

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
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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?"