

An open book is shown from a high angle, with its pages slightly curved. The book is set against a dark, almost black background. The text is overlaid in white, centered on the pages. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the paper and the binding of the book.

“What If They Never Hear the
Gospel Preached?”

2Thes. 1:4-10

2Thes. 1:4-10

- “...We ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”

Many Resolve This By Teaching That The Ignorant Are Saved

- “Since Christ is the Word of God and the Truth of God, he may be received even by those who have not heard of his manifestation in the flesh... We have, therefore, the hope that even among the heathen there may be some ... who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit working through the truth of nature and conscience, have found the way to life and salvation.” (A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, 1909).

Many Resolve This By Teaching That The Ignorant Are Saved

- “Even some two thousand years after the Great Commission, more people in the world have not heard the gospel than have heard it. The secret things do belong to God, but Christians and non-Christians alike cannot help wondering about the justice as well as the compassion of a God who assigns to eternal torment people who, for reasons beyond their control, never heard about fellowship with him through Jesus Christ ... Our opinion is that scripture does not automatically assign the un-evangelized to endless hell.” (Virgil Warren, *What the Bible Says About Salvation*, 1982).

Many Resolve This By Teaching That The Ignorant Are Saved

- “Although the Scriptures never explicitly teach that someone who has never heard of Jesus can be saved, we do not believe that it infers this. We do believe that every person will have an opportunity to repent, and that God will not exclude anyone because he happened to be born at the wrong place and at the wrong time.” (Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions*, 1993).

What Saith The Scriptures?

- If these declarations are true and those who may have never heard the Gospel are saved, why did Jesus give the Great Commission?
 - Matt. 28:18-20 - “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- If people who never heard it are saved, then teaching them the gospel puts their souls in jeopardy.
- They might hear the gospel and reject it
 - Heb. 10:26 - “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- They might obey the gospel and later fall away
 - Heb. 6:4-6 - “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Would it not have been more merciful on the Lord's part to keep salvation a secret, leaving everyone ignorant and saved by default?
- Even if they did respond to the gospel, they were already saved before hearing the gospel, and the gospel had no impact on their salvation.

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Why are people lost? Are they lost because of ignorance or because they have sinned against God?
- Ignorance of a law does not void the law.

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Jesus was killed by the Jews in ignorance
 - Acts 3:17-19 - “Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”
- If ignorance equals innocence, then the Jews committed no sin when they crucified Jesus

What Saith The Scriptures?

- God once overlooked the ignorance of the Gentiles, but now commands repentance from everyone
 - Acts 17:30-31 - “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Those who sinned under the Law of Moses are judged by that law, and those who sinned without the law also perish. Having or not having the law did not alter the outcome.
 - Rom. 2:12 - “For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- People are lost because their sins create a breach between them and God
 - Isa. 59:2 - “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”
 - Rom. 3:23 - “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
 - Rom. 6:23 - “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Without salvation, all humankind remains condemned
 - Rom. 5:10, 18 - “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life... 18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- How are people saved?
- We can be saved from our sins
 - Isa. 1:18-20 - “Come now, and 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 be as 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 devoured by the sword; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Christ died for our sins
 - 1Cor. 15:3 - “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”
 - Rom. 5:8-9 - “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”
 - John 14:6 - “Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- There is no other means available. There is no other plan of salvation.
- If people can be saved without the death of Christ, then why did God send Him to die?
- If salvation can be had through ignorance, it is better to leave the whole world in ignorance

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Only in Christ can one have:
- Redemption
 - Rom. 3:24 - “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”
- Eternal life
 - Rom. 6:23 - “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Only in Christ can one have:
- Every spiritual blessing
 - Eph. 1:3 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”
- Forgiveness
 - Col. 1:14 - “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- Only in Christ can one have:
- Salvation
 - 2Tim. 2:10 - “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- There is only one way into Christ to obtain these things
 - Gal. 3:27 - “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
 - Rom. 6:3-4 - “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- What happens to those outside of Christ?
 - 2Thes. 1:8-9 - “In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”
- Who will be destroyed? The disobedient and the ignorant; ignorance does not save.

What Saith The Scriptures?

- To whom has God promised salvation? Those who:
 - Hear the message - Rom. 10:17
 - Believe the word of God - John 3:16
 - Repent of their sins - Luke 13:3
 - Confess Christ - Rom. 10:9-10
 - Are cleansed of their sins by baptism - Acts 2:38, 22:16; 1Peter 3:21
 - Remain faithful - Rev. 2:10

What Saith The Scriptures?

- God is the Judge, not me
 - Gen. 18:25 - “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”
- But He is the Judge, and He will use His own eternal, infinite wisdom, not my very limited, very biased judgment
 - Isa. 55:8-9 - “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

What Saith The Scriptures?

- We must put our trust in God, including trusting Him to handle the Judgment perfectly
 - Psalm 103:11 - “For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him”
 - Psalm 130:7 - “O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption.”