

The Three Angels' Messages in the Challenging Times

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Abstract

This paper investigates the three angels' messages (3AM) in Rev 14:6–13 and draws out some significant implications to the current pandemic and other related challenging situations by utilizing the historical-biblical method of exegesis and historicism. Six main things are discussed concerning the message, media, and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church based on the passage: the setting, structure, three angels, target audience, meaning, and implications of the 3AM. The threefold message is worldwide in scope. They contextually fit in the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenging situations. The church's message, media, and mission are embedded in the 3AM. The proclamation of the messages to the target audience is significantly relevant to the current pandemic and troublous times in preparation for the impending punitive judgment and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Keywords: *Three angels' messages, COVID-19, the mark of the beast, worship, the earth-dwellers/settlers.*

Introduction

Do the three angels' messages (3AM) in Rev 14:6–13 contextually fit the current COVID-19 (C-19) pandemic and other challenging situations? The phenomenal C-19 pandemic causes a lot of issues and problems among the worldwide population concerning health, economy, politics, liberty, jobs, religious practices and doctrines, education, coercion, and many more.¹ The available C-19 vaccines also become a part of

¹See Kait Kelly, "Mandatory Shots: Unvaccinated Australians Likely to Face Reduction in Freedoms," *The New Daily*, July 28, 2021, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2021/07/28/covid-vaccine-mandatory/>; Department of Health, Australian Government, "Mandatory Vaccination of Residential Aged Care Workers," Fact Sheet, August 6, 2021, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-mandatory-vaccination-of-residential-aged-care-workers>; Katie Teague and Peter Butler, "COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate: The Latest on Who's Required to Show Proof of Vaccination," *CNET*, August 27, 2021, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.cnet.com/health/covid-19-vaccine-mandate-the-latest-on-whos-required-to-show-proof-of-vaccination/>; Wen W. Shen, "State and Federal Authority to Mandate COVID-19 Vaccination," *Congressional Research Service*, April 2, 2021, pp. 1–10, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://crsreports.congress.gov>; Transport Canada, Government of Canada, "Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Federally Regulated Transportation Employees and Travelers," October 6, 2021, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/5n7jydm5>.

the conspiracy theories about “the mark of the beast” in Rev 13.² This paper investigates the 3AM in Rev 14:6–13 and draws out some significant implications to the current pandemic and other related challenging situations.³ The 3AM, target addressees, and current situations are worldwide in scope and fitted in the context of Rev 14. The flying angels and the means of preaching the eternal gospel during the pandemic are fitted in the investigation. The identity of the target addressees (i.e., “those who sit on the earth” and “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people”) needs further investigation for there is no consensus among the scholars.⁴ Finally, many Christians associate the C-19 vaccines with “the mark of the beast” in Rev 13:17 and 14:10–11. Thus, the three proclaiming angels, the identity of the target addressees, and the timing and meaning of the 3AM are needed to address for there is a direct correlation with the eschatological mission and hope of the remnant church.

Method

This study utilizes the historical-biblical method of exegesis and approaches the Book of Revelation from the Adventist historicist perspective.⁵ Five main things are discussed concerning the message, media, and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: the setting, structure, three angels, target audience, and meaning of the 3AM in

² See John W. Oller, Jr., “Buying and Selling with the ‘Mark of the Beast,’” *International Journal of Vaccine Theory, Practice, and Research, IJVTPR* 1.2 (2021): 318–326; Tristan Sturm and Tom Albrecht, “Constituent Covid-19 Apocalypses: Contagious Conspiracism, 5G, and Viral Vaccinations,” *Anthropology & Medicine* 28.1 (2020): 122–139, DOI: 10.1080/13648470.2020.1833684; Elise Thomas and Albert Zhang, “ID2020, Bill Gates and the Mark of the Beast: How Covid-19 Catalyses Existing Online Conspiracy Movements,” *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* (2020), accessed October 11, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25082>; Rantoa Letšosa, “What Has the Beast’s Mark to Do With the COVID-19 Vaccination, and What Is the Role of the Church and Answering to the Christians?” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77.4 (2021): 1–8, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6480>.

³ Recently, the three angels’ messages had been the focus of the discussion in the Adventist circle, particularly by the Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on October 14, 2020 and in the October 2020 issue of the *Adventist Review*. See Marcos Paseggi, “Renewed Emphasis on the Three Angels’ Messages Could Be a Game-Changer,” *Adventist Review*, October 19, 2020, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.adventistreview.org/renewed-emphasis-on-the-three-angels-messages-could-be-a-game-changer>; Lael Caesar, “Three Angels’ Messages: *The Basics*,” *Adventist Review*, October 2, 2020, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.adventistreview.org/2010-18>; Raoul Dederen, “The Three Angels in the Nineteenth Century Early Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Three Angels’ Messages,” *Adventist Review*, October 2, 2020, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.adventistreview.org/2010-26>.

⁴ See the discussion about the “target addressees” of the 3AM below.

⁵ Historicist approach holds that the Book of Revelation provides a symbolic presentation of the prophetic outline of the future course of history from the apostolic times until the end of time (i.e., Second Coming) and beyond. Thus, the predictive prophecies are in the process of fulfillment. It argues that Revelation is rooted in the Book of Daniel which deals with sequential periods of history. This method of interpreting the books of Daniel and Revelation is utilized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. See Jon K. Paulien, “The Hermeneutics of Biblical Apocalyptic,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, Biblical Research Institute Studies, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 1:245–270.

Rev 14:6–13.⁶ Then, it draws out some theological implications in connection to the current challenging situations.

Discussion

The Setting

The setting of Rev 14:6–13 is vital in the prophetic interpretation. The opening phrase *Apokalypsis Iēsou Christou*, “Revelation of Jesus Christ” denotes the book’s title that refers to the entire book of Revelation that comes from God (1:1). John, the beloved apostle of Jesus, is the writer of His revelation (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). He was commanded to write the visions/things which must soon take place in a book to be sent to the seven churches in Asia Minor while he was exiled in the Patmos Island (1:1, 9, 11; 4:1; 22:6) during the reign of Emperor Domitian (AD 81–96).

The Book of Revelation is an apocalyptic prophecy. John himself describes it as “the revelation of Jesus” (1:1) and “the words of this prophecy” (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19), which contains revealed prophecies of future events (1:1 and 22:6). This book is largely a symbolic book that God signified, communicated, or revealed (*esēmanen* from *sēmainō*, “make known, report; foretell”) it to John by His angel (1:1, 17:1–3, 19:9–10, and 21:9–10) and the Spirit (1:10, 4:2, 17:3, and 21:10). The word *sēmainō* also denotes symbolism⁷ to unveil the purposes of God in the ongoing conflict between good and evil. Thus, the revelation of Jesus Christ is communicated to John through visions with symbolic presentations.

Unlike the classical prophecy which focuses on a short-range view, immediate situation, dual fulfillment, a local situation in view, and conditional prophecy, the apocalyptic prophecy “sees history as a divinely-guided series of events leading up to, and including, the final events of earth’s history.”⁸ It focuses on a long-range view, single fulfillment, end-time, the whole span of history, and unconditional prophecy.⁹ Those divinely-guided series of events in Revelation have to be fulfilled unconditionally from the time of John to the new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21). Hence, the end-time prophecy about the 3AM, which is a part of the whole revelation of Jesus, will be fulfilled unconditionally.

⁶ The timing of the 3AM is discussed under the structure, three angels, target audience, and meaning of the 3AM.

⁷ The word *esēmanen* (indicative, aorist, active, 3rd person singular from *sēmainō*, “make known, report; foretell”) [Balz and Schneider, *EDNT*, s.v. “*sēmainō*”) may denote that God communicated Jesus’s revelation with symbolic signs that pertain to the eschatological events. The symbolic signs are prevalent in the whole book. Thus, Ranko Stefanovic states that the word *sēmainō* in Rev 1:1 denotes symbolism. It “indicates that the visions of Revelation were communicated to John in figurative or symbolic presentation.” Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 54.

⁸ Paulien, “Hermeneutics of Biblical Apocalyptic,” 1:248.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:248.

Structure of Revelation 14:6–12

Literary Structure of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is divided into four main sections: Local, historical, central, and eschatological sections. The four main divisions can be outlined in this way:¹⁰

- A. Local Sections:
 - 1. Prologue (1:1–11)
 - 2. Epilogue (22:6–21)
- B. The Historical Section (two parts):
 - 1. Rev 1:12–3:22 covers the seven churches
 - 2. Rev 4:1–11:19 covers the seven seals and the seven trumpets
- C. The Central Piece of the Book: Both historical (spanning from past to future events) and eschatological sections
Rev 11:19–15:4 sums up the “Great Controversy vision.”
- D. The Eschatological Section: Rev 15:1–22:5 covers the seven-bowl plagues, millennium, New Heaven and Earth, and the New Jerusalem.

The central piece of Revelation. Revelation 14:6–13 is part of the central piece of Revelation.¹¹ This central section begins with the vision about God’s opened temple showing the ark of the covenant in heaven (11:19). Then, a series of visions dealing with the great controversy follows toward the climactic event, the victorious celebration of the saints with Lamb:

- A. Rev 12:1–17 shows the woman, her child, and the dragon in conflict.
- B. Rev 13:1–10 reveals the sea beast received authority from the dragon, who blasphemes God, empowers, and persecutes the saints to be worshiped by the earth-dwellers.
- C. Rev 13:11–18 envisions the land beast deceiving the earth-dwellers to worship the sea beast by making its image and receiving its mark.
- D. Rev 14:1–5 (climax) depicts the Lamb and the 144,000 saints singing the song of deliverance standing on Mt. Zion.
- E. Rev 14:6–13 reveals the three angels proclaiming the threefold message to all people to worship God and giving warning about the fall of Babylon and the followers of the beast.
- F. Rev 14:14–20 portrays the two harvests (earth’s harvest and grapes of wrath) at the coming of the Son of Man.

¹⁰ See the discussion of the structure of the Revelation in Richard A. Sabuin, “Repentance in the Book of Revelation” (PhD. diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 2006), 61, 87–103, 319.

¹¹ The central piece of Revelation is viewed as an interlude (chaps. 12:1–14:20). See, e.g., Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 328.

G. Rev 15:1–4 (climax) depicts the victorious saints, after the completion of the wrath of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb standing on the sea of glass.

In Rev 13, the events from the sea beast to the land beast are revealed. The scene about the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion together with the 144,000 saints singing the song of deliverance is the climactic event. It portrays the victory of the saints over the persecution of the Triumvirate beasts (dragon, sea-beast, and land-beast) in Rev 12–13. This climactic event is an interlude showing the future victory of God’s people with the Lamb over the enemies. The next sections reveal how they meet such victory.

Revelation 14:6–15:4 predicts the works of God in response to the deceptive works of the beasts in Rev 13, particularly of the land beast, leading up to the climactic event. The section begins with the 3AM and the two harvests (i.e., the portrayal of the judgment on the wicked and the redemption of the saints at the Second Coming). The proclamation of the 3AM seems to coincide with the land beast rulership about worshiping the sea beast. Both sections (13:11–18 and 14:6–12) are linguistically and thematically parallel. So, both events are seen in conflict: the land beast is demanding the earth-dwellers to make an image of the sea beast and worship it while the three angels are solemnly calling and warning the entire population to worship the true God rather than the beast. Then, after the completion of the seven last plagues (15:1) and the coming of the Son of Man (14:14–20), both events will reach parallel climactic events (14:1–5 and 15:2–4; cf. 19:1–10), the victorious celebration of the saints standing on Mt. Zion or in the sea of glass in heaven over the beast, its image, and the mark of his name.

The 3AM section is part of the latter section of the Great Controversy theme. Its proclamation takes place on earth during the reign of the land beast, which is before the outpouring of the wrath of God (i.e., 7 last plagues) in Rev 16, the coming of Jesus, and the celebration of the saints in heaven. Ekkehardt Mueller concludes that “the message of the three angels is the final and universal message addressed to all people in the last time of earth’s history.”¹²

Literary unit. Revelation 14:6–13 is a literary unit. It consists of the vision of the three angels proclaiming the eternal gospel with warnings (vv. 6–11), an ethical conclusion for the saints (v. 12), and an auditory scene (13). The structure can be outlined in this way:¹³

1. Three angels’ proclamation vision (vv. 6–11)
 - a. The first angel message loudly proclaims the eternal gospel (vv. 6–7)
 - b. The second angel announces the fall of great Babylon (v. 8)

¹² Ekkehardt Mueller, “The Last Message for This World,” *BRI* (2014): 1, accessed July 2, 2021, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/Last-Message-for-this-World.pdf>.

¹³ See also Osborne, *Revelation*, 385 (PDF page number).

c. The third angel loudly pronounces the judgment on those who follow the beast (vv. 9–11)

2. Ethical conclusion for the saints (v. 12)

3. Heavenly voice and the Spirit giving assurance (v. 13)

Revelation 14:6–11 is particularly the three angels proclaiming the three distinct and yet unified messages. The visionary section begins with the phrase *kai eidon*, “and/then I saw.” It is a subsequent vision to the vision about the Lamb standing on Mount Zion and the 144,000 saints (vv. 1–5). Yet, it does not mean that the climactic event will take place first before the proclamation of the 3AM. John introduces and describes what is possibly the cause of that triumphant event by seeing the vision of the 3AM. Three angels are flying in the mid-air (i.e. sky) one after the other and proclaiming their messages. In connection to the eternal gospel of the first angel, the warning messages of the two succeeding angels seem to be the final warning call or appeal to those who are still in fallen great Babylon and the followers of the beast, who do not heed the first message to worship the true God.

Revelation 14:12 is an ethical conclusion for the saints to be patient. It is introduced by the adverb *ōde*, “in this case, at this point, on this occasion, under these circumstances.”¹⁴ Grant R. Osborne interprets *ōde* as “this demands.”¹⁵ This call for endurance is not part of the third angel’s message itself. John makes such a comment after the third angel announces the hardship of the divine punitive judgment on those who follow the beast (vv. 9–11). Similarly, Rev 13:10b is an ethical conclusion for the saints that demands endurance, which is part of the parenthetical note between the two subsequent visions in Rev 13: the sea-beast (vv. 1–8) and the land-beast (vv. 11–17). Also, Rev 13:18 and 17:9 are ethical conclusions for the readers to interpret a particular vision that demands wisdom. Hence, verse 12 is John’s exhortation statement.

Finally, the 3AM vision ends with an auditory scene (Rev 14:13). John hears “a voice from heaven” commanding him to write a beatitude: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on” (NKJV). This voice might come from Jesus Himself.¹⁶ Then, the Spirit (i.e., the Holy Spirit) affirmatively responds to the heavenly voice: “Yes . . . that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them” (NKJV).

The Three Angels

John saw the three angels flying in the mid-heaven consecutively. The first angel is described as “another angel” (v. 6) for he was accustomed to seeing various angels. This angel, having the eternal gospel to preach loudly to the target addressees, is flying in mid-

¹⁴ BDAG, s.v. “*hōde*” (#2).

¹⁵ Osborne, *Revelation*, 391.

¹⁶ See Rev 1:11, 19; 19:9; 21:5. Also, the command to write is used to begin each of the seven letters (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14), a command from Jesus Himself.

air or sky “to denote the rapidity with which the gospel would spread through the world in that future period referred to.”¹⁷

“Another angel,” the second one, followed the first angel (v. 8). He has a short warning message about the fall of Babylon. Then, the third angel “followed” the second angel with an intense and longer warning, speaking loudly like the first angel. He addressed anyone who worships the beast and receives its mark that he will drink God’s wrath (vv. 9–11). These angels who are flying one after the other suggest that while the first angel is still proclaiming the eternal gospel, the second and the third angels “follow” the first angel to join in proclaiming their warning messages. There is a succession of proclamations (following the other) to fulfill the mission together to warn the whole population. The 3AM are interrelated to each other as the threefold gospel message; the three angels will finish their mission in unity at the same time in the end. Yet, the emphasis of each message will vary toward the end. In short, the third angel’s message will intensify the first two angel’s messages¹⁸ that will result in a loud cry.

Meaning of three angels. Are these “angels” literal or symbolic angels in Rev 14? The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDAC) claims to be the end-time remnant church (Rev 12:17).¹⁹ The three angels signify the remnant church movement proclaiming the threefold message in the final time of earth’s history.²⁰ Interpreting the Greek word *aggelos*, “angel, messenger” in Revelation is also challenging.²¹ However, this paper leaves room for an in-depth study on the interpretation of the word *aggelos* in Revelation and the connection of the three angels to the remnant church.²² The context of the vision

¹⁷Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2006), para. 35629.

¹⁸Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, January 25, 1910, para. 12. “The first and second angels’ messages are united and made complete in the third.” Ellen G. White, “The Parable of the Ten Virgins,” *Review and Herald*, October 31, 1899, para. 8. When the three angels follow one after the other, it does not mean the first or the second angel is gone. Instead, the three angels join each other continuing their unique messages to the very end.

¹⁹See, e.g., the discussion in Richard P. Lehmann, “The Remnant in the Book of Revelation,” in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, BRI Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 1, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: BRI, 2009), 108–109; Frank M. Hasel, “The Remnant in Contemporary Adventist Theology,” in *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, BRI Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: BRI, 2009), 1:159–180.

²⁰The SDAC’s official statement of beliefs No. 13: “The Remnant and Its Mission” states, “This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14.” The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 3rd rev. ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2018), 185.

²¹The Gk. *aggelos* (with different inflections) occurs 67 times in Revelation.

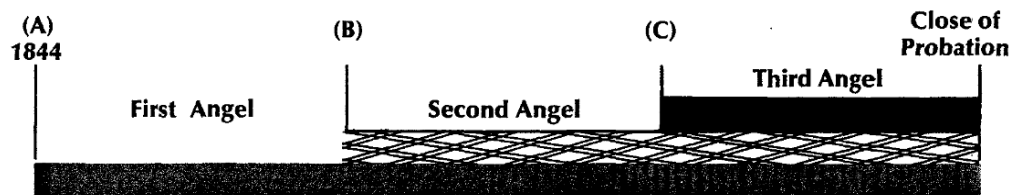
²²There is a study on the angels in Revelation but not exhaustive. See, e.g., Ian Paul, “What Are the Angels Doing in the Book of Revelation?” *Psephizo*, August 28, 2017, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.psephizo.com/revelation/what-are-the-angels-doing-in-the-book-of-revelation/>.

Many Bible commentaries do not interpret angels in connection to the church. They just explain the roles of the angels based on the context with a literal sense. Few commentaries interpret angels as human messengers, church, or institutions. See e.g., Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Accordance electronic ed. 6 vols.

about the three angels opens the strong possibility of symbolic representation, namely, “Christian religious movements”²³ or God’s end-time remnant people/church,²⁴ and “not actual angels.”²⁵

Linguistically, the three angels seem to be paralleled with the three angels who are proclaiming the threefold woe against the earth-dwellers in Rev 8:13. The proclamation to the fourfold group is related to the command to John to prophesy again to “many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings” in Rev 10:11. The proclamation of the “eternal gospel” to “every nation, tribe, language, and people” is also related to the preaching of the gospel to “all nations” to the end of time in Matt 24:14 (cf. 28:19).²⁶ Hence, these connections suggest a symbolic representation of the three angels. Also, the flying movement and the (loud) voice of each angel in proclaiming the threefold message may represent to the media or ways of broadcasting it to be heard by the whole world.

Historical fulfillment. Based on the early Adventist *local* interpretation of the fulfillment of the 3AM, the first angel’s message was proclaimed in 1831 during the Millerite movement. Then, it was followed by the next message in 1844. Finally, the third message was preached in 1845. However, based on his biblical study and the study on the writings of Ellen G. White, Ritchie Way concludes that the 3AM has the ultimate and universal application. He graphically illustrates this succession of the 3AM’s proclamation from 1844 to the close of probation:²⁷



Thus, his graphical illustration on the timing of the proclamation of the 3AM is well represented in the context of the pre-advent investigative judgment that began in 1844 and will end at the close of probation, the period of the time of the end. The church should keep preaching the first angel’s message while preaching the second and the third angels’ messages with passion and intensity.

(Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2004), para. 53596; B. W. Johnson, *The People’s New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed., 2 vols. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1999), para. 5178. However, Adventist scholars are vocal in interpreting the three angels in symbolic sense representing the remnant church. See Angel Manuel Rodriguez, ed., *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, BRI Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 1 (Silver Spring, MD: BRI, 2009).

²³ Hans K. LaRondelle, “The Remnant and the Three Angels’ Messages,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), 12:872.

²⁴ Angel Manuel Rodriguez, “Concluding Essay: God’s End-Time Remnant And The Christian Church,” *Toward a Theology of the Remnant: An Adventist Ecclesiological Perspective*, BRI Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology, ed. Angel Manuel Rodriguez (Silver Spring, MD: BRI, 2009), 1:201–226.

²⁵ See Paseggi, “Renewed Emphasis on the Three Angels,” point #2.

²⁶ Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 442–443.

²⁷ Ritchie Way, “Three Angels’ Messages: Personal and National,” *Ministry*, December 1971, p. 18.

The Target Addressees

The target addresses of the 3 AM in Rev 14:6–11 are mentioned in the prologue of the first angel’s message. The second and the third angels have no audience. Yet, the context suggests that the audience of the second and the third angels is the same audience of the first angel. Identifying the target addressees is vital for it affects the message, mission, and methodologies in reaching them—whether the 3AM are just warning messages against those groups of people as a divine judgment proclamation or a call to repentance for salvation.

Identity of the target addressees. Revelation 4:6 identifies the target audience of the first angel: *hoi kathēmenoi epi tēs gēs*, “those who settle/live on the earth” (the earth-settlers) and *pan ethnos kai phylēn kai glōssan kai laon*, “every nation and tribe and tongue and people” (fourfold group). Some scholars interpret that “the earth-settlers” is explained by the fourfold group as the same group.²⁸ Yet, others see that the earth-settlers and the fourfold group are distinct groups of people, making them a fivefold group recipient of the “everlasting gospel.”²⁹ The phrase “those who settle on the earth” denotes a negative meaning while the fourfold group has a neutral meaning in Revelation. If both groups are the same groups of people, no one will positively respond to the 3AM for repentance! Some scholars believe that the “eternal gospel” here is only a proclamation of divine judgment, not an offer of salvation for every earth-dweller.³⁰ Hence, reinvestigation of these issues is vital.

In Rev 14:6, the usual expression *hoi katoikountes epi tēs gēs*³¹ is not used, but instead *hoi kathēmenoi epi tēs gēs* (NA28).³² The expression “the earth-dwellers” is negative in Revelation. In Rev 3:10, the earth-dwellers are the object of “the hour of trial” that will come to the whole world. They persecute and murder the saints who are now asking God for vengeance against them (6:10). They are the recipients of three woe judgments at the last three blast trumpets (8:13). They celebrate the death of the two witnesses/prophets because they have felt being tormented by them (11:10). They have a negative role in the great controversy. Their names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life (13:8 and 17:8). They will be deceived to make an image to/of the sea beast by the land beast and will follow and worship it (13:8, 12–14). In short, they are negatively identified as the group of unbelievers, defiant, persecutors, deceived

²⁸ Taking the conjunction *kai* between the phrases *epi tous kathēmenous epi tēs gēs* and the phrase *epi pan ethnos kai phylēn kai glōssan kai laon* as explanatory (“that is, namely”). So, most of modern English Bibles render it as explanatory conjunction (e.g., NKJV, NET, NASB, NIV, etc.). See also Beale, *Book of Revelation*, 749; Osborne, *Revelation*, 535; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago, Chicago: Moody, 1995), 2:202-203.

²⁹ See in Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1982), 297.

³⁰ See discussion in Osborne, *Revelation*, 534.

³¹ See Rev 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [2x]; 13:8, 12, 14 [2x]; 17:2, 8.

³² Yet, the Majority Text or the Textus Receptus uses the expression *hoi katoikountes epi tēs gēs*.

individuals, worshipers of the beast, unregistered in the book of life, and recipients of divine punitive judgment.³³

Two views about the addressees of the 3AM. Many scholars stipulate that both expressions are synonyms while few see them as two different target groups of people.³⁴ The two varied expressions *hoi katoikountes epi tēs gēs* and *hoi kathēmenoi epi tēs gēs* are synonymous expressions. Based on the general biblical background, both expressions are used interchangeably. In the OT (LXX), they are both translated from the Hebrew phrase *yôšēb hā'āreš* with negative meaning (see, e.g., Num 14:14; cf. Jer 32[25]:29–30). In the NT, the Gospel of Matthew quotes Isa 9:2 which has an expression of *hoi katoikountes* (LXX); and yet it is expressed as *toīs kathēmenois* in the Gospel. So, both *katoikeō*, “to settle, dwell, inhabit,” and *kathēmai*, “to sit, settle, live, dwell,” are synonymous in the sense of “dwelling.”³⁵

Possible explanations on the addressees. In Revelation, the verbal parallelism between the earth-dwellers and the fourfold group that is mentioned alongside each other in 11:9–10 and 13:7–8 and compare it to 14:6 suggests that the earth-dwellers and the earth-settlers points to the same group. Hence, “John might have used the phrase ‘the earth-settlers’ (14:6) as a varied expression, without any distinction from the phrase ‘the earth-dwellers.’ This suggests that they are the same group of people. Only here in 14:6, the regular phrase is varied when the call to repentance is explicitly mentioned.”³⁶

Regarding the next issue about the earth-settlers and the fourfold group, the two different opinions are solely based on the syntactical interpretation of the first conjunction *kai*, “and, also, even” (in bold) between the two parallel prepositional phrases as shown in the syntactical diagram of the passage (14:6b) below:

echonta euaggelion aiōnion euaggelisai (“having an eternal gospel to preach”)

kai { *epi tous kathēmenous epi tēs gēs (“the earth-settlers”)*
epi pan ethnos kai phylēn kai glōssan kai laon (fourfold group)

³³ See the study on the identity and meaning of “the earth-dwellers” in Revelation in Glenn Jade V. Mariano, “The Identity and Meaning of ‘the Earth-Dwellers’ in the Book of Revelation” (MAR thesis, AIIAS, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 2007); also, Thomas D. Ice, “The Earth Dwellers of Revelation,” *Article Archives* 116 (2009): 1–4, accessed October 1, 2021, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/pretrib_arch/116.

³⁴ For synonymous expressions, see Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation*, 297; Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 240–241; Robert W. Wall, *Revelation*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 18:183; David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, WBC 52B (Dallas, TX: Word, 1997), 826–827; Beale, *Book of Revelation*, 749; Osborne, *Revelation*, 535. For different groups of people, see R[ichard] C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1943), 12:428; John Albert Bengel, *New Testament Word Studies*, trans. Charlton T. Lewis and Marvin R. Vincent (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971; reprint, 1978), 2:900.

³⁵ Mariano, “Identity and Meaning,” 125. See the discussion of the backgrounds of “the Earth-Settlers” in *ibid.*, 41–54, 56–58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

The common interpretation of *kai* is explanatory (“namely, that is”). That is, the second prepositional phrase (the fourfold group) is an explanation of the first prepositional phrase (the earth-settlers). However, the two phrases do not agree in number to make them the same group; the first one is stated in plural with the article as the consistent expression of a categorized group of people in Revelation while the second one is in the singular (*pan*, “every”) and indefinite that individualizes each group of the fourfold group. Other occurrences of the fourfold group are stated in various forms³⁷ suggesting not identical groups with the earth-dwellers.

Second, the fourfold group and the earth-dwellers do not necessarily mean the same group based on the context and usages. The fourfold group has a bigger entity than the earth-dwellers. The earth-dwellers are part of or mingling with the fourfold group as indicated by the preposition *ek*, “from” that precedes with the latter group (see 11:9–10; cf. 5:7, 18:4). Like the redeemed saints (5:7) and the 144,000 (7:9), the earth-dwellers come *from* the fourfold group and not vice versa. Third, the expression “the earth-dwellers” in Revelation is consistently referring to wicked people while the fourfold group has a neutral connotation. Yet, these groups of people are the target of the satanic trinity, as well.

Finally, the reasons above lead to a better interpretation of *kai* which is either connective (“and, also”)³⁸ or ascensive (“even”) conjunction. Yet, the context of solemn and urgent proclamation brings to the ascensive conjunction, namely, the latter group is the “final addition or point of focus.”³⁹ Every group in the fourfold group is pointed out as the focus of the 3AM. The first angel’s message is a call to repentance—fear, give glory, and worship the Creator—with a warning that divine judgment has come (v. 7). The earth-settlers and the fourfold group are both addressees of the 3AM as also the addressees of the satanic trinity (dragon, sea beast, and land beast) in Rev 13. The possible repentant sinners who might adhere to the call and be saved would usually come out *from* the fourfold group and not from the earth-settlers, which is attested in Rev 5:9 and 7:9—the redeemed saints by the Lamb’s blood come *from* every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Hence, the fourfold group is added as a point of focus.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, God is also concerned with the earth-dwellers/settlers to fairly warn them for repentance and take heed to the call and warnings of the angels while there is still a chance. The earth-settlers and the fourfold group are being called for they are (a) not worshiping God, but the beast (14:7; cf. 13:12-17) and (b) already made drunk with

³⁷ See Rev 5:9, 7:9, 10:11; 11:9, 13:7, 14:6, and 17:15. Contextually, the phrase “the earth-dwellers/settlers” appears with the fourfold phrase in 10:11, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6, and 17:15.

³⁸ Some literal Bible English versions normally translate *καί* as “and” such as KJV, NASB, and RWB.

³⁹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 670.

⁴⁰ See further explanations that the earth-dwellers and the fourfold group in 14:6 are not exactly the same group in Mariano, “Identity and Meaning,” 130–138.

the wine (“false doctrines”⁴¹) of the wrath of Babylon’s fornication (14:8; cf. 18:2-3).⁴² The third angel warns all people who worship the beast and his image and receive its mark on their forehead/hand for they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath (14:9-11). Therefore, the 3AM are not just a warning message for the earth-dwellers and the fourfold group. It is an eternal gospel that solemnly warns and calls them to be saved from the upcoming wrath of God.

The Three Messages

The 3AM are the threefold description of “eternal gospel.” Though the messages are stated in a negative sense, they express God’s love and concern with the recipients because the time is too short. The “eternal gospel” refers to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the expressed love of God to sacrifice His Son, the Lamb, to redeem the world from sin by His blood (Rev 1:5; 5:9).⁴³ It is eternal for the gospel of salvation does not change from the beginning. It is good news, especially for those who accept it.⁴⁴ Its preaching is the final offering of salvation for eternity. In short, “the three messages are embedded in one message—the eternal gospel—which is powerful enough to save us and to bring the cosmic conflict to an end.”⁴⁵ So, the goal of preaching the eternal gospel is to lead people to worship the true God and be saved.⁴⁶

The first angel’s message. The first angel proclaims the first message with a loud voice to be heard and get the attention of all people groups. The aorist infinitive *euaggelisai* (from *euaggelizō*) purposely denotes to “bring good news, announce good news”⁴⁷ or “to communicate good news concerning something.”⁴⁸ Using the words (the verb *euaggelizō* [10:7 and 14:6] and the noun *euaggelion* [14:6]) with the same root word (*euaggel-*) may denote emphasis in proclaiming the *eternal good news*. The eternal gospel to be preached is really good news.

⁴¹ White explains the meaning of “the wine of the wrath of her fornication”: “What is that wine?—Her false doctrines. She has given to the world a false sabbath instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and has repeated the lie Satan first told to Eve in Eden,—the natural immortality of the soul. Many kindred errors she has spread far and wide, ‘teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’” Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 725.

⁴² In the second angel’s message, Babylon the great is emphatically announced as already fallen. The reason is that she “has made [πεπότικεν—indic., perf., 3rd, sing.] all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality” (14:8b). The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, “all the nations” is parallel and point to the earth-dwellers who are “made drunk with the wine of her immorality” as stated in 17:2 (see also in 18:3). See further discussion in Mariano, “Identity and Meaning,” 142–144. Their “kings of the earth” fornicate with her and “the merchants of the earth” become rich through her luxury (18:3). These groups of people share Babylonian sins. Apparently, the people of God who do not share with her sins yet are still living with/in all the nations/earth-dwellers in and under Babylonian authority; hence, they are called to come out from the city lest they share in her sins and receive of her plagues (v. 4).

⁴³ Angel Manuel Rodriguez, “Three Angels, One Gospel,” *Ministry*, June 2021, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Mueller, “Last Message for This World,” 1.

⁴⁵ Rodriguez, “Three Angels, One Gospel,” 8.

⁴⁶ See Kwabena Donkor, “Worship: The Center of the Three Angels’ Messages—Part 1,” *BRI*, October 2017, pp. 1–5; Kwabena Donkor, “Worship: The Center of the Three Angels’ Messages—Part 2,” *BRI*, January 2018, pp. 1–5.

⁴⁷ BDAG, s.v. “*euaggelizō*.”

⁴⁸ L&N, s.v. “*euaggelizō*.”

The angel uses three aorist imperatival words as the immediate descriptions of the eternal gospel: *phobēthēte*, “fear/revere”; *dote*, “give”; and *proskynēsate*, “worship.” This threefold aorist-imperative word is better interpreted as the “constative” aorist-imperative.⁴⁹ It makes the commands to fear, give glory, and worship God a top priority. To worship God, the people should revere Him first which will result in giving Him glory. These commands are solemn and urgent that the fivefold group should make the commands a top priority for they are (in the process of) fearing, giving glory, and/or worshipping the beast and the dragon in Rev 13. Therefore, the angel of God calls them with a loud voice to turn to the true God in repentance by fearing, giving glory, and worshipping Him, the Creator, “because the hour of His judgment has come.”⁵⁰

The second angel’s message. The second angel is announcing the fall of great Babylon (v. 8). Babylon the great constitutes of the false trinity: the dragon (Satan, working through spiritualism), the sea beast (apostate Christianity during the Middle Ages), and the land beast (apostate Protestantism as represented by America).⁵¹ It is emphatically announced as already fallen, telling those who do not heed the first angel’s message. The reason is that she “has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality” (14:8b), namely, her false doctrines.⁵² The phrase “all the nations” is parallel and points to the earth-dwellers who are “made drunk with the wine of her immorality” as stated in 17:2.⁵³

In Rev 18:1–3, the other angel reiterates the second angel’s message, saying with a loud voice the fallen nature of great Babylon. This city “becomes a dwelling place of the demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every uncle and hated birds” (NKJV). “All the nations” and their “kings of the earth” fornicate with her; and “the merchants of the earth” become rich through her luxury (18:3). These groups of people share Babylonian sins concerning her false teachings. The people of God who do not

⁴⁹ The aorist imperative has two possible usages: “ingressive” and “constative.” The “ingressive” aorist imperative (“momentary or 2 single act” and “pure ingressive”) “is a command *to begin an action*. The stress is on the *urgency* of the action.” Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 719 (emphasis in original). The “constative” aorist imperative “is a solemn or categorical command. The stress is *not* ‘begin and action,’ nor ‘continue to act.’ Rather, the stress is on the *solemnity* and *urgency* of the action; thus “I solemnly charge you to act-and do it now!” Ibid., 720 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁰ Kwabena Donkor explains, “True worship is motivated by a response of repentance to the gospel that creates reverence, respect, and awe towards the Creator God and results in giving Him glory, including obedience to His commandments.” Donkor, “Worship: The Center–Part 1,” 4. The judgment that has come here refers to the pre-advent judgment that began in October 1844, which is focusing on the final phase of Christ’s heavenly ministry of cleansing the sanctuary. When His ministry ends, that is the close of probation. Then, the wrath of God (7 last plagues) will be poured into the wicked people and the beasts. Finally, Jesus will come with His angels.

⁵¹ Rodriguez, “Three Angels, One Gospel,” 8.

⁵² White explains the meaning of “the wine of the wrath of her fornication”: “What is that wine?—Her false doctrines. She has given to the world a false sabbath instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and has repeated the lie Satan first told to Eve in Eden,—the natural immortality of the soul. Many kindred errors she has spread far and wide, ‘teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’” Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 725.

⁵³ See further discussion in Mariano, “Identity and Meaning,” 142–144.

share with her sins yet are still living with the earth-dwellers in and under Babylonian authority; hence, they are called to come out from the city lest they share in her sins and receive her plagues (v. 4). During the proclamation of the fall of Babylon, there is still a chance to repentance even from those who are being taught false doctrines. The proclamation of this fourth angel complements and intensifies the third angel's message.

The third angel's message. The third angel follows and loudly proclaims the final warning against the followers of the beast. The angel is now particularly addressing the individual followers of the beasts: "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand" (v. 9). The first angel addresses the target groups of people while the second angel addresses the fall of Babylon. This time, the angel warns *tis*, "anyone" (in a generic sense) who is now worshipping "the beast and his image" and receiving his marks on his forehead or hand among the people groups. The warning deals with the receiving of the seven plagues (Rev 16) and the eternal punishment with fire and brimstone (14:10–11).

Worship issue in Rev 13 and 14. Based on the context of Rev 13, the earth-dwellers are predicted to worship the dragon and the sea beast (vv. 4, 8, 12). The land beast will deceive them to make an image to/of the beast to worship it (v. 14). The land beast also implements to receive the mark of the beast (i.e., apostate Sabbath) as a sign of their allegiance and loyalty to the false trinity⁵⁴ so that they can buy and sell, or else they will be put to death. Each member of the earth-dweller group is in the process of worshipping the beast and receiving its mark on his forehead or hand. The third message is being proclaimed when the mandate to worship the beast and to have its mark is already implemented.⁵⁵ The final warning call about the impending punitive judgment of God on following the beast is individualized. Hence, another angel of Rev 18 makes a final warning that Babylon the Great has really fallen. That is why God calls His people who are still in the city of Babylon to come out so that they will not participate in her sins and

⁵⁴ Angel Manuel Rodriguez explains, "Loyalty to the dragon and his allies requires taking the name and the mark of the beast. The wicked will identify themselves with the character and aspirations of the false trinity. Loyalty expresses itself in actions that manifest the nature of the object of loyalty. Appropriating the name and the mark of the beast means that they belong to and supposedly are going to be protected by the dragon. By submitting to the authority of the false trinity, God's will is irrelevant for the wicked."

The mark of the beast is the counterfeit of God's seal, the Sabbath. Sunday becomes the symbol of the authority of the dragon over those who follow him—his authority to change God's law—and that facilitates worshipping him. We worship the Creator on the seventh-day Sabbath, and at the close of the cosmic conflict, the wicked worship the creature through their obedience to Sunday." Rodriguez, "Three Angels, One Gospel," 9.

⁵⁵ The two verbs *proskynei*, "he worships" and *lambanei*, "he receives" (present tense) in the first class conditional phrase (protasis)—"If anyone worships [*proskynei*] the beast and its image and receives [*lambanei*] a mark on his forehead or on his hand" (Rev 14:9, ESV)—can be interpreted as progressive/descriptive present. It means, at the time of the proclamation of the third angel's message, some people are already worshipping the beast and its image and receiving its mark. The consequence of their beast-worship will take place soon from the time of the proclamation. Hence, the third angel's message (and the other angel's message in Rev 18) is apparently a solemn warning message, especially to those (earth-dwellers) who worship and receive the mark of the beast for the impending punitive judgment.

plagues (v. 4). It seems the probation of God is about to close during the proclamation of the third message.

The coalition between good and evil. The coalition between the forces of good and evil is so intense during this final call and warning. Both forces are mandating all the people to worship either God or the beast and Satan. The people are caught in the middle. They have to decide which force they will follow. On the other hand, those who will follow and worship the beast and receive its mark will be able to buy and sell (13:15–17); they are protected by the decree of the land beast. Consequently, because they do not worship the true God, they will receive divine wrath and punishment (14:10–11).

On the one hand, those who refuse to worship the beast and receive its mark will be persecuted and reprimanded not to buy or sell (13:15, 17). They are the saints “who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (14:12; cf. 12:17), who are the target of the evil powers. They will be persecuted to death because they do not worship the beast and receive its mark (13:15). Yet, the promise of God is “blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them” (14:12–13, NKJV). Thus, they need strong perseverance even at this challenging time (v. 12) to resist the satanic mandate. The coming of Jesus and their victory with Him are already predicted that will serve as their hope during tribulations.⁵⁶

Theological Implications

The prophetic fulfillment of the 3AM in Rev 14:6–12 is fit to the message, media, and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The threefold message of the angels represent the message and work of the remnant church. The proclamation of the three flying angels may relate to the broadcasting of the 3AM in various ways. Then, the mission of the church reveals the mandate to proclaim the eternal gospel to the fivefold groups: the earth-settlers/dwellers and the fourfold group. Here are some of the implications based on the study of the 3AM in connection to the message, media, and mission of the SDAC including the target audience:

Message.

Regarding the message, the 3AM has been relevant to the SDAC since the 1840s. The first angel’s message is loaded with various doctrines that center on God who is worthy of worship.⁵⁷ God, Creation, Sabbath, law, judgment, forgiveness, repentance, and worship are the focus of the end-time issues. They are all connected to proper

⁵⁶ See Rev 14:1–5, 14–20; 16:15; cf. 7:9–17; 15:2–4; 19:1–8.

⁵⁷ Such as divine reverence, giving glory, worship and the Sabbath, divine judgments, the fall of Babylon and its false doctrines, the beasts, the mark of the beast and its image, the wrath of God (7 plagues), hell fire, the Lamb and his holy angels, rest, perseverance of the saints, God’s commandments and testimony, faith in/of Jesus, blessing for dying in the Lord, Holy Spirit, health and wellness, and anything that is related to the eternal gospel.

worship: “the key issue in the final crisis will be centered on the matter of proper worship.”⁵⁸ These biblical teachings must be continually preached to all people groups.

The second angel’s message deals with the false religious system and doctrines of Babylon.⁵⁹ Many people adhere to these false systems and doctrines. The fulfillment of this message seems to be in process. “The mystical Babylon is still unfolding.”⁶⁰ In 1896, White stated, “The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed.”⁶¹

The third angel’s message is the final warning against those who worship the beast and its image and receive its mark. It points out that the land beast already enforces sea beast worship, making its image, and receiving its mark on the forehead/hand to buy or sell. The fulfillment of this prophecy is yet to come for there is still no strong implementation and reception of the mark of the beast. The resistance between believers and government agencies is expected once the law of God and the law of man collide. So, the third angel’s message is in the process of its fulfillment. It should be preached boldly with the first and the second messages as the Spirit move His people toward the end.

The Sabbath and health messages are parts of the third angel’s message,⁶² which is related to righteousness by faith (Rev 14:12).⁶³ It is implied that diseases will be rampant until this time. In the impending final conflict, the pestilences and other related issues, like pandemic and calamities which are the works of Satan, will not cease until Sunday observance is strictly reinforced, which is related to the mark of the beast. The alleged causes of such calamities are the Sabbath-keepers, the violators of the manmade law.⁶⁴

The current C-19 pandemic and the challenging situations today are *seemingly* precursors to the upcoming severe trials and the fulfillment of the third angel’s message. Though the C-19 vaccines are not related to and do not contain the number (666) or mark of the beast to be injected into humans, the rumor on that issue is still echoing. Nevertheless, there are some resemblances to some events in Rev 13 (e.g., restrictions

⁵⁸ Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 431.

⁵⁹ “The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of 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.” Ellen G. White, “The Remnant Church Not Babylon,” *Review and Herald*, September 12, 1893, para. 20.

⁶⁰ Rodriguez, “Three Angels, One Gospel,” 8.

⁶¹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 32*, 1896.

⁶² Health message is also connected to the phrase “giving glory” (1 Cor 10:31) as well as to the Creation in the first angel’s message. In particular, the health message is part of the third angel’s message. See the discussions in, for example, Warren A. Shipton, “Ellen G. White, Health, and the Third Angel’s Message-Part 1” *Perspective Digest*, 23.2 (2018), accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.perspectivedigest.org/archive/23-2/ellen-whites-health-and-the-third-angels-message>.

⁶³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923), 91–92.

⁶⁴ See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, 1911 ed. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), 589–590.

about buying and selling) and the events regarding quarantine and vaccination.⁶⁵ Some privileges in the local, international, business, social, and religious events/gatherings have restrictions if someone is not vaccinated; only vaccinated individuals can enjoy some privileges like worship gatherings and eating inside restaurants. Various governments gain control over their populace. Mandates for C-19 vaccination in various places, institutions, employments, tourism/travel, business establishments, and the like have been implemented and cause some difficulties among those who are unvaccinated.⁶⁶ Yet, when 2023 has arrived, there are now fewer restrictions on C-19 in some places.

Media

The preaching of the final warning, “a life-and-death message,”⁶⁷ should be with the power of the Holy Spirit to produce a loud cry.⁶⁸ It should be preached even before the reinforcement of worshipping the beast. Total Member Involvement (TMI) should continually be promoted and implemented by the church for its powerful proclamation.⁶⁹

Also, various means and media technologies in preaching the 3AM have a vital role in broadcasting the threefold message. These means should continuously be used due to the challenges caused by the C-19 pandemic to fulfill the mandate to proclaim the “everlasting gospel” while there are still no restrictions to use them in most places. Nowadays, the message can easily be disseminated and be read, listened to, or watched by the world using various media (internet, radio [e.g., AWR], TV, FB, cell phone, online platform, etc.), especially those who cannot be physically reached.

Mission

The proclamation of the 3AM is part of the mission of the church.⁷⁰ The church believes in the prophetic fulfillment of Rev 13 and 14, in particular, in the course of

⁶⁵ See more insights regarding pandemic and final events in Marco T. Terreros, “Reflections on the Pandemic and Final Events,” *Ministry*, June 2021, pp. 10–12.

⁶⁶ In the Philippines, there is no mandatory C-19 vaccination yet for there is no law to mandate such. Yet, the idea of compelling Filipinos to be vaccinated to protect themselves against Covid-19 is already expressed and encouraged. See Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos, “No Need Yet for Mandatory Covid-19 Vaccination: Palace,” *The Philippine News Agency*, October 14, 2021, accessed October 18, 2021, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1156644>.

⁶⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 6:60.

⁶⁸ “The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. We are to feel the power of the Spirit of God in this movement. This is a wonderful, definite message; it means everything to the receiver, and it is to be proclaimed with a loud cry. We must have a true, abiding faith that this message will go forth with increasing importance till the close of time.” Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1991), 233.

⁶⁹ See General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “What Is the Total Member Involvement,” 2015, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://www.tmi.adventist.org/about>.

⁷⁰ The mission statement of the SDAC: “The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel of God’s love in the context of the three angels’ messages of

history. Revelation 14:6–13 is contextually relevant to the present situation of the world toward its final course.⁷¹ What happening now in the world can be traced to the context of the 3AM. Wars, famines, calamities, pestilences, etc. (Matt 24:6–8; Luke 21:10) are just precursor signs to the end of time. The end will come once the gospel (3AM) is preached to all nations (i.e., the sign of the end) (Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10). The medical missionary workers and ministers, as well as the youth, should work hand in hand in the proclamation of the 3AM, especially the third one.⁷²

Target Audience

Nowadays, there are still three groups of people that exist in the world: “[a] Those who love the gospel and are committed to God, [b] those who hate the gospel and God, and [c] the vast majority of people who are indifferent to or ignorant of the gospel. The last group is not necessarily against God, nor has it necessarily sided with Satan.”⁷³ However, in the closing of the final spiritual battle, there will be only two groups who will make a stand for either God or Satan: the saints and the earth-dwellers.

Revelation 14:6–13 points out the belief system, identifying characters, and the consequences of the earth-dwellers. The end-time remnant church should carefully consider these recipients of the 3AM. The earth-dwellers are active and growing in numbers. Even among the Christian groups, there are possible members of the earth-dwellers group. The gospel must be preached to them even to every unbeliever in the fourfold group. So the church needs to solemnly warn and call their attention to their salvation before it is too late. There might be still a chance to repent even during the third angel's message; but, how can a man decide properly for his salvation when he is already drunk with false doctrines (14:8; 17:2; 18:3)? The church has to preach all the doctrinal elements of the 3AM with urgency.⁷⁴ They should earnestly proclaim them in the proper

Revelation 14:6-12, and as revealed in the life, death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Saviour and Lord and to unite with His remnant church; and to nurture believers as disciples in preparation for His soon return.” General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee, “Mission Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” amended on October 10, 2004, under “Our Mission,” accessed August 20, 2021, https://circle.adventist.org/files/CD2008/CD2/www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main_stat1.html.

⁷¹ Historically, the SDAs believe that the fulfilment of the proclamation of the first angel's message took place during the preaching of William Miller and his associates in the period from 1831 to 1844. But the proclamation continues until the close of probation. “Judgment” [Rev 14:6], *SDABC*, 7:828.

⁷² “Health reform is to stand out more prominently in the proclamation of the third angel's message. The principles of health reform are found in the word of God. The gospel of health is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the word. It is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.” Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Food* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1938), 75. See also Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 267.

⁷³ Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 431.

⁷⁴ Such as divine reverence, giving glory, worship and the Sabbath, divine judgments, the fall of Babylon and its false doctrines, the beasts, the mark of the beast and its image, the wrath of God (7 plagues), hell fire, the Lamb and his holy angels, rest, perseverance of the saints, God's commandments and testimony, faith in/of Jesus, blessing for dying in the Lord, Holy Spirit, and anything that is related to the eternal gospel.

context, time, and place for those people since the 3AM will be preached consecutively as well as simultaneously toward their final proclamation before the close of probation.

The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to convict each member of the target groups. As guided by the Holy Spirit, the church's prime duty is to preach the gospel "in all the world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). So, the church should preach and warn every unbeliever and even to other Christians so that they may not partake of divine wrath if they repent. God's will is that all should not perish but come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). The sinners who will repent and be saved are the redeemed saints from the fourfold group. In short, at present, anybody can still choose to remain faithful to God, remain an earth-dweller, or come out from that wicked group by positively responding to the gospel.

Summary and Conclusion

The 3AM in Rev 14:6–13 are worldwide in scope and contextually fit in the current C-19 pandemic and other challenging situations. The message, media, and mission of the SDAC are embedded in the 3AM. The identity of the target addressees, proclaiming angels, timing, and meaning of the 3AM are particularly investigated in connection to the message, media, and mission of the church. The message of the church is the threefold message itself, which centers on worship and includes the health message. The proclamation of the three angels is related to media. Its mission is the mandate to proclaim the message to the specified addressees to worship the true God and be saved.

The target addressees consist of the fivefold people group: "the earth-dwellers" and "nation, tribe, tongue, and people." "The earth-dwellers" are a distinct group of people whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. They are predicted to worship and receive the mark of the beast. The fourfold group refers to the universal population from which God's people will come out for salvation. The worldwide proclamation of the 3AM through the church heralding with various media is likely an ongoing and swift fulfillment of the three angels flying in mid-air. The pandemic and other calamities will have a crucial role in the enforcement of the mark of the beast to follow and worship the beasts. In sum, the proclamation of the 3AM to the target addressees is significantly relevant to the current pandemic and troublous times in preparation for the impending judgment and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The church needs God's wisdom, Spirit, power, and perseverance to effectively communicate the 3AM to all people during these challenging situations.

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