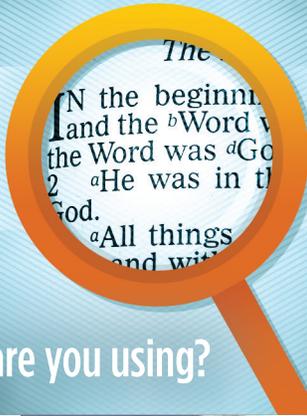


BIBLE OPTICS



What lens are you using?

The WORD or the world?

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From the Pastor

The book of Revelation depicts three mighty angels giving God's final messages to the earth. They fly through the heavens, urgently appealing to every person. They are heaven's last call to a fallen world.

Between now and December, we will be looking at these three messages and their relevance to our lives today. You may have heard them before, but we invite you to look at them as if you're seeing them for the first time.

In this issue, we delve into the first angel's message. In *Disappointment to Discovery*, we follow the story of the early Adventists' disappointment and subsequent discovery of the prophetic truths of the three angel's messages. *Gospel, Fear, and Glory* unpacks the meaning of the first angel's message. *Called to Worship* is a vital reminder of what true worship is and why it especially matters today, at this time in earth's history.

We are praying that "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling..." (Ephesians 1:18).



Nelson Mercado | Pastor
Nashville First Seventh-day Adventist Church

Disappointment to Discovery

The Most Disappointing Day

October 22, 1844 is called the great disappointment for a reason. Imagine listening to your pastor preach on the Millerite theology—Jesus is coming soon! This isn't cliché or nonchalant. Jesus is coming in just a few short years!

Deeply convicted, you and your family begin preparing for the day Jesus will come. At first, you're told that Jesus will return somewhere between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. You begin to feel anxious when Jesus hasn't come by December 1843, but you move forward in faith, selling most of your possessions. When March 21, 1844, passes uneventfully, you join other Advent believers in fixing your hopes on October 22, 1844 as the day Jesus will return.¹

As the summer of 1844 passes, you and many other Advent believers study the messages of Revelation 14. You are convicted that you have been called to proclaim the first and second angel's messages, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come..." and "Babylon is fallen, fallen..." For the rest of the year, you and your family do not simply wait for the coming of Jesus, you earnestly proclaim the first and second angel's messages to everyone you meet.

THEN I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL FLYING IN THE MIDST OF HEAVEN, HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL TO PREACH TO THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH TO EVERY NATION, TRIBE, TONGUE, AND PEOPLE—SAYING WITH A LOUD VOICE, “FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME; AND WORSHIP HIM WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA AND SPRINGS OF WATER.”

REVELATION 14:6-7

October 22 finally arrives. You and your family wait expectantly, but Jesus does not come. You are heartbroken. You have no job, no home. You were confident that your beliefs were Biblical and accurate. Now all that's left is disappointment and damaged dreams. How do you go forward?

Move Forward or Backwards

Something had obviously gone wrong in the Advent believers understanding of Scripture. But where was their mistake? Was everything they had taught about Jesus' return and the angel's messages wrong?

Several belief systems developed out of the 1844 disappointment; most lacked Biblical validity. Some held that it was a mistake to set a time and that there was no significance to October 22, 1844. Others assumed the date held only spiritual value.

For others, these were inadequate explanations for what happened on October 22, 1844. These people chose to work through the disappointment and study the Bible more. It was out of this group that the Seventh-day Adventist Church eventually grew.

Millerism's early interpretation of “the hour of judgment” in Revelation 14:7 was that this indicated the end of the world. But after the great disappointment, early

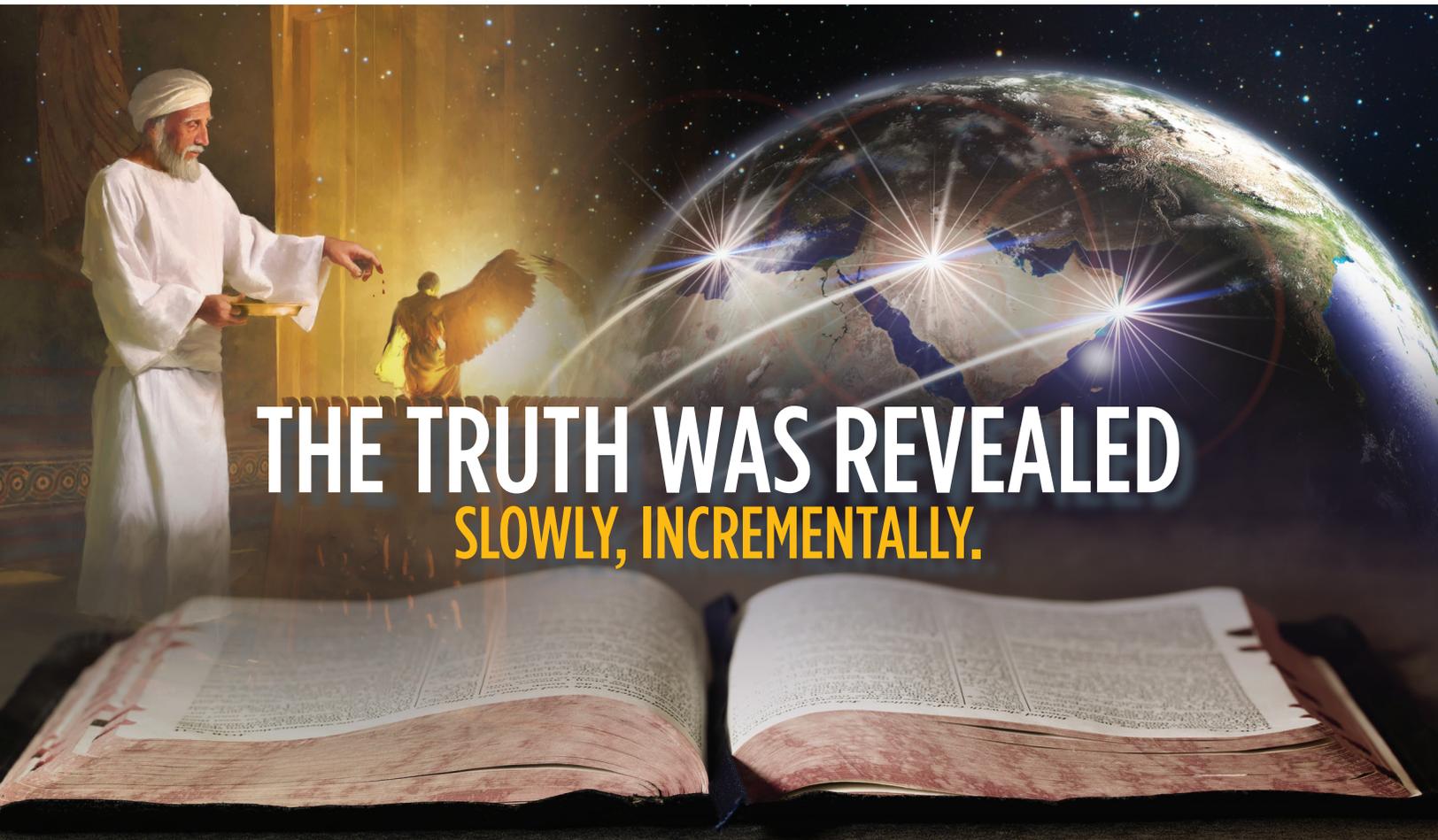
Adventists, such as James White & Joseph Bates, began to explore the functions of the high priest in the Old Testament. They discovered that it was not the earth that would be cleansed through the return of Jesus but rather the heavenly sanctuary that would be cleansed.

Indeed, they had been correct in proclaiming the first angel's message that the hour of God's judgment had come. Even though they had misunderstood where the judgment was to take place, they had fulfilled an important part of prophecy.

Fear God & Give Glory

The first angels' message to “Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:6-8) is packed with theological significance. There are two major aspects. The first being God's judgment and the second being worship. Out of the disappointment of 1844 came a discovery. The early Adventists gained an understanding of God's judicial process and the Sabbath in the years following the Great Disappointment.

The contributions to the sanctuary doctrine by James White, Josiah Litch and many others helped explain the confusion and disappointment of October 22, 1844. Through the continued study of the sanctuary, God guided His people to truth.



THE TRUTH WAS REVEALED SLOWLY, INCREMENTALLY.

Joseph Bates was one of the first to make the connection with the third angel's message, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). He believed that there was to be a group of people who kept all the ten commandments—including the fourth commandment on the seventh-day Sabbath.

An Appointment with Truth

Constant studying of the Bible and prayer had led great men and women into truth. The truth, however, was not revealed like a new car model at a show, covered in a blanket and ready to be unveiled in an instant. The truth was revealed slowly, incrementally. William Miller, Joseph Bates, James White, Josiah Litch and many others spent countless nights studying the Word of God, searching for the meaning of its great mysteries. Their work led to great discoveries. Though the journey to truth was turbulent, God still led His people and guided them on the path to truth.

Out of their disappointment, God had led the Advent believers to an appointment with prophetic truth. They were called to proclaim the first angel's message, that the hour of His judgment has come and that the God of creation wants you to worship Him the right way on His holy day—the Sabbath. They also saw deep significance in the second and third angels' messages. These too, were messages they must share with the world.

The first angel's message to "fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" is still relevant today. God is calling you to lead others to truth. There has never been a more urgent time than now to proclaim the messages of the three angels.

"We should be putting forth even greater effort than was put forth by those who proclaimed the first angel's message so faithfully. We are rapidly approaching the end of this earth's history; and as we realize that Jesus is indeed coming soon, we shall be aroused to labor as never before" (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. 402-403).

Further reading: *Great Controversy*, Chapters 21 & 22

By: Elijah Ramjattan

1 | The Advent believers' continued studies of the prophetic time periods, the symbolism of the Jewish feasts, and rabbinic calendar clarified the exact date foretold by the prophecy of Daniel 8:14. For more on this please see: P. Gerard Damsteeg's article "Early Adventist Timesetting and their Implications for Today." <https://www.andrews.edu/~damsteeg/EA%20Time.html>

GOSPEL, FEAR, AND GLORY

On April 29, 2019, a mysterious radio signal from space was detected at Parkes Observatory in New South Wells, Australia. The signal, now known as BLC1, seems to have come from the direction of Proxima Centauri—the second-closest star to Earth. Some wonder, “Are intelligent beings trying to reach us?”

YES! Though Proxima Centauri is the wrong place to look.

The fourteenth chapter of Revelation tells us of three angels “flying in the midst of heaven” with messages for “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). They “fly” over the earth, proclaiming with a “loud voice” (v. 7) an urgent warning for our world. Together, the angels deliver one unified end-time message we all need to hear.

This divine communication starts with the first angel.

Are you listening?

The Everlasting Gospel

The first angel has “the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 14:6). One might ask, “What is the everlasting gospel?”

The Gospel was first preached in the Garden of Eden. With guilty consciences, the Edenic couple hid in fear. Sin had twisted their image of the Creator. They expected God to soon arrive and execute the sentence they deserved—death. Yet, the very day that Adam and Eve rebelled against God, He showed up with a

message of hope. Our Savior walked into the garden with the everlasting gospel and rebuked the enemy saying, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).

The incredibly good news is that humanity was given a second chance in Christ—“the last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Through His perfect obedience, sacrificial death, and resurrection, Jesus succeeded where Adam failed; thus He reclaimed dominion over this world. Jesus puts “enmity” in the heart of every true believer, causing us to hate sin and love righteousness just like Him (Hebrews 1:8). This is the everlasting gospel—God’s answer to Satan’s attack on humanity. Accepting it will save us from receiving the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16, 17; 14:9–11).

Fear God

We are told to “fear God” in verse 7. The wise man Solomon said that it’s our duty to “fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Does this mean that we should obey God because we fear Him? Yes, but it’s not the “shaking in my boots” kind of fear.

Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). We learn from the apostle John that “perfect love casts out fear” and that “we love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:18, 19). This means that personally experiencing God’s perfect love dispels Satan’s lie—the idea that God wants to harm us—which enables us to love Him in return and leads to keeping His commandments.

READY TO LEARN MORE? www.ThreeAngels.info

A brand new website from the General Conference with all the best materials available on the three angel’s messages. Videos, audios, articles and more!

To “fear God” is to have a relationship with our Savior in which the bad kind of fear is “cast out.” Paul spoke of this as “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). The admonition to “fear God” is an urgent call to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. To “fear Him” is to fear nothing else. What incredible freedom we are invited to partake of!

Give Glory to Him

Next, we are called to “give glory to Him” (v. 7). When Moses asked God to reveal His glory, God described His character, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth . . .” (Exodus 34:6).

Our heavenly Father yearns for His children to have these very same traits. We have no glory of our own, but we can reflect His glory back to Him and to those around us. As we display these characteristics in our lives, we “give glory to Him.” Paul states, “We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Practically speaking, this means that by His grace we exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in our lives—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Our Mission

We’ve received a “signal” from “outer space”—three messages comprising God’s last call of mercy to this rebellious planet (we’ll study the second and third angels’ messages in the November and December issues of Bible Optics). These angels are not three literal angelic beings (see this month’s Q&A). They represent God’s faithful remnant—the heralds of these messages of hope.

Probation draws near and the fate of every man, woman, and child will soon be determined. Only those who accept the three angels’ messages will be prepared to stand for God in the time of trouble “such as never was since there was a nation” (Daniel 12:1). Scripture asks, “How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). We’ve been given the sacred privilege of delivering God’s final loving appeal. The prophet Isaiah exclaims, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news” (Isaiah 52:7).

Here’s what the servant of the Lord has to say about the messages and our mission: “In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19).

Are you in?

By: John Cloud

Join us next month as we consider the second angel’s message, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8).

More on the first angel’s message:

- See Sara Scarpino’s article “What Does it Mean to Truly Worship God?” in this issue to learn what it means to “worship Him who made heaven and earth” (Revelation 14:7).
- See May 2021 issue for a study of “the hour of His judgment” (Revelation 14:7).



**IN A SPECIAL SENSE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
HAVE BEEN SET IN THE WORLD AS
WATCHMEN AND LIGHT BEARERS.**

Bible Q&A

Who are the three angels of Revelation 14:6–12?

Revelation is a book of symbols and signs that alludes to the Old Testament in about 70% of its verses. To unlock this apocalyptic book, we must study the Scriptures that precede it. So how does the Bible use the word “angel” in other places?

The Hebrew word translated angel in the Old Testament is “malak.” The corresponding Greek word in the New Testament is “angelos.” Both words simply mean “messenger.” They can denote heavenly or earthly messengers.

The “malak” of the Lord comforted Hagar in the wilderness (Genesis 16:11) while a “malak” delivered the news of Uriah’s death to David (2 Samuel 11:23, 24).

The “angelos” Gabriel sought Mary’s consent to be the mother of Christ (Luke 1:26, 28, 38), and Jesus referred to John the Baptist as an “angelos” (Matthew 11:10).

Just as John the Baptist was sent to preach a message to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah, God’s last day remnant is sent to preach the three angels’ messages to prepare the world for His return.

The angelic beings that the Apostle John saw in vision represent those commissioned to preach the gospel. This job belongs to you and I—Christ’s church which is to be His witness “to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8).

Do you have questions about the three angels’ messages?

Send them to us at godled@kytn.org.



Called To Worship

Ever since I was eight years old, I've heard countless testimonies on everything from the Sabbath to the three angel's messages. I was given lots of truth, but I still grew up wondering what it had to do with me.

I knew the end times and the three angel's messages were positive for my parents—but I didn't really understand them. "Appreciate and preach about them, or else you're not a good Adventist" was the message I got.

When it came to worshipping God, I was taught it meant going to church on the right day. That was it. The idea of worship being part of a deeper relationship with Jesus was never even on my radar.

Can you relate?

Over the past few years, God has shown me what a true relationship with Him is supposed to be like. I've fallen in love with my Father and the three angels' messages have taken on new significance. Can I share with you what I've learned about the first angel's message and worship?

Knowing God through Worship

The first angel's message is this, "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'" (Revelation 14:6,7).

I used to think this angel was simply telling me to follow the first and fourth commandments, "You shall have no other gods before Me" and "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:3, 8). And that IS a hugely important part

of what his message is about. But the more I have come into relationship with Jesus, the more I have realized this isn't the only worship God has in mind. No, it goes much, much deeper than that.

This angel isn't just calling us to just attend church on the right day (though that's vital), he's also inviting us to get to know the One who made us through worship.

Think for a moment with me, what makes a car move? An engine, right? Will a car move without an engine? No. The engine is the heart of a vehicle. Without it, a car has no life.

Now let's talk about us. In the beginning Jesus breathed His breath of life into Adam and Eve. His Spirit—His love—gave them life. The only way for them to truly live, was for Jesus to be the engine of their hearts. The same is true for us.

Worship restores life within us. Worship is beholding God and resting in His presence. You are the one He made, and the one He wants. God knows that if He isn't living and breathing within you, you will not have life.

Broken Relationships

Growing up, my relationships with my dad, grandfather, uncles, and brother were dysfunctional and broken. I never saw a good man, or how he was meant to love his family like Christ loves the church. I didn't know it, but this brokenness in my heart stopped me from believing that God truly loved me. Or even wanted me.

Although I grew up knowing that God loved and wanted me, my heart was still broken from the past. God healed my relationship with my dad, but the damage had been done. When it came to teachings like the three angel's messages, the damage in my heart meant I felt major fear and doubt whenever I heard them.

Don't miss the next two issues of Bible Optics! We'll be exploring God's two final warnings to the inhabitants of Planet Earth. These messages reveal God's eager desire to save every one of us. Let's not miss them!

WORSHIP RESTORES LIFE AND HEALS THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS BEEN BROKEN BY SIN.

Perhaps you also feel apprehension when you hear the three angels' messages. Many of us do. That fear began when Adam and Eve fell. Sin broke their relationship with Jesus. The One person meant to fill their hearts was taken from them.

Thankfully, God has a plan to renew our relationship with Him. Worship restores life and heals the relationship that has been broken by sin. When we learn from Him in Bible study, talk with Him in prayer, and believe what He says about our worth we are worshipping Him. But the most healing worship is when we come to Jesus with our hearts open to be loved by Him. Ask God, "Lord how can I see your love for me today?"

The first angel is asking us to worship God. Why? Because His presence heals our hearts that are broken without Him. And the more He can come within you, the more you will know Him.

Why Worship Matters Now

The end times are upon us, and there is an Antichrist brewing in our midst. If we don't have the real God living inside our hearts, we aren't going to recognize the antichrist. Therefore, the first angel invites us to know the character of our Father for ourselves through worship.

Without a love relationship with Jesus where I sit with Him as His beloved child, I will only have Bible knowledge. I may know all the Bible's stories and prophecies, but if I do not know God and His heart for me, it will mean nothing. I won't know His character; nor will I recognize the opposing character of the antichrist.

The second and third angel's messages follow the first angel's call to worship. If we take this first message seriously and come to trust Him with our hearts, we will be prepared to face the challenges depicted in the next messages. Knowing and experiencing God's heart of love for us through worship will allow the Holy Spirit to prepare us for the end times.

It's very simple: we were made to know God. This is what the first angel's call to worship is about. This is what I never understood. All this talk about the end times and angels' messages were meant inspire me to get to know the One who made me.

Won't you join me in proclaiming, "I'm here to worship the true Jesus and no one else."

By: Sara Scarpino



Nelson Mercado
Pastor

Our goal is to help you grow in your understanding of key Bible teachings, gain a Biblical perspective on what is happening in our world today, and find tools to share your faith more effectively.

Learn more at www.nfsda.org & www.GodLed.net



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