



YES, NO AND MAYBE

1. I'm more judgmental than the people sitting on either side of me.
2. There are certain songs that make me emotional, because the lyrics echo my own life experiences.
3. Courtroom judges always give good news when they pronounce a verdict.
4. Right up to His Second Coming, Jesus gives sinners a chance to repent.
5. Hellfire will burn forever and ever for all eternity.

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

➤ READ Revelation 14 (NIV)

« What have you heard about the Three Angels' Messages?

» **Vs. 1: The lamb-** Despite the evil raging on earth, the victorious Lamb, Jesus Christ, stands untouched in heaven. This is the same Lamb introduced in 5:6.

• **Mount Zion-** In more ancient times, the stronghold and city of David. The site and another name for Jerusalem. The name used for the secure center of the Messianic reign (Psalm 2:6). In spiritual Zion, everlasting joy pervades (Isaiah 35:10).

• **Father's name written on their foreheads-** To have God's name on one's forehead is to be consecrated to serve God (3:12; 22:4); to bear the beast's counter-image is to be devoted to the service of Satan.

» **Vs. 3: No one could learn the song except the 144,000 -** New songs were sung to celebrate acts of deliverance. The sacrificial death of Jesus is central in the theme in Revelation.

» **Vs. 4: For they remained virgins -** This must certainly be taken metaphorically rather than any reflection on marriage as sinful or even the preference of celibacy over marriage. The words are a description of fornication or adultery—sexual immorality—rather than the relationship of husband and wife. But both in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, spiritual adultery was the figure used to cover the whole gamut of loyalty and purity in vows to God. Time and again, Israel is accused of adultery because of compromising with the heathen worship of idols and other gods.

« Why do you think it is important to Jesus to show us this moment of victory right after showing us the Dragon on the beasts of Rev. 13?

• **Vs. 6: The FIRST Angel's Message -** Eternal Gospel: His judgment has come! The adjective *eternal* means that the message is valid forever, or that it refers to an eternal truth about God and his will for humankind. The angel's message is that God will soon judge humanity; for God's persecuted people this is indeed good news.

« Why would this specific message be considered good news?

» **Vs. 8: The SECOND Angel's Message -** Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great: when used of a city, the verb "to fall" means that the city no longer exists as a place where people can lead normal lives; for whatever reason—war, earthquake, fire, pestilence—it has ceased to function as a community and is abandoned by its citizens (see a more detailed description in 18:2–3). The repetition of the verb fallen is to emphasize the complete nature of Babylon's ruin. Although the Greek word for wine is used, in translation a general word for "strong drink" or "strong alcoholic beverage" can be used, rather than the specific fermented beverage made from grapes.

« What is significant about this second message?

» **Vs. 9: The THIRD Angel's Message -** If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their

DIG DEEPER



NOTES

DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

forehead or on their hand: The third message is directed especially to those who are deciding about following “the beast.” It is a warning that “the easy way” is really the hard way, that to “go along with the world” means to go away from God. The Greek text reads, “If any man continues to worship the beast,” suggesting that there is still opportunity for repentance and salvation. The wine is unmixed, that is, it has no water in it to weaken it (as was most often the case when wine was served).

« How does this third message reveal God’s true character?

» **Vs. 11: The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever** - This is certainly an allusion to the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:28; Jude 7) and, in Revelation, of Babylon (19:3). It is contrasted to the incense smoke of the continuous worship of heaven (19:3) and of the prayers of the saints (5:8; 8:4). The verb is in the “punctiliar” form which means finality, not perpetuity. Jesus’ image of hellfire is that, although the fire is unquenchable, those cast into it are destroyed like weeds rather than burned eternally (Matt. 3:10, 12; 10:28; 13:30). Even passages that speak of eternal punishment do not affirm that individuals are placed there permanently (Matt. 25:46; see also Jude 6–7). More convincing evidence for annihilationism comes from Paul, who never speaks of hellfire but uses the image of eternal death and destruction as the fate of wicked (Rom. 1:32; 6:23; 1 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 1:28; 3:18–19; 2 Thess. 1:6–10). The author of 2 Peter seems to speak of punishment for false prophets and sinful angels until the day of judgment after which they will be destroyed (2 Pet. 2:1–10; 3:7).

« What would it say about God’s character if he tortured sinful humanity without end in hell?

THE TREE ANGEL’S MESSAGES IN SUMMARY:

In this vision John sees and hears three angels flying high in the air, proclaiming that God’s judgment of humanity will take place soon: Babylon will be destroyed, and the followers of the beast will suffer eternal punishment. The final message, which comes from heaven, is one of hope and encouragement for the Christians

« How are these three angel’s messages relevant to us personally today?

» **Vs. 16: The earth was harvested** - This first sickle harvests the righteous from all the inhabitants of the earth, which indicates that it is for both Jews and Gentiles.

» **Vs. 19: Great winepress of God’s wrath** - This was a common figure in the Old Testament for God’s execution of judgment. In today’s language we would say, “It’s time to cut the cake!” Although a seemingly destructive activity with a knife, it means that it is time to make a decision so we can move on and not be held back from the party by some people who don’t want to be here!

« How does this winepress demonstrate the love of God?

» **Vs. 18: A distance of 1600 stadia** - Ironically, forty, another number that when squared equals 1600, was a traditional number for punishment (Num. 14:33; Deut. 25:3; Acts 1:3). Sixteen hundred contrasts with 144,000, the other squared number in Revelation, which symbolizes those who are sealed from persecution by God (Rev. 7:4; 14:1). The meaning of the number used in this passage is that God will finally judge the physical world with great power.

« How is the universal judgment of sin all over the world good news?

MY PRAYER...

1. How significant are the Three Angel’s Messages to my life right now?
2. What is it about God’s judgment that is good news to me personally?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?



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