

GOD'S LAST MESSAGE

The central theme of the Bible is the redemption plan, with the resulting restoration in the believing person of the image of God. Acts 4:12 makes it plain that Jesus alone saves the sinner, and 1 John 3:2 clearly tells us that we will be like Jesus, restored to His image, when He comes the second time to take us to heaven.

Bible prophecy makes it very clear that we are in the last days, living very near to that second coming. Scripture also teaches some very difficult conditions on earth just before Christ returns, times of terrible calamity and confusion for the unrepentant, times of testing and purification for the followers of Christ. Faithful and unfaithful stewards will be clearly identified as their loyalty to Christ or to Satan is finalized.

With this lesson, we begin a tying together of what we have thus far studied. If we are actually in the "last days," which the many signs of Matthew 24 and the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation make very plain, does God have special instruction for us for such a time in earth's history? Are there any special messages to help us be fully prepared? Does He have a special mission for us? Is there a special church responsibility for us? It will take several lessons to answer these serious, vital questions.

1. Let us begin here. The truth is that in times past, God has always given special messages, clear warnings, when the world and His people were faced with calamity. Note the famous example of Noah, in Genesis 6.
 - (a) What was the problem? Verses 5-7, 11, 12. _____

 - (b) What kind of a man did God call? Verse 8,9. _____
(Compare Hebrews 11:7.)
 - (c) What was to be Noah's warning message? Verse 13-22. _____

2. When Christ came to the earth many centuries later, calamity was about to befall the Jewish nation. Their 490 years of probation (see Daniel 9:24-27 and lesson 16) were fast running out. God sent a special messenger, John the Baptist, both to call the Jewish people to repentance and to be the forerunner of Jesus who forgives the repentant.
 - (a) What was his call in Matthew 3:1-3? _____
 - (b) What was Jesus' similar call in Mark 1:14,15? _____
 - (c) What was the tragedy of Jesus' day in John 1:10,11 and John 5:39,40? _____

3. From previous studies we know that the 490 year period which ended with the rejection of the Jewish nation, was also the first part of a longer period of 2,300 years (Daniel 8:14) which ended in 1844, and which marked the beginning of God's final judgment, at the close of which the probation of the entire human race will be forever decided (Revelation 22:11). As in Noah's day all mankind will be involved. Today, we are living in the last days of this earth's history. For us God has a great, climatic, closing, and warning message in the entire last book of the Bible--Revelation.
 - (a) What is the general time to which its message pointed in Revelation 1:1-3?

- (b) What time was "at hand" in verse 7? _____
4. In the very heart of this book we find God's last warning message to this world--Revelation 14:6-12. In the five verses that precede it (14:1-5), God pictures the redeemed. In the verses that follow it (particularly 14:14-16), God gives a description of the "harvest" which takes place at His second coming. The great, last warning message in the middle (14:6-12) is to be proclaimed for the development of the redeemed who would be ready for the harvest. Read the entire chapter carefully. Then summarize the messages of the three angels in the following questions.
5. What was the message of the first angel in Revelation 14:6,7? As you study its content, note how it ties together vital points we have already studied. Summarize each part.
- (a) Verse 6--"the everlasting gospel." Review Genesis 3:15; Acts 4:12.

- (b) Verse 6--"to preach unto them." Compare Matthew 24:14.

- (c) Verse 7--"the hour of his judgment." Review Daniel 7:9:13; 8:14.

- (d) Verse 7--"and worship him." Review Exodus 20:11.

6. What was the message of the second angel in Revelation 14:8? Read also its amplification in Revelation 18:1-4 and summarize. (Our next lesson will focus on the meaning and importance of this message.)

7. What about the fearful message of the third angel in Revelation 14:9-11? What is meant by the "beast," the "image," and the "mark?" (Lesson 28 will focus on this message.)
8. The messages close with verse 12, in Revelation 14. What an appeal! In light of our previous studies, what would it mean for the "saints"
- (a) To have the faith of, or faith in, Jesus? _____
- (b) To be commandment keepers? _____

