



General Topics :: What about those who haven't heard?

What about those who haven't heard? - posted by beenblake (), on: 2006/5/8 15:55

In my Sunday School class this week, we are going to tackle a complex issue that plagues the faith of several people I know. The question is this: if a person is saved by coming to Christ and only Christ, then what of those people who have never had a chance to hear of Him?

There are specifically four different groups of people I would like to address:

- 1) What about the Jews before Christ?
- 2) What about the gentiles before Christ?
- 3) What about people in distant lands where the gospel never reached since the time of Christ?
- 4) What about children who are aborted, or children who die before they are capable of understanding the gospel and making a choice?

I know there are many theories that address these questions. I am curious to hear everyone's responses as to how they reconcile these issues. Also, if anyone is currently struggling in their faith because of these questions, please share your struggles so that we may help encourage you as well.

Thanks,

In love,
Blake

Re: What about those who haven't heard? - posted by saved_matt (), on: 2006/5/9 3:10

excellent questions and very important for believers to be able to answer them, 1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

1: Rom 4:1-3 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

2: Heb 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. & Jam 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

3: Listen to (<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid282>) Ten Shekels and a Shirt

4: Read (<http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/0420carpenter.asp>) God glorified in life and death of a handicapped child

hope these help

God bless you in your search Blake,

matt

Re: What about those who haven't heard? - posted by JesusIsMyLrd (), on: 2006/5/9 8:53

Dear Brother in the Lord,

These are very good questions, ones well worth the asking...

i would like to share what God has shown me through His word on the subject you brought up, in hopes that it will help you find the answers that God has... i don't claim that my view is totally perfect or flawless, but as i see the way God has laid out in His Word, this is how i understand it.

Quote:

-----1) What about the Jews before Christ?

2) What about the gentiles before Christ?

The Bible says,

Quote:

-----Rom 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

He is holy, and no matter who you are, where you are, or what you are, it does not change the fact that He cannot dwell with sinfulness...

Quote:

-----Rom 2:12 - 16 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

So, we see that by these verses, both questions 1 and 2 are answered. They were judged according to their consciences, if they had not the written law, and by the written law, if they did have it.

Quote:

-----3) What about people in distant lands where the gospel never reached since the time of Christ?

The same verses will answer this question, as well as Rom 1:18-32. Also see Psalm 9:17, John 3:14-21, 36.

If those in distant lands would be able to be saved through other means that Christ, then all that Christ did is in vain, and he would not have had to come, for,

Quote:

-----2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead...

All are dead and all need the Saviour. This is an immense reality that we all need to let sink deep into our hearts...

Quote:

-----4) What about children who are aborted, or children who die before they are capable of understanding the gospel and making a choice?

Yet again, look at God's holiness, and His Sovereignty... He will hold the wicked accountable. Now, since we are born with a sin nature, we have the TENDANCY to sin, and therefore, when we come to an age when we can comprehend, and our conscience is enlightened (if I may put it that way) THEN we are judged by God's law. Paul said something along these lines in Rom 7:9,

Quote:

-----For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

He was alive, but without the law?!?!? But in Romans 1, it says that the law is on their hearts... So, my only conclusion is

that he is talking about his childhood (He is at this point sharing his testimony, somewhat). i could be wrong, but this seems to be the only conclusion we can draw from this, and checking it with other scripture.

So, that is what i see in the Scripture. If i am taking anything out of context, let me know, because i don't want to be using God's Holy Word wrongly... thanks!

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/5/9 10:42

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isa 7:15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

Isa 7:16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

I know this is talking about Jesus, but I believe it applies to every child. It seems to indicate there is a point where a child **knows** to choose evil or good. So, if there is a point where a child knows, then there has to be a point where a child doesn't know. I don't know exactly when that age is. I know that in Jewish thought a boy becomes a man at age 12.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2006/5/9 12:39

Proverbs 1:

20 Wisdom calls aloud outside;
She raises her voice in the open squares.
21 She cries out in the chief concourses,
At the openings of the gates in the city
She speaks her words:
22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?
For scorers delight in their scorning,
And fools hate knowledge.
23 Turn at my rebuke;
Surely I will pour out my spirit on you;
I will make my words known to you.
24 Because I have called and you refused,
I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,
25 Because you disdained all my counsel,
And would have none of my rebuke,
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
27 When your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.
28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.
29 Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD,
30 They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.
31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.
32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

Romans 1:

Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Rom. 1:24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

These two sections of Scripture teach the same thing. Paul is illuminating what Solomon taught in Proverbs 1...

The Holy Spirit witnesses to all, many are fools and choose to deny God, then God gives them over to their own carnality...

In Christ
Jeff

Re: What about those who haven't heard? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2006/5/9 20:08

Blake,

This is a question that most Christians wrestle with at some point in their walk with the LORD. You are talking about an issue that - as I see it - belongs to the realm of God for Him to decide. Just like whether the person in the pew next to me is going to heaven. That I do not know either...I may think he/she is but I really do not know.

For us to debate on the things that belong to God is futile, IMHO. Seems to me we have enough to do otherwise.

So my answer? Leave it to God and get busy in serving Him wherever you are in love and obedience. This will cut the discussion short, I promise, but think about it a while and see if this is not the Biblical one. Remember when Peter asked Jesus about John in John 21:21-22 and what his reply was? "...what is that to thee, follow thou me."

Blessings,
ginnyrose

Re: What about those who haven't heard? - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2006/5/10 20:28

1) What about the Jews before Christ?

Gal 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

OT saints were saved on credit by the blood of animals. Notice their sins were only COVERED by the blood of animals. Jesus' blood doesn't cover, but CLEANSSES. You can cover a stain on a carpet, but it is still there. Jesus washes the stain away.

2) What about the gentiles before Christ?

I just finished a class on OT about this. When you go back through the details of the OT, you will find many who were not Hebrews who: recognized God for who He is, or were considered part of Israel though they didn't have Hebrew blood. Asenath, Zipporah, and Rahab are good examples.

I suppose this is up for debate, but I don't think because the Scriptures don't contain a list of OT Gentile saints, that there weren't many. I noticed how all the surrounding nations knew about what God did to Pharaoh's army, and not to mention Egypt. I believe those outside of Israel in Moses' time were no different than those who disbelieved Noah's message, or our message today. They had heard of these miracles of God.

3) What about people in distant lands where the gospel never reached since the time of Christ?

Samuel Morris was from the African bush, and was supposed to be killed during a tribal war, and had a vision of Christ, was freed of his bonds, and ended up coming to America to learn about what had happened to him. He was a very famous missionary (someone correct any of these details if need be). I believe God will reveal to anyone who repents of evil, crying out to the 'UNKNOWN GOD.' I think that all humanity is 'without excuse' (Rom 1). We all know right from wrong.

4) What about children who are aborted, or children who die before they are capable of understanding the gospel and making a choice?

They go to heaven.

Re: What about those who haven't heard? - posted by beenblake (), on: 2006/5/11 8:30

Thank you everyone for your insight, all have been helpful. I will present many of these to my class on Sunday.

Truly, we don't have a solid answer on any of these. We know the Lord is good and His judgements are right. We are called to walk in faith and trust in Him. There are many things we won't know for certain so that we may have faith and be able to show our trust in Him.

Thanks again,
In love,

Blake

Re: What about those who haven't heard?, on: 2006/5/16 14:28

What saves other than the Blood of Jesus? Did He not say He came to save sinners and not the righteous? Were there not righteous before the cross? Of course there was. Simeon, Anna -- two people right at the time of Jesus being dedicated in the temple are perfect examples of the many before them. Read Romans 5.1 in that light. Read also the words of the great commission VERY carefully.

:~)rm