

The Second Angel's Message and Mary Magdalene Sermon Transcript

By Adrian Ebens at Talking Rock Georgia, 23 October 2013

Speaker 1: We humbly come before thee, in adoration and praise, to lift you up. We pray for your Spirit to be here, to be among us. For you have promised, that where two, or three, are gathered together, your spirit is there also. And, we thank you for Jesus, our redeemer. As the message is given tonight, we pray that you will bless Adrian. That he may speak the truth from thy word. That the Spirit may speak through him. It would not be his words, but your words coming to our hearts, afresh. Let it be a pouring out of further study and of knowledge of thee, Father, the only true God. We thank you for this opportunity to be here, and I pray a blessing upon all who are here, that can hear this message today. And, I pray for those, Father, that are on their way here. Please watch over and protect them. Give them a blessing as they drive, so they can come and enjoy, and partake of thy spirit. We pray and we thank thee, in Jesus name, Amen.

Amen. Thank you brothers.

Got that right. Well, last night, we were looking at the first of three presentations on the third angels' message. And, you will remember that I introduced the topic with the parable of the talents. And, we focused on the third man. Let's go back there to Matthew 25, just to refresh. And this man relates some information to the land owner, or the one who was giving the talents. And, he says in Matthew 25, verse 24, "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee, that thou art a hard man." And I related that in relationship to the natural man's response to the word of God. Man creates a perception of what he is hearing in the word of God, and it comes out in these words, "I knew thee, that thou art a hard man."

And, as a young person in relationship to the three angels' messages, I mentioned to you the first angel's message was, "Get your act together. The judgment is on." Angel number two, "The other churches are already out of the game. They're out." And, the third angel's message is, "If you don't get your act together, you're going to burn in a very hot place for an indiscriminate amount of time."

I knew thee, that thou art a hard man. As we approach the three angels' messages, it's a growing experience. And, what I was attempting to show last night, was that the fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come, is actually a very intimate relational question about the desire to dwell in the presence of Jesus, and follow the Lamb wherever He goes. It's a marriage question. And, yet, when we hear... When we read this on the surface, without the deeper understanding, it sounds very hard, and it sounds threatening.

You think of the story of when the Son of God came to Adam and Eve, and He was saying, "Adam, where are you?" A voice of love. And, yet, when Adam hears that voice, in his mind it's, "Adam, where are you?" And, he goes and hides. He's hearing something different from, actually, what is going on. The perception of who God is has changed. I want to, now, bring this into the second angel's message.

The second angel's message... And, I have usually entitled this, "Wrestling with the second angel." Because, I have wrestled over how to understand this passage of Scripture, and how it affects the way I look at things. A little bit more personal history. We want to talk about vulnerability in a safe place. I mentioned to you, last night, that my first real encounter with the three angels' messages was, that in my final year of high school, I had to memorize the three angels' messages for an exam. So, that exam, the pain of losing in an exam... I understood pain, so I memorized them.

As you're memorizing and going over it, the words start to penetrate in your mind. Anyway, in the providence of God, not long after that, my class was taken on a trip to visit Avondale College, which is a very smaller version of Andrew's University. In Australia, it's the only institution that we have there. We were, as final year high school students, we were taken there to awaken our interest in studying at Avondale College. I remember the night many of us young men were... There was one room, and we're all on the floor bunked down, and the lights go out. Then someone throws something, and then someone bumped, nudges, someone. The next thing we're having a full on fight. Next thing, the language is flying. All the four-letter words are going around all over the place, and someone's head gets banged into the wall. It's getting really serious. In the middle of all that, with stuff flying around me, and punches being thrown, this voice in my head says, "And, this is the next generation to take the third angel's message to the world."

Immediately after that, the door where I was staying, opened, and I could see across to the hall where the young ladies were staying. And, I saw two young ladies sitting on the steps. And I was just compelled to walk towards them. So, I'm walking through a midst of projectiles, and fists, and I wasn't even looking. I don't know how I got through, other than my angel was protecting me. I was drawn. And, I went over to these two young ladies. And, they were sitting there, and they were studying the Sabbath School lesson. I'm going, "Whoa!" Religious people.

I'm in a Seventh Day Adventist high school, trained to be ready to give the gospel to the world. And, I had been feeding on Hollywood, and all the movies. I was enjoying just playing games, and sports, and all these kinds of things. At the age of 17 years of age, I just wasn't interested in spiritual things, really. There's more to that story, later. But, this is where I was in my current experience. And, these two young ladies are studying the Sabbath School lesson. And, something compelled me to stay there and listen. I just listened to them talk, and they were just talking about passages in the Bible. And, just the fact that these two young ladies were sitting there, openly sharing about the Bible, it really, really, spoke to me. And, God was working on my heart.

One of those young ladies now lives in North Carolina, over near Raleigh. I'm really indebted to her for that simple little witness that she played in my life at that particular time, an interesting encounter, a calling. I was being called to understand the third angel's message. That event had an impact on my life. If I hadn't had memorized the three angels' messages, that phrase, "And, this is the next generation to take the third angel's message to the world," wouldn't have meant anything to me. But, having memorized it, and knowing something about the Adventist Church, and seeing all the frivolity, and stupidity of youth that I was involved in, I felt the judgment. But, I felt in a way that I was drawn out.

So, not long after that, I began to read the book "Steps to Christ," and I came across page 13 of that little book. And, it said, "Behold Him in Gethsemane. Behold Him upon Calvary." And, I was just trying to do what the word says, to behold Him in Gethsemane, and I was thinking about Jesus, and how He sweat drops of blood. Then it talked about the separation between the Father and the Son, and how Jesus said, "My God. My God. Why hast thou forsaken me?" There was something communicated to me, that there was a cost.

The beginning of my journey was an exposure to the gift of the Father of His Son. That's what began my journey. What attracted me to God was this love gift of the Father in giving His Son. I remember when it says, "Behold Him upon the cross." I cannot explain to you, but there was a vivid picture in my mind of Jesus upon the cross. And, He turned, and He looked at me without one piece, or anything on His face, that showed any level of condemnation towards me, even though I knew I was a sinner. And, it was so

real in my mind, that I just began to weep. Because, I saw acceptance in that face, acceptance. Maybe a bit like Peter, knowing that I was as hypocrite, and a volatile person.

Craig was telling some of his experiences this morning. I don't want to glorify the past, but just so you understand, I was very much into sports. When I would play tennis, and when I couldn't hit the ball over the net properly, the racket usually ended up in a very peculiar shape, with a lot of loud expressions coming out of my mouth. Sometimes, the racket would end up 50 feet away, and people would have to get out my way. I had a temper issue. I wasn't proud of that. But, in looking in the face of Jesus, I just felt this acceptance. I can't explain to you what actually was happening there, other than the Spirit of Jesus was reaching out to me.

I was just there, and I was just crying. I'm 17 years of age, and I don't know much about the Bible... Well, I did, but not much had penetrated. I just said, "Lord, I don't really understand what this means. But I really want you to come into my life, because I screw everything up. I say all the wrong things. I want to be a better person. Please come into my life." I felt a peace and a joy come into my soul that I'd never experienced before. It was just such a clean feeling, such a peaceful feeling. That feeling stayed with me for at least six weeks, just tremendous.

Then, I began to study. I had a thirst. It's like, before, listening to passages of the Bible, and then I went to a Bible study, and we looked at two, or three, verses in the book of Philippians, and all this stuff was jumping out at me. I'm thinking, "Whoa! I can't deal with three verses." And, there was all this stuff that I was learning, just out of three verses in Philippians, chapter 2. The Spirit of God was teaching me. And, I began to just... Up until that time I had done everything I could to get out of reading. I hated reading. Now, I couldn't stop reading. The things that you once hated, you now love.

What was interesting was, just before this experience, I'd organized a huge gathering of all of my friends, just to make sure that everybody could hear what was going on. I hired a sound system to make sure that we could vibrate the house. All my friends came around. Before the event, I had this experience. Then all my friends came around, and all the music is going, and all the videos are playing, and I'm walking around going, "What am I doing here?" And, I'm listening to my friends. They're talking about such frivolous things, immoral things, empty things.

Suddenly, I got scared. I'm going, "Hang on. I used to do this, and I really enjoyed this. And, now, I don't enjoy it anymore." I can't really explain this to you, but this thought came into my head, "Well Adrian, this is your definition of fun. And, all of your fun has just evaporated. Now, you're a Christian. You're not going to have anymore fun." And, I ran out onto the front lawn, and I put my fists up, and then I said, "You've wrecked my life!" No lightning. Still acceptance.

It was such a transformation in my life, that it took me by surprise, in terms of the transformation in my life. I thank the Lord Jesus, that he forgave me for that little outburst. I still had some things to work on in my experience. But then I began to read. I began to learn about the book of Revelation, and about the Adventist understanding of prophecy, and the Gospel, and the sanctuary. I began to study more about these three angels' messages. Then I came across this quote... At that stage, it probably was in the book of Evangelism, not one of my favourite books these days.

"In a special sense, Seventh Day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them, has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of most solemn import, the proclamation of the first, second, and third angel's messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to

allow nothing else to absorb their attention." I'm going, "Okay. Right, oh." I need to study this. I need to understand.

I began to read, fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come. So, I studied all about the 2,300 days, and 1844, the hour of His judgment, worship him that made heaven and earth, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, being sealed with the Father's name in the forehead. I began to study all of these things. I could see the beauty of that message.

When I came to the second angel's message, it said, "And, they followed another angel. Saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen. That great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." And, from my study, and my reading, this was the fallen churches. It was a proclamation concerning those fallen churches, and that I as a Seventh Day Adventist was called to make this proclamation about the fallen churches.

As I began to engage this, and that of course involved exposing the falsehoods of Sunday observance, and the coming of the mark of the beast, and the falsehoods of the immortality of the soul, and all of these kinds of doctrines, that this was part of my duty to expose Babylon, expose the false works of darkness. I would listen to some of the evangelists who would preach on some of these subjects, and they would speak with such power, and such conviction, about the need to come out of Babylon.

Some of the difficulty that I began to feel was, and it took a while for this to come to my head. It's sort of like, the second angel's message was saying, the Adventist is saying, when he says Babylon is fallen, because of where he's standing, he's saying, essentially, this is the message. "I'm right. You're wrong." And, I began to struggle with that. Is this how we give this message? I'm right. You're wrong. When I listened to a lot of the speakers, just trying to vibe the way the message is coming across, that's the way it sounded to me. I'm right. You're wrong. How does that work? These were some of the thoughts that were going through my mind.

Then, I came across a quote, Review and Herald, April 1st, 1890. "Several have written to me, inquiring if the justification by faith is the third angel's message. And, I have answered, it is the third angel's message in verity." The third angel's message, of course, is the culmination of the first, and the second, and the third angel's messages. So, when we say another angel followed them, another angel followed, when you get to the third, it's a repeating of the first two, and then including of the third. So, when she says, "The third angel's message is justification by faith in verity." As a young man justification by faith in verity had something to do with the gospel. And, she says, it is "the third angel's message in verity."

I was going, okay, gospel, gospel in the three angels' messages. I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel. Okay, I can see gospel in angel number one. Angel number two. And, the followed another angel saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Where's the gospel in the second angel's message? Is there a gospel in the second angel's message?

It's an invitation to come into the gospel. Okay. I could see that. Maybe it's connected with the first angel's message, so it's part of a package. Fear God, give glory to Him. Come to the water. Come and receive the gospel. That's something that's interesting. Then, I noticed something interesting. This really puzzled me. It got me thinking. When we see the first angel, verse seven, what kind of voice does the first angel speak with?

Audience: *A loud voice.*

Saying with a loud voice. When we see the second angel, what kind of voice? There's no loud voice. And, then we get to the third angel's message. Loud voice. Is this indicating intensity? There's a loud voice, then there's not a loud voice, then there's a loud voice.

And, what's really interesting is, when you come over to Revelation, chapter 18, verse 2, the fourth angel, "He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon is fallen." Do you think it's possible, in the historical context of the giving of the third angel's message, that the intensity of the voice relates to the depth of understanding of what that message is actually saying? Would that make sense? That, the second angel's message, when it was given, it was not fully understood. It was given, but not fully understood. But something occurs amongst God's people, so when it comes to Revelation 18, it clicks.

What's really interesting, is that the earth is lightened with the glory of this message. Specifically, that Babylon is fallen, is fallen. And, this is where I come to my dilemma. Here I am, understanding, in some ways, I'm right, you're wrong. And, that's going to lighten the earth with its glory. Does that make sense? There's something not right. Can you see? I'm wrestling with this angel, going what is going on here? What is this? This repeating, a repeating of the second angel's message, that lightens the earth with its glory.

When I went to seminary, I could see that there were other men that were struggling with this same question. During the periods of the 1940s and '50s, we had, had these evangelists who had preached the third angel's message very powerfully. They were men that commanded respect. They usually had an entourage that was with them, to help them run their meetings, and they were very powerful men, that walked the sawdust trail of the tent meetings, and they would speak with great conviction. Another generation of men, maybe cut in a different mold, began to question this, I'm right, you're wrong, motif. I'll use that word. This theme, it's not really spoken, but it's coming out in this mode. By the way that the Scriptures were revealed, it's I'm here to talk, and you're here to listen. That's the way it seemed to come across.

I came across some writing, and I'm going back to the person of Desmond Ford, and one day his son asked him, "What is wrong with Adventists believing themselves especially chosen by God?" Because, this has to do with the issue of the remnant, what it means to be part of the remnant, as opposed to being part of Babylon. And, Desmond Ford's son asked him, "What's wrong with Adventists believing themselves especially chosen by God?" And, his father responds, "It makes them proud. And, pride is the antithesis of the complete reliance on Christ for salvation. But, without such pride, groups go out of business."

As I studied the history of the church, there was something in what he was saying, that I could see was true, this pride, rich and increased with goods, and that we are right, and you are wrong, and you will listen to us. But, this conclusion that the only way to resolve this issue of pride is to remove the label of being part of the remnant of God, and remove the label that says that the fallen churches are Babylon, that's a fairly drastic way of dealing with that question. We come back to that central point of, how does a man give a message, Babylon is fallen, without coming across as though he's saying, "Well, I'm right, and you're wrong," and getting value out of that message to sinners who need to repent?

So, I began to think about Babylon. What is Babylon about? What are the spiritual principles that are related to Babylon, and how do we relate to these? Have a look at Daniel 4:30, thinking about the principles, the spirit of Babylon. "The king spake, and said, is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" One of the

keynote aspects of Babylon, is a sense of satisfaction in things achieved. That's what he's saying. "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built?" I have built.

If we look at Isaiah 13:19... It says, "And, Babylon, the great glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." Beauty. A focus on display, and outward... The hanging gardens of Babylon, projection, display. And then, just over a bit further. Isaiah 14:4-6, "For they'll take up this proverb against the king of Babylon and say, how hath thee oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke...". There's that word continual.

Audience: *There it is again.*

"A continual stroke. He that ruled the nations in anger is persecuted, and none hindereth." One of the key principles of Babylon is oppression, satisfaction in achievement, performance, and oppression of others. And, when I began to think about the spirit of Babylon, I began to think about, some of these things seem strangely familiar in my experience with the remnant church. Have I encountered the spirit of satisfaction in the things that have been achieved? You read the church papers, we are doing this here, we are building this building here, we are flying people over here, and we are building this institution here, and we are doing this here, and we are doing the work of the Lord. Is not this great church, community, that I have built? We've built up our mailing list. We've got a website going, and we're doing all these things. Could that fall into that category? Is it possible to get satisfaction out of working for the Lord? I certainly had encountered that, and experienced that.

What about being in a group of people? Have you ever been in a group of people where one, two, three, or more, really have a point that they want to make sure that everybody else in the group comes to that understanding? And, they don't let it go until you either, submit, or leave? A desire to rule. A desire to rule that sometimes is very overt. Sometimes it's very, very... what's the word? Some people rule through the second guess. You know what I mean? It's like, "Well, no, no. We don't have any leaders here." Then someone says, "Well, I'm not too sure about that. I don't think that's good ideas." Then someone comes up with an idea, and someone says, "Well, I'm not too sure about that. No. I don't think that's a good idea." The second guess. Someone who rules covertly, through the second guess, and undermining, and playing it down, and... You know what I'm saying? There are different ways to rule, or to get your point across. Having been in many groups, I've been exposed to many of them. I'm sure you have as well.

As I thought about the principles of Babylon, and of course, in the context of oppression, enforcing a Sunday law on the whole world, is really... That's the ultimate expression of oppression, isn't it? You will worship the way we tell you to worship, or else. So, I began to ask myself, the question. Well, if I'm seeing what the Bible is telling me about Babylon, the spirit of Babylon, about satisfaction and achievement, about oppression, and display... have you ever been churches where you suddenly sense there's and emphasis on display? I've been there. Been there myself.

So, if I see this going on amongst the group of believers that I'm with, who claim to be the remnant, what's the difference between what I'm experiencing, and what's happening in Babylon? What's the difference?

Can I claim to be better than the people of Babylon, if I'm doing the deeds of the people in Babylon? Let me put it this way. We know that Babylon is a prostitute. So, what is worse in the eyes of God? To be the

prostitute, or to be one of the remnant who sleeps with the prostitute? Who has the greater sin? Who receives the greater condemnation, Babylon or Laodicea?

Audience: *Laodicea.*

Laodicea. As I thought about these things, I began to think about the whole question of proximity. I want to draw this. If we say that this is Babylon, and I'm standing here, and I'm going to give the second angel's message, "Babylon is fallen." In terms of the spirit of Babylon, the spirit of oppression, the spirit of control, satisfaction, and achievement... I'm not talking primarily doctrine in this case. I'm talking about the spirit that you're partaking of. If you're in the spirit of Babylon, and you're standing here, and then you hear the words, Babylon is fallen, what's just happened? If Babylon falls, what's happened to you?

You're free. Ah! That's starting to sound like righteousness by faith. Isn't it? Freedom. It's all about proximity, where you think you are. I thank you God, I am not like other men. Lord have mercy on me a sinner. Your perception of your identity affects the way you relate to the second angel's message, as to how you are going to give that message. What's really interesting is that, when you read the context of that word "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," it actually comes from the book of Jeremiah. I want you to look at the context of this.

Jeremiah, chapter 50. The phrase "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," comes in Jeremiah 51:8. But, in the end of Jeremiah chapter 50, verses 33 and 34, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives; held them fast. They refused to let them go." Earlier, you can see about the Chaldeans. It's talking about the Chaldeans. And, it's talking about Babylon oppressing the children of Israel and holding them fast. Verse 34, "Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon." This is sounding like gospel, isn't it? To give rest to the land, freedom.

In the context, in the original context of Babylon is fallen, it's in the context of God's people have been taken captive by Babylon. So, by the time we come to Jeremiah 51, verse 8, "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her, take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed." So, when the second angel's message is originally given, in the Laodicean mindset, rich and increased with goods, obviously pitted against the teachings of Babylon, the immortality of the soul, Sunday sacredness, the Trinity, amongst other doctrines, there is a cry that goes out against Babylon. But it doesn't go out with a loud voice.

But, in Revelation 18, God's people find themselves in their true condition, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. And, the cry goes out, not primarily as a cry of condemnation, but a cry of freedom. "Babylon is fallen, in my life!"

The power of oppression, my desire to rule and control other people is gone. My need to perform and achieve and prove to you that I am valuable by what I do is disappeared. Through the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone...

Audience: *Amen.*

I am free.

Audience: *Amen.*

The second angel's message is justification by faith in verity, just as the prophet said it is.

Audience: *Amen.*

It's a beautiful message. Cry freedom. I began to think about the fact that... I think I've got a quote here. The second angel's message is still a message of condemnation, but it is primarily a message of freedom. Let me read you something. "The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of the false doctrines such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to his birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy, sanctified day. These, and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches.

So, I began to think. Where do we find in the Scripture, a cry of freedom that also condemns? And, you know where I found the answer? We come back to Mary Magdalene. A cry of freedom, that causes condemnation. In Matthew 26, I'll read through this. "And, when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him having an alabaster flask, of very costly, fragrant oil, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But, when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, why this waste?" Are these the words of condemned men? Possibly? Maybe they feel it? "For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." Who instigated this little charge?

Audience: *Judas.*

Judas. "But, when Jesus was aware of it, he said unto them, why do you trouble the woman, for she has done a good work for me. For you have the poor always with you, but me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on my body, she did it for my burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial for her."

Do you remember the quote we read the other night about Mary Magdalene? Now, the act of Mary was in such marked contrast to Judas' selfishness, that he was put to shame. A woman that pours out the alabaster box. She's crying tears of joy, because she is free. Hallelujah.

Audience: *Hallelujah.*

And, in expressing her freedom, she condemned the son of perdition. Was it her intention to condemn Babylon?

Audience: *No.*

That wasn't her focus. Her focus was on the joy and the freedom that she had found in the only begotten son of God. And, in that expression of freedom, Babylon was condemned. Isn't that beautiful?

Audience: *Amen.*

Can you see the gospel in the second angel? Can you see why the second angel's message, will lighten the earth with its glory, crying with a strong voice? The cry is not primarily the cry of condemnation, it is the cry of freedom, when God's people fully experience the righteousness of Christ, that nothing they do of themselves... Inspiration. If you were to talk all those good, and noble, and lovely, and holy, and just, in man, and to offer it to God, as having a part in the plan of salvation, it would be rejected as treason. Man has no merit in himself.

Audience: Amen.

Christ alone.

Audience: Amen.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. And, when God's people come to that point, they will cry freedom, and Babylon will fall.

Audience: Amen.

And, once again, Mary Magdalene leads the way. She shows us the way to bring about final events. We want to study the final events of earth's history; we study Mary Magdalene. Because, the fourth angel, is a cry of freedom. I have been set free. I have the mind of Christ. All the promises of God are yes, in Him. Let's pray.

Father in heaven. I just want to thank you so much for the second angel's message, beautiful message, precious message. A message of freedom. Freedom from the works of the law. Freedom from self-justification. Freedom from proving myself to other men and women. Freedom to walk in all the statutes and commandments of God, by faith in Jesus Christ. Father, I pray in the name of Jesus, that you will open our eyes to see that we are not standing outside of Babylon, pointing at them. We are not better than other men. We have the mind; we are all of one mankind. We are just as in need as any other being. But you came to set the captives free, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And, I thank you for hearing this prayer, in Jesus' name, Amen.