



Awakenings

"Only by love is love awakened."

::::: The Official Newsletter of Renewed Heart Ministries :::::: Volume 7 :::::: Issue 5 ::::::



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Prophecy #3: Two Headlines and a Fig Tree

by Herb Montgomery

Quotable Quotes

“Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”

That remains one of the most powerful and revolutionary sentences we can ever say.”

—N.T. Wright

This article is Part 3 of an 8 part eSight series on our website entitled *The Final Eight Prophecies of Jesus*. To read the entire series please go to renewedheartministries.com/Esights/09-09-2013.

At that very time, there were some present that told him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, *“Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”* Then he told this parable: *“A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”*—Jesus (Luke 13:1-9).

This week we are looking at the third of Jesus’ eight final prophecies concerning Jerusalem.

What I want you to notice right from the beginning is the phrase “At that very time.” As we discussed last week, Jesus had just plead with his audience to work in the specific direction of reconciling, of their own initiative, with their much-hated adversaries. Specifically, he wanted them to reconcile with Pilate, who represented the Roman Empire to them. What we are looking at this week is Jesus’ audience’s response: “Don’t you realize what Pilate did to the Galileans?” Enemy love is never initially responded to positively, but it is the way of life, whether it appears to be so from the outset or not.

Remember, the background of Pilate’s slaying of the Galileans is as follows. Rome very carefully watched the congregating of any of its subservient people, but especially those with subversive tendencies leaning toward revolt. The Galilean Jews certainly fit this description. Those who hoped for militaristic violence as the means whereby the Jewish people would throw off the yoke of Roman oppression also held to the belief that moral uprightness, obedience to the Torah, would ensure God’s blessing of their violent revolt, and also their success. This is the paradigm of the Maccabean revolts saga. It was the paradigm of those who still subscribed to this methodology in Jesus’ day as well. If there were an engagement between Rome and insurgent Jews and Rome won, the reason is because there must have been some “sin in the camp,” so to speak. It had nothing to do with using methods God could not bless, but rather the level of religious obedience and purity in regards to the Torah by those who were fighting. The details of the story are not clear, but it appears that the Galileans were offering sacrifices in preparation for their engagement with the Romans. According to scholars, Roman soldiers had surprised some Galilean insurgents while the rebels were engaged in these sacrifices. The soldiers slaughtered the men right then and there. The excuse offered by the religio-political part of the Pharisees would have been, based on Deuteronomy 28, “If we obey God will bless us, if we disobey God will curse our efforts.” When there was failure in revolting against Roman oppression the reason was because those revolting must have been “sinners.” Thus Jesus’ response:

“Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?”

Jesus goes on to say:

“No, I tell you; but unless you repent [turn from your violence; your eye-for-an-eye retaliation against the enemy is instead love and forgiveness; this turning-the-other-

cont’d on page 3

Testimony

Just wanted to say again, many thanks for your presentations at Redwood Camp Meeting. You were able to share Jesus so effectually that the word reached into the soul of my 17 year old nephew, who has been very distant from spiritual or church related things for a number of years now. Praise the Lord! We are also looking at working together with RHM on doing a series for many of the college students attending Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods here locally. – MJ

Prophecy #3... cont'd from page 2

cheek way of life I am presenting you with], you will all perish as they did.”

Then Jesus responds to these objectors with a second occurrence everyone was talking about during that time:

“Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?”

According to some sources, this was one of the weaponry towers used by Rome for weapons storage. A group of zealot insurgents had tried to dig a tunnel under the tower, with hopes of seizing the weapons stored there and using those weapons themselves in a violent revolt against the Romans. But the tower’s foundation was already in a state of decay, and the tunnel further compromised the integrity of the foundation, leading to the entire construction suddenly collapsing, claiming the lives of several Galileans.

Again, the logic was not that the approach itself was flawed, but rather how strictly those seeking to carry out the given approach were adhering to the Torah.

Jesus goes on:

“No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

The problem was not how strictly they were adhering to the Torah or not. The problem was the concept of eye for an eye, the violent methods they were endeavoring to use themselves. Jesus warns, looking all the way down to 70 A.D., that if they did not repent, did not turn away from their eye-for-an-eye retributive violence, it would continue to escalate until they were destroyed.

Remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:13-14:

*“Enter through the narrow gate [of forgiveness, enemy love, nonviolent noncooperation]; for the gate [of eye for an eye, violence, and retaliation] is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that **leads to life**, and there are few who find it.”* (Emphasis added.)

Jesus then finishes this third prophecy with a story. Please read this story prayerfully, fully remembering the social and political context within Jesus himself told this story:

“Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Jerusalem was set on a collision course with annihilation if something didn’t change. What was the fruit the gardener looked for that would ensure that the tree remained?

I point you to the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not retaliate against an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies [i.e., the Romans] and pray for those who persecute you [i.e., the Romans], so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil [i.e., the Romans] and on the good [i.e., Torah observing Jews], and sends rain on the righteous [i.e., Torah observing Jews] and on the unrighteous [i.e., the Romans]. For if

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Prophecy #3... cont'd from page 3

you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:38-48)

What does this mean for us today? A lot!

Last December, the Washington Times published research that 84 percent of the world’s population practices some sort of faith; a third of those are Christian. That’s 2.2 billion Christians (32 percent of the world’s population). There are 1.6 billion Muslims (23 percent), 1 billion Hindus (15 percent), 500 million Buddhists (7 percent), and 400 million people (6 percent) practicing various folk or traditional religions, including African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, American Indian religions, and Australian aboriginal religions. There are 14 million Jews, and an estimated 58 million people—slightly less than 1 percent of the global population—belong to other religions including the Baha’i faith, Jainism, Sikhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Tenrikyo, Wicca and Zoroastrianism, and others.

Notice that those claiming to have some connection to the Jesus revolution of the first century (Christianity) are the largest of these groups. Imagine the world we could create if Christians simply insisted on following the clear call to non-violence represented by Jesus’ teachings, which were rooted in His picture of God as well as the way He looked at all of us. Again, I’ll ask the question I asked last week: What would happen if Christians started believing in Jesus once again?

HeartGroup Application

1. This week, spend a few days praying through this passage one phrase at a time. I want you to pause at each phrase to contemplatively talk to Jesus about each one. I also want you to be listening for what Jesus does in each of your hearts. What is the passage?

*“Our Father in heaven,
May your name be hallowed.
Your Kingdom come.*

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

*May we be released of the debts we owe others, as we
release those who are indebted to us. cont’d. >*

MINISTRY UPDATE

Adults 2 - Redwood Camp Meeting, Northern CA

This past July, I was privileged once again to be the evening speaker for a special group at Redwood Camp Meeting. This is a group that meets under a large circus tent each summer for ten whole days to worship, learn and grow in what it means to follow Jesus.

The series this summer was titled, “Putting Jesus Back into the Gospel.” Just a few of the topics covered were: The Gospel as Jesus defined it; the ethics of enemy love and forgiveness; Jesus and kingdom-of-this-world patriotism; Jesus’ teachings on nonviolent noncooperation as a means of changing the world; the nature of the New Testament ekklesia; concern for the poor in an age of accumulation; and more! (You can get this series by contacting the Northern California Conference in Pleasant Hill, CA.).

All of these topics, when rightly understood, gives our picture of God a healthy dose of what I like to think of as “Jesus steroids,” transforming our understanding of the Father into a God who looks like Jesus (see John 14.9). If we will allow them to, the ethics Jesus taught will change our impressions of God forever.

Remember, the picture we get of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is of an itinerate teacher traveling the countryside and inviting all to a radical new way of doing life here on earth that He called “the Kingdom.” This new

way of doing life was rooted and grounded in a radically new way of seeing God, seeing ourselves, and seeing everyone else around us. It was revolutionary to those who caught it, and it still remains so to us today.

For all those who attended: Keep searching, digging, and even at times, struggling to keep Jesus at the center. It is so easy to allow other things than Jesus to define us, to give us meaning, to give us a sense of worth and security. Jesus asks for that place alone, though, in our lives. Stay centered in Him, and go enlarge the Kingdom.

And for all those who were praying for this event too, thank you so much. I received one powerful testimony after another of how Jesus and His Kingdom were changing people’s lives. One person shared that it was the best camp meeting they had attended in their life. One of the most memorable testimonies was from a Vietnam veteran who, though it was a genuine struggle, came to terms with the peace teachings of Jesus. In the end, my new friend saw Jesus was really showing us a better way, a force more powerful, and he was looking forward to experimenting and growing in his newly gained insights. Again, thank you. We could not do what we do at RHM without your support.

For Christ and His Kingdom!

And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.”

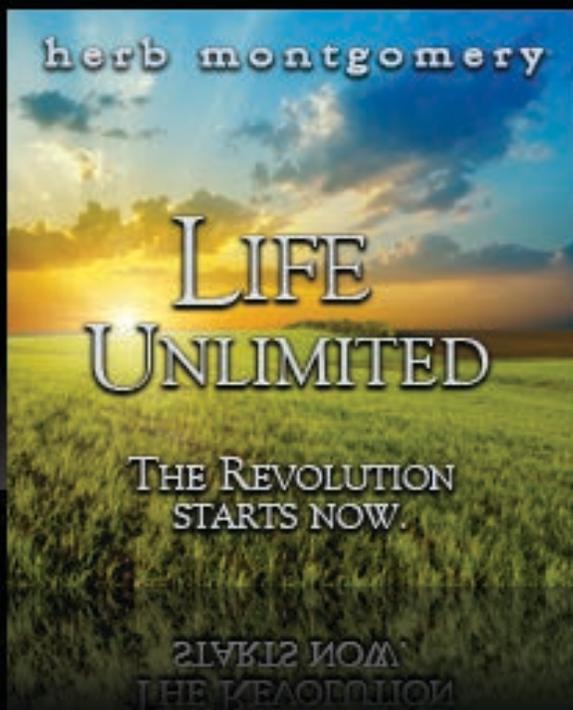
2. Write down any insights, questions, or inspiring gems each day that Jesus gives you.
3. Be prepared to share these with your HeartGroup this upcoming week.

Wherever this finds you, keep living in the enemy-embracing, self-sacrificial, other-centered, nonviolent love we see in Jesus, until the only world that remains is a world where love reigns.

I'll close this week with the words of N.T. Wright:

“‘Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.’ That remains one of the most powerful and revolutionary sentences we can ever say.”

I love you guys. ■



MINISTRY UPDATE

The New Life Unlimited - The Revolution Starts Now, Candler, NC

Out of all the series that we have at Renewed Heart Ministries, this one, by far, has undergone the most changes in its history. Typically, when a series has become outdated, we have just stopped carrying it. But for reasons I don't know, this one simply keeps hanging on, continuing to change with each advancement.

One thing that I find strangely absent from the Jesus story of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is a preoccupation with Jesus or His followers with going to heaven when they die—or, really, with going to heaven period. It seems the emphasis and focus is on bringing change to earth here, now, today. Today, we find a “gospel” being preached by those who carry the label of “Christian,” which has very precious little in common with the gospel we see Jesus and His Apostles preaching. Today, the gospel has fallen prey to private applications that tend to boil down to simply being premiums paid on a cosmic postmortem insurance policy. Jesus, to the contrary, was much more focused on now rather than later, changing the world through a changed people rather than simply passing out tickets to folks for some “otherworldly” bliss. He talked about the Kingdom of heaven having come to people on earth, rather than getting those on earth to make it to

heaven. In short, He gave us a radically different way of picturing God, ourselves, and everyone else around us, and then called us to a radically new way of doing life, rooted in and grounded in those new pictures. He called this new way of doing life, “Life Unlimited.” (See John 10:10.)

Jesus came, not to rock the world to sleep, but to start a revolution. We were, and to a large degree still are, on a collision course with an intrinsically violent end. We don't see where our trajectory is organically and inherently taking us. Jesus came to show us a new way, a better way: the way of life:

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Enter through this narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 7:12,13)

I'm so excited to offer this new series to you, both as audio and as video on our website. The audio is there now; as for the video, we hope to finish the editing soon and we will keep you posted as it is posted on the website.

The audio is there now. As for the video, we hope to finish the editing soon and we will keep you updated as it is posted on our website.

Enjoy!

Testimony from a listener in New Zealand

Hello the good Herb (what can I say, I've been listening to your presentations). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to write a short testimony. I recently was baptized and never really gave much thought to my conversion. It seemed so natural and right. I apologize for it not being one filled with exciting events. (That is what happens when you live in New Zealand, life seems to be too easy, but that is a sermon in its own right.) But hopefully it will be a blessing to those who read RHM's newsletter.

I never wanted to be a Christian. I never wanted to follow Jesus Christ. For years I watched as he was parodied as big JC, a man for entertainment, not a way of life. Life was very simple for me before I met Jesus. I lived by an intuitive mantra 'be happy now without reason' which has since transformed to 'be happy now, because the God of this world loves your guts.' I was travelling the world, just me, myself and my trusty spork. Everyday was different; I experienced many different ways and wonders of the world and believed in myself as the source of all life. If I was down, I would pick me back up. If others had a problem, I did not care; I was the source of all life. I was never nasty to people, but I never consider other peoples feelings unless my needs were met first. The morning after depressions should have been a precursor to a miserable life,

but this was my life, I knew no different. It was when I met my current partner on top of a mountain in the lower stoops of New Zealand's back country on the South Island, that my journey from self righteousness and self preservation began.

She came from a strong Christian background, and I had no problems with that. I instantly saw a pure soul with radiant love brimming from her fluttery eyelids. I found that her family was also welcoming and loving (of course not perfect) but opened my eyes to another way of life. I spent all my life looking after myself. My family was distant. I lost my Mother at a young age. I had to make things happen for me. All of a sudden, I had a new family that was driven by the love for this Jesus and I wanted to have a taste, though, like many, I resisted at first. I did not want to allow any fundamental change to my perception of the game of life. I am happy to note that my life has become more loving thanks to Jesus and his amazing show of love, grace, and mercy. I now care more about other people and their well being than my own. I would like to submit that the thought of being in this mindset was alien to me, it only ever happened to other people. I praise God that it has happened now to me too.

You keep doing what you do best, and that is being Herb Montgomery, you my friend are a blessing.

- Chris Chick, New Zealand

Schedule

OCTOBER 11-12, 2013

AWC
Phoenix, AZ
480.878.8565

OCTOBER 25-27, 2013

Pacific Union College
Angwin, CA
707.888.2274

NOVEMBER 8-9, 2013

Richland Adventist Church
Richland, WA
509.946.8807

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2013

North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND
701.391.9131

JANUARY 9-12, 2014

North Cascade Adventist Church
Burlington, WA
360.757.7577

Quotable Quotes

“War-makers love to talk of sacrifice, peacemakers love to practice mercy. ‘Go & learn what this means, I desire mercy not sacrifice.’-Jesus...The politics of nonviolent Calvary-love don't wait to be voted in, they wait for us to live them out.”

-Jarrod McKenna;
Facebook Page Post



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Well, I could have cast the first stone!

MINISTRY UPDATE

The Jesus Dialogue, LaGrande, OR

This week, I had the immense pleasure to be part of a HeartGroup's plan in LaGrande, Oregon, to grow into more HeartGroups within their community. When I arrived, what I found was a group of passionate Jesus followers, excited to put on display the beauty of God's self-sacrificing, enemy embracing, other-centered, and nonviolent love. Their passion was to enlarge Jesus' Kingdom on earth in the here and now, not through gaining power over one's community, but by humbly and lovingly serving one's community. This group had invited me to hold a one-week series of presentations on the picture of God we see in Jesus, Christ's Kingdom, and the hope for healing that Jesus calls us to in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Since HeartGroups meet predominantly in people's homes or other informal settings, they rented the community center in the town to host the presentations. Each night, I watched as folks that these people had known for years, but that they would never have guessed would come to an event like this, walked through the doors. Each night, I watched as we traversed through Matthew's, Mark's, Luke's, and John's versions of the Jesus story, discovering what Jesus called "the Kingdom." Together, each evening, we entered into what Jesus actually taught, what Jesus was passionate about (rooted, as it was, in his own culture), and what that might mean for us today.

What we discovered was that Jesus did not start a religion, but a movement. A revolution, if you will, with the goal of healing the world (John 3:17). He called this revolution "the Kingdom." The Kingdom was a radical

new way of living life in the here and now, based on an entirely new way of seeing God, ourselves, and others. Some of the things Jesus taught were enemy love, prior forgiveness, helping the poor, and embracing the religiously marginalized, and most of all, given the imminence of what was potentially coming in A.D. 70, he called for nonviolent noncooperation as a way to heal injustice and change the world.

Again, this is rooted in an entirely different way of seeing God, ourselves, and everyone around us, including our enemies..

Jesus' teachings hold great relevance to our world today, particularly given the problems of economic scarcity, global monopolies, violent wars, and downtrodden countries that are deeply in debt to powerful tyrants. This doesn't even begin to express how we witness these very same problems being played out on much smaller scales each day in our communities and even in our private lives. Jesus gave us a better way, a different way of seeing God, and a way to live that would set in motion a potentially contagious wave of healing, love, restoration, and renewal.

The original followers who belonged to this Jesus movement were people who believe in resurrection: the resurrection of Jesus', their own resurrection at some point in the future, and even the resurrection of the world itself. When all hope seemed lost, they believed that Jesus conquered death and came back from the grave. They went into the world, armed with the message of Christ's resurrection, hoping to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

What was the result of my week in LaGrande? I'm happy to say that through the power of the Spirit at least two new HeartGroups were started and perhaps one more. This means that there are at least three HeartGroups in this area dedicated to having Jesus as the central reference point for their faith, their lifestyle, the understanding of their vocation as "church", and how they should engage with the society around them, working toward healing and restoration in the lives of those they come in contact with.

I'm so excited today that I could pop!

For all those who have supported Renewed Heart Ministries, whether with prayers or financial contributions or both, thank you for your support. Together, in the light of God's love, we are changing lives, both in this time and for all eternity.

With all my heart, thank you!

Testimonies

Herb, I just wanted to communicate to you from my heart that you will never know how much I appreciate you allowing God to use you to show his love to the world. (Maybe God will tell you someday.) The holy Spirit must be working overtime with my daughters who will make every sacrifice to go hear you when you are in Arizona and seek out your resources on your website. We put a lot of miles on the car during Arizona Camp Meeting to work around my one daughter's work schedule. I loved your content at the Adults 2 Arizona Camp Meeting. Keep making us think and search as we strengthen

our relationships with God and each other. I know your travels put a strain on your family, so tell them thanks and spend quality time with them when you can. I love you! – *RW*

Even though I still have cancer, and we still go through hard times, we have been so blessed to have been able to have learned what our God is truly like through Herbs sermons, Camp Meetings, and podcasts. Without this new revelation of God's true character I am sure I would have given up long ago. I was really upset and downcast, very depressed about a week ago and I wrote to Herb. He wrote back and reminded me how special I was to God, that God was not doing this to me, but

the enemy. I knew that, but just to hear it from Herb, and the way he wrote with such compassion, broke my heart, but in a good way. I use the renewedheartministries.com website every week, I've listened to all the sermons sometimes 5-6 times, It takes a while to get all these things thought through and mused on. And yes even with this wonderful knowledge Satan can still get to me. But God's Love, modeled through Herb, and the website, and friends will overcome even the lowest Satan can push me. Thank you Herb and Crystal, for ALL that you do. Don't let Satan get at you either (I know he's trying)!! I know, and I believe God WILL continue to strengthen you. Thanks for the care – *RW*

Logo

We are looking at redoing our logo for RHM to make it more appealing to a broader audience that we are endeavoring to reach. If you have training in graphic design and would be willing to donate your time to helping us accomplish this, please email me directly at herb@renewedheartministries.com.



Mutual Aid Network

If you have training in developing websites and would be interested in donating your time to helping us put together a "Craigslist" type of website exclusively for those involved in our HeartGroups Network to see the tangible needs of those whom we might bring Jesus' Kingdom more fully into their lives, please email me directly at herb@renewedheartministries.com.

Featured Presentation

The picture we get of the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is of an itinerant teacher traveling the country side inviting all to join his revolution that he called, "The Kingdom." The Kingdom, according to Jesus was a radical new way of doing life here on earth that was rooted deeply in Jesus' new way of seeing God, ourselves, and everyone else around us. If you would like to experience more deeply the beauty of the way Jesus saw "the Father" as well as Jesus' radical Kingdom he came to establish here on earth, we invite you to listen to this months free featured presentation from the newly updated Life Unlimited series—*The Revolution* by Herb Montgomery.



Renewed Heart Ministries provides its resources free of charge. Jesus commanded, "Freely you have received, freely give." We at RHM take this command very seriously. Philosophically we have a hard time charging money to people for things God has given us for free.

In order to do this, we are entirely dependent on the contributions of our supporters. If you would like to make a one-time gift or offer monthly support, please send your contributions to the following address:

Renewed Heart Ministries
P.O. Box 1211
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Contributions can also be made online at: www.renewedheartministries.com

*All donations receive a tax-deductible receipt.

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