



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 69: The Mark of the Beast

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Review:

- A. Last week, we wrapped up **Chapter 13 of Revelation**.
 - B. In that chapter, we learned a great deal about the antichrist and the False Prophet
 - C. We also learned about the Mark of the Beast. It was a lesson which I hope clarified a lot of misinformation about the subject that is swirling around today.
- I. This week, I want to move into the next chapter and focus on the ministry and activity of three angelic beings that are outlined in **vss. 6-13**. For purposes of an outline, I've laid out this three-part lesson as follows: **The Good News, The Current News and The Bad News**.

A. THE GOOD NEWS

NOTE: It is unfortunate, and tragic, that the good news of the Gospel is misrepresented in many churches today. Here we have a summary in the message of this angel of the essential components of the Gospel.

1. First, John sees 'another angel:'
 - a. The most recent individual angel we encountered was the seventh angel who sounded his trumpet in **Revelation 11:15+**
 - b. Each of the angels John sees leaves an impression on him from the things they are saying and doing. It's no different here.
 - c. This particular angel, the first of three angels in today's passage, is noted to be flying in 'midair.'
 - d. Literally, this means: "The highest point of the sun's circuit in the sky." It's the zenith of that path. 'Midair' means directly overhead.
 - e. There is no question that all the earth dwellers around the globe would perceive this particular angel, as John does, in this location above them.
 - f. It is a prominent point from which to declare an important message, and we are told that the message is directed to: "*every nation, tribe, language and people.*"
 - g. The essence of this phrase means everyone hears this angel's message and everyone understands it. Nobody is left wondering or uncertain.
2. Second, and this is a very important note here: this angel declares "*the eternal gospel.*" Nearly every translation uses this same description, with a few using "*everlasting gospel.*" **(Question): "What is the Gospel?"**
 - a. In its simplest definition, the word 'gospel' means "good news." It is mentioned 93 times in the Bible, mostly in the New Testament.

- b. The gospel is, generally speaking, the whole of Scripture properly proclaimed, and we see that here in what this angel says.
- c. More specifically, the gospel is the good news concerning Jesus Christ and the only way of salvation.
- d. The key to understanding the gospel message is to know first why it's called 'good news.' To do that, we must start with the bad news.
- e. Going back to the Old Testament, the Law was given to Israel during the time of Moses. We hear a lot about "the Law." It is best regarded as a measuring stick. Sin is anything that falls short of "perfect" according to that standard of the Law.
- f. However, the righteous requirement of the Law is so stringent that no human being could possibly follow it perfectly, either in letter or in spirit.
- g. Despite our relative "goodness" or "badness" when we compare ourselves one from another, we are all in the same spiritual boat.
- h. **Romans 3:23** says: "*we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" That means, fundamentally, that no person is better than the next one.
- i. This is the condition we have each been born into from the very start of our lives according to **Romans 5:12** which says, "*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.*"
- j. The Bible tells us that the punishment for sin is death. (i.e. separation from God, the source of eternal life).
- k. In order for every man, woman, and child to gain eternal life, the problem of sin must somehow be addressed. It must be removed or it must be paid for.
- l. The Law established the precedent or the fact that cleansing from sin can only happen through the bloody sacrifice of an innocent life. **Hebrews 9:22** says: "*...without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.*"
- m. So, this sets up mankind's greatest dilemma. We are born into sin, in fact we all actively sin. None of us are better than the next, and we cannot save ourselves. Therefore, we are all eternally condemned BY our sin.
- n. The gospel pivots around Jesus' death on the cross. This was the ultimate sin offering to fulfill the Law's requirements.
- o. When Jesus Christ offered Himself on the cross at Calvary, that act became a symbol or a reality for all who would believe. **Hebrews 10:12** says, "*...Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins.*"
- p. This act, this provision that Jesus Christ made for our sins is called "atonement." It is His atonement that was fully and finally accomplished. That price is fully paid now, and that's our good news.
- q. The gospel also involves Jesus' resurrection on the third day. All the elements of the gospel are clearly stated in **1 Corinthians 15:3-6**. This is a key passage concerning the good news. Paul writes, "*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our*

sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

- r. It's important to note that all this was done *“according to the Scriptures.”* The core theme of the whole Bible is the salvation of mankind through Jesus Christ.
- s. Therefore, the entirety of the Bible provides the comprehensive truth of the gospel. All of the elements are tied together.
- t. Most of us are very familiar with **John 3:16**: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes IN HIM should not perish but have everlasting life.”* The point is to place your full trust and faith **IN HIM!** Jesus Christ.
- u. This essential point is further affirmed in the two verses following this famous passage. **Verses 17 and 18 of John Ch. 3** say: *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”*
- v. Again, the primary point is to: believe IN Jesus Christ, to believe IN His finished work on the cross, and to consciously trust no other person, act, or means for supplementing the truth and provision of the gospel.

NOTE: When the jailer asked Paul and Silas, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:30). Paul and Silas responded, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”* When the thief on the cross asked Jesus in **Luke 23:42**, *“Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom,”* the thief was openly declaring his full belief IN Jesus Christ. And for that, he received eternal life. There is no substitute – no greater focal point of the gospel – than believing, than trusting IN the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- 3. That brings us back full circle back to this first angel’s ‘eternal gospel’ that he proclaims. I want you to see the various elements being brought out in this angel’s brief, but all-important message:
 - a. First: There is the appeal to have a right view of Jesus Christ and to believe IN HIM: *“Fear God and give Him glory.”* (One cannot be saved apart from a proper view of Jesus Christ.)
 - b. Second: There is the issue of judgment. Sin will be judged and this cannot be avoided. The angel says, *“...the hour of His judgement has come.”* (This requires that a person understand the gravity and consequences of their sin).
 - c. Third: There is the issue of giving Jesus Christ the reverence He is owed. The angel says, *“Worship Him...”*
 - d. Lastly, there is the issue of the entire testimony of the Scriptures pointing to and AFFIRMING the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ: *“(He) made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.”*
 - e. I want to make a couple comments about this last point:

- Keep in mind that up to this present moment, all the earth-dwellers have seen God’s judgments against the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.
 - There have been supernatural disruptions in the celestial spheres, the earth has been torn apart by earthquakes, volcanoes, fire, and all manners of devastation.
 - Water has been poisoned, turned into blood, and made unsuitable for human existence. The seas have been turned into blood and life in them has been devastated.
 - So, the bottom line here is the angel is saying: *“God made all this, and God is destroying it. He has the power to start and end all things. So, get your heart right before Him.”*
 - This is a good moment to remember that ***Psalms 19:1*** says: *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”*
 - ***Romans 1:20*** also tells us, *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”*
 - The point of these two verses, and others like them is this: there is sufficient evidence in Creation to lead mankind to proper understanding regarding God.
 - Creation is in fact, by God’s design, a key element to hold mankind accountable. That’s why ALL aspects of ‘climate control,’ evolution, and any form of earth worship leads people AWAY from God – not TOWARDS God. Here the angel here gives mankind a big reality check.
 - Also keep in mind, that worship of “mother earth” and obsession with climate control will be a HUGELY dominant issue during these last years of human history.
 - I believe it will be a core element of the global false one world religious system of that time. The angel here is succinctly saying that’s all a farse. God made it, God controls it, and God will do what He wants with it.
 - The message of this angel, besides being a summary of the Gospel, is a full-blown reality check to all who have chosen to believe in humanistic lies and deceptions.
4. The third point I want to briefly mention concerning this first angel’s message is this: There will be no greater time of worldwide evangelism than during these Tribulation years.
- a. I grew up on the Mission Field. I heard many times, various missionaries taking ***Matthew 24:14*** profoundly out of context. That verse reads:

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

- b. Many missionaries then, and now, and many pastors today, continue to take this key verse out of context. They misrepresent its message.
- c. They somehow choose to believe it’s up to them to get this job done, and I think this has more to do with their self-inflated sense of importance than anything else.
- d. However, this is a verse that is about the end times. It pertains to the events directly leading up to and going through the seven years of Tribulation.
- e. It states clearly that it will be THEN, during those turbulent and difficult times that the Gospel will finally and comprehensively be delivered to: *“...every nation, tribe, language, and people”* such as we read in **Revelation 14:6**.
- f. It won’t be missionaries, churches, or pastors now. It’ll be God using the 144,000 Jewish evangelists we previously learned about, it’ll be this angel, and it’ll be many Tribulation saints that will be martyred *“for the Word of God and the testimony they had maintained”* (**Cf. Revelation 6:9, et. Al**).
- g. There will be worldwide evangelism such as there has not been at any point in prior history. Then the end will come.
- h. This doesn’t mean we should not engage in the great commission even now. But it DOES mean we need to accurately understand the prophetic Scriptures and what they are telling us.

B. THE CURRENT NEWS

NOTE: This second angel’s message is even more brief and succinct than the first angel’s message (**vs. 8**).

1. Here we see a reference to *“Babylon the Great,”* and it might naturally leave us wondering what this angel is referring to.
 - a. The giveaway clue is found in the phrase: *“which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”*
 - b. This is almost identical to the phrase used in **Revelation 17:2** which reads, *“...with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”*
 - c. Remember our previous lessons on the global false religious system which will emerge and dominate after The Rapture. This second angel’s message is about that. We learned a lot of things about this global false religious system in those lessons, and here are a few quick reminders that apply here to this passage:
 - In the wake of The Rapture, an opportunistic, heavily occultic, and apostate religion will quickly emerge which will seem to make sense to those who were left behind.

- Many so-called “Christians” today will be among those left behind, and they will fall for this false religion.
 - It will all seem to make sense because “seeing is believing.” It will be actively supported by the return and presence of fallen angels.
 - It will be a false religion that will seem to explain away the vital truth of God’s Word and the event of The Rapture.
 - It will be a false religion that is heavily-infused with the cult of ‘climate change’ and ‘taking care of the planet.’ It will be very ‘woke.’
 - It will support all the tenants of radical liberalism and socialism today, and so naturally, among other things, it will be massively deceptive. It will be intolerant of Christians and their faith, just as we see today.
 - It will be so intolerant that it will be genocidal. People will be ordered to conform to it, and if they don’t they will be killed.
 - It will have, in much of its foundational origins, some of the emerging passions and wayward belief systems of Roman Catholicism.
 - This false one-world religious system will conclude at the midpoint of the Tribulation when the antichrist and his ten kings utterly destroy it according to **Revelation 17:16**.
 - This is why this second angel proclaims this false religious system as “fallen.” This is the point between the end of the Trumpet Judgments and the beginning of the Bowl Judgments.
 - Again, it is the midpoint of the Tribulation. This false global religious system is going to be destroyed and the antichrist will demand self-worship in its place.
- d. So, with the first angel, we have the clear proclamation of truth. With the second angel, we have the clear proclamation of the end of a false religion.
- e. One angel defines the “right way,” and the other angel affirms the absolute fall and destruction of the “wrong way.”

NOTE: And now that brings us to the third angel which has one more thing to add. He’s going to deliver a wake-up call for anyone considering worshipping the antichrist and taking the Mark of the Beast.

C. THE BAD NEWS

NOTE: We delved into this third angel’s message quite a bit in last week’s lesson concerning the MOB, so I will only touch on a few reminders this week.

1. This is a transition point between two false religious systems. The first one was the one that emerged in the immediate wake of the Rapture.
 - a. That’s the harlot one-world false religion that is discussed at length in **Revelation 17**. That is religious Babylon.

2. However, this next one is the worship of the antichrist. This newest false religion occupies the last half of the Tribulation, and it comes with some guaranteed eternal consequences.
 - a. In this second false religious system, if you conform to it, you are eternally damned. That's the really bad news.
 - b. That wasn't the case with the first false religious system in the first half of the Tribulation. You could follow that one, repent, and still be saved. The Bible makes this self-evident in several ways.
 - c. But that's not the case this next time around. Things get so much worse. If you follow the antichrist's religious system, if you take the Mark of the Beast which is part of that system, you are done for.
 - d. There's no provision for repentance anymore. That's why this third angel's message is so blunt, so repetitious, and so clear.
 - e. The bad news is one cannot afford to become deceived. Pressures will be many to conform to worshipping the antichrist and to receive his mark.
 - f. However, doing that will directly and irrevocably lead to one's eternal condemnation.

NOTE: So, looking at the three angel's messages this way shows us that: 1) The first angel lays out the truth. 2) The second angel: states the end of heresy and falsehood, and 3) The third angel stresses the prognosis of those who would fall for deception once more.

D. NOTE: I want to close by making a few instructions and applications for us today:

1. We must not tolerate any watered-down version of the Gospel today.
 - a. In fact, we should actively resist this. We should confront those who proclaim things they shouldn't, and do not proclaim things they should.
 - b. Paul warns against receiving *"another gospel"* in **2 Corinthians 11:4**, and it's clear in that verse that people put up with *"another gospel" way too easily.*
 - c. Seeing the Gospel in every passage and verse is one such way this error happens. One is forced to do irresponsible hermeneutical gymnastics that are comedic at best and apostate at worst.
2. We need to recognize that the various 'woke-isms,' climate-change frenzies, and various ideas about accommodating evolutionary theories that swirl in many churches today are indications that such churches have already fallen into heresy.
 - a. These are signs of leaders and people who do not revere the truth of God's Word as they ought to. I feel the Bible makes the case that some of them will ultimately be left behind in the Rapture.
3. Lastly, we need to return to preaching a Gospel that takes the full counsel of God's Word into view.
 - a. This is an approach that, as the first angel puts it, calls people to fear God, to properly worship Him, to understand His judgment against sin, and to repent.

