

WHAT IS A HEATHEN?

1. When considering what a heathen is, you must begin with God and Who and What He is. God is PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS and God is PERFECT JUSTICE, which means that it is impossible for God to be unfair to any member of the human race.

2. God is ABSOLUTE TRUTH and He has given us His Word, a promise that every generation will be evangelized.

- A. Isaiah 51:8b, "But My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation."

3. Since Christ died for all members of the human race, every one has an opportunity to have eternal life.

- A. 1 John 2:2, "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

4. God is also ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY. God's sovereign will is that all members of the human race be saved. Therefore, God obviously desires the salvation of everyone. If they are not saved, it is BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN NEGATIVE ATTITUDE IN REJECTION OF CHRIST AS SAVIOUR.

- A. 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentence."

5. There are two areas in which a decision must be made by each member of the human race. There are two areas where man's FREE WILL has to make a decision:

- A. At the point of God-consciousness.
- B. At the point of Gospel hearing.

6. We reach God-consciousness in one or more of five different ways:

- A. Religion:

1. God exists because man universally believes in His existence.

2. In this case, faith establishes the criterion for reality.

- B. Morally:

1. Man possesses a conscience with the desire to choose right over wrong.

2. The structure of society and the functions of human government express human recognition of virtue and truth.

- C. Ontological:

1. The mind of man possesses the idea of a perfect and absolute Being. Therefore, such a Being must exist.

- 2. In this case, the mind uses rationalism as the criterion of reality.

- D. Teleological:

1. Structure of the universe demands a Designer.

2. The mind, in this case, uses empiricism as the criterion of reality.

- E. Cosmological:

1. Intuitive law of cause and effect demands the existence of God.

2. This is the perceptive process of rationalism plus logic.

7. The reaction of man to God after having reached God-consciousness.

- A. When man becomes conscious of God, he then can exercise his free will, either in a positive attitude or a negative attitude. MAN DOES HAVE FREE WILL.

- B. A positive attitude at God-consciousness desires to know God and have fellowship with Him.

- C. A negative attitude at God-consciousness shows the lack of a desire to know God and have fellowship with Him.

- D. Once a person reaches God-consciousness and has no desire for fellowship with God, God has no further obligation to that individual.
 - E. In the case of positive attitude, God is responsible to provide Gospel information on which man can be saved.
1. John 7:17, "If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself"
2. Acts 17:27, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."
3. Jeremiah 29:13, "Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron."
8. There are three systems of human perception:
- A. Rationalism—
 1. Perception through reason. Reason is the source of knowledge and, in itself, is superior to and independent of sensory perception (Empiricism).
 2. The criterion for perception is the human mind. Under this system, both the promises and principles found in the Word of God are subjected to the test of human reason. Both dogma and supernatural are rejected.
 3. Descartes demonstrated the failure of rationalism to understand God. He said, "I think, therefore, I exist."
 - B. Empiricism—
 1. Perception through observation and experimentation; conclusions derived from the observation of phenomena.
 2. Reality through sensory perception, rather than theory, which is rationalism.
 3. Aristotle demonstrated the failure of empiricism to understand and know God when he said, "the unmoved mover."
 - C. Faith

1. A system of perception which accepts an established criterion as the basis of reality.

2. This criterion is outside of the capabilities of the individual, therefore, making faith the only non-meritorious system of perception in the human race.

3. Hence, faith is tantamount to confidence or belief in the authority and veracity of another God.

4. Since the verb "to believe" is a transitive verb, the real merit of faith lies in the object of the verb.

a. In salvation the object is Jesus Christ.

b. In the Christian way of life the object is the Word of God.

5. Faith is the only system of perception which is compatible with the principle of GRACE.

6. Faith is the only system of perception common to all members of the human race.

CONCLUSION

If any member of the human race, regardless of geographical isolation or linguistic barrier, desires relationship with God, after reaching God-consciousness, God will provide Gospel information on which that person can be saved.

A. John 7:17, "If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself"

B. John 9.

C. John 10.

Man has the ability to arrive at God-consciousness through the activity of his own mind as stated in Romans 1:20, 21, "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: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

When a member of the human race has arrived at this point of God-consciousness, he has reached the point of accountability. This point varies with cultures and circumstances of environment.

Heathenism exists where the Gospel has been preached and rejected, or where people have reached God-consciousness and have rejected it.

- A. Romans 1:18-30.
- B. Romans 10:18, "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."

- C. 2 Thessalonians 1:8, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A HEATHEN IS NOT SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL. A HEATHEN IS SOMEONE WHO HAS HEARD THE GOSPEL AND HAS REJECTED IT.

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