

The Gospel in Three Parts

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

Tonight, I am going to talk about a topic that has come up in a few studies before. This time, however, I want to personalize it a bit. It is good that Bro. Luke mentioned, in his opening prayer, “those in our influence,” as tonight we will be looking at issues that affect them as well.

We have sermons, and studies, even written books like *The Highway of Holiness*, that discuss the nature of the Gospel. As Seventh Day Adventists (most of us) we have read, and heard being read, Revelation 14 numerous times, and so we know that the Everlasting Gospel is expressed in Three Angels’ message. The words of these three angels may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come
- 2) Babylon is fallen
- 3) Beware the Mark of The Beast

These three show a natural progression. Yah’s judgment arriving reveals the state of fallen Babylon, and Satan, in a last effort to overcome the saints, imposes the Mark. Yet this is not new in terms of its essence. We have seen how, from the very beginning of the New Testament Church, the principles behind these three elements have been a part of the significant sermons that the Scriptures have recorded for our edification. In fact, I did a New Moon meeting, or Sabbath study, some time ago that looked at the 3 Angels in Acts 2, recording Peter’s first sermon under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit.

But the question I wish to ask us all tonight is, “How do you present this Gospel to others?”

If we were to ask members of a nominal church (of any denomination) what the “Gospel” is, they would not answer with any of those three parts that the Book of Revelation defines as being exactly that. They would say, for example, “Jesus died for your sins, and if you believe in Him, you will live forever.” Of course, this is what the Gospel expresses, the good news; but for all its great significance, it is only a part of what it is that actually brings salvation to mankind.

When we think of “evangelism,” or “spreading the Word,” what do we think about saying? I will explain a little more why I ask that question in a moment, but I would like, for now, to refer back to our study last time, which discussed Yahshua preparing a “place” for us, a Mansion, a settled place of belonging. This is “good news.” This is a wonderful thing to hear, but hearing that Yahweh has good things in store for us does nothing – by itself – to perfect the soul.

When we read of the apostles preaching the Word to unbelievers, they rejoiced. But in their rejoicing, they also asked, “What do we do?” The message that Yah gives to us is good news, it is an invitation – but at the same time it is a standard, a high calling, a race to be run, and a goal to be met. The first angel says, “Give glory to Yah,” not because everyone will be saved from destruction, but because, “the hour of His judgment is come.” The deciding-time has come, and those who are pure are the ones who shall rejoice.

We spoke, last week, of mansions, dwelling-places of the saints. Consider a human house. Sometimes it has a “welcome mat” in front of the door. The mat is there for two reasons. The first, obviously, is to welcome people to your home. The mats could say anything, or nothing at all, in order to fulfill their second purpose – but they are called “welcome” mats, because they generally express a greeting and an invitation.

But that secondary purpose is at least as important – it is designed to help visitors clean their shoes before passing through the door to the home, into which nothing dirty or unclean should enter. We would not wish to track mud into a human house, and our Father will not allow us to bring dirt from this world into our heavenly homes, so He lays out a mat, and says, “Welcome – be ye clean.”

Our work is to teach the Gospel. It is to invite people to salvation, and truth, and life – but it is also to hold up a standard of cleanliness, of mind and body and spirit. It is to say, “Yahweh has prepared a house for you, but you must be clean to enter in. Be ye clean.”

This is why I asked the question I did above, “How is it with you, as you teach others the Gospel?”

The Gospel message is not something the leaders are to teach, not them only. Everyone in this Church is called to the work of evangelism. Everyone in this Church is responsible for the light that Yah has given to us through the Son... and so every one of us is responsible for bearing the three angels’ message to others.

Other churches have seen our material, our studies, and our teachings. Some have read our pamphlets and books, or seen our websites. Many have also seen our petitions, and have said, “Why don’t you focus on Gospel?” They do not understand, you see, what “the Gospel” really is.

The Gospel involves teaching people that there is a judgment ahead, that Babylon has fallen, and that those who will be saved must avoid the Mark of the Beast, being united with Christ and one-another that they should withstand Satan’s final and deadly attacks. What Satan will try to do is to separate the work of the Church into different sections, and thus weaken its image as the Bride of Christ, as the Body that has the consistent purpose of perfecting men’s characters.

When we speak of the Investigative judgment, and the work of sanctification, we are teaching the Gospel. We are teaching a third of the fullness of the message. The Scriptures say, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1Pet 4:12, 13, 17)

This is, in our generation, the principle behind the Sanctuary doctrine that Adventism has always taught – that our High Priest is performing the cleansing of the Heavenly Temple on our behalf (as the Israelite High Priest did in Leviticus 16) But as wonderful as it is, in terms of what it does for us, this is not a popular doctrine today, and it was not in the 1800s when it was brought to the Church by Heaven’s appointed messengers. The secular mind does not wish to hear that Yah is considering those who claim to be His people, to see who serve Him in Spirit and in Truth. The secular church-goer, of course, is

quick to say, “Do not judge me,” even to human beings who wish to point out the evil that may yet be a part of their character.

The spiritual mind can speak, as Peter did in that quotation, of “exceeding joy” in the same breath as “the time has come that judgment must begin.”

I hope you all see the balance here. Peter is speaking as the first of three Gospel angels, giving glory to Yah, because the hour of His judgment is come. When we speak the Gospel, this is a part of the message that we bear to others. The Bible describes the Gospel in three parts, and this is the first. Consider this, as you speak of Christ, for it is your responsibility to do so.

When we speak of our doctrinal positions, removed and refined from the confusion in the world, and separate from the system of Babylon that has infiltrated every religion but Christ’s, we are teaching the Gospel. The purity of belief that our Father gives us to maintain, and to hold, is expressed as it is written:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Yahshua the Messiah.” (Jude 1:3, 4)

Just as our Father raises up messengers to speak the truth, so Satan has prepared individuals “ordained to this condemnation,” for the purpose of bringing division and falsehood. They are agents of Babylon, and some (perhaps many) are not even aware of their role in this great controversy. Yahshua had this criticism: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.” (Mat 23:15)

Now, imagine for a moment how the scribes and Pharisees must have reacted when they heard this. Of course, they knew the sins in their own hearts (as evidenced from the other incident, when they walked away when Yahshua wrote their crimes in the sand). However, none of them woke up that morning and said, “Today, I am going to make someone a child of hell like myself. Today I will be a hypocrite and corrupt the religion of Yahweh.” No, these may have well been sincere, pleasant, educated men, but they were teaching the wrong doctrine, and were not dedicated to personal excellence of character. And furthermore, Yahshua could have been (and was) easily cast as a trouble-maker, as discourteous and judgmental for pointing this out. But when churches speak of Christ, they do not understand His nature, as a defender of the truth against the deceptions of Babylon.

They will say that “a bruised reed He will not break,” but they will not quote John the Baptist, saying of Him, “He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, whose fan is in his hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner. But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Mat 3:11, 12) The Gospel is in three parts, for there is judgment and purity as a vital part of that “good news,” and declaring an end to the confusion of Babylon, drawing people out of error and into truth, this also must be

a part of our message. Yes, we speak of Yahshua, and His beauty of character, and His everlasting love, and the Way that He opened up to us. But we dare not end there.

What does the beauty of His character look like? It reflects the holiness of the Father, in whose sight no sin can exist. What is His everlasting love? It is expressed in the goodness He has shown to us in giving us commandments, and blessings associated with our obedience to those divine laws. And what of the Way he has opened? Where does it lead? It leads to Heaven, which is not just “a better place than Hell,” but a life free of suffering and sorrow, if only we will wipe off our suffering and our sorrow – our sin – on the welcome mat before we enter the Mansion. Babylon is fallen, and we are called to declare it.

Now, unlike any other church in the world that I know of, the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church teaches the third of the Three Angels’ message. It is the only Church that truly speaks on behalf of freedom of religion. Some may think to protest, and say, “Many other churches speak of freedom of religion. Many organize protests, and have vigils, and give sermons, about this or that oppressed group in such a part of the world.”

It is certainly true that every now and then a “cause” will catch the attention of a church group, just as it would a secular group, and for a time they will champion that cause. It is true that an emotional reaction is a very powerful motivator, to get people moving for a time in a certain direction. And yet, what church is founded on, and maintains, the principles of Protestantism? I would say, “None but ours.”

You may have heard it said, when you were first introduced to Adventism, a quote by Roman Catholic sources from the 1800s declaring the SDA Church as the “only true Protestants.” Of course, this was not necessarily intended as a compliment, only to say, in effect, that other Churches had gone along with the Catholic Church’s declaration of authority in bestowing spiritual significance on the first day of the week, absent any Biblical support. Adventists alone, among the major religions of the world, said in that regard, “We do not submit to human authority, or human reasoning, with regard to spiritual matters.”

But what have they done? Yah will ask of Adventist leaders when He visits the earth in power, as He asked of Adam, “What hast thou done?” It is not that He does not know, but that He seeks to bring a confession out of the guilty party – only this confession will come after the judgment has been set, and every case decided. Mainstream Adventists have “prayed the court” in seeking redress from imaginary wrongs, betraying the very thing that made them favored in the eyes of Yah, and acknowledged in the eyes of even their adversaries. They maintain the Sabbath truth, of course, but other leaks have sprung up in that ship, which they believe will “go through” to the end. There is only one truth, but there are many, many lies.

Creation Seventh Day Adventists protest any and all infringements upon freedom of religion. We speak, primarily, about the trademark law that the mainstream Adventist church has used, uniting itself with the state, to become a persecuting power. But why this specific thing? Surely there are other cases in which the church and the state unite in an attempt to control religious observances. This is true, but again we point to the ministry of Christ as the great prototype for the actions of His Bride.

We do not imagine that the Sadducees and Pharisees were the only hypocrites in the world. We do not imagine that the scribes and zealots in Judaism were the only ones preaching falsehoods that would result in the loss of a hearers’ soul if accepted. In fact, Judaism was the “most correct” religion in the world at

the time of the Messiah, and yet He did not go about rebuking pagans and infidels for their sins. No, He turned His face to the ones who had been most visible, most vocal, in their supposed service of the Almighty... and He brought judgment first to the house of Yah. Furthermore, He said to His disciples, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” (Mat 10:23)

We are speaking of the Gospel in three parts, and this is the third: Avoid the Mark of The Beast. Beware the woman (a religious organization) riding a beast (the powers of the kingdoms of the earth). We could speak of any church/state union, and be true to our Protestant principles, but Yahweh has directed us to do as His Son, the very embodiment of the Gospel, did: Go to the ones who ought to have had the opportunity to be the most faithful, the most pure, and bring judgment to their house.

This, brethren, is the Gospel. We have created petitions, and pamphlets, and other literature. Do not think – and do your best so that others do not think – that this is “something the Church is into” besides the Gospel work. It is not that we are involved in “preaching the Gospel, and also protesting the Trademark.” We do not have a duty to speak of Yahshua, and protest the (Adventist) union of Church and state. No, we are involved in preaching the Gospel – period. We are speaking of Yahshua with every step we take in the Spirit. Those who know the Gospel, in its fullness, in three parts, will understand that this is all Christ, and Him crucified.

As I said, this is a simple message, not complicated at all, but think about it carefully. How is it with your own approach to teaching the Gospel? Do you present all three parts? I do not mean that we should force all aspects of the Gospel into every conversation about our faith. Most conversations do not allow for such broad coverage, but we need to be aware that our message is incomplete if we speak only of one aspect of our Savior, and not all that He desires His people to know.

And how is it with us in another way as well... We, ourselves, must live as those who embody these principles, just as Christ Himself did. We stand, joyfully, in the judgment of our Father. We see no conflict between examination and the joy of Yah’s salvation. We speak in opposition of doctrinal and spiritual errors, in favor of the purity of faith, and of course we have a pure faith ourselves, which allows for no sin. Just as we represent a pure faith, so our hearts and minds are continuously purified, transformed by our reflection on (and of) our Father in Heaven. Into this light, no darkness can enter.

And we protest, as Christ did, the abuse of religious authority, especially when it is supported by secular force. We cannot make a visible stand for every such abuse, but as Yahshua did, we focus on that abuse which lies closest to the Christian heart, among the commandment-keeping, Savior-awaiting, former Bride of Christ. We will not complete our intercession on their behalf before the Son of Man returns, but by doing it this way, as instructed by Yahshua Himself, we have the potential to save – truly save – the most souls for everlasting life.

This is no small thing we do, brethren, but let us seek the divine wisdom of the Spirit, as we take the opportunities that our Father places in our way, to speak for Christ, to speak the Everlasting Gospel, the speak as the three angels of Revelation 14. How is it with us? Do we recognize Christ in our warnings of judgment? Do we recognize Christ in our defense of pure doctrine, which allows no compromise with the world? Do we recognize Christ in the letters of protest, in the petitions for support, in the rebuke of the modern-day Sanhedrin? Then let us not fear, as Christ did not fear, to speak boldly on behalf of the Gospel, for this Word, this great “good news,” is the salvation of mankind.

Are there any questions or comments as we close?