

What About Those Who Have Never Heard Of Jesus?



Often times when Christians humbly echo Jesus' Truth that there is only one way to God (**John 14:6; 3:16-20**), you may hear a question framed this way: "So you're telling me that those who've never heard of Jesus are going to Hell?" Or, "So you're telling me that that innocent native who has never heard of Jesus is going to Hell?" However you hear it, it's one of the most emotionally laden questions that a Christian can ever be asked.

Nothing is more terrifying or more awful to contemplate than that any human being would go to hell. On the surface, when we ask a question like that, what's lurking there is, "How could a loving God ever possibly send some person to hell who never even had the opportunity to hear of the Savior? It just doesn't seem right." (Right to WHO? Can you hear the ENTITLEMENT mentality?).

Often times, the Bible's answer to that question "What about those who have never heard of Jesus?" is misrepresented by people like Rob Bell, author of *Love Wins*, who in an interview with Sally Quinn of *The Washington Post*: "If billions & billions & billions of people, God is going to torture them in Hell forever – people who never heard about Jesus are going to suffer in agony b/c they didn't believe in the Jesus they never heard of – then @ that point we have a far greater problem than the thesis of my book. (a loving God would never send anyone to hell b/c that's His nature)

So what about those who've never heard? To get us thinking, that might be a good question after all, b/c the question could be followed up w/another question: Heard WHAT?

There's TWO WAYS of doing Bible Study: **DEDUCTIVE and INDUCTIVE.**

- **DEDUCTIVE:** Begin with the point you want to make, then gather evidence from Scripture to make the point you want to make. PROBLEM: Taking Scripture out of context.
- **INDUCTIVE:** Begin with Scripture and let Scripture itself, in context, lead you to the point SCRIPTURE wants to make, to the intention of the AUTHOR & ultimately the HOLY SPIRIT. What does SCRIPTURE say?

We're going to do an INDUCTIVE Bible Study on a section of Scripture that speaks directly to this issue: **Romans 1:18-32**

1st, There's something about the POWER of the GOSPEL.

- **It is for EVERYONE who BELIEVES.** Believes WHAT? What they WANT to believe? Or does belief have an object? The OBJECT of belief is JESUS.
- **It is offered to all RELIGIONS** (Jews & Greeks are both religious, just in different ways (Greeks worshipped wisdom & achievement). Everyone is religious. It's DNA'd into ALL God's image-bearers). & the offer of the Gospel is for all people in all places @ all times.
- **It is all about Righteousness through FAITH (trusting in Jesus) and not WORKS.** Both Jews & Greeks who profess some kind of "religious beliefs" and those who claim to have no "religious beliefs" are still trying to be their own Lord (I call the shots) / Savior (I can redeem myself).

2nd, There's something about the PSYCHOLOGY of IDOLATRY.

Here's how this UNIVERSAL PROCESS GOES (#1 sin of mankind is IDOLATRY – EVERY Bible book counters it!)

- **God REVEALS the TRUTH about Himself to ALL.** The Teacher (God) has not failed to teach. What may be known about God (His POWER & NATURE) is obvious and plain. We see Truths about God in the things that have been made, in God's creation (1:20). We look @ the moon in its beauty, the sun in its brightness, the stars in their order, the detail of the human body, the mountains, the oceans, the multitudes of SPECIES of insects & animals and there's no doubt that behind all this is A CREATOR GOD of intelligence, power, majesty, and mercy. ALL PEOPLE are WITHOUT EXCUSE for NOT knowing God as He is revealed (in nature, and confirmed in the Bible).
- **The TRUTH about God is TRAUMATIC** (because it requires a shift in BELIEF & BEHAVIOR.) God speaks His TRUTH into the minds and morals of His image-bearers, and with our minds and morality, because we are sinful & self-centered, this Truth TRAUMATIZES us. "How DARE this God . . . ?" "WHAT KIND OF GOD would . . . ?" (make me this way, let this happen . . .)
- **The TRUTH about God is REJECTED, REPRESSED, and REDIRECTED.** People KNOW this God, but the RR&R the TRUTH. In order to RR & R the Truth, what must you 1st know? The TRUTH! It's not that SOME people don't KNOW the Truth; it's that ALL people RR & R the Truth!

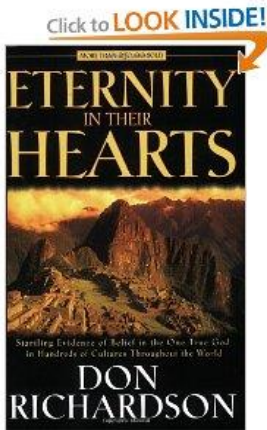
- **The issue of the Truth about God is MORAL and not PHILOSOPHICAL.** It's "GODLESSNESS," the failure to factor THIS GOD into every equation of your life. It's NOT putting God as revealed in the Bible in the center of your life. "Fool" is a MORAL term that describes people living as if The Living & True God does not exist. "WICKEDNESS" is simply wrong behavior, which is a result of RR & R. That's the whole point of the laundry list of bad behaviors @ the end of the chapter. [Keller . . . "So HOW LONG have you been sleeping with your girlfriend . . ." don't want a God who does not AFFIRM your behavior & want you to be happy as YOU define happiness!]
- **Psychology and practically RR & R is manifested by SUBSTITUTION aka *IDOLATRY.** What is the essence of Idolatry? 1:25, EXCHANGING / WORSHIPPING & SERVING . . .
 - ***This * is ROBBERY*** – Because we take what is due to God & give it to someone or something else.
 - ***This * is PERVERSION*** – Because in idolatry instead of giving our devotion to GOD we give it to SOMETHING LESS than God, to CREATED THINGS. An IDOL is ANYTHING more important to you than God (value), ANYTHING that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, ANYTHING you seek to give you the significance, security, identity, and purpose only GOD can give you, ANYTHING/ONE that calls the shots besides God. It's ANYTHING that CONTROLS you. Anything you value, serve, and build your life on that is LESS THAN God.

Here's 5 CONCLUSIONS that together answer the question.

- ***God's wrath is against people who REFUSE to believe in Him AS REVEALED.*** What is revealed without us and within us is not an empty jar w/o content except what you fill the jar with. God is not a "fill in the blank" deity. God CLEARLY reveals Himself to be 1 kind of God, not just ANY kind of God. And whoever doesn't believe in THIS God as revealed lives under the shadow of His wrath.
- ***The sin of REJECTING the TRUE GOD is the sin that places people under God's wrath.*** People are going to Hell because they REJECT the REAL God as He is revealed and REPLACE the real God with (a) or many FALSE gods.
- ***People will be held ACCOUNTABLE and JUDGED on the basis of the REVELATION God has given of Himself to them.*** That's why they are "without excuse". No one

can say, “If I had only known that You existed, what you were like, and what you require, I would have worshipped and served You!” That excuse will NOT hold water on the Final Day of Judgment.

- ***There is NO record in the Bible of ANYONE being SAVED apart from faith in Christ.***



Cornelius was the 1st Gentile convert in **Acts 10** . . . God brought him to a place to receive the Gospel. & God STILL does that! James Mallory the “God of the hole...” [a tribe in South America who did Not worship multiple gods & were very moral. They believed one “god” created everything, came to earth, and had left & gone down into this deep hole & would one day return to claim those who were faithful to him. So they offered sacrifices to this one God to atone for their behavior. Talk about “ripe”!]

Eternity in Their Hearts: Startling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures Throughout the

World by Don Richardson “Has the God who prepared the gospel for all peoples also prepared all peoples for the gospel? Don Richardson, author of best-selling *Peace Child*, demonstrates through compelling stories from many different cultures how the concept of ***a supreme God*** has existed for centuries in hundreds of cultures throughout the world. From deep in the jungles of Burma to a majestic fortress in Peru and in countless other civilizations, people have exhibited in their histories terms and concepts that have prepared them for the gospel. *Eternity in Their Hearts* shows how God uses ***redemptive analogies*** to bring all men to Himself, bearing out the truth from ***Ecclesiastes 3:11*** that God has also set eternity in the hearts of men.”

- ***The Lord Jesus Christ was sent by God into a world that was already on its way to HELL.*** Our fallen world is not searching for God, but rejecting Him & running away from Him through man-made religions (and “spirituality”) & immoral (or amoral) living (attempts at determining good and evil for oneself). Jesus is God’s gift of GRACE to those who apart Him have no hope of salvation / eternal life! ***John 3:16ff*** Apart from God’s grace in Jesus, the whole world is on the wrong trajectory & stands condemned! The GOSPEL, the GOOD NEWS must be broadcasted!

For further reading, consider: <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/letter-to-a-12-year-old-girl-about-the-eternal-destiny-of-those-who-have-not-heard-the-gospel>