

The Good News That Always Will Be True



SABBATH—MARCH 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 14:6, 7, 8; Exodus 20:2–11; Revelation 14:10, 11, 12; Isaiah 34:8–10; Jude 7.

MEMORY VERSE: “God’s people need to be very patient. They are the ones who obey God’s commands. And they remain [stay] faithful [loyal] to Jesus” (Revelation 14:12, NirV).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION shows us that Satan’s end-time lie will be a big success. It will cause many humans to choose to worship the wild sea-animal power and get its mark. But Revelation 14:1–5 tell us that God will have a small group of people on the earth who are loyal to Him at the end time. In the end, people must choose who they will worship. The people who worship the wild sea-animal power will get a mark on their foreheads or right hands. This mark is not something that we can see. It is a word picture for the choice that people make with their minds and hearts to serve this religious government.

At the same time, the people on earth see the Good News preached with power. The last time anyone preached the Good News with this much power was the time when God poured His Spirit on the New Testament church. After God’s people preach the Good News to people everywhere, God pours out His Seven Last Troubles on the evil people on earth. But first, God sends warnings to everyone. Satan’s tricks happen everywhere. So, God’s people preach everywhere, too. They announce the Good News that Jesus died for all humans. God wants everyone to be saved. The question will be: Who will accept God’s gift, and who will not?



God wants everyone to be saved. The question will be: Who will accept God’s gift, and who will not?

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES (Revelation 14:6)

Just before the end of this earth's history, God will send warnings to everyone on earth. The Bible shows us these warnings as three angels flying in the sky. The three flying angels will shout their warnings to everyone on earth. The Greek word for angel is "angelos [än'-ge-los]." This word means "messenger." The Three Angels are word pictures that show us God's people and the end-time messages He gives them to share with everyone on the earth.

Read Revelation 14:6 and then read Matthew 24:14. John writes the 1st Angel's Message the "good news that will always be true" (Revelation 14:6, NlrV). What does this name show us that the 1st Angel's Message is about and the reason that God sends it to everyone on Planet Earth? Why is this message important to everything that we believe?



The Three Angels in Revelation are word pictures that show us God's people and the end-time message He gives them to share with everyone on the earth.

The 1st Angel's Message is an end-time message. This message is good news about God, who saves humans because of everything that Jesus did for them. The 1st Angel's Message is the Good News that continues forever because God never changes. God made this plan to save us before He made us (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2).

Everyone must pay attention to these Three Angels' Messages because they are about everlasting life. That is why God commands His people to preach these messages to all the people living on the earth. At the same time, the wild sea-animal power will use the power it got from Satan to control the people living on the earth (Revelation 13:7). Satan's end-time tricks and lies happen worldwide. But God's end-time messages fill the whole earth too.

God's people preach the Three Angels' Messages to stop the work done by Satan and his end-time team of three evil powers: (1) the dragon (a symbol for false religions and the belief that dead people communicate with the living); (2) the wild sea-animal power (a symbol for the Roman Catholic Church); and (3) the false prophet (a symbol for Protestant churches that turn away from Bible truth). These three powers will work with Satan until the 6th Last Trouble is over. Before God pours out His Seven Last Troubles, everyone on earth will learn about these two different messages. God will use one message and Satan will use another message to win the hearts and minds of humans.

THE 1ST ANGEL'S MESSAGE: PART 1 (REVELATION 14:7)

Read Revelation 14:7 and then read Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. These verses talk about what it means to “ ‘Honor God with love and fear’ ” (Revelation 14:7, NLV). What does it mean to “ ‘fear God’ ” (ERV)? How is this idea about fearing God connected with the Good News about Jesus? What is the connection between the Good News and obeying God’s law? (Also read Romans 7:7–13 for a hint.) What is the connection between our honoring God and praising Him?

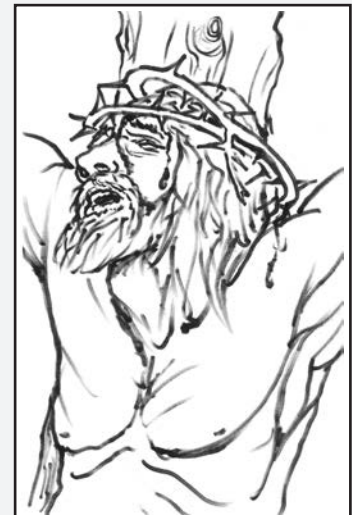
The 1st Angel tells everyone on earth to “ ‘honor God with love and fear [respect]’ ” (Revelation 14:7, ERV). The 1st Angel who makes this announcement also carries the Good News. This word picture about the angel with the Good News shows us something important. When we understand what Jesus did to save us, we will honor God with love and respect.

The Bible shows us that our giving God glory is connected with respecting God (Psalm 22:23; Revelation 15:4). When we respect God, we show that we obey Him and His law (Job 1:8). When we give God glory, we show that we thank Him for saving us and helping us obey Him.

What does it mean to fear, or respect, God? Does it mean that we are afraid of Him? Not at all! It means that we trust Him and put Him first in our lives. God’s end-time people respect God (Revelation 11:18; Revelation 19:5). The person who respects God gives Him honor by obeying Him (Deuteronomy 5:29; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Genesis 22:12).

Why must we honor God and give Him praise? Because it is now time for God to do His work as Judge (Revelation 14:7). God will judge His people before the Second Coming to make clear to everyone on earth and in heaven that we choose to serve God. Our actions and works show our choices. At the end of God’s work as our Judge, the choice of every person will be made clear (Revelation 22:11). Then Jesus will come to give everyone a reward for the good or bad things he or she did on this earth (Revelation 22:12).

Revelation 14 teaches us that God’s work as our Judge is part of the Good News. God’s work as Judge is Good News to people who accept God’s gift to save them. But God’s work as Judge is bad news for people who do not obey God. The 1st Angel’s Message announces to everyone on earth that it is time for them to turn to God and away from sin. God sends this message to everyone on earth because He does not want anyone to miss out on living with Him forever.

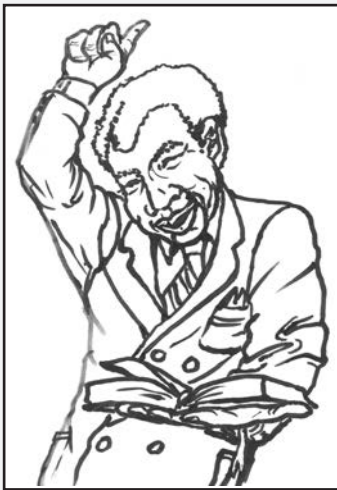


When we understand what Jesus did to save us, we will honor God with love and respect.

THE 1ST ANGEL'S MESSAGE: PART 2 (Exodus 20:2–11)

The book of Revelation shows us that worship and obeying God's law will be the two most important tests in the end time (Revelation 14:12). The people on the earth will choose to belong to one of two groups: (1) the group that worships God and obeys His law or (2) the group who fears the wild sea-animal power and worships it.

Read commandments #1–4 of God's law (Exodus 20:2–11). Then read about the things that the wild sea-animal power and the wild land-animal power do in Revelation 13: (1) during the Middle Ages, the wild sea-animal power forces people to worship it (Revelation 13:7, 8). (2) In the end times, the wild land-animal power forces everyone to obey a law that honors the wild sea-animal power (Revelation 13:14, 15). (3) The wild sea animal speaks against God and His Name (Revelation 13:5, 6). (4) The wild land-animal power forces people to get the wild sea animal's mark. This mark is the special proof of his power (Revelation 13:16, 17). How do these four actions show us Satan's attacks at the end time on commandments #1–4 of God's law?



The 1st Angel's Message shows us that God will command people in the end time to worship the God who made them and to put Him first in their lives.

Commandments #1–4 of God's law are about worship. The book of Revelation shows us that these four commandments will become the test of loyalty to God in the end time. The last war between Jesus and Satan will be about worship and the first four commandments.

The 1st Angel's Message has two parts. The second part shows us the most important test for people living on the earth at the end time. The angel asks everyone to "Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs [the places where water comes out of the earth] of water" (Revelation 14:7, ERV). This command uses the same words used in the 4th commandment (Exodus 20:11). These same words in both verses show us that there is a connection between keeping the Sabbath and worshipping God as the One who made us.

God's law and the Bible show us that true worship includes honoring God on the Sabbath. The 7th-day Sabbath is special proof of our connection with God (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12). The 1st Angel's Message tells people to worship the God who made them and to put Him first in their lives. Keeping the seventh-day Sabbath will be a big part of that message.

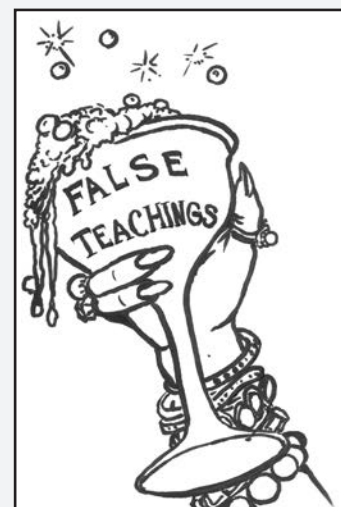
THE 2ND ANGEL'S MESSAGE (Revelation 14:8)

The 1st Angel's Message tells people to worship the true God. The 2nd Angel's Message announces Babylon's fall. Babylon was an Old Testament city. In Revelation, Babylon is a word picture for three things: (1) Babylon is a word picture for any false religion. (2) In Revelation 14, Babylon is a word picture for end-time Protestant churches who turn away from Bible truth in the same way that the Roman Catholic Church did in the Middle Ages. (3) In Revelation 17, Babylon is a word picture for the Roman Catholic Church itself. Revelation 17:5 says, "Babylon is the **mother** of prostitutes. [A female prostitute is a woman who has sex with anyone for money]. By this example, we see that Babylon's daughters are word pictures for Protestant churches who behave the same as Babylon [the Roman Catholic Church]. These Protestant churches refuse to stop believing Babylon's false teachings. The churches follow Babylon's example: they give up Bible truth so that they can work with the kings on this earth."—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 382, 383, adapted.

In Revelation 14:8, John writes the word "fallen" (NLV) twice. The words "fallen! . . . fallen!" tell us that Babylon turns away fully from Bible truth. She causes all the countries on the earth to turn away from God, too, by drinking her "wine." Babylon's wine is a word picture for false teachings. But why does John say that Babylon is fallen now when that fall cannot happen fully until Babylon makes all countries on earth drink her "wine" first?

John says Babylon is fallen now to show us we can trust the 2nd Angel's warning that the Protestant churches will turn away fully from God in the future. But when? In *The Great Controversy*, Ellen G. White says that when "the Protestant churches [Babylon] join fully with this earth's leaders, then her fall will happen."—Page 390, adapted.

Revelation 17:2 and 18:3 show us that many Protestant churches will drink Babylon's "wine" and turn away from Bible truth in the end times. We see that happening today as many Protestant churches turn away from the beliefs that separate them from the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church makes people "drunk" with her false teachings so that they will worship her power and not God.



Babylon's wine is a word picture for false teachings.

THE 3RD ANGEL'S MESSAGE (Revelation 14:12)

What does Revelation 14:12 tell us about God's loyal people?

The people in Revelation 14:12 are very different from the people in Revelation 14:9, 10 who follow the wild sea-animal power. John warns us about what happens to the people who leave God. They will experience God's full and deep anger. The Old Testament uses the word picture of a cup of wine poured out to show us the time when God will judge all people. At that time, the full strength of God's anger will be poured on the evil people on earth who choose to worship the wild sea animal. God will "pour" on them His anger the same as strong and sour wine that is not mixed with any water. In Bible times, people often mixed wine with water to make it taste less strong. The wine in Revelation 14:10 that is not mixed with water is a word picture. It shows the full strength of God's anger against sin when His anger is not mixed with mercy (Psalm 75:8).



The rising smoke does not mean that the bodies of God's enemies will burn forever. It means that when they are destroyed, they will be destroyed forever and never come back to life again.

In Revelation 14:10, 11, John explains what will happen to the wild sea animal's followers. Revelation 14:11 says, "The smoke from their burning pain will rise forever and ever" (ERV). How do Isaiah 34:8–10 and Jude 7 help us to understand what John means in Revelation 14:11?

John tells us that God will burn the wild sea animal's followers in the lake of fire. This word picture shows us that these people will not live again. They will burn up until there is nothing left. God uses fire as a punishment when He judges people who have done terrible evil (Genesis 19:24; Isaiah 34:8–10). Smoke is a well-known word picture in the Bible. Both Isaiah and Jude use smoke as a word picture to show us that the cities of Edom and Sodom were destroyed fully. These cities are not burning today. This fact shows us that the end of these two cities is everlasting. In the same way, the smoke that rises forever from the burning bodies of the wild sea animal's followers is a word picture. The rising smoke does not mean that the bodies of God's enemies burn forever. It means that when they are destroyed, they will be destroyed forever and never come back to life again. They will burn only long enough to make sure there is nothing left to burn.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Read Ellen G. White, “The Final Warning,” pages 603–612, in *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*.

The book of Revelation shows us that God commands His people to announce to everyone on earth the Good News about Jesus for the end times. This work seems very hard to do. Maybe it even seems to us that this work is not possible to do. But we have God’s promise that He will give us His power to help us.

God gave His followers the work of announcing the Good News to everyone on earth. “God’s power will be as strong at the end of this work as it was when it first started. . . .

“God’s people will help other souls accept the Good News. Where does their success come from? Are God’s people a success because they are good with words? No. Their success comes from the Holy Spirit. His power carries the message into people’s hearts. The Spirit convinces them that the message is true. God’s people show why the Good News about Jesus is true. They plant the seed of truth in the hearts of other people. That seed will grow into a plant that will make fruit.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, pages 611, 612, adapted.

God’s people will tell everyone on earth about God’s last message. That message will cause a big separation that will divide all the people living on the earth into two groups: (1) the people who follow God and (2) the people who choose to follow the wild sea animal. The Bible uses the word pictures of two harvests. A harvest is the time during the year when farmers collect the food from the crops that grew on their farms. The word picture of the harvest shows us the separation that God’s last message causes: (1) the wheat (God’s people) is collected into the storehouses (Revelation 14:14–16) and (2) the wine grapes (Satan’s followers) are collected and put into the winepress where they will be mashed (Revelation 14:17–20). Revelation 17 and 18 tell us about these things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Seventh-day Adventists are the only ones preaching the Three Angels’ Messages. Why does this fact tell us that our work is important?
- ② What is important about the Sabbath in the end times, and why?



“God’s people . . . plant the seed of truth in the hearts of other people. That seed will grow into a plant that will make fruit.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 612, adapted.