

REVELATION – SERMON 56

THREE HEAVENLY HERALDS

Revelation 14:6-11

INTRODUCTION

- Having vital information can be the difference between life and death
- Throughout history, man has utilised various means of communicating information to his fellow man
- In the spiritual realm, information has eternal consequences
- People are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)
- The church has been entrusted with the task of bringing God's message of salvation to the world (Matthew 28:18-20)
- The church, however, has yet to fulfil this task
- During the tribulation, God will raise up human witnesses to declare his message – the 144,000 (7:1-8) and the two witnesses (11:1-13)
- But as the final judgments are poured out, God will entrust his holy angels to declare to the remaining people on earth his message
- Three angels, suspended in the midst of heaven, will thunder out to an astonished world both the mercy and wrath of Almighty God
- Their message will be unavoidable and unmistakable
- There have been many attempts to identify these angels with historical figures or movements

- The SDA cult believe that they are the fulfilment of the three angels and their message

Consider the three angels and their three-fold proclamation:

I. GOD'S COMPASSION IN HIS BEHEST TO THE WORLD (6-7)

A. Another angel

1. This refers to another of the same kind as previous angels in the Revelation
2. In former times, God used angels to convey his message to man (Hebrews 2:2)
3. Presently, angels do not preach the gospel, only men
 - a. When Cornelius needed to hear the gospel, the angel could only send for Peter and have him deliver it (Acts 10:3-6)
 - b. Galatians 1:8 suggests there will be a time when an angel from heaven preaches the gospel
4. While the false prophet uses wonders to persuade men to worship the beast, God sends his angel to persuade men to worship God

B. The everlasting gospel

1. Gospel means "glad tidings"
2. Some think that this gospel is different to the gospel of grace that is presently preached
3. Yet the message of warning of God's judgment, repentance from sin and turning to God in faith is essentially the same message we preach today

4. The gospel is *everlasting*
 - a. Its Author is eternal
 - b. Its truths are from everlasting to everlasting (1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8)
 - c. It remains unchanging through eternity
 - d. Its effects are everlasting (John 3:16)
5. “Preach” is the verb form of the word for “Gospel” – that is, to *evangelise*

C. To all people in the world

1. The earth dwellers – the ungodly on earth during the tribulation
2. Every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (cf. 5:9; 7:9; 11:9; 13:7)
3. The gospel is for every person on earth, without exception
4. Christ foretold this worldwide evangelisation prior to his second coming (Matthew 24:11-14)
5. Even as God pours out his wrath upon an ungodly world, he extends his hand of mercy

D. The essence of his message

1. Fear God
 - a. This is a reverence, awe and esteem for God's holiness and power which results in careful obedience to God's will (Proverbs 1:7; 8:13)

- b. It is man's basic duty to fear God (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
 - c. Man in his natural state has no fear of God (Romans 3:18)
 - d. During the tribulation, many will foolishly fear the power and threats of men, rather than God (Luke 12:4-5)
2. Give glory to him
- a. Man's great sin is that, knowing there is a God, he glorifies him not as God (Romans 1:21)
 - b. Man must repent in order to give glory to God (Revelation 16:9; cf. Jeremiah 13:16-17)
3. His judgment is come
- a. The verb tense here (prophetic aorist) describes the God's judgment as so imminent and certain that it is as if it is already completed (cf. 11:18)
 - b. This will be a final chance for the unbelievers to change their allegiance from Satan to God before the vials of God's wrath are poured out
4. Worship him
- a. Satan has from the beginning sought to draw men and angels from worshipping God to worshipping him (Matthew 4:9-10)
 - b. As it is now, so too during the tribulation, every person must choose whether they will worship God or Satan
 - c. The grounds that the angel gives for worshipping God is the natural revelation, of which God is Creator

- d. The dwellers in heaven, whether they be the elders (4:11), or angels (10:6), acknowledge God to be the Creator of all things
 - e. The first four bowl judgments will affect each of these four aspects of creation (16:2-9)
5. This language is similar to that of the apostles when evangelising idolaters (Acts 14:15-17; 17:23-25)

II. GOD'S CONDEMNATION OF BABYLON'S WHOREDOMS (8)

A. The fall of Babylon

1. This event does not take place until the seventh vial (see ch. 18), and is described here proleptically
2. Some regard this to be a future, rebuilt city of Babylon in modern-day Iraq
 - a. The city has been an abandoned ruin for centuries
 - b. Isaiah 13:20 states that Babylon shall never again be inhabited
3. Chapter 17 gives a detailed description of this woman, "Mystery Babylon", showing her to be a Satanic religious and political system that will dominate the world during the tribulation
 - a. It originated with Nimrod (Genesis 10), grandson of Ham, son of Cush, the chief rebel of his generation, who led others in defiance against God (Genesis 11)
 - b. Nimrod's mother and wife, Semiramis, founded the idolatrous mystery religion that has overspread the earth and continues to this day

- c. A major element of this religion is the mother-child cult which can be found in almost every culture under different names
4. Roman Catholicism most closely aligns with the Scriptural characteristics of this idolatrous mother of harlots

B. The fornication of Babylon

1. The people of all nations (17:4; 18:3), including their kings (17:2) will be drunk with the wine of her fornication
2. She will corrupt the earth with her fornication (19:2)
3. This is primarily *spiritual* immorality – idolatry and rebellion against God, which is manifest in all manner of outward act of immorality

III. GOD'S CURSE UPON THE BEAST WORSHIPPERS (9-11)

A. Warning against taking the mark and worshipping the beast

1. There will be a stark choice for people during the tribulation
 - a. Refuse the mark and suffer persecution and starvation
 - b. Receive the mark and live
2. The angel warns potential beast-worshippers of the awful eternal doom they must face
3. He also encourages believers to remain faithful to the end (14:12-13)

B. The wrath of God

1. The *cup* is a frequently used metaphor in Scripture to denote God's anger (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17,22; Jeremiah 25:15; Habakkuk 2:16)
2. The seven vials comprise the wrath of God to be poured out upon the world (15:1)
3. Both God's wrath (*thumou*) and indignation (*orges*) are combined to describe the full fury of God against the ungodly
4. This wrath will be "without mixture" – undiluted, full-strength punishment
5. It was this cup of God's wrath upon sin that Jesus drank of at Calvary (Matthew 26:39; John 18:11)

C. Their eternal torment

1. Fire and brimstone describes the lake of fire where the lost will spend eternity (19:20; 20:10; 21:8)
2. The holy angels will participate in the execution of this judgment (Matthew 13:40-42)
3. In the presence of the Lamb
 - a. Elsewhere, hell is described as being removed "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)
 - b. God is omnipresent, therefore there is no place where his presence is not, even hell (Psalm 139:8)
 - c. The damned will only know God's presence in his judgment and anger for all eternity, but not in his love, grace or glory

4. The smoke of their torment ascends for ever
 - a. This is a clear description of the eternal duration of the torments of hell (cf. Isaiah 66:24; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 3:12; 25:41; Mark 9:44,45,46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13)
 - b. “For ever and ever” – *eis aionas aionon* – literally “unto ages of ages”
5. They have no rest day or night
 - a. There is no rest to the wicked, in this life or the next (Isaiah 57:20-21)
 - b. The believer enjoys rest in this life (Matthew 11:28-30) and the next (Revelation 14:13)

CONCLUSION

1. Those who fear, glorify and worship God in this scornful world, will fear, glorify and worship him in the bliss of heaven (15:2-4)
2. The only hope of escaping God’s wrath is to “kiss the Son” – submit to his rule, render adoration to him (Psalm 2:12)
3. The angels in their preaching are an example to us
4. We are to preach the grace of God, as well as the justice of God (Jude 22-23)
5. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11)
6. *“Most Christians would like to send their recruits to Bible college for five years. I would like to send them to hell for five minutes; that would do more than anything else to prepare them for a lifetime of compassionate ministry.”* — William Booth