

PROCLAIM GOD ABOVE ALL REV. 14:6-7
22ND SUN AFTER PENT/REFORMATION SUN OCT 25, '15

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

It is almost taken for granted today that if you want to know where you are or how to get somewhere else you use GPS on special device or on phone or computer or built right into car.

So, what is GPS? Global Positioning Satellite.

It depends on satellite in geosynchronous orbit.

Means right speed & altitude so always directly overhead.

How did people navigate before such devices?

Ancient way still involved what was directly overhead, looking at stars at night, which are in fixed positions.

Today, Reformation Sunday, we celebrate that even though people of church tend to lose bearings, wander off track, God preserved for us GPS: Gospel Proclaimed in Scripture which text figuratively pictures as directly overhead and which we must stay directly lined up with.

so that we can know where we are in relation to God and how we need to go on our way to heaven.

What we do in worship every week and especially today is check this GPS, this north star, this eternal Gospel, to see where we are and what we are to do.

GOD'S MESSAGE IS ALWAYS NEEDED BY ALL
GOD RULES OVER ALL HIS CREATION
GOD'S GOSPEL INCLUDES ALL JESUS HAS DONE

GOD'S MESSAGE IS ALWAYS NEEDED BY ALL

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There is delightful children's book illustrated by Maurice Sendak titled A Hole Is to Dig, which includes such obvious things as hands are to hold, arms are to hug, toes are to dance on.

John tells us in text, the gospel is to proclaim.

Greek work for gospel, evangel, translated good news,
more specifically means announcement of good news.

Text says gospel is eternal, which is true only because

God continues to preserve it despite all opposition.

by seeing that it is constantly proclaimed

from one person & generation to another.

If Luther and others who rediscovered the gospel in the Bible

had just said, "Oh, that's good." and kept it to selves,

there would be no reformation to celebrate.

But they didn't. Despite great opposition & persecution

they refused to be quiet.

They wrote & published it in volumes.

One thing that happened in reformation was restoration of

preaching in worship so gospel was clearly proclaimed.

One reason gospel needs to be constantly proclaimed is

as Luther once commented, church is always

one generation away from ceasing to exist.

It is fire that continues to burn only by constantly igniting

what is next to it.

Another reason Gospel needs to be constantly proclaimed to

everyone on earth, every nation, tribe, language and people

is because there is no other way to be saved

& no one would ever guess or figure it out by themselves.

Only way to ever know it is through God's revelation in Bible.

God's law is written in human hearts so we don't kill each other.

We are naturally law oriented: what do I have to do?

But the gospel is a foreign language which must be

heard over and over again, and acted out & explained

in order for it to be understood.

This is what those who really know gospel and what it means

need to do constantly: proclaim gospel around the world

in every way possible, sending & supporting missionaries

and using mass media & technology

and also sharing it with everyone right here around us

in every way possible, by what we say & do,

being loving, patient, forgiving & talking about why.

drawing attention to Jesus, creating opportunities

to talk about him and following up on them.

v. 7 says to give God glory which means not just telling him

he is great in our worship but telling others as well.

But another reason gospel needs to be constantly proclaimed even to us who do already know it,
in our worship and in conversation with each other
is that if we don't constantly hear & use this foreign language
we would easily forget it and not truly understand it
even when we did hear it.

We can't just say, "Oh, I know that already" and go on
to talk about something else.

Assuming the gospel is the same as denying the gospel.
Gospel must be constantly proclaimed to all creation because...

GOD RULES OVER ALL HIS CREATION

⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory,
because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who
made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

When I read v. 7, I ask myself why the God we are to worship
is specifically identified as the God who made all things.
I think it is because natural, manmade religion tends to
get it backward & worship created things as if they are gods.
Throughout history & throughout world, forces of nature
our lives depend on have been personified & worshiped.

Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans,
remote tribes on every continent have had sun god,
moon god, god of wind, sea, rivers, mountains, trees

When Apostle Paul did miracle in Lystra and people wanted to
worship him, assuming he was one of these gods,
he cried out, "Men, why are you doing these things?
We are bringing you good news that you should turn from these
vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth
and the sea and all that is in them."

Modern people don't believe such myths and superstitions
but still tend to worship creation instead of the creator
by seeking after things more than God,
living as if what we have: money, beauty, health, power, etc.
are what give us security, comfort, value
Instead of the God who gives them to us.

But even religion that acknowledges God is weak religion
when God's role is limited to creation.

Many today are like deists who picture God like watchmaker
who put universe together, wound it up & let it go.
and now he just watches it

but we don't need to pay much attention to him unless
we need him to tinker with it or fix problem now and then.
An indication of how easy this is to slip back into is to notice
how many supposedly Christian songs & hymns praise God
for beauties of creation or his awesome power
but don't go on beyond this to the real gospel.
or how many sermons can be heard that find in Bible
principles to follow in families, finances, etc.
but don't go on to what God himself does when we fail.
v. 7 goes on from creation to hour of judgment that has come.
because creation has been broken by sin.
We have not what God made us to do
and now we are so ruined we can't even when we try.
and so we deserve God's judgment every hour
and the suffering we bring on ourselves.
Nothing works the way it is supposed to
and so all of creation is doomed to destruction.
This is why God must be proclaimed above all
not just as creator but as redeemer.

GOD'S GOSPEL INCLUDES ALL JESUS HAS DONE

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel...⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come,

Before the final hour when God declares his judgment,
God send the eternal gospel declaring his salvation.
God has spoken to us not just by angels overhead
but by coming down to earth in person.
God, the creator, has acted to save his broken creation
by becoming a creature, the one replacement piece
that is able to fix all that is ruined.
Jesus, the word made flesh, reveals the true God to us
by his preaching and teaching the foreign language
of God's truth and love
but also by acting it out in his miracles
that show both his power and his grace.
He has perfectly kept the law that we fail to keep
or even rightly understand.
God's hour of judgment has already come for us
because he was judged to be guilty of sin in our place
when he suffered and died on the cross.

Now God the judge declares us forgiven and free
in the hour of worship through his absolution
and in his sacraments,
and so also in the final hour of judgment
because of his own grace.

This is the real gospel that must constantly be declared.

Not just that our sins are excused
but that they are taken away and we are made new
Not just that we get to start over again
and try harder to make up for our failures
but that Jesus has done it for us

And God the Holy Spirit does it in us,
working with his tools of word and sacrament
to install faith in us by his doing, not ours
and to work in us what is pleasing to him
by his own power, the power of his love.

Proclaiming God above all is proclaiming God does it all.

He is our creator and the savior of fallen creation.

He is the judge and our advocate and defender.

Jesus is the messenger and the message.

This is the GPS that keeps us on track,
the eternal Gospel Proclaimed in Scripture
when we need to keep hearing & proclaiming.

GOD'S MESSAGE IS ALWAYS NEEDED BY ALL

by generation after generation,
by every nation, tribe, people and language,
by ever person around us every day
and by each of us every day of life.

GOD RULES OVER ALL HIS CREATION

He himself, not just his creation, is what we need for life.

This broken creation is headed for a final judgment
but meanwhile it is sustained by God's own doing
because God continues to be at work to save it
through the gospel.

GOD'S GOSPEL INCLUDES ALL JESUS HAS DONE

We are saved not by anything we are or do
but because Jesus has done it all for us,
taking away our sins, giving this to us through faith,
and giving us new lives to live now and forever.