

10. God's Everlasting Gospel (1Q 2019—Revelation)

Biblical material: Rev. 14:6–12; Matt. 24:14; Eccles. 12:13, 14; Exod. 20:2–11; Isa. 21:9; 34:8–10.

Quotes

- Someone asked, “Will the heathen who have never heard the Gospel be saved?” It is more a question with me whether we—who have the Gospel and fail to give it to those who have not—can be saved. *Charles Spurgeon*
- The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time. *Carl F. H. Henry*
- When you have nothing left but God you will become aware for the first time that God is enough. *Dag Hammarskjold*
- The law discovers the disease. The gospel gives the remedy. *Martin Luther*
- The gospel is nothing but a frozen asset unless it is communicated. *J.B. Phillips*
- If you want to know what God has to say to you, see what Christ was and is. *C.H. Spurgeon*

Questions

Why is the gospel “everlasting” if it’s only about our salvation? Why did our faith community choose the third angel’s message as its motto? How do we make sure the good news is about God? How do we make obeying God and the Ten Commandments not seem legalistic? How does this study fit into the great controversy theme?

Bible summary

Rev. 14:6-12 is the familiar three angels’ messages. The frightening aspects of these messages, especially the third, need to be connected to the good news! The everlasting gospel is that God is good, in contrast to the Devil’s lies about him. It’s necessary that the gospel is preached to all the world before the end can come (Matt. 24:14). Eccles. 12:13, 14 tells us the most important thing is to follow God, for there will be a judgment. Exod. 20:2–11 records the 10 commandments. The call that Babylon is fallen is first given in Isa. 21:9. Judgment and retribution are expressed in Isa. 34:8–10.

Comment

The truth is that the gospel—God’s good news—is everlasting because God is always good! We do not need to limit the gospel to our salvation, although that is what interests us! The good news is that God has always been good, and always will be good—that he can be trusted to always do what is true and good and right. This is what will keep the universe secure throughout eternity.

Revelation 14, despite its terrifying imagery, proclaims that God will indeed break into human history and bring this world of evil to an end, before remaking it. God is on trial, and it’s our privilege to speak for him, and to reveal in our actions the kind of person we believe him to be. God’s message to this world is to “change your minds” and come back to him, our loving Father. In this we also demonstrate the truth about God and his character, the wisdom of his actions, and his complete trustworthiness.

The truth as it is in Jesus, in contrast, means “putting off” the old self. We all recognize the old self in terms of our wrong thinking and self-centered viewpoint. The

new self is not robot-like submission to God, or absorption into him, but the way we were supposed to be—living beings rightly motivated and following what is good, for others as well as for ourselves.

Paul says we are created to be like God. Think what means for a minute. Then consider what Paul immediately identifies as a hallmark of this recreated self: honesty and truthfulness. That is so important in God's universe—it comes at the top of the list! No anger, because that gives the devil access. No stealing, no bad speaking; no bitterness, slander, malice... All of these concepts are self-preoccupied, looking to serve and please ourselves at the expense of others. Such ideas are completely unacceptable in the plan of God for his truly free universe where all are actuated out of a sense of love and concern for the other. Kindness and compassion are what matters, with an attitude of forgiveness, remembering how God has forgiven each of us. Such changes in thinking and behavior do not come “naturally” to us, we come to God himself for healing so that we can become “like God in true righteousness and holiness.” This is our message to the world!

So when it comes to Revelation 14, what then? How are we to present it? Only in the context of the God who came to this world, who showed us what he was like, and sought to win us back to love and trust. Only then does this make any sense!

Ellen White Comments

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, “It is the third angel's message in verity.”... Brightness, glory, and power are to be connected with the third angel's message, and conviction will follow wherever it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit. {RH, April 1, 1890 par. 8}

Christ's most favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. The curse of every church today is that men do not adopt Christ's methods. They think they can improve on the rules given in the gospel, and so are free to define them, hoping thus to reform the churches and the workmen. Let God be our one Master, our one Lord, full of goodness, compassion, and love. {TM 192-3}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have declared unto them Thy name,”—“merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,”—“that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. {DA 19-20}

In all the gracious deeds that Jesus did, He sought to impress upon men the parental, benevolent attributes of God. . . . Jesus would have us understand the love of the Father, and He seeks to draw us to Him by presenting His parental grace. He would have the whole field of our vision filled with the perfection of God's character. . . . It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. Christ came to manifest the love of God to the world, to draw the hearts of all men to Himself. . . . {AG 99}

When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890}

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