

The Remnant and the Three Angels' Messages (Part 2)



12 in a series

Introduction

In the 19th Century, the famous author Jules Verne wrote a book entitled: *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. This science fiction novel, since made into a number of movies, tells the story of adventurous explorers entering an Icelandic volcano and journeying into the depths of the planet. They encounter many unexpected hazards and surprises before finally achieving their goal.

A experience of studying the book of Revelation can be a similar experience. For example, we begin by entering God's heavenly throne room through visions given by Christ to the Apostle John (e.g. Revelation chapters 4 & 5). We then encounter some unexpected surprises in the key issues found chapters 12 – 14, before we finally reach our goal in the concluding chapters – eternal life with our Creator (see Revelation 21:1-5).

The Three Angel's Messages of chapter 14 - and in particular the First Angel's Message of verses 6-7 - are at the very centre of Revelation. It is in this middle section of Revelation that we arrive at the very heart of the deep spiritual issues our Saviour wants to communicate to us through this book.

Just like Jules Verne's book, Revelation throws up some unexpected surprises – our faithfulness to the Ten Commandment being one of them. We see the honouring of the Ten Commandments as a central issue and - in particular - the seventh-day Sabbath.

Any faithful reader of Scripture is impressed to ask themselves: **What will I personally do with what Revelation is telling me - and how can I apply these spiritual message to my life today?**

Overview for Session #12

1. Overview of the Remnant
2. The Seventh Day in Scripture and History
3. The Second Angel's Message
4. The Third Angel's Message

1. Overview of the Remnant

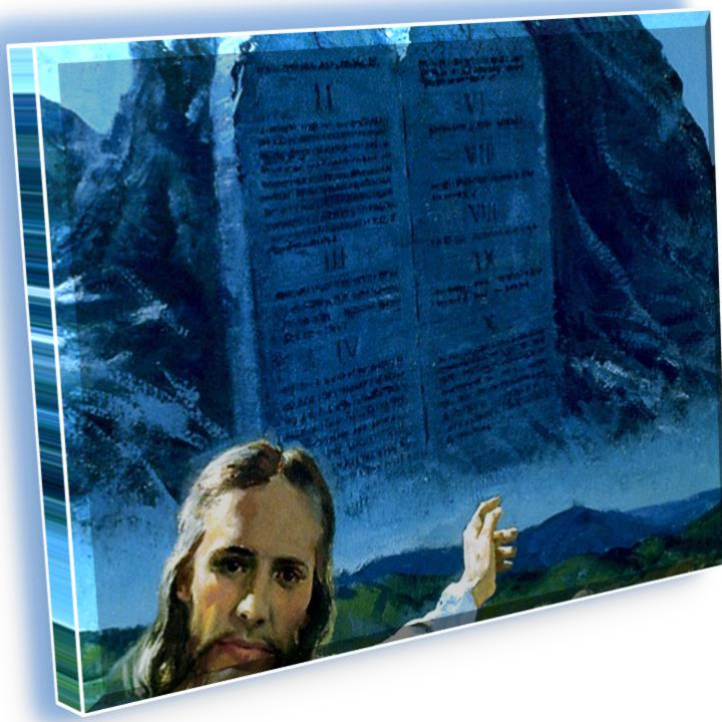
The Remnant people are the last believers on the planet just before the climactic Second Coming of Jesus. They have a specific response to the Dragon's attack on them. Staying true to God they choose to keep His commandments out of love for their Creator. They are redeemed and they uphold the righteousness of their God. The remnant are promised the reward of everlasting life.

The message of the first angel is at the very heart of these final messages to the entire world. It is a call to worship the true Creator God and not the counterfeit anti-Christ which is rampant in the Earth at the end time.

The characteristics of God's Remnant are as follows:

- They accept Christ's purchase of their eternal lives - Revelation 14:4.
- Their actions reflect the character of Jesus - Revelation 14:1-5.
- They obey the commandments of God - Revelation 14:12 & 12:17.
- They spread the three angel's messages throughout the earth - Revelation 14:6-13.

Question 1: How would you summarise the characteristics of the Remnant people?



2. The Seventh Day in Scripture and History

In our last lesson, we saw how Scripture supports the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath and how the first angel's message upholds the sanctity of the fourth commandment. Here again is the first angel's message:

Revelation 14:6-7⁶ *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—⁷saying 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.”*

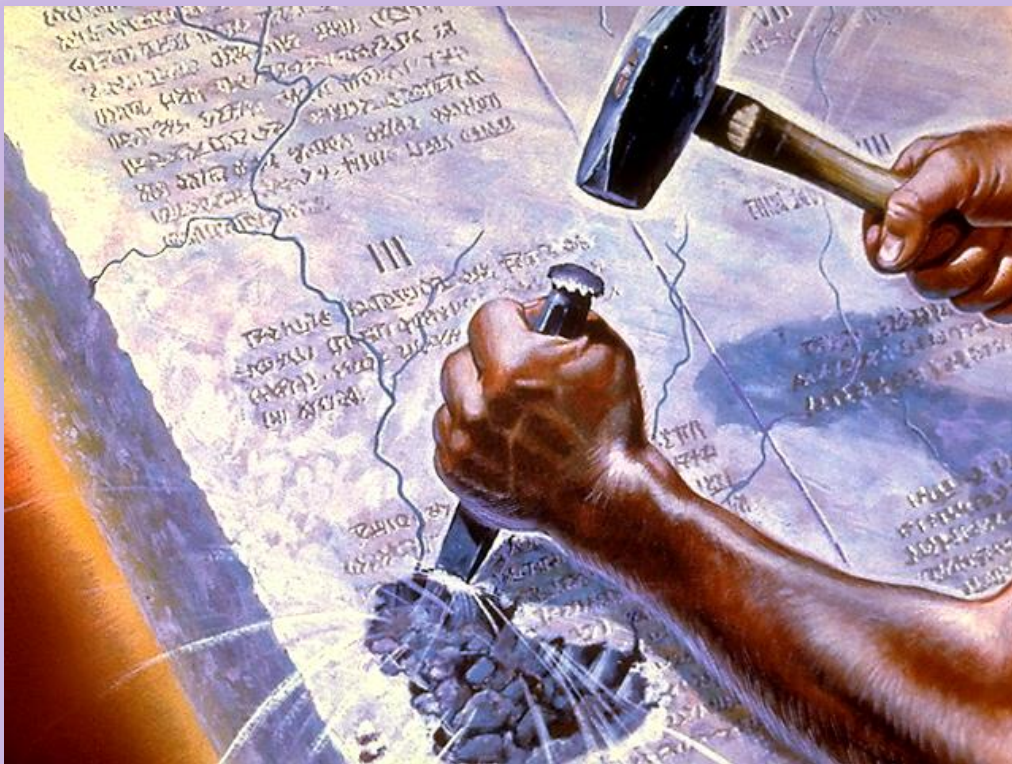
Compare this message with the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8-11....

Exodus 20:8-11 ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy... ¹¹ For in six days **the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.**

Question 2: What’s the significance of the parallel wording in Rev. 14:7 & Exodus 20:11?:

The message of the first angel has referenced the fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments – the command which honours the Seventh-day Sabbath.

The origin of the Sabbath shows us that the day did not follow Roman timing (i.e. from midnight to midnight) but rather was observed from sunset on Friday night to sunset on Saturday night (e.g. Leviticus 23:32, see Genesis 1:1 – 2:3).



a) HOW DID THE “CHANGE” TO SUNDAY HAPPEN?

Christians faithfully observed the Sabbath after Christ died. However, within the first few centuries there was rapid deterioration of the faith. The seemingly harmless roots of later changes go back to the time of the apostles just as Paul predicted. While Philip and John were still living, Christians voluntarily commenced celebrating the crucifixion

weekend. They centred their celebrations on the crucifixion day which was the day of the Jewish Passover. Christians suffered much from their perceived origin as a Jewish sect. The commemoration of the Passover day in memory of the crucifixion was seen in Rome as further identifying Christianity with Judaism, so the early Christians decided to make a change.

It was Sixtus, the bishop (or Pope) of the Church in Rome who started the process that ended in transference of the day of worship. He led Christians to celebrate not the crucifixion but the resurrection. Further, Christians were to celebrate the Passover on a Sunday, not on any other weekday on which it naturally fell. However, it was at first not a weekly but an annual observance. The Christians in the city of Rome dreaded being confused with the Jews who had become extremely unpopular because of a series of Jewish revolts against Roman rule. By changing this celebration to Sunday and applying it to the resurrection, they hoped to avoid being thought of as Jewish.

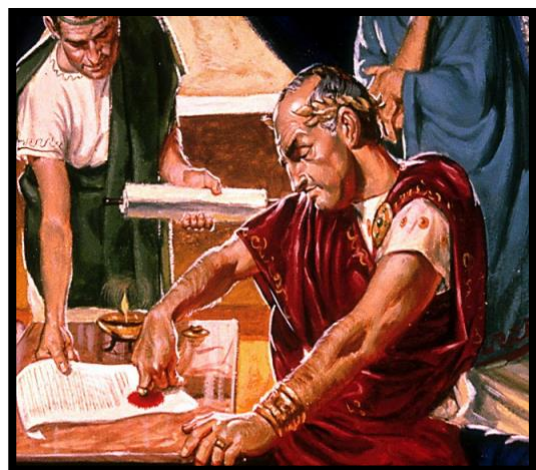
Another significant factor in this change from the biblical Sabbath to Sunday was the first day of the week was a joyous festival in the Roman Empire in honour of the sun. The converted sun-worshipper would feel very much at home in the Christian spring festival to honour the resurrection which was held on the sun's day.

How and when the step from the annual resurrection celebration on a Sunday to weekly worship every Sunday is not clear. It was a gradual process led by traditions and customs, and not by Scripture.

The next important act in the drama came in A.D. 200 when Pope Victor sought to enforce the annual observance of resurrection Sunday. He ordered all bishops who would not follow the plan of celebrating the resurrection festival to be 'excommunicated'. Sunday observance was the vehicle the Bishop of Rome used in his attempt to gain control of the church.

Constantine (the emperor of Rome 305-337AD) was responsible for legislating a great deal of the compromises between the pagan religion and Christianity. He welded the two together and in so doing elevated the day of the sun above the Sabbath. The first civil law in favour of Sunday was passed in 321 A.D. and the church began to follow soon after. In 363 A.D. at the Council of Laodicea the church began to officially transfer the 'solemnity' of the Sabbath to Sunday.

The first Sunday law by Consantine



Various councils and laws increasingly condemned the biblical seventh-day Sabbath and instead exalted Sunday. It is in this way the pagan institution of honouring the sun's day became the official day for Christian worship.

b) WHO CHANGED THE SABBATH TO SUNDAY?

(Excerpt from "The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine", page 50)

Question: Which is the Sabbath day?

Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D.336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.

The Medieval Christian Church (specifically the Roman Catholic Church) has claimed responsibility for the transference of the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday.

Question 3: Do you think this is enough "authority" to change the Sabbath day? _____

c) SUNDAY IN THE BIBLE

In the eight passages which mention the first day of the week (Sunday), there is:

- *no command to keep it,
- *no record of its being appointed as a Sabbath,
- *no record of any blessing being placed on it,
- *no record of its being made holy,
- *no record of any sacredness being attached to it,
- *no promise of a blessing for its observance,
- *no threat of punishment for its non-observance,
- *it is not once called the Sabbath or given any sacred title,
- *no record that Christ kept it or commanded it to be kept,
- *no record that the apostles kept it or commanded it to be kept,
- *no record that the early Christian churches observed it.

In fact there is nothing, absolutely nothing, in all the Bible that gives the slightest hint of a Sunday institution. The observance of Sunday is a practice for which there is no Bible authority.

Question 4: If there is no Bible command to observe Sunday should we keep it anyway?

Question 5: Do you wish to honour the biblical seventh-day Sabbath in obedience to God's Word? _____

d) THE SEA BEAST AND THE LITTLE HORN

We saw in a previous lesson that the Little Horn power in Daniel chapter 7 is the same entity as the Sea Beast in Revelation 13:1-10. Through the characteristics of these two symbols we see a direct connection to the Medieval Christian Church which attempted to make changes to the law of God. We have seen how both the Ten Commandments and the Bible Sabbath have been changed.

3. The Second Angel's Message

Revelation 14:8 ⁸ *And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*

The first angel's message (Rev. 14:6-7) is now being proclaimed in the earth. The second and third angel's messages are yet future. Here we see a prediction that the days of spiritual Babylon's are numbered and its fall is imminent. This evil power is destined for defeat. Babylon is paralleled to the counterfeit trinity in Revelation chapter 13 which consists of the dragon (Satan), the Sea Beast (a religious power) and the Land Beast (a political power which mirrors the church-state pattern of the Sea Beast).

Babylon has always been symbolic of opposition to God. This unholy trinity will be on the earth just before Jesus returns. It is a last attempt of Satan to turn people's allegiance away from following God and His truth. Satan attempts to set himself up as god of the Earth but in the end he will fail miserably (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17)



What is Babylon? In the Old Testament, Babylon was a nation that oppressed the people of God and had a counterfeit system of worship. Revelation takes the term 'Babylon' and uses it to describe the false worship in the religious world and in particular the erroneous system of the Medieval Christian Church.

Revelation 18:2-4 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."

Question 6: If you found yourself in spiritual 'Babylon' how would you respond to God's call to "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"? _____

The same message that proclaims the fall of Babylon calls men and women to come out and away from all false worship and return to the great truths of the Bible - truths held by Christ and the original believers. This is a call back to the "Bible only" as our sure foundation of faith and Christian practice.

4. THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

Revelation 14:9-11 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "IF ANYONE WORSHIPS THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE, AND RECEIVES HIS MARK ON HIS FOREHEAD OR ON HIS HAND, HE HIMSELF SHALL ALSO DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

This is a warning against the worship of the beast and its image; also against the receiving of its mark. God's last message will proclaim His fearful judgments on those who refuse



to heed His message and cast in their lot with apostate religion. God calls His people from all churches to accept the truth and forsake all false teachings.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; HERE ARE THOSE WHO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE FAITH OF JESUS.

Here is the contrast between those who serve God, and those who worship the beast power. The genuine faith in Jesus of His followers leads to obedience to the commandments of God.

God's last message will include the teachings of Jesus. Christians who love their Lord and have based their faith on His teachings as outlined in the Bible will proclaim it. And it will emphasise the commandments of God.

Question 7: Can you explain the difference between those in spiritual Babylon and those who are not? _____

Here we have the picture of God's final call to people before the Lord Jesus returns. This call is a world-wide message: a message that is borne to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people" to prepare men and women for the coming of Christ. It is to be sounded with a loud voice proclaiming the everlasting gospel. God's final call will remind men and women that the hour of God's judgment has arrived and is calling them back to the worship of the Creator through the observance of His true Sabbath. It will then tell of the downfall of Babylon which is the great false religious system set up by the adversary of Christ and will warn men and women against the worship of the beast, his image and his mark. Those who accept the message will be the remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. This will be God's final call to humankind - His last message to all nations on Earth.

This message is being taken to the world today through a movement of people raised up by God - just as surely as were Noah and John the Baptist. This message rises above sectarianism and transcends the barriers of denominationalism. It is God's final message to help men and women get ready to meet Jesus when He comes. May the Lord Jesus guide you into all truth and when you find it may you cherish it.

Buy the truth and sell it not. Proverbs 23:23.

Question 8: Is it your plan to take your stand on God's side and be faithful to Him? _____

