

IS PREACHING THE GOSPEL DONE? NO LONGER A CONCERN FOR US? NOT OUR JOB?

Has the *church* finished preaching the gospel? Has our part all been done? Can we leave the job to “others” to whom it has been given at the end? Some say so. But what did *Jesus Christ* say? What is *God’s* will? We need to find out FOR SURE! And we need to find out *directly* from the word of God.

Begin at the beginning

Lets start at the commencement of the church. What was “the job” the church was given in the beginning, by it's head, Jesus Christ?

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Do we only need to do half of it in this time? Just “teaching them,” feeding the flock? Some say so. Where do they get *that*? We need answers. You personally need to know the answers! Christ’s words don’t have a time limit, they are for us today. The disciples were not unfamiliar with the job, they had watched Jesus do it for three and a half years. They knew what he meant. They had talked with him, seen what motivated him, and how he went about it, seen the miracles. We have not. So we need to study and find out what and how we are to do things. God’s word is provided for us, for that purpose. Here is more relayed by another.

Luke 24:47-48 "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. "And you are witnesses of these things.

This fills in a little more of exactly what is to be preached. Notice, it does NOT say “until just before it ends,” or “until” *any* certain time. Let’s get a little more from yet another record.

Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Again, there is no *time limit* given. The only limit that could even be remotely applied is that of when “every creature” [created human being] has heard the gospel! The Greek word for “every” means just that. (Greek = pas: all, any, every, the whole.) Which then begs the question, have “all” heard it? Notice also the sequence, preach *first* the gospel, repentance, baptism. *Then* you teach (feed) them.

But does this apply in the "end time?"

Or does this only mean “until *near* the end,” after that we don’t have to any more? We are specifically told we will *not know* when the end time is!

Acts 1:6-8 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Again, no time limit. And it is inclusive of the entire earth! So, no limit in time or geography. Anywhere there are people, in any time, the gospel is to be preached to them.

Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Who will preach?

Some would argue that it says it “*will* be preached,” not that “*we* will preach.” So why wouldn’t you *want* to preach the good news (the gospel)? The answers are given in previous verses!

Verse 11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

You might be deceived into not preaching good news to people, SAVING them from the awful time coming. Or,

Verse 12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

You don’t LOVE them enough to do whatever you could to keep them from a horrible death that the majority will experience! What a terrible attitude to have! God’s own people! Yes, that’s what it says, their love grown cold, no matter how much love they *claim* to show. Where do YOU fit? Think deeply on this topic. If YOU are unwilling to do the job, are self satisfied where you are, letting “others” carry the load, then YOU will suffer the fate of those you are unwilling to help to avoid. YES!

Revelation 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Revelation 7:14 "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Isn’t it much better to hear and DO as we are admonished? Now? Better for everyone?

Romans 10:18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."

People need to HEAR! If *you* are not preaching, or supporting *a work* that actually does preach the unvarnished truth, how can they hear? And not just a work audaciously *claiming* they are doing a "great work." While in

actuality only producing a slick program or magazine designed to *attract* people in order to "grow the church."

Verses 13-15 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

But nobody will listen

Of all those who hear, some (very) few will be called. Notice it is in present tense, "How beautiful *are* the feet of those who preach the gospel", not "*Were* the feet..." It is an on-going process, uninterrupted until Christ himself returns. Yet, in spite of what God says, most don't, or won't do it, or at best are very reluctant. But people HAVE to hear the word!

What about the two witnesses?

Will the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:3) of the end time be *required* to do it? Because the majority of God's people *refuse* to do the job they have been given? Paul, speaking to the Romans, 30 years after Christ gave the command to do so, it had not been done yet after all that time. Many who originally heard him say those words had died. In the 20th century a great work was done, many did hear. But most of the people who heard, are now GONE! An entire new generation that has *not* heard is here.

In the time of Christ the entire world's population has been estimated to be around 300 million, fewer than live in the United States alone today! Let's say all of those people heard the gospel then, does that mean we are done? Don't need to preach the gospel any longer? Of course not. All nations alive *now* have NOT heard the gospel. If none of them hear, are called, and repent to become disciples who are we supposed to teach?

Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

“as a witness” means "evidence." That’s why we are to do it, not driven by the purpose of trying to “grow the church,” or for some other ulterior motive. People living at the end must be without excuse, whether called or not. AND given the opportunity to escape the horror to come! And we don’t want to give them that opportunity? God doesn’t punish people without telling the *reason* for the punishment, it is only fair. In the Worldwide Church of God’s heyday, there were 8 million magazines sent out *each month*. The telecast reached millions *each week*. Herbert W. Armstrong preached during the years 1927 to 1986. He finished *his* work, but he certainly didn’t finish *the* work, the job Christ gave us to be doing! Yet, there are those who say so. Mr. Armstrong himself said, “the greatest work lies ahead!” But not by you? Not by “your” group? Jesus Christ finished HIS work too. Did that mean the rest of us can kick back? It sure is a lot easier!

John 17:4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

If Christ’s death didn’t finish the work, then Herbert Armstrong’s certainly did not! It’s been more than 34 years now. Since he died several billion people have been born! That’s roughly 1/30th of all who have ever lived. They don’t matter? They don’t need to hear the gospel? We don’t need to preach it to them? Aren’t you glad someone did to *you*? It’s part of the “give” way of life, giving and sharing something that is very valuable.

Do we have to do it *now*?

Now, think of how many people have been born since the death of Christ. They never heard Jesus Christ, the apostles, or Herbert Armstrong preach, probably never even heard of Herbert Armstrong! You don’t care about them? There is a time, when conditions in the church will be SO BAD, and conditions in the world SO BAD, that just to *get the job done* there will have to be high profile preachers, the two witnesses. Everyone else is either hunkered down in a place of safety, or undergoing severe tribulation. But the two witnesses are not here yet. Even if they were, does that negate the job of others who could be doing something? I don’t think so! We need to try any and all means to accomplish the job God set before us, as long as we

personally are able. We can't just huddle, and look inwardly, thinking only of ourselves, "feeding" ourselves and our own. It's still light out, when we CAN work.

Matthew 9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

What if God called you to labor in His harvest, but you say, No, the harvest isn't yet. We don't have to do it. Isn't that practically the same as saying, "My lord delayeth his coming;"?

Mr. Armstrong said the work is over!

Some pick and chose scriptures, and statements by Mr. Armstrong to justify their leading down a certain path, to certain conclusions. Claiming that the work is over. We need to think about what is being told us. There are some very clever arguments out there, that can twist what was said to make it say something else. We need to be getting the *whole* truth from God's word.

Mark 13:8-19 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows. "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. "Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. "But

woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! "And pray that your flight may not be in winter. "For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

We *think* we are close to the end. But what if we are not? The church has always thought they were close to the end. But they didn't use that as an excuse for inaction, to excuse themselves from obeying Christ because "somebody else" will do that in the time of the end. Honestly, these end time events are barely starting to happen! Are we "hated by *all* for My name's sake." Hardly. But the gospel must go out to all nations, because "the end is not yet." It's *because* we preach that message, the coming of the kingdom of God, and the need for repentance that we will be hated! If we *aren't doing that*, well...

Luke 6:26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

The truth stings people! Look at history. The people of God have been sharing the gospel, and the *unpleasant* need to repent for 2000 years! Sometimes it has been a big affair, reaching many, sometimes not. The church is likened to the moon (Revelation 12:1), reflecting the glory of the sun, but it waxes and wanes. Sometimes it's big and bright (a super moon,) sometimes you can barely even see it (new moon) but it's still there. The work of God, doing the job Christ gave us, will be done. But we should want to be a part of that wonderful job, the one that *really matters* here on earth. Instead of turning inwardly on ourselves, look outward, to all the people we could help. What's the purpose of feeding a flock, if the flock isn't going to *do* something, have a purpose for being?

Look at the example of Herbert Armstrong and his wife. When they started out it was just the two of them, and a few poor families. It would have been easy to say, "Well, I can't do it. I'll just wait for the two witnesses to be raised up." No, they did what they *could*, and God (eventually) blessed it to become an influence on the world! It waxed great. But now it appears to be waning. We are still *way ahead* of where the Armstrong's started! Did the Worldwide Church of God need to collapse? Probably. It was headed in the wrong direction. Evil men had wormed their way into high position, such

that God could no longer bless it, or even use it. It had become a worldly institution. The work had to be transferred elsewhere *among his people*. Just because the work in one place was supplanted, doesn't mean you quit, and give up.

Ephesians 4:11-13 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

But God hasn't given us anyone to do it

There are certain roles (not "ranks" or "offices") for certain of the brethren, to build up the body of Christ. We *are* to do this, but it doesn't cancel half of the great commission, make it null and void as far as we are concerned. In fact, two of these roles are *specifically* for preaching the gospel to the world: Apostles, and evangelists. And they are roles *not limited* to those ordained with the title, or "rank," per se. (Acts 21:8) To make excuse by saying, "We don't have any evangelists." is to miss the point. Stephen was "only" a deacon.

Don't YOU be *deceived*

Verse 14 "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Matthew 24:46 "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Don't let anyone convince you NOT to do what Jesus Christ clearly said TO DO! Will you be found "so doing?" Following the command of our Lord and savior? Or, not? Following somebody else's idea of what we should do or not do? Here is another parable, (among several,) to drive the point home!

Luke 19:11-23 Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

Notice the time context, why this parable was even given! "...because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately." *Because they thought they were in the end time!* Christ clearly showed them no matter what you think the time is, *you do the work he has given you to do*. Did the unproductive servant think time was too short to do anything? Afraid his master would return quickly? That he didn't have enough resources? Something to think about. The fearful will not even *be in* the kingdom!

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (KJV)

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

It says “always.” Not, “if you are a part of a big organization.” Or, “if we have vast resources.” Or, “just when you have strong leadership.” Or only “if you feel like it!” ALWAYS! If we do the work, do the job given us, growing spiritually as we do, then we will receive a reward! Do you have enough faith to just *do* as he says? Just as the patriarchs did?

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Do you want to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” or, “You wicked and lazy servant”? It all depends on what (if?) we are *doing* when he returns, at the end of this age, or our personal end. Are we lazy, and just don't *want* to do the work? Or make excuses? Or claim to be "doing as much as anyone else?" Do you think that will be credible with God? Think about it.

Next time someone tells you “it's not our job.” You tell them, “No, we have specifically been told to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and that's what *I* am going to *do*. And I am going to *find* others who *want to* also!” Let's be about our Fathers business.