

Text: Rev. 14:6-13

Title: "How the angels will preach the gospel"

Time: 3/4/2018 am and 3/11/2018 am

Place: NBBC

Intro: Our passage this morning mentions the everlasting gospel (v. 6). *Gospel* means *good news*. The true everlasting gospel in the Book of Revelation and throughout the rest of Scripture is the good news that Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (v. 10; see Rev. 5:6, 5:12, 13:8). As God's Lamb, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. That is the gospel.

The everlasting gospel is also the good news that this work of Christ means that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord in simple faith shall be saved freely by grace alone, and not by good works (see Rev. 22:16-17).

The gospel is the good news that changed your life and mine, that brought us up out of the horrible pit of our sin and set our lives on a course toward greater Christ-likeness. It is the news that changed us from idol worshippers to worshippers of the true God. It is the news that baptized us in the Spirit of God and made us a part of the churches of Christ, His Bride.

Have you ever wondered why God has entrusted the everlasting gospel to local churches and not to the angels? I have, and whenever I think of our ineptitude as a local church at this important work, I always find myself without a satisfactory answer. It seems like the angels would do better. Certainly, God has chosen the weak things of the world so that we can learn not to glory too much in men (1 Cor. 1:26-31). There has been a lot of glorying in the gospel

accomplishments of Billy Graham who went home to be with the Lord last week. But still it seems at times that the angels could have done a better job than even he did.

Well, I want us to note this morning that our passage not only mentions the everlasting gospel, but also it tells us that there is coming a day when it will be up to the angels to preach it in this world. That day will come somewhere around the middle of the seven-year period of future judgment called the Great Tribulation. There are no more local churches with gospel ministries during this time. God has his witness on earth, primarily through the 144,000 Jews who were saved early in this period. We learned more about them last week. But it seems their ministry is somewhat confined to Zion, or Jerusalem.

So we do not need to wonder what it would be like to have the angels in charge of ministering the gospel in our world, because this passage tells us that this is going to happen someday, and it shows us what it will be like when it does. In many ways this future gospel ministry of angels provides an example for us of what our gospel ministry should be like. But in one important way, God desires our gospel ministry to be very different from theirs.

This morning we will look at two important similarities and one important difference between the Great Tribulation gospel ministry of angels, and our own gospel ministry as a local church in this age of God's judgment withheld.

I. The angels will preach the gospel because God is worthy of worship, and so must we (vv. 6-7).

III: In London in 1887 the Colonial Conference heard the complaint of a Mr. Pender, whose Eastern Company had

been commissioned to lay telegraph cable from England to Australia. His company received 32,000 £ annually from the Australian colonies for the project, but they were in London seeking government subsidies from England for the project. Members of the Conference objected to the request, because the company was actually in the process of laying a replacement cable. The overruns to budget were due to the fact that the first cable laid down did not work very well. The protest of one Englishman there made a lot of sense at the time. He said, "What we wanted all along was not a telegraphic cable; we wanted the telegraphic messages sent from England to Australia." They got a cable, but not the messages. The cable did not work.

Appl: Often we think that God saves sinners because He wants them to enjoy bliss in heaven rather than the horrors of hell. I think we can say with confidence that God takes no pleasure in the death and judgment of the wicked. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But if we understand the Great Commission correctly, I believe that we will see that God wants sinners saved because He desires and deserves to be worshipped. He is worthy of worship. Matthew tells us that the disciples fell down and worshipped Jesus just before He gave them the Great Commission. And then in giving them the Great Commission, He said, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples." The reason we make disciples is that Jesus is the sovereign of heaven and earth and is worthy of the respect, obedience, and worship of His subjects. To fail to worship is to rebel against that divine authority.

The angels of our passage get this right. Angels know about worship's importance. Some of them do nothing more than cry out night and day, "Holy, holy, holy!" (Rev. 4:8). Heaven is heavenly because it is a place of proper worship. When the angels preach the gospel, they do not lose sight of why it is people must be saved – God must be feared, God must be glorified, and the Creator of all things must be worshipped.

So what must we say about someone who claims to be saved but who fails to worship God as He commands and deserves to be worshipped? Well, that is kind of like going through the trouble of laying a cable from England to Australia and never getting a telegraphic message to work, only worse. For it is the life-blood of the Son of God that was shed to make you and I people who fear God, who glorify Him, and who worship Him willingly as our Creator.

This is why we worship as saved sinners, but it is also why we give the gospel and seek the salvation of lost sinners. It is not enough that they should be rescued from the fires of hell. That is certainly important. But we must go on to make them obedient disciples of Christ because He is worthy of that obedient worship. As we seek God's blessing and empowerment of our gospel ministry as a church, there is much we can learn from this angel who emphasizes the importance of worship in his gospel proclamation.

II. The angels will preach the gospel because God is wrathful in judgment, and so must we (vv. 8-11).

III: We have been praying for Parkland, FL, where high school students lost their lives to a shooter a few weeks ago. I saw a news report that spoke of an armed school resource deputy officer that stood outside the school for four minutes while the shootings were occurring without going

inside to help defend the children. That deputy has since resigned the force. A police officer is expected to enter the building where children are being shot and shoot the killer. If the building were on fire, a fireman would be expected to run into the building and get people out of harm's way.

Appl: Well, there is an expectation placed upon you and I as gospel preachers as well, is there not? A killer is loose in the lives of people. The fire is about to burn, and people need to be warned. It is a fearsome task. Who among us would want to face what that deputy police officer did? But face it he did, and he had a job to do. We as those entrusted with the gospel message have a job to do too. The example of the second and third angels show us that faithfulness in that job requires two things:

1. We must expose the sin of this world for what it is (v. 8). The nations thought that they were well within their rights to have this economic connection to the eschatological Babylon of antichrist. Without that mark, you cannot buy or sell. But the angel called it fornication – betrayal of God's morality for your own personal pleasure.

*Gospel* is good news, but it must begin with the bad news. We see this in the Book of Romans. It is not enough to just tell people that God is loving and has a great plan for them. We have also to tell our friend that he has a sin problem, and that God is holy. Jesus had to die for your sin. You must repent aware of your sinfulness and believe on Him as your Lord and Savior to be saved from your sin.

2. We must explain the judgment of God for what it is (vv. 9-11). God's judgment is wrathful. It involves undiluted, unrelenting, and unending torment in the fires of hell. No one understands this better than the holy angels and the Lamb. The holy angels understand this, for they execute

that wrath on the sinner. The Lamb understands this, for He bore that wrath in behalf of the sinner.

Ill: Bryan and I reflected on the suffering of our Savior after Bryan's accident. I think his reflections were better informed than mine.

Your sin and my sin were the cause of the Savior's suffering. That God is wrathful against our sin is what made the Son of God the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Rejection of the salvation provided by that sacrifice will be the cause of suffering under the judgment of God for the sinner. We can avoid that by calling upon Him for salvation. Only then will our names remain written in the Lamb's book of life, slain from the foundation of the world.

III. The angels will preach the gospel from the safety of the sky, but we must do so facing dangers on the ground (vv. 6, 12-13).

Ill: My dad and I reflected on my mom's life with verse 13. She was a faithful gospel witness.

Appl: Verse 6 tells us that the angel proclaims the gospel from the sky, and it literally says that he does so *over* the inhabitants of the earth. By way of contrast, verses 12-13 speak of the endurance, the obedience, the faith, the toil, the works, and yes, even the death of the saints in their gospel ministry. No angel will ever face these dangers preaching the gospel. You and I will have to.

Perhaps in this last point we can see why it is God has asked you and I to share the gospel with that family member, that work associate, that neighbor, or that friend, rather

than an angel. We can do so with patience, with toil, living among them and not in heaven above them. We can do so with the humility of a sinner saved by grace. We can do so with the love and compassion of Jesus. We can do so with changed lives that are obedient to the commandments of God and faithful in love for our local church, which backup our claim that the gospel of Christ is true. We can do so as the church, the Bride ever empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: One thing this prophecy makes certain about the gospel ministry of these angels: they will do the job assigned to them.

Shall we? Tragically, the answer to that question is far less certain.

Honestly, I think that the prophecy of Revelation indicates that for most of those from every nation and tongue and tribe and people who hear these angels, it will be too late. They will reject what they hear from heaven. They will be dominated by the strong delusion and power of the dragon and the two beasts. They will already have taken his mark in order to save their own lives.

For that reason, our gospel work is far greater than the angel's will be. Now is the acceptable time; today is the day of salvation. Therefore, today is the day for gospel preachers and disciple makers. Let's share the gospel because God deserves to be worshipped and His wrathful judgment is coming. Let's do so willing to face the difficult toil, sacrifice, and dangers of the task.

If we are faithful, God will give the increase, and Jesus will build His church. His Word will not return void.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*