

The Wine of His Wrath

A Preview of Things to Come – Part III

Revelation 14:9-10

Introduction

Grammy award winning musician Carlos Santana has sold more than ten million copies of one album alone – his album entitled, *Supernatural*. He has been interviewed often, of course, and he openly informs people of the influence of an angel in his life.

According to one interview, Santana often hears the angel's voice as he meditates in front of his fireplace. For several years now, he claims to have been in contact with his spirit guide, Metatron. Metatron, he explained, is an archangel and a guide for him – and evidently for many others as well, who believe Metatron is the highest angelic being created.

Obviously, this raises flags for the believer who understands from the Bible that Satan was the highest angel who fell after attempting to dethrone God. He is called an “angel of light” (Isaiah 14 and II Corinthians 11).

With candles flickering, incense burning, and a yellow legal pad at one side, Carlos Santana sits in his room softly chanting. “All of a sudden,” he explains, “I hear his voice – an inner voice – and I know I can trust it. His voice has told me that I would be able to connect molecules with light over radio frequencies so that my music would be popular again.” Then he said, with perfect confidence to this reporter, “You can trust his voice – his voice will never take you to the desert.”ⁱ

Metatron's voice might not “take you to the desert,” but it might take you to hell; which is far worse than any desert.

This warning of the apostle Paul to the Galatians in the first century is just as needed in the twenty-first century:

... even if . . . an angel . . . should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you [that is, if he delivers a different message than the one you have already received from Christ through His apostle], he is to be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)

For some time now, we have observed in our study through Revelation that the world has been captivated by a man empowered and energized by the

angel of light. This man that we know as the antichrist has effectively been channeling the message of a fallen angel – Satan himself. This fallen angel – through the antichrist and the false prophet – is in the process of deceiving the whole world.

At the height of this influence; at the height of the popularity of the antichrist, at some time after the midpoint of the Tribulation, John the apostle records that suddenly, three angels begin to deliver a gospel message, or “euangelion” in Greek, of their own. Their gospel messages are drastically different from the antichrist's message.

The first angel, in Revelation 14:6, circled the globe, preaching that the human race needed to fear God, give Him glory, and worship Him alone. In verse 7, the angel says, effectively, that God is worthy of the worship of creation because God happens to be the Creator.

What a dramatic scene this is. Imagine an angel flying high in the sky and, with a booming voice, announcing that mankind is worshiping the wrong god – the antichrist.

Then, another angel appears in verse 8. This angel announces the coming collapse of the world kingdoms – referred to as Babylon in this verse. The angel delivers a warning to all the nations that are drinking the wine of Babylon's immorality – they are literally partying with the prince of darkness.

In Babylon of old, a man's hand suddenly appeared and wrote a message on the palace wall of the king as all of the kingdom's big shots partied, having just begun drinking their wine from the temple vessels as an act of sacrilege and blasphemy. The hand wrote, translated by Daniel the prophet to the terrified crowd, “You have been weighed in the balances and found lacking.” In other words, “You're in deep trouble with God.” That very night, Babylon fell to enemy soldiers. (Daniel 5)

Now the message appears again, only this time, it is not a handwritten message on a wall, it is a living angel in the sky. Again, it even uses the metaphor of drinking and partying, “You're drinking wine with Babylon.” In other words, “You've partnered in your

blasphemy and immorality with the kingdom of Babylon and you are in deep trouble with God.”

I can only imagine the way these angels have the attention of the human race – if only for a few moments at a time.

Angel Messenger of God’s Wrath

Now, in verses 9-10a of Revelation 14,

... another angel, a third one, followed them [the first two angels], saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

“he also will drink the wine of the wrath of God...”

In other words, if we worship the enemy of God, we will experience the wrath of God.

Notice further in verse 10,

“he also will drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger...”

This message is to literally frighten potential worshipers of the antichrist into believing the gospel.ⁱⁱ

The angel reveals the doom of those who follow the antichrist. Those who say our preaching or teaching should never scare unbelievers with the reality of hell need to study this angel’s message. Besides, tell me how to preach about hell without scaring unbelievers.

Hell is scary. If you did not know this; if you are hearing this today believing hell is a figment of someone’s imagination or a creation of some religion to keep people honest, or that hell is a bad day stuck in a traffic jam, just hang on. I am so glad you are listening.

The gospel is not just, “Believe in Christ and repent of your sin in order to go to heaven”; it is also just as correct to say, “Believe in Christ and repent of your sin in order to not go to hell.”

Avoiding the wrath of God is a very good thing – and I am recommending it to everyone today!

This third angel will basically spend all his time warning the world of a coming judgment. His message is intended to frighten those tempted to take the mark of the beast by informing them of the terror of a literal, everlasting place of torment.

It occurred to me in my study, that the contemporary angels of today – the ones floating in and out of séances, musician’s living rooms, and

sessions with New Age gurus – have nothing to say affirming the creative power and handiwork of God. They instead, tell people that they are equally god. So we can create our own destiny, speak to the universe, and create our own reality – exercise *our* divinity!

Furthermore, the popular angelic messages today speak of divine love and never a word about divine wrath. Most of the messages I have read about that are supposedly from angels basically boil down to, “God loves everyone.” In a sense, this is true.

However, have you ever heard a message from one of these angels that said, “God is angry with you.”? This message will pack them in.

“Judgment is coming and God is really angry!” This happens to be the message of the third angel.

This was, in fact, the gospel message that sparked a great awakening. It all began when Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon that lit the fires of revival. It was entitled, “Sinners in the Hands of a Happy God”.

No, “People Who Have Made Some Bad Choices in Life in the Hands of a Loving God”.

No, “Victims in the Hands of a Therapeutic God”.

No, “Negative Thinkers in the Hands of a Positive God Who Wants to Fulfill Their Vision and Make Their Lives the Best Life Now”.

No, but these messages are being preached in pulpits today in our cities and it is little wonder why there is no revival.

Jonathan Edwards preached an authentic gospel message entitled, if you can imagine, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” This is an excerpt from his sermon manuscript which he read without ever looking up:

The pit is prepared. The fire is made ready. The furnace is now hot ready to receive them. The flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is sharp and held over them and the pit has opened its mouth under them . . . O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in.

This is the gospel of the third angel.

Ladies and gentlemen, we typically do not think of God as angry or furious or wrathful.

Evidently this happens to be a part of Satan’s strategy, because when angels are sent to deliver the message from God to the planet, the fact that He is

angry and wrathful is top news. This is the other side of God that Satan would like kept out of sight.

Satan is constantly grooming false teachers to keep this news out of the public marketplace.

The messages of positive thinkers and positive word movement pastors refuse to talk about sin, judgment, repentance, and, certainly, the wrath of God.

Michal Horton, evangelical author and teacher, recently reviewed and summarized messages that dominate Christian television and radio. I watched part of an interview with him the other day. He said that the basic premise of their messages can be boiled down to this: "God is nice, you're nice, so be nice."

We could add, "And if you'll be nice, God will be even nicer to you."

The gospel then, is nothing more than behavior modification and a positive outlook on life. There is another gospel.

I agree with one author, who wrote,

A shallow gospel presentation that does not present the reality of eternal judgment, the reality of the Law of God, the reality of condemnation, and eternal hell does not warn of God's wrath, does not crush the sinner under the weight of his violation of the Law of God, does not make him stand before God guilty and without excuse. The gospel presentation that does not do this is not a true gospel presentation.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ladies and gentlemen, this really gets back to the authority of scripture. What has God said?!

The reason I spend time basically introducing the biblical gospel and both sides of the nature of the gospel and the authority of scripture as it defines the doctrine of God's wrath and eternal judgment is because otherwise, you simply would not believe what we are about to study.

The mind of even the Christian is shocked by this. When they meditate on the wrath of God and eternal torment, even the most stalwart believer shudders to consider what this will mean for unbelievers.

I would not believe this were it not for scripture.

This angel delivers several characteristics of the wrath of God in his brief message in Revelation 14.

1. The first characteristic is that the wrath of God is personal.

Notice the personal pronouns through this angel's remarks in verses 9-10 – circle them.

. . . *"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,*

he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone . . ."

This is personal, not metaphorical or mystical. This is reality.

This is the horror of a person who experiences a literal mark on his forehead or hand and because of their blasphemy and idolatry is being promised a literal torment in a literal place of literal fire and brimstone. This text is also a peek into the reality of a coming future lake of fire as the eternal state for unbelievers.

Many supposed evangelicals no longer believe in what this angel is preaching. They are scrambling for loopholes.

How does one arrive at denying a literal, eternal hell?

They do not start with denying this – or any other key doctrine for that matter. They redefine it. In fact, they start by redefining scripture and one of the most popular ways is to redefine scripture in terms of relevance. In other words, the only parts of the Bible that matter are the parts that are relevant – and they do not think hell is relevant. How convenient is that?

You might be thinking, "Yea, churches started doing that in recent years – I hear talk of relevance all the time." Then, actually, you should back up in American history to discover where the stage was set for our generation today to deny the message of this third angel and the coming eternal wrath of God.

In the 1920s, a liberal pastor surfaced by the name of Harry Emerson Fosdick. Even though he was originally a Baptist pastor, he avoided charges of heresy while pastoring a Presbyterian church in New York by resigning.

With the full funding of John D. Rockefeller, a new interdenominational church, called Riverside Church, was built for Fosdick. Overlooking the Hudson River, this church was soon packed to capacity.

Fosdick was a best-selling author of books related to positive thinking and the generous grace of God.

He literally influenced seminaries and pastors all across this country. At the height of his fame, his picture graced the cover of *Time Magazine* in 1930.

In an interview in 1928, his words became the standard for American pastors, especially those who longed to be accepted by their culture. With Fosdick's words, they found their champion. Now, they would begin the long slide away from Bible exposition and verse-by-verse teaching.

In this seminal interview, Fosdick said, "Preachers who pick out texts from the Bible and then proceed to give their historic settings, their logical meaning in the context, their place in the theology of the writer, with a few practical reflections, are grossly misusing the Bible. Nobody who speaks to the public assumes that the vital interests of the people are located in the meaning of words spoken 2,000 years ago."^{iv}

This led a lot of ministers to say, "Well, of course that's true. How could we have been so old fashioned as to follow Paul's exhortation to Timothy to . . ."

"preach the word . . ." (II Timothy 4:2a).

"I mean, we're well past believing that the words of . . ."

". . . scripture [are actually] inspired . . . and profitable . . .

"[to effectively and thoroughly] equip [the believer for life] for every good work."

(II Timothy 3:16-17).

"We're way past that!"

The trouble is that Fosdick was heard and he created an informal movement that included thousands of pastors, seminary professors and teachers. He became the inventor, in modern terminology, of what we call today, the seeker-driven church. For many, it is a badge of honor.

In the seeker movement, the desire to relate to the unbeliever is more important than the desire to convict the unbeliever with the gospel. The desire to be relevant overshadows the desire to be biblical.

Preaching – if it is even called that – begins with the *needs* of the audience rather than scripture, which leads to the *transformation* of the audience (Romans 12:1-2).

With almost prophetic precision Fosdick wrote these words that are now considered gospel truth in the evangelical church, "Who seriously supposes that one in a hundred of the congregation cares, to start with, what Moses, Isaiah, Paul, or John meant in

those verses. So the preacher should not end, but start with thinking about the audience's vital needs, and then let the whole sermon be organized around a constructive endeavor to meet those [felt] needs . . . all this is good sense and good psychology."^v

The church growth methods of the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first century are nothing more than the repackaging of this pastor in New York.

One of the most popular authors, who really did nothing more than bring Harry Emerson Fosdick into modern church growth, was not a pastor, but a pollster by the name of George Barna. Barna wrote another book that sent pastors scurrying to the book stores.

In this book, entitled *Marketing the Church*, Barna wrote, "It is critical that we keep in mind a fundamental principle of Christian communication: the audience, not the message, is sovereign. If our advertising – I guess he means our preaching – is going to stop people in the midst of hectic schedules . . . our message has to be adapted to the needs of the audience. – Does this sound familiar? – When we produce communication that is based on a take-it-or-leave-it proposition, rather than on sensitivity to people's needs, people will reject our message."^{vi}

In other words, no matter what, remember that the feelings of the audience are more important than delivering the truth.

Read the messages and conversations of Jesus Christ. One of the striking things is how sensitive He is to the feelings of the Pharisees. He did not call them a "brood of butterflies," but a "brood of snakes".

If this is not twisted enough, Barna went on to explain that the apostle Paul felt this way too. He writes, "Paul studied strategies and tactics that would enable him to attract the most prospects and realize the greatest number of conversions."^{vii}

Is he kidding? Let Paul speak for himself!

. . . when I came to you, . . . I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. (I Corinthians 2:1)

In other words, "I didn't come with a strategy or tactic to realize the greatest number of conversions!"

Paul wrote further,

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

*I was with you in weakness and in fear
and in much trembling,*

*and my message and my preaching were
not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in
demonstration of the Spirit and of power,*

*so that your faith would not rest on the
wisdom of men, but on the power of God.*

(I Corinthians 2:2-5)

Can it get any clearer than this?!

Paul said, “When I came to you, I didn’t begin with your felt needs, I began with the character of Christ. What mattered the most to me was not that I was relevant to you, but that you were related to Christ. I wanted to deliver the truth about Christ’s crucifixion; that is, that Christ suffered the wrath of God for the sake of sinners; Christ paid the penalty of sin so you wouldn’t have to go to hell.”

I am amazed at the popularity today of emergent church leaders like Brian McLaren, who say things like, “When somebody asks me if Christ is the only way to heaven, I have a problem with that because that assumes the primary purpose that Jesus came to earth was to get people to escape hell and take them to heaven.”^{viii}

Of course it was.

*[I] have come [that is, for this purpose I am here] to seek and to save [those who are] lost.
(Luke 19:10)*

Say John 3:16 with me – so many preachers have forgotten the fundamental truth of the gospel –

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, [why?] that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

It sounds like Christ came specifically to save us from hell and take us to heaven.

Can there be anything greater than the gospel of salvation?

Salvation is personal – we must accept Christ by faith in Him alone.

In the same way as salvation is personal, so is God’s coming wrath upon those who do not believe.

2. Secondly, not only is the wrath of God personal, it is terrible.

Notice verse 10 of Revelation 14.

he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger . . .

This is, without a doubt, one of the most compact, compressed sentences regarding the wrath of God found in scripture. His wrath will one day be unmixed.

In John’s day wine was typically mixed with water. Even the Romans believed that to drink unmixed wine was barbaric. They normally mixed it at one part grape juice to three parts water.

So John uses this practice as a metaphor for the *undiluted* wrath of God. It is “*straight wrath*”. Mercy and compassion will not be mixed into the cup – only wrath and anger.

Can you imagine this terrible moment the world will one day face?

It is no wonder that David wrote:

*. . . who may stand in Your presence when . . .
You are angry? (Psalm 76:7b)*

The word John uses to refer to God’s “anger” is the Greek word “thumos” (θυμος), which gives us our word “thermometer”. It means burning anger.^{ix}

I saw a glimpse of “thumos” one afternoon in the eyes of a kid in my neighborhood. I can still picture the side yard about three houses away from where I lived. I was about ten years old at the time, and this neighbor boy was older, bigger, and stronger. I do not remember the content of our conversation, but I am sure I was sharing the gospel with him. He was really mad. I remember him getting right up over me – and I was pretty sure I was going to die. I remember balling up my little fist – and the next thing I knew, he was holding his bloody nose. There was an awkward moment of, “What was I thinking and what do I do now?!” I took off running. Back then, I was short for my age; a skinny little kid with a head of red hair – you will have to use your imagination. I took off running – and he was right behind me, yelling all sorts of unbiblical things. At the edge of the yard, there was a chain-link fence about four feet high. That fence was the only thing between me and life. I do not think I even touched it, but I am sure I did a handspring off the top. The other kid ran into the fence, had to stop to climb over it, and by then, I had escaped – and lived to grow up and become your pastor.

This neighbor kid was filled with “thumos”.

Can you imagine God filled with “thumos”? Can you imagine seeing undiluted anger in His eyes as He looks at you?

John adds to this the word “wrath”. “Wrath” is from the Greek word “orge” (οργη), from which we

get our word “orgy”. This word refers to settled, deliberate, merciless wrath.^x

It is no wonder that David could write this warning:

Now therefore . . . show discernment; take warning . . .

Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling.

Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

(Psalm 2:10-12)

This is the gospel! This is both sides of it!

Escape to Him or, one day, there will be no escape from Him. We cannot outrun God.

Run to Him now – you cannot outrun Him later.

God’s wrath is personal and it is terrible.

This is the gospel of the angel in Revelation 14. It is a different gospel from the gospel of messengers, pastors, and an angel named Metatron, who bring messages of success and good times.

The world has followed the voice of their angels, their experts, their pseudo-pastors, and their pseudo-spiritual advisors – and they will be led past the desert, directly into a chasm called hell.

This is the other side of the gospel – and it must not remain a secret.

For those who believe, this message from angels is an encouragement to tell others of the impending judgment of God. This compels us to live for Christ in a world without hope, so they can see our distinctive lives and our pure lifestyles – literally, our good deeds – and glorify our Father, who is in heaven.

If you are not a believer, these angels of Revelation, who will one day warn the human race to reverence God, follow God, worship God, and surrender to God, are, even now, warning you. You can benefit from their future warning today!

Conclusion

Let me invite you to receive Christ’s pardon and forgiveness for your sins.

In 1833, the United States Supreme Court made an interesting decision. It had to do with a George Wilson and James Porter. They had robbed a U. S. mail train and were caught, brought to trial, found guilty, and sentenced to be hung.

James Porter went to the gallows first, and hung by the neck until dead.

George Wilson’s friends interceded on his behalf and President Andrew Jackson issued a formal pardon.

The charges resulting in the death sentence were completely dropped. Wilson would have to serve only a prison term of twenty years for his other crimes.

Incredibly, George Wilson *refused the pardon!*

The sheriff did not know what to do. He could not hang a pardoned man. Wilson was returned to court as they attempted to “force” the pardon upon him. He refused to go free.

I was able to read some of the court documents that are available online. It was recorded that George Wilson chose to, “. . . waive and decline any advantage or protection which might be supposed to arise from the pardon referred to . . .”

Wilson’s case eventually reached the United States Supreme Court. The Attorney General made the following comment, “The court cannot give the prisoner the benefit of the pardon, unless he claims the benefit of it.”

The case was decided, and Supreme Court Justice, John Marshall, wrote the following opinion: “A pardon is a deed, to the validity of which delivery is essential; and delivery is not completed without acceptance. It may then be rejected by the person to whom it is tendered; and if it be rejected, we have no power in a court to force it on him.”

George Wilson was hung by his neck and he died.^{xi}

My friend, you can be pardoned today through Christ’s sacrifice on your behalf – He died for your crimes so you can go free. However, you have to accept His offer.

The wrath of God is personal – and so is redemption. We do not inherit it from our parents or grandparents. We do not have redemption rub off on us from our spouse or children. We must personally believe on Him who died for us. We must personally accept the pardon of Christ’s forgiveness. We must personally follow Christ as our Master and Lord.

Why would we do anything less, in light of His coming wrath?!

ⁱ Chris Heath, “The Epic Life of Carlos Santana,” quoted by “Santana’s Wayward Spirituality,” www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/weekly/00-05-16/12439.html.

ⁱⁱ Robert L. Thomas, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 1995), p. 209.

ⁱⁱⁱ John MacArthur, “Apostates, Be Warned,”

<http://www.gty.org>.

^{iv} Harper’s Magazine (July, 1928).

^v Harry Emerson Fosdick, quoted by John MacArthur in Ashamed of the Gospel (Crossway Books, 2001), p. 76.

^{vi} Ibid., p. 76.

^{vii} Ibid., p. 76.

^{viii} <http://www.youtube/mclaren>.

^{ix} Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 844.

^x John MacArthur, Revelation, Volume 2 (Moody Press, 2000), p. 91.

^{xi} “U. S. Supreme Court United States v. Wilson, 32 U. S. 7 Pet. 150-163 (1833),”

<http://supreme.justia.com/us/32/150/case.html>.