

## **Ignorance About Salvation: A Good Excuse?**

Have you ever heard someone ask the question, "What about those people in Africa or some other far away country that have not read the Bible and cannot possibly know what to do to be saved? Could God be that cruel to condemn somebody forever and ever just because he didn't know about the plan of salvation?" If you have heard someone ask these questions, you may remember how convincing it first may have sounded. However, if we assume we cannot be condemned because of ignorance, we also have to assume some other things as well.

We first have to assume that there is no need for teaching the gospel. In fact, we would be putting men's souls in jeopardy by teaching the gospel to them, because once they know about God and salvation, then they are responsible for what they know. They would have been better off if you had not told them anything about God in the first place. Why teach someone if he is already saved?

Next, we have to assume that if there is no need for teaching and if someone is saved because he does not know, then there is absolutely no need for the Bible. Why did God go to the trouble of inspiring man to write something that we do not have to know? If being ignorant can save us, then God should not have to give us knowledge about anything whatsoever, including salvation.

Finally, we have to assume that Jesus did not have to die, because if we are saved through ignorance, wouldn't it have just been easier for God not to do anything? Then we would all be saved and there would be no need for Jesus to have to suffer as He did.

We see that this belief causes some very big problems and cannot possibly be true. Jesus said in Mark 16:15, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" Jesus knew that all needed to be taught! This is why He issued the command for His apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel. All need to be taught because one cannot believe unless he is taught and without belief one cannot be saved (Mark 16:16). It is the same with the Bible. We need the Bible, because without the Bible we cannot know about God and His Son. And, if we cannot know, we cannot believe, and without belief we cannot do the other things God has told us to do to attain salvation. Finally, we find that Jesus had to die! There simply was no other way and no other sacrifice to atone for the sin of man! Jesus prayed in the garden in Matthew 26:39, "*O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.*" If there was another

way, God would have provided it; but there simply was no other way. Jesus had to die!

On top of all this, those who believe one cannot be condemned because of ignorance have to deal with Acts 17:29-30: "*Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*" It is true that God overlooked some things in Old Testament times, but now that Jesus has prepared the way of salvation, everyone is responsible for following Him in that way to attain salvation (Hearing, Romans 10:17; Belief, John 3:16; Repentance, Luke 13:3; Confession, Romans 10:10; Baptism, Mark 16:16). It is a sad thought to think of those that do not know, but that is why we must do our part in teaching those who are lost! Ignorance is never a good excuse and on the Day of Judgment, every knee will bow and give an account of himself before God (Romans 14:10-12). It is a sad thing to say, but ignorance absolutely will not help!

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