

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 60

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

The Everlasting Gospel STUDY GUIDE

In Revelation 14, we find a message called the “everlasting gospel.” Under this heading, a series of announcements given by three angels follow: fear God, give glory to Him, the hour of His judgment has come, worship Him, Babylon is fallen, do not worship the beast or receive his mark on the forehead or on the hand. The first angel is pictured as announcing the everlasting gospel while the second and third angels offer further developments of the first message.

Revelation 14:6-12

The importance of the message is evident by the fact that it is to be given to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people with a “loud” or distinct voice. It is a testing message, bringing every person in the world to a decision concerning the salvation wrought out for them by Jesus Christ. It produces a people who keep God’s commandments while keeping the faith of Jesus for salvation. It also brings to a final decision all who would refuse to embrace the gift of salvation.

THE GOSPEL: WHAT IS IT?

The word “gospel” in the Greek means “good news” or “glad tidings.” What is the good news or glad tidings that God wants to take to every “nation, tribe, tongue, and people?” The Apostle Paul offers a concise, yet powerful, answer in one of his letters to the church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

The gospel is good news that brings a message of hope to all people “that Christ died for our sins ... was buried and ... rose again....” This is the first truth of the gospel declared by Paul

to the Corinthians. The entire Bible is in reality the gospel or good news of God’s deliverance from sin, but we need a starting point and Paul gives this to us in 1 Corinthians 15.

In Revelation 14, this gospel message is to be declared to the world. We must conclude that while Paul is speaking to the church in Corinth, he is also declaring a fact that applies to all people. The good news or glad tidings, the everlasting gospel, declares to the world that we have a Savior in Jesus Christ.



“...‘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.’” **REVELATION 14:7**

Isaiah 53:6

Paul declares that this gospel is “according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Since there was no New Testament in Paul’s day, his most likely source for this good news is found in Isaiah 53.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

This truth became the central theme of Paul’s writings and teachings and is seen in many of his epistles, like the one he wrote to Timothy.

1 John 2:2

This wonderful news was also John’s theme as seen in his earlier letters.

It is no surprise that we find the everlasting gospel becoming the central theme of the final message to Earth just before Jesus comes. The gospel is a message of God’s changeless love for the entire world. Jesus is the Savior of all (1 Timothy 4:10). He is your Savior, as well as mine.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

You may have noticed that Revelation 14 calls this message the “everlasting gospel.” This means that this good news of God’s

KEY SCRIPTURES

Rev. 14:7 THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME

Rev. 14:8 BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN

1 Corinthians 15:3 CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS

1 Corinthians 15:4 HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY

unmerited love is not just a New Testament theme, it is also the message of the Old Testament. Christ was set apart to be our Savior from eternity past. In the Old Testament, we look forward to the cross by interpreting the symbolism of the lamb and the sacrificial service. In the New Testament, we look back to the cross by accepting Christ's heavenly ministry of mediation through His sacrifice on Calvary (1 John 1:7; 2:1-2).

Whether we are New Testament believers or Old Testament believers, our focus is in the same place—the cross of Christ. This is important because many people today think the Old Testament offers salvation through the law. They say, “In the New Testament we have God's grace, His unmerited love, and the gospel; but the Old Testament is all about God's law.” But is this what the Bible teaches?

Hebrews 4:2; Galatians 3:8

From these two Scriptures, we can see that the gospel was preached in the Old Testament. In fact, according to the Apostle Paul, the old and new covenants are not a matter of time or dispensation, but rather of condition. We can just as easily be under the condition of the old covenant today by seeking salvation by means of our works (Galatians 4:22-27). The obedience to the law seen in God's Old Testament faithful was the fruit of salvation, not the means to salvation. Abraham was under the new covenant or everlasting covenant of faith in Christ as were all the faithful Old Testament believers (Hebrews 11).

The Bible says that Abraham obeyed God's voice and kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws (Genesis 26:5). Why? Because he believed in the everlasting covenant promise of God (Hebrews 8:10-12; 10:16-17). Abraham's obedience to God's law was a testimony that he experienced God's everlasting-covenant promise to put His laws in our hearts. In other words, it was God, not Abraham, who performed the work.

The disobedience of Israel at Sinai was a testimony to the failure of the Old Covenant promise. The people promised, “All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:7), but their promises were faulty (Hebrews 8:6-9). The Old Covenant is an experience based on promises we make to God. The New Covenant is an experience based on promises God makes to us. The two covenants are timeless expressions of the two ways of salvation, one true and the other false:

- One is based on God's promises, and the other is based on man's promises.
- One is based on Christ's work, and the other is based on man's works.
- One is based on Christ's merit, and the other is based on man's merit.

Hebrews 13:20

The everlasting covenant is the agreement between the Father and the Son to save mankind. It was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-47), fulfilling God's everlasting covenant as a man on our behalf.

Romans 8:29

The plan of salvation was not an afterthought. The everlasting covenant was already decided in eternity. It was a plan foreknown in the heart of God from the foundation of the world.

So where is the gospel in the Old Testament? A major Old Testament gospel presence is seen in the sacrificial system set up for Adam and Eve from the very inception of sin, and then given to Israel in the sanctuary service. Every sacrifice pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who “takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7). But the gospel message is also found in the very Law of God. Right in the context of the Ten Commandments in the book of Exodus, we find the gospel of God's deliverance from sin through the blood of the Lamb.

Exodus 20:1-2

These two verses precede the giving of the Law on Sinai. Before God directs His people to keep His Law, He points them to how He saved them from slavery in Egypt. How did God bring His people out of Egyptian bondage? God brought the Israelites out of bondage through the blood of a lamb (Exodus 12:13). This is the same means by which He brings us out of sin's bondage today.

This is powerful when you think about it. God says first, “I will deliver you by the blood of the Lamb. That's who I am. I am the God who delivers you from bondage. And then, once you see how I deliver you from bondage and death by the blood, then keep My commandments.” The gospel is the same today. God delivers us from sin's slavery today. God delivers us from death today (Romans 6:23). And God delivers us by the blood of the Lamb, typified in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. In other words, the entire Old Testament is saturated with gospel, gospel, gospel: in the sacrifices made for Adam and Eve, in the lamb slain for the Passover, and in the entire sanctuary system. All of this pointed to Jesus, the Lamb slain from Earth's foundation (Revelation 13:8).

John 1:29

The text does not say that Jesus might take away the sin of the world. Neither does it say that Jesus has taken away the sin of Christians. Jesus has taken away all the sins of the world! That is the gospel message to be preached to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people because it includes all of humanity. Jesus Christ has paid the price for the sins of the entire world.

The only question that remains is a personal, individual one: Will you accept the gift and surrender your heart to this love?

Summary

The everlasting gospel is the good news of the everlasting covenant between God and Christ, our heavenly representative and the “second Adam.” It is the glad tidings that God accomplished through Christ; something for the entire world. It points every person, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, to salvation by grace through faith in the

life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This good news changes God’s Ten Commandment Law. Instead of the means of salvation, it becomes the fruit of salvation. We keep God’s Law because we love Jesus (John 14:15). And we love Jesus because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). This is why the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14:6 closes by pointing to those who keep the commandments of God in Revelation 14:12. Will you choose to be among those who so appreciate God’s love for us, and allow it to transform your heart and mind according to the everlasting gospel promise? ★

