

From the Lips of Angels

A Preview of Things to Come – Part II

Revelation 14:6-8

Introduction

Has it ever occurred to you that every major religion believes in the existence of spirit guides in general and, more specifically, in angels? Is it any wonder that scripture delivered a warning to the first century church that if an angel from heaven delivered a gospel to them that was contrary to the gospel delivered by the apostles, the church was to consider it accursed (Galatians 1:8)?

It is interesting to note that Paul does not rule out the possibility of angels delivering the gospel. He does not say, “Aw, that’ll never happen!”

In fact, Paul’s point assumes this possibility and he warns the believer that if an angel comes and delivers a *different* gospel, they are not to listen. In other words, they would know it was wrong, not because an angel delivered it, but because it was a different set of truths.

What a needed warning this is! When we study the major religions of the world, we discover many of them base their foundational beliefs on messages from angels.

The history of Islam traces its roots to their great prophet Muhammad, who received his call to become the prophet or apostle of God from the angel Gabriel, along with instruction. He received from Gabriel information to begin reciting to his followers.¹

However, this is a different gospel. The prophecies of Muhammad effectively demoted Jesus to being one of six prophets; the last one, of course, being Muhammad.

To further reveal the differences between Muhammad’s gospel and the gospel of Christ,

Muhammad taught that Christ did not die on the cross to atone for the sins of mankind – in fact, it was Judas who died on the cross, instead of Christ.ⁱⁱ

Now, according to Islam, one’s hope for heaven is in being a faithful Muslim and following the *Articles of Faith* and the *Five Pillars of Faith* which enable one to earn heaven.

The angel of Islam preached another gospel.

Buddhism is another world religion in tune with spirit beings; voices from the world beyond that effectively teach one to find salvation in oneself.

This is a different gospel.

In one of his final messages, the dying Buddha was instructing a young monk and others as he gave this parting advice – which is immediately understood as tragic by the believer, “I am old now, and full of years; my journey nears its end and I have reached my sum of days, for I am nearly eighty years old. You must be your own lamps, be your own refuge. Take refuge in nothing outside yourselves; hold firm to this truth as a lamp and a refuge and do not look for refuge to anything besides yourselves. Conquer the cravings and depressions of ordinary men . . . whoever among my monks does this, either now or when I am dead, if he is anxious to learn, he will reach the summit.”ⁱⁱⁱ

One of the world’s fastest growing religions is Mormonism, although it has slowed down quite a bit in the last decade. Elohim came to planet Earth and had relations with Mary, so that Jesus could be given a physical body and the plan of salvation could begin. Jesus grew up and married Martha, Mary, and Mary Magdalene. After His death and resurrection, He

came to the Americas and preached to the Native Americans, whom Mormonism believes are actually the lost tribes of Israel.

By the way, this particular doctrine has now created quite a problem because of the discovery of DNA, which is having a bit of a problem connecting Native Americans to the Jewish people. Followers of Mormonism say this does not matter as it is a minor point.

According to their gospel, the last living follower of Jesus recorded God's plan of salvation by writing it on golden plates in ancient Egyptian symbols. For 1,400 years, they lay undiscovered until a direct descendant of Jesus and his three wives, a young man named Joseph Smith, discovered those golden plates. He soon received visits from an angel Moroni and, with his help, was able to translate the golden plates and give the world a completed gospel. In his gospel, faithful Mormons will one day inhabit their own planet and live as polygamous gods – spawning their own race for all of eternity.

This is another gospel.

So in just these three religions, the angels Moroni and Gabriel and other spiritual guides have influenced the lives of millions of people around the world. Evidently, these angels are not talking to each other very well because they have created conflicting, contradictory versions of the gospel.

Joseph Fielding Smith, a former president of the Mormon church, named after its founder, wrote, "There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith. No man can reject [his] testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the kingdom of God."^{iv}

This stands in direct contradiction to the apostle's message, in which he preached of the resurrected Christ,

. . . there is salvation in no one else . . .
(Acts 4:12a)

This is the gospel of Christ.

The word, "gospel" comes from the Greek word, "euangelion" (ευαγγελιον), which simply means, "good news," or "good tidings."^v

The first century apostles knew well the use of the word "gospel" as good news. In fact, we have illustrations of the use of the word with religious connotations.

In addition, we can clearly see throughout history, the way Satan, the counterfeiter and deceiver, mimicked many of the terms related to the gospel of

Jesus Christ with his own false rulers – before the birth of Christ and afterward.

Archeologists uncovered a white stone with writings on it, dating back to the time of Caesar Augustus in 27 BC. It was an edict issued as political propaganda which celebrated the glory of this first emperor of the Roman Empire, and it actually used, among other phrases, the word "gospel". Listen to the counterfeit, gospel message of this edict concerning Caesar Augustus:

- God sent him to Earth to be a savior;
- his coming to Earth would bring peace;
- his birth was the beginning of life and breath;
- his honor was to last forever;
- his birthday, in closing, "was the beginning for the world of the gospel" – the beginning of good tidings.^{vi}

It is no wonder that when Paul and John proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ, their message faced immediate conflict. Their gospel was different from Rome's gospel!

In Revelation chapter 14, the word "gospel" is used one time. It is the word that gives our transliterated word, "evangel". And right in the middle of this word, "evangel," whether Greek or English, is the word "angel".

The gospel was a message. An angel was a messenger of those tidings. In fact, the Greeks used the word for children who brought news – women, slaves, ambassadors, anything, or anyone capable of delivering a message.^{vii}

When the runner brought the good tidings that Athens had defeated the Persians at Marathon, he was called an "angel" by the classical Greek writers.

An angel is indeed a messenger.

Angels throughout scripture served as God's messengers. They brought messages to:

- Daniel (Daniel 8);
- the priest and father of John the Baptist (Luke 1);
- both Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1-2);
- the shepherds (Luke 2);
- Philip (Acts 8);
- the women outside Christ's tomb (Matthew 28);
- Paul (Acts 27).

We also discover angels playing a significant role in the events of the end times. They will:

- gather the unbelieving world for judgment (Matthew 13);
- gather the believers for glory (Matthew 24);
- accompany the Lord Jesus when He returns to Earth in triumph (Matthew 25);
- initiate disasters upon the earth (Revelation 8).

Now, as John the apostle records another preview of things to come in Revelation 14, he delivers his vision of three more angels; three angelic messengers with three messages:

1. The first angel delivers the gospel which reinforces *creationism*.
2. The second angel delivers the gospel which includes *consummation*.
3. The third angel delivers the gospel which warns of *condemnation*.

God is graciously offering sinners another opportunity to repent before the final outpouring of His wrath in coming judgment.^{viii}

Angel Messengers from God

Let us rejoin our exposition of Revelation chapter 14 at verse 6a.

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven...

Where is midheaven? The Greek word for this refers to the point in the sky where the sun reaches its high point at noon.^{ix}

In other words, no one can miss this angel. The antichrist cannot shoot him down; the human race cannot ignore him. I can imagine this scene as he begins to speak, high in the air. Billions will pour out into the streets and fields to listen to what this messenger has to say.

Now remember, by this time in the Tribulation, the world has seen its share of miracles. The antichrist has been brought back to life; the false prophet has called fire down from heaven; God has poured one judgment upon the Earth after another – tidal waves, earthquakes, and epidemics; one out of four people have already died.

If there was ever a time when mankind would be ready for the gospel, it would be now. So here comes the first of three angels, flying around the globe, high in the sky, notice in verse 6b,

. . . having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;

Today, the church is responsible for the proclamation of the gospel. However, at this time in the Tribulation, with the church having been raptured, God will shift His methods, as we have seen. This is so that the gospel is delivered by 144,000 Jewish evangelists, two unique witnesses, converted people of all nations, tribes, and tongues, and now, an angel.^x

However, notice this angel's gospel is not unique or altered in any way. John calls it, in verse 6, the . . .

. . . eternal gospel . . .

It is timeless and unchanged. It is the same gospel that has been preached throughout human history – that mankind is sinful and in need of atonement in order to be right with God.

The pre-Christ world looked forward to the coming Messiah who would suffer for the sins of the world (Genesis 3:15).

The people of the Old Testament world had the gospel delivered to them from Adam to Isaiah telling them that a suffering One was coming, upon whom the Father would place the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

We would be atoned for by the Son of God.

The ancient world looked forward to the cross, while we look back in faith to the cross of Christ where He bore our sins in His body on the tree (I Peter 2:24).

No matter where we go in the world, we find mankind trying to deal with the reality and stain of sin. I have watched people scrubbing themselves in the putrid water of the Ganges River in India; Hindu pilgrims believing that the river is a gift that dripped down the hair of their god Shiva so that mortals could wash themselves and free their souls. Mankind the world over intuitively understands the concept of some kind of atonement.

This eternal gospel is not new. It is the gospel of the Lamb – the merits of the atoning Lamb of God who paid, in His death sacrifice, for the sins of the world (I John 2:2).

This is the gospel!

Throughout the Bible, the word for “gospel” is described in various terms, each looking at it from a different viewpoint. The gospel is called:

- the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23);
- the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1);
- the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24);
- the gospel of God (Mark 1:14);
- the gospel of the glory of Christ (II Corinthians 4:4);
- the gospel of salvation (Ephesians 1:13);
- the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15);
- the glorious gospel (I Timothy 1:11).^{xi}

When we understand that the word “gospel” means “good news,” this then is the eternal good news. This is then:

- the good news about Jesus Christ;
- the good news about the grace of God;
- the good news about the glory of Christ;
- the good news about the true path to peace with God;
- the good news that we can indeed be forgiven and saved from the wrath of God.

The gospel, John writes in this verse, is being preached by an angel. And it is consistent with the gospel preached by Paul and the apostles.

The Gospel of Creationism

Now notice Revelation 14:7.

and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come . . .”

“Fear God and give Him glory.”

Now remember, this is being said in the middle of the Tribulation when people are in fear of the antichrist and giving him glory. So, this message is saying to make a shift – transfer reverence from the antichrist to the Lamb.

To “fear God” means to reverence Him and honor Him.

Solomon wrote that the fear of God is the beginning of true wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Peter challenged his readers to fear God (I Peter 2:17).

The world would be fearful of retribution by the antichrist with his murderous agenda against all who follow Christ.

Christ’s earlier words would ring in their ears, “Don’t be afraid of someone who can only hurt your body temporarily; . . .”

“. . . fear [God] who is able to [bring torment to] both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

The angel not only preached from the sky for mankind to fear God, but to glorify God. *And to give Him glory!* This means to elevate Him, honor Him, and exalt Him – for He is worthy of all glory!

What happens to be the one special area in which humanity is judged for refusing to give God glory? Creation.

More than ever, not just the world outside of religion, but the world of religion is stepping up to honor and thank Charles Darwin for his theory of evolution.

It began in February 2006 with a special Sunday marking the birthday of Darwin. Supporters said their religious services and sermons on evolution – and I cannot imagine the number of biblical texts that were tortured that Sunday – were planned, “to stand up to creationism, which [holds to] a literal interpretation of the Bible.”^{xii}

In 2007, this was changed from Evolution Sunday to Evolution Weekend so that more faith systems could be a part of it.

In February, 2009, or just last month, it was celebrated again – somehow we missed it – and more than 12,000 ministers and churches participated. Over 400 rabbis participated, as well.

What were they doing? They were honoring the work of Darwin and his theory of origins over and against the record of scripture.

I guarantee that these participants stayed away from Romans chapter 1. This was not in their bulletins that Sunday. Paul wrote to the Romans,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth . . .

. . . that which is known about God is evident . . . for God made it evident to them.

How did God make this evident?

. . . since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes; His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

For even though they knew [intuitively about] God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks . . .

(Romans 1:18-21)

The apostle Paul was writing this in the face of evolutionary pantheists; the gospel in the first century was confronting Buddhism which had already reached the Mediterranean world with its own theories of evolution.

The church was delivering the gospel to the Stoics and Gnostics who disbelieved in a personal God and special creation – and these were the scholars of Paul’s generation.

The importance of creationism to the gospel

How important is creationism to the gospel? Let me give three statements to answer this, in honor of Darwin’s birthday, since we missed it last month.

1. First, the credibility of Jesus Christ requires creationism.

Jesus Christ said, and He was not uninformed, *But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. (Mark 10:6)*

Jesus did not say, “After millions of years of evolution, male and female humans finally evolved.”

He said that at the outset, the beginning of creation, man and woman were created.

Jesus was not saying this because He happened to be around. John’s gospel records,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Later in the chapter, John says, in case we missed it, the Word is Jesus Christ. He goes on to say, in verse 3,

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

In other words, Jesus Christ was not just casually present at creation; He was the creative power behind creation.

So, for those who might say that creation is only in Genesis and the rest of the Bible does not make a big deal about it – my friend, the credibility of Christ’s word and witness hangs on it.

2. Secondly, not only does the credibility of Christ require creationism, but the gospel of Christ is tied to creationism.

There can be no mistaking this. The apostle Paul said this to the intelligentsia of his day,

. . . We . . . preach the gospel to you . . .

This is the word the angel uses in Revelation 14.

. . . We . . . preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. (Acts 14:15)

Why should Paul’s audience turn from their idols and their speculations? Because this gospel introduced them to the true and living God who created everything that is.

It cannot get any clearer than this.

Not only is the credibility of Jesus Christ tied to creationism and the gospel tied to creationism, but there is a third statement of the importance of creationism to the gospel.

3. Thirdly, the future judgment of the world is coming at the hands of its Creator God.

Look again at the text in Revelation 14:7.

. . . “Fear God, and give Him glory, . . .”

Why?

“. . . because the hour of His judgment has come; . . .”

This is implying, “So you’d better . . .”

“. . . worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water.”

The world may not want to deal with a Creator God now, but it will deal with Him in the future.

Evolution eliminates the God of Genesis, but these people still have a problem with the God of Revelation.

Genesis reveals a God who created the human race. Revelation reveals He not only created the human race, but He will one day judge the human race.

In light of the coming judgment day, this angel preaches the gospel of repentance and faith – honor, glorify, and reverence Creator God.

Can you imagine the utter folly of the church honoring, instead of Creator God, an evolutionist? Is the church that lost? Is the church that bored with the gospel? Do we not have more than enough to honor and glorify in our Savior?

By the grace of God, *our church will never have "Evolution Sunday"*. We choose to be out of step with our world. We are not even going to have Evolution Monday or Tuesday either.

We, in our church, do not celebrate Evolution Sunday, we celebrate resurrection Sunday. We honor, exalt, and worship, just as this angel encourages the world to do, our Creator Lord who is coming again to rule and reign.

So the first angel preaches the gospel which hinges on creationism.

The Gospel of Consummation

Notice Revelation 14:8.

And another angel . . .

Here comes the second in this trio of angels.

. . . a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

When we arrive at Revelation chapter 17, we will unpack the symbolism of the mystery of Babylon (17:5).

Now, however, understand that Babylon was founded in Genesis 10 by an idolater named Nimrod. It became the site of the first organized system of religion that opposed God. It built the tower of Babel whose top reached the heavens (Genesis 11:4).

This meant that the top represented the heavens as the early Babylonians developed the Zodiac and began to effectively bow before the movements of the stars. They believed their lives were governed, not by a Creator God, but by created stars.

How popular is the religion of Nimrod today? Millions of people believe their lives are ordered by the horoscope – and they have their devotions in the newspaper or online every single day.

Babylon was the first system of idolatry devised by mankind. A fascinating point to consider is that in the same way humanity was united in the first idolatrous false religion at Babel, it will again be united in the end times under the name of Babylon. History will thus come full circle.^{xiii}

This started with Babylon and it will end with Babylon.

However, notice that this angel speaks of Babylon as if it has already fallen. The twice repeated word, "fallen" is for certainty and emphasis.

Babylon has fallen – it will most certainly fall.

The first angel preached the gospel of creation. This second angel preaches the gospel of consummation.

In fact, from this angel's vantage point, it is as good as done. In other words, Babylon has not fallen yet – in fact, it is the pride of the antichrist – but, it will fall.

This angel shouts from on high, "The obituary of Babylon has already been written and the fall of world religions that oppose our Creator God is guaranteed."^{xiv}

This is true, no matter what the stars might say.

I remember touring for my Christian college in a singing group one year. We traveled through thirty different states rather quickly and sang in nearly two hundred churches and schools. It was on this tour that I began preaching to high school assemblies and God began to change my desire from wanting to be a history teacher to becoming a pastor/teacher.

While we were in California, we took some time off to tour one of the major Hollywood film studios. Our tour included some amazing movie sets, stunt shows, trained animal demonstrations, and a behind-the-scenes look at how movies were made. I will never forget our amazement at the way the film industry so cleverly fooled the American public. They could make anything look real.

This is going to really date me, but the tour included showing us how the Six Million Dollar Man jumped to the top of a building. Does anyone remember *The Six Million Dollar Man*? It was a TV show that had really bad acting, but the good guys always won. To jump to the top of a building, he would stand in front of a screen with the building on it and he would jump while they would scroll the building down to make it look like he jumped to the top.

Our tour led us to a pond where much of the movie *Jaws* was filmed. Do you remember the movie *Jaws*? It scared a generation of kids away from the water. *Jaws* was nothing more than a shark's head made of different materials and then covered with water resistant paint.

I was struck the most, later in the tour, by walking down a short alley and being shown *Leave it to Beaver's* home. I really am old! Do you remember that show? Beaver's father wore a necktie when he cut the grass and Beaver's mother fixed dinner wearing a dress and high heels.

You may remember that in the opening to this show, the camera panned the neighborhood, Beaver's

front lawn, and then, a big, two-story house. Well, that two-story house and the houses next to it were nothing more than sheets of plywood nailed together, propped up, and painted to look like the fronts of houses. There were front doors that opened into a back alley. If you went around to the back, you could see all the 2 by 4's bracing the plywood facade. From the front it looked real. It was inviting. It was everything we would want our houses to be. Millions of people watched Beaver go through the front door to his house – but it was all make believe.

Ladies and gentlemen, Satan and his angels have done an incredible job presenting their versions of the gospel – life after death, how to wash away sins, heaven and how to get there. It sounds real. Millions of people believe it. Babylon looks real, inviting, and it appears to be permanent.

However, when compared to scripture, it is all make believe – it is religious plywood, propped up with counterfeit visions, false prophets, angels of light, and plagiarized truths.

The truth is, you can believe another gospel – the tidings of any number of angels today. And if it were not for this text in Revelation 14, you might not be too concerned about following the wrong angel.

I commend you, my friend, to the gospel delivered by this messenger from God. It is the everlasting gospel of an everlasting Lord who is a living, creating, resurrected Savior capable of leading you into everlasting life.

This gospel both warns and gives assurance,

. . . there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be [can be] saved. (Acts 4:12)

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 3/22/2009 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ Josh McDowell and Don Steward, Handbook of Today's Religions (Thomas Nelson, 1992), p. 279.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 395.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 306.

^{iv} Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, pp. 189-190.

^v Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 843.

^{vi} Mark Wilson, Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Revelation (Zondervan, 2002), p. 91.

^{vii} Donald Grey Barnhouse, Revelation: God's Last Word (Zondervan, 1971), p. 263.

^{viii} John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 2000), p. 85.

^{ix} Ibid., p. 85.

^x Daymond Duck and Larry Richards, The Book of Revelation (Thomas Nelson, 2006), p. 209.

^{xi} MacArthur, p. 86.

^{xii} "Evolution Sunday," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution_Sunday.

^{xiii} MacArthur, p. 91.

^{xiv} Sam Gordon, Worthy Is the Lamb (Ambassador, 2000), p. 307.