

What About Those Who Have Never Heard?-gm

-How Can God Send Anyone To Hell If They Have Never Heard About Jesus?

- How Can Jesus Be The Only Way To God If Many Never Get A Chance To Decide About Him?

-What About The Unborn Children?

-What About Children Who Perish Before They've Had A Chance To Even Understand What Is Right Or Wrong?

-What About The Mentally Incapable?

By B. D. Tate

Introduction:

It seems that many are caught up or stuck in the thought that God would be unfair, unjust, and even cruel to those who have never heard about Jesus, if they are cast into hell. If they have never heard, how can they be condemned to an eternal realm of punishment, banishment, and isolation in darkness? Some simply cannot move forward in their faith to share the gospel, to live fully in it, because this issue is not resolved in their heart.

Some of the answers that are presented are unsatisfactory. Some answers are just too quip, or do not address the heart of the matter. The answer is not going to be found in denying scripture. The answer is not going to be found in quoting a few about it. It takes a little more digging, inquiring, and meditation to give something of substance that may satisfy these issues. The following is my attempt to give a more comprehensive response.

God Is Righteous and Compassionate

The Bible declares that God is righteous and with righteous judgment He judges all the earth:

Ps 50:6 Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself *is* Judge.

Furthermore, the Bible reveals that God is love (I John 4:8). God is compassionate and merciful. He is also holy and just. When it comes to judging all of mankind, He alone decides. What is God deciding? God decides who will enter heaven and who will be cast into hell. Jesus taught us about the sheep and the goats to illustrate this ultimate issue about life:

Matt. 25:32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.

33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

And,

Matt. 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...'"

John, the apostle, was given this revelation about the same event:

Rev. 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. 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 Bible is clear and the teachings of Jesus confirm again and again, there is a Day of Judgment concerning the destiny of everyone. It was certainly on Jesus' mind. Jesus may have taught about hell and judgment as much or more than any other subject. To save us was His primary mission (John 12:27); He warned again and again:

Lu 9:25 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?"

Something Went Wrong With Life!

Life is far more than just existing. It isn't just for our pleasure, getting to do what we want, or making a name for ourselves; no, life is for God. We were made for His purpose. We were created to know Him and spend eternity in His love. However, something went drastically wrong with the fall in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). We were made sinners, selfish, and separated from God's love. The fall made it so that all of us are born into sin nature and will experience loneliness, fear, hatred, schism, isolation, insecurity, pain, rejection, torment, and death. These *are all perversions* of the life, feelings, and experiences God intended.

When the fall occurred, so did death. Death is separation from God and from real life. Death is manifested in disease, sickness, bad relationships, poverty, violence, war, hatred, and all manner of ill will in our world. Selfishness is the cause of all death and suffering.

Heb 9:27 "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment..."

All are appointed to die once since the fall (Gen. 2:17) and as we all know, people are dying all over the world (tens of thousands every day now); but none are appointed to die the second death! The second death was created for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). The warning is clear: **there is a second death!**

Re 2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the **second death.**"

Re 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the **second death** has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Re 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death.**

Re 21:8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the **second death.**"

With eternity in the balance, and our time on earth is but for a moment in comparison, it is vitally important that everyone hears the gospel of salvation! The truth however may be, that many never hear it.

The millions of unborn will never hear the gospel. Many children that die before they can understand will never hear it to comprehend it. The mentally incapable will not be able to hear or understand it, even if it is presented.

Many May Never Hear

There are likely many who will never hear the name of Jesus all of their lives. There may be many in foreign lands and distant places so remote that civilization has not reached them either. What about the deepest and darkest tribal areas of Africa or South America? What

about island peoples, who for centuries, the world didn't know they existed?

What about the people that are born in countries where the political powers demand allegiance to Communism and Atheism, or Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism? Many are taught and indoctrinated to believe another religion. In the last two centuries, many are taught evolution and not creation, taking away the need for a god.

There are countries that forbid evangelism or even conversion to Christianity. Some countries have banned bibles. Many, if they do hear about Jesus, will get a very distorted, incomplete, and skewed view of who He is.

Then there are families, tribes, and religious systems that will reject anyone who converts. Parents will reject their son or daughter and consider them dead. In some cases, converts to Christianity are banished from society. The decision to believe in Jesus for some becomes a life and death decision. We may be thinking of modern times, but this issue goes back thousands of years.

Today, the persecution of Christians worldwide is as strong as ever. Churches are burned; converts are imprisoned, or worse put to death. Why is this? Why is there such hostility towards Jesus and God's salvation plan?

When it comes to answering the question: ***What About Those Who Have Never Heard?*** We must examine more than the simple thought that God is somehow being unfair. We must dig a little deeper than accusing God of being unrighteous in condemning anyone who does not accept Jesus as their savior. There is a spiritual war going on for souls.

We're in a Spiritual War

There is a war raging for the souls of mankind. There is a spiritual war between the God of heaven and the powers of darkness—Satan and the demonic.

There is a war going on in the hearts of people. Sin nature is very self centered and sometimes willfully ignorant of the truth—denying, ignoring, and sometimes outright denouncing it. Furthermore, the bible reveals that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer.

17:9). This means, as Jesus put it, men love darkness rather than the light (John 3:19).

The war within us is described as between the flesh and the Spirit:

Ga 5:17 “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

No Excuse?

Consider what Paul, the apostle, wrote in regards to human responses to God’s salvation:

Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,**

19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.

20 **For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,**

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

On the one hand, there appears to be many that have never heard; on the other, it appears that God inspired Paul to reveal that His invisible attributes are clearly seen. Everyone upon the earth knows there is a God and that there is a problem with unrighteousness in the earth. This passage asserts that no one has an excuse. It further states the reason is that men are without excuse is because they are

unthankful, proud and arrogant in professing to be wise, and in rejecting the truth, they exchanged the glory of God for a lie.

The Gospel Must Be Preached In All The Earth

Yet, the gospel of grace must be preached to all the earth. It is by hearing the truth that faith comes (Rom. 10:17). How can anyone believe if they have not been shared with or preached to?

Ro 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? **And how shall they hear without a preacher?**

The Great Commission is all about God sending us to reach those who have not heard:

Matt. 28:19 "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."

The balance of humanity's destination rests upon the commission to "go" into all nations. Jesus also said something about the end of the age only occurring after the gospel has been preached in all the earth:

Mt 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world **as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.**

Is God Cruel?

All of us wonder how God will judge the people who have never actually heard. We all see it as unfair, unjust, and extremely cruel to condemn someone to eternity in hell that never had a chance to hear, let alone accept Jesus as their savior.

There is a curious passage about Jesus preaching to the dead after His resurrection from the dead, but before His ascension:

1 Pet. 3: 8 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,
19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison...

Is there a time after death for those who have not heard to respond? I don't know the answer to that question; however, we do know that this world provides the only revealed time frame for salvation to be accepted. We do know that God called us to go and preach to the lost and dying. He sent us because this is the day of salvation!

2Co 6:2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, **now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**

How Can God's Foes Be So Successful?

Since God is Almighty, since God's will cannot be stopped, how is it that the world is so fallen, in such darkness, and many have not heard? If God is sovereign, how could darkness remain? If there is a war going on between heaven and the forces of evil, how is it that the light doesn't just overwhelm and completely eradicate God's foes?

The answer to this question, in my opinion, answers all the previous questions. What is going on in the earth that would create the potential for people not to hear about God's salvation?

God's Sovereignty

Many have interpreted God's sovereignty to mean that God is in control of everything. If God is in control, how do we explain all of the suffering, violence, unrighteousness, and evil in the earth? It is very

clear to all of us that God's will is not being done here. For the most part, people do not obey God, but go their own ways. The world is filled with rebellion towards God's will. Jesus told us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This testifies that God's will is not being done here.

Many want to blame God for all the suffering in the world. Why would a loving God allow sickness and disease? Why are we all going to die?

The Bible explains these things by putting the responsibility of what happens in the earth upon mankind's dominion:

De 30:19 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both you and your descendants may live..."

Our Dominion Is Real

God gave humanity dominion (Gen. 1:26). This means that God set up the world and then gave us the keys to run it. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God's influence in their lives, this left us without God's grace. We've been operating in the world on our own, doing our own things, having our own ways, and we've created the mess it's become.

Sickness and disease are from the curse of the law (Duet. 28). This means that human beings are born without God's grace and covering; therefore, we are vulnerable to decay, sickness, death, and dying. In a way, it is like a flower that has been cut. It is still visibly beautiful, but we all know it is just a matter of time before it withers away.

Video Game Analogy Explains It

I think the best analogy to explain what is going on is a video game. A programmer programs a video game. Everything in it is programmed. Every decision and its consequences are programmed. The programmer has complete sovereignty over the design, planning,

processes, and dynamics of the game; however, people play video games because, although they had no influence in the programming of the game, they have complete control in how the game is played.

Each person is given life in this pre-programmed world God created. God's sovereignty is expressed in the laws that govern. Every decision we make reflects God's sovereignty, listen to this verse:

Gal. 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

Life is filled with people's choices and the consequences of them. With so many people making so many choices, we can lose the cause and effect relationship. It is like many people standing around a small pond throwing rocks into the waters. As each rock splashes, it causes ripples to expand in all directions. With ripples overlapping ripples, it is easy to see how we might not be able to trace which rock created which ripples. With this in mind, we can understand how life can become so confusing.

Applying the Truth

We've been given dominion over our souls. We've been given choice and free will. Along with this power to decide are also the consequences of those decisions. Many people would like to make any choice and have it turn out the way they want it to. The problem is that our choices, because of dominion, **affect the lives of others**. My ripples are going to collide with yours and vice versa.

The power of our decisions is backed by God's laws (I Cor. 15:56): the laws that are programmed into the earth (Ps. 105:7). God is faithful and true that whatever we sow, we will also reap. It is called cause and effect. Another way of saying it is: we get what we deserve.

This power of dominion means we have influence over others in regards to changing opinions. What we say, act on, or present can and does influence others. Others influence us. We often regard experts,

scientists, doctors, and people of position, with higher respect than sometimes our own opinion.

Complicating all of this is the fact that all people lie and many lie all the time. Deceptions present themselves with half-truths, misleading information, leaving out particulars, and only expressing what we want others to know. Manipulation, misrepresentation, deliberate and opinionated argumentation, withholding of facts, willful biased interpretation of events, are all part of our world.

The fact is, no one is without an opinion, a bias, and stands in the complete truth. We are all blinded by the world, our sin nature, and pride.

The Power Of Influence

Paul wrote that men “**suppress the truth in unrighteousness...**” The power of dominion includes the power to acknowledge or reject, to accept or turn from the truth. One of those power-positions given to us is parenting.

Parenting is one of the most influential gifts from God. Influence by a parent is magnified in the life of a child being raised. Whole generations can be manipulated (Hitler’s Germany). Whole countries can be closed from free thinking, freedom of religion, and freedom of inquiry (suppression of the truth), all in an effort to influence the next generation. Is this God’s fault? It is certainly His sovereignty being used by people to do what God would not want.

When it comes to our world and education, what we are taught, what we’re being told to believe, consider these misrepresentations:

- 1) *Evolution* is worldwide, it has a hold on our scientific and educational institutions; it is considered by most scientists to be fact. The reality is that it is a lie. It is a belief system that is often contradictory to reality. The facts of evolution are actually interpretations of the evidences from a biased view.
- 2) *Economists* over the past fifty years or more have been advising our government, politicians, and other leaders to use models that do not take into consideration negative trends. In other

words, the models themselves are biased (See Bust Boom Bust documentary). They do not consider obvious realities.

- 3) *Food Supplies and the Western Diet* are rife with misleading information regarding sugar, salt intake, carbohydrates, processed foods, hybrid crops, antibiotic treatment of livestock, etc. We are told one thing, but the truth is suppressed that our diets are poisoned, causing us to become sick, overweight and/or obese. All of this is causing an epidemic in chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart attacks, high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney failure, cancer and many others.
- 4) *The Medical Profession* is drug bound (in bed with pharmaceutical companies). For every ailment there are multiple drugs being prescribed. The side effects of these drugs causes addiction, life-long issues such as thyroid failure, cancer, loss of appetite, altered sex drive, reduced energy, anxiety, weight gain, and more. Often the medical issues can be resolved by nutrition corrections and treatments...however, this is rarely discussed.
- 5) *Politics* is flooded with judgments, hypocrisy, lies, corruption, and misrepresenting the facts...need I say more?
- 6) *Our country's history* originally was based upon religious freedom, escaping oppression, and seeking to pursue a better life. Around the 1920's and 30's, our text books for evaluating the purpose of this country, was changed. It was changed to focus purely upon the economic reasons for people coming to America (which is item 17 in the long list of grievances given in the Declaration of Independence). This completely changed the emphasis of our nation from Christian values to secular reasoning and financial foundations. We went from being people oriented to profit oriented.

The Love of Money and Power

What is driving most of what happens today in our world (our country) as far as information, what is regarded as truth, what is important, what is considered valuable, revolves around one thing—money. It is the love of money. Money represents power without

responsibility. It represents dominion driven by selfishness and greed. Money does not have morality; it does not require accountability, it is pure power. How we handle money reflects our heart's condition.

Mt 6:24 **"No one can serve two masters;** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

The result is that God's ways are ignored, ridiculed, considered out of date, false, worthless, wrong, while we often choose to operate in what is best in our own eyes. Is God responsible? God's sovereignty is being used against Him! It is being used to do all manner of things He told us not to do (Ten Commandments). We have taken freedom for religion and turned into freedom from it.

Listen to Jesus' warning about misleading others:

Luke 17:1 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come!

2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

One Way?

The potential to influence others from the truth is great. It is happening all around us. It is happening all over the world. Is it God's fault? Did God want the lies, the deceptions, and the false witnesses to another truth? God did not bring in other religions; there is only one true way to the Father:

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."

Jesus is the only one that could, the only one necessary, the only one prophesied to come, to lay down His life as a ransom for sinners. Jesus' atonement makes it clear that the law's judgment,

against all of us as violators, is satisfied (Col. 2:13, 14). He paid a debt He did not owe, for us who owed a debt we could not pay. Then, Jesus rises from the dead and declares, “Because I live; you shall live also.” He now offers mercy to all who call upon His name.

If there was another way, then Jesus would not have suffered the crucifixion. Yet, it is the resurrection that frees us all from the second death!

God’s Integrity: He Cannot Lie!

If God is Almighty, why would He allow the world so much influence? God gave His word when He gave us dominion. It really is that simple. What we see in this world is not fair, just, equitable, truthful, or good to so many. What we see is a world operating contrary to God’s will. If this shows us anything, it shows us how faithfully true God is to His word. He will not violate our freedom, our conscience, or our dominion to influence others, even when we lie, cheat, deceive, mislead, and misrepresent Him!

We Get To Decide!

The God of heaven has given to us the greatest gift we could receive—dominion. We get to decide how it is used. Even when we use it against Him, He will not stop it. In fact, He can’t stop it. He can’t stop what men will do with their dominion. He cannot lie, He cannot violate His integrity, and He cannot change His nature: He is faithful and true (Heb. 6:18).

The Gospel Has Reached The Whole Earth

The gospel of Jesus Christ has gone out into the entire world. It has reached the Far East, the southern hemisphere, and is broadcast around the globe twenty-four, seven. Missionaries have journeyed to every know people group. This started nearly two centuries ago. If various places, peoples, and nations seem to be in the dark about Jesus, it is because they have chosen to be. The decisions made by ancestors often influence and bind the generations following.

Today, the potential to have the gospel presented to everyone many times over is stopped by people. It is suppressed by governments, religious leaders, and the scientific and academic communities. The media around the world could show God’s works, share the gospel of grace, and keep the world abreast of God’s salvation every day—but they don’t and they won’t.

There is plenty of money, resources, transportation, and modern technology, to reach everyone around the world within days, if not weeks. What is preventing this? It isn’t God.

The Truth Has Been Preserved

The Bible, Christianity, and the gospel of salvation have all been preserved to this day! Millions around the world have received Jesus Christ as their savior and become born again. There are literally millions of believers in China, Russia, Singapore, and India for example. In regards to the Bible:

Sir Frederic Kenyon put it, that **“The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.”**

*[Sir Frederic George Kenyon was a British paleographer, biblical and classical scholar. Educated at Oxford, He was the director of the British Museum. He was also the president of the British Academy from 1917 to 1921. In 1920, he was appointed president of the **British School of Archaeology** in Jerusalem.]*

The scripture says this:

Ps 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

A nation is blessed, like America, because of the gospel. It was founded by godly men and women. It was founded upon biblical principles and a strong (protestant) Christian heritage. The facts are the facts that this nation, even with the dirty bath water, has had at its core, Jesus Christ as savior to the world.

Most, if not all people born in this country, have heard many times over, and have the opportunity to seek many times over, the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There aren't too many towns that don't have a church.

Many immigrants coming to this nation have been introduced to Christianity. It is also true, that many Christians have the opportunity to share with others many times over!

If a nation is blessed because of acknowledging God is Lord and Jesus Christ is the savior, then a nation that doesn't, is cursed. The curse would be being born into a situation that taught something else. There is no truth, no wisdom, and blessing outside of Jesus Christ the Lord. He is Lord of all the earth.

If a family decides to turn against the gospel, they most likely will succeed at turning their children against it too. If a family turns into a tribe, all standing for something else, turning away or rejecting Christ, they will enter into darkness (With demonic oppression) and their children with them. A tribe turns into a nation. Whole nations have embraced deceptions and lies and the influence captures, and holds in bondage, millions. Is this God's fault?

Dominion Is Supposed To Be A Blessing, But Because Of Sin Nature, It Has Been Cursed

Our dominion has consequences not just for us, but for those we influence! It is all well and good when this dominion works to bless all of us. When we influence each other to do "good," we all benefit; however, the reverse is also possible. How many of us have influenced others only to find out that our advice, counsel, or opinion was wrong? Some of us have been the reason that others got hurt. Some of us have been the reason that others lost their opportunity, lost their job, their position, their money, and even their lives—that's the curse.

Make no mistake about it; this world is filled with evil, misdirection, deception, and misrepresentations. All of us have the opportunity to influence others, just as others have influenced us. This works well when the influence is godly. It doesn't work so well when it is not. All of it is consistent with God giving us dominion.

Dominion Is The Culprit When Used For Evil

We like dominion when we get to use it the way we like. We like dominion when we have the freedom to choose. We don't want anyone telling us what to do. If we don't want to listen, we don't want to be made to. When it comes to hearing and receiving the gospel, there is the responsibility to present it, **and there is the responsibility to seek it out.**

Dissemination Issues

The gospel message is for the most part, generally intact worldwide; however, it is the dissemination of it that is often faulty, suppressed, and neglected. Sometimes the presentation of the gospel is marred with regulations, stipulations, "do's and don'ts," with obligations, expectations, and more.

I've heard many say, "Christianity is all about restrictions, guilt, and shame." Christianity is presented that it is all about keeping the law, doing right, and living holy. The burden of having to keep all of the commandments simply is beyond any of us. This kind of Christianity is a turn off—a skewed and underdeveloped presentation. There are many others.

The suppression of the truth has already been emphasized. This suppression can come from outside forces as mentioned, but it can also come from inside of us. Some feel that they have been so bad, done something so wrong, that God could never forgive them. They cannot forgive themselves, how could God? Others simply find it too hard to believe (many times because what they were taught is weak).

The gospel of course has been neglected. Many Christians have never learned how to present salvation, let alone attempted to. Many

are encouraged to just live a good life, do the best we can, and try to love one another.

Yet, it is the sharing, witnessing, and preaching of the gospel that helps others find their way. Most likely, someone shared with us, that is how we came to know Jesus. With this in mind, when we don't make an effort, isn't the gospel commission being neglected?

When the gospel is neglected doesn't that mean someone is not going to hear? When we ask the question: ***What About Those Who Have Never Heard?*** Doesn't that include those near us?

The Lost Are Responsible To Seek To Be Found

What About Those Who Have Never Heard? It would be tragic if someone doesn't hear because we refused to share the truth with him/her. At the same time, each person already knows there is a God and that something is wrong with our world. Everyone knows they are lost (don't know) until they come to know the truth. Many may not know the answer (is Jesus), but they know they don't have it. This means it is not just the responsibility of those being sent to share the gospel, but also those who are lost to seek the answers found in it.

Ps 119:2 Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies, **Who seek Him with the whole heart!**

Re-Addressing The Question: What About Those Who Haven't Heard?

I'm going to re-address this question now that other factors have been pointed out: ***What About Those Who Have Never Heard?***

The Unborn, Children, and Incapable

In regards to children, the unborn, and the mentally incapable, I think the following reasoning according to scriptural principles applies:

There is no clear Biblical passage that actually addresses this question. The issue of the eternal destiny of children and the unborn

must be built upon other concepts and principles. Therefore, the following passages are presented in order to establish a consistent line of thought; in order to answer or give an explanation for the salvation of children and the unborn.

The answer revolves around judgment. If **judgment** is based upon our deeds, thoughts, actions, and rejection of Christ, then any child that is unable to understand, perceive, comprehend, or be aware of such things, would pass from judgment because they would be innocent by reason of ignorance and a lack of understanding.

If judgment is based upon our words, self centeredness, and choices, then such things would again be beyond a child's comprehension (obviously the unborn would be in the same place).

Are the unborn and children born with sin? The answer is absolutely yes. All of mankind is conceived into sin nature. No one has to teach a child to be self centered, want their own way, or rebel against their parent's will. Anyone fathered by a human male is conceived in sin nature.

Ps 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, **and in sin my mother conceived me.**

Ro 3:23 for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,

Ro 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, **even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam**, who is a type of Him who was to come.

1Co 15:22 **For as in Adam all die**, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Yet, is it just to condemn that which is unable to comprehend? If their life is cut off before they could understand, is it just to condemn them for something **they had no choice in?**

Ge 18:25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"**

Abraham challenged the Lord's judgment **based upon** a human understanding of judgment. God's judgment is revealed upon human constraints, human issues, and human understanding. Jesus said it this way:

John 15:22 **"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."**

And then again in,

John 15: 24 **"If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father."**

What can we reason from these types of passages? We can reason that Jesus spoke to them about what they could understand, what they, as persons, would be able to comprehend and could reason with, and since that is true, *they have no excuse*. However, if they are unable to hear, unable to comprehend, and since they can't be spoken to, wouldn't that strongly imply that they now have an excuse for their sin?

Jesus is actually saying indirectly, the condition exists that they'd have an excuse and "they would have no sin."

Judgment is based upon how we live in this world according to the Law of Moses, according to the revealed word of God. These expose sin nature within us, which is primarily manifested through our self centeredness.

It is the function of law to make plain to us our condition of sin, and then for us to turn to God for salvation (Gal. 3:24, 25). How does an unborn child, or a child of an early age, come to understand their own "sin" condition?

A child may understand right from wrong at an early age because of parental training. A child may experience guilt from disobedience, know the need to reconcile with his/her mom or dad; but these do not necessarily bring about a *full* understanding of what sin is, and our need to be saved.

Some children have been saved as early as five or six years old according to their testimony, even still the majority of children are oblivious to spiritual (eternal) issues.

It is very difficult for us to establish an age of accountability; we can only speak to parameters. We can know that an unborn child has no clue and has done no deed, nor spoken any words that would justify or condemn him/her. We can know that an unborn child cannot be spoken to in order to comprehend such things.

Why is this important? It is because that is what the scriptures point to in judgment concerning sinners in this world. We are being judged by what we say, think, do, or don't do; we are being judged by our rejection or response to the gospel, the words of Christ, and Christ Himself.

Mt 12:37 "For **by your words** you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jesus said, "You must be born again!"

1Jo 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

No unborn child can participate in this agenda. Thus, we conclude that the unborn are with *great excuse* and their sin nature is not imputed towards them, and they passed from judgment based upon the fact: that they cannot commit the things that are actually being judged.

In Regards to People Capable Of Responding, But Never Hearing—Decisions Change Things

If our decisions were only "skin deep" or did not plant like seeds and grow, everything would be completely different. However, each decision we make moves us. The decisions we make take us in the direction we've chosen. We don't remain stagnant or static but reap the consequences of our decisions. Our decisions matter.

If we make decisions this year about our life, next year we will not be in the same position to decide again—we will have moved. In a way, it is like a spiral heading up or down. When we decide something, we move up or down that spiral depending upon what it was. Or it is like starting a game of monopoly. Once we begin, the decisions take us down the board so that we are no longer where we were when we started.

For example, if we make a decision to go to college and get our degree, we'll be leaving home, committing to study, and going into debt most likely. Many risk this to find a very good job down the road. After college, with our degree, we are no longer where we were before it. Our job situation has improved. Doors should be open to us to find a career type occupation.

Conversely, if we decide not to go to college but start work without a degree, we may be making money now and not going into debt, but we most likely will limit our earning power over the course of our lives. This decision may hurt down the road when more income is needed.

This works with choosing friends too. If we choose lazy, care-free, and irresponsible friends, we may end up like them (if we aren't already). If those friends get into trouble with the law or drugs, we may end up with a record or life changing (or destroying) addiction!

We can't return to the point of beginning when there was no history, no hindrances, and no baggage. Our decisions move us down the road with positive or negative, and sometimes both, consequences.

A decision to have sex can end up with an early and unwanted pregnancy. The decision to have an abortion may seem to erase this mistake, but the truth is, the life of an unborn son or daughter will always plague us with guilt, often for the rest of our lives. If the baby is allowed to live, the birth and responsibility of raising the child is also life changing.

I have briefly tried to explain a truth about decision making. I think most of us can understand that consequences from decisions change lives.

What We Believe Matters

When we decide to believe something, that believing will change us! When we decide for something, our hearts are softened and receptive towards it. Conversely, when we decide *against something*, our hearts are hardened and unreceptive towards it.

It is the *hardness of hearts* that I'm addressing by bringing up this truth. Our decisions influence our hearts.

Hardness of Heart!

Hardness of heart is what happens to us when we continually ignore, neglect, or reject something. This is what happens to us when condemnation and guilt plague us over the sins we have committed. Since there is no escape from the law, the only way to avoid it, is to deny its reality. The same goes for the existence of God. Some people have lived with guilt so long that they have become numb to the law and God. They stopped feeling at all!

We have seen hardened criminals commit horrendous crimes, how can they do this? It didn't happen overnight. We don't become hard with one decision, it takes many. Furthermore, the condition of our heart is often influenced by our upbringing. If we have been rejected or neglected, abused and unloved, this type of constant pain hardens or destroys anyone of us.

If our lives are mistreated, needs unmet, and we experience little or no love, the power of these negative decisions against us will harden or destroy the best of us.

All of this influence is the by-product of dominion. People are influenced and can influence others. We are not in a neutral or void place when we are born into this world. Evil, sin, and selfishness has ruled most of human history. Thank God that some responded and obeyed God's call, God's will, and God's salvation; or the world would have completely fallen apart (Noah's time).

This spiritual war has been raging for six thousand years, yet, there are still millions who believe, who have obeyed, and have prayed!

Praying Makes A Difference!

Praying makes a difference in someone's life! Someone prayed for us to come to Jesus, we need to pray for others. **People may seem free to decide, but as I have begun to explain, that is not always the case.**

When someone becomes addicted to drugs or alcohol, porn or gambling, and other things, he/she have lost their freedom to an extent.

When someone has become bitter, trapped in unforgiveness, anger and resentment, he/she is not free to decide.

When someone is caught up in the rat race of business, making money, constantly working, and can't see "the forest for the trees," he/she needs help.

Awakenings don't just happen! God needs someone to pray and often needs to shake someone's foundations to get their attention. Sometimes a crisis, sometimes an illness, sometimes a death, or something to "upset the apple cart," will lead to a window of opportunity for a hardened heart to see again.

Hatred is not something people are born in. Hatred is learned, experienced and provoked. Offendedness is a trap that will keep us from learning, hearing, or receiving. Our pride can blind us! Fear is debilitating and panic is often irrational, when people are bound by them, they are not free to decide. Let's not forget there is an enemy in the world too:

Cor. 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

And,

1Pe 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like **a roaring lion**, seeking whom he may devour.

Prayer for others authorizes God, removes the enemy's strongholds, and helps those we are praying for to come to their senses.

2Co 10:4 3 For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war according to the flesh.**

4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for **pulling down strongholds,**

5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

The Battle Is Spiritual

The battle raging is a spiritual war that must be addressed and attacked by spiritual means:

Eph 6:12 **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,** but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Sometimes the decisions people have made take them on a spiral toward darkness. At first, it is temptation being lived to, then it may become a stronghold—a habit, then it may lead to obsession—taking over their lives, and finally, it can lead to possession. As this decision making progresses, the person is losing their freedom to choose!

The power behind this process is not the devil; it is God's divine laws:

I Cor. 15:56 The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law.

However, once someone opens their heart, plunges into darkness, the demonic become the masters. Sometimes the strongholds and the strongman must be removed by the power of Jesus' name.

When someone has made bad decisions and keeps on making them, it may not just be their own doing any more. The demonic are riding them, if not possessing them. The addiction may be more than just human frailty and weakness, a demon may be involved. Jesus spent

much of His ministry casting out demons. People who are demonized need help!

This type of darkness can be individual; it can be in a family, a tribe, and then a nation! Sometimes in dealing with unbelief, atheism, and agnosticism, we must claim the blood of Christ to redeem them from the curse of the law. The curse of having turned away from God by hardening their hearts and remaining in a place where their ears cannot hear. Jesus said this:

Mr 4:23 "If anyone has *ears to hear*, let him hear."

If Anyone Can be Trusted, It's God!

The God of all creation, the God who gave us dominion, freedom, life, feelings and emotions, love, peace, rest, and truth, all that we know of living, is the God of Love. If any being is fair, just, faithful and true, it is only God! If anyone is judging righteously, it is God.

This is the God who gave us parents, life's choices, opportunities, talents, information, training, mentoring, instruction, and help in every way possible. This is the God who provided, supplied, protected, secured, and comforted us in any way we've known it. If there is peace, rest, and joy, it is only really found in Him!

If anyone is fair, it is God. If anyone is telling the truth, it is God. If anyone wants others to live, find life, find hope, love, and faith, it is God! It is God who set life up, provided it, and made us to be aware—to have a conscience. ***He is the giver of life, not the taker!***

If anyone should be trusted, it is God! He has shown Himself faithful and true amidst a world that lies, deceives, and manipulates; misrepresenting who He really is.

God is love, and His judgments are faithful and true. I would not want any other being judging us. I would not want the world to judge me, especially knowing how much favoritism, hatred, lying, cheating, and deception, it produces.

We cannot trust our education, scientists, experts, and even our doctors to tell us to live to the truth in Christ. We can't trust anyone, not

even our own hearts; for they are deceitful and desperately wicked in our natural condition!

If God can't be trusted, there is no one that can be. If God sent His Son to die for us, why would He, if He is not trustworthy? God has more vested interest in every soul than anyone will ever.

Remember God Is Merciful!

When it comes to judging those who have never heard, think about all the mercy God showed Israel. Think about all the forgiveness He poured out in Jesus! Think about how much God loves us! For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16)! No greater love is found than for one to lay down His life for another!

When it comes to answering the question: ***What About Those Who Have Never Heard?*** We are ultimately going to have to believe God's judgment *will be eternally just and fair*. There really isn't another choice. We are not God; we can't change or create anything. We are totally dependent upon His word, His will, and His compassion.

When it comes to the things we do understand, let's not let them go because of the things we don't! Let's not let the world influence us about who God is, or how unfair He may appear—we know we can't trust the world! We know that human beings lie, deceive, cheat, steal, and destroy. Even the best of us fall far short of true love.

When it comes to Satan and the demonic, how could we ever let them get the best of us? Why would we trust their doctrines, their teachings, and their religions? Jesus said this about the matter:

John 10: 10 **"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.** I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

If we are distrusting of God's word, God's nature, and His truth, something is wrong. If we see God as vengeful, unfair, uncaring, uninvolved, and unwilling to save, love, or intervene; we've been

misled, we misunderstand, and we've been damaged! We don't understand the gospel of grace!

Christianity, because of human dominion, has not been presented in the same way that Jesus presented it to the apostles. The word itself has been misjudged, misapplied, and misrepresented too!

We are in a war, a spiritual war, and there is a lot of propaganda flying all around. When people ask questions, sometimes the motivation isn't about getting to the truth, but obscuring it!

Be Grateful!

If we have found the Lord, be very grateful that we were given the truth in salvation! We should be very grateful to have been born in a nation, a tribe, and a family that believed in Jesus. We are blessed to know the truth; shouldn't we all the more, knowing that many may not hear, press to help others hear?

Be grateful because the God of Love is the one who will judge. Imagine a different God for a moment. A God that is vindictive, lying, cheating, deceiving, and ruthless, who actually takes pleasure in torment, punishment, and the pain of what He created. This is more in line with Satan, not God Almighty.

The Testimony about God says this:

Eze 18:32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"

And,

Eze 33:11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

God has gone to great lengths to save all of us from our sin. He kept the integrity of our dominion while taking care of the wall that

divided us from His holiness. With this in mind, it is not God's will that anyone should perish:

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

God is in the saving business. Condemnation comes from getting what we deserve. In other words, when decisions are made and consequences result, the laws that govern bring back upon us what we have chosen. This is ultimately fair; however, the results of decision making were supposed to have been a blessing, not a curse. When the curse resulted, then the decisions of evil became collateral in scope, not only affecting the persons making the original decisions, but also those around them and the next generations.

Don't We Fear God?

A final thought that should be presented is this: Shouldn't we fear this God? Jesus said this:

Mt 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather ***fear Him*** who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

We can complain and accuse, we can rebel and raise our hands against the Lord, but the bottom line is this: God is God, and we are not. What God decides is sovereign. The way God operates, rules. We may not understand, like, or get it the way God did it, but we are all subject to His ultimate judgment. Fear God!

This is the God who could have made us robots, slaves, pets, or just some kind of machine, but instead chose to give us life as He has it. We get to live, enjoy life, make decisions, have feelings, experience love, joy, peace, and rest. We get to make plans, set goals, share with others, be a blessing and be blessed. If we can't be grateful and fearful of this God, something is skewed. What do we have that we didn't receive?

Many of us do not have a good understanding about how good God really is. We have many accusations, accusers, and detractors; while at the same, they enjoy life, liberty, and dominion God gave them.

We belong to God. We are told to seek Him. He went to great lengths to allow our fallen world to occur and then provide the only salvation in His Son. Jesus came and laid down His life, suffered immensely, was crucified, and died. But then, on the third day rose from the grave and is alive evermore. He did this for us. He died for us; He rose from the dead for us. It is up to each of us to respond, believe, and receive the Lord of glory into our hearts and lives.

Shouldn't the whole world be singing, shouting, and sharing this truth? If it is not, is it God's fault? Certainly, we can see that evil is present and selfish men, and rebellious governments are preventing this truth from reaching everyone on the planet!

What About Those Who Haven't Heard?

The world prevents, hinders, and stops God's will from being done. It keeps the truth from reaching many. If people don't hear, it isn't God stopping it. The influence and dominion God gave mankind is the real culprit.

We don't call it the ***Great Commission*** for no reason! Indeed, all of God's people are called to go and preach the gospel to those who have not heard. If we don't go, who will? If we don't share, someone may not hear. If dominion is real, these potentials are real. If someone doesn't hear, it means God is faithful to His word regardless of what men do—the dominion remains. He will not violate His word, even if it means someone doesn't hear. That may sound horrible, but the truth is, it means God is faithful and true.

When it comes to standing before the throne of Judgment and having never heard in our life time about Jesus, we must surrender this to the Lord. At the same time, we all must take some responsibility to share with those around us!

The Warning Is Clear

Anyone whose name is **not** blotted out from the book of Life will enter God's heavenly kingdom. Anyone's name blotted out will not enter:

Re 3:5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Only those who are living, come of age, can overcome the darkness of this world, to find the light in Jesus Christ. Although the Great Commission is sending all of us out to reach those who haven't heard, it is clearly the responsibility of everyone to seek the truth! Someone who overcomes is someone who has not remained in the darkness of lies, deceit, and false religion, to find the only living God.

It appears strongly that when Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, that everyone's name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life! It is only when someone rejects, turns away, ignores, or denies Jesus is Lord, that their name is blotted out.

God's Spirit is everywhere in the world drawing all people to Himself. When people decide to stop asking and seeking there are consequences for choosing the darkness (consequences that affect their children too).

For some of us, depending upon where and when we are born, the asking and seeking is more difficult.

What if We Had Been Born in a Different Situation?

What if we had been born to a family that did not know Jesus? What if we had been born in a community that rejected Christianity? What if we'd been born in a nation that prohibited religion and taught atheism and evolution?

Certainly, the thought of not having the same opportunity to hear about salvation is a very scary scenario. We too, could have been asking and seeking but because of pressure, intimidation, and the overwhelming consensus of our community, tribe, or nation, stopped far short of the truth. We could have been one of those who never heard.

A reality check exists, however; in truth, we could only be born to the parents we were born to. Our DNA could only come together in the time and place that it did. We would not be who we are otherwise.

We can only control the things we do understand. We can only choose from the powers we've been given. We are only responsible to the truth that we could have sought. We should be very grateful to have been born into a family, a tribe, and/or nation that exalts Jesus Christ as savior to the world.

As a Final Note:

There are testimonies from foreign lands and peoples that found the truth in the midst of darkness. There are Muslims who have had dreams and visions of Jesus Christ and have been saved. There are tribal peoples who when missionaries came preaching Jesus, they knew who He was but didn't know the full account. It appears that those who seek God with their whole heart still find Him no matter where they are.

Most likely, if someone is reading this booklet, he or she has heard the good news and is seeking some answers about this very disturbing question: ***What About Those Who Have Never Heard?***

It is important to find answers to our questions; otherwise they will just keep coming back to us—and plague us. We need to be settled in the truth about the gospel of grace. The enemy of course, would like to trip all of us up by bringing doubt into the equation about this question.

The enemy would like us to become double-minded about the *Great Commission* and its importance. Some might become “stuck” in their faith because if those that have never heard are condemned, how unfair would that be?

God, who is love, must have provided other ways to reach people. God, according to the Bible, would be unjust otherwise. Why would God allow such an unjust system of dissemination of the good news?

Sometimes people feel that if they do not have all the answers, or that Christianity can't provide all of them, then it could not be true.

Just as with getting the word out about salvation in Jesus is hindered, so also is the fullness of the gospel itself hindered by people.

We are in a fallen world and the information, revelations, and truth being presented, is being presented by fallible, prideful, and sinful saints. The bottom line then is this: we may not have all the answers we need to the satisfaction we need; however, we certainly have all the necessary answers to the most important issues in life!

Jesus is Lord, and He who has the Son, has life; He who does not have the Son, does not have life (1 John 5:12). We are to go to the entire world to share the truth of salvation in His name. We go as a witness; which means, not everyone is going to accept it, but everyone will be examined by it. If someone has never heard those words, and that person couldn't have heard, it seems pretty clear that those persons would not be examined by the truth they never heard.

We are going to have to trust that the same God who gave us the Bible, Jesus His Son, the Holy Spirit in salvation, who is just, holy, and righteous, *will be ultimately just and fair to everyone concerning the eternal destiny of our souls.* Amen.