

HEALING STREAM MINISTRIES presents...

THE UNDILUTED, FULL STRENGTH, THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES
with enough power to...

- **cleanses from all sin**
 - **set us free from all bondage**
 - **break all the power of the enemy over us**
 - **restore us to total spiritual health**
 - **develop immunity to all last-day deceptions**
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#53 – Scriptural Detective Work

When studying the Book of Revelation it is so tempting and relatively easy for anyone to try to match the Biblical text with contemporary “breaking news.” Sometimes the matching works. Often it does not, especially when it is motivated by a need for the sensational. There are preachers who sometimes, in their eagerness to preach prophetically about current and future events, have had to change their sermon content because certain events no longer matched the text. But if the text may not always match historical events, that does not exhaust its meaning to speak God’s word to the conditions of the sinful human heart.

Because the word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword,” we will often be able to unflinchingly and penetratingly apply the Scriptures to our own lives. This is especially true about the three angels’ messages, particularly the warnings about Babylon and the beast.

So before you apply these Biblical symbols of Babylon and the beast to “others” (organizations, nations, and people), try applying them to your own life. To do so, you must first become a Scriptural detective. You must patiently trace every symbol to the setting of its Old Testament roots. Then you must discern the meaning of the symbol as applied to those roots, and then (and only then) can you make a practical application to human life and experience.

What is Babylon? Babylon is a harlot. Spiritual harlotry occurs when we pursue other ‘gods’ than our Creator God. The Scriptural evidence for this is abundant (Deuteronomy 31:16; 32:16; James 4:4). To serve others gods is harlotry – the breaking of the first commandment – “*You shall have no other gods before me.*” Harlotry is idolatry. When we for our self-worth and significance depend on anyone or anything other than God we are commit-

ting idolatry (and harlotry). So in the 2nd angel's message (Revelation 14:8) you have embedded the covenant violation of the 1st commandment.

What is the beast? In addition to your previous understanding of the historical applications of the beast, the beast is also an idol. There is a remarkably close connection between Babylon and the beast. Remember how Babylon rides a beast (Revelation 17:1-2). This beast has an image, a name, and a number (Revelation 15:1-3). Do you not see here hints of violating the 2nd, 3rd and 4th commandments? [2nd commandment is about 'i-mage,' the 3rd commandment is about 'name,' and the fourth commandment is about 'number']. So the 2nd angel's message is a warning not to break the 1st commandment; and in the 3rd angel's message is embedded a warning not to break the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th commandments.

What then are the experiential applications of the symbols of Babylon and the beast to our own lives? It is like this –

- When we pursue other gods (breaking the 1st commandment) we become harlots just like Babylon.
- When we pursue other gods we will ride a “beast” through which we express the idolatrous pursuits of our hearts.
- We will custom-design this beast (or idol) in our own image (the breaking of the 2nd commandment).
- We will defame God's holy **name** (taking it in vain) by trying to make a **name** for ourselves through our idol (the breaking of the 3rd commandment),
- and we will receive the **number** of our beast – six and/or 666. And because it is hard work to ride and control our own beast at all times, we will have no rest day or night.
- The **number** of our God is found in the **seventhness** of the 4th commandment. If you somehow believe that your Sabbathkeeping is your work entitling you a first mortgage on heaven – placing God under obligation to save you – you have missed the point about the Sabbath. The Sabbath is **not** work. It is **rest from work**. It is a celebration that we are not saved by our own work, but by Christ's perfect, complete and finished redemptive work. The Sabbath carries in its number ('7') God's rating of our lives as being complete (a perfect 7) when we are 'in' Christ (Colossians 2:10).

Question: Have you accepted God's rating of your life when you are **in** Christ? Have you accepted the rating by the witnesses in heaven's courtroom on Christ's sacrifice as a perfect seven? *“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”* (Revelation 5:12). Do you believe that witnesses in heaven's courtroom will only tell the truth, the whole truth

and nothing but the truth? Do you agree with God's rating of His Son's redemptive work?

"The Father gave all honour to His Son, seating Him at His right hand, far above all principalities and powers. He expressed His great joy and delight in receiving the Crucified One, and crowning Him with glory and honour...And all the favours He has shown to His Son in His acceptance of the great atonement are shown to His people. God loves them as He loves His Son. The seal of Heaven has been affixed to Christ's atonement. His sacrifice is in every way satisfactory. In Him mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The Father embraced His Son, and in this included all who receive Him."

E.G. White , Bible Echo, May 22, 1899

Do you believe that Christ's redemptive work is in every way satisfactory? What rating do you give God for rating you with a perfect '7'? How about expressing that rating by singing heaven's doxology, the song of Moses and the Lamb – "*Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God, Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, You King of the saints*" (Revelation 15:3,4).

Thus when you do Scriptural detective work, you will see **much more** than warnings about sin and depravity. You will behind the symbols of 'Babylon' and the 'beast' also see God's invitation for people everywhere to experience the joyful assurance of God the Father's rating of their lives when they trust in Christ as Saviour. This is detective work to discover buried treasure!

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