

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

19

GOD'S LAST WARNING IS NOW BEING GIVEN

Following the theme of our previous lesson, God has opened the prophecies to alert us to the shortness of time remaining in which to make our decision, either for Him, or against Him.

Those who received the prophecies were elated at the prospects of the soon return of Jesus. But their hearts sank as their hopes were not realised at the time calculated. What they thought was the date for the second coming of Jesus, was actually the date for the beginning of the judgement.

God allowed the mistake to run its course, thus testing those who would be faithful to Him even though it appeared He had failed them (Isa.54:5-8; Job 13:15). He still had work for them to do! They were told that they were to prophecy again. But what were they to prophecy? Those who had proved their love for the Gospel and Jesus through this testing time, could now go

into the world and proclaim, with the power of God, that the judgement hour had come.

At every stage through the history of man, God has continued to give His warnings (Amos 3:7). But further to this, there are two specific occasions that form a precedent to the final call to salvation.

What constitutes God's final warning and how to recognise the genuine so that we are not taken by false doctrine, will now form the basis of our study.

The Old Testament is replete with messages of a coming Messiah, or Saviour and ends with a proclamation that preceding this Messiah, would be the appearance of Elijah the prophet (Malachi 4:5,6). But what has this to do with the coming of Jesus in the latter day? There are three incidents where God refers to the appearance of Elijah to emphasise the urgency and gravity of His warnings to the people of earth. The third and last of these events is now spreading through the world and proves another testimony to the extreme nearness of our Lord's return. In our study we shall examine these three incidents concerning the warnings of Elijah and their relevance for our day...

1. How was the prophecy of the return of Elijah the prophet fulfilled?

Matthew 11:10-14; 17:10-13 _____

2. How can another man take the place of Elijah and the prophecy still be true?

Luke 1:15-17 _____

Note: The prophecy was not so much referring to the literal appearance of Elijah, but rather a reissuing of the message of Elijah. Even Jesus reiterated the message of Elijah when John the Baptist was cast into prison (Matthew 3:1-3; 4:12,17).

3. What was the message of Elijah that was so relevant for both the time of Christ and the days of Elijah when the people had forgotten God and become absorbed in worldly interests?

1Kings 18:18,21,36,37,40 _____

Note: Elijah warned the people of their present course and of its consequences; he also gave them the solution whereby they may withdraw from their covenant with death and again embrace life. To summarise the message of Elijah:

☛ We have forsaken the commandments of God and worshipped the gods of this world.

☛ God has proved Himself, choose Him and choose life. A choice for the world is to choose death (Deut.30:19; Joshua 24:15).

☛ The Lord has revealed His power to save and will turn the heart of the honest soul back to Himself.

☛ Those who refuse to turn to God in spite of His pleadings and warnings will be destroyed (Hebrews 10:29).

4. Compare the message of John the Baptist with that of Elijah.

Matthew 3:1-3,7,8; 11:10 _____

Luke 1:16,17 _____

Luke 3:17 (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) _____

5. The forgoing, being the message of Elijah, was repeated by John the Baptist and confirmed by Jesus at His first advent. What does the prophecy of Malachi say that may suggest a double fulfilment of the Elijah message and that this proclamation will be repeated again, just before the second coming of Jesus?

Malachi 4:5,6 _____

Note: Christ had already confirmed the appearance of Elijah in the person of John the Baptist, as the forerunner to prepare the hearts of the people to receive Him at His first advent. The statement in Malachi refers to "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" and would seem to be more applicable to the second advent and the judgement than to the first advent (Acts 2:20; 2Peter 3:10). So then, do the Scriptures confirm the Elijah message on a third occasion, as a herald of the judgement and the imminent return of the Lord of lords and King of kings? Is there a proclamation specifically adapted to the time of the judgement, that like the Elijah message, directs the people of the earth to choose God and warns of the consequences of indifference and rebellion? -- Yes! It is commonly termed the three angels' message. Read on and learn why...

6. God commissioned three angels to give a message to the inhabitants of earth. In the proclamation of the first of these angels, what event is stated as having begun?

Revelation 14:6,7 _____

Note: The proclamation of the three angels message of Revelation 14 is unique to the last days, unique, in that it announces the judgement of God as having started. This of course cannot be true until after the judgement has actually begun; we learned from an earlier lesson (12) that the judgement began at the end of the 2300 day (year) prophecy, in 1844. Hence the final warning of the judgement hour could not have been given with power until after that time. The apostles spoke of a day when the judgement would come (Acts 24:25), but the announcement of Revelation 14 says that that day has now come. The last days are NOW, the last warning is NOW being given.

7. What is the reason given by the first angel that we should worship God?

Revelation 14:7 _____

Note: Review lesson 1.

8. The angel proclaims the everlasting Gospel, what power attends that call and what is its objective?

Romans 1:16 _____

9. What is the message of the second angel?

Revelation 14:8 _____

Notes: "Babylon" is a title used in Scripture to designate a corrupt church. In ancient times Babylon became the seat of heathen religion and the worship of the sun. Conversely, "Jerusalem" represents the church made up of God's faithful and obedient followers and the church to which He has placed His name. When Israel was faithful and obedient to God, Jerusalem was the centre of that worship (Micah 4:1,2; Psalm 76:1,2 [note that "Salem" was the original name for Jerusalem]). Hence, Jerusalem and Babylon, historically and spiritually, are fitting symbolic appellations for the religious system they each represent.

"Babylon the great fallen", refers to the false religions of the earth having overstepped the boundary of God's tolerance and have fallen from grace (It is possible to fall from God's grace [Hebrews 12:15; Exodus 32:33]). God will NOT accept a man made oblation, or wilful disobedience in place of His revealed will (Mark 7:6-9; Jeremiah 14:10-12). The identification of the earthly power(s) under the figure of Babylon will be discussed more fully in a later lesson.

10. In a few words, summarise the message of the third angel?

Revelation 14:9-11 _____

Note: a) This Gospel opens declaring that the LORD is God and worthy of our worship and devotion. He has set before us in the

three angels' messages, the words of Elijah, if the beast is God, then follow him, if the LORD is God, then follow him. He also implies that time is running out, for the judgement has now begun. Also contained in the three angel's messages and confirmed by John the Baptist, is the destruction of those who reject His call to salvation (see Q3 and Q4).

b) The "beast " is another term embodied in the representation of Babylon and again this topic will be expanded in future lessons.

c) "The smoke of their torment ascending up for ever and ever", is often interpreted to mean an eternity of burning in torment. But this is NOT the case. God said that the wages of sin is death, NOT eternal life in hell (Romans 6:23). The eternity spoken of, is the eternity of destruction, or non existence, that the fire executes upon the wicked; there is no resurrection from this death (Ezekiel 28:18,19).

11. What is said to precede the coming of Jesus?

Malachi 4:5,6

Note : From the forgoing, it may now be seen that the three angel's messages is the herald given in the spirit and power of Elijah, a fulfilment of the prophecy that immediately precedes the second coming of Jesus. From lesson 18 we have learned that there are no more prophetic time periods to lapse; the 2300 day prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9 was the last time prophecy to be fulfilled (lesson 12) and the last warning message is now going to the world. This generation is the first generation to qualify to be the last generation in this present world. Elijah gave the message first and John the Baptist repeated the same warnings. Who will give the third and final message in the spirit and power of Elijah, now that the judgement has begun? And how will we know the truth when we hear it?

WHO WILL GIVE THE LAST ELIJAH MESSAGE ?

To find an answer to this question, we would do well to examine the character of the people whom God had chosen to deliver the message on the two preceding occasions.

a) ELIJAH

12. What was the character of Elijah?

James 5:16,17,18 _____

Note: "Elias" is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Elijah" (the OT. was written in Hebrew, the NT. was written in Greek). Elijah prayed and got results. Not because he was a man of human passion, but because he was a righteous man (v.16).

13. What did Elijah claim to be?

1Kings 18:36 _____

14. Elijah asked God to hear him and answer his prayer. What was the result of that prayer?

1 Kings 18:37-39 _____

15. What is God's response to the prayers of those who do not repent of and forsake their sin?

Proverbs 1:23-33 _____

Psalm 66:18 _____

Ezekiel 20:31 _____

Note: God did answer Elijah's prayer. The prayer of faith can move the hand of Omnipotence, but the unrepentant have no power with God. Notice the promise mentioned in the next question.

16. What does God require of His disciples (servants, as was Elijah), that they may receive answer to prayer?

John 15:7,8 _____

Note: It is clear that Elijah was a converted man, a man with the same human frailties as the rest of us, but through the power of God, he had turned away from his sin. This he did in exactly the same manner as you and I may also do (see how in lessons 3,4,5 and 6).

b) JOHN the BAPTIST

17. The second exponent of the Elijah message was John the Baptist. What was the character of this servant of God?

Matthew 11:11 _____

Luke 1:15,17 _____

Note: It was none other than Jesus Himself who made this commendation of John the Baptist. And it was an angel from heaven, the Lord's messenger, who said that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit and work in the spirit and power of Elijah (v.13). Two unchallengeable sources.

18. Who receives the Holy Spirit?

Acts 5:32 _____

Compare Hebrews 5:8,9 and Ephesians 4:30 _____

Note: Those who are obedient are "sealed" by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. IT IS ONLY THE OBEDIENT WHO HAVE THE FAITH TO PRAY FOR A MIRACLE AND HAVE IT WORK (Romans 16:25,26; Matthew 17:20; 1John 3:21,22; Romans 14:22,23; 1John 5:14,15).

What then is the qualification for those who give the Elijah message and turn the hearts of the people to God in readiness for the second coming of Jesus? --- They are obedient to the Word of God (1Peter 1:22,23).

In this lesson we have seen that the Elijah message for the last days, is that given by the three angels of Revelation 14. The three angels message closes contrasting those who rebel against God and those who accept the warning and act upon it.

19. How does God describe His faithful people who respond positively to the warning and who live at the time the three angels message is being given?

Revelation 14:12 _____

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DISCIPLES

Who will God commission to proclaim the last warning through the Elijah message? Is it to be the work of just three angels?...

20. What is the work of an "angel"?

Hebrews 1:7,14 _____

Note: In this context, "ministering spirits" are the heavenly angels. In another context, Revelation 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14, it is clearly not a reference to heavenly angels, as these angels have human traits and experiences, notice Revelation 2:4,9,10,14,20; 3:2,3,10,16,17.

If an angel is a ministering spirit, then these human "angels" may be ministers, church leaders, or any of the servants, or followers of God (2Cor.3:5,6; 4:7; 5:20). Notice that not all of these professed church people were ministering in their churches the way God wanted them to do. In fact some of them were absolutely corrupt (2Cor.11:3,4; 4:1-7; Galatians.1:6-9). See how Christ referred to some of the church leaders of His day and again in the days of Isaiah, refer to Matthew 23 and Isaiah 9:16. Even Satan appears as an angel of light (pretending to have the truth) and his ministers appear as ministers of righteousness, but they are in fact ministers of darkness, a fraud (2Cor.11:13-15; 2Peter 2:17-19).

21. Three angels are said to proclaim the everlasting Gospel. What was Christ's commission to His disciples, servants, ministers?

Matthew 28:18-20; 24:14 _____

22. What are the characteristics of Christ's disciples?

Revelation 14:12 _____

John 15:7,8 _____

John 8:31 _____

Note: It can be seen that the disciples of Christ have the same spirit and character of obedience as did Elijah and John the Baptist. It is the disciples of Christ who give the three angels message. By their word and their testimony, they live the truth and love and teach the Gospel. Their lives testify to the power of God to change a character from one that use to delight in sin, to one that now delights in righteousness (Revelation 14:12). Like those who passed through the great disappointment, they are prepared to say, "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15).

John the Baptist said that he was a voice crying in the wilderness (John 1:23). There will be many voices crying in the last days, as Satan steps up his efforts to deceive those who are not enlightened by the light of the glorious Gospel (2Corinthians 4:3,4). Every honest Christian wants to know how to serve God and worship Him the way Christ has said to do it. A false three angels message given by him who comes as an "angel of light" will lead the careless and unheeding into perdition (death) (2Cor.11:3,4,13,14,15; Rev.17:8).

Satan hates the Gospel of Jesus Christ, including the three angels message. Especially is the three angels message the object of his attack, as it reveals a worship system that creates blindness to the truth. That message is God's final call to every honest soul, to recognise the deception by His revelations and to come out of the false doctrines (wine) of Babylon (Rev. 18:1-4).

The following group of lessons will focus on what is taking place within the churches of the world, what Christ is doing and what Satan is doing, that each of us should be able to see exactly where we stand in respect to this great controversy between Christ and Satan !

