

THE 1ST ANGEL'S MESSAGE

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

John the Disciple sat in prison on the island of Patmos, a small island in the Aegean Sea. He was an old man at this time. John was imprisoned, "...for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." The Roman Emperor, Domitian, was a fierce persecutor of Christians, and after having captured John the Disciple, Domitian sought to make a public spectacle of what following Jesus would gain you. So, he threw John into a cauldron of boiling water! However, just as God delivered the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace, God delivered John from this cauldron. God had a plan for John and preserved his life. Domitian grew angry that John couldn't be killed, so he exiled John to the island of Patmos thinking, "out of sight, out of mind." With John imprisoned on this small island, Domitian hoped John's influence would wane and fewer people would convert to Christianity. However, Domitian underestimated the power of God, because while John was imprisoned on Patmos, the Lord gave him a vision, and this vision was about the end of the great controversy between Jesus and Satan. This vision is what makes up the book of Revelation in our Bibles. This book contains the message given to the world at the end of time, and in this book, we find a closing message consisting of three parts. Each of these three parts was delivered by an angel, and they are known as the three angel's messages. You can read them for yourself in Revelation 14:6-12. In this lesson we will specifically look at the first angel's message to the world, and here's what it says.

Revelation 14:6-7: "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the _____ gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth - to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear _____ and give him _____, because the hour of his _____ has come. _____ him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

This message can be broken down into three parts:

- 1: The Everlasting Gospel
- 2: Our Acknowledgement of the Gospel
- 3: Our Gospel-Centered Worship.

The Everlasting Gospel -

The word "gospel" means "good news," and the good news it refers to is the news of God's salvation through Jesus. It tells of God's love for mankind and the sacrifice God is willing to make to restore a relationship with us.

The apostle Paul summarizes the gospel this way...

1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are _____, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ _____ for our _____ according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was _____ on the third day according to the Scriptures."

That's the Gospel message! It's the everlasting gospel that says that all of us have sinned, and we all deserve punishment. But, because God's love for us was too great, instead of us enduring the wrath, God Himself took our place and bore the punishment. (Isaiah 53:3-5). God proclaimed to the whole universe that He is indeed a God of love! Satan had sought to confuse the minds of humans to look at God as a selfish, self-centered, unloving God but God displayed His love publicly by dying in our place on Calvary, but not just dying our death, we have been raised up with Jesus! The Gospel is the best news ever because it's not only shows the saving power of God, but it also shows the faithfulness and love of God in how He restores us more and more into His likeness!

Sometimes we only stress the forgiveness the gospel brings. Forgiveness is definitely a powerful part of the gospel, but, it is not the everlasting gospel in its entirety. The everlasting gospel shows the completeness of God's love, "*who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness (sin) and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*" (Titus 2:14).

God doesn't want to just forgive us of our sins, but He wants to transform us into His likeness! But the transformation isn't one of white-knuckling our way through a Christian experience. We accept the gospel by grace through faith, so no one can boast and we live it the same way we first received it, by grace!

The everlasting gospel is the complete display of God's love for us, and it tells of how what Christ accomplished on our behalf changes us into His likeness.

BASIC POINT

The 1st Angel's Message is the gospel message to the world!

Our Acknowledgement of the Gospel -

After the proclamation of the eternal gospel, this angel says,

"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come"

Have you ever had a fear? Why do you think after proclaiming the best news ever, the gospel, this angel then transitions to fearing God? In the Bible, there are two main ways fear is used. The first way might be similar to when our parents receive a report card with our failing grades or might be similar to what diagnosis the doctor will bring us. It is one of terror.

Fear in the Bible can depict one where our bodies tremble because we expect a punishment or bad news. But, there is a second way fear is used in the Bible, and this way is one of immense awe!

Psalms 22:23: "You who _____ the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in _____ of him, all you offspring of Israel!"

This angel, proclaiming to everyone on earth to "fear God," could be using both ways of fear in this proclamation. Thankfully, this angel doesn't just say, "fear God," but attaches something to that. He says we should give God glory because His hour of judgment has come. The word "glory" here refers to having an opinion or estimate of someone or something. God's glory is tied to His character (Exodus 33:189-19; 34:6).

So this angel is saying we should fear God based off His character. That sounds like the fear that the angel is referring to is more like the second way of fearing - AWE! This angel is saying we should be in awe of God's character, that we should take God seriously based off the good news of His amazing love towards us.

But this angel also says that the "hour of His judgment has come." What could this mean? Some think of God's judgment as a scary event. They hope they'll be found faithful and be able to spend eternity in heaven. But in context with the everlasting gospel, the good news about what Jesus has done, should judgment be scary? NO! Daniel, prophesying of the judgment spoken of in the last days says, "...judgment was given for the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:22). God says we shouldn't fear judgment if we've understood His love for us. Here's what love does to fear!

1 John 4:18: "There is no _____ in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."

So what judgment could God be speaking of? This angel says the hour of His judgment "has begun." This judgment is taking place during the end of earth's history before the second coming of Christ. Paul told Felix that there would be a judgment to come in the future (Acts 24:24-25), and Peter said that an end-time judgment would begin with the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). This is a judgment in favor of God's children who have accepted the gospel. It's actually attached to the good news!

Our Gospel-Centered Worship -

The angel closes his message with a call to worship God as the Creator - "*Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.*" This angel quotes from the Sabbath commandment, which is a part of God's law of love. Within the context of the everlasting gospel, this call to worship God as the Creator makes sense. He is the Creator and the Re-creator of us through His love. The Sabbath commandment points us to dependence on God as our Provider and Sustainer. The everlasting gospel shows us that we cannot earn salvation but have to receive it and rest in it. Therefore, the Sabbath is a day to worship God **because of** the everlasting Gospel, NOT to gain the everlasting gospel. Sometimes when we think of the 10 commandments found in Exodus 20:2-17, we think of a list of don'ts, when instead, we should look at it as a list of responses based off God's everlasting gospel.

Look at the context of the 10 commandments

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (Exodus 20:2).

The context is God's deliverance from bondage! It is not one of strict rigidity but one of freedom! And it is within this context that God directs our attention to worship Him as the creator (Exodus 20:8-11; Revelation 14:7).

This angel not only presents the everlasting gospel and shows us how to acknowledge its truths (i.e. standing in awe of what Christ has done), but this angel calls us to return to worship God based off the 10 commandments with an emphasis on the 4th commandment, or the Sabbath commandment, showing that we truly have received, by grace, the sacrifice of Christ in our hearts. This angel doesn't present behavior modification but instead proclaims the good news and then shows how those who live their lives based off the supremacy of this news will act. They will stand in awe of God and His loving character while worshipping (Sabbathing) Him as the Creator, the Re-creator, and resting in His complete sacrifice on their behalf. This is the message of the first angel in Revelation 14:6-7

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What is your reaction to this special message that you have been chosen to proclaim?
2. What makes it difficult to share it?
3. What makes it an exciting message to share?

LESSON 8: THE FIRST ANGEL'S MESSAGE

