

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?



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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.



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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
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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.**