

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.”