

The Final Warning



As the Titanic sailed through the night, messages began to come through the message board warning, "Icebergs ahead!" Sadly those who got the message failed to acknowledge the urgency, and as a result, hundreds of souls perished in the icy ocean on that fateful night. The great tragedy is that their deaths could have been avoided if they had only listened to the warnings. Similarly, God has given us three specific warnings to prepare us for the coming crisis spoken of in the book of Revelation.

To prepare us for the end of the world, Jesus said this "gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). Notice three points; the gospel, the world, and the end. We find the fulfillment of this prophecy in the last book of the Bible. Notice the similarity. Revelation 14:1 shows an angel "having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people." After the gospel goes to the world, we see Jesus coming "on the cloud... to reap, for harvest of the earth is ripe" (Rev. 14:14, 15). This is the fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14.

Just as warnings were given to the Titanic, the final presentation of the gospel in the last days is accompanied by three specific warnings. Between the part where "the everlasting gospel" is preached and

the end of the world, we see three angels with three urgent warnings. The word angel may be interpreted, 'messenger,' which means these angels represent three messages God's people must give to the world to prepare them for the end of all things. So it's crucial for everyone to understand this prophecy.

The first warning message declares, "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" (Rev. 14:7). Ironically, this echoes the ancient warning of Solomon to "Fear God and keep His commandments...For God will bring every work into judgment" (Eccl. 12:14). While Revelation says to fear God and *give Him glory* because the judgment has come, Solomon says to fear God and *keep His commandments* because the judgment is coming. By this parallel, we see that we give glory to God is by keeping His commandments.

While the warning in Revelation tells us to keep the commandments, this is actually a call to a specific commandment, as it calls us to "worship Him who *made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water*" (Rev. 14:7). This verse parallels the fourth commandment, calling us to worship God on the Sabbath, for "the Lord *made the heavens and the earth, the sea...and rested the seventh day,*" Saturday (Ex. 20:11). The call to worship God is a call

to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. This is important because we find shortly after this that the mark of the beast institutes a false form of “worship” (Rev. 14:9).

The second warning message announces, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8). The key that unlocks this warning is found in Revelation 17, where we see a woman called Babylon drunk with the blood of the saints. Babylon is not hard to identify. In the Bible, a woman often represents a church (Jer. 6:2; Eph. 5:23). When a church falls away from God, it is called a “harlot,” so Babylon here represents an impure church (Rev. 17:1; Ezek. 16:28).

Fallen Babylon represents the fallen condition of the early Christian church when it began to mingle with pagan Rome to become the Roman Catholic Church. Let’s look at some identifiers. Outside of being a church, we are told that Babylon is also a “mother” and a “great city,” which sits on “seven mountains” or hills (Rev. 17:5, 18, 9). Because the Catholic Church was the first church, she refers to herself as the “mother church,” but why is this church also called a city? This is because when Constantine was converted to Christianity, he gave Rome, “the city of seven hills,” to the church, making her not only a church but also a city located on seven hills.

In addition, we are told that this woman is wearing purple and scarlet," the colors Catholic priests wear in their official ceremonies (Rev. 17:4), she fornicated with "the kings of the earth" when the church mingled with Rome (Rev. 17:2), and she became "drunk with the blood of the saints" all through the middle ages as she ruthlessly killed those who refused to accept her doctrines, like during the inquisition. In light of these clues, Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism, was among the first to identify the Catholic Church as Babylon, "a view that was to become dogma for all Protestant churches" (*Newsweek Magazine*, Oct. 31, 1999). As a result, the cry went out, "Babylon the great is fallen...Come out of her, My people" (Rev. 18:2, 4).

Tragically, like the Titanic, the message has not been heeded. While Babylon represents the Catholic Church, we are also told that Babylon is a "mother of harlots," which means many of the Protestants churches which came out of her would eventually grow up and become as corrupt as the mother (Rev. 17:5). Today, many Protestants are saying that the Catholic Church is not so bad after all, and we should unite on common points of doctrine. When this takes place, Protestants will also be identified as Babylon and will "share in her sins" (Rev. 18:4). Just like the Titanic, Babylon is sinking, and

those who refuse to come out and get in the lifeboats will perish in the vast ocean of their sins.

The final warning that must go to the world is a warning against receiving the mark of the beast. The prophecy declares, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark," he will receive the wrath of God (Rev. 14:9). We find more details about this issue in the previous chapter, where we are told that "the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast... to receive a mark" (Rev. 13:15, 16). Many get so caught up with side issues about the mark that they overlook the main issue. The prophecy says the "beast" will "cause" people to "worship." If you cause people to act, you force them. Evidently, the mark of the beast is forced worship. Since the way to enforce something is by making a law, the mark of the beast must be a law that forces some form of worship.

The prophecy says the beast will cause as many "as would not worship" the beast to be killed, but God warns, "If anyone worships" the beast they will receive His wrath" (Rev. 13:15, 14:9). Again, the issue is who to worship. That's why, just before the warning to avoid the mark God appeals, "worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water," once again taken almost verbatim from the fourth commandment which calls us to worship God

on the Sabbath, “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” (Rev. 14:7; Ex. 20:11). Since most equate worship to Sunday church service, it is not hard to believe that the mark will involve enforcing Sunday laws. While some may think this could never happen, Sunday laws have been around for centuries, while the Bible says Saturday, “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord” (Ex. 20:10). The mark of the beast will be a law forcing some form of worship. It is about true worship versus false worship. We either “worship Him who made heaven and earth,” or we “worship the beast” (Rev. 14:7, 11). The decision is yours. You have been given the warning. Now, what are you going to do with it?

When the Titanic sank, there was a great loss of life. Similarly, as the final warnings go out to the world, most will not listen. Like the Titanic, they take things too lightly and are in peril of eternal death. While God is calling the world to repent and be saved, only a few will get in the lifeboat and be rescued. Won't you please heed the warnings right now so you will be ready when the ship goes down?

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