's children, even after they sinned. But sin caused their separation from God. So, Adam and Eve needed to leave Eden. Nothing was the same after they ate the fruit.

Sin changed the human family in many ways (read Genesis 3:14–24). How did sin change our communication with God? (Also read Exodus 19:16–22 for the answer.)

Sin completely changed human life in ways we can't even start to imagine in our minds. Because of sin, the land was under a curse. The land was filled with thorns and weeds. Because of sin, humans felt pain. Now they must sweat and work hard to grow their food or earn a living. In the end, we all die and become dirt. Death is the most powerful example of sin. Because of sin, we lost our face-to-face communication with God, too.

But God promised to solve the sin problem. Yes, our first parents, Adam and Eve, no longer could see God or talk to Him face-to-face. But they left Eden with hope for the future. God explained to them His plan to save the human family from sin.

Genesis 3:15 is the first Bible promise that Jesus saves us from sin. This first promise filled Adam and Eve (and us) with hope. God made clothes for Adam and Eve before they left Eden. The clothes were a symbol of what Jesus would do for sinners. Jesus would cover them with His holy life, the same as clothes. Because of Jesus, we can hope to communicate with God face-to-face again.

So, right there in Eden after Adam and Eve sinned, God gave them hope. God promised that He would solve the sin problem. As soon as humans sinned, God promised a Savior.

How do you feel after doing something bad? Do you feel guilty? Do you feel shame? Do you hate yourself? How does sin cause you to suffer? How does your faith in God and the Good News help you not to give up?

GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS (Hebrews 1:1, 2)

How did God talk with people after sin separated them from Him? Read Hebrews 1:1, 2; Romans 1:19, 20; Numbers 12:6; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; John 14:7–9; and John 10:27–30 for the answer.

As we already saw, people no longer communicated with God face-to-face after sin. But God continued to communicate with sinners in other ways. One of those ways is with nature. Nature helps us to understand God's wonderful acts. Nature shows us the things we lost because of sin. As we saw yesterday, the death of every living thing is the most powerful example of what sin cost us.

Another way that God talks to us is with His messengers. God chooses men and women to be His messengers and to talk for Him to His people. Another name for messenger is prophet. Messengers share God's words with His people. Some examples of messengers are Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Daniel. God's messengers help us understand that He remembers us. God continues to be with us, too. Some messengers wrote down the messages God gave them. Many of these messages are now part of the Bible. Other messengers didn't write any books of the Bible. But many things that these messengers said were included in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The Bible also shows us God. We see God's love in the Bible. The Bible gives us advice about how to live. The Bible helps us understand who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. In the Bible, we learn about God's plan for our lives.

For sure, nature and the Bible are powerful ways that God communicates with us. But the most powerful way that God communicates with us is in Jesus. Just as God searched for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, so Jesus came looking for sinners (Luke 19:10). Jesus announced: " 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father too' " (John 14:9, ERV). When Jesus died on the cross, He kept the promise God made to Adam and Eve in Eden. Jesus died as our Substitute so that He could give us everlasting life.

After Jesus went to heaven, God poured His Holy Spirit on the church. The Spirit continues to lead us into all truth. The Spirit helps us understand what will happen in the future (John 16:13).

How does Jesus' love show you the Father?



Nature shows us the things we lost because of sin.

ELLEN G. WHITE

God doesn't limit His communication with people to Bible times. As we will see in coming weeks, God talks to people in every age. God will communicate His words to us in modern ways until Jesus comes back.

Ellen Gould Harmon White and her twin sister Elizabeth were born on November 26, 1827, in Gorham, Maine. They were the youngest of eight children born to Robert and Eunice Harmon. In a few years, the family moved to the city of Portland, Maine, where Robert Harmon hoped to build his hat-making business. At about the age of 9, Ellen suffered a terrible injury. While she was in a park near her home, an angry classmate threw a stone at her. The stone hit Ellen in the face. For many weeks after, Ellen was very sick in bed. Because of this accident, Ellen stopped going to school. She had health problems for the rest of her life. She also felt bad about the way she looked at the time. So, she didn't visit many people.

Sick and injured, young Ellen started to think about her spiritual future. She was afraid of God. She didn't feel worthy of going to heaven. Her feelings grew worse after the Harmon family accepted William Miller's teaching that Jesus was coming back soon. Ellen was baptized into the Methodist Church, in 1842. But she didn't feel worthy of God's love. She believed she was "forever lost."—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, page 29; also read pages 20–31.

During this time, young Ellen had two dreams. The dreams changed her ideas about God. Later, she met a Methodist preacher named Levi Stockman. Stockman helped Ellen understand God's love. She wrote later, "Faith now filled my heart. I felt a love for God that I couldn't put into words. I felt my sins were forgiven. My ideas about the Father changed. I now saw Him as a loving parent, and not a strict master who forced people to obey Him without question. My heart filled with deep love for Him."—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, page 39, adapted.

During this time, Ellen learned the Bible teaching about what happens when we die. She also learned that there was no forever-burning hell. Her new understanding about God changed her whole life. We will learn each Friday about how, Ellen G. White fell deeply in love with Jesus. She served Him for the rest of her life.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/1>.



For many weeks after getting hit in the face with a stone, Ellen was very sick in bed.

THE START OF THE SDA CHURCH IN POLAND

In 1888, Poland was controlled by other countries. At this time, a new spiritual light appeared in Poland. Herman Szkubowiec became the first Seventh-day Adventist in Poland. Later, Herman started the first Seventh-day Adventist church in Poland.

In 1893, two Polish men became Seventh-day Adventists. These men were Karol Fendel and Jozef Szlodzinski. Karol and Jozef traveled to the city of Łódź. There, Karol and Jozef shared their faith with a Baptist family named Lach. The Lachs accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message. They held Sabbath worship in their home. Sharing new religious ideas in Poland wasn't easy at that time. Most Polish people didn't trust people who weren't from Poland. But the Seventh-day Adventist message started to grow in the Lach's house church. In 1895, a new church group started in Łódź. A Russian pastor named Henrich Loeb sack held public meetings. Pastor Loeb sack baptized the first Seventh-day Adventist members in the city.

Another pastor named Herbert Schmitz felt that God wanted him to preach in Warsaw. Pastor Schmitz was a German who did not speak the Polish language. He looked for houses in Warsaw with German names on the doors. When the owners welcomed him in, he explained the Seventh-day Adventist faith. His small audience was mostly German. But the Seventh-day Adventist faith started to grow in that community. In a few months, Pastor Schmitz started a church in Warsaw. Soon, sermons were preached in both German and Polish.

In 1912, Schmitz became the first leader for the growing work in Poland. Even after World War I started, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Poland continued to grow. In 1921, the Seventh-day Adventist Union in Poland was started. The Seventh-day Adventists in Poland started to build their churches again after the war. At that time, they had 1,080 members. The churches continued to grow. Soon Bible meetings were held. Bible workers sold books about Jesus across Poland. Seventh-day Adventist schools were started.

The most amazing part of this story is those early Bible workers. These workers knocked on doors. They preached in private homes. They baptized new members in secret. In 1988, the Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated its work in Poland. The small group that met in the Lach family home was now a strong church across the whole country. The courage of the first members helps us remember that the light of Bible truth shines bright in dark places.

This story is adapted from the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists, available at encyclopedia.adventist.org.

INSIDE Story



When the owners welcomed Pastor Schmitz in, he explained the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

The Work of God's Messengers



SABBATH—OCTOBER 3

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 15:6; 1 Kings 18:19–39; Isaiah 53; Daniel 2:46–48; Mark 1:2–5.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then I heard the voice of the Lord God. He said, ‘Is there anyone that I can send with my message? Who will go on our behalf [who will go for us]?’ I said, ‘I am here. Send me!’ ” (Isaiah 6:8, EASY).

IN BIBLE TIMES, God's messengers often had an important part in the history of God's people. Sometimes God's messengers served as powerful members of the community of faith.

The life of God's messengers was often hard. Many people misunderstood their work or rejected it. So, God's messengers felt sad or upset. Often, God's messengers didn't accept the work that He gave them right away. And no wonder. Many people refused to accept their messages. Often people paid no attention to God's messengers. People made fun of them, beat them, or threw them in jail. Some messengers were killed with stones or hunted the same as wild animals. Many messengers died for their faith.

Today, we also live in a time when many people reject God's messengers or pay no attention to their words. God asks us to follow the advice of His messengers anyway. God also asks us to share with people the hope that His messages give us. This week, we'll look at times when God sent His messengers to His people. God's messengers invited God's people to come back to Him and to follow Bible truth.



People made fun of God's messengers, beat them, or threw them in jail.

**ABRAHAM, DEFENDER OF GOD'S PROMISE
(Genesis 15:6)**

From Genesis to Revelation, we see that God always has a loyal group of followers (read Jeremiah 31:7, 31–34). Abram is an example of one of these loyal followers.

God communicated the rules of His Promise to Abraham. God showed Abraham how He would save sinners (Genesis 15:6–17). Later, God gave Abraham a test of faith. This test showed how God would give His Son Jesus to die for our sins. God asked Abraham to give his son Isaac as an offering to Him (Genesis 22:1–17). This test was very hard for Abraham. Think about all the reasons why Abraham could have refused to obey God. But Abraham obeyed. God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac. God sent a ram as a substitute.

God sent His messengers to help His people to come back to Him. Many of God's messengers also warned His people about terrible happenings or punishments in the future. But not every messenger warned about the future. Often God's messengers warned God's people against sin and about not hurting the poor and needy. God's messengers also warned His people not to break the rules of His Promise.

Most important, God's messengers helped His people to understand the promise about the coming Savior. Today, God's messengers help us understand the work God gives us to do. We must warn other people about what the Bible says will happen in the future. Part of this message is the Good News that Jesus saves us from our sins. As His loyal people, we will keep His commandments (Revelation 12:17).

For sure, Abraham wasn't perfect. But what experiences helped Abraham to serve God? Read Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6–9; and Hebrews 11:8 for the answer.

Abraham's story helps us understand our own time. Today, in the same way as in Abraham's day, people try to replace Bible truth with false teachings. As Abraham did, we must show God's love to people daily. Part of our life's work includes announcing the three angels' messages (Revelation 14:6–12).

The Bible says that "Abram believed the LORD. The LORD was pleased with Abram because he believed. So Abram's faith made him right [accepted] with the LORD" (Genesis 15:6, NIV). Where is the promise of the Good News in this verse? What hope does this promise give us?



God asked Abraham to give his son Isaac as an offering to Him (Genesis 22:1-17).

THE ELIJAH MESSAGE (1 Kings 18:19–39)

Read the story in 1 Kings 18:19–39. What does this story teach us about the type of work that God asks His messengers to do?

Elijah's work and his message show us that God chose him to be His messenger. God sent Elijah to lead Israel back to God. Elijah went to King Ahab. Elijah announced that there would be no more rain for a long time. God used this disaster to help His people stop worshiping the false gods Baal and Asherah. King Ahab and his countrymen blamed Elijah for their misery. They tried to kill Elijah.

On Carmel, Elijah challenged the messengers of the false gods to a test. Elijah asked the Israelites to give up their false gods and come back to the Lord. The people finally understood that their choice caused them to reject God. They were now ready to come back to God again. God was more powerful than their false gods, which weren't even real.

Just before Jesus comes back, God commands His church to announce the Elijah message again to everyone on earth. But first, God commands His people to turn away from their own 'false gods' and get ready for His coming. God continues to use His messengers in the Bible to communicate with us. The Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White continue to give us warnings, advice, and encouragement.

"We need a new life in Jesus more than we need anything else. The first thing we must do is ask God for this gift. God wants very much to give it to us. So, why don't we have it? We aren't ready. So, we must do everything we can to get ready for it."—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 121, adapted.

How does the Elijah message change the lives and homes of people? Read Malachi 4:5, 6 for the answer.

A new life in Jesus starts in the heart and home. A new life in the home causes new life in the church, the community, and the country. That's God's plan for the home.

What 'false gods' do we have in our homes, hearts, and churches today? How can we get rid of them?



Elijah went to King Ahab and announced that there would be no more rain for a long time.

**ISAIAH, MESSENGER OF THE GOOD NEWS
(Isaiah 53)**

Isaiah is one of God's most important messengers in the Old Testament. God personally asked Isaiah to serve Him (read Isaiah 6:1–8). Isaiah didn't feel worthy. Then an angel flew to Isaiah with a burning coal. The coal came from the altar in heaven. The angel touched the coal to Isaiah's lips. The touch of the hot coal 'removed' Isaiah's sins.

God sent Isaiah to warn Israel and its leaders of their sins. This task was very important. Isaiah's messages help us understand God and His plan to save sinners. One of Isaiah's most famous messages is chapter 53. This chapter shows us Jesus' death and explains what it did for us.

Read Isaiah 53. God gave this message to Israel more than 500 years before Jesus died on the cross. How does this message show us Jesus' death for us? What does this message teach us about why we can trust the Bible?

Isaiah's messages tell us about the Savior's plan and work (Isaiah 53:3–5). Isaiah explained why Jesus "was like [the same as] a lamb that people were leading away to kill" (Isaiah 53:7, EASY). Isaiah also talked about how Jesus died for the sins of all people in every age of history.

"We have all turned away, like [the same as] sheep that take the wrong path. Each of us has turned to follow our own way. But the LORD has taken all our sins and put the punishment on him" (Isaiah 53:6, EASY). In this verse, Isaiah shows us the sin problem. This verse also shows us God's answer to it. More than any other chapter in the Bible, this chapter plainly shows God's plan to save sinners.

Isaiah's job wasn't easy. People laughed at his warnings. Today, people may do the same thing when we warn them about sin (Romans 6:23). Isaiah's warning for Israel is for us, too (Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 5:20). The Israelites weren't fair. They refused to change their lives. So, God destroyed Jerusalem. The same sin will cause the people on this earth to be destroyed when Jesus comes back.

Read Isaiah 53 again. Write down everything Jesus does for us. What hope does Isaiah's message give you?



The angel touched the coal to Isaiah's lips.

DANIEL: AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH (Daniel 2:46–48)

Most Christians know the story in Daniel 1. In this story, Daniel honors the health laws that he learned as a child. Daniel is a powerful example of faith (Daniel 1:8). He refused to eat the food or drink the wine from the king's table (Daniel 1:12–16). Daniel chose to eat a plant-food diet. He ate vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and grains. Daniel also chose to drink only water. This diet test was small compared to the tests that God gave to Daniel later. But this test helped Daniel to stay loyal to God later on when his faith could get him killed.

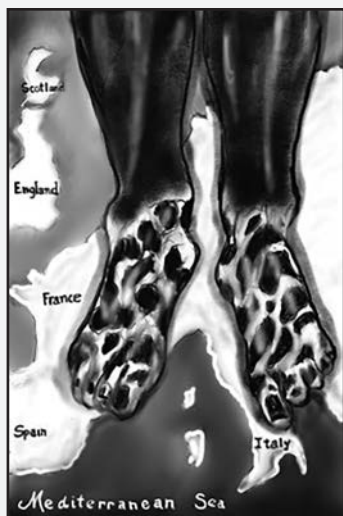
How did Daniel share God's love and truth with the people around him? Read Daniel 2:46–48; Daniel 4:18; Daniel 5:13, 14; and Daniel 6:25–27 for the answer.

Look what these people say about Daniel's God! The stories about Daniel's life show us important Bible truth. When we obey God, we can teach other people about the God of heaven. Our God is more powerful than any false god or king.

Daniel's name means 'God is my judge.' God's work as our Judge is an important topic in the book of Daniel. So, Daniel's name helps us remember to get ready and stay ready for the Second Coming. We must keep God's commandments, even with the 'little' things in life.

Think about the statue in chapter 2. Daniel wrote this chapter 500 years before Jesus was born. The statue shows us the beginning and end of four powerful kingdoms. The feet and toes of the statue show us the countries of Europe in our time. Many people tried to join these countries with marriages, wars, or promises. But the countries continue to stay separate, just as Daniel said. Daniel's dream gives us powerful reasons to trust God's messengers. The Soviet Union is proof of that. No one thought the Soviet Union would break apart. But it broke into separate countries. Why? Because Daniel 2 shows us that the countries of Europe will stay separate until Jesus comes back.

All the kingdoms in Daniel 2 came and went, just as Daniel said. God's everlasting kingdom is the next and last kingdom. Daniel has been right so far. Why is the statue in Daniel 2 a good reason to trust God about what will happen next?



The feet and toes of the statue show us the countries of Europe in our time.

**JOHN THE BAPTIST: GETTING PEOPLE READY
(Mark 1:2–5)**

**What special work did God give to John the Baptist?
Read Mark 1:2–5 for the answer.**

The book of Mark tells us that John the Baptist is the man that God promised to send (Isaiah 40:3). John's job was to announce Jesus as the Lamb of God. John was loyal to God his whole life. When Satan heard John preach, he got scared. Satan feared he would lose his control over Israel and the whole human family. (Read Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 224.) John showed the people their sins. John's powerful message made Satan afraid that he would lose his hold on people's hearts. So, Satan tried again and again to get John to sin and give up his work.

Read Matthew 11:1–6. While John was in prison, what did Jesus say to make John's faith strong?

Satan couldn't get Jesus to sin. Jesus won the fight against sin and Satan in the desert. Jesus' win made Satan so angry. So, Satan changed his plan. He got John thrown in jail. John was Jesus' cousin. The news about John hurt Jesus. Satan wanted to break John and to fill Jesus' heart with pain. But Jesus sent John a message of encouragement. John didn't understand why he was in jail when Jesus was so powerful. But Jesus' words helped John. John stayed loyal to Jesus, even when he died.

Today, Jesus gives our church a message to share (Revelation 14:6–12) with everyone on earth. Just as John did, we must warn people to stop sinning and accept Jesus. Satan will try to make us doubt the work God gives us. We do not need to lose hope if we remember how God led us in the past. Sometimes things will not go well for us. Then we must remember John the Baptist. An evil woman threw him in jail. A weak king killed him. When John was in jail, he did not lose faith. Whatever people do to us, we can pray to God in faith. He will answer us. God promises us power to do His work (Acts 1:8). Today, we live in a time when many people reject Jesus and His teachings. So, we must be loyal followers for Jesus, wherever we are.

How do you keep your faith and trust in God during these times?



**John's job was
to announce Jesus as
the Lamb of God.**

CHOSEN FOR SPECIAL WORK

God chooses His messengers to do special work at a special time. These men and women share the messages needed most for their time. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White was God's special messenger. God chose Ellen in December 1844. A few weeks earlier, the Millerite Adventists expected Jesus to come back and life on earth to end. They believed that Daniel 8:14 taught that Jesus was coming in 1844: "It [the things in Daniel's dream] will continue for 2,300 evenings and mornings. After that, God's temple will be clean again" (Daniel 8:14, EASY).

William Miller's followers expected Jesus to come back to this earth on October 22, 1844. Thousands of people across North America and worldwide waited for Jesus to come back. Soon they would be with their Savior. He would take them to heaven.

But Jesus didn't come. The Millerite Adventists were so sad. That time when Jesus didn't come back is named the Great Disappointment.

During that time, God gave Ellen Harmon [White] her first dream. The dream filled her and the disappointed followers with hope. God was with them. They saw that they misunderstood Daniel 8:14. They got the date right. But they were wrong about what happened at that time. Ellen Harmon [White's] dream showed a path leading from earth to the Holy City, the new Jerusalem. On this path, the Advent people traveled to the Holy City. "Jesus was in front of them. Jesus led them to the city. If the people kept looking at Jesus, they were safe."—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, page 31, adapted. This dream was good news. God was leading a new group of followers out of the Great Disappointment. Jesus was with His people. He was coming back. They just needed to keep looking at Him. God gave His people many reasons not to give up hope, even after Jesus didn't come back when they expected.

Ellen G. Harmon [White] was a 17-year-old teenager when God chose her to be His messenger. Her job wasn't easy. Slowly, people accepted that Ellen's dreams were from God. But Ellen was afraid to be God's messenger. How would she answer God? Next week, we will look at Old Testament messengers and their work. Ellen had some of the same problems they did, as we will see next Friday.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/2>.



"If the people kept looking at Jesus, they were safe."

FROM CRIMINAL TO CHURCH LEADER: PART 1

Matthew and Martin were Marek's best friends. If a fight happened at school, the same three teens were always to blame: Matthew, Martin, and Marek. Today, Matthew is dead. Martin spent seven years in jail. Marek used to sell bad drugs for a living. Now he is one of the leaders for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Poland. What happened?

Marek grew up in a Christian family in southern Poland. When Marek was 18 years old, his girlfriend left him. He prayed: "God, I want her back." Nothing happened. Then he prayed, "God, I don't want to wake up anymore." Again, nothing happened.

Marek stopped praying. He stopped believing in God. He started taking bad drugs. Then his friend Martin decided to sell them. Martin invited Marek to sell them, too. Marek joined him.

Two years later, Marek wanted to go to a big New Year's Eve party. But he couldn't find anyone to join him. So, he decided not to go. He went to visit his grandmother. His grandmother had a picture of Jesus in her home. Marek stared at the picture. He thought, "Even if I don't believe in God, Jesus was real." Marek remembered reading the Bible as a boy.

A few days later, Marek visited a fortuneteller. The fortuneteller warned Marek that life on Planet Earth would end soon. Marek was surprised. He asked the woman when that would happen. She said in one year.

Marek started to read the book of Revelation. He hoped to learn how life on earth would end. Then he started to read about Jesus in the New Testament. Marek was amazed to learn that Jesus had a kingdom where people would be happy and live forever.

Later, after a party, Marek sat in a car with some friends. Out of the window he saw a bookstore named "Signs of the Times."

The next day, Marek went to the bookstore and asked, "Do you have some books about a man named Nostradamus?"

The woman behind the counter said, "No. But if you want to know about the future, we have *The Great Controversy*."

Marek bought the book. He was amazed at what he read. He checked what he read with the Bible. Everything matched.

At night, Marek read *The Great Controversy* in bed. He asked himself, "Am I getting 'light' from God when I read this book?"

Just then, the lightbulb above his head started to blink. That was strange! Marek saw a reflection of himself in a window. All he could see was his head and the light bulb above it. The bulb stopped blinking and shone brightly again.

Marek believed God used the lightbulb to answer his question. For the first time in his life, Marek felt God's love. Marek knelt and said, "God, if You are this loving, I want to serve You."

INSIDE
Story
by MISSION EDITOR



The bulb stopped blinking and shone brightly again.

Old Testament Messengers



SABBATH—OCTOBER 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: James 5:17, 18; 1 Kings 22:1–14; 1 Samuel 8:4–22; Exodus 15:20; Jeremiah 14:1–15.

MEMORY VERSE: “Early in the morning all the people left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they started out, Jehoshaphat stood up. He said, ‘Judah, listen to me! People of Jerusalem, listen to me! Have faith in the LORD your God. He’ll take good care of you. Have faith in his prophets [special messengers]. Then you will have success’ ” (2 Chronicles 20:20, NIV).



In times past, God used His messengers or prophets to help His people find their way to heaven.

GPS helps travelers know where they are on Earth. GPS helps people know where they are going, too. GPS also warns travelers against danger. In the same way, spiritual travelers on their way to heaven need help getting there, now and in the future. In times past, God used His messengers, or prophets, to help His people find their way to heaven. God’s messengers in Old Testament times wrote stories, gave advice, special messages, poems, and songs. Their writings tell us a lot about their lives.

This week’s lesson looks at some of God’s messengers in the Old Testament. Their lives help us better understand their special gift. As we’ll see, God’s messengers were people, the same as you and me. They were weak. At times, they felt fear, anger, and no hope. Life wasn’t always easy. Often, they suffered hard times and troubles, in the same way as anyone else.

If prophets suffer the same as anyone, can we learn from looking at the lives of a few of these servants of God?

A HEART WITH NO PRIDE (James 5:17, 18)

As we saw last week, the Lord used Elijah to do a powerful work.

What does James say about Elijah? Read James 5:17, 18 for the answer. What do you think James means when he says that “Elijah was a human being [person], just as we are” (James 5:17, NlrV)?

Elijah’s success on Carmel was amazing (1 Kings 18)! God used Elijah to do wonderful work. One of the most powerful miracles in Old Testament history happens in this story: Elijah made fire come down from heaven (1 Kings 18:38)! You would think that Elijah would be very happy and excited after doing that miracle.

Read 1 Kings 19:1–16. What does this story tell us about how Elijah felt after the miracle on Carmel?

“Then he [Elijah] traveled for one day into the desert. He came to a small bush. He sat down under it. He prayed that he would die. ‘LORD, I’ve had enough,’ he said. ‘Take my life. I’m no better than my people of [from] long ago’ ” (1 Kings 19:4, NlrV). For sure, Elijah is very sad. The question is, “Why is Elijah sad?”

Maybe the answer is found in Elijah’s words: “ ‘Lord, God of heaven’s armies, I have always served [worked for] you the best I could. But the people of Israel have broken their agreement [promise] with you. They have destroyed your altars. They have killed your prophets [messengers] with swords. I am the only prophet left. And now they are trying to kill me, too!’ ” (1 Kings 19:10, ICB). Does Elijah believe that he didn’t do a good job? Maybe he feels that he failed to serve God as well as he should. Whatever is going on here, we can see that Elijah suffers the same as we do.

Are there times in your life when you feel you didn’t do a good job? What Bible promises can you believe in that can help you during these times?



One of the most powerful miracles in Old Testament history happens in this story: Elijah made fire come down from heaven (1 Kings 18:38)!

GOD'S REAL MESSENGERS (1 Kings 22:1–14)

In the early history of Israel, God warned His people against false messengers or prophets (Deuteronomy 18:20). God also helped His people to know who His real messengers were.

God's prophets announced God's messages, even if their messages upset people in power.

Read 1 Kings 22:1–14. What does this verse tell us about God's messengers and how they behaved?

King Ahab hated Micaiah. Micaiah was God's messenger. King Ahab said, " 'I hate him because he will not say anything good about me when he speaks for the LORD' " (1 Kings 22:8, ERV). These words tell us a lot about Ahab. (He was not a very good person, was he?) The king's words tell us even more about Micaiah. He was not afraid to say the truth, even to the king.

Micaiah stood alone against 400 false messengers. He announced the Bible truth that God gave to him to share. King Ahab tried to force Micaiah to change his message (1 Kings 22:13, 14). But Micaiah refused to change God's word. He stayed loyal to God and the work He gave him to do.

Read 1 Samuel 9:3–14. What do these verses tell us about what other people thought about God's messengers?



**King Ahab hated Micaiah.
Micaiah was God's
messenger.**

In 1 Samuel 9:3–14, Kish sends Saul, his son, to look for his lost donkeys. Saul's servant says to him, " 'There is a servant of God who lives in this town. Everything that he says will happen really happens. So people respect him very much. We should go to meet him. Perhaps [Maybe] he will tell us which way we should go from here' " (1 Samuel 9:6, EASY). The servant is talking about Samuel, God's messenger. The servant's words help us understand that people expected God's messengers to be honest and loyal to God. God chose His messengers to show His love. At the same time, God's messengers are human. So, they are not perfect at all.

LOYAL TO GOD (1 Samuel 8:4–22)

Read 1 Samuel 8:4–22 and Leviticus 8:10–13. Many of God’s messengers worked with kings and religious leaders. How did God’s messengers help these leaders?

At times, God’s messengers worked with kings. Sometimes their experiences were good. Other times, their experiences were awful. God’s messenger Samuel had a terrible experience when Israel asked for a king (1 Samuel 8:4–22). This sad story shows us an important lesson. In every age, God’s people must be careful not to want to be the same as the people around them (1 Samuel 8:5). In the story in 1 Samuel 8, the people didn’t really understand the terrible things that would happen when they got a king (1 Samuel 8:11–18). Of course, God told Samuel to warn His people. But the people wanted a king anyway. So, soon Samuel poured oil on the head of Saul to show that God chose him. Then Saul became Israel’s first king.

In the Old Testament, the books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles tell us about the lives of Israel’s kings. More kings did evil than good. One job of God’s messengers was to help evil kings come back to God and obey Him. Many of these kings hurt or killed God’s messengers. These evil kings caused God’s people to break His law (1 Kings 18:4–19; 2 Chronicles 24:20–22).

Many of God’s messengers also worked with Israel’s religious leaders. Moses is an example of one of these messengers. Moses poured oil on Aaron and his sons to show that God chose them as Israel’s first religious leaders (Leviticus 8:10–13). Sometimes God used His messengers to warn the religious leaders (read Hosea 6:9; Malachi 2:1–3). A powerful example is when the man of God warns Eli about his evil sons (1 Samuel 2:27–36).

God’s messengers were also teachers (2 Chronicles 34). God’s messengers announced His messages to the religious leaders and kings, too (Jeremiah 5:31; Ezekiel 22:26). Sometimes God’s messengers also told the leaders of foreign countries about God’s plans. We can read some of these messages in the Old Testament (Isaiah 60:1–3; Isaiah 62:1, 2). Sometimes God asked His messengers to write down His messages (2 Chronicles 13:22). God’s messengers were men and women of prayer. They obeyed God’s commands. They served Him and His people with their whole hearts (Jeremiah 42:4; 2 Kings 22:15–17).



Sometimes God asked His messengers to write down His messages (2 Chronicles 13:22).

SPECIAL MESSENGERS WHO WERE WOMEN (Exodus 15:20)

Read Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; and Nehemiah 6:14. What do these verses teach us about some of the people that God chose to be His messengers?

The Bible shows us that God, at times, chose women to be His messengers. (Read Exodus 15:20 and Luke 2:36.) In Micah 6:4, Miriam is included with Moses and Aaron as a messenger that God sent to His people. Miriam sang a special song to honor God after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:20, 21). But Miriam was also a sinner, the same as any human. She had evil feelings in her heart against Moses and his Ethiopian wife. So, God punished her (read Numbers 12:1–10).

Deborah is another woman who was God's messenger. Deborah also helped lead Israel in a terrible time (Judges 4:1–4). Her song (Judges 5:2–31) showed what God did to save Israel.

Read 2 Kings 22:11–14. Why did King Josiah's men go to Huldah? What does this story tell us about the important work that Huldah did in Israel?

Huldah was a messenger from God. The top leaders in King Josiah's government met with her (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22) after they read the "Book of [about] the Law" (2 Kings 22:8, ERV) to the king. (We believe this book was the book of Deuteronomy.) After the king heard the words in this book, he "tore his clothes" (2 Kings 22:11, ERV) to show that he was very upset. The king understood that Israel wasn't following the teachings in the Book of the Law. The book warned that bad things would happen to Israel if they didn't follow its teachings. The king believed these warnings. So, he sent his men right away to Huldah. God gave Huldah a message. Soon He would punish the kingdom of Judah. King Josiah made many changes for the better because of Huldah's messages. The king's changes helped God not to punish His people during King Josiah's time.

God's messengers were people who needed His love and forgiveness, the same as you and me. What hope do their stories give you?



Miriam sang a special song to honor God after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15:20, 21).

FALSE MESSENGERS (Jeremiah 14:1–15)

When God does something, Satan always tries to copy it. God chose men and women to be His messengers. So, Satan also chose people to be his messengers. Satan used these messengers to try to destroy God's work and His people. How can we know God's real messengers from the false messengers that Satan sends?

Read Jeremiah 14:1–15. What is happening in these verses? What does the Lord think about false messengers?

In Jeremiah 14, God gave Jeremiah a message. The message was a warning for the kingdom of Judah. God would punish Judah with war, food shortage, and disease. False messengers at the time said that Jeremiah's message wouldn't happen. Jeremiah talks about the false messengers: "Then the LORD said to me, 'Jeremiah, those prophets [messengers] are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or command them or speak to them. Their prophecies [messages] came from false visions [dreams], worthless [useless] magic, and their own wishful [foolish] thinking' " (Jeremiah 14:14, ERV).

False messengers are evil. Often their messages come from the false gods they worship (Jeremiah 23:13, 14). But God did not send these messengers to His people (read Jeremiah 23:26; Ezekiel 13:2).

False messengers often preach popular views or ideas. That's what happened in 1 Kings 22. In this story, Ahab commanded 400 'messengers' to give him advice. All of the false messengers told the king to fight against Ramoth-Gilead. Then Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, what to do. Jehoshaphat told Ahab to talk to Micaiah, God's messenger. One of the false messengers told Micaiah to tell Ahab what he wanted to hear: " 'Look. The other prophets [messengers] agree. All of them are saying the king will have success. So agree with them. Say the same thing they do' " (1 Kings 22:13, NIV).

Micaiah felt the same terrible pressure to lie that the false messengers felt. But Micaiah refused to lie. He waited for God to tell him what to say (1 Kings 22:14).

Following the popular view or doing the popular thing is always easy. Why is that never a good idea?



Satan used these messengers to try to destroy God's work and His people.

NOT PERFECT, BUT WILLING TO SERVE

As we saw already, being God's messenger is never easy. The lives of the Old Testament messengers show us this truth. Ellen G. White also felt the same fears and worries that the Bible messengers felt. As we learned last Friday, Ellen Harmon [White] was young, shy, and in poor health when God chose her to be His messenger. God gave her a second dream as proof that He chose her. But she was worried about being God's messenger. She wrote:

"About a week later, God gave me another dream. He showed me the troubles I must suffer. I must go and tell other people what He showed me. People would try to stop me. I would suffer much. . . . This dream upset me very much. My health was poor. I was only 17 years old. . . . I prayed that God would choose someone else. But He continued to say to me, 'Tell other people what I showed you.' I didn't want to go out in public. I was very shy. . . . I wanted to die. Then I wouldn't have to do the things God asked me to do."—*Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, pages 35, 36, adapted.

Do you see that Ellen Harmon [White] said she wanted to die? Then she wouldn't need to be God's messenger. Ellen Harmon [White] prayed long and hard. Her friends encouraged her. Finally, she accepted the work God gave her. For the rest of her life, she served God. She gave her life to the Lord "to do everything He asked me to do."—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, page 38.

Ellen G. White's writings became powerful in the lives of church members, then and now. But Ellen White was human. She had her own personal problems. She was often sick. She had family problems, too, at times. Her life teaches us an important lesson: God chooses people who aren't perfect but who are willing to serve Him.

The Holy Spirit helped Ellen G. White to write down God's messages. Ellen White's writings encourage church members and connect them with Bible truth. Ellen White helped the Seventh-day Adventist people to become a church, in 1863. In later years, Ellen White's writings helped start the worldwide health work and many schools. For sure, the most important thing that she gave the church was her writings. She wrote nearly 100,000 pages. Ellen G. White's writings continue to help people worldwide today.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/3>.



The Holy Spirit helped Ellen G. White to write down God's messages.

FROM CRIMINAL TO CHURCH LEADER: PART 2

Marek's life started to change as he read *The Great Controversy* in Poland. Marek decided to keep the 7th-day Sabbath. He also wanted to stop smoking but couldn't.

On the Sabbath, Marek passed a street poster. The poster advertised a five-day stop smoking class at a Seventh-day Adventist church. Marek never heard of that church before.

Marek went straight to the church. He arrived at 2 o'clock that Sabbath afternoon. The church would have been empty at that time. But a group of Bible booksellers was there. They invited Marek to come back next Sabbath morning.

Marek went back the next Sabbath and enjoyed the sermon. Marek was amazed at the love the church members showed him. He learned that a big group of young people was meeting the next Sabbath. The members invited Marek to go.

The next Sabbath, Marek waited for some church members to come to take him to the meeting. He heard two voices in his heart. One voice said, "Don't go. Enjoy the nice weather." The other voice said, "You really need to go to this meeting." So, Marek decided to continue waiting.

The church members arrived and took Marek to the meeting. The meeting amazed Marek. Every word touched his heart. The preacher was a British pastor from London. The pastor talked until noon. Then he said, "I know I need to end now. But I know there is somebody here who needs Jesus."

Marek thought, "Who told the pastor about me?"

Then the pastor shared his personal story. He was born into a religious family. But he left the church. He used drugs and drank. Both his church and his mother stopped praying for him.

The pastor said, "Then I met Jesus. He lifted me up from the bottom where I was. Now I am here to tell you about His power. Jesus can change your life, too. If you want Jesus to change your life, just come here to the front."

Marek looked at the crowd of 1,000 people and sat back in his seat with fear. He didn't want to go forward in front of that big crowd of people.

The pastor said, "Don't think about people looking at you. Just come forward. Your coming forward is between you and God."

Marek stood up. He couldn't sit anymore. His heart pumped fast as he walked to the front. As the pastor prayed, Marek understood for the first time God's plan to save sinners. Marek started to cry. Nothing could stop his tears. But Marek also was excited and happy.

Today, Marek is happy he decided to give his life to Jesus. He now serves as a church leader in Poland. He continues to share his faith with other people.

INSIDE
Story
by MISSION EDITOR



Marek's heart pumped fast as he walked to the front.

New Testament Messengers



SABBATH—OCTOBER 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Matthew 16:13–16; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 14:3; Acts 21:9; Matthew 24:23, 24.

MEMORY VERSE: “There are different kinds [types] of gifts; but they are all from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve; but all these ways are from the same Lord. And there are different ways that God works in people; but all these ways are from the same God. God works in us all in everything we do” (1 Corinthians 12:4–6, ICB).



The Holy Spirit makes
Jesus the most important
part of the messages
He gives to
God's messengers.

GOD communicated with His messengers in Old and New Testament times. The messages in the Old Testament agree with the messages in the New Testament. That's because the same Holy Spirit who helped men write the Old Testament also helped men write the New Testament. In Old and New Testament times, the Holy Spirit helped God's messengers to understand His words. So, both parts of the Bible agree perfectly with each other. The Holy Spirit also gives God's messengers strength to serve Him. The Holy Spirit makes Jesus the most important part of the messages He gives to God's messengers. The book of Hebrews helps us understand this important Bible truth (Hebrews 1:1–3).

This week, we will look at the gift of special messages in the New Testament. We will look at the work God's messengers did. We also will look at the people that God chose to be His messengers. We will compare God's messengers with church leaders and learn how the two jobs are different. We will learn about the danger of false messengers, too.

JESUS: MORE THAN A MESSENGER (Matthew 16:13–16)

Moses said, “The Lord your God will give to you a prophet [messenger] like [much the same as] me. He will be one of your own people. Listen to [obey] him” (Deuteronomy 18:15, ICB). Who was this messenger? The Bible tells us the answer: Jesus (read Acts 3:22; also read John 6:14).

Who did the Bible say that Jesus was? How did Jesus’ followers answer the question? Read Matthew 16:13–16; Mark 8:27–29; and Luke 9:18–20 for the answers.

All the Old Testament promises about the coming Savior showed us Jesus. New Testament writers understood that Jesus kept all of these promises. In Luke 24:13–35, Jesus showed that He was the Savior that the Old Testament promised would come.

In John 1:1–5, John talks about someone named the Word. The Word is not just any person or messenger. The Word “made all things. Nothing was made without Him making it” (John 1:3, NLV). So, the Word made everything that was made. He made all the planets and everything in heaven and on earth. That Word is Jesus.

So, every time Genesis 1 says, “and God said” we know these words mean Jesus is talking. Jesus announced, “ ‘There will be light!’ ” (Genesis 1:3, EASY). This same Jesus “brought light to all people” (John 1:4, EASY). Jesus was the most important part of God’s plan to save us. Jesus came to this earth to shine the same as a light in the dark (John 1:4, 5).

God’s promises will always happen. We can trust Him. God always does what He says He will do. God’s messages are the same as light that shines in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19). God’s messages will continue to encourage people until Jesus comes back and starts His kingdom. His kingdom will continue forever.

Until that time, Jesus offers us everlasting life. The question we must ask ourselves is: “Will we accept His gift?”

Think about how Jesus made the earth and the skies and everything in them that is good (John 1:1–3). This same Jesus died on the cross for your sins. What does this amazing Bible truth show us about God’s love for us?



The Word made all the planets and everything in heaven and on earth.

CHURCH LEADERS AND GOD'S MESSENGERS (Ephesians 2:20)



These New Testament writers wrote about the life and death of Jesus.

The New Testament talks about the work of messengers and church leaders. The church leaders were named apostles. The apostles also were God's messengers. God sent the apostles to teach and lead the church. In the Bible, "apostle" is another name for each of Jesus' 12 followers. The rest of the New Testament supports this idea. In the New Testament, we see that other people are named apostles who weren't part of Jesus' 12 followers.

Paul says 12 times in his letters that he is an apostle. In Romans 1:1, 2, Paul connects his preaching and being an apostle with the words of the Old Testament messengers. Paul says that God chose him to preach (Romans 11:13).

Some people refused to accept that God chose Paul to be an apostle. Paul gave them reasons and proof to help them accept that God chose him (1 Corinthians 9:1, 2). Paul understood that He was continuing to do the work that Jesus started. Jesus is the leader of the church (Ephesians 2:20). The Holy Spirit shows the apostles who God is. So, the Holy Spirit gives the apostles the same understanding that He gives to God's messengers (Ephesians 3:1–5).

In 2 Peter 3:1, 2, Peter talks about God's messengers from Old Testament times. God gave the apostles the same power to speak and work for Him. Peter also compares God's messengers in the Old Testament with God's messengers in the New Testament. All during Bible history, the Holy Spirit gave certain people the gift of understanding God's messages. In the New Testament, both apostles and God's messengers communicated His words to other people. But not all messengers were apostles (Acts 15:32).

**What work do apostles and messengers do for Jesus?
Read Ephesians 2:20 and Ephesians 3:5 for the answer.**

The apostles tell us that Jesus was the most important idea they wrote about. These New Testament writers wrote about the life and death of Jesus. They also wrote about His work in heaven and His Second Coming.

The apostles and messengers who wrote about the Bible tell us about Jesus. What does this idea tell us about why the Bible must decide what we believe about Jesus?

**THE WORK OF NEW TESTAMENT MESSENGERS
(1 Corinthians 14:3)**

What do 1 Corinthians 14:3; Ephesians 4:11–13; and Revelation 22:6 tell us about the work of God’s messengers in New Testament times?

The verses above about God’s messengers are helpful. But these verses don’t tell us everything that the New Testament messengers did. New Testament messengers did many of the things that Old Testament messengers did. So, we can look at the lives of Old Testament messengers to better understand the work of messengers in the New Testament.

In 1 Corinthians 12:10, special messages are included in the list with other spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28, special messengers are included in the list after apostles. As we saw yesterday, apostles were church leaders who also got messages from God. As we read in 1 Corinthians 14:3, “But if someone speaks a clear message from God, he helps the people who hear him. He helps them to become stronger [powerful; strong] as believers [Christians]. He [the Holy Spirit] helps them to be happy and strong in their troubles” (EASY).

Ephesians 4:11–13 also gives us a list of spiritual gifts. Special messengers are included in this list, too. Apostles, preachers, pastors, and teachers are also in the list (Ephesians 4:11). These persons help grow the church until Jesus comes back (read Ephesians 4:12, 13).

The book of Acts talks about two of God’s messengers: Judas and Silas. These men didn’t write any books in the Bible. The words of Judas and Silas made the faith of church members strong (Acts 15:32). Yes, at times, God’s messengers must warn His people. But at other times, God’s messengers also encourage church members, the same as Judas and Silas did. The church members needed to hear their messages. For sure, the words of Judas and Silas filled the church members with hope.

So, we can see God’s messages include encouraging promises (1 Corinthians 14:31). In hard times, the gift of special messages encourages people and gives hope to their hearts.

In Revelation 22:6, Jesus is named the Lord God of the special messengers. This verse also tells us that Jesus’ words are holy and true. So, we can trust that the words of His messengers will be holy and true, too. We can trust so little in this life. But we can trust God’s messengers in the Bible. For sure, Revelation 22:6 is good news!



The words of Judas and Silas made the faith of church members strong (Acts 15:32).

FEMALE MESSENGERS AND YOUNG ASSISTANT PASTORS (Acts 21:9)

Read Luke 2:36–38 and Acts 21:9. What do these verses tell us about female messengers?

In Old Testament times, God chose both men and women to be His messengers. In New Testament times, God continued to choose women to be His messengers. Anna is the first woman who is named a special messenger in the New Testament. Anna “never left the temple. She stayed there day and night to worship God. She fasted [ate no food for a short time] and she prayed” (Luke 2:37, 38, EASY).

Acts 21:19 says that Philip “had four daughters who were not married. They spoke messages from God” (EASY). We don’t know what messages Philip’s four daughters communicated to the church. But we do know that none of their messages were included in the Bible.

We also know about young assistant pastors who helped church leaders do their work. Church leaders helped these young pastors become church leaders. Paul helped Timothy become a church leader and pastor. Paul wrote these words to Timothy: “I told you the message about Jesus and you believed in him. So you are like [the same as] my own child” (1 Timothy 1:2, EASY). Paul taught Timothy how to be a pastor. Paul wrote, “Timothy, you are like my own child. So now I am telling you to serve God well. Remember the words from God that people spoke about you, when you became a servant of God. Those words will help you to be strong, like a soldier who fights well” (1 Timothy 1:18, EASY).

In Titus 1:4, Paul writes these words to Titus: “I told you the message about Jesus and now we both believe in him. So you are like my own child” (EASY). Paul gave Titus the job of choosing leaders for the church in Crete. This job was not easy. Paul offered young Titus spiritual advice on how to do this task. Paul ended with these words: “You must teach these things to the believers [church members]. Help them to live in a good way. Warn them when they do wrong things. Use all the authority [power] that you have as a leader in the church. Make sure that everyone respects you” (Titus 2:15, EASY).

Young or old, male or female, we all have a part in God’s work. What is your part? What else can you do for God?



Anna is the first woman who is named a special messenger in the New Testament.

**FALSE MESSENGERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
(Matthew 24:23, 24)**

Read Matthew 24:23, 24. What does Jesus warn us about in these verses? Why should we follow this advice?

Jesus said, “ ‘People will come and say they are the Christ [the Savior]. People will come and say they are prophets [messengers from God]. But they are not true [they are lying]. They will show big signs [miracles] and do wonderful things to fool [trick] people. They will fool God’s chosen people if they can’ ” (Matthew 24:24, WE).

As we can see, Jesus warns us about end-time lies. These lies will be really powerful. There will be “big signs” and “wonderful things [miracles]” that “fool [trick] people.” So, we must be careful. Miracles do not prove that God did them. We have very powerful enemies. Satan and his evil angels also can make miracles happen. As Paul warns us: “Our fight is not with people. It [our fight] is against the leaders and the powers [demons] and the spirits [the devil and his demons] of darkness [evil] in [on] this world [earth]. It [our fight] is against the demon world [Satan’s army of evil angels] that works in the heavens” (Ephesians 6:12, NLV). These evil powers work with false messengers to trick people.

Sad to say, false messengers are not new. The New Testament talks about the false messengers in the Old Testament times (Luke 6:26). In the New Testament, false messengers are compared to hungry wolves who pretend to be the same as ‘sheep’ (Matthew 7:15). We can tell who they really are because of the way they behave (Matthew 7:16).

False messengers lie and trick people (Matthew 7:17–20). Jesus announced, “ ‘Many people will come and say they are prophets [messengers] of [from] God. But they will not be true [cannot be trusted]. They will fool [trick] many people’ ” (Matthew 24:11, WE). Jesus also warns, “ ‘They will fool God’s chosen people if they can’ ” (Matthew 24:24, WE; also read Mark 13:22 and 1 John 4:1).

How can we protect ourselves from Satan’s lies? Read Ephesians 6:10–18 for the answer.

We must put on God’s battle suit. His battle suit will protect us from Satan’s lies. Also, we must ask the Holy Spirit to control us. We must study the Bible, too. These things will protect us and keep us close to Jesus.



In the New Testament, false messengers are compared to hungry wolves who pretend to be the same as ‘sheep’ (Matthew 7:15).

MAKING JESUS AND THE BIBLE #1 IN OUR LIVES

God chose His messengers to do important work at special times. The most important job of a messenger was to help people know God better and to help them have a loving relationship with Him. Ellen G. White did this work. Her work had two important parts: (1) to lead people to Jesus and (2) to help them trust His Word, the Bible.

Ellen White loved Jesus her whole life. She wanted to share her love for God with other people. She wrote a famous set of five books named *The Conflict of the Ages*. This set of books starts and ends with the words “God is love.” Maybe her most popular book is *Steps to Christ*. In it, she wrote: “Our growth in God’s love, our joy, our skills all depend on our relationship with Jesus. When we communicate with Jesus every day, we will live in Him. We will grow in love and forgiveness. We will grow strong in the fight against sin. Jesus started the work to save us. He will finish this work, too.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 69, adapted. Ellen White loved to talk about Jesus.

Respect for the Bible was an important part of Ellen White’s work for God. Ellen White compared her writing to a small light and the Bible to a big light. Ellen White believed her writing helped people better understand the Bible. The Bible showed God’s love and His plan to save sinners. Early in Ellen White’s work for God, she wrote: “Dear Reader, make the Bible the reason for your faith and behavior.”—*Selected Messages*, book 3, page 29, adapted.

Years later, she wrote: “The Lord wants you to study your Bibles. He didn’t give us any new truth to replace the Bible. . . . If we study the Bible, God will give life to our spirits. Then we will do good works. These works will shine the same as light in the dark.”—Letter 130, 1901, adapted. Ellen White also believed that people who said they were God’s messengers needed to teach “what Jesus taught. Jesus’ teachings include more than just His own words. His teachings include the words of the messengers and teachers in the Old Testament. Jesus’ teachings do not include human teachings.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 826, adapted.

Ellen White made Jesus and the Bible the most important part of her Christian experience. Next Friday, we will look at her beliefs about how God communicated His words to His chosen messengers.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/4>.



Ellen White compared her writing to a small light and the Bible to a big light.

A SCHOOL FOR BERTA

Berta was excited when she heard that the first Seventh-day Adventist church school opened in Poland. Berta was a teacher who was looking for work. But there was a problem. The Seventh-day Adventist school was outside Warsaw, far away from her home in Krakow.

Berta thought sadly, "This job is not for me."

Then a friend started to talk to Berta about the Seventh-day Adventist school. Again, Berta thought the school was too far away. So, she decided to look for work in Krakow. Then another friend told her about the Seventh-day Adventist school.

The friend said, "I heard about this new Seventh-day Adventist school. Maybe you would like to be a teacher there."

After this conversation, Berta wondered if God was trying to tell her something about becoming a teacher there.

Berta prayed, "God, what should I do?"

There was also a teaching job at the public school in Krakow. Berta decided that she would try to get a job with both schools. Then she would accept the job from the first school that offered her a job.

The Seventh-day Adventist school was the first school to write back to Berta. The school manager asked Berta to come to the school to discuss the job.

Then Berta got worried. She had a 16-year-old son named Jacob. Jacob's school and friends were in Krakow. Would he be willing to move to another city?

Berta prayed again. She decided to give Jacob the choice. He could move with her to Warsaw or stay with a family member in Krakow.

Jacob said, "Mother, let's move together. I want to be with you."

Berta was surprised and pleased. Jacob's words were more proof that God was leading Berta to Warsaw.

Berta accepted the job. Today, Berta is the school manager for the Seventh-day Adventist elementary school near Warsaw. Berta knows that God led her to the school. Her son says that his mom made the best decision. Jacob didn't have any Seventh-day Adventist friends in Krakow and wasn't interested in church. But now he has many Seventh-day Adventist friends and is interested in church.

Jacob said, "Mom, you made a wonderful decision to come here. I am so glad we did."

Berta said that she is happy. She knows that God brought her to the school. She says, "That's why I am here." Thank you for your Sabbath School offerings that support Seventh-day Adventist education in Poland and worldwide.

INSIDE
Story
by MISSION EDITOR



Berta prayed, "God, what should I do?"

How God Communicates With His Messengers



SABBATH—OCTOBER 24

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2 Peter 1:18–21; Exodus 17:14.

MEMORY VERSE: “God showed these things to Jesus Christ to show to his servants. These are things that must happen soon. Then God sent his angel and showed them to John, his servant. John wrote down what God said and what Jesus showed to him. These words tell all [everything] that He saw” (Revelation 1:1, 2, WE).



On Patmos, God gave John special messages about the future.

JOHN was one of Jesus' 12 Apostles (Luke 8:51; Matthew 17:1; Matthew 26:36, 37). As we already saw, an apostle is a church leader and teacher. After Jesus went to heaven, John continued Jesus' work in Jerusalem. Before Jerusalem was destroyed (A.D. 70), John moved to the city of Ephesus. From Ephesus, John managed the churches in Asia Minor. Later, Domitian, the King of Rome, sent John to Patmos. Patmos was an island in the Aegean Sea. The Romans sent people to live there as punishment.

On Patmos, God gave John special messages about the future. These messages were not only for the seven churches in Asia Minor. The messages also were for Christians in all future ages (Revelation 1:1–3, 9–11). First, God the Father sent His message to Jesus. Then Jesus gave God's message to His angel. The angel sent the message to John. John gave the message to the people. This example shows us how God uses His messengers to communicate His messages to us.

This week, we will look at the different ways that God communicates His messages to people.

THE BIBLE AND NATURE (Hebrews 1:1, 2)

Read Hebrews 1:1, 2. Why is God so interested in talking to us? What does He tell us with the words of Jesus and in the writings of His messengers?

What does God want to say to us? Why does He want to communicate with us? God wants us to know why we are here. We live on an earth filled with sin. Sometimes awful things happen. God wants us to know why things are so bad. He wants us to know why we can hope in His love for us, too.

God uses nature to communicate His messages and Bible truth. Nature shows us God's power and caring love. King David announced, "The heavens tell about the glory [power] of God. The skies announce what his hands have made" (Psalm 19:1, ERV). Paul says, "Ever since God made the world [earth and skies], he has been showing people clearly about himself. We cannot see God. But the things that he has made show us clearly what he is like [who He is]. We can understand his great [wonderful] power that continues for ever. We can know that he is the true God. So there is no reason for anyone to say, 'We could not know about God' " (Romans 1:20, EASY).

For sure, God communicates with us in nature. He also uses nature to show us His love. A powerful example of God's amazing love for us is the way that He made our bodies to heal. "God's healing power is in all of nature. What if a tree is cut? Or what if a person breaks a bone? Right away, nature starts to repair the hurt. God made us and other living things ready to heal our own cuts and injuries. The moment a part is injured, the things that God made start to fix their own broken parts."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 113, adapted.

Yes, nature shows us God's power and love. But nature also can show us evil at work (read Genesis 3:14–19; Matthew 13:24–30). How can something good and beautiful also show us evil at work? God gave us the Bible and sent us Jesus to help us understand the answer. Jesus is the Living Word of God. The Bible is the Written Word of God. Both Jesus and the Bible tell us about God (John 5:39).

The Bible is a record of God's messages to us, too. The Bible tells us why we are here and God's answer to the sin problem. We can trust the Bible because its verses are God's words to us (read 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19–21).



Jesus is the Living Word of God. The Bible is the Written Word of God.

HOW GOD SENDS US HIS MESSAGES (2 Timothy 3:15–17)

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. But what makes the Bible different from other books?

Read 2 Timothy 3:15–17 and James 1:17. What important message do these verses give us?

2 Timothy 3:16 helps us to understand that the whole Bible comes from God. (Also read 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

But how did God make the Bible? The Holy Spirit helped God's messengers write the Bible. How did He do that? The Holy Spirit communicated God's messages to these men. So, the Holy Spirit helped them to accept and understand God's messages.

God sent His messages in dreams (Numbers 12:6; Isaiah 6:1, 8). God also communicated His messages to people who saw and heard God's truth (1 John 1:1–3). The Holy Spirit helped men to research history (Luke 1:1–3) and to choose the correct information to include in their messages. The Holy Spirit also communicated ideas and thoughts to people's minds. The messengers used their own words to communicate God's messages. But they were not allowed to change God's thoughts in any way.

How did God's messengers share His messages with people? The messengers often told them to the people (2 Peter 1:19–21). Or the messengers wrote them down for people to read (John 20:30, 31). Sometimes the messengers did special things to show the people what God wanted them to do (Ezekiel 4:1–8).

We may have many questions about how God wrote the Bible or how He communicated His words to His messengers. Why is it so important to trust that the Bible is from God, even if we don't understand fully how it was written?



The Holy Spirit communicated ideas and thoughts to people's minds.

SPOKEN MESSAGES (2 Peter 1:18–21)

The Holy Spirit helped men write the Bible. So, we can trust that the Bible is God’s Written Word. God also gave His messengers words to speak. Why can we trust that their spoken messages also came from God? Read 2 Peter 1:18-21 for the answer.

God spoke to Adam and Eve before they sinned (Genesis 2:16, 17). God also spoke to them after they sinned (Genesis 3:9–19). When God spoke to them, they understood His words completely. People heard God speak at Sinai (Exodus 20:1–20). People also heard God speak when Jesus was baptized (Matthew 3:17) and when Jesus’ clothes became bright (Matthew 17:5). We don’t always understand what people say when they talk to us. But when God talks to us, He always talks clearly. He doesn’t trick us or lie.

The Bible says, “God said to Moses, ‘I am the LORD’ ” (Exodus 6:2, ERV). Many Bible writers tell us that they heard the voice of God. Isaiah heard God speak to him (Isaiah 8:1, 11). So did Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4, 9, 11) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:16; Ezekiel 6:1). We must believe the words of these messengers about hearing God’s voice. If we doubt their honesty, we will doubt the Bible itself.

God spoke to His messengers with words they understood. In the same way, God’s messengers spoke His words to His people. Noah was a true messenger from God. Peter tells us that “Noah preached about the right way to live” (2 Peter 2:5, NIV). Noah didn’t write any part of the Bible. But he preached God’s message to the people living before the Flood. Noah’s message came from God as much as the Bible did. Many other messengers weren’t Bible writers. These messengers include Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, and John the Baptist. They didn’t write God’s messages down. They spoke their messages to God’s people.

What about Jesus? The Bible says that He “wrote on the ground with His finger” (John 8:6, NKJV). That’s the only time we see the Bible talk about Jesus writing something. But He taught and preached with power (Matthew 7:29). Some people said, “ ‘We have never heard anyone say such [these types of] amazing things!’ ” (John 7:46, ERV). So, Jesus didn’t write any books. But His messages were powerful.

God has messengers who didn’t write any part of the Bible. Why can we trust that their messages are from God?



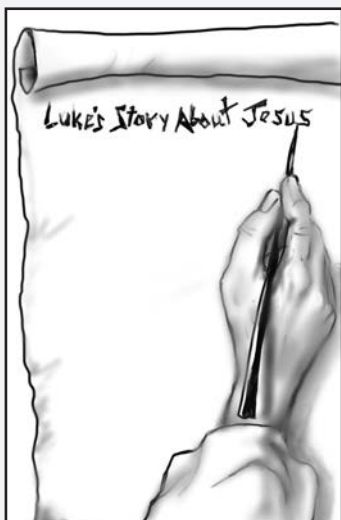
Noah didn’t write any part of the Bible. But He preached God’s message to the people living before the Flood.

WRITTEN MESSAGES (Exodus 17:14)

Some famous sayings and talks have changed people's lives and human history. But if these words weren't written down, no one would remember them. Or if people do remember, they may not remember the correct words or ideas. So, writing helps us remember what people say. If they write down their words, we can read what they wrote whenever we want.

Shortly after the Israelites left Egypt, they won a fight against the Amalekites. God told Moses to “ ‘write about this battle. Write these things in a book so that people will remember what happened here. And be sure to tell Joshua that I will completely destroy the Amalekites from the earth’ ” (Exodus 17:14, ERV). The Holy Spirit helped Moses to write the first five books of the Bible, the book of Job, and Psalm 90. Then the Holy Spirit helped God's messengers to write the rest of the 66 books that now are part of the Bible.

Why did God ask His messengers to write down the messages He gave them? Read Exodus 17:14; John 20:30, 31; 1 Corinthians 10:11; and Revelation 1:19 for the answer.



The first four books of the New Testament contain many sermons and teachings from Jesus.

The different books of the Bible show us the different personalities and writing skills of the men who wrote them. As we will learn next week, their different personalities and writing skills don't make some parts of the Bible more important than other parts. Yes, some parts may have more meaning for our lives and faith today. But that doesn't make one part of the Bible more holy than another part.

Sometimes Bible writers wrote God's messages after they first shared the messages with people. Sometimes an assistant wrote down the messenger's words. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses wrote the final sermons that he preached to the Israelites before he died. The first four books of the New Testament contain many sermons and teachings from Jesus. Sometimes, New Testament writers used quotes from outside the Old Testament (Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Titus 1:12). Some Bible writers also wrote down the words of Satan (Genesis 3:1–5; Matthew 4:1–11).

When we read the Bible, we should remember that the Bible writers were not perfect. So, their writings are not written in perfect language. Even so, the Bible's message is truth. We can trust forever what it says.

ACTIONS, SYMBOLS, AND PICTURE STORIES (Ezekiel 4:1–8)

The Bible is filled with symbols. Some of these symbols show Jesus' death and His work for us in heaven (Hebrews 8:1–6).

In the book of Daniel, we read about a mighty statue. The different parts of the statue show us the kingdoms and powers that will control the earth, one after another. Later, Daniel uses animals and horns to show us these same kingdoms and powers (Daniel 7 and 8). In chapter 11, Daniel uses two kings to talk about what will happen in the future. The book of Revelation uses some of these same symbols. In Revelation 13, we read about two wild animals. These animals are symbols for two powers on earth.

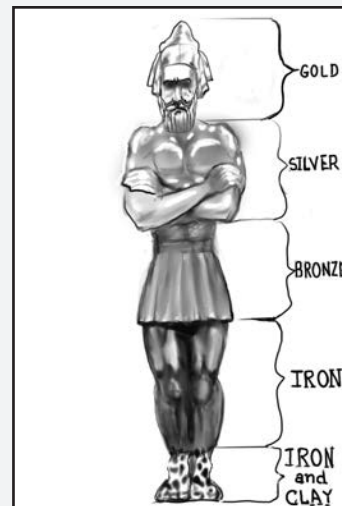
In His teachings, Jesus also used symbols. He compared Himself to many things. He named Himself the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 41–58), the Light of the World (John 8:12; John 9:5), and the True Vine (John 15:1–8). In the story about the farmer (Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23) and many other stories (Matthew 13:24–52 is one example), Jesus really was talking about His kingdom and its growth.

Why do you think God spoke to Ezekiel and, at the same time, used a special experience to help Ezekiel understand His messages (read Ezekiel 4:1–8)?

In Ezekiel 4:1–8, God told Ezekiel to lie down on his left side for 390 days. Then Ezekiel lay on his right side for 40 days. Ezekiel's left side was a symbol for how long God would punish Israel. Ezekiel's right side was a symbol for how long God would punish Judah. God asked Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute. A prostitute is someone who sells sex for pay. Hosea's marriage showed Israel's broken relationship with God. The Israelites were the same as a prostitute because they 'cheated' on God with other gods.

The experiences of Ezekiel and Hosea surprise us. They were meant to, and not just us, but God's people back then. At that time, much the same as today, the people refused to pay attention to God's warnings (read 2 Chronicles 36:15–21). So, God asked Ezekiel and Hosea to do surprising things to get the people's attention.

What action do you think someone could do today to warn us about the dangers of not following God? (Read Revelation 3:14–18.)



The different parts of the statue show us the kingdoms and powers that will control the earth, one after another.

ELLEN G. WHITE'S THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW GOD COMMUNICATES WITH HIS MESSENGERS

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White was God's messenger. Her writings, life, and work show us that God chose her to announce and write His messages. The Holy Spirit helped her write and talk in the same way He helped the Bible messengers. But Ellen White didn't believe her writings were the same as the Bible. So, what did she think about her work as God's messenger? What did she believe about how God communicated with His messengers?

First, Ellen White always believed the Bible was God's Word. The Bible shows God's truth and His plan to save sinners. God used His messengers to communicate His truth and His plan.

Second, Ellen White understood that God worked together with His messengers. God communicated His thoughts or ideas to His messengers. The messenger used his or her words to announce God's message. As Ellen White says, "God did not choose the words for His messengers. God chose the messengers. His Spirit helped them to write God's messages. The Spirit filled them with God's thoughts. . . . God combines His mind with the human mind. In this way, the words of the man are the words of God."—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 21, adapted.

Ellen White also wrote, "The Bible is God-given truths written in human language. The Bible shows us how God works together with people."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, page 25, adapted. God used many ways to help His messengers understand His messages. He showed them pictures in their minds. He spoke words to them and filled their minds with thoughts. Ellen White's experience with getting messages from God was much the same as the experience of the Bible writers.

Third, Ellen White understood that not all her experiences and communications were from God. "Sometimes I must talk and think about the everyday things of life. I must write letters or give information to some workers. These words and information do not come from God."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, page 39, adapted. We must remember this important idea when we read her writings, experiences, letters, and diaries. Then we will not misunderstand her words or use her writing to say something she didn't mean.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/5>.



God used many ways to help His messengers understand His messages. He showed them pictures in their minds.

BIBLE WORKER OF HOPE

In January 1906, a young Slovenian man named Albin Močnik stood on a bridge in Bremerhaven, Germany. Albin thought about jumping off the bridge and killing himself. But a stranger stopped him. The stranger introduced him to a pair of Seventh-day Adventist families. The names of the families were the Schiefers and the Banas. Both families were shoemakers.

Albin moved in with the Schiefers and the Banas. Their quiet and loving lives helped Albin to accept Jesus. In March 1906, Albin was baptized.

Soon after Albin's baptism, he went to a meeting in Friedensau. Albin didn't know that he was the first Slovenian Seventh-day Adventist when he went there. Albin decided to go to Friedensau school so that he could serve his own people better. Soon, Albin started to translate Sabbath School lessons into the Serbo-Croatian language.

In 1908, Albin finished his studies. He went to Croatia with Pastor Robert Schilliner. Albin shared the Good News about Jesus in Zagreb and in Split. Then Albin moved into Srem. Srem was a part of Croatia at that time. After that, Albin entered Serbia. There, he preached and baptized new members. He even got locked in jail for preaching.

Albin was often sick. But he never gave up. During World War I, Albin served in the army. His health was poor. He was sad that he was away from his wife and children. While he rested to get well, he printed the first Seventh-day Adventist hymnbook in the Serbo-Croatian language. He even wrote 120 songs himself.

Albin helped heal the German Seventh-day Adventist church to heal after some members tried to break it apart. Before World War I, some church members in Germany disagreed about fighting in the war. Some Germans said it was wrong. Others disagreed. Albin helped to unite the church after the war. Soon, Albin's work for God in his own country was a success. He gave the church new life. He chose new leaders. In 1925, He became the first president of the Yugoslav Union Conference.

As president, Albin did many things to help the church. In 1925, his book *Adventism* helped government leaders understand his church's beliefs. He edited the church paper *Glasnik*. He also started a school for pastors in 1931.

Albin suffered much, but his faith was strong. When he chose life and not death on that bridge in Bremerhaven, he became a Bible worker of hope. His story shows that the Good News about Jesus can change lives. Albin had the courage to share the Good News about Jesus in new places.

This story is adapted from the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists, available at encyclopedia.adventist.org.

INSIDE Story



A stranger stopped Albin.

Special Messages About the Future



SABBATH—OCTOBER 31

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Exodus 17:14; Jeremiah 36:17, 18; Isaiah 13:1; 1 Kings 11:41; Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

MEMORY VERSE: “Everything that people wrote in the Bible in past times is there to teach us something. Those words help us to be patient and strong. As a result [for that reason], we can trust God to do what he has promised” (Romans 15:4, EASY).



Many of God's messengers used assistants or secretaries to help them write.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN A SONG that God wrote? In Deuteronomy 32, Moses wrote a song that God taught him (Deuteronomy 31:19–22). We don't often think about songs as messages from God about the future. But many songs in the book of Psalms really come from God. Of course, God didn't tell His messengers the exact words to write. But God did give His messengers the ideas for the songs. Then they chose the words and often set them to music.

The Bible talks about three ways that God's messengers communicated His messages: (1) they spoke God's messages; (2) they wrote them down; and (3) they showed them with actions. This week, we will look at #2: the writings in the Bible. The Bible is the Written Word of God. God's messengers wrote His ideas in their own words. God's Words include the sermons and talks that His messengers gave.

This week, we will look at the writings of God's messengers. Many of them used assistants or secretaries to help them write. We also will learn some important rules for Bible study. We will need to use these rules when we study verses that are hard to understand.

CHOSEN TO WRITE (Exodus 17:14)

The first way that God chose to communicate His messages to people was with voices, dreams, or angels. Later, God told Moses to write about the experiences of God's people. Moses wrote them in a book, as God told him.

What is the first time that writing is talked about in the Bible? Read Exodus 17:14 for the answer.

In the Old Testament, we read many examples about how God told His messengers to write His words for His people. God told Jeremiah, “ ‘Take a book and write in it all the words which I have said to you about Israel, Judah, and all the nations. Write all I have said since the day I first spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today’ ” (Jeremiah 36:2, NLV).

God told Jeremiah the reason he must write His messages. Jeremiah must “ ‘warn the people of Judah about the very bad things that I have decided to do to them. When they hear about it, perhaps [maybe] they will stop doing the evil things that they have been doing. Then I will forgive their sins and everything wrong that they have done’ ” (Jeremiah 36:3, EASY). So, God warned His people about the future because He wanted to save them.

God's messengers wrote for many different reasons and in different places. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible while he was in the desert. David wrote many of his poems while King Saul hunted him (read Psalms 52, 54, 57, 59). Daniel wrote his dreams while he served in the courts of Babylon and Media-Persia. Paul wrote his letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon while he was in jail. John wrote the book of Revelation after he was sent in punishment to Patmos Island. When God told His messengers to write, the Holy Spirit gave them power to do it, wherever they were.

God also chose people to write Jesus' teachings. God trusted His messengers to write down the holy truths that Jesus said.

What if someone said to you, “We can't trust the Bible because we don't have the first copies that the Bible writers wrote.” Why is that really a weak reason or excuse not to believe in the Bible?



The first way that God chose to communicate His messages to people was with voices, dreams, or angels.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF WRITING (Isaiah 13:1)

The Bible contains different types of writing. Some Bible books are much the same as diaries. The writers wrote about what happened in everyday life (read Numbers 33:1–49). The books of Daniel, Zechariah, and John are examples of special messages about the future. Their writings are filled with symbols, angels, and end-time happenings.

Read Isaiah 13:1. How does the Bible talk about the message that Isaiah is giving in this verse?



Sometimes the dreams that God gives His messengers are named “messages” or “the word of the Lord.”

Sometimes the dreams that God gives His messengers are named “messages” or “the word of the Lord.” These words help us understand that messages are special words or communications from God. Many messengers wrote God’s messages as poems. In Bible times, writers often used an idea in one line of a poem and then said the idea again later in another line. Here is an example:

“At that time people will look to God, their Maker
[the Lord who made them].

Their eyes will see the Holy One of Israel”
(Isaiah 17:7, ICB).

Do you see how the words “the Holy One of Israel” are another way of saying “God, their Maker [the Lord who made them]”? Each line gives us more information about the same idea that helps us understand it better.

God’s messengers also used symbols and powerful language. These things help us to better understand their messages and obey. When we understand the type of writing God’s messengers used, we can know what they wanted to say. Then we will know better how to follow their advice.

Going to court is another idea that some Bible writers used. In Jeremiah 2:4–9, Jeremiah tells Israel about God’s legal complaint against them. Israel broke God’s law. So, God was taking Israel to court. Jeremiah uses the symbol of a court of law to show us God’s work as Judge. This symbol helps us better understand why God was judging His people.

The Bible also contains messages about the future, history, songs, and picture stories. God told Jeremiah to write a book with all his messages (Jeremiah 36:2). Much of the New Testament is filled with letters. Paul’s letters are just as important as the writings of the Old Testament messengers. Paul plainly tells us that the Holy Spirit gave him his messages (read 1 Corinthians 7:10, 12, 40).

WRITING ASSISTANTS (Jeremiah 36:17, 18)

Read Jeremiah 36:17, 18 and Romans 16:22. What do these verses tell us about the Bible writers and their use of writing assistants?

Jeremiah chose to use Baruch, a writing assistant that he trusted. Baruch helped Jeremiah write God's messages and share them with Israel's leaders. Jeremiah isn't the only example in the Bible of a messenger who used the help of a writing assistant to communicate God's message.

In the New Testament, Tertius helped Paul write his letter to the Romans (Romans 16:22). Tertius was Paul's secretary. Tertius wrote only what Paul wished to say.

Paul often used writing assistants. At the end of Paul's letters to the Colossians and Thessalonians, Paul adds a greeting in his own handwriting (Colossians 4:18, 2 Thessalonians 3:17). Paul's handwriting is the same as a stamp or a signature. It is proof that Paul wrote the letter. This information helps us to understand that someone else wrote down the letters to the Colossians and Thessalonians for Paul. Paul knew that some people would think that his letter didn't come from him at all. So, Paul added a note in his own handwriting at the end of the letter. Then no one would have any reason to doubt the letter really came from him.

Some people wonder why the language is so different in many of Paul's letters. These people believe the reason is because Paul used different assistants to help him write each letter. The different assistants each used a different type of writing to communicate Paul's ideas. People also think the same thing about Peter's two letters. "Yes, the language in 2 Peter is different from the language in 1 Peter. We can explain why the language is different. We think Peter used a writing assistant to help him write his letter in the Greek language. For sure, these Greek-speaking assistants chose words to help Paul and Peter communicate their messages. The word choices of the different assistants help explain why the language in each of their letters is often different."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 5, page 186, adapted. So, the skills of the different writing assistants help explain why the letters are often different. Remember, too, that God's Spirit sends the thoughts. His messengers choose the words.



Paul knew that some people would think that his letter didn't come from him at all. So, Paul added a note in his own handwriting at the end of the letter.

OTHER BOOKS, TEACHINGS, AND SAYINGS (1 Kings 11:41)

“The Teacher was wise man. He also taught the people to understand things. He studied many proverbs [wise teachings] and he wrote them down carefully. The Teacher tried to find the right [best] words, so that he could show the true [correct] meaning of what he wrote” (Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10, EASY).

Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10. These verses show us that Solomon didn’t invent all the wise teachings and sayings that he wrote. The Holy Spirit showed Solomon which teachings were correct. Then God’s Spirit helped Solomon to write these ideas in the best words. Proverbs 31 is an example. This chapter includes the sayings of the mother of King Lemuel (Proverbs 31:1). Again, Solomon didn’t write these sayings. But he included them in his book. History writers of the Old Testament also used information from other writers to tell the story of God’s people.



Solomon didn’t invent all the wise teachings and sayings that he wrote.

Read 1 Kings 11:41; Luke 1:1–4; and Jude 14, 15. What do these verses tell us about how Bible writers, at times, used information from writings, teachings, and sayings outside the Bible?

Ezra and Nehemiah are other examples of Bible writers who used history records to help write their books. Ezra includes copies of letters and laws about Jerusalem and Persia (read Ezra 4–7). Nehemiah tells us about the records of family lines that he used in his story (read Nehemiah 7:5–72).

New Testament writers also used information from outside the Bible to write their books and letters. Luke is an example. “The Holy Spirit helped Luke write his book about Jesus. Luke studied and collected information and stories about Jesus’ life. Then Luke combined this information into a story.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 5, page 669, adapted.

Many people think Jude used quotes from 1 Enoch 1:9. This book is not part of the Bible. Also, Paul used quotes from Greek thinkers (read Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12).

The Holy Spirit helped God’s messengers choose information from other writings outside the Bible. Why is this idea important for us to remember?

**GOD'S MESSAGE AND WEAK HUMAN MESSENGERS
(2 Corinthians 4:7)**

What does Paul say about God's treasure in 2 Corinthians 4:7?

Paul compares God's people to clay pots: "Treasure is kept in clay jars. In the same way, we have the treasure of the good news in these earthly [weak] bodies of ours. That shows that the mighty power of the good news comes from God. It [the power] doesn't come from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7, NIV). The Bible shows that God's messengers weren't perfect. They made mistakes in their personal lives. (Just look at Moses, Elijah, David, Jonah, and Peter.) So, their writings also showed the limits of human understanding and communication.

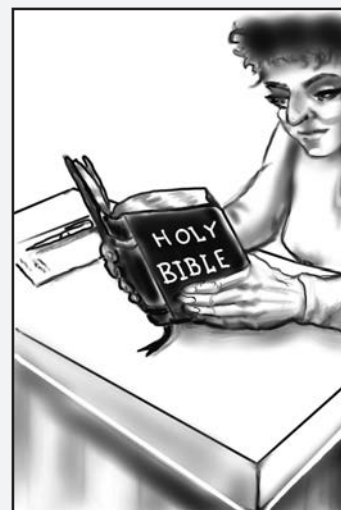
"Jesus showed us how God and men can work together as one. We see this same work between God and humans in the Bible. God gave humans Bible truth. His messengers wrote these Bible truths in human language. The messengers also wrote these truths to meet our needs."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, page 747, adapted.

For sure, God's messengers made mistakes at times. They were human, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7. The Holy Spirit didn't stop God's messengers from writing some things that we have trouble explaining or understanding today. As Bible-believing Christians, we must accept the Bible as God's Word. We must trust the Lord, even with the parts we don't understand.

Some mistakes could happen when people copied the Bible later on after it was written. When we study some of these verses or other parts that are hard to understand, we need to ask ourselves some helpful questions. Do we fully understand the meaning of the writer's words? How might more prayerful study help us solve the problem?

Maybe we can't solve every problem we have with understanding the Bible. But the little things that trouble us when we read are not important compared to the message of Bible truth. We can trust that the Bible truths are perfect, even if God's messengers are not.

Why do you think that God chose weak people to write the Bible and be His messengers? Why not choose holy angels?



**The little things
that trouble us when
we read are not important
compared to the message
of Bible truth.**

ELLEN G. WHITE'S WRITINGS

Ellen G. White's experience and writings show us much of the same things that we studied this week about God's messengers in Bible times. God also told Ellen White to write down what He showed her.

In 1909, Ellen White thought back over her life. She wrote: "When I was a girl, I was hurt in an accident. This accident almost killed me. I was weak. I couldn't write. . . . But one night the Lord's angel came to me and stood next to my bed. He said to me: 'You must write the things I give you.' I said, 'I can't.' Again, the angel commanded me, 'Write the things I give you.' I thought I would try. I took a lap desk from the table. I started to write. I could write easily."—*The General Conference Bulletin*, May 31, 1909, adapted.

As we saw this week, the Bible writers used writing assistants. So did Ellen White. Her secretaries helped her get her writing ready to be printed. Sometimes these assistants helped her write down her thoughts. Or they read what she wrote in her own handwriting. They corrected misspelled words and helped Ellen White say her messages clearly. But these assistants didn't change her thoughts or add their own.

Ellen White also used quotes and information from other books. She used these things to help her write the messages God gave her. Ellen White told her readers the names of some of the books she used. She didn't try to hide from anyone that she used their work. She used their ideas because she found something in their writings that helped her communicate God's truths.

Was she perfect? Did she make no mistakes? Of course not!

She wrote, "I have never said that I was perfect. Only God is perfect."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, page 37, adapted.

Sometimes we may read things that Ellen White wrote that are more difficult to understand than other things she wrote. But that's because she was human, just as we are. She didn't become perfect or stop being human just because God chose her to be His messenger. Ellen White grew as a person and a writer, just as we all must grow. We see this growth and change in her writings over the years.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/6>.



Ellen White's secretaries helped her get her writing ready to be printed.

“GOD IS #1”: PART 1

Naum stood firm for his faith when he was only seven years old. In Yugoslavia, the law said that children must attend school every Saturday. But Naum, a first-grader, decided not to attend school on Sabbath. After Naum missed class for two Saturdays, he was ordered to explain why he was absent.

When Naum got to class, a group of five people waited for him. The group told all the students to leave except for Naum.

The seven-year-old boy bravely stood in front of the group. The group included the school manager, two teachers, and two policemen. One of the policemen was the manager for the secret police in that area.

The group leader asked, “Why aren’t you in class on Saturdays?”

Naum explained, “Because I believe in God. The fourth commandment of His law teaches us to rest on the Sabbath. That’s why I’ll be in church every Sabbath, and not in school.”

The man frowned at Naum. “We will kick you out of school. Then you won’t be allowed to get an education.”

Naum said, “I’ll be in church because God is #1 in my life.”

The man asked, “What do you do at your church?”

“We read the Bible, sing songs, and pray.”

The group said, “Sing us a song!” So, Naum sang a hymn. Then he prayed a simple prayer. Naum thanked God for blessing him. He thanked God for the government. He prayed for God to be with the group that was questioning him. Naum asked God to give them wisdom to make the right decision.

When Naum finished praying, he was asked if his father told him to not go to school.

Naum said honestly, “No.”

If Naum answered “Yes,” his father would be thrown in jail right away. That’s why Naum’s father never told his son not to attend school.

The group was silent for a few moments. Then they told Naum, “You will be told soon if you may stay in school.”

Naum went home to tell his parents what happened. His parents weren’t surprised. They knew their son’s faith in Jesus was strong. So, they knew he would stand firm for God.

The school leaders never announced their decision to Naum. So, Naum continued to attend school, except on Sabbaths.

When Naum completed elementary school, he wasn’t allowed to continue his education because of his decision to keep the Sabbath. So, at age 15, Naum started working full-time with his father on their farm.

But God had other plans for Naum. Read more next week.

Thank you for supporting God’s work in Maruševec, Croatia.

INSIDE
Story
by GINA WAHLEN



**Naum prayed
a simple prayer.**

Hear and Obey!



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Numbers 14:4–11; Jeremiah 36:20–26; 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16; Matthew 23:30–35; 1 Corinthians 10:6–12.

MEMORY VERSE: “Those things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us. That’s because we are living at the time when God’s work is being completed” (1 Corinthians 10:11, NIV).



**In Bible times,
God’s messengers often
announced messages
that people didn’t
want to obey.**

TODAY, people may give you this advice: “Be true to yourself.” This advice means that our personal ideas, experiences, and needs are “truth,” whatever these things may be. But what happens when some of these “truths” go against the Truth, Jesus Christ, and His Written Word, the Bible?

What happens is that some people will accept Bible truth and reject their false beliefs. Other people will continue to believe lies. Some people will change their behavior when they hear Bible truth. Other people will fight against it.

In Bible times, God’s messengers, or prophets, often announced messages that people didn’t want to obey. These prophets were blamed, made fun of, or sent away from their communities. Some of the messengers were hurt or killed (Hebrews 11:32–38). But they didn’t worry about the danger to their lives. They announced God’s messages anyway. That’s because God gave His prophets lifesaving messages. So, the prophets announced these messages, even if doing so put their lives in danger.

ANGER AT GOD'S MESSENGER (Numbers 14:4–11)

God chose Moses to lead His people. Moses knew the joy and pain of leading God's people through the desert on the way to the Promised Land.

Read Numbers 14:4–11. What is happening in these verses? Why are the people upset with Moses and Aaron?

The Israelites were angry at God because they didn't trust Him. So, the people were mean and nasty to God's chosen leaders, Moses and Aaron. As humans, we need to feel safe. When we don't feel safe, we can become angry and afraid. Then we may try to hurt people, the same as the Israelites tried to hurt Moses and Aaron.

Why were the Israelites afraid? What did Caleb say to encourage them? Read Numbers 13:26–30 for the answers.

The Israelites were afraid to fight for the Promised Land. "When people doubt God, Satan takes control of them. After that, no one knows the terrible things that Satan will cause them to do."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 389, adapted. Moses had a terrible problem with the people at this time. Their fear made them angry at Moses and Aaron. Then the people fought against God and Moses. The people wanted to choose a new leader to take them back to Egypt (Deuteronomy 34:10–12; Numbers 14:4). Then Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes. They asked the people to trust in God, even if they were afraid: " ' If the LORD is happy with us, he will bring us into this land. And he will give it to us. In that land there is plenty of food and drink, enough for everyone. But do not refuse to obey the LORD. Do not be afraid of the people in that land. They are ready for us to fight against them and win! They have no place to hide! The LORD is with us to help us. So do not be afraid of them' " (Numbers 14:8, 9, EASY).

For sure, we can easily trust God when things are going well. What about when disaster happens? Or how about when trusting God means we suffer for our faith? How much do we trust God then?



Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes. They asked the people to trust in God, even if they were afraid.

DESTROYING THE MESSAGE: PART 1 (Jeremiah 36:20–26)

What was happening at the court of King Jehoiakim? What did the leaders do when they heard Jeremiah's warning? Read Jeremiah 36:20–26 for the answers.

Jeremiah was God's messenger to the kingdom of Judah. At that time, disaster was coming. For many years, Jeremiah warned Judah that God was not happy with them. Jeremiah also warned that the Babylonians would beat Judah in a war. Then the Babylonians would carry many of God's people to Babylon (Jeremiah 6:8–19; Jeremiah 26). The Lord wanted to save His people. But they needed to obey Him first.

God's people were guilty of many public sins. They worshiped false gods. They killed their children and offered them to the gods. They cheated on their wives. They were not fair. They hurt people. Jeremiah warned God's people to stop these sins. But they paid no attention. As Jeremiah's work neared its end, God tried to warn His people even more. In Jeremiah 32, God tells Jeremiah to buy some land. God also tells Jeremiah to keep the piece of paper that shows that Jeremiah is the landowner: "The LORD Almighty, Israel's God, says, 'A time will come when people in this land [will] again buy houses, fields and vineyards [grape fields]' " (Jeremiah 32:15, EASY). God's message is meant to give the people hope after they are carried away to Babylon.

God loved His people so much. That's why He asked Jeremiah to write a final message of warning to them. King Jehoiakim's bad behavior showed that He didn't respect God, His message, or His messenger.

How did God answer the king in Jeremiah 36:27–31?

Sometimes we think that if we pay no attention to God's messengers, their messages will go away. But we cannot destroy God's message for us. Jeremiah's message about King Jehoiakim's end is an awful warning for every one of us (Jeremiah 36:30, 31). When we pay no attention to God's warnings, we will be in terrible danger. For sure, we will suffer for our sins and evil choices.

God kept trying to save His people. He continued to warn them, even after they refused to pay attention to Him. What does this Bible truth tell us about His love?



God loved His people so much. That's why He asked Jeremiah to write a final message of warning to them.

**DESTROYING THE MESSAGE: PART 2
(2 Chronicles 36:15, 16)**

For the most part, the history of Israel and Judah in Bible times shows that they rejected God's messengers. In the story of Moses, the Israelites were afraid to enter the Promised Land. So, they fought against Moses and Aaron. Years later, King Jehoiakim burned God's message. The king hoped that the fire would destroy God's warning forever.

Read 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16. What did the people of Judah do when they heard God's messages? How did God finally answer Judah?

Jeremiah was God's messenger during the times of King Josiah, King Jehoahaz, King Jehoiakim, King Jehoiachin, and King Zedekiah. Babylon was about to attack God's people. Everything that Jeremiah warned about was soon to happen. Then 21-year-old Zedekiah became king of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:11). The Bible says that Zedekiah "did things that the LORD said were evil. The prophet [God's messenger] Jeremiah spoke the LORD's message to Zedekiah. But Zedekiah was too proud [filled with pride] to listen to him" (2 Chronicles 36:12, EASY).

The Bible says that Jeremiah "spoke for the Lord" (2 Chronicles 36:12, NLV). Even so, Zedekiah refused to empty his heart of all pride. Jeremiah was only a man. He was a sinner, the same as the rest of us. But God used him as His messenger. Jeremiah announced the message God gave him.

Jeremiah is only one of God's many messengers. For hundreds of years, God sent His messengers to warn His people (Exodus 3:15; Psalm 105:26; Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 6:8; Jeremiah 25:4; Matthew 11:13; Luke 11:49, and so on). God warned His people because He wanted to save them from sin (2 Peter 3:9). The history of Israel and Judah in Bible times shows us God's love for His people. His love never ends. God continued to try to save His people. He promised to save them if they gave their hearts back to Him.

Sad to say, the people of Judah rejected God's promise to save them. The king and the leaders laughed at Jeremiah's warnings. They didn't respect God's message.

The king and the leaders laughed at God's words. For sure, we wouldn't do the same thing today, right? Or would we?



King Jehoiakim burned God's message. The king hoped that the fire would destroy God's warning forever.

PRETENDING TO BE RELIGIOUS (Matthew 23:30–35)

Do you sometimes look at the mistakes people made in the past and say, “I would never do that!” Maybe we don’t make the exact same mistakes these people made. But let’s be honest. We often behave the same way they did, right? Jesus warned us against this behavior in Matthew 7:5. He tells us to correct our bad behavior first. Then we can tell our friends about their mistakes.

Read Matthew 23:30–35. What is Jesus warning us against in these verses? Why is this warning so important?



When the leaders made the graves beautiful, they thought they showed everyone that they would never kill God’s messengers, the same as the leaders did in the past.

Jesus didn’t like the behavior of the Jewish leaders. Worse, they refused to change. The leaders were the same as graves filled with dead men’s bones (Matthew 23:27, 28). The Jewish leaders refused to confess their sins or to stop sinning, even when they knew they were wrong. Again and again, Jesus tried to save them.

When Jesus talked with the leaders, He often said they pretended to be religious. That’s why Jesus named them hypocrites (read Matthew 23:14, 15, 23, 25, 27). Hypocrites are people who pretend to be holy in public. But in private, they are living a lie.

For sure, the leaders’ behavior didn’t match their teachings. (Just look at what the leaders in the past did to God’s messengers.) The leaders in Jesus’ day decorated the graves of these Old Testament messengers. The leaders made their graves look beautiful. The leaders thought they were honoring God’s messengers for their faith. But the leaders didn’t follow the teachings of God’s messengers in their hearts. When the leaders made the graves beautiful, they thought they showed everyone that they would never kill God’s messengers, the same as the leaders did in the past. But at that very time what were the leaders in Jesus’ day planning to do? They were planning to kill Jesus! Jesus was not just any special messenger. He was the Savior.

The Jewish leaders in Jesus’ day behaved the same as very religious people in public. But their hearts were selfish and filled with hate. How can we make sure that we don’t behave the same as these Jewish leaders?

WARNINGS FOR US (1 Corinthians 10:6–12)

Many Old Testament stories are sad. Terrible things often happened in them. God gave us these stories for an important reason. God wants us to learn lessons from these stories about what happens when we fight against Him.

Why did God tell His Bible messengers to write what they wrote? Read 1 Corinthians 10:6–12 for the answer.

In these verses, Paul connects the past with the present. He connects ancient Israel with the modern church. Today, we are part of this church because we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior (Galatians 6:14–10).

Paul says we must learn from ancient Israel's history. We must learn from their experiences, both good and bad. God thought that these experiences were so important to us that He told His messengers to write about them. As Paul says, "We must learn from those things that happened to our ancestors. We must not want to do very bad things, like [the same as] they did" (1 Corinthians 10:6, EASY). The past often shows us what will happen in the future.

God wants us to understand that we don't need to make the same mistakes that our ancestors made. If we obey His messengers, we will have success (2 Chronicles 20:20). Many people believe that success is having a nice home, cars, clothes, and other stuff. For sure, God will take care of our needs. But God also wants us to have success in other ways (3 John 2). He wants us to have health and spiritual success. He wants us to win the fight against sin. We will have these things when we obey God's messages.

God always means what He says. When He speaks, His words are everlasting and powerful (Isaiah 40:8). His words do what God wants them to do. God gave us His messages to help us to meet Jesus. Paul says, "The things that happened to those people are examples. They were written to be warnings for us. We live in the time that all those past histories were pointing to [showing to us]" (1 Corinthians 10:11, ERV). If these words were important to follow back then, how much more should we follow them today?

Think about people in the Bible who fought against God or didn't believe His messages. What lessons do their stories teach you? How can their stories help you not to make their same mistakes?



Paul says we must learn from ancient Israel's experiences, both good and bad.

**ELLEN G. WHITE: GETTING GOD'S MESSAGES
AND GIVING THEM**

At times, many people saw what happened to Ellen White when God gave her a dream.

Arthur White was Ellen G. White's grandson. In the past, Arthur served as the manager for his grandmother's writings. Arthur believed that God gave his grandmother hundreds of dreams during her lifetime. Some dreams continued for a few minutes. Other dreams continued for many hours. At times, many people saw what happened to Ellen White when God gave her a dream. Some people were there who didn't believe Ellen White was God's messenger. God wanted them to watch what happened to her when He gave her a dream.

In 1868, James White wrote about what happened to his wife when God gave her a special message: "She didn't know what was happening around her." She didn't breathe. Her muscles became stiff. But when she moved a part of her body, she moved it easily. Her eyes were wide open. When the dream ended, she was blind for a little while. But nothing was wrong with her eyes. No one controlled when her dreams happened or how long they continued. Even Ellen White herself didn't know how long the dream would be. (Read James White, *Life Incidents*, pages 271–274.)

As in Bible times, some people accepted the messages. Other people rejected them. Ellen White said, "God chose me to warn His people. . . . If they don't accept His advice, He will hold them responsible. . . . In the name and strength of my Savior, I will warn people. I shall give them His message and try to encourage them. I shall do whatever God's Spirit leads me to do. Maybe people will hear and obey. Or maybe they will not. My job is not to make myself happy. My job is to do what My Father in heaven wants me to do. He gave me my work."—*Testimonies for the Church*, volume 4, pages 231, 232, adapted.

Ellen White was very kind to people who didn't believe in her gift. She said that these people must be shown "love. We must be patient with them while they decide what to believe."—*Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 328, adapted. Ellen White believed that her messages were proof that her gift was from God. If people loved Bible truth, they would accept her gift. Ellen White trusted God to give these people understanding. She also wrote that God "gives us enough proof for our faith."—*Testimonies for the Church*, volume 4, page 231, adapted.

To discover more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/7>.

“GOD IS #1”: PART 2

Naum remembers well the day he learned that there would be a Seventh-day Adventist high school and college in his own country. Naum lived in what was Yugoslavia at the time.

Naum says, “A church leader came to visit my church. The leader told us about the school that was going to be opening in Maruševec. The news made us so happy!”

The school in Maruševec opened in 1969 with 45 students.

Naum says, “This school was a miracle! I was one of its first students. The teachers studied the book *Education*, by Ellen G. White. Our teachers gave us the best education!”

The government didn’t accept the school at the time. So, the students needed to pass all 17 government tests on different study topics at the end of every school year.

Naum says, “The tests were hard. But at the end of the fourth year, we scored better and higher grades than the students from the State schools! Everyone said we were the best school in what used to be the country of Yugoslavia.”

When Naum finished high school, he went to the university in the city of Zagreb. There, Naum studied French and Latin. When he finished his studies, Naum had two job offers: one from the government and one from the Seventh-day Adventist high school in Maruševec.

Naum met with the government leaders who offered him the job. Naum said, “You know I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I’ll go to church every Sabbath. So, why are you offering me a job?”

The leaders’ answer surprised Naum. They said, “We are offering you a job because you are honest. We need honest workers. There aren’t many honest workers in the government.”

Naum said, “Thank you. But I accepted a job at the school in Maruševec.”

For many years, Naum taught the students at Maruševec. He taught them French and Latin. He also taught them important Bible rules.

Naum says, “The first things I wanted my students to learn about were God and His plan to save them. After that, I taught them knowledge and how to live. We are living in hard times.”

In 2017, your 13th Sabbath Offering helped build a much-needed building at Maruševec Adventist School in Croatia. This quarter, your 13th Sabbath Offering will help build a new church in the capital city of Zagreb. This church will replace a very old, large church that earthquakes destroyed in 2020. The new church building will be a place of worship for members and a teaching center for the people in Zagreb. The building will include a classroom, a kitchen, and a large dining room. The church will serve the needs of the people in the community.

INSIDE
Story
by GINA WAHLEN



“We are offering you a job because you are honest.”

Explaining God's Special Messages



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 14

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Matthew 5:17–48; Isaiah 65:17–20; 1 Corinthians 16:20; Genesis 3:1–5; Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 10:25–28; Luke 4:16–30; Luke 24:25–27, 44–49.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus then began to explain to them what Moses and all God’s prophets [messengers] had taught. He [Jesus] showed them what they wrote in the Bible about himself” (Luke 24:27, EASY).



Jesus helped His two followers correctly understand these special messages.

AFTER JESUS WOKE UP FROM THE DEAD, He appeared to two of His followers. They were sad because they didn’t expect Jesus to die. They said, “ ‘But before that we had hoped that he would save the people of Israel. We hoped that he would make us free again’ ” (Luke 24:21, EASY). The followers expected the Messiah to come save the Jews from the Romans. Their ideas came from a false understanding of special messages about the Savior in the Old Testament.

Jesus helped His two followers correctly understand these special messages. He also explained to them other Bible truth about Himself (Luke 24:25–27). Jesus’ explanation of the Old Testament helped them understand. They got excited when they finally understood these Bible truths about Jesus (Luke 24:31, 32). Later, Jesus appeared to a big group of His followers in Jerusalem. Jesus helped them to understand the special messages about Himself, too (Luke 24:45; also read Luke 24:33, 36, 44–49).

These experiences teach us why we must have a correct understanding of Bible truth. A false understanding can cause spiritual disaster in our lives.

THE BIBLE EXPLAINS ITSELF (Matthew 5:17–48)

How we explain the Bible depends on what we believe about it. Some people think the Bible is a collection of old writings. They don't think these writings agree. Other people believe that "everything that is written in the Bible comes from God's Spirit. It helps us in many ways. The Bible teaches us what is true. It warns us when we are doing wrong things. It shows us what is right. It teaches us how to live good lives" (2 Timothy 3:16, EASY).

Read Matthew 5:17–48. How did Jesus explain the Old Testament teachings in these verses?

Some people may think that Jesus was replacing the Old Testament teachings with new ones. But if we read the verses carefully, we see that Jesus helps us understand the Old Testament teachings more fully. Jesus does what Jeremiah promised the Savior would do (Jeremiah 31:31–33). Jesus puts God's law in the minds and hearts of His people (compare with Hebrews 8:8–10; Hebrews 10:16).

Sometimes the Bible explains a dream or message right away. In Daniel 2, we read about the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had (Daniel 2:31–35). Then we read Daniel's explanation of the dream (Daniel 2:36–45). Also, in Matthew 13, we read the picture story about the farmer (Matthew 13:1–9). Then Jesus explains that picture-story in Matthew 13:18–23).

Sometimes God gave a message about something many years before it happened. Later, another messenger explained the message. We see that happen in 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23. In these verses, we learn that God kept His promise about the 70 years, just as Jeremiah said He would (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; Jeremiah 29:10). In the same way, a lot of Old Testament symbols show us the things Jesus came to do. The messengers in the New Testament explain these symbols.

"The Old Testament uses symbols to show us God's promises about Jesus. The New Testament shows us how God kept these promises. Both testaments are important."—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 104, adapted.

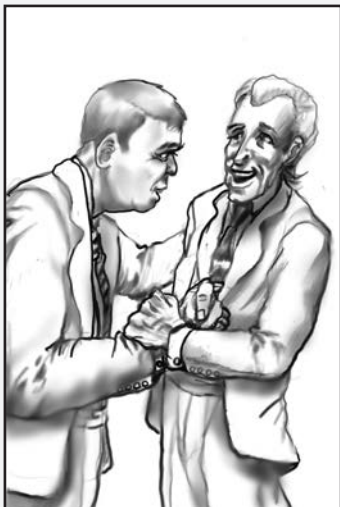
Do you believe that the Bible is God's Written Word? Why is your answer so important when you are studying the Bible? Why must we trust that the Bible is God's Word?



In Daniel 2, we read about the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had (Daniel 2:31-35). Then we read Daniel's explanation of the dream (Daniel 2:36-45).

HOW HISTORY HELPS US UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE (Isaiah 65:17–20)

In Isaiah 65:17–20, we read about the new heavens and earth. What does Isaiah mean when he says that “the child will die one hundred years old” there (Isaiah 65:20, WEB)?



**Paul helps us
to understand that
Christians must greet
each other warmly.**

Is Isaiah really saying that there will be death and sinners in heaven and on the new earth? Of course not! This idea goes against the promise in Isaiah that God will wake up His people from the dead (Isaiah 26:19). This idea also goes against the promise that there won't be any more death or sorrow (Isaiah 25:8; Isaiah 65:19).

So, then, how should we understand Isaiah 65:20? First, we must understand that Isaiah is using symbols. When did you see a 100-year-old child? Never, right? Second, Isaiah also uses the beautiful language of poems to help us understand the blessings God will give Israel. But Israel must obey God to get these blessings (compare with Deuteronomy 28). Isaiah does the same thing that Jesus does in Matthew 24. Jesus connected things that were happening in His day with things that would happen later. In Isaiah 65:17–20, Isaiah explains that the things happening in his time showed the things that will happen in the new heavens and new earth.

In the book of Isaiah, the new life is not something that happens only in the future. Isaiah 65:20 announces that God is already destroying death. God makes us new, right here and now. He saves us and forgives us. God also promises us long life and no more death (Isaiah 65:20). These promises show us the wonderful things to come.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:20. What does Paul say to do in this verse? How do we follow this advice today?

In New Testament times, close friends and family greeted each other with a kiss. Paul tells Christians to greet each other this way, too (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; and 1 Thessalonians 5:26). Paul helps us to understand that Christians must greet each other warmly. They must make each other feel welcome and part of the family of God. In some countries today, kissing is not an accepted greeting. But a handshake, a hug, or a bow would be fine. The important idea is that Paul wants us to make church members feel accepted and loved whenever we meet and get together.

**THE WORDS AROUND A WORD OR BIBLE VERSE
(Genesis 3:1–5)**

Preachers tell the story about a man who suffered deeply. The man wanted to know God's plan for his life. So, the man opened his Bible and put his finger on a verse. He read: "So Judas took the money and he threw it down on the floor in the temple. Then he went away. He hung himself from a rope so that he died" (Matthew 27:5, EASY). The sad man was surprised. Did God really want him to hang himself? The man opened the Bible again to be sure. He then read, "Jesus said to him, 'Then go and do the same thing he did!'" (Luke 10:37, ICB). For sure, both verses are Bible truth, but they are talking about separate things. We need to understand the stories and chapters connected to the verses we are studying. Then we can better understand the real meaning of those verses.

Many people don't understand the Bible because they do what the very sad man did. They try to understand a verse without carefully studying the words around it. If we don't study those words, we can't understand the Bible correctly.

Read Satan's words in Genesis 3:1–5 and Matthew 4:1–11. How did Satan give God's words a wrong meaning?

Some people teach false ideas about the Bible because they really don't know any better. Other people know Bible truth. But they teach false ideas, the same as Satan did. In the Garden of Eden, Satan came to Eve as a beautiful talking snake! (Compare Genesis 3:1–5 with Revelation 12:9.) Satan gave God's words a false meaning.

When the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13), "Satan came to trick Jesus. Satan pretended to be an angel from heaven."—Ellen G. White, in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 18, 1888, adapted. In Satan's conversation with Jesus, Satan changed the meaning of God's words in Psalm 91:11, 12. Satan told Jesus that God would protect people who put their own lives in danger. As we can see, Satan tried to make these verses say something that God didn't promise.

If we want to understand a word or a verse, we must first try to understand the verses around it. We also must try to understand the story or chapter it comes from. Why is this advice so important?



In Satan's conversation with Jesus, Satan changed the meaning of God's words in Psalm 91:11, 12.

THE MEANING OF THE VERSE (Luke 10:25–28)



The Bible is the same as an endless treasure. It always has something new to teach us.

Every Christian should understand the Bible. The Bible is plain and simple enough so that each person can understand God's plan to save us. At the same time, the Bible is deep enough to interest the minds of the most intelligent people. The Bible is the same as an endless treasure. It always has something new to teach us.

Read the story about Jesus and the lawyer in Luke 10:25–28. Some people say that the Bible doesn't need to be explained. If that is so, why does Jesus ask the lawyer, "What is written in the law? What do you understand from it?" (Luke 10:26, ERV).

If we want to understand a verse, we should first try to understand what the words in the verse mean. Then we should try to understand how the words are used. What can we learn from ancient history to help us understand the verse? What symbols does the writer use, if any? The understanding we come to should agree with accepted Bible truth. When we compare different verses about the same idea or story, we will better understand the Bible. An easy way to learn how to do that is to compare the Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament.

Compare Matthew 5:43–48 with Luke 6:27–36. How do these verses help us better understand the meaning of the word "perfect" (ERV) in Matthew 5:48?

If we want to understand the Bible, we must empty our hearts of all pride. We also must study the Bible very carefully. Remember, no one owns truth. We all need the Holy Spirit's help to understand it. We always should try to come to a correct understanding of Bible truth. To do that, follow this important rule: start your study with what you understand. Then build from that. Over time, this study plan will help us understand things that might not be so easy right now. Until we get to heaven, we will always have questions about the Bible that we can't answer.

Think of a time when you were bothered by something you didn't understand. Later, you got an explanation that helped. How can that experience help you trust God with the things in the Bible that, for now, you don't understand?

EXPLAINING THE BIBLE (Luke 4:16–30)

When we study the Bible, we should pray for two things: (1) personal spiritual growth and (2) the Holy Spirit's help to lead other people to Jesus. Jesus said that a real Christian lives under the control of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises us that the Holy Spirit “will help you to understand everything that is true” (John 16:13, EASY). Jesus also said, “Man must not live only on bread. He must also live on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, NIV). Jesus' followers also honor His command to teach other people “to obey everything that I have taught you” (Matthew 28:20, EASY).

Read Luke 4:16–30 and Luke 24:25–27, 44–49. What do these verses teach about how Jesus explained the Bible?

Jesus was, is, and always will be “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6, ERV). Jesus' teachings came from the Bible. Mark 1:14, 15 is an example. Mark writes, “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee. He preached the good news of [about] God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near’” (NIV). What time is Jesus talking about? Jesus is talking about the time in Daniel 9:24–27. In the sermon on the mountain (Matthew 5–7), Jesus uses quotes from Exodus 20:13, 14 (Matthew 5:21, 27). In Luke 4, Jesus uses quotes from Isaiah 61:1, 2. So, we see that Jesus preaches Bible truth.

In another example, Acts 8 says that a man from Ethiopia traveled “home from Jerusalem. He had been there to worship God” (Acts 8:27, EASY). This information tells us the man knew about the Jewish religion. He even owned a copy of Isaiah's book. The man read it on his way home. But he didn't understand the message about the suffering Savior. The man needed Philip to explain it to him.

This experience teaches us important lessons. First, just because we read a chapter doesn't mean we will always understand it. Second, we can learn from each other. Third, we must share what we know with others. Philip's knowledge about the Bible helped the Ethiopian man get baptized (Acts 8:35–39; compare with Psalm 51:12). Our understanding about the Bible can help people accept Jesus, too (John 17:17).

At times, we may need help understanding the Bible. But why must we know for ourselves what we believe?



Philip's knowledge about the Bible helped the Ethiopian man get baptized (Acts 8:35–39; compare with Psalm 51:12).

READING THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

How should we read and understand the writings of Ellen G. White? Here are a few rules to help us:

First, start with prayer. Don't read her work with a spirit of doubt. How we think or feel has the power to change what we read, see, or hear. So, the Holy Spirit must control our thinking. As Ellen White said, "If you study the Bible to find proof for your own ideas, you will never learn Bible truth. Study the Bible to learn what the Lord says."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 112, adapted.

Second, make sure you understand fully what you read. Don't take a sentence or part of a paragraph by itself and try to understand it without studying the paragraph or whole chapter it came from. Ellen White wrote, "We must understand when and where something was written. Time and place are important."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, page 57, adapted. Sad to say, some people don't take the time to understand this rule when they read the writings of Ellen White. This problem has caused no end of trouble for some church members.

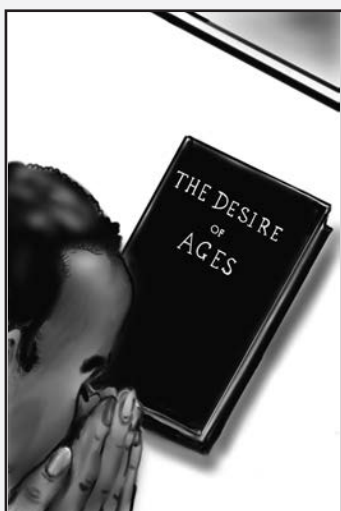
Third, ask yourself: "What important Bible truth or rule does she talk about in the work I am reading?" Here's an example: in 1894, Ellen White wrote to church members in Battle Creek, Michigan. She told them not to buy bicycles (read *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 8, pages 50–53). Ellen White wanted church members to follow an important Bible rule. She wanted them to be good managers of their money. (Back then, bicycles were very expensive.)

Fourth, study everything Ellen White wrote on a topic. Some things she wrote are hard to understand. Her teachings will help you understand her more difficult ideas.

Finally, many people say that Ellen White said things she never said. So, make sure that she really said it. What is the best way to do that? Look for the name of the book that an Ellen White quote comes from. Make sure the quote is really from there. When you see that it is, then you may use the rules above to study and understand her words.

God gave us a wonderful gift in the writings of Ellen G. White. We must follow the above rules to read her writings wisely. Her writings are a blessing to millions of people worldwide. So, we must not use them in the wrong way.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/8>.



How should we read and understand the writings of Ellen G. White?
First, start with prayer.

LIGHTING THE FLAME

At the end of the 1800s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church suffered hard times. Many of the church's first Bible workers died. Members fought with each other about Bible truths. Buildings burned down. At the same time, new leaders started to serve. One of these leaders was Elmer Ellsworth Andross.

Andross was born in 1868, in Minnesota. Andross wanted to work for the government. He wanted to make a lot of money and be famous, too. So, he chose to become a lawyer. But then his plans changed. He became a Bible worker. He accepted an invitation in 1899 to share the Seventh-day Adventist message in England. The Foreign Mission Group couldn't promise to support Andross. But Andross and his wife, Sophie, decided to trust God. The Androsses arrived in Liverpool, England, full of hope.

In Liverpool, Andross helped start a new church of about 40 members. In the spring of 1900, Andross preached in the Midlands. Soon after, he preached in Birmingham. At the end of July, the church had 16 new Sabbath keepers. More people were interested in joining the church. In October, Andross was filled with joy. He said, "About 30 people promised to keep the Sabbath. . . . I never saw people who enjoyed Bible truth more! For sure, God's angels went before us and touched people's hearts. The angels got them ready to accept our message."

In 1902, Andross became the president of a group of churches in North England. Under Andross's leadership, the members in North England nearly doubled. The number of churches grew from six to 17.

In 1905, Andross became the president of the British Union. As president, Andross helped the church save a lot of money. Andross announced that soon the church wouldn't need money from the General Conference anymore. Andross started the Stanborough Park headquarters in 1907. He also helped start the church's work in printing, education, and health work. Andross was president of the British Union for three years. During this time, church membership grew 42%. The number of churches also grew, from 31 to 52 churches.

In 1908, sickness forced Andross and his family to go back to the United States. But Andross's work in England continued to grow. Elmer E. Andross was more than a church leader. He was a Bible worker with a pastor's heart. His years in England show how one man's faith can change history. Because of Andross, the Seventh-day Adventist message became the same as a bright flame. This flame continues to shine to this day.

This story is adapted from the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists, available at encyclopedia.adventist.org.

INSIDE Story



**"For sure, God's angels
went before us and
touched people's hearts."**

Testing God's Messengers



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 21

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Daniel 10:7–19; Isaiah 8:20; John 3:16; Matthew 7:20; Jeremiah 28:9, 15–17; Psalm 34:8.

MEMORY VERSE: “My friends, do not believe everyone who says that they speak God’s message. There are many false prophets [messengers] who are [traveling] around everywhere. They say that they have a message from God’s Spirit, but the message comes from a false spirit. So check each message carefully to see if it is really from God” (1 John 4:1, EASY).



How can you know if a diamond is fake or real? The best way is to test it.

A REAL DIAMOND is one of the most precious stones on earth. Many other things can be made to look the same as diamonds. But they are fakes. So how can you know if a diamond is fake or real? The best way is to test it. Some tests can be done at home with a few simple tools. Other tests must be done in a lab or a jewelry shop. If a diamond passes several tests, you can be sure that the diamond is real.

A diamond is one of the strongest materials on earth. Part of a diamond’s strength is that it can stand very high temperatures and temperature changes. To test a diamond, you can heat it with a lighter, then drop it into cold water. A real diamond will not be destroyed. A fake diamond will break!

God’s gift of special messages is worth more than any diamond. If someone says he has this special gift, we can’t simply take his word for it. We must test his messages. This week, we will look at Bible messengers to understand the rules we must use to test their gifts.

MIRACLES AND SIGNS (Daniel 10:7–19)

When God's people left Egypt, the Lord talked to His people about messengers. The Lord said, " 'You will have prophets [messengers]. I, the LORD, will let them learn about me through [in] visions. I will speak to them in dreams' " (Numbers 12:6, ERV).

God often uses miracles and special signs to show that someone is His messenger. Messengers get their messages straight from God. Often God sends them His messages in visions or dreams (Daniel 8:1; Isaiah 1:1; Acts 9:10; and so on). God may send miracles with these dreams as proof that they come from Him.

Read Daniel 10:7–19. Make a list of some of the miracles that happened when God appeared to Daniel?

Daniel lost his strength when God appeared to him. Then he needed to depend on God during the rest of the experience. People were with Daniel who didn't see God appear or hear the message that God gave Daniel. But the experience with God was so powerful that they were afraid. So, they ran away and hid. God uses miracles to show people that He chose someone to be His messenger. The miracles help bring God's messages to people's attention.

What does Deuteronomy 13:1–5 teach us about the gift of special messages?

Miracles, signs, and wonders show that someone is at work who is more powerful than any human. That doesn't mean that the miracles are always from God. Satan also can work miracles. So, miracles alone are not proof that someone is a messenger from God. Also, more than one miracle or sign is needed. Messengers must be tested, too. Miracles are not a test of the real gift of special messages. A person must pass all tests in the Bible before we can accept him as a real messenger from God. Sad to say, history is filled with many false messengers (read Matthew 7:15).

In some countries, miracles and signs happen more often than in other places on earth. Why must we be careful when we are trying to decide if something is really from God or not?



Daniel lost his strength when God appeared to him. Then he needed to depend on God during the rest of the experience.

AGREEMENT WITH THE BIBLE (Isaiah 8:20)

People may lie. But God does not lie (read Numbers 23:19). The messages God gives His messengers also will show that God always tells the truth. God's truth will be seen in the messages He gives.

Read Isaiah 8:20. What important rule is God giving us in this verse?



The new messengers don't disagree with the basic rules or ideas that God already gave in the Bible.

The Bible is always the final test for anyone who says he is a messenger. How do we test a messenger? We must compare what he says with what the Bible says. A real messenger from God will never go against Bible truth. That is why we must know the Bible if we want to follow the Lord. Then false teachers and false messengers cannot trick us.

In the Old and New Testaments, many messengers honored the writings of messengers who lived before they did. These new messengers give us more light about the writings from the past. But the new messengers don't disagree with the basic rules or ideas that God already gave in the Bible.

What do 2 Peter 1:19–21; Romans 15:4; and James 1:17 teach us about God and the messages He gives us in the Bible?

The Old Testament helps us understand God's plan to save sinners. The first special message that God gave us shows us this Bible truth (Genesis 3:15). The Old Testament offerings also show us God's plan to save us. Later, God gave His messengers more Bible truth about how Jesus was God's offering for sin. God gave His messengers more information about how Jesus would come to this earth as a baby. Jesus would live as a man. He would die for sinners. The Bible shows us that God gives His people more truth when they are ready to understand it. Their understanding of Bible truth grows with every age. A later group of God's people often will have more understanding about God's truth than His people who lived in the past.

But we must remember one important rule. We cannot say this rule enough: new Bible truths will **always** agree with the truth that God already gave to us.

WHEN JESUS WAS BORN AS A BABY (John 3:16)

What if someone says he is a messenger but doesn't believe in Jesus? Then this person is a false messenger. That includes messengers who are part of other religions. As John tells us, "How do you know whether a person has God's Spirit in him? He must agree that Jesus is God's Messiah [Savior] who was born as a human baby. If someone says that, then he has God's Spirit. But if someone does not agree to say that about Jesus, he does not have God's Spirit" (1 John 4:2, 3, EASY).

When John wrote these verses, he was talking about false teachers. These teachers said Jesus wasn't human. He only looked human. Yes, John is saying a messenger should agree that Jesus was a real person who lived on earth. (Most Christians agree.) But John's test does more than that. John's test helps solve a very real problem. This test is as important for our time as it was for John's.

What do the following verses tell us about Jesus? John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 11:25; Hebrews 4:14, 15; John 14:1–3.

Real messengers must believe that Jesus was God. They must also believe that He was a real human being. They must believe that Jesus came to this earth and lived a life without sin. He died for our sins on the cross. He woke up from the dead. He now works for us in heaven. Real messengers also must believe that Jesus is coming again. At the same time, real messengers must do more than agree that Jesus lived on earth. Jesus must be the most important part of their teachings. A real messenger will help people to have a saving relationship with Jesus.

The Bible helps us to see the sin in our hearts and get rid of it. Then Jesus can live in us. God's gift of special messages always brings us close to Him.

A real messenger won't try to get a group of people to follow him and his teachings. A real messenger won't brag about himself (Acts 4:12). God's true messengers will be ready to serve Him. They won't do anything to hurt the people that God sent them to help.

Jesus is fully God and fully human. He died for our sins. Why is this belief so important to our faith? What do we lose if we throw out this teaching?



A real messenger will help people to have a saving relationship with Jesus.

HOW WE LIVE TELLS PEOPLE WHO WE ARE (Matthew 7:20)



Many messengers had hard lives. Moses led the children of Israel through the desert (Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

“ ‘In the same way, look at the way people live. Then you will know what they are really like [who they really are]’ ” (Matthew 7:20, EASY).

Jesus said the words above in His sermon on the mountain (Matthew 5–7). In this sermon Jesus talked about the basic rules and teachings for the Christian church. Part of the work for the church included the work that God’s special messengers would do. That’s why Jesus warned against false messengers in the church.

We must have enough time to know who someone really is. When we see how a messenger lives his life, we can see if he is really from God or not. Is he bringing people close to Jesus? Or is he leading people away from Him?

Read Jonah 1:1–3; Acts 15:36–39; and Galatians 2:11–14. What do these verses teach us about messengers?

Just because someone is a messenger doesn’t mean he is without sin. Just look at Jonah, Paul, or even Peter. They made mistakes. Only God is perfect. But His messengers never are. Messengers at times behave badly. They are sometimes weak in faith. But for the most part, their lives must show that they are walking with God.

A real messenger lives Bible truth. He builds up God’s kingdom (Matthew 7:16–20). What if someone says he is God’s messenger, but his life doesn’t match his message? Then we should not trust this person.

Many messengers had hard lives. Moses led the children of Israel through the desert (Deuteronomy 34:10–12). Haggai helped the people in Judah to start building the second temple again after 19 years (Haggai 1:12). Isaiah served four kings during a difficult time (Isaiah 39:5, 6; Isaiah 53:4–6). We also must remember Daniel (Daniel 9:15) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 9:1). God’s messengers always showed love for God and His people, even when the people were mean to them. Their love was proof that God was with them.

How often do people disappoint you with their behavior? What lesson can you learn from that experience?

WHEN THE MESSAGE HAPPENS (Jeremiah 28:9, 15–17)

People often think that a messenger is someone who tells about what will happen in the future. For sure, God's messengers do that. But that's only one part of a messenger's work. A messenger's work includes so much more. Messengers help people to come back to the Bible. Messengers give advice, warnings, and encouragement.

Messengers help people know and get ready for the future. Why else do messengers tell us what will happen in the future? Read Jeremiah 28:9, 15–17 for the answer.

We can test a messenger with this simple test: Do the things happen that he says will happen? When a messenger says that something will happen, then it should happen. As the Lord told Moses: “ ‘A prophet may say that he speaks with my authority [in My name], and he may say what will happen. But if it does not happen, you will know that his message has not come from me. He has not spoken my message. That prophet has spoken his own ideas. So do not be afraid of him!’ ” (Deuteronomy 18:22, EASY). This test can be hard to do because some messages may not happen if the people do what God asks.

We see this important rule in the story of Jonah. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh, “ ‘After 40 more days, God will destroy Nineveh’ ” (Jonah 3:4, EASY). But Nineveh was not destroyed. Why?

Read Jeremiah 18:7–10. What do these verses teach us about special messages?

What happens often depends on the choice that God's people make when they hear His warnings. If the people change their behavior, the punishment may not happen. The people of Nineveh obeyed Jonah's warning. They changed their lives. So, God did not destroy them (Jonah 3:10). Later, the future children of these Ninevites forgot about Jonah's warning. Nineveh again became an evil city. So, God destroyed it. God knows the future. But we don't. Our future happiness depends on the choices we make now.

Why is it important to understand that God's punishments depend on what we do when we hear His warnings? How can this rule help us better understand Bible truth?



The people of Nineveh obeyed Jonah's warning. They changed their lives. So, God did not destroy them (Jonah 3:10).

**GIVE THE LORD A CHANCE TO SHOW YOU
HOW GOOD HE IS!**

During more than one experience, Ellen White showed she had strength that was more than human.

Some Seventh-day Adventists accept Ellen G. White's gift. Other Seventh-day Adventists question it. God's people often felt the same way about His messengers in Bible times. God gave Ellen White her first vision in December 1844. At that time, some people doubted if she was a real messenger from God. Their questions helped Adventists to come up with reasons for their support of Ellen White's special gift.

First, the Adventists showed from the Bible that the gift of special messages would be in the church until the end-times. The Bible supports this idea. (Read Joel 2 and Revelation 12:17.) These and other verses promise that the gift of special messages will be a sign of God's end-time people. (Read Gerhard Pfandl, "The Gift of Prophecy and God's Remnant Church," *The Gift of Prophecy*, chapter 4.)

Second, the first Adventists saw that Ellen White's gift changed people's lives for the better. Her ideas helped them to work together in peace and love during the Sabbath meetings in the late 1840s. At this time, many of the Adventists didn't agree on Bible teachings. Ellen White's gift helped them to agree on Bible truth. Today, her writings continue to help the Seventh-day Adventist community of faith to work together in peace and love.

Third, God did many miracles when He sent His messages to Ellen White. During these public experiences, Ellen White shared information about things she had no way of knowing anything about. She told people what would happen in the future. During more than one experience, she showed she had strength that was more than human.

Today, Seventh-day Adventists continue to use these reasons to support their belief in Ellen White's gift. A powerful proof of Ellen White's gift is our personal experience with her writings. As a writer of the Psalms said, "Give the LORD a chance to show you how good he is" (Psalm 34:8, ERV). We must prayerfully read Ellen White's writings. Then we can test her messages to see if she really is God's messenger.

Start with her small but most popular book, *Steps to Christ*. Then read the *Conflict of the Ages* books. This set of books shows the war between good and evil, from the books of Genesis to Revelation.

To discover more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/9>.

FINALLY, I BECAME A BIBLE WORKER!

When I was 16, I wanted to volunteer as a Bible worker. I was excited at the idea of serving overseas. But I was too young at the time. So, I needed to wait for a few years. I had fun looking at the volunteer jobs on the Adventist Volunteers Services (AVS) website anyway. I used to imagine myself teaching overseas as a Bible worker.

When I started university, I forgot all about being a Bible worker. I thought about what I would do when I finished school. Being a Bible worker wasn't on my list of things to do any longer. But in my final year of school, I took a break. I went as a Bible worker to India for a month. I had a wonderful experience. But I wasn't convinced that being a full-time Bible worker was part of God's plan for my life.

When I was 22, I started to look for work. The perfect job for me would give me enough free time to do Bible work. I wanted to serve God in my community. As I thought about this idea more, I knew I really wanted to be a Bible worker. So, I started looking for a teaching job on the AVS website. I got accepted to be a teacher at Malang Adventist Academy.

I left Manchester, England, for Indonesia just one day after my 23rd birthday. No question, this teaching job is the best 'gift' I ever gave myself!

My time in Indonesia was hard but in the best of ways. Being at Malang Adventist Academy was the best year of my life.

The school welcomes students from all faiths and churches. The school is really making the lives of their students better. One of my students was a Sunday keeper. He is now a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of his experience at school. I was happy when another student signed up for a Pathfinder camping trip. This student was Muslim. He knew that we would worship Jesus during our trip. He came to our meetings anyway and enjoyed them all! I enjoyed helping my students grow strong in faith. I shared my story with them about Jesus. I led Bible meetings. I encouraged my students to pray.

During my time at Malang, I learned so much about myself and God. I am grateful for my fellow teachers and the church community. Everyone was loving and caring from the start. Malang always will feel the same as a second home to me.

Are you, too, interested in Bible work? If yes, please check out the volunteer jobs on AVS. The class "Preparation [getting ready] for Mission [Bible work]" is an excellent class to take. This class will help you get ready to be a Bible worker.

This story is adapted from the TED News website, <https://ted.adventist.org/news/a-missionary-at-last/>.

INSIDE
Story

by GRACE NKESHIMANA



No question, this teaching job is the best 'gift' I ever gave myself!

Permission to Talk for God



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 28

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Exodus 2:11–15; Matthew 21:23–27; Jeremiah 38:1–4; Acts 6:1–7; 1 Chronicles 29:29.

MEMORY VERSE: “So be careful! God’s message to us is alive and powerful. It is like [the same as] a sword that has two sharp edges. Even more than a sword, God’s message goes very deep into us. It cuts between our soul and our spirit. It is like a sharp knife that can cut deep into our body between our bones. God’s message shows what we are really thinking. It shows what we really want” (Hebrews 4:12, **EASY**).



On November 9, 1989, Günter Schabowski said something on live TV in East Germany that started the fall of the Berlin Wall.

ON NOVEMBER 9, 1989, Günter Schabowski said something on live TV in East Germany that started the fall of the Berlin Wall. Schabowski was the government spokesperson for East Germany’s press. Schabowski made a mistake during a press meeting on TV. He announced that East Germans would be allowed to visit Western Europe. When a reporter asked Schabowski when this change would happen, Schabowski said, “As far as I know, this change happens right away.” Minutes later, many East Germans came to the border and asked to cross into Europe, because of Schabowski’s announcement.

People often are chosen to speak for a company or a country. But what about those people who talk for God? This week, we will look at the power and permission that God’s messengers have. We will ask, “What power do messengers have who didn’t write a book of the Bible?” These messengers include Nathan, John the Baptist, and Ellen G. White.

PERMISSION TO TALK FOR GOD (Exodus 2:11–15)

Before you give a person permission to talk for you, you must choose someone you trust. This person must know what you believe and then communicate it.

How did Moses' time as a shepherd help him to be God's spokesperson? Read Exodus 2:11–15 and Exodus 3:1–3, 10–13 for the answer.

Moses spent the first 40 years of his life getting the best education that Egypt offered. But this learning didn't teach him to become God's messenger. Moses needed to spend the next 40 years of his life as a shepherd in the desert. In many ways, Moses had to undo much of the education he got as a prince in Egypt. Moses would be talking for God. So, before Moses could help God lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses needed to get to know God better.

Read the conversation between God and Moses in Exodus 4:10–16. What can this conversation teach us about how God chooses His messengers? How do His messengers work for Him?

Moses was God's spokesperson. Aaron spoke for Moses (Exodus 4:16; also read Exodus 7:1). God helped Moses and Aaron to decide the best way to share the message He gave them. God does the same thing with all His messengers.

Moses knew that he made mistakes in the past. Moses remembered his last meeting with his fellow Israelites. At that time, the Israelites did not believe Moses could help them. So, God understood Moses' worries and fears. God was patient with Moses. Moses made many excuses about why he wasn't the best person for the job. God removed all reasons for Moses' excuses. Finally, Moses' fears showed his doubt. He questioned God's choice in using him. So, God commanded Moses to stop making excuses and get to work (Exodus 3:14–17).

You may not be a special messenger. But what did God ask you to do for Him with your life? What is the best way to get ready for this work? Or, if you are already doing this work, what is the best way to continue doing it?



Moses would be talking for God. So, before Moses could help God lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses needed to get to know God better.

**JESUS HAD PERMISSION TO TALK FOR GOD
(Matthew 21:23–27)**

Did God give Jesus the power and permission to talk for Him? If yes, what was the proof? Read Matthew 21:23–27 and John 17:2 for the answers.



**Jesus woke up people
from the dead.**

While Jesus was teaching, the Jewish leaders asked Him a question. They wanted to know who gave Jesus the permission to speak for God. Jesus didn't go to any of the local schools for religion. None of the teachers trained Jesus. Jesus answered with a question about John the Baptist: Who gave John permission to speak for God? The Jewish leaders refused to answer. In doing so, they rejected God's power in the lives of both John and Jesus.

Read Matthew 7:28, 29; Mark 1:21–27; Luke 8:22–25; Luke 9:1; John 5:25–27; and John 7:38. What do these verses tell us about Jesus' power?

All power belongs to Jesus. He made humans (John 1:3). He is our Savior (Romans 3:24). Jesus also is the Word of God in a human body. Jesus had power from God to do His work on earth. Jesus' teaching surprised His audiences because He taught with power from God (Matthew 7:29).

The first four books of the New Testament talk about Jesus' power as God's messenger. Jesus forgave sins (Mark 2:10, 11). Jesus commanded demons to come out of people (Mark 3:15). Jesus knew what people were thinking (John 2:24, 25). Jesus woke up people from the dead. He offered the gift of everlasting life (John 10:28). While Jesus lived on earth, He used the power that God gave Him (John 17:22). Jesus depended on the Father and always worked together with Him (John 5:19). Jesus often used quotes from the Old Testament. Jesus said the Old Testament explained who He was. Jesus had all power in heaven and on earth. He could give power to His followers (Mark 6:7). Jesus gave power to His messengers to communicate His messages and talk for Him (Revelation 19:10).

Jesus gave so much proof that He was sent from God. But some people rejected Him anyway. How can we be careful not to make this same terrible mistake?

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD, THE BIBLE (Jeremiah 38:1–4)

God helped His messengers write the Bible. The Bible answers life's big questions. God shows us who He is in the Bible. The Bible teaches us the meaning of life. We learn from the Bible why we are here. The Bible also teaches us God's plan for our lives. The Bible shows us truth. Bible truth helps us to make the best choices in life. The Bible is the rule for our faith and behavior.

We can accept the Bible, or we can reject it. We don't need to burn our Bibles to reject Bible truth, as King Jehoiakim did (read Jeremiah 36:22–27). We may say we believe the Bible. But what if we don't follow it? Then we reject it. When we discover Bible truth and accept it, we can be changed, the same as King Josiah (read 2 Kings 22:10–13). Then we can help other people accept Jesus, too.

Today, people often make fun of the Bible. Or they look for mistakes when they read it. Some people don't think the Bible is important for their lives today. They think that Bible truth is old-fashioned and not up-to-date with accepted ideas and behavior. (For sure, the Bible often goes against these things. And it should!) Many people also laugh at Bible truth because it goes against science or popular teachings.

Sad to say, some Christians use the Bible to support personal beliefs that go against the Bible. Other people explain the Bible in a way that gives it no control or power over our lives. That is the same as rejecting it.

One of the easiest ways to reject the Bible is not to read the Bible or live its truth.

How did God's spoken message change people's lives? Read Jeremiah 38:1–4; John 3:1–10; and Acts 16:25–34 for the answer.

In Bible times, writing material was expensive. Many people couldn't read. So, the spoken message from God's messengers was very important.

Bible truth can touch the heart. With the Holy Spirit's help, God's truth can show us our sin. Bible truth can change our lives for the better and make us new. The Bible tells us to stop sinning and obey God (Acts 5:29; also read Hebrews 4:12). That's why many people reject the Bible. They don't want to give it any control over their lives.



**The Bible is the rule
for our faith and behavior.**

GOD'S MESSENGERS AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP (Acts 6:1–7)



**In times of war or trouble,
the messengers shared
God's advice
with His people.**

Hosea 12:13 says, “The LORD used a prophet [messenger] to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. He used a prophet to keep them safe in the wilderness [desert]” (EASY). As we see in this verse, part of the job of God’s messengers was to protect and lead God’s people.

If we read Judges 4:4–8; 2 Chronicles 20:14–17; Exodus 12:1–3; and Deuteronomy 1:9–16, we can see that God’s messengers showed His people His plan for leadership in their lives. In times of war or trouble, the messengers shared God’s advice with His people. Messengers also gave hope and encouragement to the people and their leaders. (Read the stories of Jehaziel and Deborah.) Messengers also gave advice to the leaders about worship and religious celebrations. At other times, the messenger helped the leaders make good decisions. God sent His messengers to help His people with advice for every part of their lives.

How did God’s messengers help the church in New Testament times? Read Acts 6:1–7; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 1 Corinthians 7:10–16; and Titus 1:5 for the answer.

When Jesus went back to heaven, He left His followers without a visible leader on earth. But Jesus told His followers what He wanted them to do: “ ‘Go everywhere in the world [earth]. Tell the Good News to everyone’ ” (Mark 16:15, ERV). Yes, Jesus chose the Twelve Apostles to lead His church before He went to heaven. Apostles were the leaders and teachers in the church. But there was nothing already in place to help the apostles get started. They needed help. So, God sent His messengers to them.

The New Testament church had many difficult experiences at first. How would they lead and guide the church? How would they share God’s message? How would they punish false teachings and sins in the church? God’s messengers helped answer these questions. The messengers helped keep the church safe (Acts 13:1, 2). The church couldn’t get started without God’s messengers. They helped the church move forward with its work for God.

Some people are against churches and church leadership. Why is good leadership important? Why is it important to be part of a church?

BIBLE MESSENGERS WHO DIDN'T WRITE ANY BOOKS OF THE BIBLE (1 Chronicles 29:29)

Read 1 Chronicles 29:29 and 2 Chronicles 9:29. What do you learn about some of the messengers in these verses?

There were many Bible messengers whose books didn't become part of the Bible. These messengers included Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, and Iddo.

Read 1 Kings 11:29–39 and Luke 7:28. What do these verses teach us about the power of messengers whose writings are not included in the Bible?

Why did God allow the writings of some messengers to be included in the Bible and not the writings of others? We don't know. What we do know is that the messengers whose writings were not included in the Bible were filled with the Holy Spirit. Their messages fully came from God. The Bible teaches us that the spiritual gifts will continue in the church until the end times. That includes the gift of special messages. The Bible says that there will be special messengers from God in the end times. Paul says, the Lord “gave all these gifts to help God's people to serve him in different ways” (Ephesians 4:12, EASY). Paul adds, “This work must continue until we are all joined together in what we believe and in what we know about the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13, ERV). For sure, the spiritual gifts will continue in the church until “the great [amazing] and terrible day of the LORD comes” (Joel 2:31, Nlrv).

After David slept with Bathsheba and then killed her husband, God sent Nathan to talk to him (2 Samuel 12:7–14). Nathan didn't write a book of the Bible. But David didn't question Nathan's word. Why? Because Nathan's message came from the Holy Spirit. Nathan respected Bible truth. Modern messengers will also respect it, too. Their messages must be tested with the Bible. Modern messages don't replace the Bible as the reason for our faith and teachings.

Ellen G. White wrote, “The Lord wants you to study your Bibles. He didn't give us any new light to replace His Written Word. The Bible will help people who are confused to understand His truth. The Bible gives us life, the same as food.”—Selected Messages, book 3, page 29, adapted. How well does the church follow this advice?



Modern messengers will also respect Bible truth, too. Their messages must be tested with the Bible.

THE POWER OF GOD'S MESSENGERS



In God's messages to Ellen White, we see the fight between good and evil. This fight started with Lucifer in heaven.

God's messengers speak for Him. Their messages have the power to change lives for the better. Some of these messengers wrote part of the Bible. Other messengers didn't write any part at all. Some messengers lived after the Bible was written. God gave all these men and women their messages. Their messages showed that God chose them.

Ellen G. White belongs to this last group of messengers who lived after Bible times. As Seventh-day Adventists, we do not include Ellen White's writings as part of the Bible. We do not say that her writings are the same as the Bible. At the same time, her writings help people. They tell us what God wants us to know. Ellen White wrote, "In the messages I give, I share with you what the Lord showed me. I don't write one article about my own ideas. I write only what God showed me in a vision. His messages are the same as precious light that shines from His throne."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, page 29, adapted.

Ellen White's writings always agree with Bible truth. She warns against sin. She tells us about our need for Jesus. Jesus is the only hope of everlasting life.

In God's messages to Ellen White, we see the fight between good and evil. This fight started with Lucifer in heaven. It will continue to the end-times. Then sin and evil, along with Satan and his angels, will be destroyed forever. Ellen White's writings help us understand what the Bible teaches about the end-times. She talks about the danger of joining the church with the government. She teaches us that religious freedom is important. She warns against sin and evil. She honors God's law. She helps us understand Bible truth about the mark of the beast.

Ellen White also talks about Christian living. Her messages have helped to change many lives for the better. These messages include topics about health, education, family relationships, being parents, and being holy.

Ellen White's writings are not in the Bible. But God uses her to help people who are living in the final days of earth's history. Her writings speak with power and meaning to our lives.

To discover more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/10>.

TO FINLAND WITH LOVE: THE WORK OF ELSA LUUKKANEN

Elsa Luukkanen was born on May 20, 1916, in Sortavala, Finland. Elsa grew up very poor. At 16, Elsa went to Seventh-day Adventist Bible study meetings. Then she was baptized. Because Elsa kept the Sabbath, she lost her home and her job for a time. But she kept her faith.

When Elsa was 17, she led her first person to Jesus. When she was 19, she started preaching.

A church member helped pay for Elsa to study at the Toivonlinna Adventist school. She worked as a Bible bookseller before she became a Bible worker. When World War 2 started, Elsa and another Bible worker named Aino held Bible meetings across Finland.

Many people came to Elsa's meetings. Her preaching touched hearts. Often, she sang and played the guitar. In Joensuu, the Seventh-day Adventist membership grew from five to 150 people in just two years. A new church started. Elsa helped to start more churches in other cities. One Bible worker said that Elsa was "filled with the Holy Spirit. Her sermons were powerful. Her sermons touched hearts and minds and brought people to God."

After the war, Elsa's work for God continued. In Helsinki in 1957, Elsa preached up to three times a day to big crowds. 80 people were baptized. Elsa worked so hard. So, church leaders asked her to take a break and rest. Elsa, along with Aino, went to North America for a vacation. They went to Finnish communities. There they preached and sang. They supported their Bible work with money they made from dressmaking. Elsa named her work "vacation preaching"!

Elsa went back to Finland. In the late 1960s, she started the Adventist Welfare Society (AWS). This center gave tens of thousands of blankets and clothes to poor people all across Eastern Europe. Elsa and Aino even collected offerings to sew clothes and build a new church and a new building for AWS in Kajaani. Elsa said, "I couldn't just preach. I had to help the children. I loved all the poor children in Finland as if I were their mother. They were the same as my children. I had to find homes for them." Elsa Luukkanen found and built homes for these children across Finland.

Elsa died in 1996. Over her lifetime, she led 700 people to Jesus. She helped start many churches. In 1975, Elsa was honored during the worldwide Women's Year celebration. She spent her whole life serving Jesus. She did not let war, hard times, or being poor stop her from her work.

This story is adapted from the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists, available at encyclopedia.adventist.org.

INSIDE Story



"I loved all the poor children in Finland as if I were their mother."

God's Messengers: Serving Him at Important Times in History



SABBATH—DECEMBER 5

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Hebrews 11:7; Judges 4:4–16; Judges 2:16–19; Isaiah 59:1–4; Revelation 1:1–3.

MEMORY VERSE: “Before the Lord God decides to send trouble, he first tells his prophets [messengers] about it” (Amos 3:7, EASY).



Since Adam and Eve sinned, our hearts want to do evil.

SINCE ADAM AND EVE SINNED, our hearts want to do evil. Without Jesus' help, we would choose sin and pleasure over everlasting life. God knows this sad truth about us. But He loves us anyway. He works to save us from ourselves.

That's why the Lord sends His messengers to help His people at important times in history. Sad to say, God's people rejected His offer of help again and again. So, God sent them warnings that He would punish them.

God always communicates His plans to His messengers before He acts or does anything (Amos 3:7). If people confess their sins, God is ready to forgive.

God continues to communicate with us in the same way today. Just as God had messages for His people in the past, He has messages for us today.

In this week's lesson, we will look at important times in Bible history when God used His messengers to share His plans with His church and with other people worldwide. We also will talk about the work of Ellen G. White. We will look at how she served God at important times in the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A WARNING ABOUT COMING DISASTER (Hebrews 11:7)

God wants to save us. Even after Adam and Eve sinned, God wanted to heal His relationship with them. After the Fall, the people on the earth followed God for a time (Genesis 4:26). But as time passed, very few people followed God. God's loyal followers praised Him for His love. They also warned the people around them about God's punishment for sin.

By Noah's time, the people on the earth were very evil. So, God chose to destroy them (Genesis 6:5–7). "Noah preached about the right way to live" (2 Peter 2:5, NIV). Noah warned everyone who would pay attention to him about the coming Flood. God told Noah to build a lifeboat (the ark) to save everyone who believed the warnings.

Read Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5; and Genesis 6:9. In what ways did Noah preach "about the right way to live" (2 Peter 2:5, NIV)?

The Flood was an important happening in human history. The Flood shows us what happens when evil controls the human heart. The Flood also shows us God's love and forgiveness. God punished sinners with the Flood. He saved everyone who accepted His invitation to enter the ark.

"The people on the earth were very evil. Methuselah, Noah, and many other people believed in God. They stood against the evil of their time. 120 years before the Flood, the Lord sent a holy angel to Noah. The angel told Noah to build a boat. The angel told Noah to preach, too. Noah must warn everyone that God would destroy evil people with a Flood. The people who believed the message must get ready for what was coming. They must stop sinning. They must change their lives for the better. They must ask God for forgiveness. Then God would save them."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 92, adapted.

God told Noah about the Flood and saved him and his family. God also made a promise with Noah and all living things on the earth. God promised never to destroy the earth again with water (Genesis 9:8–17). Every rainbow helps us remember this promise. The rainbow also gives us hope that God will save us.

Next time you see a rainbow, think about the promise God gave to Noah. Why should this promise give you hope?



God punished sinners with the Flood. He saved everyone who accepted His invitation to enter the ark.

A MOTHER IN ISRAEL (Judges 4:4–16)

After God led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, He gave them the land of Canaan. God promised to bless His people very much. But they must promise to obey His law. God warned the Israelites about breaking their promise. If they did, they would suffer and be destroyed (Deuteronomy 27–30). After Joshua died, the Israelites stopped following God. Soon the people from nearby countries started to fight against the Israelites and hurt them. The Israelites cried to God for help. God sent judges to His people to save them from their enemies (Judges 2:16). God also sent His messengers to encourage the Israelites to be loyal to God.

Read Judges 4:4–16 and Judges 5:1–5. What did Deborah do for Israel?

Deborah had an important part in Israel's history. Deborah shared God's message with Israel and Barak. Barak was the leader of Israel's army. Deborah gave Barak the signal to start the battle: "Then Deborah said to Barak, 'Get ready! This [today] is the day that the LORD will put Sisera under your power [control]! The LORD will lead you into battle!' " (Judges 4:14, EASY).

Deborah was an important leader in Israel. Her leadership and faith in God's promise to fight for Israel gave the people hope and the courage to fight. Barak was a skilled war commander. But his skill wasn't the thing that helped Israel win. At first, he was afraid to lead Israel's army. But then Deborah promised to go with him.

The story of Deborah and Barak teaches us an important lesson about success. Together, Deborah and Barak led Israel into battle. After they won, Deborah and Barak invited everyone to join them in praising God. That's what real leaders do when they win. They give God all the praise and honor for their success.

Deborah's work as God's messenger shows His love for us in times of suffering. When God gave Deborah the message for Barak, she didn't question how they would win. She didn't argue that the Israelites were too weak to win. Deborah believed God's promise and encouraged Barak to trust in Him, too.

How can we learn to trust God when things don't always look encouraging or fill us with hope?



Together, Deborah and Barak led Israel into battle.

COMING BACK TO GOD (JUDGES 2:16–19)

Read Judges 2:16–19. What is happening in these verses? What do the Israelites keep doing again and again?

Soon the time of the judges ended. Then Israel wanted a king (1 Samuel 8). God's people needed His messengers more than ever at this time. The messengers gave advice to the king, the leaders, and the people.

During King Ahab's time, Israel stopped following God and started worshiping the Baals (1 King 18:18). So, God sent Elijah with a special message: there would be no rain. But Ahab didn't stop worshiping false gods. He hunted for Elijah to kill him. But God kept Elijah safe (1 Kings 18:10–12). During the third year of the food shortage, Elijah went to talk to the king. Ahab blamed him because there was no rain (1 Kings 18:17).

Read Elijah's announcement to Israel. How did Israel answer? What happened? Read 1 Kings 18:21, 38, 39 for the answers.

Fire came down from heaven. Elijah's powerful message touched the hearts of the people. Both the fire and the message helped the people to come back to God. Today, we live in communities that don't honor God as their Savior. The people in these communities are the same as the Israelites. They don't want to give their lives fully to the Lord. Many of us often want to make ourselves happy and not God.

God warns us that living to make ourselves happy will cause pain and suffering to us and other people. This self-ish wish to live for ourselves will end in death. So, we must obey God and follow His voice. Then God will keep this promise to us in Isaiah 58:11:

"The Lord will always lead you.

He will satisfy your needs in dry lands.

He will give strength to your bones.

You will be like [the same as] a garden that has much water.

You will be like [the same as] a spring that never runs dry" (ICB).

As sinners, we have a natural wish to do things that are wrong and evil. What choices do we need to make to help us not give in to the evil in our hearts?



Fire came down from heaven. Elijah's powerful message touched the hearts of the people.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE (Isaiah 59:1–4)

“The LORD sent his servants many times to warn his people. He wanted to be kind to them. He wanted to keep his temple safe” (2 Chronicles 36:15, EASY).

God sent many messengers to His people after Elijah. The messengers warned, taught, and brought hope to God’s people. But the kingdoms of Israel and Judah sinned against God. God compared these kingdoms to Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:9, 10). God’s people were selfish, filled with pride, and worshiped false gods. They hurt their workers, widows, orphans, and the strangers who asked them for help. (Read Isaiah 58 to learn what God thought about Israel’s sins.) Finally, God punished Israel. The Assyrians carried the Israelites away from their land. Later, the Babylonians carried the people of Judah to Babylon (2 Kings 24, 25).

God punished His people but gave them encouragement, too. He sent them messengers, including Ezekiel and Daniel. These men gave God’s people hope for the future.

Read Isaiah 59:1–4 and Nehemiah 9:30. What helpful advice in these verses does God give to His people? How is this advice helpful to us today?



God kept trying to save the people and their leaders. Again and again, He sent His messengers to them with warnings.

When the kingdoms of Judah and Israel sinned, God didn’t judge them right away. He sent His messengers to warn them. The messengers told the people to confess their sins and come back to God. But the people and their leaders refused to obey. God kept trying to save them. Again and again, He sent His messengers to them with warnings.

Jesus said these words about the Jewish leaders: “‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets [God’s messengers] and kill with stones those men God sent to you. Many times I wanted to help your people! . . . But you did not let me’ ” (Matthew 23:37, ICB).

God never left His people without hope. Even when they were carried far away from home, God promised: “A Redeemer [Savior] will come to Zion. He will come to save Jacob’s people who turn away from [stop doing] their sins” (Isaiah 59:20, EASY).

Where would you be in life if God were not so patient and loving with you?

**MESSENGERS FOR THE WAITING TIME
(Revelation 1:1–3)**

What task did God give to John? Read Revelation 1:1–3 for the answer.

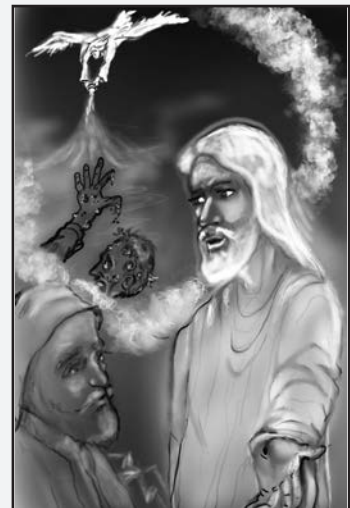
The first Christians hoped to see Jesus come back in their lifetime. John saw Jesus go up in the clouds. The angel explained that Jesus would come back the same way (Acts 1:10, 11). Jesus didn't come back right away. Then many Christians died. Now the church faced an important question. Yes, they believed Jesus would come back. But when?

While John was on Patmos Island, God talked with him about the Second Coming. John wrote, "Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, even those [people] who stabbed him. And all peoples of [on] the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this [promise] will happen! Amen" (Revelation 1:7, ICB). Jesus showed John the things that would happen in the end-times. God asked John to encourage and warn the seven churches in Asia Minor, too (Revelation 2, 3). John also warned that God would punish evil (Revelation 14:6–12). John wrote about the end of the earth (Revelation 20), the Second Coming (Revelation 14:14–16), and the new earth (Revelation 21, 22).

John wrote, "I am John. I am a believer [follower of Jesus], as you are. I am like [the same as] your brother and your friend. Because we belong to Jesus' kingdom, we are having trouble and pain. So we all need to be strong and patient, as Jesus helps us. The Roman leaders punished me because I taught God's message. I told people the true message about Jesus. That is why they sent me to Patmos island" (Revelation 1:9, EASY). For sure, John understood what it meant to suffer for his faith.

Jesus told John many times to write down what he saw. Jesus told John to share these things with the seven churches (Revelation 22:16). John is much the same as John the Baptist, who announced Jesus' first coming (John 1:6–8). Jesus wants us to tell other people about Him, too. We also must keep God's Words about Himself in our hearts. God gave these words to His messengers to give to us (Revelation 19:10). Maybe we aren't messengers. But we may work for God while we wait.

Think about all the Bible truth God gave us. What does God ask us to do with all this light?



Jesus showed John the things that would happen in the end-times.

THE POWER OF GOD'S END-TIME MESSENGER

God always sent His messengers to communicate with His people at important times in history. We also should expect that God will talk with His people in the end-times, too.

When Jesus didn't come back on October 22, 1844, the Millerites were disappointed. God chose Ellen Harmon (White) to be His messenger. God gave her a message for the disappointed group of Millerites. Ellen White's first vision gave them hope.

Soon the Adventists started printing books. In the 1860s, the Adventists grew to several thousand members. Now they needed to become a worldwide church so that they could announce the three angels' messages with power. Some people were against the idea of becoming a worldwide church. So, God used Ellen White to encourage the Adventists to start the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On May 21, 1863, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born.

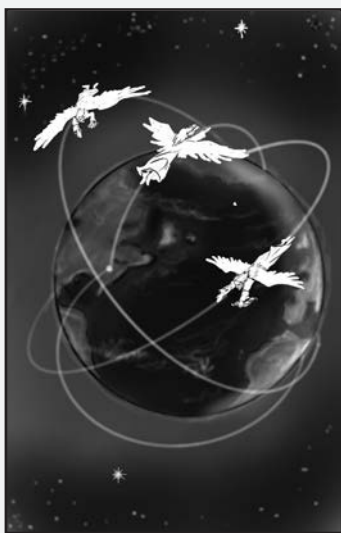
That same year, God used the gift of special messages to encourage Seventh-day Adventists to be healthy. Most church members weren't healthy at all. They also didn't live healthy lives. So, God gave Ellen White two special messages. The first message was in 1863. The second message was in 1865. These messages changed the lives of many church members. Then Seventh-day Adventists started to support good health and healthful living.

From the 1870s to 1890s, Ellen White developed an education plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She wrote: "Real education means more than studying a topic or just getting ready for this life now. Real education is about the whole person and what he can become. Real education develops the body, mind, and spirit."—*Education*, page 13, adapted.

In the 1880s, Ellen White helped the church to understand better God's plan to save sinners. She explained that God's love and forgiveness were important to this plan. Ellen White helped the church to better understand the connection between God's love and His law. From 1901 to 1903, Ellen White suggested changes that helped the church to do God's work better.

In short, there would be no Seventh-day Adventist Church as we know it today without Ellen White. She was God's messenger at an important time in history.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/11>.



Now the Adventists needed to become a worldwide church so that they could announce the three angels' messages with power.

DEMONS AND DEATH: PART 1

Leena and her friends, Anneli and Timo, were studying the Bible in her apartment. Leena lived in a Finnish town a few hundred miles north of the capital, Helsinki.

Leena said, "I have a feeling that something bad is about to happen. Let's pray."

The three university students knelt in prayer. Just then, a tall dark figure ran into the living room. The figure came near Anneli and tried to grab her.

Timo and Leena started to pray harder.

Then a bright figure entered the room. The bright figure chased out the dark figure. The dark figure stood at the door and tried to reenter. But the bright figure blocked every move that the dark figure made. After about 10 minutes, the dark figure gave up and left.

After that, the students talked about what happened. Leena said she saw a fight between two figures. One was bright and filled with light. The other figure was dark. Timo hadn't seen figures. He saw only what looked the same as light and dark shadows that ran past him across the floor. Anneli didn't want to talk about what she saw. Later on, the students learned that the strange attack in Leena's apartment happened at the same time that someone killed himself in a nearby home.

Leena said, "That's why I had the bad feeling."

Then Anneli told her friends something they didn't know about her. She did witchcraft in the past. Evil spirits still attacked her. But Anneli said that God was way more powerful than the evil spirits. After the attack, Anneli went home and lay down on her bed. The bright figure came into her room, sat down on the end of her bed, and stayed with her until morning.

The demon attacks stopped after Anneli was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That was the first experience Timo had up close with the war between Jesus and Satan. But that was not Timo's last. Timo was a deep sleeper. He hardly ever woke up at night after he fell asleep. But soon after the attack in the apartment, Timo woke up when he felt someone was staring at him in the dark. Then he heard a voice.

The voice said, "Don't get baptized."

Timo was a computer engineering student. He was about to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Timo looked into the dark room. He couldn't see anything. But he could tell someone was there. Timo prayed, and the figure left.

The next day, Leena told Timo that someone killed herself near his home last night.

Timo asked, "Do you know what time that happened?"

Leena did. The person died the exact time Timo woke up.

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The bright figure came into her room, sat down on the end of her bed, and stayed with her until morning.

Special Messages for the End-Times



SABBATH—DECEMBER 12

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:1–21; Ephesians 4:11–14; Revelation 12:17; Acts 2:36–42.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘In the last days [end-times] I will send [pour] My Spirit on all men [people]. Then your sons and daughters will speak [communicate] God’s Word. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see special dreams. Yes, on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days’ ” (Joel 2:28, 29, NLV).



What part does the gift of special messages have in the end-times.

SOME GOVERNMENTS make special laws named “sunset rules.” (No, sunset rules are **not** about the time when the sun sets!) Sunset rules help protect citizens. Sometimes a government will make strict laws during a time of war, a natural disaster, or an emergency. These strict laws remove certain freedoms from citizens during dark and difficult times. Some governments will include sunset rules to end these strict laws after a certain time. The sunset rules give the people back their freedoms.

Did God include a sunset rule with the gift of special messages? Is there a time before Jesus comes back when God will stop pouring this gift on His people? Last week, we learned that God communicated to His people with His messengers. This week, we will study the topic of the gift of special messages in the end-times. What part does the gift of special messages have in the end-times? What part does Ellen G. White have in earth’s final history?

A PROMISE IN THE BOOK OF JOEL (Joel 2:28–32)

Read Joel 2:28–32. What does God promise to do in the end-times?

Joel was a messenger for God during Old Testament times. Joel lived many hundred years before Jesus was born. When we read Joel's writings, we can learn important information about the future. When we read Joel 2:28–32, we may ask, "Is Joel talking about his own time? Or is he talking about things far in the future?"

Bible thinkers teach us that there are two types of special messages: (1) classical messages and (2) apocalyptic messages. Classical messages are messages for people, countries, and leaders. They use real numbers and real names. (Read Jeremiah 25:1–11 for an example.) Apocalyptic messages use symbols and signs. They use numbers as symbols, too, to explain when something will happen in the future. (Read Daniel 7 for an example.) Sometimes God's messengers will mix the two types of messages together. (Read Matthew 24 for an example.)

What about Joel 2:28–31? Is this a message about things happening in Joel's time only? Or is this a special message about the future? Joel 2:28–31 is a message about the future. So, we should not expect this promise to happen in Joel's lifetime. We also shouldn't expect this promise to happen in the years right after Joel dies. We should look for this promise to happen in the end-times. Notice the time when Joel says that God will keep this promise. The Lord tells Joel: "The sun will become dark and the moon will become red. Then the great [powerful] and frightening day of the Lord will come" (Joel 2:31, EASY).

Elsewhere, the Bible talks about the sun becoming dark and the moon becoming red. In His sermon about the end-times, Jesus talked about signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Matthew 24:29). Also, John talks about the same signs (Revelation 6:12, 13). Both Jesus and John talk about the final signs that will happen before the Second Coming. So, Jesus and John help us to understand that Joel's message also must be about the end-times, too.

Think about the messages that happened just as the Bible promised. Why should they help us to trust God about His future promises, including the Second Coming?



The Bible talks about the sun becoming dark and the moon becoming red.

GOD POURS HIS SPIRIT ON HIS CHURCH (Acts 2:1–21)

John the Baptist warned the people to stop sinning.

Read Peter's sermon in Acts 2:1–21. Why did Peter use a quote from Joel when he talked about Jesus' first coming? How does Peter use special messages from God in his sermon?

In Acts 2:1–21, we read a quote from the book of Joel. This quote is one of the longest quotes from the Old Testament. Peter uses this quote when he preaches to the people in Jerusalem. When we read what Peter says, we may wonder, "Peter, what about the signs of the dark sun and the red moon? We can't see them happening in your time." Peter might answer, "The signs happened in my time. When Jesus hung on the cross a few days ago, the sun became dark for three hours" (see Mark 15:33).

What was proof to Peter back then may not convince us today. In these end-times, we expect God to more fully keep the promise He made to Joel. What proof do we have that God will keep this promise more fully in our time? The answer is in Joel 2:23. In this verse, Joel talks about the early and the late rains. Acts 2 shows us when the first part of this promise from Joel happens. The final promise will happen when God pours His Spirit on people just before the end of human history. This time is named the Latter Rain.

Often people think special messengers from God preached only about the future. But Bible messengers did more than that. Often, Bible messengers asked people to stop sinning and come back to God. We see the people feeling guilty for their sins while Peter is preaching to them (Acts 2:37–39).

John the Baptist warned the people to stop sinning, too. As God's messenger, John announced the first coming of Jesus. While John preached this message, he also warned, " 'Stop doing wrong things and turn [come] back to God! The kingdom of heaven is almost here' " (Matthew 3:2, WE).

When God pours His Spirit on all people in the end-times, He fully will keep the promise He made in Joel 2. God's messengers in the end-times will also warn people, as John the Baptist and Peter did. God's end-time messengers will warn people to stop sinning and come back to God. God's end-time messengers also will tell people to look to Jesus to save them. These messengers will help God's church to understand and follow Bible truth.

GIFTS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT (Ephesians 4:11–14)

God gave the church many gifts. These gifts help the church to serve Him better. In the New Testament, we read many lists of spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:8–10; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).

Read about spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:11–14. Why does God give these gifts to His church? How does the gift of prophecy, or special messages, help the church do God's work?

Spiritual gifts help the church to grow and to preach Bible truth. Paul included the gift of prophecy, or special messages, in all four lists. That tells us that the gift of prophecy, or special messages, is one of the most important gifts.

Let's look at some Bible truth about God's messengers:

1. God chooses His messengers and gives them their work (read 1 Kings 19:16, 19–21 and Isaiah 6). Often, God's messengers don't feel worthy to serve Him. But in the end, they obey.

2. God talks to His messengers in dreams. Or He speaks to them so that they can hear His voice and words. Sometimes God tells His messengers what will happen in the future (Daniel 2). At other times, God tells His messengers about what is happening in the countries or with the leaders of that time.

3. The Bible talks about things that happen to God's messengers when He talks with them or gives them a message. Some messengers lose strength. Or they may stop breathing. Other times, the experience with God may fill the messenger with new strength or power (Daniel 10:8–10, 18, 19).

4. Messengers communicate their messages in different ways: (1) with words or sermons (Acts 21:10–12); with their behavior or actions (Ezekiel 4), or with writing letters (Revelation 2, 3). Some messengers used secretaries or assistants. Baruch helped Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:1–4).

5. A messenger's words must agree with Bible truth (Isaiah 8:20).

6. A messenger's behavior and message will show that God chose him to serve Him (Matthew 7:15–20).

7. Satan always tries to copy God's work. The same is true for the gift of prophecy. In the end-time, there will be false messengers (Matthew 24:24; 2 Peter 2:1).



Spiritual gifts help the church to grow and to preach Bible truth. Paul included the gift of special messages in all four lists.

GOD'S END-TIME PEOPLE (Revelation 12:17)

Revelation 12 talks about the history of the war between good and evil. This chapter shows us how the war started in heaven and what will happen in the end-times.

What is “the truth that Jesus taught” (Revelation 12:17, ERV)? Compare Revelation 19:10 with Revelation 22:8, 9.

In Revelation 12:17, we read about God's end-time church. We will know the end-time church because of two things: (1) this church obeys God's Ten Commandments and (2) it has “the truth that Jesus taught” (ERV). What is this truth?

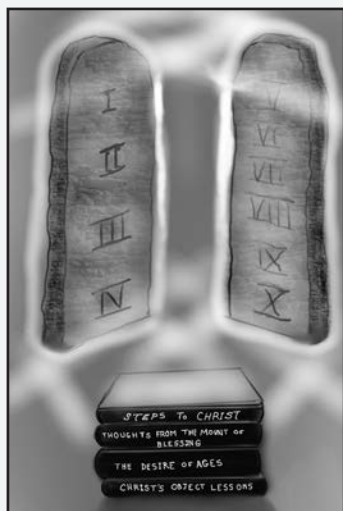
Some Bible thinkers say that “the truth that Jesus taught” means our belief in Jesus. Other Bible thinkers give this verse a different meaning. They say that Revelation 12:17 means that Jesus Himself gives a special message to His end-time church (also read Revelation 19:10). The Greek language of the Bible verse allows for both explanations. So, which one did John really mean?

If we compare the two things about the end-time church, we see that both things are said or written in much the same way. So, just as the commandments of God come **from** God, the truth that Jesus taught comes **from** Jesus, too. Jesus gives the message. So, He shows us who is His real church. How does Jesus do that? He shares this important information with John to give to us.

The Bible gives us proof in Revelation 19:10 and Revelation 22:9. These verses show us that “the truth that Jesus taught” (Revelation 12:17, ERV) is the same as the gift of special messages. As we already saw, God's messengers tell God's people to come back to Him. Or they show us what will happen in the future.

In Revelation 12:17, Jesus shows us who is His real church in the end-times. His end-time church will keep His commandments and have the gift of special messages. God sent messengers to the people in Old and New Testament times. In the same way, God will send His messengers to His people in the end-times.

What proof do we have that God gave to Ellen G. White the gift of special messages? (Read Revelation 19:10.)



Jesus' end-time church will keep His commandments and have the gift of special messages.

MODERN MESSENGERS (Acts 2:36–42)

Most Christians today believe that God gave men and women His messages in Bible times. But do they really believe that the same thing can happen today? If the promise in Joel 2:28–31 is real, then how will God give us the gift of special messages in the end-times? What will this look the same as?

Read Acts 2:36–42. What was the message of Peter’s sermon in these verses? How did Peter’s audience answer?

God first poured His Spirit on His church in A.D. 31. This experience is an excellent picture of what will happen during the end-times. God will pour His Spirit on His end-time church, too. But He will pour out much more of His Spirit at that time. When God first poured His Spirit on His church, the church preached about Jesus. They also told people to stop sinning and to come back to God. God’s Spirit helped the church to do this work. The Holy Spirit gave Peter the power to preach about Jesus. Peter’s sermon caused 3,000 people to give their hearts to Jesus and to get baptized. This time was named Pentecost and the “early rain.”

God gave the early rain or the Holy Spirit to help the church to grow. In the same way, God will pour “ ‘the latter rain’ on the church in the end-times to finish His work on earth.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 611, adapted. So, we can see, the gift of special messages in the end-times will look much the same as it did in Acts 2.

As we already saw in Joel 2:28–31, God will pour His gift of special messages on His church in the end-times. He will pour this gift on young and old people, and on men and women. God will talk with them. When the Holy Spirit chooses an end-time messenger, the messenger will praise and honor Jesus. The messenger will ask people to come back to God and help them to finish God’s work on earth. Ellen G. White did all these things. During her life, she honored Jesus and the Bible above everything else in her work. She told people to come back to God. She invited everyone to help God save lost people.

How grateful are you for the gift of Ellen G. White’s writings in our church?



The Holy Spirit gave Peter the power to preach about Jesus. Peter’s sermon caused 3,000 people to give their hearts to Jesus and to get baptized.

ALL ABOUT SERVING GOD



“At the cross, Jesus joined mercy with truth, and obedience with peace.”

In Ephesians 4, Paul says that God gave the church spiritual gifts to help us do His work. That’s the reason God gave Ellen G. White the gift of prophecy, or special messages. Her messages help people to have a strong relationship with God and to share His love with other people.

Ellen White wrote, “More than any other Christian group, Seventh-day Adventists should honor and praise Jesus. We must announce the Sabbath truth along with the third angel’s message. The most important part of this message is Jesus. We must not leave Him out. At the cross, Jesus joined mercy with truth, and obedience with peace. So, the sinner must look to Calvary. He must have the simple faith of a child. He must trust in Jesus’ love and forgiveness to save him. The sinner must accept Jesus’ perfect life.”—*Gospel Workers*, pages 156, 157, adapted.

Ellen White taught that God invites each Christian to join Him in His work to save people. “The Lord wants His people to do far more than they are doing now to save sinners.”—*Evangelism*, page 113, adapted.

“We must not be lazy. Let us work together to bring sinners to Jesus and His love.”—*Evangelism*, page 115, adapted. Ellen G. White was a Bible worker in Europe in the 1880s. During the 1890s, she worked for God in Australia.

Satan is angry in the end-times because God commands His people to serve Him (Revelation 12:17). God’s end-time followers have a message for their time. God leads them and gives them understanding. “The Lord shows us the dangers that are around us and ahead. With the gift of prophecy, or special messages, God shows us the lies that will trick people in the end-times and make them slaves. God tells His people, ‘This is the right way. Walk in it.’ ” [Isaiah 30:21, EASY]. . . . *The Great Controversy* shows us Satan’s lies.”—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 31*, 1890, adapted.

Satan is angry when people give their lives to Jesus. So, Satan does everything to cause people to doubt the gift of prophecy and Ellen G. White’s writings. Satan causes people to believe that her writings are not important for our time. Satan also causes people to believe she is a false messenger. But Satan succeeds the most when he causes young people today not to read her writings.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/12>.

DEMONS AND DEATH: PART 2

Timo and his friends, Leena and Anneli, had a frightening experience during a Bible study in Leena's apartment. Anneli later explained that she used to do witchcraft. Even now, evil spirits tried to hurt her. But after Anneli was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the demons stopped hurting her. Timo was a computer engineering student. He also was getting ready for baptism. He woke up at night when he heard a scary voice tell him, "Don't get baptized."

The scary warning didn't stop Timo from getting baptized. He later became a Seventh-day Adventist pastor. But his experiences with demons and people who tried to end their own lives didn't stop.

After Timo became a pastor, he and some other pastors got on a boat. They were on their way to a meeting in Sweden.

That night, Timo couldn't sleep. He felt a strong need to pray. As soon as he started to pray, Timo heard an evil laugh. Timo knew something bad was happening. But he didn't know what it was. He prayed hard for the next two hours.

At breakfast, an older pastor came to Timo. Something woke the pastor up in the middle of the night.

The pastor said, "What was happening with you last night? The Holy Spirit told me to pray for you."

Then another pastor came to the breakfast table.

The pastor said, "Last night, I woke up and felt the need to go outside for some fresh air. When I got to the boat deck, I saw a man about to jump into the sea."

The pastor talked with the man for an hour. The pastor told the man not to kill himself. The man came back to the deck.

Then Timo and the other two pastors compared their experiences. They discovered that everything happened to them last night at the same time! Timo knew God woke him up to pray, even if he didn't know who or what he was praying for. God woke up the older pastor to pray for Timo. The older pastor's prayers gave Timo the strength to keep praying. Timo and the old pastor were the same as Aaron and Hur, who held up Moses' arms when the Israelites went to fight (Exodus 17:8–12). As long as Moses' arms stayed up, the Israelites won (verse 11). In the same way, God used the prayers of Timo and the older pastor to help their friend fight against evil and save a man's life.

Timo is now 45. He is the communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Finland. Timo's experience showed him that the war between good and evil is very real.

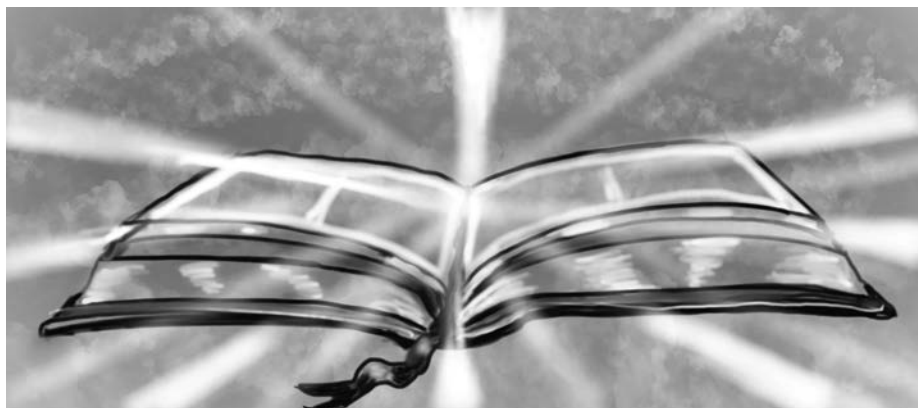
Timo said, "This war is happening all around us. Jesus already won the fight. So, we don't need to be afraid. Jesus will protect us. Satan can't hurt us when we trust in Jesus."

INSIDE
Story
by MISSION EDITOR



**The pastor told the man
not to kill himself.**

Blessings From the Bible



SABBATH—DECEMBER 19

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 1 Corinthians 2:2; Luke 24:27; 2 Timothy 4:1–5; Matthew 11:28, 29; John 17:20–23.

MEMORY VERSE: “Everything that is written in the Bible comes from God’s Spirit. It [the Bible] helps us in many ways. The Bible teaches us what is true. It [the Bible] warns us when we are doing wrong things. It shows us what is right. It teaches us how to live good lives. As a result [because of the Bible], people who want to serve God can know how to live properly [correctly]. They will be people who are ready to do all kinds [types] of good things” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, EASY).

GOD never asks us to believe in Him without giving us reasons for our faith. Nature gives us powerful proof to trust in God. Even after 6,000 years of sin, nature shows us a God who is both powerful and loving.

There’s more. Peter writes, “We heard this voice come from heaven when we were with Christ [Jesus] on the holy mountain. All this [the experience we had] helps us know that what the early preachers [Old Testament messengers] said was true. You will do well to listen to what they have said. Their words are as lights that shine in a dark place. Listen until you understand what they have said. Then it will be like the morning light which takes away the darkness. And the Morning Star (Christ) will rise to shine in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:18, 19, NLV).

God sent His messengers to talk to us. Their messages are proof. The question is: Will we accept their words?



Even after 6,000 years of sin, nature shows us a God who is both powerful and loving.

**SPECIAL MESSAGES PRAISE AND HONOR JESUS
(1 Corinthians 2:2)**

God uses special messages to communicate with His people. Special messages connect people to God. No wonder, then, that Satan (the dragon) is angry at the woman (God's church). Because Satan is angry, he goes to war against God's people (read Revelation 12:17).

Last week, we learned who God's end-time people are. They keep the commandments of God. They have the truth that Jesus taught. Revelation 19:10 tells us that this truth is the gift of special messages.

What does Paul say is the reason for his life and his work for God? What did he live for? Read 1 Corinthians 2:2 and Galatians 6:14 for the answers.

Jesus' followers accepted what God's messengers in the Old Testament said about Jesus. As Christians, we have promises about Jesus from both the Old and New Testaments. These promises show us a coming Savior. Jesus kept all the promises. All this proof helps make our faith grow strong. "God gave people a fair chance to grow their faith in God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit."—Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3, page 182, adapted.

In some ways, faith may be more of a 'heart thing,' than a 'head thing.' What does that mean? It means that when people shut their hearts, their minds shut, too.

Read John 1:1–5. What do these verses tell us about who Jesus is?

Jesus lived before there was anything that was made. Jesus came to this earth as a baby. He was born with a human body. He lived with us. Jesus is the living Word of God. As the Living Word, Jesus was an important part of the words and messages that God gave to His messengers.

Think about how big outer space is with all its planets and stars. Jesus made all of it. This same Jesus died for us. What wonderful hope does this thought give you?



Jesus lived before there was anything that was made. Jesus came to this earth as a baby.

SPECIAL MESSAGES SUPPORT BIBLE TRUTH (Luke 24:27)

The Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit worked with special messengers to make the Bible. 2 Peter 1:21 helps us understand how God works with His messengers: “None of the prophets’ [messengers’] messages came because any person wanted to say something. Instead [but], God’s Holy Spirit caused people to speak words that came from God” (EASY).

Who made the Bible? How does the Bible help us? Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 for the answers.

Without the Bible, we wouldn’t know how to live. The Bible teaches us how to escape sin. Today, the Bible is everywhere. But that was not so in the past. In Jesus’ day, only the Jewish leaders were allowed to read the Bible. So, God’s messages were precious in those days.

After Jesus woke up from the dead, what did He use to help His two sad followers better understand His work? Read Luke 24:27 for the answer.



**Jesus is God’s Word.
Jesus honored the Bible
(John 7:38).**

Jesus is the most important Messenger who lived. He didn’t just teach God’s Word. Jesus **is** God’s Word. As God’s Word, Jesus honored the Bible (John 7:38). That’s one of the most important things that special messages do.

“Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God? Do you wish to follow its teachings? Then you must learn daily from the Bible. Every day you must ask God to fill your heart with the wish to serve Him. You must ask Him for strength. God will give us these gifts. He will send the Holy Spirit to give them to us.”—Ellen G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, March 8, 1910, adapted. The gift of prophecy, or special messages, always honors the Bible. The gift of prophecy always causes us to read the Bible. The Bible gives us the reasons for our faith.

When Jesus walked on the road to Emmaus with His two followers, He started the conversation with an explanation about Bible truth. After that, He told His followers who He was. Why did Jesus explain the Bible first? What should that tell us about how important the Bible is to our faith?

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S 'LIE DETECTOR' (2 Timothy 4:1–5)

Did you know that there are more than 45,000 different types of Christian faith groups today? How did a religion that started with Jesus separate into so many different groups? The answer is that people started to believe different things about the Bible. Today, what one church teaches goes against what other churches teach. For sure, not all their teachings or explanations can be correct.

From the start, Satan confused people and caused them to reject Bible truth (read Genesis 2:16, 17; Genesis 3:1–5). Satan mixed just enough Bible truth with lies when he tricked Adam and Eve. Satan does the same thing with us today to get people under his control. Satan lied to God's people from the beginning of time (2 Chronicles 36:14–16). Satan even tried to trick Jesus (Matthew 4:1–11). But Jesus met Satan's lies with Bible truth (Matthew 4:4).

Read 2 Timothy 4:1–5. What important advice does Paul give Timothy about the Bible? Why did Paul want Timothy to be ready? What danger was coming?

Paul saw a time when people would not love or obey Bible truth. They would choose spiritual teachers who preached lies. God will allow these people to believe the lies they are looking for because they rejected His truth. "For [because of] this reason, God will allow them to follow false teaching so they will believe a lie. They will all be guilty as they stand before God because they wanted to do what was wrong" (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12, NLV).

But for people who love Bible truth, Jesus promised: " 'You will know the truth and the truth will make you free' " (John 8:32, NLV). God gave us the gift of special messages to help us to separate Bible truth from lies. That's why God's special messages are the same as a lie detector. They show us what is Bible truth and what's is false.

This idea helps us understand why there are so many Christian faith groups and teachings today. If we believe Bible truth, we will honor the Sabbath. If we believe Bible truth, we will reject the false teaching that the dead are in heaven or burning in hell. That limits about 99.5% of all the churches we can belong to, right? So, where else can we go except to the Seventh-day Adventist Church?



Satan even tried to trick Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11). But Jesus met Satan's lies with Bible truth (Matthew 4:4).

GOD'S MESSAGES GIVE HOPE TO HIS PEOPLE**(Matthew 11:28, 29)**

Read Matthew 11:28, 29. What does Jesus tell us to do? What does He promise everyone who comes to Him?

God always cares about us and how we live. Before God made Adam and Eve, He made a perfect home for them to make them happy (Genesis 1). God gave Adam and Eve everything they needed. After they sinned, God went looking for them (Genesis 3:9). God told them about the coming Savior (Genesis 3:15). God made them clothes (Genesis 3:21). For sure, God cares about His children.

God shows us He cares for us in other ways, too. He sent us His messengers in the past because He loves us. God also gives His church the gift of prophecy, or special messages, today. This gift gives us hope and helps make our lives new.

What message does God give to Isaiah to share with His hurting people? Read Isaiah 40:1–5 for the answer. How can we follow this important rule in our lives today?



Before God made Adam and Eve, He made a perfect home for them to make them happy (Genesis 1).

God punished His people in Judah. But God wanted the people from Judah to know that He continued to love them. So, He gave Isaiah a message of hope to share with the people. Isaiah must convince the people that God loves them very much. God cared so much about touching the hearts of His people with the message He gave Isaiah. So, God tells Isaiah exactly what to say and how to say it. God encourages His people with many caring messages in the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 12:1; Isaiah 49:13; and Isaiah 51:3).

Paul warned that people who live for Jesus will suffer for their faith (2 Timothy 3:12). In the difficult times ahead, we will need words of comfort and hope. God uses the gift of prophecy to help encourage His people. This gift gives us strength while we wait for Jesus to come back to take us home.

In what parts of your life do you need a word of hope? What does God help us to do after He gives us hope? Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4 for the answers.

**WORKING TOGETHER IN PEACE AND LOVE
(John 17:20–23)**

Read John 17:20–23 and 1 Corinthians 1:10–13. What important idea do we learn from those verses?

Before the time came for Jesus to die, His heart was filled with a deep wish for His people. Jesus and His Father were one in heart, mind, and spirit. Jesus wanted all His followers to be one in heart, spirit, and mind with each other, too. Jesus prayed a powerful prayer for His people to work together in love. This prayer also was a special message about His church in the future. This promise will happen before Jesus comes back. The Holy Spirit will help God's people everywhere on earth from every country to work together in peace and love. Paul also talks about this idea. He asks church members in Corinth to agree with each other about Bible truth. They must teach the same things. They must not allow anything to separate them.

Jesus prayed, “ ‘Father, I pray that all who believe in me can be one. You are in me and I am in you. I pray that they can also be one in us. Then the world [people everywhere] will believe that you sent me’ ” (John 17:21, ERV).

God wants everyone to be saved. But before people can be saved, they must believe in Jesus. They must believe that God sent Jesus to save us. When different groups of people accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they will show His love. Their lives will be powerful proof that Jesus is who He says He is. Jesus wanted this peace more than anything else for His church. Satan worked hard from the start to destroy this peace. (Read Acts 6:1 for an example.) Sad to say, there has been separation in the church since that time.

But God sends us the Holy Spirit to give us hope. The gifts of the Holy Spirit help the church to work together in peace and love. Ephesians 4:11–15 tells us that these gifts also help the church do God's work. Paul explains: “All of us will become united [joined together], like [the same as] one person. We will all believe in Jesus as the Son of God. We will all know him. We will become like [the same as] a man who has grown up well. We will be completely as God wants us to be, just like Christ himself” (Ephesians 4:13, EASY). The gift of prophecy, or special messages, is an important part of helping the church work together in peace and love.



Jesus prayed a powerful prayer for His people to work together in love.

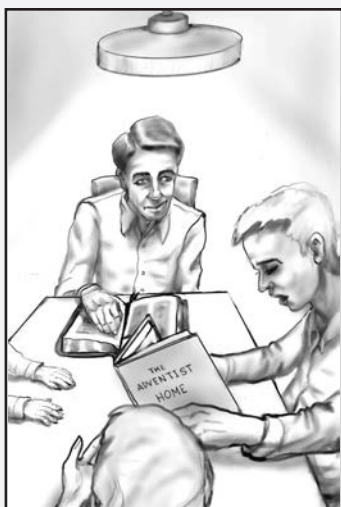
TRY IT AGAIN!

Many years ago, the Kellogg company wanted to win back customers who switched to other brands. They made an advertisement to encourage people to “taste our cereals again for the very first time.” This saying may be helpful for Seventh-day Adventists, too. Many of us have spent time learning **about** Ellen G. White without really ‘tasting’ or reading her writings. Learning about her life and work is helpful and important. We must read her work for ourselves. If we don’t ‘taste’ her writings for ourselves, we won’t be able to understand how much God blessed our church with her messages. When we read her writings, we will understand the gift that God gave to us. As we already saw, Ellen White connects us to Bible truth and to God. God blesses us deeply when we read her writings.

Roger Dudley and Des Cummings Jr., did a study about Ellen White’s writings. They discovered that people who often read Ellen White’s writings have a more powerful relationship with Jesus than people who don’t read her writings. Their faith is strong compared to people who don’t read her work. Dudley and Cummings also discovered that people who read Ellen White’s writings will worship together more often with their families. These same readers want to talk more about Jesus to other people, too. Dudley and Cummings wrote, “Our study shows that the church members who often study Ellen G. White’s writings have better spiritual growth than members who don’t read her writings often or at all.”—Dudley and Cummings, “Who Reads Ellen White?,” *Ministry*, October 1982, page 12, adapted.

During this quarter, we learned that God communicates with His messengers. Their messages connect us to God. God’s special messages help us to be holy in every part of our lives. God’s messengers invite us to trust that God will save us in Jesus. God’s special messages will change our lives. That’s why the Bible invites us to “taste [give God a chance to show you; learn and study] and see that the Lord is good!” (Psalm 34:8, EASY). God’s messages help us to preach Bible truth, share Jesus, and serve people. We must do these things if we want Jesus to come back. We must do our part in announcing the Second Coming as we wait for Jesus to come back. God’s special messages will give us the courage and strength to do exactly that.

To learn more, visit <https://whiteestate.org/absg/13>.



Dudley and Cummings discovered that people who read Ellen White’s writings will worship together more often with their families.

WHERE ARE YOU, GOD?

I opened my cousin's letter and started to read. She wrote, "I gave my life to Jesus." I wondered, "What does that mean?" I wanted a close relationship with God. But I wasn't sure how to do that. Sure, I went to different churches. But I didn't find that special connection with God that my cousin talked about.

After I finished university, I moved back to Helsinki, Finland, where I met my future husband. I invited him to go to church with me. I hoped he would come to know the Lord and show me how to have a relationship with Him, too. But it didn't work.

Then our children were born. My life became busy. I had everything I wanted except for God. I continued visiting churches and prayed, "Lord, I can't find You. Please find me."

Our teenage daughter decided to study in Australia for a year. I was worried and prayed for her to find a good family to live with. She did! My daughter and I used text messaging to stay in touch. The family she was staying with started to text me, too. I got to know them on the group chat we set up. The father of the family was named Greg. I told Greg and his family that I was searching for God. I learned that Greg no longer went to church. But he told me to read his favorite book, *The Desire of Ages*. I found a copy of the book online and started to read it. The book changed my life for the better! I found answers to my questions and had a closer 'walk' with God.

Then Greg told me to visit a Seventh-day Adventist church near me in Helsinki. When I arrived at the church, I felt so much love from the church members. Those people really knew so much about the Bible! I loved the sermon, too. I went to church the following week.

I fell in love with Jesus, just as my cousin did do many years earlier. That summer, I visited the church's Bible camp. There, I studied the Bible deeply.

I came home so happy from Bible camp. I shared my love for God with my husband. I asked him to give his life to Jesus. I didn't know then, but that was our last conversation about God. Two days later, he died in a car accident.

I couldn't understand why God took my husband so soon after I gave my life to Him. Now I understand that God gave me a church family to support me and pray for me during those hard times. The Bible verses I read gave me peace. The Holy Spirit filled my heart with hope.

Soon I started to work for the church at its Bible school. I now help other people who are suffering the same things I did. I met a good man at church. We got married. God gave us work to do for Him together. As for Greg in Australia, he came back to the Lord. For sure, God works in amazing ways!

INSIDE
Story
by HANNELE AMBERLA



I found answers to my questions and had a closer 'walk' with God.