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"Going home": *Good news from the second angel*

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have seen their mandate and message as rooted in the urgent call of the three angels of Revelation 14:6–12, more familiarly known as the three angels' messages. Sadly, the second angel's message has not often been delivered as a relevant message for us but rather as one needing to be delivered to others. Our practice ignores our belief that the three angels' messages should be a central platform in preparing all the people of God for the last days.

The Elijah message of Malachi 4:5, 6, the final appeal of the Old Testament and echoed in the New (Luke 1:17), warns the world and prepares a people for the great day of God and has been seen by Seventh-day Adventists to be fulfilled by both John the Baptist (Matt. 17:11–13) and the three angels' messages. All three angels have a restoring, reforming message to ready God's people for Jesus' return (Rev. 14:14–20). They are God's response to the beasts of Revelation 13—the "present truth" needed and delivered by those enduring these end-time events. As a preparatory message, how does the second angel's message have relevance for all the people of God?

Overview of the three angels' messages

An amazing progression of focus and teaching characterizes the three angels' messages. The messages move from the everlasting gospel to the commandments of God, from grace to law. They move from a message of mercy to the announcement of an impending executive judgement. They move from a message filled with hope to a solemn warning to those who would be murderers of God's people. They begin with the worship of the Creator and then focus on those who worship the beast. They contrast the rest that the Creator gives to those who worship Him with the experience of the beast worshipers who receive no rest (Rev. 14:11). The picture that emerges is one of a panorama of acceptance and rejection, of salvation and damnation.

It is easy to see the good news in the "everlasting gospel" (v. 6), the good news that Jesus came to live, die, and be resurrected as our Savior.[1] The first angel expands on this good news by reminding us that Jesus is our Creator, due our worship, and a judgment is announced that confirms those who are trusting in the everlasting gospel. Rewards can then be given accordingly. The first angel's message further includes the good news that we can reverence God and give God glory by our choices, worship, and lifestyle, all of which are elements that can be readily shared, indeed *must* be shared, within our community and with others.

Often, as deliverers of these messages, we see our role to be the proclaimer of the three angels' messages rather than the ones who are called to live them. However, in each of the three angels' messages, the focus remains on *everyone*. From the first angel we learn that "every nation" (v. 6) gets to hear the gospel. The second angel attests that "all nations" (v. 8) who have heard of Babylon's deceptions also hear of God's merciful response. The third angel is similarly all-inclusive, focusing on God's judgment for anyone and everyone (vv. 9, 11). We cannot exclude ourselves from these preparatory messages. How does the second angel's message fulfill its role as a preparatory message for the saints?

Significance of "Babylon"

Revelation 14:8 comprises the first time "Babylon" is introduced in the book of Revelation.[2] But it is only in the later chapters of Revelation that we learn about the all-encompassing identity of Babylon.[3] In the first use of the word, John intends to point the early Christians to Daniel's time, when Babylon ruled the world and the false religion of Babylon dominated the people of God.[4] The book of Daniel begins with Yahweh apparently losing the war against Babylon's gods. Yahweh allowed the temple to be destroyed and the people of God to be taken off to Babylon as captives. The vessels of the temple were placed within the