

3. **Summarize the meaning of grace and the gospel.** (*Romans 3:23–25; Romans 5:6–8*)

Christ's grace is unmerited, undeserved, and unearned. Jesus died the agonizing, painful death that lost sinners will die. He experienced the fullness of the Father's wrath or judgment against sin. He was rejected so we could be accepted. He died the death that was ours so we could live the life that was His. He wore the crown of thorns so we could wear a crown of glory.

This is the One who loves us so much that He would rather experience hell itself than have one of us lost. This is the boundless, unfathomable, incomprehensible, undying, unending, infinite love which longs for us to experience eternity.

To a generation starved for genuine, authentic love and longing for meaningful relationship, the gospel speaks of acceptance, forgiveness, belonging, grace, and life-changing power. It speaks of a God of unconditional love who cares so deeply that He will go to any length to redeem us, because He wants us with Him forever.

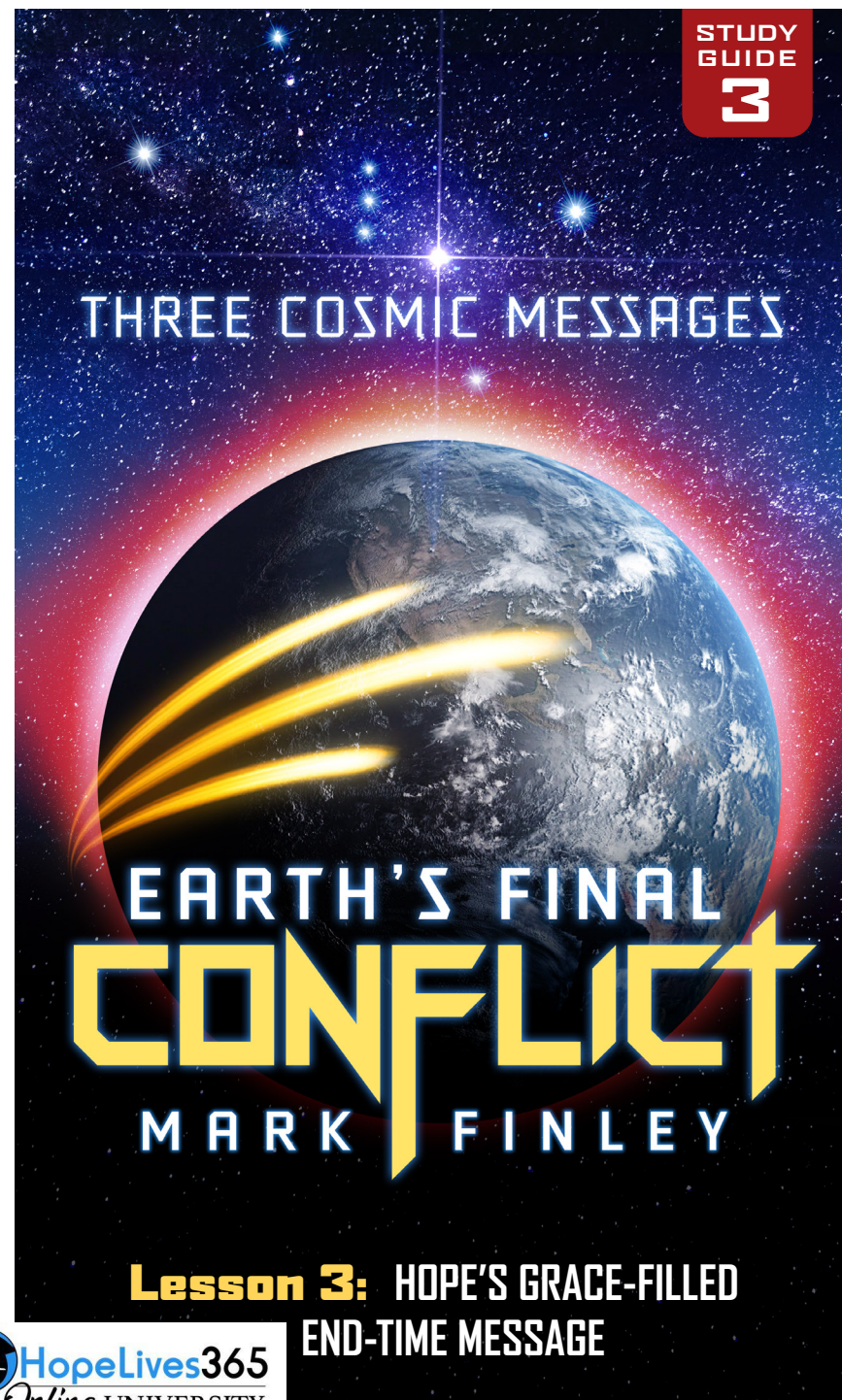
Into All the World

4. **How far-reaching is heaven's final message to the human race?**
(*Revelation 14:6*)

According to the urgent, end-time message of the first of the three angels, the "everlasting gospel" is to be proclaimed "to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (*Revelation 14:6*). Here is a mission so grand and so comprehensive that it is all-consuming. It demands our best efforts and requires our total commitment. It inspires us with something larger than ourselves and leads us out of the narrow confines of our own minds to a grander vision.

What can be more rewarding than being part of a divine movement providentially raised up by God to accomplish a task far greater than any one human being could ever accomplish on their own?

This is the destiny to which you are called. This is Christ's appeal to your soul. Will you answer Christ's call? As a debtor to grace, will you give all you have to this Christ who paid such an infinite price for you? Will you participate in His mission of sharing His last-day message with a dying world?



BUSINESSES, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS ALL HAVE THEIR SLOGANS.

According to Entrepreneur.com's small business encyclopedia, a slogan is "a catchphrase or small group of words combined in a special way to identify a product or company." Slogans are like mini-mission statements. They vividly and powerfully identify a business and its vision, shaping attitudes of employees and consumers regarding what the business is all about. In a sense, just like ranchers brand cattle with a marks of ownership, slogans brand businesses and products.

Israel's Statement of Faith

God brands religious movements as well. He places His identifiable stamp of approval on them to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. In the days of ancient Israel, when the heathen nations around them were polytheists worshiping multiple gods, Israel's clear, identifiable, powerful statement of faith was found in Deuteronomy 6:4. Twice a day, in the morning and the evening, Jewish families repeat the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4)

"Hear, O Israel." Throughout the centuries of their exile, the chanting of the Shema reminded Jews of the spiritual vision and path that united them as a people. It also strengthened Israel's resolve to resist attempts to force them to abandon their spiritual vision and path. Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the first verses that a Jewish child is taught as soon as he or she learns how to speak. In addition, Jewish mothers continually teach their young children to chant the Shema before going to sleep.

A Powerful Example

An amazing example of the power of this faith identity took place immediately after World War II ended in 1945. During the Holocaust, some Jewish parents in Europe had placed their children in Christian orphanages to save their lives. After the war, rabbis visited those orphanages to search for the Jewish children. The priests and nuns who ran the orphanages were not willing to release the children and return them to their people. In fact, they would often deny that they had any Jewish children.

During one visit, a leading rabbi asked the priest in charge to allow him to return in the evening when the children were going to sleep. The priest reluctantly agreed. When the rabbi returned, he entered the children's room, and as he walked through the aisles of beds, he chanted the Hebrew words of the Shema. One by one, children burst into tears and cried out, "Mama!" Many repeated the words of the Shema.

The priest was caught off guard. The children's memories of their Jewish mothers putting them to bed every night with the Shema on their lips were still strong. He had no choice but to admit that he was "mistaken." The lost children of Israel were able to return "home" to their people and to their Torah.

Burned into their consciousness, indelibly impressed upon the minds of these children were those words that confirmed their Jewish Identity: "The LORD our God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The three angels' messages in Revelation 14 are our Shema—our rallying point. They are our identifying statement of faith. They define who we are as an end-time people and describe our mission to the world. We find our unique prophetic identity outlined in Revelation 14:6–12, and it is here that we find our passion to proclaim the gospel to the entire world.

Revelation's End-Time Message

The heart of Revelation is an urgent last-day message found in the 14th chapter. In the imagery of three angels flying in mid-heaven, God proclaims his last message of mercy to a dying world.

1. Summarize Revelation 14:6 in your own words.

The message is urgent; the angel flies in mid-heaven. It is universal; it is to be proclaimed to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. It is eternal; the angel has the everlasting gospel. A message that is urgent, universal, and eternal must be incredibly relevant and important for an end-time generation.

The Eternal Gospel

Let's pause for a moment to meditate on the meaning of the eternal or everlasting gospel. If we fail to understand the meaning of the gospel, we miss the entire point of the three angels' messages. We can never fully understand the issues in God's judgment-hour message—to worship the Creator, to come out of Babylon, and to avoid the mark of the beast—if we fail to understand the gospel. This leads us to ask a very basic question. What is the gospel and why is it everlasting? In his letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul gives one of the clearest definitions of the gospel in the New Testament.

2. How does the Apostle Paul define the gospel? (1 Corinthians 15:1)

The gospel is the incredibly good news of Christ's death for our sins—of His glorious resurrection and His ever-present love and concern for us. The gospel is the joyous reality that Jesus will deliver us from sin's penalty and sin's power. Paul continues describing this amazing grace throughout the book of Romans.