

Babylon: A Works-Centered Religion

This is the opposite of the false teachings of Babylon, which are centered in human teachings, traditions, and works.

5. Describe Babylon. (Revelation 18:2–4)

Demonic forces control spiritual Babylon. All nations have drunk the wine of her fornication, which represents false doctrine. People are confused in their thinking and mistake error for truth.

Fornication is an illicit union. Notice carefully who unites in this end-time confederacy. Babylon unites with the “kings” and “merchants” of the earth. Revelation 18 depicts a union between the earth’s false religions and its political and economic powers. They unite in an evil confederacy to persecute God’s people.

6. What is God’s final call to humanity? (Revelation 18:4)

Where are most of God’s people? In Babylon. And what is God’s final call? “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins” (Revelation 18:4). Since sin is the transgression or breaking of God’s law (1 John 3:4), God is calling His people to come out of every law-breaking church.

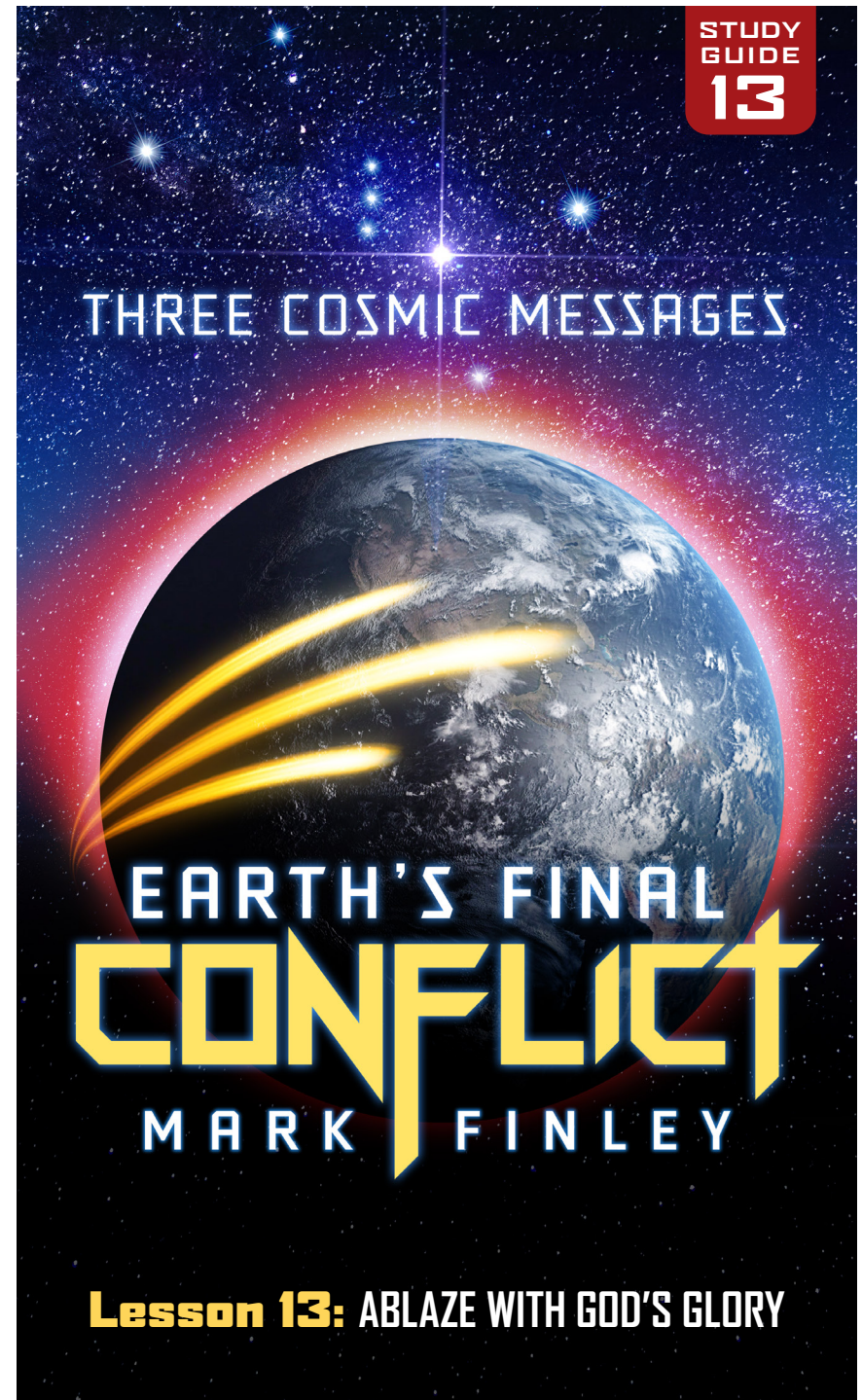
Why is God making this final call? Revelation 18:5 tells us, “For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.” Where are we in the panorama of last-day events? We are poised on the verge of a religious, political, and economic union. The accumulating figures of sin are rapidly reaching their limit in God’s record book.

God is preparing a people to proclaim the marvels of His grace, the greatness of His love, the goodness of His character, and the righteousness of His law. They love His truth, live His truth, and proclaim His truth. The earth is lightened with the glory and character of God, and the Holy Spirit is poured out in latter rain power. Hearts are touched, lives are changed, the world is reached, and Jesus comes again.

In the fading light of human history, in these critical times in this crisis hour, won’t you say the following prayer? “Jesus, take away all human pride. Help me to trust in you and you alone. Make me what you want me to be. Keep me faithful until you come again. Use me in this closing work to make a difference in our world.”

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THE MESSAGE OF THE THREE ANGELS FLYING IN MID-AIR WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL to preach to every man, woman, and child on this planet is especially designed by Christ to prepare each one of us for His second coming. To casually set them aside or treat them with careless indifference is to risk eternal loss.

1. What admonition does the apostle Paul give us regarding the last days of human history? (*1 Thessalonians 5:4–6*)

Bible-believing Christians have divine insight into what is coming upon this world. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation vividly reveal the final climatic events in earth's history. Revelation 14 presents heaven's final message to a rebellious planet brought by three angels flying amidst heaven. In Revelation 14:6 and 7, the first angel proclaims the everlasting gospel of God's grace in light of heaven's final judgment, calling all to obey God and worship the Creator.

The second angel announces in Revelation 14:8: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Babylon is a symbol of religious confusion, false doctrine, and human traditions. The message of the second angel does not leave room for compromise. It appeals to us to decide for Christ, not falsehood; truth, not error; Scripture, not tradition; the teachings of God's Word, not the traditions of men; the freedom of the Lamb, not the coercion of the beast.

The third angel's message warns against the mark of the beast. Throughout Bible prophecy, a beast represents a political or religious power. The beast of Revelation 13 and 14 arises out of Rome as a worldwide system of worship, led by a papacy that will unite church and state at a time of economic upheaval, natural catastrophes, social turmoil, international political crisis, and global conflict.

History repeats itself. Just as in the days of the ancient Roman Empire under Constantine, once again Sunday worship becomes the vehicle to unite church and state to achieve unity. Our shattered world provides a backdrop for Protestants and Catholics to unite in the common cause of bringing about world peace. The United States eventually takes the lead in this global confederation to save our planet.

"Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul, and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of Spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 588).

God raises up a last-day people to stand on the shoulders of the great reformers of the past with the Bible as their only creed. Christ alone is their only source of salvation, the Holy Spirit is their only source of strength, and the return of our

Lord is the consummation of all their hopes. The message of the three angels concludes with an urgent appeal for Christ's faithful followers to keep the commandments of God through the living faith of Jesus dwelling in their hearts.

2. How does John characterize God's people in the last days? (*Revelation 14:12*)

God's people are identified as Christ-centered believers filled with the faith of Jesus who lovingly keep His commandments, including the Bible Sabbath. Revelation 14 describes them spanning the globe with the eternal gospel.

Lighted with God's Glory

The three angels of Revelation 14 are joined by a fourth angel in Revelation 18. This angel gives power to the proclamation of the three angels so that the "earth was illuminated with his glory" (Revelation 18:1). Revelation 18 focuses on the major events leading to the climax of human history and the ultimate triumph of the gospel.

3. Summarize Revelation 18:1 in your own words.

The fourth angel comes down from the glorious presence of God, proclaiming God's last message of mercy and warning earth's inhabitants of what is coming. The Holy Spirit is poured out in unprecedented power, and the gospel is rapidly spread to the ends of the earth. Thousands are converted in a day, and God's truth impacts the entire planet.

4. What other words are associated with God's glory? (*Revelation 18:1; Revelation 4:11; Revelation 5:12; Revelation 19:1; and Revelation 21:26*)

The great controversy between good and evil is about God's honor and reputation. When Moses asked God to show him His glory, God responded: "I will make all My goodness pass before you" (Exodus 33:18–19).

God's glory is His character. The earth will be filled with the glory of God. We, His followers, will be completely overwhelmed by His love. We will totally comprehend its depth and will so fully grasp how amazing His grace is that our characters will be changed by redeeming love. The last message proclaimed to a world engulfed in spiritual darkness is, "Fear God and give glory to Him" (Revelation 14:7). There is no glory in our works, no glory in our righteousness, no glory in our goodness.