

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).



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

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.

**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.

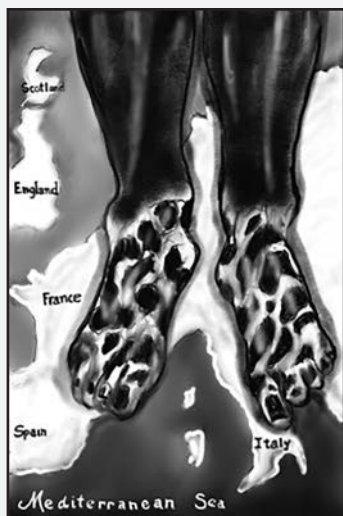
How did Daniel share God's love and truth with the people around him? Read Daniel 2:46–48; Daniel 4:18; Daniel 5:13, 14; and Daniel 6:25–27 for the answer.

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.



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

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

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.