

Repent

by **Herbert W Armstrong**

Well greetings friends, and this is Herbert W Armstrong once again with the Good News of the World Tomorrow.

Now, my friends, once again why is it that we have not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, but a gospel of men about His person? Now we have been going through the New Testament to see what gospel Jesus did preach, what He taught His disciples, and the customs that He practiced.

We have just seen during the past week how Jesus was sending His students, His learners; because the word 'disciple' means 'a student' or 'learner,' out on a practice preaching mission. They were learning to be the preachers, that is they were to be empowered as ambassadors; having authority to represent the government of God.

Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God, which is the Government of God. The reign of God over us and over our lives. Not just, you might say over our hearts as people do, which doesn't mean anything. They make a sentimental sort of an emotional something of it that robs it of all meaning.

Well Jesus had called His twelve disciples together, and incidentally, He had chosen them and called them. They didn't come and ask for the job. They had other jobs. Jesus called them away from their jobs. They forsook everything - their jobs, in many cases they had to forsake their friends, their relatives. They followed Him.

Jesus had gone about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching - what gospel? The gospel of the kingdom of God and He was healing every sickness and every disease. Then He called His twelve and He sent them forth, what? To preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. And He told them first to remember not to go into the way of Gentiles, but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6). Who were not Jews in Judah, but the lost sheep of the ten tribes who had migrated clear across Europe by that time.

And then He said that they were going as sheep among wolves (Matthew 10:16)) and Jesus was showing that the condition then, as they preached the truth, was a good deal like it would be in the latter days. Because, Jesus said that the church would be the little flock, that His people would be persecuted. And there actually in history we find that after about 30 or 40 years of the ministry – as a matter of fact – there was only a couple of 19 year periods, or a total of 38 years of actual organized preaching of the gospel from the time of Christ, until it was virtually snuffed out so far as any organized effort was concerned. There were two 19 year periods - a 19 year time cycle. One for preaching the gospel around Palestine and that part and Asia. Then again of going over into Europe and continuing to expand the work into Europe and preaching it to Europe for one more 19 year time cycle and then that was the end.

Now Jesus had said, when His disciples had asked Him to tell when would be the Second Coming of Christ and be the end of this age. In other words, the time we are living in now and our present generation. He said, "...when this gospel of the kingdom has been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14 paraphrased)

Gospel Not Preached

Now that gospel has not been preached for 1800 years and, my friends, that is not of my making. I've had nothing to do with it. I don't think it was of the making of Peter, James, and Andrew, and Matthew, and the others, that Jesus had called them and that He had revealed to them the gospel of the kingdom and sent them to preach it. It was certainly not any of the doing of the apostle Paul, that God called him. Because Jesus Christ called him and struck him down and blinded him and forced him into the gospel and to send it out.

And it wasn't my doing that God revealed it to me and sent me to proclaim this same gospel to you today. But when they asked Jesus how to know when the end of this world would come, and what would be the sign of His Second Coming. First He told them that there would be false preachers, but that wasn't the end of the age, that was the beginning. And that happened at the very beginning.

Next there would be wars and rumors of wars, and these men going out - appropriating the name of Christ and pretending to have His authority and going in the name of Christ – did get them a certain amount of prestige in the world and people accepted them. But what did they do? They preached about Christ, they preached in His name, but they preached a different message altogether. They denied the message that God sent to this world, for this world, by Jesus Christ.

And so, now God's way is the way of love. God's way is the way of obedience to God and you obey God by love. And it's love to God and love to neighbor and that's defined in God's law - the Ten Commandments, but the people began to reject the Ten Commandments. They hated the Ten Commandments, they didn't love the law of God. They hated it, although the law of God is love and it is the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is the fulfilling of that law. And so they tried to convince the people that the law was done away. Lean to your own understanding, your own conscience, that's all there is to it. And that is what they began to teach, but they taught it in the name of Christ!

My friends, the law of God is the way of peace. It's the way into peace and to happiness and to prosperity and joyous abundant living. But when the preachers preached against that way, the people were encouraged to go the other way; of greed, of vanity, the selfish way. And that brought on the thing that Jesus said would follow: wars, strife, hardship, poverty, trouble, everything of the kind that we have had in the world.

And then was to follow famine and then pestilence and we haven't seen the worst of that yet. We are finally in the time now at the end, of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom and **world war**, but we haven't seen the end of that yet. We are in it now – in a recess between the second and third World Wars.

Now all that, He said, was the beginning of sorrows, but that wasn't the end. But He did say this in verse 14, this is Matthew 24:

"...this gospel of the kingdom [which He preached, which He sent His disciples out to preach, which He ordained His apostles to carry to the world, and which they did] ...this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations [that's down in the end time, as it is going now on The World Tomorrow Program]; and then [He said] shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14)

I tell you my friends I warn you by the authority of Jesus Christ, you'd better wake up. It is later than you think. This is the Work of God. **This is the doing of God Almighty.** And I say, **wake up!** And he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear while he may. Time is coming when no man can preach. And when the night will come when no man can work. And there will be a famine of hearing this gospel. This word of the Eternal that God sent by Jesus Christ.

Sending Out the Disciples.

Well now Jesus had sent His ministers out on this practice mission. And so finally we come down here in Matthew now the eleventh chapter and the first verse:

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples [as we've been going into the past week, that] he departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities." (Matthew 11:1)

Now Jesus departed and the twelve went on their way. Now Mark's account picks it up right there in the sixth chapter of Mark. Will you open your Bibles? Mark 6 and beginning with verse 12, Mark 6:12:

"And they [these disciples] went out, and [they] preached..." (Mark 6:12)

Now they went to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they traveled a long way to get there and they preached, what? Did they say, "Well there is nothing that you do; no you just accept Christ and you'll be saved. There are no works to salvation." That is what they tell you today, my friends. That is the message you are getting today. Jesus said many false preachers would go out deceiving the people, but they would go in His name and saying that He is the Christ, but they would deceive the people with that kind of a message. You have been hearing it ever since you were a little baby. That is the kind of gospel that has been going out in these United States and throughout the British Empire and throughout the Christian, so-called, world – is that kind of a message.

That isn't what these disciples went out preaching, that were instructed by Jesus and I have just been reading the instruction He gave them. They went out and preached that men should repent. Now to repent, my friends, is to acknowledge you have been wrong. To repent is to turn around and go the other way. What have they been doing wrong? What did He mean repent? You have to repent of something. What do you repent of? Sin, and what is sin? The transgression of God's law. The violation of the rule, the reign of God. God is the supreme ruler, but God made us a free moral agent, because God is working out a purpose here below. And that purpose is to recreate - to reproduce Himself and to do it, my friends, and to make us the character of God. We had to be made independent, free moral agencies. Each human being an independent entity with a mind of his own. And that means that even God cannot and will not control your mind.

When you have a baby – I've mentioned it so many times - that little baby has a mind of his own. And as he begins to develop and to grow you begin to find that it isn't your mind and you can't control his mind. He has one of his own. And he has a will of his own, as you parents have always found out as your children grew up.

Now God ordained it that way, God planned it that way. He could have made it another way, but it wasn't according to His purpose – it wouldn't have worked out His purpose. And in His plan to

work out His purpose, He made us each to have a mind of our own. GOD WILL NOT, as we say, cram His religion down your throat. God lets you make your own decision.

The devil **cannot** put his ideas into your mind, unless you are willing. The devil **cannot** exert any force or compulsion on you whatsoever. You are a free moral agent. But the devil does have a certain power of persuasion, of influence, of deception, because human beings have been willing to submit to it. And human beings have not been willing to submit to God and the rule of God. God's law has been here – God is the supreme ruler and being the supreme ruler, God has decreed that the devil may tempt us up to a certain point, and that man is a free moral agent and to decide for himself which course he shall follow. God, the ruler, has decreed that and you have that privilege, because God has so decided it. And He could have decided it otherwise. It isn't because God isn't able to stop it. It is because God has decided it must be that way to fulfill and to accomplish His purpose.

Voluntary Submission

Now mankind has had a spirit and an idea of mind and attitude that is enmity against God - it is antagonistic to God - it is not subject to the law of God; the natural carnal mind of man neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7 paraphrased). And so man has rejected the law and the rule of God.

Now when these disciples went out and taught that men should repent, they meant to repent of their transgressions against God; of their rebellion against the rule of God. Because, my friends, if we are going to submit to the rule of God, we do it voluntarily. If God is to rule your heart, your mind, your life, your every day actions, your living, God must do it with your consent and because you make that decision. **AND THAT IS THE FIRST DECISION THAT YOU MUST MAKE TO BE SAVED.** I tell you, my friends, the blood of Jesus Christ can have no effect whatsoever on you, until you, of your own accord, with your own mind have come to repent. And have decided that you will acknowledge you have been wrong and surrender to God to let Him rule your life, your mind, your heart, your every action, and thought.

You see, on the day of Pentecost when men came and said what shall we do? They were stricken in their hearts. They had heard the preaching of Peter. They said, "What shall we do?" Yes, they were really hit right down deep in the heart, they were afraid, they were frightened. "WHAT IS THE WAY OF SALVATION?" they cried out to Peter. He didn't say, well you haven't anything to do but just appropriate Christ, accept Him and receive Him and go on your way rejoicing – you are already saved.

Peter said, "Repent [REPENT SURRENDER TO THE RULE OF GOD. That's what that means. REPENT], and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38)

Now you know you cannot properly be baptized until you believe with all your heart, because when Philip had been sent by the Holy Spirit to the eunuch "...and the eunuch said here is water, what hinders me to be baptized? Philip said, well if you believe with all your heart and your mind you may." (Acts 8:36 paraphrased). Now he had already repented, so Philip taught him that he must believe.

But the trouble with most of us, is we haven't repented. We are still carnal minded, we are still rebellious, stiff necked people, with a stubborn jack-ass will of some kind – THAT WON'T YIELD TO THE LAW OF GOD OR TO THE WAY OF GOD. We want our own way!

Why, my friends, Isaiah one of the prophets on whom the New Testament Church is founded and built; because in Ephesians you'll find that the church is built on the foundation of the prophets, as well as the apostles and Jesus Christ, Himself the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). And so Isaiah is one of those prophets and the church is founded on the prophets and you know what Isaiah said – he told you the way to salvation.

And Paul had written to Timothy, one of the young ministers, he set out teaching the New Testament gospel to the Gentiles. "...from a child thou hast know the Holy Scriptures that are able to make thee wise unto salvation [and Paul, the apostle, wrote that] ...all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable to correct us, reprove us and instruct us in righteousness." (II Timothy 3:15-16 paraphrased)

And the early apostles went out preaching the gospel by the Old Testament Scriptures, because at first that is all they had. Now here it is – here's the way of salvation as Isaiah gave it:

"Seek ye the [Eternal].... You have to seek God if you are ever going to find Him. It isn't just so easy that all you do is go through a little tawdry sentimental hogwash of some kind in a church service. Work up your emotions, shed a few crocodile tears, wake up tomorrow morning wonder what you did it for and what it was all about. Give the preacher your hand and the Lord your heart – so called.

I've asked a lot of people like that what did you do when you gave the Lord your heart? And they look blank and they say, well I don't know. Didn't mean anything – it was just catch phrase that the preacher used to get them up there. Oh, my friends, it goes so much deeper than that. Isaiah said:

"Seek ye the [Eternal] [you have to seek Him with all your heart. You'll have to hunger and thirst for God's way, if you are ever going to get it] ...seek ye the [Eternal] while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:" (Isaiah 55:6)

Now how you going to find Him? "Let the wicked forsake his way..." (Isaiah 55:7). That is you forsake your way. You have been living the wrong way, that's what is wrong with you. You'll have to forsake your own rotten way that has seemed so good to you. The way you have loved, the way that you cherished, the way you thought was right.

"There is a way that seemeth right to a man [and the Bible says] the end there of are the ways of death. (Proverbs 16:25)

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the [Eternal], and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:7)

When? If you forsake your way – you are not a sinner any longer when you do that. A sinner is a transgressor. A sinner is one who is transgressing the law of God, the **government, the rule, the**

reign of God . But when you are not transgressing it any more, you are not a sinner any longer. Of course, you've got your past sins hanging over you. You have got to get rid of them.

God Looks At The Heart

Now, God will not hear sinners. A sinner is cut off from God, but you cease to be a sinner when you repent. Now a repentant man is no longer a sinner – I wonder if you can get that - I wonder if you can comprehend and understand it. A MAN WHO IS A REPENTANT MAN IS NO LONGER A SINNER, IF HE REPENTS. As long as he doesn't break the law and is not antagonistic to God and isn't disobedient any longer. Of course he won't be able to stay obedient without the spirit of God, mind you.

But nevertheless, God looks on the heart and in his heart he is not a sinner, when he has repented. But he isn't in, what people would call a saved condition by any manner of means yet. He still has to be justified. **He still has to be reconciled to God. He has to be justified**, because his past sins are still hanging there and separating him from God and separating him from the Holy Spirit. The sins he committed yesterday, day before, last year, or years before that; they are all hanging over him. The law has come over him and he is under the law, because he broke it and the penalty is death. And the law claims his life and is going to take it in death.

But, Jesus Christ took his sins on Him and paid the penalty in his stead and will give you, not a piece of paper, but He will give you absolute forgiveness marked – paid in full. He paid it by giving His life instead of yours. By His blood and His blood was His life and the life He gave was a life that was actuated by blood in His veins - the same kind of life that an animal has. But He had a different kind of a mind than an animal has, because He was in the image of God and so are you. We are not really of the animal family and some day we are going to learn that, that we have been mistaken – that we are actually supposed to be of the God family, but God made us of matter instead of spirit that we can be transformed into spirit. Oh when will we wake up to the truth of God that this world has lost long ago?

Now our thoughts are wrong. We've been going the way that seemed right to us, and it is the way of mankind and the way of the carnal humanity that is enmity against God and antagonistic to God. Now God continues here through Isaiah 55:8:

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the [Eternal]. (Isaiah 55:8)

And we have got to find God's ways and so the way to find Jesus Christ, the way to find God is "Seek ye the [Eternal] while he may be found, call upon him while he is near..." (Isaiah 55:6). And he is near to you this minute. But I don't say just give your heart to Him, alone. Oh I say give your heart to Him, if you know what it means. But, not very many people know that. Here's what it means:

"Let the wicked [and you are wicked, if you haven't done this...let the wicked] forsake **his** way..." (Isaiah 55:7) Your **own way**, your own stubborn will, the way that has seemed right to you, the way that has been so glittering so glamoring to you that you have thought it was very fine, but it has always ended up in headaches and all kinds of retribution that hasn't been very pleasant. You never could quite understand why.

"Let the wicked forsake **his** way, and the unrighteous man his [own] thoughts: and let him return unto the [Eternal] ...For [God says] ...my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts [says God]." (Isaiah 55:7-9)

How To Receive The Holy Spirit

Well there it is. Now these disciples went out teaching that men should repent and that means surrender to the law of God. Then you have to do something more; you have to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and then there is one other thing that must take place, but God does that. He has promised He will. That is to give you His Holy Spirit and impregnate you with the Spirit of God. **PUT WITHIN YOU THE LOVE OF GOD SHED ABROAD IN YOUR HEART** and it is like a current of electricity, and only it doesn't have wires. Electricity comes into a light bulb, for instance, or a machine or a motor on one wire; it goes out on the other. There is a return circuit – it takes two wires. And it is moving, it is flowing, it isn't static, it isn't standing still. And that is the way it is with the Spirit of God.

If God gives you His Holy Spirit, it doesn't stay stagnant within you **IT MUST MOVE, IT MUST FLOW OUT FROM YOU LIKE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER**. In obedience, in reverence, in worship and awe, respect, and obedience to God. That's the way you love God. And then in love, in the way of service, charity, tolerance of your neighbor. But not in trusting your neighbor, or relying on him. The Bible teaches you to trust God. Believe God, have your faith in God, but have charity and love for your neighbor.

Well these disciples went out and they preached that men should repent. Jesus said, man shall live by every word of God (Luke 4:4). If we have not transgressed the law of God, if we were all living according to every word of the Bible, my friends, and had done it from birth, we wouldn't need a Savior. You need a Savior only because of your transgressions.

"And they cast out many demons and they anointed with oil, they anointed with oil, many that were sick and healed them." (Mark 13 paraphrased)

Now continuing, next verse 14: "And king Herod, heard thereof (for his name was spread abroad:) [had become known...Jesus name had become very well known] and he said, [That] John the Baptist is (was) risen from the dead..." (Mark 6:14). Now he heard about Jesus and he thought that it was John the Baptist resurrected or risen from the dead

Now verse 17:

"For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife: for he [Herod], had married her [his brother's wife] For John said unto Herod, it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." (Mark 6:17-18)

Now there was a case of divorce and remarriage. Yes she had divorced – Herodias had divorced Philip, who had been her husband; who was the brother of Herod and now wanted to marry Herod, probably because Herod was the king. It would give her a little higher position. She was probably ambitious. And she was probably attractive and the king wanted her, because she was attractive to him.

But John said, that if you marry a woman that is divorced, you are committing adultery and living in adultery and it is not lawful in God's sight. And Herodias set herself against him; against John. Now she was pretty sore at John for that, she wanted this king.

She set herself against John and desired to kill him. She had murder in her heart, she wanted to add murder now to the adultery that she was living in. And she could not, "For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man and holy and kept him safe." (Mark 6:19-20 paraphrased)

Well Herod on his birthday had made a supper for his lords, I'll have to hurry now. And the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced before Herod; it pleased Herod so much that he said, "...Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt and I will give it to thee. And he swear unto her whatsoever she would ask he would give. And she said unto her mother, What shall I ask? and the mother said, The head of John the Baptist." (Mark 6:21-24 paraphrased)

Here was her chance to get him and kill him. Well "...the king was exceeding sorry for that, but for the sake of his oath and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her and straight way the king sent forth a soldier of his guard and commanded to bring John the Baptist's head. And he went and beheaded him in the prison." (Mark 6:26-27 paraphrased)

Jesus Christ said of all the men born of women, there has never been a greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). Because he preached the truth of God, **THIS WOMAN WAS SO ANGRY SHE WANTED TO KILL HIM. Because I preach that same truth today, my friends, the same gospel that Jesus did,** I hope you don't want kill me now; because I told you. But I've told you the truth, even as John the Baptist did.

Well now, my friends, let me tell you about the most important thing in your life right now. If you want to really understand your Bible, if you're willing to set yourself to devote a half hour, or more every day to Bible study, you may enroll now for the 'Ambassador College Correspondence Course.' We charge no tuition.

Now I have a book we've announced many times and maybe you haven't written in for it yet. 'The Wonderful World Tomorrow, What it Will Be Like.' You need this book; it pulls back the curtain in front of you of time and looks into the world as it will be tomorrow. And shows you exactly what it is going to be like. We are going to come out of all of this thing and we are going to have peace on this earth at last. We are. But, something is going to have to be done with human nature before that happens. And it is going to be a very happy world. You should live right on into it, if you live out your natural life. You really should – there is no charge whatsoever. Write in for this booklet, 'The Wonderful World Tomorrow.' Absolutely free and you will certainly be glad that you did. And so until next [time], this is Herbert W Armstrong saying "Goodbye friends"