

Introducing the Agents of the Word of Christ

1. Non-Human Agents of the Word of Christ

a. In the writing of the Old Covenant:

i. Angels (Hebrews 2:2)

ii. The Holy Spirit

2 Samuel 23:1-2; Matthew 22:42-44; Acts 1:15-16, 20; Acts 28:25

b. In the writing of the New Covenant: The Holy Spirit

John 13:33, 26, 14:2

John 14:16-17

2. The Primary Human Agents of the Word of Christ

a. “The Twelve” (Matthew 26:20)

b. Named as Apostles (Luke 6:12-13)

c. Eyewitnesses and Servants of the Word (Luke 1:1-2)

d. Who had personally heard the message of Jesus (John 14:25)

e. And had been with Him from the beginning (John 15:27)

3. Big Promises about the Word of Christ

a. The Spirit would teach them all things (John 14:26).

b. The Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said to them (John 14:26).

c. The Spirit of truth would come and testify about Jesus (John 15:26).

d. The Spirit would guide them into all the truth (including the things that they could not bear at that point) (John 16:12-13).

e. The Spirit would disclose to them what was to come (John 16:13).

- f. The Spirit would disclose to them the truths about Jesus that would glorify Him (John 16:14).

Exploring the Fulfillment of the Promises

Introduction:

- Interpretation must begin with the primary audience

Example: Matthew 28:20

Five Themes to Observe about the Agents of the Word of Christ:

- A. Their awareness of their defined group: the common “we”**
- B. Their qualifications as agents of the Word**
- C. Their role: why Jesus appointed them and what they should do**
- D. Their faithfulness in their role**
- E. The result**

E1 - the power of the message; disciples made; Jesus glorified

E2 - the deposit of authoritative truth

Practice Passages:

John 14-16

Acts 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching

Acts 5:28 “We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.”

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

John 17:6, 20 [Jesus prays to the Father] “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world... I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.”

A: Group **B:** Qualifications **C:** Role **D:** Faithfulness **E1:** Result: Disciples **E2:** Result: Truth

1. John

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 19:26, 33-35 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ... coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

John 21:20, 24 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following *them* ... This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

Acts 4:19-20 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰ for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

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1 John 1:1-4 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- ² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- ³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

Revelation 1:1-3, 9-10 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.... I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...

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2. Peter

Acts 3:15 [you] put to death the Prince of life, *the one* whom God raised from the dead, *a fact* to which we are witnesses.

Acts 4:20 we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 5:28-32, 6:1 “We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this [Jesus’] name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.”

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.

³⁰ “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. ³¹ “He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ³² “And we are witnesses of these things;

and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” ...

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number...

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Acts 10:38-44 “*You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ “We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. ⁴⁰ “God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

⁴² “And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

⁴³ “Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” ⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

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1 Peter 1:10-12 As to this salvation, the [Old Covenant] prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look.

1 Peter 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

1 Peter 1:23, 25 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.... and this is the word which was preached to you.

2 Peter 1:16-21 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

¹⁷ For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—

¹⁸ and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

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¹⁹ So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Peter 3:1-2 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

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3. Matthew [Levi]

Luke 5:27-29 After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." ²⁸ And he left everything behind, and got up and *began* to follow Him. ²⁹ And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other *people* who were reclining *at the table* with them.

4. James and the others from the twelve apostles

Acts 1:2, 8 after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.... "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Acts 2:1-4, 14 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.... ¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words..."

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Acts 12:2 [Herod] had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

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5. Luke

Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,

³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

⁴ so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Deuteronomy 25:4 You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.

Luke 10:7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

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6. The Author of Hebrews

Hebrews 2:3-4 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord,

it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

⁴ God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 13:22 But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

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7. Paul (and his associates)

Acts 26:9, 12-18 So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.... While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. ¹⁴ "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

¹⁶ 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen,

but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

¹⁷ rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

1 Corinthians 9:1-2 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

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1 Corinthians 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread...

1 Corinthians 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

1 Corinthians 15:3-11 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,

that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

¹¹ Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

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2 Corinthians 3:5-6 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, ⁶ who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-3a, 8 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. ² For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority of* the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God... ⁸ he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Colossians 4:16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.

1 Thessalonians 5:27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

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2 Peter 3:15-16 and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

¹⁶ as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 17 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.... If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. [Colossians 4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.]

1 Timothy 2:5-7 For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time. ⁷ For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

The Result: The Faith That Was Once for All Delivered

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

1 Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Galatians 1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

Philippians 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Colossians 2:6-8 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him, ⁷ having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and overflowing* with gratitude. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Anyone besides Paul?

Remember Luke 1:2, 4 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word ... so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Remember Hebrews 2:2-3 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

Remember 2 Peter 3:2 you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

2 Peter 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

Jude 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.