

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: What about those who do not know?****What about those who do not know? - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/15 11:57**

This question takes various forms: What about the nations that were not a part of the covenant God made with Israel? What about men then and now who never had the truth brought to them by a prophet or servant of the Lord?

We must acknowledge that there are limits to what we can know about this with certainty; we only know in part. However, there are passages that address the difference between those who know and those who do not know. Perhaps we can share from the passages we are familiar with and glean insights from one another.

For example:

We know that it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than it will be for the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida. Our Lord said -

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

Several passages speak to the greater accountability and stricter punishment for those who know:

Luke chapter 12:

"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more"

James chapter 3 "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

II Peter chapter 2

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Hebrews chapter 10

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Even in the passage in Romans 10 where Paul sets forth the connection between faith, and hearing, and preaching, and being sent - He brings this charge against the people of Israel -

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

What we can deduce from these and other passages is that God recognizes and takes into consideration the opportunities men have had to know the truth. We can also deduce that His judgments are based upon degrees of accountability; for example, it was the generation 20 years an older who were condemned to die in the wilderness.

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I would be interested in considering other related passages and insights from those here on the forum.

mak

Re: What about those who do not know? - posted by docs (), on: 2020/5/15 12:36

When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. (Deut 32:8)

"From the Biblical perspective, the historical role and destiny of nations receive significance only in relationship to the prophetic future of Israel. In the New Testament, Paul discusses this concept of salvation history in Romans chapter nine through eleven. It is not meant, however, that the purpose of God in His providential workings in the arena of history is by any means for Israel's sake only. Though Israel's election remains central, both testaments declare the universal scope of God's redemptive purpose for all nations." (Reggie Kelly)

"The revelation in God's Word of His plans for Israel has a vital, practical application for people from all other nations. When we consider God's plan for Israel, we cannot stand aside, as citizens of other lands, and say, "Israel's fate does not concern us." The fact is, the well-being of every nation is at stake. Until Israel enters its full inheritance (in Christ - docs) the other nations can never enjoy the blessings that God has in store for them also." (Derek Prince)

Jesus' last words were to go into every nation and preach the gospel to all men. It has always been the Church's mission and responsibility to let those men and nations know who do not know. And ALL MEN in ALL NATIONS will ultimately be affected by the unfolding of God's prophetic plan for Israel. It's my opinion that this has been left out of much of the modern Church's overall perspective.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/15 13:49

I think it would be good for us to consider how God dealt with Gentiles during Old Testament times.

From certain passages we learn that it was not necessary for Gentiles to become full proselytes to Judaism and to become circumcised in order for them to be saved. There were what are termed Gentile "God-fearers" who believed in and obeyed the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Some lived outside of Israel and experienced God's favor as God revealed Himself to them in one way or another.

Cornelius is a clear example of one of these God-fearers. God told him, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God."-Acts 10:31

I think one mistake that can be made here is to think that God only chose Israel for salvation in Old Testament times and that He sovereignly left the Gentile world to be doomed and damned.

God's ultimate purpose for choosing Israel was to bring the Messiah into the world. Christ is the true Israel and all those that trust in Him are grafted in Him and become a part of His Olive Tree and Vine. He chose them for other reasons also but that was His ultimate reason, the climactic purpose.

Re: What about those who do not know? - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2020/5/15 13:51

Quote:
-----This question takes various forms: What about the nations that were not a part of the covenant God made with Israel? What about men then and now who never had the truth brought to them by a prophet or servant of the Lord?

I think these verses have to come into view when considering this question;

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
(Romans 1:18-20)

Not all men have had the revelation that Israel had but Paul testifies that men have known of God's existence and God's justice since the creation of the world. They knew enough to prove that they had no excuse for their sins.

I would agree that there are degrees of accountability in God's judgments. This makes me tremble to consider my own accountability before God since much is required of those who are given much. (Luke 12:48)

In Christ,

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2020/5/15 14:03

/God's ultimate purpose for choosing Israel was to bring the Messiah into the world. Christ is the true Israel and all those that trust in Him are grafted in Him and become a part of His Olive Tree and Vine./

I'm thinking His Olive Tree and Vine is Israel and the covenants made with them. All men and even nations who become part of this Olive Tree are thereby ultimately affected because of God's calling to Israel. They only receive their significance and salvation because of God's prophetic purpose for Israel.

"The prophets were inspired interpreters of history and have given us a philosophy of history that derived from Israel's experience in that history. The past is a pattern and a promise of the future, a prophetic point of reference that discloses the ethical and redemptive purpose of God unfolded in the progress and future of salvation history. The meaning of Israel is the meaning of history. The Lord of history and of all the earth, and of all nations, has, for a profound reason chosen to identify Himself as the God of Israel."

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/15 14:19

Brothers,

do you think these words have any bearing on the answer to the question posted? To me they do but perhaps you have a different take.

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. - Ephesians 2:11-12

God has been so compassionate, beyond our imagination or understanding, to all mankind around the world for thousands of years. All of it undeserved and if any man could see the exceeding sinfulness of sin and man's heart the way God does, we might be in greater awe of His grace.

Yet, there is some mercy from God that requires conditions to be met and these are really promises of God that must be communicated to be enjoyed. These must be communicated in order to be obtained. How could you do the condition unless you are aware of it? The Gospel being a perfect example. The heavens do declare God but do not declare these conditional merciful promises.

The example of Cornelius is an interesting one. In his case, Cornelius had faith. He believed God was God and he believed God would reward him if he diligently sought Him as he did in prayer, alms giving and fasting. But remember that he was exposed to the covenants and teachings of God about this.

As Mak has pointed out, God reaches out at times proactively to draw people to Himself if they will humble themselves

and fear Him.

In years past, there have been a multitude of people groups who have not had the Gospel or a message of repent and be saved brought to them. Were all these left without that hope because God had foreseen they would not respond anyway? Was it just a coincidence that so many lived in the same place and time and failed to have a witness to the promise all because none of them would have responded positively anyway?

I'm not asking these things in this way to shock the conscience or provoke the heart but rather to make sure we've thought through what we say when we suggest certain truths about God's outreach that are difficult to back up Biblically or experientially.

Again, God's character is unassailable. He is merciful and He delights to show mercy. The record is clear. But, the record is also clear that Israel, His chosen and beloved spouse, enjoyed certain mercies, great mercies, that were not extended to all mankind until Christ came or so the Bible seems to say to me.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/15 14:28

Quote:
-----I'm thinking His Olive Tree and Vine is Israel and the covenants made with them. All men and even nations who become part of this Olive Tree are thereby ultimately affected because of God's calling to Israel. They only receive their significance and salvation because of God's prophetic purpose for Israel.

I do have Scriptures I can point to to prove my point about Christ being the ultimate Olive Tree and Vine into Whom we are all grafted. But I am concerned about derailing this thread off topic from the OP's main issue being addressed.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/15 15:53

Robert said:
//Were all these left without that hope because God had foreseen they would not respond anyway? Was it just a coincidence that so many lived in the same place and time and failed to have a witness to the promise all because none of them would have responded positively anyway?//

In your paradigm why would they not respond?

It seems a tad disingenuous to suggest that they didn't hear because they wouldn't respond, when God is deciding who will hear and who will respond.

I think it is far preferable and accurate to just say "we just don't know what will happen to folks who have never heard."

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2020/5/15 17:10

Quote:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:18-20)

Not all men have had the revelation that Israel had but Paul testifies that men have known of God's existence and God's justice since the creation of the world. They knew enough to prove that they had no excuse for their sins.

This is exactly the verse in my mind as well.

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I grew up as a Hindu for the first 25 years of my life. Never heard the Gospel preached to me during those days. Nor did my religion teach anything regarding personal God to whom our actions are accountable. God to Hindus are just an entity to bless us.

But deep inside me, I always knew that my actions are not correct. I knew that God is not pleased with me. I would often confess my sins to Hindu Idols and repent from them. I would also donate blood frequently to cleanse my sins. But when I read the Gospel everything made sense. I understood that God had already shed his blood for my sins and I no need to shed mine!

I do not believe God chose me because I had this conviction deep inside my heart about my sins. I believe there is nothing good in me. God by his mercy allowed me to read his word.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/15 18:07

Hi Todd,

This Scripture is pretty clear about what happens I think:

.....when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8.

the line seems to be for those who have not heard the gospel that they "know" God. That I think would be the fault line.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/15 18:40

Todd wrote:

Quote:
-----I think it is far preferable and accurate to just say "we just don't know what will happen to folks who have never heard."

Good point. I think it's definitely safe to deduce that anyone who is exposed to Christianity and rejects Christ (regardless of where they live) cannot be saved whatsoever because they are rejecting the testimony of Christ in their midst.

But as far as those who've never heard or will never hear of Jesus whatsoever, it's debatable among some Christians as to whether they can be saved without ever hearing of Christ. Christian apologist William Lane Craig believes it's possible one can be saved via Christ's atonement even if they never hear the name of Christ. He thinks it would be rare (based on the testimony of Scripture regarding man's utter depravity) but possible if they respond positively to general revelation.

Craig also argues from the standpoint of Molinism, that God may have decreed for individuals to be born in certain places and times based on how He knew they would respond to Him.

Personally I hesitate to affirm any possibility that anyone can be saved today apart from a specific knowledge of Christ. But I believe this can be debatable without dividing over it.

I also find it interesting to consider how certain Gentiles were saved before the Mosaic Covenant came into place, such as Job.

Re: many years ago - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/5/15 20:44

A story about a missionary who traveled to difficult to reach peoples in the Himalayas (mostly Buddhist) to share the Gospel had been a suggested reading from a client/friend. As I read through his record it was interesting how his journey unfolded and how the Lord worked in him and through him.

Over the years he kept hearing of a particular monk that people kept making mention of and how he should visit him but, partly because he lived in a very isolated cave on the side of a cliff, things just never worked out to make the journey. If I remember correctly,... the missionary was scheduled to leave but something happened that prevented his departure, delaying him for a time so he decided to go visit the monk. After traversing such a precarious perch arriving at the opening of the monk's cave and being welcomed, the missionary began to share the gospel of Jesus with the monk. After a time the monk began to weep uncontrollably but seemingly with an element of joy as relief had come to his heart. Puzzled by t

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Of course, those who reject the gospel after hearing it also do not know God, and they will be punished for both.

But the first part of that may involve or include those who never hear the gospel of Christ.

I don't believe it would make sense for God to punish someone for not obeying the gospel of Christ if they've never heard it. It would make sense for Him to punish them for their many other sins against His moral Law and for rejecting the light they have.

In case someone objects to my use of logic when considering this issue, think about this. Would it be just for God to condemn a completely or perfectly innocent or sinless person (whether an adult or child) if there ever was such a person on this earth (besides our Lord Jesus who voluntarily sacrificed himself for our sins)? Of course it wouldn't be just, our conscience recoils at that thought, and for good reason. Both Scripture and reason make it abundantly clear that that is unjust and evil. So too, based on common sense and the testimony of Scripture it's reasonable to deduce that God would not hold it against someone if they don't believe in the gospel message which they've never heard.

Sometimes we may reason thus: "We should just be child-like and accept what the Bible teaches even if it doesn't make sense to us. We should be careful not base our beliefs on our reasoning which is tainted by sin."

To a certain degree I agree with that, but we must be careful not to go too far with that, because our reasoning capabilities are also God-given for the purpose of getting to know God more and more. In Isaiah 1:18 God says, "Come now, let us reason together."

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, and part of that diligence involves rightly dividing His Word of truth; we do that by using whatever tools God has granted at our disposal. If we have the ability to know Greek and Hebrew then we can use that gift and God will be pleased and glorified and honored and the Body of Christ will be edified (as in this case of our brother Mak breaking it down for us), but if we don't have that ability we can do our best with the tools we have and God will be glorified in it.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/17 15:53

//Yes but... "fair" is a very subjective term whereas the scriptures use the phrase "impartial", which God is in fact impartial and/or "not a respecter of persons" //

Agreed- But I believe he is truly impartial and not pretend impartial.

This requires that we perhaps be a little more understanding of those with little or no knowledge.

By "understanding" I mean to accept that some folks just don't get any light, or it is dim at best.

I just don't like the standard Christian line of "well, if they don't repent and seek the Lord they're going to burn." If God says that, so be it. But Christians shouldn't because they have no idea what they are talking about and should not hold forth on such matters.

Re: Brother Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/5/17 22:55

firstly- my bad on posting reply in wrong thread :/

Had copied your quote and realized I wasn't logged in and clicked wrong thread to reply after logging in... good catch and thanks for redirecting ;)

Yes I believe that is a reasonable course of action... as long as it's one done in faith toward God.

I'm gonna be totally transparent here and it may cause some to view my person differently but that's ok-

Once I got to a place where I really needed and wanted to know the Lord,.. He knew and in every way possible made His comfort, mercy, grace, love and discipline known to me. As I began to respond consistently to Him in faith, He was very attentive and let me know it in a plethora of ways. I was, as are many when they're a young immature believer, so somewhat legalistic in my thinking yet the Lord was not offended. He walked every step, read every word, participated in every musing and meditation I had - always willing... always patient... always present.

After a time of Him requiring me to openly (and in cases publicly) repent, having broken down the wall between us, I be

has ears to hear - LET HIM HEAR." Hearing to receive is a choice, just as refusing to hear is a choice.

Receiving the implanted word spoken by God will save our souls - this is the "hearing of faith". Resisting and refusing to receive (hear) the living word is EVIL.

The indicative must govern the subjunctive. God attempts to show mercy to men by speaking to their wrong ways. He shows by this a willingness to forgive and restore. Only after prolonged refusal to hear, does He impute upon their heads the evil of refusing to receive correction.

Israel broke the yoke and tore asunder the covenant God made with them. Jesus offered restoration to the people of Israel by inviting everyone who was weary and heavy laden to "take MY yoke upon you".

The words that accompany passages where God's judgment was most severe are worth becoming familiar with: insolent, proud, abusive, defiant, rebellious, stubborn, unyielding, stiff-necked, abandoning, effacing, annulling, etc.

There is no doubt why God considers THESE attitudes, EVIL!

In addition a rare word for refusing to is used in the NT - that word

ἀπαρκαουᾶ and it means to "hear aside" or refuse to hear. It is through one man's ἀπαρκαουᾶ that sin entered the world:

The problem of refusing to hear is the evil in the world - not having the chance to hear is not.
mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/5/18 8:01

Hi Mak,

Mark 4:3-4

Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow; as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

v. 14 15

The sower sows the word.

These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

Are these ones victims to be shown mercy or are they villains to be punished without mercy?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/18 8:05

//my bad on posting reply in wrong thread :/

Had copied your quote and realized I wasn't logged in and clicked wrong thread to reply after logging in... good catch and thanks for redirecting ;//

You were in the correct thread- it just seemed it belonged over in this one.

Thanks for your thoughtful reply. I appreciate it!

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/18 9:08

Mercy and Judgment belong to God so He alone knows.

We can know that Paul said the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the working of Satan and every deception that deceives those who are perishing.

Then he follows - they are perishing because they refused the love of the truth so as to be saved. I believe condemnation comes for refusing the love of the truth.

There is a passage in Jeremiah, where the prophet wondered about the poor, asking aloud "perhaps they do not know the word of the Lord?" So he went to the rich and powerful and discovered a conspiracy to cast off the word of the Lord.

I can not know about those who have not had the opportunity (if such people even exist), but those who refuse to know or neglect so great a salvation - we can know for certain that they will be judged

Mak

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/5/18 10:35

The scriptures say:

1 John 5:19 "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

2 Cor. 4:3-4 "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. He came to save sinners, to open their eyes, to set them free.

1 John 3:8 "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."

Luke 4:18-19 (NKJV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." v. 21 "And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Col. 2:14-15 "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

1 John 2:2 "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

God's judgments bring men out of evil into righteousness.

Isa. 26:9

For when the earth experiences Your judgments
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Mercy triumphs over judgement and there is hope for all men.

Luke 1:78-79

Because of the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,
TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

1 Cor. 15:17-45

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/18 10:59

God's judgments also destroy evil doers, everyone whose name was not found written in the lamb's book of life.

Revelation 20

And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

The second death is not to teach men righteousness, but to annihilate the presence of evil from God's new heaven and earth. This will be the ultimate victory in the destruction of the work of Satan.

The reason for men being condemned is not in question. Our Lord made the "verdict" for condemnation clear in John Chapter 3.

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

Jesus gave the reason for the condemnation - "light has come, but men love darkness MORE THAN light $\frac{1}{2}$ (a comparative indicating that men preferred one over the other). Jesus did not speak about those who have never seen light, He simply said "Light has come" and men loved darkness MORE THAN light because their deeds are evil."

We should be careful how we apply this, but the language is clear. Men will be condemned for loving darkness more than light. Jesus certainly knew about all nations upon the earth. He was not naive.

Men can be in the dark, because they want to stay there. Men can be in a state of ignorance, because they despise wisdom and discipline. For such men, they will be filled with the fruit of their own ways. They will perish not for lack of opportunity to know, but for refusal to receive the truth when they were given the opportunity.

mak

added: Not all are IN Christ - but YES - all who are IN Christ will be made alive. AMEN We all bore the image of the ea

rthly - ADAM - Now LET US bear the image of the heavenly.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/18 11:22

The Lord has said in the OT that His own people ignored His offers of mercy and commands for repentance because of their stubborn evil hearts. I think it is fair to infer that the same is true for anyone to whom God offers mercy or commands repentance and they refuse. I don't think there is Bible warrant to assume that anyone knows intuitively that they need to repent and thereby they will be given mercy. They might throw themselves to God's mercy like the Nineveh people did "hoping" He might be merciful once they repented but there is no confidence in such hope, only a "perhaps". There is no law of mercy and I think there is some confusion about that. That is Biblical. No inference necessary.

One of the great truths pervasive through the Bible is that God treats people differently according to His own will and discretion when it comes to mercy. You might as well buy your Bible with erasable ink in order to avoid that.

When Moses met with God and asked Him to show Moses "his goodness", this is what God said about His goodness:

And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. - Exodus 33:19

In context, God was about to show redemption mercy to the people of Israel and not show the same mercy to the people of Egypt. This extension of mercy, great mercy, was not because of something "good" in His people. God said He chose them in spite of the fact that they were rebellious and stiff necked. Mercy from God is not because of some goodness in men. This prime text on mercy and God's goodness should be more than sufficient to make that case.

Yet God provides a second great instance of redemptive goodness centuries later and completely flips the script. When Jesus came He came like Moses to set a people free in unmerited mercy. Yet, some people would not have this same mercy in the same way. This is what God said in the case of the Gentiles getting mercy this time and most of the Jews not provided it this time:

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!

For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. - Romans 9:16-18

I have seen the word "fairness" and "impartiality" used in the context of a discussion on mercy. These words don't belong in that conversation in God's own words.

Fairness has to do with justice. Impartiality says that a judge would not treat two equally guilty parties differently. That is not what mercy means. In fact, mercy always is at the discretion of the judge. If the judge "owed" two parties the same mercy then fairness and impartiality would be appropriate concepts in the issue of mercy.

Has God promised equal justice to all? Yes. Has He promised equal mercy to all? Only to those who would believe in His Son. Has He promised every man would have the same opportunity to hear the Gospel of grace? No. Does that make God nasty, unfair, not good. Not according to God, He has said clearly His goodness is revealed as He shows mercy to whom He wills to show mercy not on the basis of anything other than Himself.

Do we wish God would show the same mercy to all in the same degree and all the time? Yes. But, we don't have the wisdom of God. That's why in issues of mercy, relying on God's word is so critical and not relying on experience or extrapolations is important.

I don't know why God chooses to bestow great mercy on some and lesser mercy on others. God has not revealed it an

d my opinion on the matter is less than worthless.

The grace and mercy God has shown each of us is completely unmerited and attempts to justify His grace by something in us runs counter to Scripture.

A lot of people will say they believe mercy is unmerited and yet hold onto some idea that it is at least partially deserved based on some virtue in themselves or others. God has said just the opposite.

He said He had mercy on Israel in spite of their stubborn rebellious hearts. He said He had mercy on the gentiles in spite of the fact that they weren't even pursuing righteousness. That's God's high view of the situation.

We all want every man to have the chance to know Jesus. I actively spend my life pursuing that. My desire or especially God's desire that all men repent though is not the same thing as saying God, if He is fair or good, would make sure all men have the same opportunity. Then mercy would be owed or God would be obligated by His character to give mercy to all if He gives mercy to any. God said the exact opposite about His goodness and His fairness.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/18 12:39

The Lord indeed revealed His glory to Moses, but the quote from chapter 33 is only the partial revelation. The full revelation is not until chapter 34:

Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation"

Here in the midst of God declaring His Name as merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness and truth and keeping mercy unto thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin - THEN THE GLORY OF HIS JUDGMENT - HIS RIGHT TO BE SEVERE is also revealed and is equally HIS GLORY! "by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the LAWLESSNESS of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children of the children, down to the third and fourth generation."

The LXX has this "Furthermore, the Lord will not cleanse the LIABLE, bringing the lawlessness of the fathers upon the children..."

This is in perfect harmony with the passages in Ezekiel 3, 18 and 33. If a man takes heed to the warning of judgment and turns from his wicked ways, he will experience the glory of God's mercy, but if he refuses then he will be held liable for his wickedness. God does not purpose (boulamai) the death of the wicked. God desires Mercy - but if men refuse to turn from their wickedness - they will be held liable for their sins. He will have mercy upon whom He has mercy and He will harden whom He will harden.

And what if He bore with great patience the objects prepared unto destruction - men like Pharaoh. A man who was so despicably hardened that he ordered the infanticide of every male child born to the Hebrews, just to keep them under His bondage as slaves. I have no doubt that some of his own royal court objected to such a strategy, but whatever misgivings Pharaoh might have had, he hardened himself to any sense of decency or mercy. I am glad that God saw fit to "harden" his heart, repaying him according to his own hardness. It is not a stretch that God knew how hard this man already was and handed him over to his depravity. What does it take in a man to order the infanticide of thousands of innocent lives, willfully bringing pain and sorrow to every mother who suffered such a horrific injustice. God held Pharaoh liable for his wickedness - He just bore with Him to make His own name and glory known.

mak

added: And may God be glorified that He repaid Egypt according to her deeds. She was accomplice to the horrible infanticide of male Hebrew infants, and the Lord repaid her with a just recompense. Every single home in Egypt suffered the loss of the firstborn male child. Glory to God.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2020/5/18 16:56

Thank you mak,

this is the best and most Biblical study I have ever seen on this topic. We have probably all heard some kind of "traditional" views that have been passed down to us. But you have shown us that it is not enough to just read some commentaries or listen to even well know Bible teachers.

Searching and knowing Scripture is essential.

We should be concerned about those who never heard, but we should be even more concerned about us who have heard...!

"Here in the midst of God declaring His Name as merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness and truth and keeping mercy unto thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin - THEN THE GLORY OF HIS JUDGMENT - HIS RIGHT TO BE SEVERE is also revealed and is equally HIS GLORY!"

1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/18 17:46

//what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?//

What does it mean to disobey the gospel of God?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/18 17:52

The participle used for "disobeying" is ἀπειθήσασθαι - a form of ἀπειθήσασθαι - = refusal to be persuaded

Cognate: 544 ἀπειθήσασθαι - literally, refuse to be persuaded (by the Lord). See 543 (apeitheia)

543 ἀπειθήσασθαι (from 1 /A "not" and 3982 /πεῖθειν, "persuaded") - properly, someone not persuaded, referring to their willful unbelief, i.e. the refusal to be convinced by God's voice. This is the core-meaning of the entire word-family: 543 (ἀπειθήσασθαι), 544 (ἀπειθήσασθαι), 545 (ἀπειθήσασθαι). All these cognates focus on man's decision to reject God's offers of faith, i.e. refusal to be persuaded in their heart concerning obeying His will (Word

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/18 18:52

Thanks Mak.

That sort of begs the question of how plain the offer(s) must be.

On one hand we have the Pharisees who refused to believe on purpose despite knowing in their heart of hearts that Jesus really was who he said he was.

Then on the other hand we have the remote jungle tribes and the child raised in an ISIS household.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/18 20:39

Yes Todd,

Even Jesus recognized that distinction. He distinguished between those who are given much and others. We know He does not require much from those only given little.

This is why I believe Paul said for "the Jew first" because they were given the greater opportunity, they received the greater accountability.

Mak

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/18 23:24

Todd wrote:

Quote:

-----What does it mean to disobey the gospel of God?

The thought came to mind, was the gospel of God preached during Noah's time, and throughout OT history even to the Gentiles?

Being that the term 'gospel of God' essentially means 'message of God,' I'd argue yes, the message of God has been preached throughout mankind's history, one way or another, to one degree or another, leaving all men without excuse for their rebellion against God.

I know that many times we just think of the gospel message in terms of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. However, we know that even before Christ died and rose the Gospel message was being preached by John the baptist and by the Apostles and disciples.

In Revelation 14:6-7 it says, "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earthâ€”to every nation, tribe, tongue, and peopleâ€” 7 saying with a loud voice, â€œFear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.â€”

Notice that there is no mention there of our Lord's atoning death or His resurrection, but it's still called the everlasting gospel; because it's a message from God whereby He's warning humanity to repent before it's too late. For those who take heed, it is good news indeed, but for those who refuse to listen it is bad news.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/19 1:46

Robert wrote:

Quote:

-----The Lord has said in the OT that His own people ignored His offers of mercy and commands for repentance because of their stubborn evil hearts. I think it is fair to infer that the same is true for anyone to whom God offers mercy or commands repentance and they refuse. I don't think there is Bible warrant to assume that anyone knows intuitively that they need to repent and thereby they will be given mercy.

According to Romans 1:20, God has revealed His eternal power and Godhead to all people throughout all time, leaving all without excuse should they continue to suppress His truth in their unrighteousness.

In Romans 2:4 we read that the goodness of God is intended to lead sinners to repentance. What is that goodness which is shown to all people? Many things, from life itself and every breath, to every moment of health enjoyed, to every piece of food on the table, to every piece of clothing on the back, to the sunshine, the rain, etc. etc. Everyone knows all these things come from the hand of a loving and merciful Creator.

So besides knowing that He is Almighty and everlasting, all know that He is also good. Thatâ€™s why they are without excuse if they reject Him. Not because they donâ€™t know Him, but because they do; albeit not intimately unto salvation until they repent.

Quote:

-----They might throw themselves to God's mercy like the Nineveh people did "hoping" He might be merciful once they repented but there is no confidence in such hope, only a "perhaps". There is no law of mercy and I think there is some confusion about that. That is Biblical. No inference necessary.

One of the great truths pervasive through the Bible is that God treats people differently according to His own will and discretion when it comes to mercy. You might as well buy your Bible with erasable ink in order to avoid that.

The Biblical data shows that there is a certain â€œlawâ€” of God whereby He is â€œboundâ€” to respond in mercy to every person that throws himself or herself upon His mercy. Thatâ€™s not to say He is bound to forgive sinners based on any goodness in them, but based on His own promise to forgive all who thrust themselves on His mercy in repentance, based on who He is, His character, which He has revealed in His Word. So many scriptures attest to that truth. These are just a few:

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. -Psalm 86:5

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. -Proverbs 28:13

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; 20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. -Isaiah 1:18-20

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. -Isaiah 55:7

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. -Romans 10:13

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -1 John 1:9

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/19 2:39

Robert wrote:

Quote:

-----When Moses met with God and asked Him to show Moses "his goodness", this is what God said about His goodness:

And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. - Exodus 33:19

In context, God was about to show redemption mercy to the people of Israel and not show the same mercy to the people of Egypt. This extension of mercy, great mercy, was not because of something "good" in His people. God said He chose them in spite of the fact that they were rebellious and stiff-necked. Mercy from God is not because of some goodness in men. This prime text on mercy and God's goodness should be more than sufficient to make that case.

I think there may be a confusing of God's choosing all of Israel for service with God's choosing of the remnant within Israel for eternal salvation. We know that not all those that were chosen to inherit the promised land were saved eternally, but only the remnant within Israel.

I want to address the Lord's statement, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." I believe God is simply saying there, "If I choose to show mercy to anyone on my terms that is my prerogative. If I choose not to destroy any sinners when I can rightly do so if I wanted, that's my sovereign choice."

Now, that can have a double application, one being earthly and/or temporal, and the other being spiritual and/or eternal. I'll try to explain.

In the first place, God chose Israel for service and delivered her from the hands of her pagan enemies even though she didn't deserve it. God delivered them from temporal destruction even though many of them weren't saved from their sins. That's what I mean by all of them experiencing a temporal, earthly salvation. They were sovereignly chosen by God for service as a nation.

In the second place, God can grant mercy, grace and eternal salvation to guilty sinners if He so chooses to do so upon His terms. And He has made plain to us throughout Scripture what those terms are, namely repentance and faith. I believe He's essentially saying, "If I want to forgive guilty sinners upon their repentance and faith I can freely do so, that's my prerogative." But that's different from Him saying that He's withholding forgiveness from certain sinners for no apparent reason.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/19 3:53

Hi Oracio,

God does call Israel His servant. For sure. But I think there is a lot more God says about Israel (the people) in addition to that. For one example He calls them a special treasured people out of all the nations :

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

They are His special treasure.
Elsewhere they are the apple of His eye.
Also, His beloved wife.
Also, His sons and daughters.

These references and more indicate a covenant relationship that is much more intimate, loving, personal and deeper than that He chose to have with any other people on earth.

So when God chooses to have mercy on Israel with all the blessings, abundance, protection, instruction, promises and His very daily presence, He is expressing a temporal and most exceeding choice of Israel, love of Israel the people, that transcends by far the other nations.

Finally, and maybe the greatest blessing to Israel, is that they were called to become holy as He is holy so that they could declare and display to the nations the character, divine nature and glory of God in and through themselves. Much the same as today as we become more like Jesus and declare and display His glory to the nations thus fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant to be a blessing to the nations.

But, I think Scripture would confirm it is understating the mercy shown to Israel by God's special blessing to them to describe their covenant relationship (special to them and not others) as only servants and otherwise make them no different in intended blessing, grace and mercy than that offered to or give to the other nations.

A new thing was done for the Gentiles when Christ came. Jesus Himself said that and He almost got thrown off a cliff for it. But the Scripture is clear that the Gentiles are a wild branch grafted in. The tree has always been Christ, true Israel.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/19 7:45

Oracio wrote:

//Everyone knows all these things come from the hand of a loving and merciful Creator. //

Christians far too often quote Romans chapter 1 to condemn most of humanity to hell because God made it evident He exists by the things He created. Therefore, they conclude, all humans who do not accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior are without excuse.

But this line of reasoning is simply ridiculous . Trees and starry night skies and beautiful sunsets do not lead one to the only name under heaven by which we must be saved. Believing there is a god, believing there are supernatural forces at work in nature does not bring a person to Jesus.

I know what Paul wrote in Romans 1, but that is the problem with reading someone else's mail, especially when the writer is no longer around we can't ask him questions about what he exactly meant. For example, Jesus said: “No one can come to Son unless the Father draws him.” (John 6:14)

And as stated above there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
Acts 4:12

Was Paul saying that primitive men were told about Jesus by the pretty flowers? We don't know because he doesn't tell us, and Rom 1 must be read in conjunction with the rest of scripture.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/19 9:27

Hi Todd, in my comments on Romans 1 I never once said that everyone knows the name of Jesus, but that everyone has always known certain basic things about who God is. So respectfully, your reply is a straw man.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/19 9:43

Sorry Oracio - I did not mean to imply that you specifically say this.

But nonetheless the great majority of Christians do.

Your argument seems to be that if a person who is far removed from any true gospel influence obeys the light he is given, he will be led to Jesus. That is something that is easy to say but hard to prove.

Maybe that's not your position if not I apologize.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/19 9:47

Pondering your concerns, two passages came to mind.

I hope they will be of some benefit to you, even if they do not answer or address all that is in your heart

What the Lord spoke to Jonah reveals His heart - for out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. This is what the Lord said to the prophet -

" And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left."

Another passage from Matthew 10 -

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

These two passages express God's general concern for men.

I would not presume to understand how God deals with all men, but I will take Him at His word that He desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

I assume you also trust His heart and character to judge righteously. I sense that your difficulty is with the theological suppositions of men. There are certain matters too weighty for us, and we do well to remember the words of David - "I have made my soul as a little child".

Children trust their Father - we simply need to trust our Father to do what is right.

mak

Re: Mak - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/5/19 10:20

Quote:

----- God's judgments also destroy evil doers, everyone whose name was not found written in the lamb's book of life.

Definitely.

ALL descendants of Adam are evil, NONE excepted.

Rom. 3:9 â€

â€ both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

Ps. 14:2-3 â€

The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men

To see if there are any who understand,

Who seek after God.

They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;

There is no one who does good, not even one.

That includes YOU. And I.

Our evil selves must be destroyed. Our evil selves were destroyed. We were and are continually crucified with Christ.

Gal. 2:20 â€

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Rom. 6:3 â€

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

And likewise, the evil self in every person not found in the Lambâ€™s Book of Life must be destroyed. Just like you and I.

Quote:

----- The second death is not to teach men righteousness, but to annihilate the presence of evil from God's new heaven and earth. This will be the ultimate victory in the destruction of the work of Satan.

The question is: What is the second death.

I must say there are many things in the Bible that I do not fully understand. Based on my present limited understanding, this is how I see it:

I think we all agree that the first death is the death of the outward physical man. It grows old and dies when it loses its physical life. Death is really the loss of life. Manâ€™s physical body is dust and returns to dust, just like the animals on earth.

But God made man infinitely higher than animals. Although God made man out of the dust of the ground, He made man in His own image and breathed His own breath into man and man became a living soul (Gen. 1:26,27, 2:7). Man has an outward earthly body and an inner eternal soul.

Eccl. 3:11 â€

He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out th

the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

I believe that Adam, before his fall, being in the image of God, actually had God's own life in him. We know from the New Testament that eternal life is the life in Christ, the great and eternal I AM.

1 John 5:11-12

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

When Adam sinned, as God warned him, he died. His soul died. It did not become non-existent. It will eternally exist. But it lost God's light and life and peace and joy and sunk into darkness and death and torment.

And in Adam, ALL die.

While we still have our earthly life, amidst our toils and sorrows and troubles, we still have earthly comforts and pleasures and the warmth and light of the sun. But when our earthly life is over, these will be gone, and, our souls will be left in a state of total darkness and torment without the life and light of Christ. This, I now consider, is the second death. It is the eternal existence of torment without the peace and joy and wonders of God's light and life.

Those who are saved in Christ now will not be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2:11) because they have already passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

There are now 2 possibilities for the rest of mankind:

(1) God will leave them eternally in the torment of the second death, OR,

(2) Because of God's infinite love and mercy, there will be universal restoration and all men will be saved by God's amazing grace.

I am inclined to believe in universal restoration. There are ample scriptures to support this.

1 Cor. 15:26

The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

ADD:

This will be the ultimate victory in the destruction of the work of Satan.

Quote:

----- added: Not all are IN Christ - but YES - all who are IN Christ will be made alive.

Scripture does not say: "all who are IN Christ will be made alive"

Scripture says: "In Christ all are made alive."

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/19 11:29

Thank you Jade for sharing your heart and understanding. I did deduce from your earlier post that you leaned towards or were open to the universal aspect of the atonement. I am also aware that you have likely discussed this with others who sought to persuade you otherwise.

I acknowledge that our Lord made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and that similar language is used to describe God reconciling the whole world to Himself. I trust these passages and the ones you have quoted form the basis of your understanding.

There are two passages for me that reconcile universal atonement and individual choice to receive the sacrifice by faith.

The first is in Romans 3 where Paul wrote - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 2 God presented Him as the atoning sacrifice through faith in His blood,

There is no doubt that all were justified freely by His blood - but there is a very distinct qualifier that Paul was inspired to add - "whom God set forth as a propitiation THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD!"

Sadly, not all men have faith. The atonement has been made for their sin and their justification freely awaits them - THROUGH FAITH! The atonement must be received by faith to be enjoyed.

The second passage that agrees with this is none other than John 3:16.

Careful study of this passage in context will reveal that it is in the very same way that Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness that our Lord's death will save those who believe. For it was not the placing the serpent in the pole that automatically healed the people. The instructions given to Moses is that everyone who is bitten and LOOKS UPON the serpent on the pole will live.

Our Lord's death is there for everyone. He was lifted up that all men would be drawn to Him. Those who look to Him in faith will live.

Although the motive or hope is to make God's mercy universal unconditionally based upon the death of our Lord; nevertheless, taking away the condition of faith is to take away from the words of the book and there are grave consequences for any who do so. God set forth Jesus as a propitiation THROUGH FAITH in His blood. Faith is the condition God Himself set.

Please prayerfully consider this.

Mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/19 11:41

Mak-

Amen to your post of 2020/5/19 9:47.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/5/20 10:00

Mak,

Certainly. Faith is a vital necessity of Christian salvation and life in Christ. And, "we all are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit".

Question is: Is God able to bring all men to repentance and have faith in Christ?

He most certainly can.

God is mighty to save.

With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.

It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

Rom. 11:33-36 " "

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?
Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?
For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever.
Amen.

Will He?

It is God's will for all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 10:27

Jade, and Mak

Perhaps you could help me understand the difference or the sameness when God says it is His desire that all men be saved and His will that all men be saved.

For example, if God wills, desires and commands all men love Him with all their hearts does He take every action that is necessary and sufficient to make sure they do?

Some Scripture and even translation on that would be helpful.

I have seen in many comments the notion that if God desires something for every man, then He "must" supply every man what is necessary or sufficient to make His desire a reality. While that notion may seem implied, it really isn't an implication. God can desire every man everywhere never sin but He hasn't give every man everywhere His Holy Spirit nor has He glorified them where they could be sinless. So, while God may desire something He doesn't by necessity have to supply the means to accomplish His desire.

Mak, I think you and I have gone back and forth on this issue before but given Jade's perspective, I think it is worthwhile to set forth explicitly how God's "desire" for something to happen means that He does what is necessary and sufficient to make it happen. Especially given the topic specifically addressed in this post about those who do not hear.

And I want to interject the story I know you both know where Jesus chastens Chorazin for not repenting after the miracles they had seen and He says that Sodom would have repented if those miracles had been done in their midst which of course they weren't. Given God's desire that all men be saved, at some point prior to final hardening and destruction wouldn't God by your positions have done those miracles in Sodom

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/20 10:51

It may depend on how important the desire is.

A new mother desires that her child take nourishment. We would think a mother monstrous who desires that her child eat, but who refuses to feed him when she has the power to do so.

In God's case it is a tad trickier because everything is in His power.

If we say God desires all men to come to Him *on their own*, it sounds better but seems contrary to certain scriptures.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 12:01

My question really is.....when God in Scripture expresses desire for something to happen does He as a rule give all sufficient means to those whom He desires something from. Todd I think you have rightly noted that not all hear and yet God desires all be saved. You are left with an inherent problem with reasoning that says God's desire equals God's provision.

From the Bible I tried to show that God desires all to repent but then He doesn't provide the miracles which Jesus declares would've worked to cause Sodom to repent. To me, this one example puts a whole in the argument that if God desires something from men or for men, then He will logically, automatically and consistent with His character provide all men the sufficient means to receive or attain what He genuinely desires.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/20 12:37

//You are left with an inherent problem with reasoning that says God's desire equals God's provision. //

Actually I did not say that.

What I said or implied is that a human who desires something good for a loved one does not HAVE to help even if they are able. However, a human who refuses to help a loved one in a vital matter, or a life and death matter, when it is in their power to do so, would require that we conclude one of three things: 1) the person does not REALLY love the other person, 2) The person really doesn't desire to help, or 3) the person is insane or evil.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 12:49

What do you conclude then about God from the Chorazin example?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/20 14:39

//What do you conclude then about God from the Chorazin example?//

That Jesus is using a rhetorical device.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 14:44

By logic, then, His curse of increased punishment on Chorazin relative to Sodom is a rhetorical curse?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 15:06

Todd. I understand better now your line of thinking and do see now that if I held to your way of thinking then what happens to the vast majority of people who God has not taken the Gospel to is a huge challenge to how the love of God works out. I think you would clearly agree that believing in Jesus is the primary way we get to Heaven. So, the vast majority don't hear but at the same time the vast majority of those going to heaven have heard. Otherwise, the Gospel going out was never that necessary in the first place. Not trying to put words in your mouth just following through on your logic.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/20 15:52

Some people might say "how do we not know that Jesus has not preached to Sodom and Tyre and Sidon?"

I won't go quite that far.

Some people would also say "God is a debtor to no man."

I can't go quite that far either.

I just trust that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Really right, not a pretend right.

A "pretend" right is saying that everything God does is right. If we think God does something that does not seem

ight, then it likely means God is not doing what we think.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 17:15

I know Todd that you've probably heard this before, but just in case, there is a line of thinking based in Scripture that says God has a special or family love for His children and He has a different love for mankind generally. One is that of a Father and the other is that of a love of pity that is genuinely concerned about the good of those who have made themselves, by their sin, His enemies. The Creator's love of pity and loving concern is indeed great and very concerned for physical, emotional, and spiritual need. It is a temporal love though that will one day end when His patience with His enemies has run out.

The love of the Father though is exceedingly special and far reaching beginning before time and extending forever.

Most people who hold to your view, perhaps not you, view God's love as the same all the way around when it comes to mankind generally. No distinction between the Father's love of His own children and the love of the Creator for His enemies.

The problem of this view among other conflicts it has with Scripture is that God may love me today with a Father's love but tomorrow He may pour out His wrath and hatred toward me forever if I don't believe in His Son. This seems logically strange to me and I'm sure given how I see you think, you would agree. That is why I assume you in the past seemed to struggle with the eternal destruction idea of Hell. How could lavish love turn so abruptly into unending hate?

Further, as you say, how could someone who loves me so extravagantly not make sure I get the opportunity to hear about Jesus. Not just me, but billions of others. It seems wholly inadequate to just throw my hands up in the air and say "well, I guess it will all make sense one day" or "won't God do right?" Of course we know He will be righteous, but often that means justice and not mercy.

I think we have all been struggling with the definition of God's love more than anything else. For me, it isn't a struggle at all as I receive what I see in Scripture as a strong statement that God has an electing love that began in His will before the foundation of the world. Undeserved by far.

As a father, I get this. I love my own children. I love the brethren. I love my neighbor. I love my enemies. In the Bible, each of these loves is defined differently and the standards of affection, responsibility and sacrifice for each is set forth explicitly and they are different. I see a perfect symmetry in our Father's love and levels of love. He has loved and will love His children forever, affectionately and without limit. He loves His enemies, whom He has known forever, with a far reaching love, even to the giving of His own Son to die for them, but there is a limit to this love. It is a great and undeserved love that God deserves amazing praise for. But there is a limit. A limitation as to who gets to hear of Him and how long His patience will endure them.

I would struggle if I thought God loved me immensely today but someday soon He would hate me forever with unbelievable eternal wrath. I would struggle if God loved me immensely but failed when He could easily do it, to get me the Gospel of His beloved Son so I could know Him and love Him if that is what I really wanted and He just arbitrarily decided not to get me that Gospel. So, either God is unloving or His love is discriminating. I think that is where you get to. It makes no sense to sugar coat or white wash reality by saying I'm sure He provides a multitude of ways for billions of people to know Jesus or be saved other than the Gospel. There is a boat load of Scripture that casts great doubt on that approach.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/20 17:48

I can agree with every word you are saying if and only if you throw out the doctrine that God decides in advance who will and who will not "œget in.œ

If you aren't willing to throw out that doctrine, then you are left with the inescapable conclusion that man's sin has nothing to do with it- rather it's only God's choice that matters- for who can resist God?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/20 18:33

Thank you Robert for sharing your thoughts.

I am not drawn to the maze of attempting to trace the logic of God stating He desires to save all men and the logical implications of these definitive statements. I do not have to understand how God works to accept what God says. If He makes an indicative statement that He wills, or desires, all men to be saved, then He does - I accept this by faith.

I am content to ascertain by study whether or not the writers of the Old and New Testament made definitive statements about God's will. If Paul definitively stated that God desires all men to be saved. Then it is clear Paul believed this and taught this. The statement stands on its own. I will not subject Paul's indicative declaration to my subjective reasoning.

If Ezekiel heard God tell Him that He did not desire (will) the death of the wicked, but that the wicked would turn from his way and live, then I am content to hold this statement as indicative of God's will. The statement stands on its own indicative merit. I need not wait to accept it based upon whether it passes the test of human logic.

You seem to be holding these indicative, definitive statements to the test of human logic. Why is that necessary? God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not as our thoughts...you know the rest - they are vastly higher than our human logic will ever attain to. This does not mean we do not use our capacity to reason, but we do not subject indicative facts to logical scrutiny.

If John wrote an indicative statement that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, then I am content to say definitively Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. I do not have to work out any logical support to hold this as truth.

Do you believe John the apostle's indicative statement that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world? Do you believe Paul's indicative statement that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth?

I am not interested in trying to reconcile every aspect of mercy and judgment with human logic.

And here are some thoughts in reference to the statement our Lord made concerning the judgment facing the cities in which most of His miracles were done. His statement does not draw our attention to the questioning why the miracles were not performed in Tyre and Sidon. His definitive statement draws our attention to the day of judgment where according to His definitive statement it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon than for Chorazin and Bethsaida. You are looking back with questions, while Jesus was directing us ahead with a warning. What is to be taken from His indicative statement is that on the day of judgment, it will be worse for the cities in which most of His miracles were done. I do not believe the destruction of Tyre and Sidon was "the final" destruction for them.

Let's take up the discussion from here. Please let me know if you understand my thoughts and you are welcome to respond to them in a way that will help me further.

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/20 21:23

Mak, Perhaps you can help me understand the difference or sameness of God's will and His desire?

Re: Testimony - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/5/21 1:19

Could the difference between Sodom and Chorazin be found in the testimony?

(My understanding) is that Jesus is differentiating between, the testimony of the Abrahamic to Sodom even involving Lot, with the testimony (+miracles) that came from Himself. With the later being a more potent or substantive version being able to identify that testimony to a literal incarnation in man who lived and walked among them. Suggesting (or stating) that His testimony of God's mercy is the culmination of all God's activities on earth. No one has ever made such a claim before, much less performed the physical miracles to back it up but Jesus did and as such considered it a more compelling expression of God's desire which calls for them to repent and choose to yield to His will. Love always involves a choice.

In order for us to come into His will we must respond to His desire (His call) for us to come to Him. His desire offers us the choice to obey Him in love, that obedience is faith. Or to say it another way, faith is the response.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/21 6:57

Mak, "Perhaps you can help me understand the difference or sameness of God's will and His desire?"

My own present understanding (which is still in process) of the meaning of "will" and "desire" has come from the study of the words chosen by biblical writers in their various contexts.

There are two principal words that are translated "will" and "desire". English translators use different words for these two Greek words depending upon their best judgment.

The two most prominently used words are θέλω and βούλομαι. My practice has been to study the use of these two words and their respective word families in both the LXX (Septuagint) and the Greek New Testament. The writers of the New Testament drew their understanding of these word groups from their usage in the Old Testament.

In addition to this, I research the work of men who devoted their lives to studying the language and making their research available to us. I am so thankful to God that He raised up men who poured their lives into gleaning the original meaning of the writer.

Here is a sample of what I have gathered so far in my study of these two words.

θέλω - Usage: I will, wish, desire, am willing, intend, design. (usage in context determines the meaning) 2309 /βούλομαι ("to desire, wish") is commonly used of the Lord extending His "best-offer" to the believer who is wanting (desiring) to birth His persuasion (faith) in them which also empowers, manifests His presence

The corresponding Noun - βούλησις - Usage: an act of will, will; wishes, desires. (again - usage in context determines the meaning) 2307 /βούλησις (from 2309 /βούλομαι, "to desire, wish") properly, a desire (wish), often referring to God's "preferred-will," i.e. His "best-offer" to people which can be accepted or rejected.

βούλομαι - Usage: I will, intend, desire, wish. 1014 βούλομαι to plan with full resolve (determination) βούλομαι ("resolutely plan") is a strong term that underlines the predetermined (and determined) intention driving the planning (wishing, resolving). In contrast, 2309 (βούλομαι) focuses on the desire ("wishfulness") behind making an offer (cf. TDNT, 1, 629)

βούλομαι...βούλησις - the corresponding noun: Usage: counsel, deliberate wisdom, decree (again: usage in context determines meaning) a resolved plan, used particularly of the immutable aspect of God's plan purposefully arranging all physical circumstances, which guarantees every scene of life works to His eternal purpose

One way to glean the dynamic nuances of the meaning of these two terms is to study passages where the same writer has decided to use them together. When they are used alongside each other, the writer had a distinction in his mind and

What do you think?

If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

SO IT IS NOT THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN THAT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES PERISH.

By whose will and provisions are we cleansed and made righteous?

Jer. 31:33 â€

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I WILL put My Law within them and on their heart I WILL write it; and I WILL be their God, and they shall be My people.

Ezek. 36:25-27 â€

Then I WILL sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I WILL cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Moreover, I WILL give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I WILL remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

I WILL put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Heb. 8:12 â€

For I WILL be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I WILL remember no more.â€

GOD WILL!

Quote:
----- Given God's desire that all men be saved, at some point prior to final hardening and destruction wouldn't God by your positions have done those miracles in Sodom

Is there really no "second chance" after a man dies?

Ps. 90:3 â€

You turn man back into dust

And say, "Return, O children of men."

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/21 7:55

Thanks Mak. I look forward to what you present.

I am particularly interested in Scripture where God says He does not desire the death of the wicked but then He without any contradiction kills the wicked. I totally understand their sin caused it. It seems though that in this obvious and pervasive case that will and desire are two entirely different things on its face. You could not say God does not will the death of the wicked. Second, isn't it reasonable to assume that if God wills something that He must also desire it. In the case of the death of the wicked, them, God does not desire the death of the wicked on one level but at some point His desire for justice and righteous rises higher than His lack of desire for the death of the wicked. What I'm getting at is God's desires are manifold and coexisting and it would be potential error to take one expression of desire and make that a monolith for some doctrinal application.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/21 8:14

Agreed Robert,

If you have access to it, This resource has done a great deal of work to explain, with biblical and historical documentatio n, the usage and nuances of both words.

The writers have provided the passages each word is used along with their studies and reasons for how the meaning sh ould be understood in its context.

Theological dictionary of the New Testament Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

If you do not have access, I have the entire series in digitally linked searchable format. I would be happy to copy and pa ste entire sections and email them to you so that you can study them at your own convenience.

mak

added: Robert you wrote: "It seems though that in this obvious and pervasive case that will and desire are two entirely different things on its face. You could not say God does not will the death of the wicked."

If you or I could not say that God does not will the death of the wicked...what confidence can you have in scripture when the writer DOES SAY EXACTLY THAT! We can question what is meant by the statement - but if we believe that what is written is "god-breathed" then we CAN SAY IT!

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/21 8:36

Here is one verse that directly addresses your desire.

Ezekiel 33:11

Îµá¼°î€½ Î±á½•î„îçáç-î, î-áç¶ á¼•î³îŽ, î„î-î îµ î»î-î³îµî¹ î°î•î¹îçî, îŸá½• î²îçî•î»îçî¼î±î¹ î„á½, î½ î½-î½î±î„îçî½ î„îçá çî á¼€îfîµî²îçáçî, á½î, î„á½, á¼€îçîfî„î•î-î¹î±¹ î„á½, î½ á¼€îfîµî²áç† á¼€î€á½, î„áç†î, á½•î¹îçáçî î±á½•î„îçáçî î°î±á ½¶ î¶áç†î½ Î±á½•î„îçî½. á¼€îçîfî„î•îçî†áç† á¼€îçîfî„î•î-î¹î±î„îµ á¼€î€á½, î„áç†î, á½•î¹îçáçî: á½î¼áç¶î½, î°î±á½¶ á¼µî½î± î„î- á¼€îçî½áç„îfî°îµî, îµ, îçá¼¶î°îçî, î™îfî•î±î»

"Speak to them, as I live, thus says the Lord, I do not purpose the death of the ungodly (Christ died for the ungodly) so a s the ungodly to turn from his way and him to live; also in order that you do not die house of Israel"

î²îçî•î»îçî¼î±î¹ - here is a present "Middle" indicative verb, the nuance of the middle voice here reflects the action of the verb back to the subject in a unique way. God does not either for Himself or by himself purpose, plan, the death of the w icked.

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/22 6:37

Hi Mak,

When Paul describes the conversion of the Gentiles in 2 Cor4:6, he, by the Spirit says, and I'm paraphrasing, they repe nted and believed when God shone the light of the glory of Himself in Christ into their hearts. Thus, spiritual vision is the key to repentance. Vision of God's glory.

In the case of those who hear the Gospel or even those who saw Jesus in the flesh when He was on earth, they had phy sical vision of God's glory in Jesus and His deeds but lacked spiritual vision because of their hardened hearts caused by their own sin. They could see God's glory but they couldn't spiritually see.

I think the prime example is the thief on the cross who in one moment was mocking Jesus because of what he saw with his physical eyes and suddenly in an instant he "saw" Jesus with his heart as Lord and Savior.

Like, Job, or Isaiah, or John the apostle, there's a seeing God through human perception and knowledge and then there is a spiritual seeing that undoes a man and moves him to repent and fall on his face.

All men can plainly see the glory of God in creation in a physical human knowledge sense but only some see His glory in the heart and repent and give Him thanks and glory. Some men are given a clearer picture of His glory in the face of Jesus through the preaching of Jesus and can know about him with the physical mind. Yet, Paul makes clear this isn't enough. God must shine light spiritually into the heart so they can truly see the glory of God in Jesus. Then, they are moved to repentance and faith in Him as God's true Son.

It's spiritual sight that is missing for men to see the glory of God whether they've heard the gospel or not.

So, once again, it comes down to this..... does God shine His spiritual light and vision of His glory into every man's heart? Can God be faulted if He shows men His glory physically to their own minds either in nature, the conscience in the law, or even a physical encounter with Jesus and His power and loving deeds? No.

All men have a witness of God.

The key is does God shine a "brighter" light to all. Paul would say no. He said, we were converted when God shone this spiritual vision into our hearts. When spiritual sight is given, men see God's glory. There were two thieves on crosses mocking Jesus. They both saw the same bloody mess. One was instantly given heart vision, spiritual light, and in a miracle that the other did not receive, both equally guilty of similar sin, even though they were both mere feet away from Jesus having the cross preach to them both about Jesus, and one didn't see the glory, and one did.

The fundamental question for what happens to all mankind who have minds to know the glory of God in everything is, has God shone into their hearts with spiritual vision and not just into their minds with natural information which they suppress because of their sinful hard hearts. I have concluded from Scripture that all men have knowledge of God's glory, only some are given spiritual understanding to see the glory, moving them, like many saints in the OT and NT, to repentance and faith.

What happens to those who don't know is the wrong question. All know the glory in some measure. The question is..... Since all know, how does one get a better spiritual vision that a hardened heart refuses to see?

ADD: If all men received spiritual sight of the glory of God, then here would be the testimony of billions:

"I am an atheist, a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Hindu, etc. Then one day, God gave me a clear understanding that He is truly God or that Jesus is truly His Son. It was nice, but I'm going to continue the way I was. I was amazed at His glory, I saw His beauty and love, I was afraid of His holiness that I saw, but I'm perfectly content with the lies I was choosing to believe instead."

Haven't heard that testimony and I've been all over the world sharing Jesus. Maybe others have.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/22 8:16

Robert-

If the Pharisees in Jesus's day were honest that is exactly what they would say.

ADD: it seems you are reading way yonder more into 2 Cor.4:6 than is warranted.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/22 8:27

Thanks Todd, I think the Bible says it is much more than that. There is a hardening by God that has occurred because of sin. A stubborn, evil and rebellious heart is involved. A heart that hates what God loves and loves what God hates is involved. A soul that hates God is involved. A sinful nature is involved.

Dishonesty and a suppression of the truth, a belief in lies, is just the soul's way of giving sway to evil desires and intent ion and the soul is trying to push the guilt down in their conscience so they can keep right on doing what they love. I know you know all that.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/22 9:18

Todd, do you think the thief on the cross who didn't turn to Jesus actually saw Jesus as King of Heaven and able to deliver him to paradise but, as he's dying, decided to be dishonest about it?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/22 11:45

No- but I think the Pharisees certainly did.

It is possible the rich young ruler did as well, but I like to think he eventually came around.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/22 11:56

Why do you think "certainly". I'm not trying to use Scripture to play "I gotcha". Maybe this will change your mind. This Scripture just came to mind when I read your post that clearly states that they did not understand as you suspected:

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. - 1 Corinthians 2:6-7

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" - 1 Corinthians 2:8-9

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/22 14:10

He said, "Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, "We see," your guilt remains.

John 9:38-41

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/22 15:03

Thanks Todd. I have always thought that the passage you quoted pointed to the pride of the Pharisees in their own wisdom and was not actually proof they understood. Here is a second verse speaking to the Pharisees and other Jews of their "ignorance and blindness" or lack of understanding because of judicial hardening:

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.

And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables,

so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven." - Mark 4:10-12

Understanding, spiritual sight and wisdom, is a gift.

And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. - Matthew 13:11-12

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, - Luke 24:45

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/22 17:16

There is no doubt, at least in my mind, the Pharisees saw Gods glory in the miracles and words of Jesus, and they knew he was telling the absolute truth, but willfully chose not to believe because it threatened their power structure.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/22 17:47

Thank you Robert for the discussion. Although we differ in our understanding of the means by which God's grace quickens the person who responds to the gospel, I am very aware that unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that try to build it. I remember our Lord's words that it takes the drawing of the Father for men to come.

I have the privilege of preaching and teaching regularly, and more than ever in my journey, I am aware that the response of the heart is more than just a result of my sharing. I seek to set forth the truth plainly so as to commend myself before every man's conscience, and I hope that the grace of God will awaken the heart bound or dead in sin.

I am entirely dependent upon the Lord adding to the number of saints that I gather with. Nearly every time I am quieting my soul before the Lord and seeking to yield to His Spirit, I consciously acknowledge that He alone can circumcise the heart and that repentance is a gift of grace.

Thank you for your thoughtful dialogue. I have always been stimulated by it.

mak

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2020/5/22 18:18

Brothers, is there anyway that this might help ?

I just happened to come across this ,.. have just started listening,..thought it quite interesting,thought on this conversation you are having here.

.....

â€œThe Sovereignty of Godâ€

By Arthur W.Pink

,...<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXh9ZdxC1MM&feature=share>

â€-â€-â€-â€-
elizabeth

Re: AWP - posted by savannah, on: 2020/5/22 21:18

Elibeth,

"The Sovereignty of God" by Arthur W. Pink is a classic on the subject. It is a favorite of mine. Thanks for mentioning it.

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2020/5/22 21:30

You are welcome, Savana

*I will put the website here again,.. something seems to have went wrong on last try.....I noticed it wasnâ€™t working as it should. Sorry about that.

.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXh9ZdxC1MM&feature=share>

â€-â€-â€-â€-â€-

elizabeth

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/23 5:54

thanks Mak, to the praise of the glory of His grace we will join hands one day to shout together. :)

Re: - posted by savannah, on: 2020/5/23 21:25

Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, "We see," your guilt remains.

The key to understanding this are the words "YOU SAY".

They, in their pride said, "we see".

Jesus Himself doesn't say that they actually do see.

He says that their guilt remains because 'they say' that 'they see'.

If such were not the case this following verse would be meaningless;

The ear that hears and the eye that sees - the Lord has made even the both of them. Proverbs 20:12

Robert, you have accurately handled the Word of Truth. Thanks for doing so. I've been following this thread all along. The verses in 1 Corinthians 2 and Mark 4 which you brought to the table are enough to clearly show the truth of the matter with the Pharisees and all others who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/24 8:54

There is a difference between ignorance and willful ignorance, the latter being far worse. The Pharisees were guilty of willful ignorance, which is just a way of saying they were not really ignorant at all.

ADD: if the Pharisees were truly innocent because God had not really "opened their eyes," why did Jesus seem so angry and frustrated with them all of the time?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 9:58

Robert and Savannah, - I hope that both of you realize that you are attempting to express something that is eisegesis - reading into the text.

It is clear from exegesis that word for knowledge is *ginosko* and *epiginosko*. You are affirming a type of Gnosticism which I do not believe either of you intend to do. Please come consider this. You are saying that there is a hidden knowledge only offered to the elect. The rest of the people can never really know. Therefore yourselves and the other elect are the only ones who really are "in the know".

This is not what Romans 10 says. When Paul asked "did they not know" - he was speaking of personal experience with God: You are reading into the text a type of "knowing" not in Paul's mind.

Mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 10:13

Hi Mak, Maybe my language has not been precise or useful so I will pass along a very familiar verse that explains what is required to "know" and this even for believers.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. - Ephesians 3:14-19

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 10:18

Robert,

Please study the two uses of *ἐπίγνωσκα* in II Peter chapter 1 and chapter 2. The first is clearly used of *the elect*. Please explain in your own words, why we should not understand it as the very same type of knowledge in chapter 2

Mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 10:24

Thanks Mak. I'll look those up and try to respond. What do you think the Ephesians passage means?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 13:33

The Ephesians passage is Paul's prayer for every Christian to receive the imparted ability from the Holy Spirit for a spiritual establishing through the indwelling of Christ. To enable believers to fully grasp the personal knowledge of the love of God in a way that would propel them to the fullest experience of the life of Christ.

This same word *ἐπίγνωσκα* that Paul uses the intensified form *ἐπίγνωσκα* in I Timothy that God desires *all men* to COME to the full-knowledge of the truth.

In your study please include Paul's different meanings for this word to offer support to your ideas about different types of knowledge.

Mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 14:58

Mak,

So God must impart this *knowing* was my point. He must do something in the heart that gives an experience of the love of Jesus. Knowing in an intimate personal sense seems to require a gift from Him in power. This isn't just agreeing with a kind of information knowing. Even the devils know in this sense and James says informational knowledge is not faith. This concept of spiritual understanding that comes from a God given spirit of revelation and God given wisdom isn't Gnosticism and I'm truly regretful if you might think it is because the Scripture speaks abundantly and often of the Spirit revealing, teaching and, most importantly, making Jesus *real* in the heart.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 16:30

Robert, please know that I have understood your point that God must impart the knowing, but please attempt to address my sincere questions about your point.

Are you asking me to just take your point by faith and not test it with the scriptures. Please explain why Peter and Paul both use the same word "gnosko" and "epignosko" for the elect and the non-elect.

My point is that there is no such word for this "God born knowledge" in the scriptures. I can see where you infer it. That I accept as sincere on your part and reasonable.

But even in Romans 10, Paul uses "gnosko" for Israel when he made the statement - "did Israel not KNOW".

Peter uses the very same form of the word "epignvosko" for being equipped with everything necessary for life and godliness through the "epignosko" of the One having called us. Here you would say this is the God-given knowledge. Am I correct? This is only logically consistent with what you are saying.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: What about those who do not know?

Then in chapter 2, he writes it would have been better for them not to have KNOWN -"epignosko" in the Greek Perfect active indicative to describe someone who you would say is "NOT" the elect.

Please explain in your own words this discrepancy. Also, please know that I am not saying that your advocating a God born knowledge is Gnosticism. We all depend upon the grace of revelation to know Him. My point is that you are inferring that God is not offering this "knowledge" to everyone. That is the gnostic element I am getting at.

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 16:56

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 16:56

Hi Mak, Without any false humility, my words or opinions matter not. Here are some verses that underscore what I was trying to say.

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, - Ephesians 1:17

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. - Matthew 16:17

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see (one common usage of perceive) the kingdom of God." - John 3:3.

But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. - Luke 18:34

One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. - Acts 16:14

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; - Colossians 1:9-10

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 17:41

Robert, I am very aware of every scripture you have quoted and many more supporting what you are saying.

There are scriptures that need to be reconciled with these scriptures you are not addressing. Is there a reason for that.

I acknowledge that many passages speak of God giving the spirit of wisdom and revelation, shining the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, etc.

There are many other passages that speak clearly of men "refusing this knowledge that God was actively seeking to impart to them. The passages that I have asked you to speak to are just the beginning.

If you do not want to make any attempt to speak directly to them, then I will accept it and let it go, but you have not even attempted to address my sincere objection to your premise that God never attempted to give them the special revelatory saving knowledge.

mak

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 17:52

Perhaps these questions will help you understand my objections to your premise that God does not offer saving knowledge of Himself to any but the elect.

So when God describes Israel as "unhearing" and "refusing to receive correction." What knowledge is He seeking to give them? He just wants to improve their earthly state before they are condemned forever?

What was God seeking to do? What purpose did He have in attempting to turn them back to Himself (while still withholding the special revelatory saving knowledge).

Can you address what kind of mercy God was offering them? What was He attempting to accomplish in their hearts? Does God raise up a prophet and speak to people for over 23 years even though He has never intended to give them the "saving knowledge" because they are not His elect.

Please explain this.

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 17:54

Hi Mak. I never have doubted that God on one level reaches out with general revelation to all or even a face to face revelation with some and that men have in evil refused of their own sin to see. We agree.

The problem is "now what". The answer is here:

But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. - Deuteronomy 29:4

These Israelites had literally "seen" it all and yet.....

You said you are aware of all these Scriptures I have set forth but you have not given them their plain meaning. Reconciliation with your Scriptures isn't required if you and I already agree that

God reaches out and man, in his sinful heart, refuses. We are in total agreement. I with all respect think that you have not

Told me what all these passages I have quoted mean. I feel like you just tell me what they can't mean.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 18:30

Normally brother Robert, you make the effort to actually answer questions, and I do the same with you.

You have not attempted to answer my questions and have instead have asked me to respond to yours.

This is disappointing. I will wait to respond to the scriptures you have posted, if and when you make a real attempt to explain what type of knowledge was God seeking to impart when He was actively speaking to Israel through the prophets?

If He had no intention of ever saving them, what repentance was He desiring? What did He want them to hear? What purpose was He trying to get them to repent for?

In your mind, it was not to save them, so please explain in your own words, what all these attempts were to accomplish.

mak

Re: Re - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/24 20:12

I really am trying to answer your questions but I think we are talking past each other. God has always reached out to mankind generally and especially to Jews as His special people. He reached out but they did not all have circumscised hearts. In spite of this general revelation and special revelation, there was a remnant, by His grace, who had hearts to understand and who desired to respond by faith. It was a small group compared to the whole.

Mak, we have gone back and forth on this in other threads. You clearly aren't persuaded that faith is a gift that all don't have because all don't receive. I think Scripture is clear that repentance and faith are a gift from God that not all receive. Faithfulness is a gift of the Spirit and Galatians makes that ultra clear. All God's children have all the gifts of the Spirit.

If you don't want to give meaning to the Scriptures that I set forth it's not a problem. I was afraid this was turning into a sparring match and that isn't a good thing.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/24 20:27

We do agree that men can refuse what God offers, and that without His offer, there is nothing to respond to.

The answer to every scripture you have posted is so simple, God offered and men responded in faith. When men respond in faith to God's grace, His desire is born in their lives, whether it be salvation, repentance, understanding, or any other of the many forms of mercy He offers to men.

I have very carefully considered the implication of your position that God does not offer the ultimate gift of repentance unto life except to the elect. Your position is that their receiving of the gift reveals that they were the elect of God.

I am asking you to explain the instances where men refuse what God is seeking to do in their life. I know you believe men can refuse, but do I understand correctly, that you do not believe those who refuse were offered the same repentance unto life that men who received it were offered?

Do you understand my concern, am I understanding you correctly. I am not asking if you agree that men have refused God's general revelation. I am asking if men have ever refused His offer of repentance unto life?

How can I be more clear? The prophets pleaded with the people who never responded. Are you saying, that everything God was speaking to those who refused to repent was "less than the gift of repentance unto life?"

This is where I lose your logic. I have asked you to explain it yourself, but you simply return to the presenting your understanding that men respond because God offered them the "full" repentance grace. All the others who God pleaded with and did not respond, never had the same equal offer although it seemed that God was attempting to show them something.

Is this not a fair representation of your position?

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/25 7:14

Hi Mak. My personal opinion or position doesn't matter. Let's just let the Scripture given by you and me speak by the Spirit to those who were interested and leave it to the Lord. Thanks for the interaction.

