

(John the Baptist Comes to Town) - Part 4 Turn or Burn!

by Rolfe Barnard

God demands repentance from all men and sinners must cease their resistance against God's rule to avoid eternal consequences.

Duration: 25:18

Scripture: Genesis 6:9, Psalm 9:17, Matthew 4:17, Luke 13:3, John 3:36, Acts 17:30, Romans 6:23

Topics: "John The Baptist"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of repentance as the only command that God has for sinners. He states that God does not have time to argue or negotiate with sinners, but instead demands that they turn away from their sinful ways. The preacher highlights the message of John the Baptist, who proclaimed the need for repentance and warned of the consequences of not turning to God. He also emphasizes that through the grace of God and belief in Jesus Christ, sinners can receive forgiveness and be set free from the punishment of hell.

Transcript

...messages on the general subject, John the Baptist come to town, repentance, God's requirement, the chief duty of all men everywhere, and the gift of God to believing sinners. We've been trying these last three Lord's Days over these radio stations to press the demand of a sovereign God as it came through the lips of the voice of John the Baptist. That demand was repent, repent.

You know, my friends, God Almighty's got nothing else to say to an eternally bound soul. You need to bring your problems or your alibis or your theology or anything else and try to have a Bible conference with a holy God. He's just got one thing to say to a sinner.

Stack arms, sinner. Throw down that shotgun. Yield yourself to my claims.

Plant, by the grace of God, the flag of King Jesus in your life. And then, Lord, God will put up the white flag of peace. And you'll know the peace that this world didn't give and therefore cannot take away.

And now I remind you that at the close of the broadcast we're going to make an announcement about how you may receive this message and the three preceding in booklet form. And I want you to stand by. And now, with your Bibles open, I want to speak to you on the subject, turn a bird.

John the Baptist said repent or else. It's repent or hell. There's no ifs and ands about it.

That's the only command God has for the sinner. You ignore that and he won't do business with you on any other ground. That's the only place God will deal with the sinner, the place of repentance.

He's got no time to argue about you being a special creation of Adam's ruined and lost race. He just looks every human being in the face now and says you're all cut out of the same cloth. And you repent.

You repent. John the Baptist evidently knew by heart. Psalms chapter 7 and verse 12, where the psalmist speaking of God says, God judges the righteous and God is angry with the wicked every day.

If he, the wicked, turn not, he will whet his sword. He has bent his bow and made it ready. Turn a bird.

Turn a bird. Richard Baxter went up and down England side years ago saying sinner, turn a bird. The gifted and sainted and lamented Spurgeon had a sermon, turn a bird.

And that's just what it is. Our text here, from which I think John the Baptist drank deeply, simply puts it on the line. If you don't turn, God will whet his sword.

He's got it ready. He's prepared the instruments of death. And you've made a pit and you've dug it and then you've fallen into the ditch which you made.

It's turn a bird. God has a sword and God will punish sin. The old time preachers believed this.

They went up and down the land and copied or re-published God's demand. And said, turn. Turn sinner.

Turn. There's no time to argue. There's no time to delay.

There's no time for a conference. Turn. Throw down your arms.

It's turn a bird. The heart of the gospel is that God in his marvelous grace, nobody can make him do it, but he said sinner. The way has been prepared so that as you throw down your arms, peace and pardon may be yours.

And that way is that Lord Jesus in his precious life and his death and his present reign, and because of who he is and what he did and what he does now, God Almighty is able and will and prays God to promise, imagine God promising an old sinner anything, but he does in that grace, to promise that they'll file this sinner out of hell if he repents toward God and believes in Christ. The pardon will be his and he'll be set free. Thank God.

Isn't that grace? Isn't that grace? You know, my friends, the pulpit universally almost used to preach against sin. Now it's popular, unpopular, to even mention any kind of sin. We hear a lot now about God is love, but also according to the Bible, he's just.

And the Bible line upon line and precept upon precept and plain text upon text says, the wicked, S-H-A-L-L, shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. I wonder how many preachers I'm preaching to now and you're afraid to speak out here. I warn you, my friends, that you're preaching to a generation that is wicked.

And because it's wicked, it's held a conference in abolished hell and it thinks that by deciding they don't like hell, that they've done away with hell. And because this is a hypocritical generation, it'll have but faint

punishment. And now we invent all sorts of doctrines and movements and isms to get out of facing the plain fact that it's repent or it's hell.

You're living in a day, my friends, when men have endeavored to prove that God will clear the guilty. He says he won't in the Bible. You're living in a day when men and women are endeavoring to prove that he will, by some kind of means, refrain from punishing sin when he says he won't.

Two hundred years ago, the predominant strain of the pulpits all over England and America was one of terror and of justice. And that kind of preaching produced a breed of God-fearing men and women who made our nation possible. Now we lap up a soft gospel of easy believism and we have a soft generation of so-called Christians, God-hippos, to come back to the plain teaching of the Word of God.

You know, my friends, people sneered at Noah when he preached righteousness. No wonder people didn't pay much attention to him. Imagine old Noah coming back to America, walking down the streets and see the parade of naked flesh and all the outright flagrant disobedience of God's plain teaching.

Men and women snubbing their fist at God and thubbing their nose at him and blowing the smoke of their absolute impenitent attitude in the holy nostrils of God. Imagine Noah coming and preaching righteousness. No wonder they didn't get in there.

No wonder they didn't pay any attention to his preaching. And perhaps they made fun of Noah. But the day came when the flood was there, when they came to appreciate the old man after it was too late.

And I tell you over this radio station, someday you'll know I'm telling you the truth. I'm not here to warn you, not to flatter you. I'm here to warn you.

And I tell you that God Almighty says, if the sinner turn not, he'll burn in hell. God will wet his soul. You know, John the Baptist was sent just to tell men that.

He said, it's repenting time now. He said, no time to argue now. God help you.

I think I've had hundreds of people come to me and if you'd listen to them talk, they're cut out of a little different cloth than anybody else. And I tell them, high time that you just came on down and joined the human race. We're all in the same boat, sinner.

We're in rebellion against the holy God and he's not going to talk over the latest meeting of the latest 80s AIDS society. Any human sinner, he just says, sinner, throw down your arm, repent right now. Right now.

That's the only message he's got to us. And he won't talk until you say, well, Brother Barnes, you don't understand my case. God does.

And he says, sinner, I've just got one thing to say to you. You pointed your shotgun against me as long as you need to and I haven't cut off your neck yet. I've been patient and long-suffering.

And you've been shooting at every claim of a holy God. And I've been patient, but I've got just one thing to say to you, sinner. And that you come on down here and take your place and repent.

Repent. Repent. You just can't make a Bible conferee out of a holy God.

You can't make out like that you are different from everybody else. God commands all men everywhere to repent. And he won't even talk to you.

He won't do business with you at all on any other plane. He won't just let you pour out your sob story. And he'll say, well, I understand now that you're a different person than most folks and I'll have to get me a brand-new scheme of dealing with you.

He's not going to do it, sinner. He'll just look you in the face and says, repent or else. It's repent or else.

You're just bringing all your alibis, but all the time you're talking about you're this and you're that and about this and that and the other. You've got the shotgun of your own hatred to holiness and your own unwillingness to bow to my rule. You've got it pointed right straight at the heart of God.

And you, just like your great-great-granddaddy old Adam, you're trying to reach up in with your filthy hand. Snatch God off the throne. Sit there yourself.

And God says, sinner, I'll just tell you right now, I've got nothing to say to you. You don't like this, you just can't help it. You just turn or you're going to burn.

You just turn or you're going to burn. That's pretty plain, isn't it? But that's the God's truth. It's time we quit this nice little dealing, trying to slip up on the blind side of God, making out like we are not just old double-barrel, hell-deserving sinners.

That's what we are. Why, if we'd have had our way, we'd have pushed God off the throne a long time ago. If we'd have been there in person, but we'd have driven the nails in the hands and feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our voices would have drowned out everybody else's voice when they cried, Away with him! Away with him! And crucify him and release unto us.

Barabbas. That's the kind of folks we are. Those people doing just exactly what you'd have done if you'd been there in person.

And old Adam did exactly what you'd have done if you'd been there in person. And I'm telling you, if what I'm saying to you is so, God Almighty couldn't be holy and treat with us and talk over conditions and try to work out something that would be mutually satisfactory to both of us. God Almighty, if He's got it all, He's got one thing to say to rebellious sinners.

Sinner, repent. Repent. What kind of turning? What kind of turning God talking about? What kind of turning is necessary? Well, bless your dear heart, it's an actual turning.

A lot of people always talking to me about they want to turn. Well, you're going to go to hell wanting to turn. Repentance is an actual turning.

It's not simply wanting to. It's not simply trying to find out how to. It's an actual turning from sin.

It's to see your face in the mirror of God's holy law and get a glimpse at yourself and see yourself as God sees you. And I tell you that any form of repentance is worse than nothing if it attempts to deceive God and lie about your condition. I tell you that your darling sins must be turned from.

One leak in the ship is enough to sink that ship. And I tell you God Almighty declares that a repentance after the order of giving up all of your sin. That's what He's talking about.

If you don't, it's no Christ. The gates of heaven are barred against any human being who thinks he can enter that straight gate with you and all of your idols hooked to your own bosom and all of your rebellion still carried in your arms. Oh, my friends, God Almighty demands actual, actual.

John says, do it. Do it. They came to Him and said, what must we do? They listened to you preach, evidently I'll move now.

And John said, you did right, bud. You quit doing that and you do this and you do that. Somebody says that's legal.

And I warn you, my friends, that no sinner ever has come to real repentance which is a reliance on Jesus Christ without facing the way He's done and who He is and legally any other way you want to. That's the precursor of real repentance. A man's got to actually turn on himself.

Take sides with God against yourself. Now, bud, that's hard to do because your mama don't want you to do that. Your mama swears that you're a sweet little boy.

And your wife will say, Brother Barnard, I want you to pray for my husband. He's such a good man. And God says His old heart is as vile as the pits of hell itself.

But the mother says, My boy's a good boy. And the wife says, My husband's a good husband. He's just got one bad habit, they tell me.

But you listen to me now. Listen to me now. It's got to be actual.

You've got to take sides with God against yourself. And that's hard to do, isn't it? Now, it's easy to quit a few little things you do. But, oh, my soul, to take sides with God and say, God, that's right.

That's what confession means. You're right, God. I agree with you, God.

You've told me the truth. And I'll hide it and disclose it no longer. That's what confession is.

And this actual taking sides against yourself, your own nature, who you are, that part of you that makes you do what you do, that thing that makes you take, take in sides, abhorring yourself and the way you do. Actually, that's got to take place. And then the repentance that God Almighty demands is entire.

No reservations. You can't hug something. You can't fool God.

You can't keep any rebellion. I know that this matter of laying down your arms will have to be done all over again, again and again and again and again. I know there's nothing in the Bible about repentance, that just you did it 30 years ago and that wound that up.

No, no. No, no. No man can have any evidence he's born from above, except there's some fruit, and the fruit of the new birth is repentance and faith.

And then, therefore, it's an everyday proposition. But it's got to start sometime. And man's got to bring everything that he knows anything about, every rebellion of which he's conscious, and lay those things and that rebellion down and take sides against himself.

And no reservations, please. No holding one hand behind your back, please. No, sir.

No, sir. The rich young ruler couldn't get in, except he did that. I tell you what's fact, my friends.

A pig will always be a pig. I don't care how you clean him up. And a sinner will always be an old wicked sinner, unless he comes to the place of repentance where God Almighty will do business with him.

Entire, entire. Now, that's hard to do, isn't it? That's hard to do. But you're not going to do it if you can help it.

You'd rather go to hell, some of you, than to have this operation. Oh, my soul. To come, lay in every ambition and every desire and every well-devised plan of your whole life and say, Lord, it's all dross in my sight.

I turn it over to you. That's hard to do. As a matter of fact, no man can do that just by deciding he'll do it.

No man will ever do that apart from the goodness and grace and mercy of God. And that's the reason those who listen to my voice now who have the slightest evidence that you've been able to repent, you thank God that he enabled you to come to the place, instead of congratulating yourself and alibiing for yourself and defending yourself, that you took sides with God against yourself and repented. What kind of turning is demanded by a holy God? Well, bless your heart, it's immediate.

The longer I preach, the more this thing makes the spiritual hair stand up on my head. God commands all men to repent. When? Well, every time that word occurs in the New Testament sense, in the imperative mood.

Right now. Right now. I've known some people through my ministry up and down the land that talk to me about they want to go to heaven when they die and they don't want to go to hell.

And yet, they sleep well and they eat well and they make a good living and they're nice sociable people and they're good citizens and they listen to you preach, never bat an eyelash. And they are perfectly unaware of the fact that every time they draw a breath, they're drawing a breath that was given to them by a holy sovereign God against whose will they're absolutely sinning every day of their life. Here's this old wicked world and just like revolution yonder in Cuba or somewhere else and the rebels are out in the hills and the mountains and every time they see a soldier they take a shot at him and they're aiming to overthrow the dictator or the king or whoever it is.

And this old world is a scene where two people claim to be sovereign, Satan and the Lord. And some people say, well, I'm not such a bad fellow, brother preacher. I do this and I do that, I know.

But you're a member of the rebel army and you're a shotgun carrier for the enemies of King Jesus. And if your side wins, God will be put out of business. And God Almighty has sent forth a proclamation that says, Rebel, lay down your arms and do it right now.

And I promise pardon. And you say, well, I'll do it when I get ready. And men walk the streets, breathe God's air, eat God's food, drink God's water and enjoy God's blessings.

And continue with the shotgun of their wills pointed at the very heart of God. And God Almighty demands immediate repentance. Not tomorrow, not next day.

You know, God doesn't say, now, it's all right. You just keep on. You just keep on being on the enemy's side.

You just keep on. You come to the wells that I have dug and drink the water I give you and eat the food I prepare for you and gain the wealth I give you power to gain. But meanwhile, you get your old stomach full of good fat meat, red rare meat, and drink your full of water and load your shotgun on your shoulder and go hide behind a bush and kill off as many of the angels of God as you can.

And that's all right. That's exactly what the Senator does every dime he makes. God gave him power to make that dime.

Every ounce of food he consumes, God Almighty produced that food. You try to make a crop yourself without God's help. Every bit of the water that refreshes your old tired body came from a well that God Almighty provided.

That's right. Every breath of air you take, it's God's air. And you breathe God's air and shoot at God at the same time.

And you eat God's food and use it to give strength to your resistance to the demands of the sovereign Christ. And I tell you, my friends, God couldn't be God. God wouldn't be God.

God would be a disgrace if He allowed sinners to take their time about what they're going to do about ceasing their resistance against His rule. That's the reason in the Bible God says repent right now. God don't like it, brother.

God don't think it's nice for you to be shooting at Him. God don't like that at all. God's angry with the wicked every day.

The Word of God says the sin is on Him continually. And that's the reason God Almighty demands immediate repentance. Immediate repentance.

Hear me, my friends. It's turn of birth. It's so in John the Baptist's day.

It's so now. It'll always be so. The only hope for a sinner is to turn from his rebellion out of which nest grows all of his lawlessness and turn himself over to the Lord Jesus Christ.

My message is done. My time is drawing to a close. And my heart longs after those who've heard these messages on repentance.

And now, our Father, for this last month You've given us the strength and enabled us to bring these messages on the necessity of repentance. We pray now that as the last message has now been heard for all who've heard, my soul, I wish I could come there and just grab people if it's God's way and make them hear it that God demands and He commands they cease their resistance, their rebellion right now. Oh, Holy Spirit of God, press these demands on eternity-bound sinners.

For Christ's sake, we bring afresh the needs of my own heart. Lord, I continue the crying over this radio book that You enabled me. Lord, help me to preach.

Help me to deal faithfully with the gospel and the law and the needs of eternity-bound sinners. Then we bring the needs of this broadcast, Lord. If You are in it, I'm counting on You to raise up those whom You want to become prayer partners and financial partners with us in this ministry.

Help us to expand if You please or to lose these stations that seem as good in Your sight. Now, Lord, we've tried to preach and we've brought this simple prayer to You. Lord, speak to hearts.

In Christ's name, amen.

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