

IS GOD TRYING TO SAVE THE WORLD NOW?

Does God have a plan for the billions who have died without ever hearing His true Gospel? Are those who have never heard the true Gospel going to a burning HELL? What does your Bible say?

BY HERBERT W ARMSTRONG

First of all, you need to know that you live in a world cut off completely from God. Even though I have said it before, let me put it in a brief "nutshell." Let me restate the "roots." Once the GOVERNMENT OF GOD ruled on this earth. God put angels here to inhabit the earth before the creation of man. Under their king Lucifer, super archangel, the most powerful being God can create next to God Himself, they rejected God's government, turned to the opposite way of life. God's government is based on the law and principle of love-the way of GIVING. It is giving to God a return of His love which He gives us- giving to God obedience to His law of love and way of life; giving to God reverence, worship, adoration. Lucifer chose and turned his angels to the opposite way of GETTING- the way of self-love-the way of vanity, lust and greed, jealousy and envy, competition and strife, resentment toward others, and over any authority over one. (Especially the way of rebellion against God and His truth.) Where Man Went Wrong This brought on the earth chaos,

decay, waste, emptiness and darkness. Psalms 104:30 says God then RENEWED the face of the earth (Genesis 1), in six days creating man after God's own kind (Gen. 1:26). God created man mortal male and female-out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). God offered the first man and woman, from whom the human race has sprung, eternal life in the Kingdom of God, actually being born as one of God's own children in the God FAMIL Y (symbolized by the tree of life) or (Adam had to make a choice) rejection of God and His government, and taking to himself the knowledge of good and evil (deciding for himself right from wrong). God is the source of basic knowledge. Man rejected this knowledge. Adam rebelled-rejected God's GOVERNMENT and God's WAY OF LIFE, choosing to go his own way, decide for himself, create his own knowledge. In other words, follow the course of the sinning angels (II Pet. 2:4). Whereupon God sentenced Adam and his family-all mankind in general- to 6,000 years of being totally cut off from God's

government, God's religion, God's basic knowledge, God's ways that produce peace and happiness and give eternal life. God said, in effect: "You have decided! Go! Form your own ideas of government, form your own religions and kinds of worship, form your own type of education and production of knowledge, form your own way of living-form your own society and civilization, wholly cut off from me." For 6,000 years, that is. Yet God reserved the right to INTERVENE in specific cases, or in specific individuals, as He deemed necessary to His purpose!

Is God Trying to Save the World Now?

God did intervene in the cases of Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham-the nation Israel. He communicated to them His way. He intervened in sending Christ with the MESSAGE to be announced of the coming restoration of the government of God after the 6,000 years of man's rule. Christ announced

that man may be, if and when called by God, forgiven, reconciled (relationship and access to God established), and can receive God's Spirit (the impregnation of GOD-life) and be born into the God family by a resurrection from the dead. But a first death was pronounced on all children of Adam because of Adam's sin (I Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27) and a SECOND death as penalty IF man rejects God's salvation when and after God calls him. But He has not been calling THE WORLD for the 6,000 years. . Adam and Eve did not believe what God said. They rejected Him. Jesus preached His good news message to countless thousands, yet only 120 believed what He said (Acts 1: 15). Jesus taught His good news message to His apostles. They went forth and proclaimed it, but by about A.D. 59 it was suppressed. Christ raised up His Church on Pentecost, A.D. 31. He called it "the little flock." It was, compared to the world's total population, only a "little" or "tiny" flock. Jesus did not come on a "soul-saving crusade." Remember, the world as a whole was cut off from God. God was not yet trying to "get the world saved." Only those FEW God specially called-just the few in whom God intervened in this world's civilization- those He deemed important to His purpose. What of all the others? They were as yet not being judged-not lost. Their time is yet

to come. The only ones called to salvation or any personal contact with God for the first 1900 some years were Abel, Enoch and Noah. Then God intervened to specially call Abraham. Abraham did not seek God; it was God who chose, intervened, and called Abraham. Notice it! "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation . . ." (Gen. 12: 1- 2). That nation was to be Israel, known as GOD'S NATION, to be separate from this world's society which is cut off from God. Abraham did not call on God. God called Abraham for a special mission. Also his sons, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and Joseph. But the world as a whole was cut off from all access to God. It was building its own governments, its own religions, its own knowledge and systems of education-going its own ways! Four hundred and thirty years after Abraham, God raised up Moses in a special way for a SPECIAL MISSION-to lead the children of Israel, descended from Abraham,' then slaves in Egypt, numbering probably two or three million (perhaps even more, for there were 600,000 men, besides women and children and they had many children!). God did not offer spiritual salvation to Israel. He offered them, in return for obedience to His government, only physical, material, national

rewards and greatness. The only ones "converted" or CALLED for salvation between Moses and Christ were Moses and the prophets sent to Israel and Judah. They, and they ONLY, were given the Holy Spirit, and that only so they could perform the WORK God called them to do in God's own nations, Israel and Judah. All these years God was not trying to save the world spiritually. The world was totally cut off from God! Moses was further used in writing the first five books of the Bible, as God was making available His revelation of basic KNOWLEDGE.

The Good News Announcement

Then came Jesus Christ as the Messenger of the Covenant (Mal. 3: 1 and Mark 1:1, 14-15). He brought an announcement-a message from God-the good news announcement of the coming Kingdom of God! But He did not come on a "soul saving crusade." As stated before, of the thousands who heard Him announce the coming Kingdom of God, only 120 BELIEVED what He said (Acts 1: 15). They formed the beginning of the Church of God when they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 31. That same day God added to them about three thousand whom He had specially called (Acts 2:41). Then, after that, "the Lord ADDED to the church daily such as should be [at the resurrection] saved" (verse

47). The apostles did not get these people saved-but God added such as He CALLED to be saved. Thus the Church of God started. It started in a world cut off from God-and comparatively very small. Jesus called it "the little flock" (Luke 12:32). For a short time it grew to a few thousand members God had called and added. Then, in a short time, the persecution set in (Acts 8: 1) and the Church was diminished in size.

True Church Goes Underground

The true gospel of the Kingdom of God was suppressed by the false church raised up by Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8) in A.D. 33. In reality it was the remnant of the Babylonian Mystery Religion, which appropriated the name "Christian" and deceived the whole world (Rev. 17:2, 5). By A.D. 59 even the churches had turned to another gospel (Gal. 1:6-7). The true gospel was suppressed! The "little flock" -the true Church of God- virtually went underground. The gospel had to be taught secretly. Thousands of true Christians were tortured and martyred- put to death by the fast growing false Babylonish church. Ever since then only a comparative few have been called by God to repentance, belief and spiritual salvation. Let me make that plain! In Ephesians I, Paul addresses his inspired letter "to the saints which are at Ephesus,

and to the faithful IN Christ Jesus" (verse 1). He is writing to saints in Christ-not to the world. When Paul here uses the pronoun "us," he means those saints and includes himself. He says: "According as he [God] hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having PREDESTINATED US unto the SONSHIP [as it should read] of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (verses 4- 5). Predestinated-why? To be lost? No! To become God's sons-His own children. The rest of the world, remember, is cut off from God-has no access to Him. He continues: "In whom also we [not the world] have obtained an INHERITANCE, being PREDESTINATED according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who FIRST trusted in Christ" (verses 11-12). Notice what that says: We were predestinated to be the FIRST to trust in Christ-to receive SALVATION. We were specially CALLED, chosen-while the rest of the world is cut off from God and Christ. After the second coming of Christ-after He establishes the Kingdom of God and the whole world comes under Christ's rule at the end of this DAY OF MAN (this 6,000 years when the world as a whole is cut off from Christ)- then EVERYBODY will be called to

salvation (Matt. 25:31-40). But today only the precious predestinated FEW! Jesus plainly said: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ..." (John 6:44).

World Cut Off From God

Again get this: understand it! The world as a whole is cut off from all access to God. God has not been trying to save the world. God sentenced this world to 6,000 years of going its own way-forming man's own governments, his own religions-all false-his own knowledge and systems of education-his own society going the way of "get" rather than of "love." Instead of trying to save this sinning world, God sentenced it to sowing its own ways, and reaping what it sows-to prove once and for all that ONLY God's way of love is good for us. Just look at the result today! Soon, if God does not step in and intervene, and take over the rule, man will destroy himself. For the first time in history the weapons of mass destruction are available that can erase all life, including all humanity, from this earth. Just before man brings that about, God will intervene once again, stopping it by His supernatural power, and send Christ to rule with the Kingdom of God over all nations. Then Satan will be put away at last (Rev. 20: 1-4). Christ on His throne will go out to save all who are willing (Matt. 25: 31).

After a thousand years of Christ's rule will come the Great White Throne Judgment-the resurrection back to mortal physical life of all since Adam (except those God had intervened to call). That will be many billions. God is NOT trying to save them Now-He will THEN. Finally, at last, everyone will have been called and had his chance for salvation and eternal life!

A Divine Master Plan

The Holy Days picture God's MASTER PLAN. The Day of Pentecost is called the Feast of Firstfruits-just the small FIRST harvest for God's Kingdom-including us, now. The Feast of Trumpets pictures the coming of Christ to rule. The Day of Atonement pictures putting Satan away so we may be at one with Christ. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the millennium-the Kingdom of God ruling-the thousand years when all then living will be called, and saved if they are willing. The final day of the fall Feast pictures the Great White Throne Judgment, when the billions sentenced to be cut off from God will be resurrected mortal, and then called, drawn to Christ and saved if they are willing.