A PROPHETIC VOICE



SERMONS BOOK

FOR EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGNS

ONEVOICE27

MISSION FOR ALL

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION
PERSONAL MINISTRY

Dear preachers...

There are moments in history when God needs a voice. **This is one of them.**

The world needs to hear once again the message of salvation, hope, and preparation for the Second Coming of Christ. That is why we are issuing the challenge of "A PROPHETIC VOICE": an evangelistic series in which pastors, evangelists, and lay members unite to proclaim God's final message with clarity and power.

But before asking God to use our voice, we must ask Him to grant us the anointing of His Holy Spirit.

The power of evangelism does not lie in the preacher's eloquence, but in the presence of the Holy Spirit. We need men and women who pray, who study, who have a deep understanding of the message they are going to proclaim, and who allow the Holy Spirit to speak through them.

Paul said: "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 1 Corinthians 2:4

Therefore, A PROPHETIC VOICE requires prepared and consecrated preachers. Consecrated so that the Holy Spirit can use them. Prepared to master the message. Convinced so they can preach with authority. Passionate about making clear appeals.

We do not preach simply to fill auditoriums. We preach to win souls.

Every sermon should seek a decision. Every appeal should open a door to Christ. Every preacher should remember that behind every face is a person for whom Jesus died.

Today God is still asking: "Whom shall I send?" May our response be Isaiah's: "Here am I! Send me."

Let us, as pastors, evangelists, and lay members, raise A PROPHETIC VOICE. A voice filled with the Spirit. A voice grounded in the Word. A voice that proclaims Christ. A voice that calls for a decision. A voice that, by the grace of God, may be the instrument that brings many souls to the feet of Jesus.

Let us consecrate ourselves! Let us prepare! Let us preach! Because there are still souls who need to hear the VOICE of God.

Your friend in the service of our Savior.

William Barrero Sáenz.

Personal Ministries and Sabbath School,
Inter-American Division (IAD).

A PROPHETIC VOICE

A VOICE announced Christ's first coming.
A VOICE proclaims His second coming.



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Sermon 1



A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

Main text: Isaiah 40:3
Supporting texts: Matthew 3:1–3; Luke 1:13–17; Luke 3:3–6; Malachi 3:1; Revelation 14:6–7.

Central idea

Before Christ's first coming, God raised up A VOICE to prepare the way. Before Christ's Second Coming, God will once again raise up A VOICE to prepare the world.

INTRODUCTION

When a voice announces that something is about to happen

On the night of **April 18, 1775**, in the British colonies of North America, one of the most famous episodes in the history of American independence took place.

Paul Revere rode out to alert the residents of several towns that British troops were on the move. The purpose of that mission was simple but urgent: **to warn people that something was about to happen and that they needed to prepare**.

It was not just any voice. It was a voice saying, in essence: **"Get ready! Something is about to happen."**

The importance of that night was not in the messenger. The importance was in **the event that stood behind the message**.

The voice was important because **the event was momentous**.

And this brings us to one of the most extraordinary statements in the entire Bible:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.'" Isaiah 40:3.

Isaiah does not say, "Listen to the voice." He says, **"Prepare the way."** Why? Because **someone is coming**.

The message was not about John. The message was about **Christ**. John was not the event. **John was the voice announcing the event.**

Because just as there was A VOICE that prepared the way for Christ's first coming, the Bible announces that there will be A VOICE—a worldwide message that will prepare the way for

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Christ's Second Coming.

And here is the extraordinary parallel: **Isaiah 40:3 → Matthew 3:3 → Revelation 14:6–12.**

A voice before the first coming. A voice before the Second Coming.

I. A VOICE WAS PROPHESIED

Isaiah 40:3. Let us read it again: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.'"

There is something impressive here. **The voice was announced before it appeared.** Isaiah is looking into the future. Israel did not yet know John. John had not yet been born. But God had already announced his mission.

1. God always prepares before He intervenes

Before the Flood: **Noah preached.**

Before the deliverance of Israel: **Moses appeared.**

Before Christ's first coming: **John preached.**

And before Christ's return: **God has announced a final message.**

God does not act capriciously in history. He prepares people for what is coming.

Amos 3:7 says: "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."

2. The voice had a defined mission

It was not a voice to entertain. It was not a voice to impress. It was not a voice to make the messenger famous. It had a mission:

"Prepare the way of the LORD." The message had a purpose: to **prepare people to meet the Messiah.**

Ellen G. White makes an extraordinarily direct application to our mission.

In *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 8, page 9, she writes: "What is our work? The same as that given to John the Baptist..."

She then quotes Isaiah 40:3–5 and states that all who are truly engaged in the work of the Lord in these last days must bear a decided message. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 9).

This is impressive. **Ellen White directly connects our last-day mission with the mission of John the Baptist.**

John prepared the way for the first coming. **We must prepare the way for the Second Coming.**

II. A VOICE APPEARED IN THE WILDERNESS Matthew 3:1–3

After approximately four centuries of prophetic silence since Malachi, something extraordinary happens.

Matthew 3:1 says: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea." And verse 2 presents his message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Then Matthew says: "For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness…'"

The prophecy was finding its fulfillment.

Why the wilderness? Because John did not arise from the centers of power. He did not come from Herod's palace. He did not come from the Sanhedrin. He did not come from the rabbinical schools.

God raised up a voice **from the wilderness**. Ellen White explains that God called John to the wilderness, away from rabbinical training and the prevailing influences around him, to prepare him for a special mission. (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 101–102).

And there is a powerful lesson here: **Before God uses our voice publicly, He wants to shape our character privately.**

John spent time in communion with God. Ellen White says that, in solitude, **"by meditation and prayer,"** John sought "to gird up his soul for the lifework before him." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 102).

This gives us a sequence: **Solitude → communion → character → message → mission.**

We cannot have a great voice for God unless we have first learned to listen to the voice of God.

John was not the message; John was the voice

This is a fundamental distinction. John 1:19–23 records that when the priests asked him, "Who are you?" John did not say, "I am the Messiah."

He did not say, "I am the main character." He said: **"I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," '"**

What extraordinary humility! **John knew who he was, and he also knew who he was not.**

He was a voice. Christ was the message. And when Jesus finally appeared, John declared: **"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"** John 1:29.

The true voice always ends by pointing to Jesus.

Ellen White puts it beautifully: as John saw the people turning to him, "he sought every opportunity of directing their faith to **Him who was to come**." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 108).

That must also be our rule: **If our preaching causes people to admire the preacher more than Christ, we have stopped being a voice.**

The true voice says: **"Do not look at me. Look at the Lamb."**

III. A VOICE PREPARED THE WAY FOR THE MESSIAH

Now we come to the heart of the message. What does it mean to **prepare the way**?

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Isaiah uses an image familiar in the ancient world. When a king was going to visit a region, the road had to be prepared. Obstacles had to be removed. Depressions had to be filled. High places had to be lowered. Roads had to be straightened. The route had to be made passable for the king's arrival. Isaiah uses that image to speak about something much deeper: **the human heart.**

Luke 3:4–5 expands the prophecy: "Prepare the way of the LORD… Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth."

What was John saying? **Prepare to meet God.**

1. There are valleys that must be raised

The valley can represent discouragement, hopelessness, or a sense of unworthiness. People who say: "God cannot forgive me." "The burden of my past is too great." "I have made too many mistakes." But the gospel says:

Rise up. There is grace. There is forgiveness. There is hope. The prophet Isaiah says:

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:16–18.

2. There are mountains that must be brought low

What can a mountain represent? **Pride.** Self-sufficiency. Spiritual arrogance. Pharisaism.

The idea: "I am fine." "I do not need to change." "I have always been a Christian."

John said: **"Repent."** Because the way of the Lord cannot be prepared while pride rules the heart.

Jesus said: "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 14:11.

3. There are crooked paths that must be made straight

This is where decisions come in. There are people who want Jesus, but they are living on paths they know are wrong. God says: **Make the path straight.** Preparing the way means turning from our evil ways.

Here is the heart of John's message. Matthew 3:2: **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"** What does it mean to repent? It does not mean simply feeling bad. It is not merely crying. It is not feeling remorse. True repentance involves:

Recognizing sin. Confessing it. Turning away from it. Turning to God.

Proverbs 28:13 says: "He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."

Notice the two actions: **confesses** and **forsakes**. Not merely confessing. Not merely acknowledging. **Confessing and forsaking.**

But here comes the most beautiful part: God does not call us to repentance in order to leave us empty. He calls us to repentance so that we may **receive Christ**.

Acts 3:19 says: "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." And Acts 2:38 declares: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

CONCLUSION

"Repent." Because knowing that Christ is coming is not enough.

We must be prepared to receive Him. Perhaps you came tonight simply because a friend invited you. Perhaps you had never seriously thought about God.

Perhaps you have been away from church for a long time. Perhaps this is the first evangelistic series you have ever attended. But I want to tell you something:

It is no accident that you are here tonight. God is raising up a voice. And that voice is telling you: "Get ready." Not tomorrow. Today. Hebrews 3:15: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

APPEAL

"Lord, prepare my heart to receive You"

I want to make an appeal especially to our friends who are with us. I am not asking you to become an Adventist tonight. I am not asking you to understand the entire Bible tonight. I am not asking you to have an answer for every question you have.

I want to ask you for something much simpler and much deeper: accept Jesus.

Perhaps you need to say: **"Lord, I recognize that I am a sinner."** Perhaps you need to say: **"Lord, I want to confess my sins."**

Perhaps you need to say: **"Lord, I want to turn away from what I know is wrong."**

And finally: **"Lord Jesus, I accept You as my Savior and Messiah."**

Because Jesus did not come merely to tell us that we are sinners. **He came to save us from our sins.** Matthew 1:21:

"And you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." Tonight the same Jesus who came two thousand years ago is calling to your heart.

And the question is not: **"Are you ready to understand it all?"** The question is: **"Are you willing to give Him your life?"**

Sermon 2



A VOICE PROCLAIMS THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

The news that never goes out of date

Main text: Revelation 14:6–7

"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.'"

Central idea

Before presenting the final warnings to the world, God presents the everlasting gospel: the good news that in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness, salvation, restoration, and eternal life.

Purpose

That our friends understand that the gospel is neither a human religion nor a temporary solution, but God's eternal plan to save human beings through Jesus Christ; and that they respond personally by accepting Christ as their Savior.

INTRODUCTION

News that everyone wants to hear

In 1945, World War II ended. For years, millions of people had lived under the fear of war, waiting for news of their loved ones and wondering when that nightmare would end.

When the news of Japan's surrender finally came, it spread rapidly around the world. People poured into the streets. They hugged. They cried. They celebrated.

Why? Because one piece of news had changed the meaning of that day. The war was over. For many, it was probably the news they had waited for more than any other in their lives.

But think about this: Some news is important for one day. Some news is important for a generation. But there is one piece of news that has eternal consequences.

And that news is precisely what we find in Revelation 14. John says: "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel..."

It does not say that he had a theory. It does not say that he had a philosophy. It does not say that he had a religion. It says: "THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL."

The word gospel means good news. And here is what is wonderful: God has good news for you tonight.

Perhaps you came here carrying problems. Perhaps you have wounds no one knows about. Perhaps you have made mistakes that you regret. Perhaps you feel that your life needs to begin again. Perhaps you have wondered: "Can God still do something for me?"

The answer of the gospel is: YES. Because the gospel says that Jesus came to save us.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL. Revelation 14:6

John begins by saying: "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel..." There are two words here that we must highlight: Gospel and Everlasting.

What is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news of what God did for us in Jesus Christ. Paul summarizes it extraordinarily well in 1 Corinthians 15:3–4: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day..." There is the heart of the gospel:

Christ died. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. Christ lives. And all of this: "for our sins." Not simply for other people's sins. For our sins. That is why the gospel is personal.

Why everlasting? Because the gospel did not begin when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The plan of salvation was in the heart of God before creation.

Revelation 13:8 presents Christ as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Peter says that Christ was foreordained for our redemption "before the foundation of the world." 1 Peter 1:20.

God did not improvise our salvation. When Adam and Eve sinned, God did not say: "Now I have to think about what to do." The plan already existed, and from eternity He had provided the remedy:

The gospel is not what we do for God; it is what God did for us.

"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—" 1 Corinthians 1:30

Sin produced a tragedy that no human ability can solve on its own. It made us guilty before God, introduced into our nature a permanent inclination toward evil, and finally placed us in a world dominated by its consequences. That is why we needed a salvation much deeper than simply the forgiveness of our sins.

And that is precisely what we find in Jesus Christ.

Paul masterfully summarizes the plan of salvation in 1 Corinthians 1:30 by saying that Christ has become for us "righteousness and sanctification and redemption." These three expressions allow us to contemplate Christ's work from an extraordinarily beautiful perspective:

What Jesus did for us is called justification.
What Jesus does in us is called sanctification.
What Jesus will do for us is called glorification or final redemption.

Christ deals with our past, transforms our present, and guarantees our future.

I. WHAT JESUS DID: JUSTIFICATION

Justification speaks to us about something Christ has already done for us. On the cross, Jesus bore our guilt. Isaiah had prophesied: "the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

The sinner has a real problem: he is guilty. On his own, he cannot erase what he has done. The good works of the present cannot erase the sins of the past. Religion, morality, human effort, and good intentions cannot remove our guilt.

But Christ did what we could never do. He died in our place.

2 Corinthians 5:21 declares: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." That is justification.

It does not mean that God says our sin never happened. It means that when we trust in Christ, He takes our guilt and offers us His righteousness.

Romans 5:1 puts it simply: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What wonderful news!

Justification frees us from the guilt of sin.

We do not need to live forever under the weight of what we did. Perhaps someone has spent years carrying a sin from the past. Maybe you have said: "God cannot forgive me." "What I did is too serious." "I have failed too many times." But the gospel responds:

Christ has already paid the price. The cross is not a declaration of how much God condemns us; it is the demonstration of how much God loves us.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The first piece of wonderful news. What Jesus did on the cross solves the problem of our guilt. That is why we can look at the past without despair. The past no longer has to be our condemnation. In Christ we can say: "I have been forgiven."

II. WHAT JESUS DOES: SANCTIFICATION

But here something fundamental appears. If Jesus only forgave our sins and left us exactly as we were, the plan of salvation would be incomplete.

We need more than forgiveness. We need transformation. We need Christ not only to change our standing before God, but also to change our life.

That is why Paul says that Christ has become for us: **"sanctification."** 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Sanctification is the work Christ carries out in us **today** through the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 2:13 says: "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."

Christ does not only forgive us. CHRIST TRANSFORMS US.

Justification addresses the problem of our **guilt**.

Sanctification addresses the problem of the **power of sin**.

Because there is a difference between having been forgiven and continuing to live enslaved.

A person may say: "I know God forgives me, but I cannot overcome this sin."

And the gospel responds: **Christ does not only want to forgive you; He wants to free you from the power and dominion of sin.**

Romans 6:14: **"For sin shall not have dominion over you."** What a promise!

Sin may have dominated our life for years, but it does not have to keep ruling it.

Perhaps someone says: "That is just the way I am." "I cannot change." "I have always been this way." "This is my weakness." But when Christ enters the life, a process begins:

what we once loved, we begin to hate; what we once hated, we begin to love; what once seemed impossible begins to become possible by the grace of God.

Ezekiel 36:26 expresses the divine promise: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you."

Sanctification does not mean that the Christian will never be tempted again or that he will never make a mistake. It means that he no longer needs to live under the dominion of sin.

Every day Christ works in us. Every day the Holy Spirit convicts us. Every day we learn to depend more on Jesus. Every day we are called to die to self and allow Christ to live in us.

Paul expressed it this way: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

The second piece of wonderful news

What Jesus does in us today progressively frees us from the power of sin.

Justification looks to the cross. Sanctification looks to our daily life.

Justification tells us: **"You are forgiven."** Sanctification tells us: **"Now walk with Me."**

Justification changes our position. Sanctification transforms our condition. And both are the work of Christ's grace.

III. WHAT JESUS WILL DO: GLORIFICATION AND FINAL REDEMPTION.

But one stage still remains. Because, although Christ forgives us and transforms us, we still live in a world where sin exists.

We still get sick. We still cry. We still die. We still face temptation. We still see injustice. We still live surrounded by pain. That is why we need a third dimension of salvation.

Paul calls it **"redemption"**. 1 Corinthians 1:30. This is the culmination of the plan of salvation. When Christ returns, our salvation will reach its fulfillment.

Romans 8:23 says that we are waiting for "the adoption, the redemption of our body." What an expression!

Redemption includes our bodies too. We will not only be forgiven. We will not only be transformed spiritually. We will finally be set free from this world of sin.

Jesus promised: **"I will come again and receive you to Myself"** (John 14:3). And when He returns, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 declares: "the dead in Christ will rise first." And 1 Corinthians 15:52 adds: "the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." What a glorious day that will be! The day when: death will be defeated, sin will be eliminated, pain will end, tears will disappear, and God's children will receive incorruptible bodies.

Glorification will finally free us from: THE PRESENCE OF SIN.

THREE STAGES, ONE SALVATION

We can summarize the plan of salvation this way:

Christ's work	Time	What does it free us from?
Justification	What Jesus did	The guilt of sin
Sanctification	What Jesus does	The power of sin
Glorification / final redemption	What Jesus will do	The presence of sin

What a wonderful plan! Christ did not leave salvation half finished. **He solves the whole problem.**

When all this happens, the promise of Revelation 21:5 will be fulfilled: **"Behold, I make all things new."**

There will be no need for hospitals. There will be no cemeteries. There will be no funerals. There will be no prisons. There will be no violence. There will be no divorces. There will be no abandoned children. There will be no tears. There will be no sin. Because Jesus will have made all things new.

CONCLUSION

Sin presents three great problems: guilt, power, and presence.

And Christ has an answer for each one. For guilt: JUSTIFICATION. Christ died for us.

For power: SANCTIFICATION. Christ lives in us.

For presence: GLORIFICATION AND FINAL REDEMPTION. Christ will return for us. That is why the plan of salvation is: COMPLETE. And it is: SUFFICIENT.

We do not need to add anything to what Christ did. We do not need to invent another way. We do not need to look for another Savior. Because: **"Nor is there salvation in any other"** (Acts 4:12).

Christ did everything necessary. Christ does everything necessary. And Christ will do everything necessary.

APPEAL

Tonight I want to speak especially to our friends. Perhaps you have come to church several times. Perhaps this is your first time. Perhaps someone invited you.

Perhaps you came because you feel you need something different in your life. I want to tell you something:

God knew you would be here.

And the everlasting gospel has a personal message for you. It is not only for humanity.

It is for you. Perhaps you have been searching for peace. Jesus says: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

Perhaps you need forgiveness. Jesus says: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." John 8:11.

Perhaps you feel that your life has no hope. Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life." John 11:25.

Perhaps you have been far from God. Jesus says: **"the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."** John 6:37.

Salvation is not a prize for those who manage to be good enough. It is a gift for those who recognize that they need Christ.

Imagine someone handing you a gift. What do you have to do to receive it? **Hold out your hands.** You do not have to pay for it. You do not have to make it. You do not have to deserve it. You have to **receive it**. Salvation is like that. God prepared the gift. Christ paid the price. The Holy Spirit invites you. And we respond: **"Yes, Lord, I accept Your gift."**

Sermon 3



A VOICE PROCLAIMS: "FEAR GOD AND GIVE HIM GLORY"

When loving God means obeying Him

Main text: Revelation 14:7. "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come..."

Key texts: Deuteronomy 10:12–13; Ecclesiastes 12:13–14; Deuteronomy 6:2; Psalm 112:1; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3; Revelation 14:12.

Central idea

Fearing God does not mean living in terror of Him; it means recognizing Him as Lord, loving Him, revering Him, and demonstrating that love through obedience to His commandments.

Purpose

That our friends and fellow believers understand that the first angel's message not only proclaims the gospel, but also calls us to a relationship of **love, reverence, and obedience to God**, and that they respond by accepting Christ and deciding to live according to His will.

INTRODUCTION

What does it really mean to "fear God"?

When we hear the expression "fear God," we may easily think of fear, terror, or anguish. But the fear of God spoken of in the Bible does not mean living terrified before a God who is waiting to punish us. It means recognizing who God is, revering Him, loving Him, respecting Him, and, above all, **taking His Word seriously enough to obey it**.

Ellen G. White connects the true fear of God with love for God and obedience to His commandments, presenting this as the essence of true religion.

Again and again, the Bible connects **the fear of God with obedience**. It gives us an extraordinarily powerful definition of this concept in the experience of Abraham.

I. ABRAHAM: THE MAN WHO FEARED GOD BECAUSE HE OBEYED

Genesis 22 presents one of the most difficult scenes to understand in the entire Bible. God asks Abraham to take Isaac, his beloved son, the son of promise, and offer him as a sacrifice.

It was a test that touched the most sensitive place in his heart. Isaac was the son of promise. Through him, God had announced that He would establish His covenant with Abraham. And

now God asks Abraham to give him up.

How do we obey when we do not understand? How do we obey when it hurts? How do we obey when what God asks seems contrary to our plans?

Abraham teaches us something fundamental: **the fear of God is demonstrated especially when we obey without questioning God's Word.**

After Abraham shows his willingness to obey without questioning God, the Angel of the LORD stops his hand and declares: **"Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me"** (Genesis 22:12).

What an extraordinary definition! God did not say, "Now I know that you are afraid of Me."

He said, **"Now I know that you fear God,"** and the evidence of that fear was that Abraham **obeyed**. The fear of God did not remain an emotion. It was expressed in a decision.

Abraham feared God because he was willing to obey God. And here we find a fundamental truth:

True fear of God is demonstrated through obedience.

When obedience is easy, many people obey. But when obedience costs us something, when it requires surrender, when it forces us to place our desires on the altar, then the depth of our fear of God is revealed.

Abraham did not obey because he understood everything. He obeyed because he **trusted the One who was asking it of him**.

II. FEARING GOD MEANS KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS

Notice one of the clearest statements in the entire Bible. Deuteronomy 10:12–13:

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD…?" It is extraordinary!

What does it mean to fear God? The text itself answers: walk in His ways. Love Him. Serve Him. Keep His commandments. We do not need to invent the meaning of the fear of God. The Bible explains it.

That is why the first angel's message is so important.

Revelation 14:7: "Fear God…" And a few verses later, Revelation 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints; … those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Do you see it? Revelation 14 begins with "Fear God" and ends by speaking of people who keep God's commandments.

That is not accidental. God's final message calls a generation to take His will seriously again.

Illustration: the father and the child

Imagine a father walking with his young son. The boy sees a busy street and wants to run into it. The father tells him, **"Don't cross!"** Does the command exist to take away his freedom? No.

It exists because the father **loves him** and knows about a danger the child does not yet understand. When the child obeys, he is not saying, "My father is enslaving me." He is saying, **"I trust my father."** Biblical obedience is born from trust.

Jesus also connected love and obedience

John 14:15: **"If you love Me, keep My commandments."**

Jesus said, **"If you love Me..."** And then: **"keep My commandments."** Here is the heart of the matter. **True Christianity does not consist simply of saying, "I love Jesus."** True love produces obedience.

A person may say, "I love my wife." But if he continually deceives, humiliates, and betrays her, his words do not match his actions. That is why 1 John 2:4 declares: "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

In 1 John 5:3, John says it even more clearly: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

Do you want to know how the Bible defines love for God? "That we keep His commandments."

It is not legalism. It is love. We do not obey in order to buy salvation. **We obey because we have received salvation and we love the Savior.**

A FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION: SALVATION AND OBEDIENCE

This must be very clear to our friends. We are not saved because we keep the law. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:8–9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith... not of works."

But verse 10 adds: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..." Obedience is not the root of our salvation. It is the fruit.

We do not obey so that God will love us. We obey because God loved us. We do not keep the commandments in order to save ourselves. We keep them because we have already been saved by the grace of Christ.

Illustration: The wedding ring

think of a married man. Why does he wear a ring? Does the ring make him a husband?

No. The ring is an outward sign of a relationship that already exists. In the same way: Our obedience does not buy our relationship with Christ. It reveals that a relationship with Christ exists. That is why Jesus said: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

WHICH COMMANDMENTS SHOULD WE OBEY?

Let us see what the Word of God says. Psalm 119:172: "All Your commandments are righteousness."

Romans 7:12: "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

The law is not bad. The law is: **holy. Just. Good.** And which law? The law God gave in the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20. There we find:

- You shall have no other gods.
- You shall not make for yourself an image.
- You shall not take God's name in vain.
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- Honor your father and your mother.
- You shall not murder.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not bear false witness.
- You shall not covet.

The law shows us God's moral character and teaches us how to relate to Him and to our neighbor.

III. THIS IS MAN'S ALL

Centuries after Abraham, Solomon reaches an extraordinary conclusion at the close of the book of Ecclesiastes: **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all"** (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

After exploring wisdom, pleasure, work, riches, projects, achievements, and the experiences of life, he finally declares:

"Fear God and keep His commandments." It is as if Solomon were saying: "I have traveled many roads. I have searched for meaning in many things. And in the end I have discovered what is essential: **fear God and obey His will**."

Notice the connection between the two expressions: **Fear God. Keep His commandments.** The fear of God is not simply a religious emotion. It is an attitude that becomes a way of life. That is why Genesis 22 and Ecclesiastes 12 meet at the same point.

Abraham: **"You fear God"** because you obeyed.

Solomon: **"Fear God"** and keep His commandments.

In both texts, the fear of God is directly connected with obedience. And this leads us to an unavoidable question:

What does obeying God look like in practice? The biblical answer cannot simply be: "Obey whatever you consider right."

God did not leave obedience to be defined by our feelings, our culture, or our preferences. God gave us His law.

CONCLUSION

OBEYING WHEN IT IS NOT POPULAR. Abraham had to obey when his decision was not easy.

And we, as God's children, are also called to obey when obedience is not popular.

Perhaps keeping God's commandments will not always agree with what society considers convenient. But the Christian's question should not be: **"What is everyone else doing?"** The question should be: **"What does God say?"**

Abraham did not ask what others thought. He listened to God. And he walked by faith.

Today we also need a generation of believers who not only know the commandments but **live** them. A generation that is not ashamed to obey.

A generation that loves God enough to remain faithful when obedience requires sacrifice. A generation that can say: **"Even if others do not, I want to obey God."**

APPEAL

And perhaps someone may say, **"I want to obey God, but I am afraid I will not be able to."**

Do not trust in your own strength. Trust in Christ. Jesus does not only forgive the past.

He also transforms the present.

And He can make real in you what Revelation 14:12 says: **"Here is the patience of the saints; ... those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."**

Is there anyone here tonight who wants to say to the Lord, "I want to obey You because I love You"? Come forward and let us pray together.

Sermon 4



A VOICE PROCLAIMS: "THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME"

The judgment: good news for those who trust in Jesus

Main text: Revelation 14:6–7

"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth... saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come.'"

Supporting texts

Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14, 22; Ecclesiastes 12:13–14; John 5:22–27; Romans 8:1, 31–34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1.

Central idea

The judgment is part of the gospel because God is judging sin, doing justice, vindicating those who trust in Christ, and preparing the way to establish His eternal kingdom.

Purpose

That our friends understand that the biblical judgment should not produce despair in those who surrender their lives to Christ. On the contrary, the judgment is **good news**, because we have a Savior, an Advocate, and a Judge who loves us and is working to bring sin to a definitive end.

INTRODUCTION

There are announcements that change the way we live. When a person receives a court summons, life changes immediately. That person can no longer act as though nothing is happening. A date has been set, a court has been constituted, a case will be examined, and a decision will finally be made.

Revelation 14:7 presents precisely that kind of announcement, but infinitely more solemn: **"The hour of His judgment has come."** It does not say that someday it will come. It does not say that the judgment is far away.

It says: **"has come."** The first angel proclaims that humanity is living in the hour of God's judgment.

This announcement is at the center of the end-time message. That is why it cannot be treated as a secondary doctrine or as mere prophetic curiosity. It is an urgent call to **fear God, give Him glory, and worship Him as Creator.**

Most people think of judgment as an event that occurs at death. Or at the end of history. However, the Word of God presents judgment as a process that involves investigation, gathering evidence, hearing witnesses, and issuing a verdict.

In the human judicial systems of democratic societies, we can identify, in general terms, three stages in the development of a trial: investigation, verdict, and carrying out the sentence. Allowing for the differences between human courts and the heavenly court, this structure helps us understand the solemnity of the judgment announced in Revelation 14:7.

a. An investigation.

b. A verdict.

c. Carrying out the sentence.

Another important aspect of the judgment process is understanding that the judgment is not intended to determine whether or not we are sinners. That is already established. What is at stake is whether we are IN CHRIST OR NOT, whether or not we are covered by the robe of His righteousness. Romans 8:1.

I. FIRST STEP: THE INVESTIGATION

When a person is accused of committing a crime, a responsible court does not begin by carrying out a sentence. It investigates first.

The evidence is examined. Testimony is heard. Records are reviewed. Responsibility is determined.

True justice does not condemn without investigation. The Bible presents precisely this idea when it speaks about the heavenly judgment.

Daniel saw an extraordinary scene:

"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; ... A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9–10).

Notice the expression: **"The books were opened."**

Why open the books? Because judgment involves a review of the records.

Revelation presents the same reality: **"And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books"** (Revelation 20:12).

God's investigation is not prompted by ignorance of what has happened. God knows every person's life perfectly. The purpose of the heavenly investigation is to demonstrate before the universe the justice of God's decisions.

Nothing remains hidden from Him. Solomon wrote: **"For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil"** (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Jesus also declared: **"For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known"** (Luke 12:2).

"A book of remembrance" is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of "them that feared the Lord"... In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded. — Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, GC 481.1.

Concerning the record of evil deeds, she states: "Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God." — Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, GC 486.2.

In the judgment, people's lives are examined, including how they used the talents received from God. This should make us think. Every word. Every decision. Every opportunity. Every act of mercy. Every sin. Every response to the light received. Everything is recorded.

But here an extraordinarily beautiful truth appears: **The one being judged has an Advocate.**

John wrote: **"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"** (1 John 2:1).

What wonderful news! Standing before the court does not mean we are alone. **Jesus is there.** The same Christ who died for us is our Advocate and our High Priest. That is why the judgment should not produce despair in those who have surrendered their lives to Christ.

It should produce **repentance, trust, and dependence on Jesus**.

When did this investigation begin?

Here we come to the heart of our prophetic understanding of the judgment in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 8:14 declares: **"For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."**

The prophecy of Daniel 8 is connected with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, and Revelation 14:7 announces: **"The hour of His judgment has come."**

According to the prophetic interpretation of Daniel, at the conclusion of the 2,300 years, in **1844**, Christ entered the final phase of His priestly ministry in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and began the work of the investigative judgment.

Christ's work since His ascension includes two activities corresponding to two defined periods: the first extends from His ascension to 1844, and the second from 1844 to His Second Coming in glory. The idea of two distinct activities in Christ's work since His ascension is clearly expressed in the following paragraph:

"After His ascension, our Saviour was to begin His work as our High Priest.... As Christ's ministration was to consist of two great divisions, each occupying a period of time and having a distinctive place in the heavenly sanctuary, so the typical ministration consisted of two divisions, the daily and the yearly service, and to each a department of the tabernacle was devoted." — Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, PP 357.3.

That is why the message, **"The hour of His judgment has come,"** is not simply an announcement for some future time. **It is a message for us.**

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II. SECOND STEP: THE VERDICT

In a human court, after the evidence has been examined comes the decision.

The judge determines: **guilty or innocent.** There is a verdict.

In the heavenly court, the moment will also come when every case will be decided.

Daniel 7:10 says: **"The court was seated, And the books were opened."**

And Revelation 22 presents the solemn moment when Christ declares: **"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; ... he who is righteous, let him be righteous still"** (Revelation 22:11).

This declaration represents the moment when each person's destiny is fixed. There will be no other opportunity. No other appeal. No possibility of changing sides.

Ellen G. White expresses it solemnly: "When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death." — **The Great Controversy, GC 490.2**.

What a thought!

Today we are still in the time of probation. Today we can still repent. Today we can still confess our sins. Today we can still come to Christ.

Today we can still say, **"Lord, save me."**

But the moment will come when the judgment ends. That is why Revelation 14 not only says, **"The hour of His judgment has come."** It also says, **"Fear God and give glory to Him."**

The announcement of the judgment is a call to make decisions **today**.

The judgment does not teach salvation by works. We must be very clear here. The fact that our works are examined does not mean that we are saved by our works.

The Bible teaches that we are saved by grace through faith.

Paul wrote: **"For by grace you have been saved through faith... not of works"** (Ephesians 2:8–9).

But he immediately adds: **"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works"** (Ephesians 2:10).

Works are not the root of our salvation. **They are the fruit of our relationship with Christ.**

The judgment reveals whether our profession of faith truly corresponds with our life.

Jesus explained it: **"Therefore by their fruits you will know them"** (Matthew 7:20).

The issue is not only what we say we believe.

The issue is: **What has Christ produced in our life?**

The judgment should produce reform. If we know that we are living in the hour of judgment, we cannot live just any way we please.

The message of the judgment should produce a work of reform. A reform of the heart. A reform of our priorities. A reform of our relationship with God. A reform of our family. A reform of our spiritual life. A reform of our relationship with sin.

Ellen G. White devotes an entire chapter of *The Great Controversy* to **"A Work of Reform,"** before the chapter on the investigative judgment. The sequence is significant: the message of the judgment calls for spiritual preparation.

III. THIRD STEP: CARRYING OUT THE SENTENCE

Justice does not end with a decision. In human courts, after the verdict comes the carrying out of the sentence.

In the same way, in the great controversy between good and evil, the moment will come when the decisions made by God will be carried out.

The Bible teaches that Christ will return to reward each person according to his or her decisions.

Jesus declared: **"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work"** (Revelation 22:12).

The Second Coming of Christ will be the moment when the righteous receive the promised reward.

Paul wrote: **"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout... And the dead in Christ will rise first"** (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Those who have died in Christ will rise. The living righteous will be transformed. And together they will meet the Lord.

But the judgment against the wicked will also be carried out in full. The Bible presents a scene after the millennium in which the wicked are resurrected, appear before God, and finally receive the ultimate consequence of their rebellion.

John saw: **"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it... And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books"** (Revelation 20:11–12).

Finally: **"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death"** (Revelation 20:10, 14).

Justice will finally be carried out.

CONCLUSION

We are still living between the investigation and the final verdict! That is why the message of Revelation 14:7 is so urgent.

"The hour" is not merely information; it is an invitation. God did not reveal the judgment simply so that we could formulate a prophetic doctrine. He revealed it so that we would **make a decision**.

APPEAL

Dear friend. One day, all of us will stand before God's tribunal. Paul said it clearly: **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"** (2 Corinthians 5:10).

And if the hour of judgment has come, **the hour has also come to decide which side we will be on**.

TODAY is the day of salvation. Not tomorrow. TODAY is the moment. Jesus is still interceding. The door is still open. Forgiveness is still available. The blood of Christ still cleanses.

When our name is called before the heavenly court, may we be covered by the righteousness of Christ and finally hear from the lips of the Savior: **"Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your lord"** (Matthew 25:21).

How many of you want to accept Christ today as your Advocate and personal Savior?

Sermon 5



A VOICE PROCLAIMS: "WORSHIP THE CREATOR"

Recognizing again the God who made us.

Main text: Revelation 14:7

"...and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Supporting texts

Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:26–27; Genesis 2:1–3; Exodus 20:8–11; Psalm 95:3–6; Isaiah 40:25–26; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11; Revelation 14:6–7; Revelation 21:1–5.

Central idea

God's final message calls humanity to worship the Creator, because our existence, our dignity, our purpose, and our hope depend on recognizing that we belong to the God who created us.

Purpose

That our friends understand that the Bible presents God as the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and humanity; that they discover the spiritual implications of believing in biblical creation; and that they decide to worship, love, and obey the Creator.

INTRODUCTION

Who has the right to tell me what I was created for?

Imagine that you find an extraordinarily complex device. It has hundreds of parts. Wires. Circuits. Screens. Sensors. Everything works perfectly.

And someone tells you, "This appeared by accident." You would probably ask, "How could that be?" It is impossible!

If you find a watch in the middle of the desert, no reasonable person concludes that an explosion of sand produced the watch.

Why? Because we recognize design. When we see something organized, functional, and extraordinarily complex, we naturally ask: Who designed it?

Now look at something infinitely more complex: the human body. The brain. The eye. DNA. The heart. The ability to think. Consciousness. The ability to love. And a fundamental question arises:

WHERE DO WE COME FROM? But there is an even more important question: WHO MADE US?

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Because the answer will determine another question: TO WHOM DO WE BELONG?

Revelation 14:7 gives us the answer: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth..."

God does not say, "Worship whomever you want." He says: "WORSHIP HIM WHO MADE."

God's final message takes the world back to the beginning. Genesis begins with God creating. Revelation ends by calling us to worship the Creator.

I. I. GOD THE CREATOR VERSUS EVOLUTION: CREATION OR CHANCE?

The Bible begins with a forceful declaration: **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"** (Genesis 1:1). It does not begin with a theory. It begins with God.

Before speaking about sin, God; before speaking about redemption, God; before speaking about the Sabbath, God. And before speaking about humanity, the Bible presents the **Creator**.

The Genesis account states that God created through His word: "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

"Then God said..." is one of the most powerful expressions in Genesis 1. The universe did not appear as the result of an endless chain of purposeless accidents. **God spoke, and reality appeared.**

Psalm 33:6 declares: "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."

And verse 9 adds: "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

Hebrews 11:3 summarizes it this way: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God."

Biblical Creationism and Philosophical Evolutionism

Here we need to make an important distinction. Evolution, understood as a naturalistic explanation of the origin and development of life, is not simply a neutral scientific description. When it is used to explain **the ultimate origin of life without any need for God**, it enters the realm of a philosophical worldview: **naturalism**.

The problem is not the scientific study of nature. Science is a valuable tool. The problem arises when a particular interpretation of scientific data is turned into a total explanation of reality and the conclusion is drawn that **there is no Creator because a Creator is considered unnecessary to the explanation**.

The Bible presents a radically different worldview. We are not the product of cosmic chance. We are not simply organized matter. We are not the final result of an endless series of accidents. **We are God's creatures.**

And here an extraordinary connection with worship appears. **If God created, God has authority.** The Creator has rights over His creation.

Revelation 4:11 presents heavenly worship with these words: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

The inhabitants of heaven do not say, "You are worthy because You are powerful." They say, **"You are worthy... for You created all things."** Creation is the foundation of worship.

A saying often attributed to Louis Pasteur holds that the more one studies nature, the more one is amazed at the work of the Creator. Pasteur wrote: "God has placed in the tiniest beings of creation extraordinary properties that make them agents in the destruction of everything that has ceased to live."

Another saying, often attributed to Pasteur, suggests that a little science leads people away from God, while deeper study brings them back to Him. A similar idea appears much earlier in Francis Bacon's writings.

II. BIBLICAL CREATION REVEALS OUR DIGNITY AND OUR PURPOSE

Genesis 1:26–27 says: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." And then: "So God created man in His own image... male and female He created them."

What an extraordinary declaration! The human being is not presented as a biological accident. Humanity is presented as: A SPECIAL CREATION OF GOD.

Illustration: the artist's signature. Imagine a work of art bearing the signature of a great artist. The signature gives it identity. Value. Origin.

Now Genesis says that the human being bears something far greater: THE IMAGE OF THE CREATOR.

That means that every human being possesses a dignity that does not depend on:

- money,
- profession,
- intelligence,
- nationality,
- age,
- appearance,
- social status.

Why? Because that person was created by God.

THE PROBLEM OF A LIFE WITHOUT A CREATOR

If we eliminate the Creator, we also end up weakening the biblical foundation of human dignity. But if God created human beings in His image, then every person has extraordinary value.

That is why Jesus taught: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

God considers our lives so valuable that Christ came to die for us.

CREATION AND SALVATION

Here we find something wonderful. The same God who **created us** is the God who **redeems us**.

Speaking of Christ, John 1:1–3 says: "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

Who created? **Christ.**

Colossians 1:16: "For by Him all things were created..." The Creator entered His own creation. The One who made human beings became human. The One who gave us life gave His own life.

EVOLUTIONARY WORLDVIEW	CREATIONIST WORLDVIEW
My god is chance.	My God is the Creator.
My father is an animal.	My Father is God.
My origin is uncertain.	My origin is divine. I was created in the image and likeness of God.
My animal origin leads me to behave like an animal. It justifies my animal behavior.	My divine origin leads me to behave like a child of God.
My life cycle is: Be born, evolve, reproduce, and die.	My life cycle is: Be born, grow, reproduce, die, and rise again to live eternally.
My destiny is uncertain.	My destiny will be glorious. Eternal life.

III. THE SABBATH: THE DAY TO WORSHIP THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE

There is something extraordinary in Revelation 14:7. John could simply have said:

"Worship God." But he does not. He says: **"Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."**

Why does he use precisely that language? Because he is using the language of the fourth commandment.

Exodus 20:8–11 declares: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy... 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."

Let us compare:

Exodus 20:11: **"The LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea..."**

Revelation 14:7

"Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea..."

The connection is extraordinary. The first angel calls humanity to **worship the Creator**.

The fourth commandment points to the Creator. And the Sabbath is the memorial of that creation. That is why the Sabbath is not simply a day to rest. **It is a weekly monument to the Creator.**

Every Sabbath, God invites us to stop our activities and remember: **"I made the heavens." "I made the earth." "I made the sea." "I made you."**

The Sabbath is a weekly answer to one of humanity's great questions:

Where do we come from? The answer is: **We come from God. Our origin is divine.**

THE SABBATH AND THE FINAL CONFLICT OVER WORSHIP

Here we find the prophetic heart of the message. Revelation 14 presents two groups:

- **Those who worship the Creator** (Revelation 14:7).
- **Those who worship the beast and its image** (Revelation 14:9).

The final conflict of history will be mostly a conflict over **worship and authority**.

Who has the right to our worship? Who is our Creator? Who has authority over our conscience? Whom will we obey?

That is why the Sabbath takes on an extraordinary prophetic dimension.

"The keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator." — Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, GC **605.2.**

"The fourth commandment is the only one of all the ten in which are found both the name and the title of the Lawgiver." — Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, PP **307.2.**

This is fundamental. A seal identifies the one who has authority. The fourth commandment identifies the Lawgiver as:

THE LORD — YOUR GOD — CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

That is why the Sabbath functions as a permanent memorial of God's creative authority.

CONCLUSION

A CHURCH CALLED TO WORSHIP THE CREATOR

The message of Revelation 14:7 is urgent: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

It is not a message for another generation. It is God's message for this generation.

In a society that is moving farther and farther away from the Creator, God raises up a people to say:

Worship the Creator!

In a society that exalts the creature, God says: **Worship the Creator!**

In a society that presents existence as the product of chance, God says: **Worship the Creator!**

In a society that has forgotten the Sabbath, God says: **Remember the Sabbath day!**

In a generation that asks, "Who am I?" the Sabbath answers: **"You are God's creature."**

And in a generation that asks, "Whom should I worship?" Revelation answers: **"Worship Him who made..."**

APPEAL

Friend, today I want to ask you something that no one else can answer for you:

Who governs your life?

If God is your Creator, then you belong to Him. If Christ is your Redeemer, then you have hope.

And if He is coming soon, then we need to prepare. Today you can say:

"Lord Jesus, I believe that You are my Creator and my Savior. Thank You for giving me life, and thank You for giving Your life for me. Forgive my sins. Help me turn away from evil. I want to obey Your Word. I want to worship You as my Creator and follow You as my Savior. Prepare me to live with You for all eternity."

Would you like to make that decision tonight?

Sermon 6



A VOICE PROCLAIMS: "BABYLON IS FALLEN"

When truth is mixed with error.

Main text: Revelation 14:8

"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.'"

Supporting texts

Revelation 17:1–6, 9, 18; Revelation 18:1–5; Genesis 11:1–9; Isaiah 4:1; John 17:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4; Matthew 15:8–9; Revelation 18:4.

Central idea

Babylon represents the end-time religious system that mixes God's truth with human error, and its "wine" represents false teachings and spiritual practices that lead people away from biblical truth and from a genuine relationship with Christ.

Purpose

That our friends understand what Babylon represents in prophecy, what its wine means, and above all, that they hear God's loving call to come out of all spiritual confusion and remain faithful to Jesus Christ and His Word.

INTRODUCTION

A Mixture That Can Be Deadly

Imagine that you buy a bottle of water. You open it. It looks like water. It has the same color. It looks clear. But someone warns you:

"Do not drink it. Someone added a poisonous substance." The water in the bottle still looks the same. But it is no longer pure water. And that is precisely the danger of a mixture.

Error mixed with truth can be much harder to detect than open error.

If someone tells you, "I do not believe in God," you immediately know that person's position. But if someone says, "I believe in God, I believe in Jesus, I believe in the Bible... but I also believe that some human traditions have the same authority as the Word of God," the situation is different.

The mixture may look spiritual. It may look religious. It may have temples. It may have priests. It may have ceremonies. It may have hymns. It may talk about Jesus. But the question is not: Does it look religious? The question is: Is it faithful to the Word of God?

And here the second angel of Revelation 14 appears, saying: **"Babylon is fallen, is fallen..."**

Why does God devote such a strong message to Babylon? Because God loves people.

And when truth is mixed with error, **people can become spiritually lost without realizing it.** But there is wonderful news: God not only exposes the confusion. God also calls people to come out of it.

I. WHO IS BABYLON?

Revelation 14:8. The second angel proclaims: **"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city..."**

The first question is: **Should we look for a city called Babylon?**

Literal Babylon existed. It was one of the great empires of antiquity. But in Revelation, Babylon takes on a prophetic and spiritual meaning.

Revelation 17 presents a woman called: **"BABYLON THE GREAT"** (Revelation 17:5).

And it says: "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth" (Revelation 17:18). Therefore, we are dealing with a **prophetic symbol**.

WHERE DOES THE NAME BABYLON COME FROM?

To understand Revelation, we need to go back to Genesis. Genesis 11 tells the story of the building of the tower of Babel. Human beings said: "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens." And God confused their language.

Genesis 11:9: "Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth."

The word is connected with the idea of **confusion**. And Revelation uses the name **Babylon** to represent great spiritual confusion.

The kings of the earth have committed fornication with Babylon. "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication'" (Revelation 17:1–2).

Used figuratively, this biblical statement refers to an illicit alliance: a political-religious union between an apostate church and the nations of the earth.

The true church does not mix politics with religion; the Word of God points this out: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17).

Ellen G. White described the danger as "attempting to build up the church by the aid of the state, of appealing to the secular power in support of the gospel of Him who declared: 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" — The Great Controversy, GC 297.1.

Babylon sits on many waters (Revelation 17:1). "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). In other words, it has control over the majorities.

Another characteristic that identifies Babylon is that she is drunk with the blood of Jesus' martyrs. "I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6).

Very little historical research is required to demonstrate that Rome, both in ancient times and throughout the Middle Ages, persecuted the church of God.

According to ancient Christian tradition, Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome under the reign of Emperor Nero during the A.D. 60s.

According to ancient Christian tradition, John was exiled to the island of Patmos under the reign of Emperor Domitian, generally around A.D. 95.

"But blackest in the black catalogue of crime, most horrible among the fiendish deeds of all the dreadful centuries, was the St. Bartholomew Massacre. The world still recalls with shuddering horror the scenes of that most cowardly and cruel onslaught.

The king of France, urged on by Romish priests and prelates, lent his sanction to the dreadful work. A bell, tolling at dead of night, was a signal for the slaughter. Protestants by thousands, sleeping quietly in their homes, trusting to the plighted honor of their king, were dragged forth without a warning and murdered in cold blood." — Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, GC 272.1.

II. WHAT IS THE WINE OF BABYLON?

Revelation 14:8 says: "...because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

What does that wine mean? The Bible often uses the image of wine to represent teachings or doctrines that affect people spiritually.

Isaiah 28:7 says: "But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink..." Here wine is associated with **spiritual confusion**.

Babylon offers a cup. And the cup contains: **MIXED TEACHINGS.**

Truth + error.

Word of God + human tradition.

Christianity + pagan concepts.

Divine commandment + human commandment.

WHY "WINE"? Because wine intoxicates. An intoxicated person loses the ability to think clearly. Loses balance. Loses discernment. And something similar happens spiritually.

A person can reach the point where the question is no longer, "What does the Bible say?" but, "What does my tradition say?" "What does my culture say?" "What does my family say?" "What has my church always said?"

But Jesus said: "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition..." (Mark 7:13).

What are some of the teachings that identify the "wine" of Babylon?

1. The sacredness of Sunday.
2. The immortality of the soul.
3. Worship of images.
4. Hell — eternal torment.
5. The confessional. Forgiveness of sins by a priest.
6. Replacing Christ's ministry in the sanctuary.
7. A millennium on earth.
8. The secret rapture.
9. Salvation by works.
10. The repeated sacrifice of the Mass.
11. Baptism by sprinkling; infant baptism.
12. Eliminating the biblical HISTORICIST method of interpreting prophecy.
13. Mariolatry.

"The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, 'For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'" — Ellen G. White, Testimony Treasures, vol. 2, 2TT 362.3.

The altered prescription: Imagine that a doctor gives you a prescription.

It says: "Take exactly these medications in these amounts." But someone decides to modify it.

That person says, "My grandmother always did this," and changes the instructions. It may seem like a small modification. But when health is at stake, a small modification can have major consequences.

God gave us a spiritual "prescription" in His Word. We do not need to improve it. We do not need to add human traditions to it. We do not need to remove what makes us uncomfortable. WE NEED TO OBEY IT.

III. COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE

Here we find something extraordinary. Revelation 14:8 says: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen..." The expression presents Babylon's fall as an accomplished reality: "Babylon is fallen."

Although the system still exists, God prophetically announces its fall. It is a way of declaring that its defeat is certain. But then Revelation 18 expands the message.

Revelation 18:1: "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory."

And then Revelation 18:4: "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE."

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What a beautiful declaration! God says: "My people." This means that there are sincere people within Babylon. God considers them: "My people."

That is why the call is not: "Attack My people." It is: "COME OUT OF BABYLON, MY PEOPLE."

THE BURNING BUILDING. Imagine a building beginning to catch fire. The fire chief arrives and shouts: **"GET OUT OF THE BUILDING!"**

Is he insulting the people inside? No. He is trying to save them. It does not matter whether they entered the building with good intentions. It does not matter whether they have been there for years. It does not matter whether they like the building.

The problem is that the building is in danger. God's call is similar. It is not a call of hatred. It is a call of salvation: "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE."

"But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and 'receive not of her plagues.'" — Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, GC 604.1.

"God has children, many of them, in the Protestant churches, and a large number in the Catholic churches, who are more true to obey the light and to do [to] the very best of their knowledge than a large number among Sabbathkeeping Adventists who do not walk in the light. The Lord will have the message of truth proclaimed, that Protestants may be warned and awakened to the true state of things, and consider the worth of the privilege of religious freedom which they have long enjoyed." — Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, Book 3, 3SM 386.2.

CONCLUSION

A VOICE THAT CALLS PEOPLE TO COME OUT. Now we can understand the heart of the message. God is not saying, "Come out because I hate the people who are there." He is saying, "Come out because I love you." God is not destroying people. He is exposing systems of error. He is not attacking those who sincerely seek God. He is calling His children back to the truth.

APPEAL

"LORD, I WANT TO COME OUT OF CONFUSION AND FOLLOW YOUR TRUTH"

I want to speak especially to our friends. Perhaps tonight you have heard things you had never heard before. Perhaps some of them surprised you. Perhaps some even made you uncomfortable.

But I do not want to ask you to make a decision based on what a pastor says. I do not even want to ask you to accept something simply because the Adventist Church teaches it.

I want to ask you to do something much simpler: OPEN YOUR BIBLE. Compare. Investigate. Pray. Ask questions. And say: **"Lord, show me the truth and give me courage to follow it."**

Jesus said: **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:31–32).

Do you want to be free? Then come to Christ. Abide in His Word. And allow the truth to transform your life.

Sermon 7



A VOICE PROCLAIMS: "IF ANYONE WORSHIPS THE BEAST"

The decision that will determine our destiny

Main text: Revelation 14:9–10

"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…'"

Key texts

Revelation 13:1–18; Revelation 14:6–12; Daniel 7:2–27; Exodus 20:3–6; Matthew 4:8–10; Revelation 17:1–6; Revelation 12:17.

Central idea

The final conflict in human history will be a conflict over worship. Revelation identifies a power represented by the beast that usurps divine prerogatives, persecutes God's people, and seeks to receive the worship that belongs only to the Creator.

Purpose

That our friends understand the biblical characteristics of the beast of Revelation 13, recognize the conflict between worshiping the Creator and worshiping the beast, and decide to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and His Word.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN PRINCIPLES COST SOMETHING

In the second century, a venerable Christian named Polycarp was brought before a Roman proconsul. He was an elderly man who had devoted his life to serving Christ.

The proconsul knew that Polycarp could save his life with one simple choice:

"Swear, and I will set you at liberty; reproach Christ."

It seemed like a simple decision. Polycarp could preserve his life. He could return home. He could continue preaching. He only had to say a few words.

But Polycarp looked at the proconsul and declared: **"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"**

Then came the threats. "I have wild beasts at hand." Polycarp replied: **"Call them then."**

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"I will cause you to be consumed by fire." And the old man remained firm. In the end, Polycarp died rather than renounce Christ.

But that story leaves us with a question far more important than the story itself: **What are we willing to lose in order not to lose our principles?**

As long as our principles cost us nothing, it is easy to say we have them. The true test of conviction comes when we must choose between comfort and faithfulness; between the approval of people and the approval of God; between saving our life and remaining faithful to what we know is true.

Jesus said: **"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"** (Revelation 2:10).

Faithfulness is not merely believing when it is easy. **Faithfulness means standing firm when being faithful carries a price.**

To whom do you owe your allegiance? Revelation 13 and 14 present exactly that conflict. It is not simply: What religion do you belong to? It is: WHOM DO YOU WORSHIP? It is not simply: What church do you attend? It is: WHO HAS AUTHORITY OVER YOUR CONSCIENCE?

That is why the third angel proclaims: **"If anyone worships the beast..."** Notice that it says: **"IF ANYONE WORSHIPS..."** The prophecy is speaking about a personal decision. And tonight you and I need to ask ourselves: WHOM WILL I WORSHIP?

I. THE BEAST IS A RELIGIOUS-POLITICAL POWER

To identify the beast, we must not begin with human opinions. We must begin with: THE BIBLE.

Revelation 13:1 says: "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns..." At first glance, it seems like a strange image. But Revelation does not invent this language. John is using symbols that already appear in Daniel.

DANIEL 7 AND REVELATION 13 explain each other.

Daniel 7 presents four great beasts. Daniel 7:17 says: "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth." Daniel uses beasts as symbols of: KINGDOMS OR POLITICAL POWERS.

The fourth beast has: ten horns, great power, extraordinary characteristics.

And from it comes a little horn. Revelation 13 takes up that same language. This means that to understand Revelation 13 we must study: DANIEL 7.

FIRST CHARACTERISTIC: IT RISES FROM THE SEA

Revelation 13:1: "I saw a beast rising up out of the sea..." In Revelation, the waters represent "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). Therefore, this beast arises in a densely populated setting.

SECOND CHARACTERISTIC: IT HAS SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS

Revelation 13:1. This language connects directly with Daniel 7. Daniel saw: **lion → bear → leopard → fourth beast.**

Revelation brings characteristics of those beasts together in a single figure.

Revelation 13:2 says: "Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion."

Where do those characteristics come from? From Daniel 7. This tells us that: REVELATION IS TAKING UP DANIEL'S PROPHETIC HISTORY.

THIRD CHARACTERISTIC: IT RECEIVES AUTHORITY FROM THE DRAGON

Revelation 13:2: "The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority."

Who is the dragon? Revelation 12:9 answers: **"the great dragon... called the Devil and Satan."**

So behind this power there is a spiritual dimension. Satan is the real enemy. This is fundamental.

Because if we turn the sermon into nothing more than a denunciation of human beings, we lose sight of the real conflict. THE CONFLICT IS BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN.

ILLUSTRATION: THE PUPPET AND THE PUPPETEER

Imagine a stage. You see a puppet moving. It walks. It raises its hand. It speaks. But behind the stage someone is pulling the strings. The puppet is not the ultimate source of the movement. Someone is behind it.

Revelation 13 presents something similar. The beast acts in history. But Revelation reveals that behind the conflict there is a spiritual power: THE DRAGON.

That is why we must look beyond the symbol. The great enemy is not a person. IT IS SATAN.

FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC: IT RECEIVES WORSHIP

Revelation 13:4: "So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast..." Here the central issue appears. WORSHIP.

Do you remember the sermon about worshiping the Creator? Revelation 14:7 says: **"worship Him who made..."** The Creator. Now Revelation 13 presents another kind of worship: **"they worshiped the beast."** So we have two options: **Revelation 14: Worship the Creator.**

Revelation 13: They worshiped the beast. THE FINAL CONFLICT IS A CONFLICT OVER WORSHIP.

II. THE ACTIONS OF THE BEAST

Now we must enter one of the most important parts of this study. The Bible REVEALS the actions of the beast against God, against His Word, and against His people.

1. It speaks against God

Revelation 13:5 says: "And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphe-

mies..." And verse 6 says: "Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God..."

Daniel 7 presents a similar characteristic in the little horn.

Daniel 7:25 says: "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High..." Therefore, we are looking for a power with a dimension that is: **religious**, **authoritarian**, and **blasphemous**.

What is blasphemy in the bible?

jesus was accused of blasphemy when He declared that He had authority to forgive sins. Mark 2:7 says: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

If there is an institution on earth that claims the divine prerogative of forgiving sins, it must be identified with this political-religious power.

In John 10:33, His enemies said: "...You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

Therefore, biblically, blasphemy can involve **claiming divine prerogatives**. This is what the power described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 does: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

2. It persecutes God's people

Revelation 13:7: "It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them."

Daniel 7:21 says about the little horn: "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them."

Once again, we have an extraordinary correspondence.

The prophetic power: has a religious dimension, exercises authority, speaks against God, persecutes the saints.

Persecutions during the Middle Ages.

- In 1208, after the murder of a papal legate, Pope Innocent III called for the Albigensian Crusade, whose military campaign began in 1209 and was directed primarily against the Cathars, or Albigensians, of Languedoc; the Waldenses were also targeted. At the capture of Béziers in 1209, a contemporary source claimed that nearly 20,000 people had perished, although this figure cannot be regarded as a secure historical estimate.

- In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council was convened. Canon 3 provided, among other measures, for the confiscation of the property of condemned lay heretics and the excommunication of those who supported or protected heretics; those who remained under excommunication for a year were also declared ineligible to hold public office.

- Under the pontificate of Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241), the papal Inquisition took institutional form, particularly through measures adopted in 1231 and the appointment of Dominican inquisitors in 1233.

- In 1252, Pope Innocent IV promulgated the bull Ad Extirpanda, which permitted, under certain conditions, the use of torture by secular authorities in inquisitorial proceedings to obtain confessions and information about other heretics.

3. It Exercises Authority for a Prophetic Period of 1,260 Years

revelation 13:5 says: "...and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months." In biblical prophecy, symbolic time periods use the day-year principle.

Daniel 7:25 speaks of "a time and times and half a time." Revelation 12:14 uses the same expression. Revelation 12:6 speaks of **1,260 days.** Revelation 13:5: **42 months.**

In the prophetic context, they correspond to the same period: 1,260 prophetic years.

This period is directly related, in the prophetic interpretation presented in this sermon, to the medieval supremacy of the papacy, approximately from 538 to 1798. In February 1798, French forces under the command of General Berthier occupied Rome, and Pius VI was subsequently taken captive.

4. It Receives a Deadly Wound

Revelation 13:3: "And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed..." The prophecy presents: **rise → authority → persecution → deadly wound → recovery.**

This brings us to an extraordinary historical moment. In 1798, papal power suffered a decisive blow when French forces occupied Rome and Pius VI was taken captive. He died in exile the following year, on August 29, 1799, in Valence, France.

The wound was extraordinary. But Revelation says: **"his deadly wound was healed."** And the world was amazed.

Revelation 13:3 says: "...all the world marveled and followed the beast." Revelation presents a power that: RECEIVES A WOUND AND RETURNS TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE. And that recovery is part of the prophecy.

All these characteristics correspond to the system of the papacy as a political-religious institution, not to individual Catholics.

III. THE MARK OF THE BEAST

As we have seen, the end-time setting centers on the Ten Commandments, more specifically on the first table of the Law. But it is the fourth Commandment that becomes the test of faithfulness and identity.

On one side, the remnant must proclaim the Sabbath, as seen in the first angel's message of Revelation 14:7, in the call to worship "Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Furthermore, not only does the true remnant proclaim the Sabbath, but the Sabbath also becomes a seal that identifies them in their faithfulness at the end of the Conflict.

The angel who restrains the four winds of destruction at the end time cries out: "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" (Revelation 7:3). Just as in the vision of Ezekiel 9, where those faithful to the LORD receive a mark on their foreheads that spares them from destruction, at the end time God's faithful servants also receive a sign, or seal, that exempts them from the destruction that is about to be unleashed.

What is that mark, sign, or seal? The sign God has given His children throughout all generations: the Sabbath, which is a perpetual sign of God's covenant with His people. Exodus 31:13, 17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

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In the same historical end-time context, Satan places "a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and ... no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark" (Revelation 13:16–17). We understand this mark to be the counterfeit of the Sabbath, which is the only day God designates in the Bible as the Sabbath day. In other words, Satan will try to impose Sunday as the day of rest.

CONCLUSION

TWO GROUPS. Revelation 14 presents two groups.

Group 1 — Revelation 14:7: **"worship Him who made..."** They worship the Creator.

Group 2 — Revelation 14:9: **"If anyone worships the beast..."** They worship the beast.

And Revelation 14:12 presents the faithful people: **"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."**

Notice the two characteristics: COMMANDMENTS OF GOD + FAITH OF JESUS.

This is not legalism. It is not salvation by works. It is: **salvation by faith in Christ that produces obedience.**

APPEAL

Dear friends, tonight I want to close this presentation with a question that deserves a personal answer: **Whom will you obey?**

Because the moment will come when obeying God and obeying human beings will no longer be two compatible paths.

The moment will come when you will have to decide. Between the seal of God and the mark of the beast.

I invite you to choose Christ. And choosing Christ means saying: "Jesus, my life belongs to You."

"Your Word will be my standard." "Your commandments will be my guide."

"When I must choose between human pressure and the will of God, I will choose God."

"When I must choose between comfort and faithfulness, I will choose faithfulness."

"When I must choose between what the majority does and what the Bible teaches, I will choose the Bible."

If that is your decision, stand to your feet and come forward. Let us pray together.

Sermon 8



A VOICE PROCLAIMS: CHRIST IS COMING!

The day Jesus will put an end to pain and make all things new.

Main text: Revelation 22:12

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

Other key texts

John 14:1–3; Acts 1:9–11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Matthew 24:27–31; Revelation 19:11–16; Revelation 21:1–5; Revelation 22:20.

Central idea

The Second Coming of Christ is the culminating event of human history: Jesus will return personally, visibly, and gloriously to put an end to sin, raise those who died trusting in Him, transform His children, and take them to live eternally in a new world.

INTRODUCTION

During World War II, the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines became a center of battle between Allied and Japanese forces. In the history of war, there are moments when an army seems lost. There are moments when the enemy advances, cities fall, soldiers have to retreat, and it seems there is no hope.

Something similar happened in the Philippines during World War II.

General **Douglas MacArthur** received orders to leave the Philippines as Japanese forces advanced. He had to leave, leaving behind thousands of soldiers who continued fighting in the midst of a desperate situation.

But before leaving, he spoke words that became etched in history: **"I shall return."** And MacArthur left. But his soldiers remained.

They remained in enemy territory. They remained in the midst of war. They remained waiting for the fulfillment of that promise. And after a time, MacArthur returned. He returned with an army.

He returned to face the enemy. He returned to recover the territory. And finally, that promise became a reality: **he returned for his own and led them toward freedom and safety.**

But this story reminds us of an infinitely greater promise. Approximately two thousand years ago, **Jesus came to this world**.

And when He came, He found that this planet was not a place of peace. It was territory occupied by the enemy. Sin had entered. Death reigned. Satan had raised his flag over this world.

Jesus came to our battlefield. He lived among us. He fought the enemy. He faced temptation. He knew pain. He suffered rejection. And finally, on the cross, He faced the enemy in the decisive confrontation.

Jesus won. But after completing His mission, He also had to leave. His disciples watched Him ascend to heaven. And they remained here. We are still here.

On this battlefield. There are still tears. There is still sickness. There is still death. Sin still exists. We still face temptation. The enemy still fights against God's children. But before Jesus left, He did not leave us only a mission. **He left us a promise.**

In John 14:1–3: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

What extraordinary words! Jesus said: **"I am going away."** But He did not stop there. He said: **"I will come again."**

MacArthur said: **"I shall return."** And he did. But Jesus said something much greater: **"I will come again."** And Jesus will return too.

MacArthur returned for his soldiers. **Jesus will return for His disciples.**

MacArthur returned to defeat the enemy decisively. **Jesus will return to put a definitive end to sin, pain, and death.**

MacArthur returned to take his soldiers out of the war zone. **Jesus will return to take us home.** So tonight we are not waiting for a possibility. **We are waiting for the fulfillment of a promise.** Jesus went away, but He **will return**.

He will come to take those who placed their trust in Him.

And while we wait for that day, our task is to remain faithful on the battlefield.

You may be tired. You may have cried. You may have asked: "How long, Lord?" But today God wants to remind you: **YOU ARE NOT WAITING IN VAIN!** The same Jesus who promised, **"I will come again,"** will keep His word.

"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37).

Today we will try to answer the question: Why will Christ return to the earth?

I. JESUS WILL RETURN TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

We live in a world that needs to be made new.

There are homes that need to be made new. There are hearts that need to be made new. There are relationships that need to be restored. There are people who are tired of fighting pain, sickness, loneliness, and death.

We live in a wonderful world, but one that is deeply wounded.

Every sunrise reminds us that God still gives us beauty. But every tear reminds us that something terrible happened. The creation that came perfect from God's hands was damaged by sin. Death entered where God had placed life. Pain appeared where God had established happiness. Separation took the place of communion.

Yet **God has not given up on His creation.**

The history of this world will not end in a cemetery. It will not end in a war. It will not end with the triumph of disease. It will not end with death.

It will end with Jesus Christ making all things new.

Jesus is not coming only to put an end to this world

There is an even more beautiful truth. Jesus will not return simply to destroy the old. **He will return to inaugurate something completely new.**

Revelation 21:1–4 presents one of the most glorious scenes in the entire Bible:

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away..." Then John hears a voice saying:

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."

And what will God do? Revelation 21:4 answers: **"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain."**

What a promise!

God will not merely remove our tears. **He will remove the cause of our tears.**

There will be no more death. No more sickness. No more funerals. No more goodbyes. No more broken hearts. No more children crying from hunger. No more parents burying their children. No more wars. No more sin.

Because Jesus will have made all things new.

There is an expression in Revelation 21:5 that deserves our attention: **"Behold, I make all things new."**

It does not say: "Human beings will make all things new." It says: **"I make all things new."**

The final restoration will not be the work of human beings. It will be the work of God. The same God who said in Genesis, **"Let there be light,"** and light appeared, will speak again over a

planet devastated by sin. And when God says:

"Behold, I make all things new,"

the entire universe will behold the result of His restoring power. Sin will be no more. Death will be no more. Satan will be no more. Suffering will be no more. And an eternity of communion with God will begin.

II. JESUS WILL RETURN TO RESTORE WHAT SIN DESTROYED

The Bible presents a beautiful symmetry between Genesis and Revelation.

In Genesis we find a perfect world that is lost. In Revelation we find a world restored.

In Genesis a tree of life appears. In Revelation the tree of life appears again.

In Genesis death enters. In Revelation we are told: **"there shall be no more death"** (Revelation 21:4).

In Genesis, human beings are separated from the presence of God. In Revelation: **"God Himself will be with them."**

In Genesis a curse appears. In Revelation it is declared: **"And there shall be no more curse"** (Revelation 22:3).

How wonderful!

What sin ruined, God will restore.

What Satan tried to destroy, Christ will recover.

What death took away, Jesus will give back.

And what today seems lost forever, God can restore eternally.

A City for the Redeemed

Revelation 21:2 says: **"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."**

This will not be some vague spiritual existence, floating somewhere. The Bible speaks of a **new earth**.

Isaiah 65:17 records the divine promise: **"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth."**

And Peter also wrote: **"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells"** (2 Peter 3:13).

There will be the New Jerusalem. There will be the redeemed. There will be the tree of life. There will be the river of the water of life. And above all: **Jesus will be there.**

Because the greatest gift of eternity will not be a house. It will not be a crown. It will not be a city of gold. It will not even be the absence of pain.

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The greatest gift will be the presence of Christ. Revelation 21:3 says: **"God Himself will be with them."**

And what will we do on the new earth?

Eternal life will not be a boring existence. Isaiah 65:21–22 says: **"They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit."**

There will be life. There will be purpose. There will be relationships. There will be service. There will be discoveries. There will be communion. There will be joy. And everything will be free from what now contaminates our best experiences.

Isaiah 35:10 puts it this way: **"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return… They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away."**

Can you imagine it? A world where joy never ends. A life where no one has to say: "This happiness is too beautiful; someday it will end." Because there, happiness will be eternal.

III. JESUS WILL COME TO RESTORE OUR COMMUNION WITH GOD

Communion between God and human beings is now interrupted by sin. But at that time God will be able to dwell with His sons and daughters, and the redeemed will be with Him forever.

"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God'" (Revelation 21:3).

The Second Coming of Christ will destroy the barrier of sin, just as the walls of Jericho were brought down, and God's presence with us will be permanent and visible. People long to be in the very presence of God, to be able to see Him. John says that "we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez once recalled an experience from his childhood: "In the innocence of my childhood, when I looked at the sky, I often spoke with God. Very often I would say to Him, 'Jesus, please open the sky and let me see You! I want to see Your face!' He never did, but He promised me that in the future I would see Him. I still look at the starry sky and say to my Lord, 'I want to see You!' And I can almost hear Him say, 'Wait a little longer and you will see Me!'"

CONCLUSION

CHRIST IS COMING, BUT WHEN? Perhaps someone is asking: "Pastor, when will Jesus return?" The Bible answers in Matthew 24:36: **"But of that day and hour no one knows."**

We do not know the day. We do not know the hour. But we know something much more important: **HE IS COMING.** So we do not need to set dates. We need to: **BE READY.**

APPEAL

Dear friends, Ellen G. White wrote: "The hour will come; it is not far distant, and some of us who now believe will be alive upon the earth, and shall see the prediction verified, and hear

the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God echo from mountain and plain and sea, to the uttermost parts of the earth. All creation will hear that voice, and those who have lived and died in Jesus, will respond to the call of the Prince of life." — Ellen G. White, The Review and Herald, July 31, 1888.

Let us be ready, because our redemption is near. "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37). MARANATHA!

FINAL PRAYER

Loving Father, tonight we bring this evangelistic series to a close with one of the most beautiful promises in the entire Bible: **Jesus is coming.**

Thank You that our world will not end in death, sin, and pain. Thank You that history will have an ending. Thank You that sin will have an ending. Thank You that death will have an ending. Thank You that tears will have an ending.

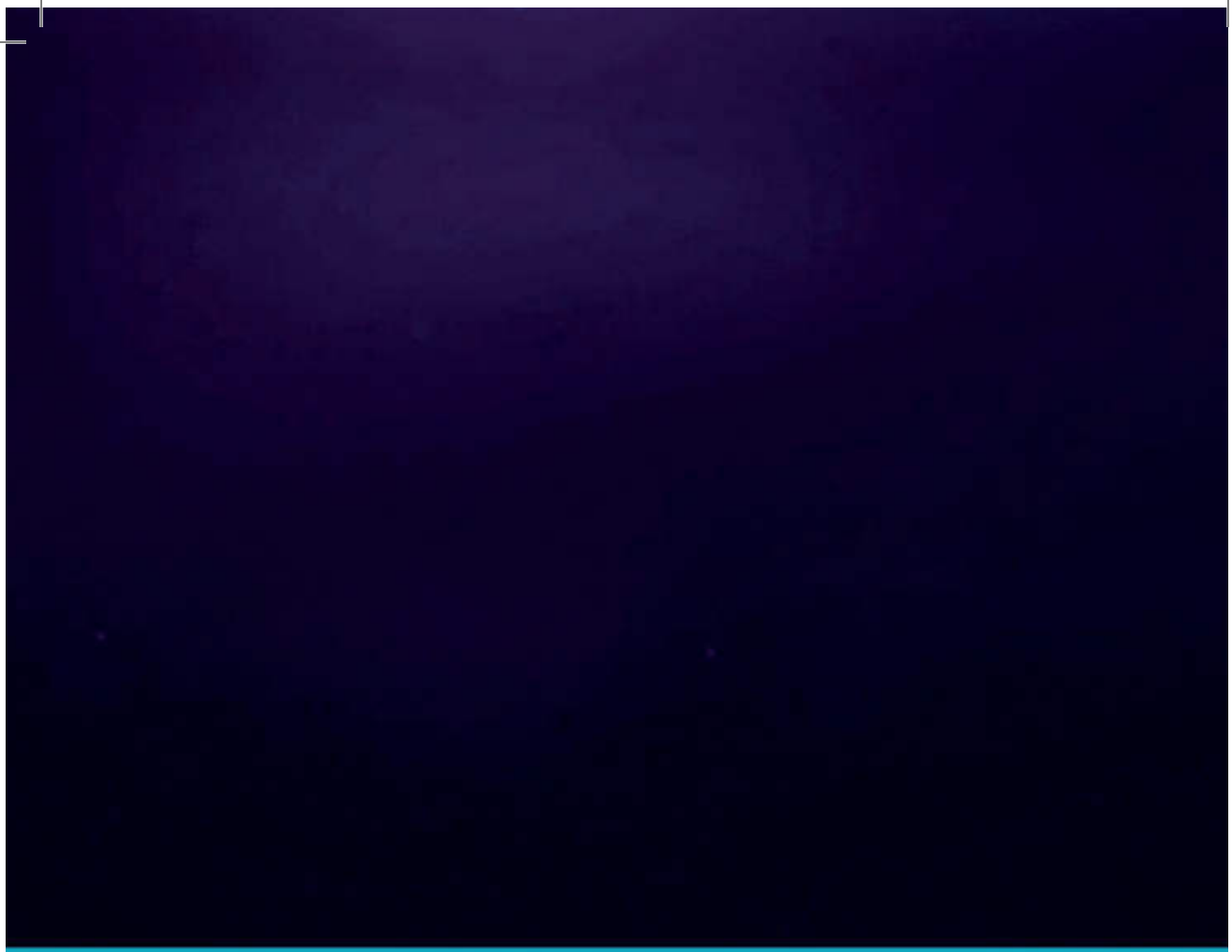
And thank You that after all of that, eternity will begin. Lord Jesus, come soon. But before You come, enter our hearts. Forgive our sins. Cleanse us. Transform our lives.

Help our friends in particular, those who have joined us throughout this evangelistic series. May no one leave without having accepted You. May no one reject Your appeal. May no one put off until tomorrow the decision that must be made today.

And when that glorious day arrives, when the heavens open and You appear with power and great glory, allow us to lift our eyes and say: **"BEHOLD, THIS IS OUR GOD; WE HAVE WAITED FOR HIM, AND HE WILL SAVE US"** (Isaiah 25:9).

Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Notes



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