

jenaministries – Part 7 My Questions

9. What Happens to People Before Christ and Unreached People After They Die?

I understand the saving grace of Jesus and that if we make Jesus our Lord, we are saved. We become righteous in God's eyes because we are living for Jesus and are born again. Jesus was the ultimate blood sacrifice for our sins. But what about the people who lived before Jesus and the people after Jesus who have never been told about Jesus' saving grace.

Before Jesus, God taught people they had to sacrifice blood to atone for their sins. Adam and Eve were the first people and they knew they had to sacrifice animals. Cain (Adam & Eve's son) tried to sacrifice his best crops and God quickly corrected him (**Scriptures 1 – Cain Brought Fruit for Offering Genesis 4:1-7**). Cain knew it had to be blood.

The Jews (God's chosen people from Abraham & Isaac's seed) also knew they had to sacrifice blood to God because of their sins. Abraham was even willing to offer his son Isaac (**Scriptures 2 – Abraham to Sacrifice Isaac Genesis 22:1-13**).

Then came Moses who spoke to God directly (**Scriptures 3 – God Spoke to Moses in Person Numbers 12:6-8**). God gave specific Jewish laws to Moses for his chosen people to follow. They were given specific instructions on how and when to sacrifice blood for their sins.

But did sacrificing blood for their sins mean that they were saved and would go to heaven? Did it guarantee their names would be written in the book of life? Maybe not. God didn't promise them that. Rather he promised they would live a prosperous life. He promised to protect them and bless them. Still though, people were unable to obey the Jewish laws and God allowed them to be exiled and other people to take over their promised land.

Seems that all the sacrificing of blood for atonement of sins was God's way of preparing us for the saving grace of Jesus. And to show us that people cannot do it without God's help. Even though God chose the most righteous man he could find (Abraham) to make his seed the chosen people, they were still unable. And even though he brought them to a prosperous land and blessed them abundantly, they still were unable to obey God's laws.

There are some verses in the bible that may suggest that maybe people before Christ and unreached people would be judged by the way they lived. In **Luke 16:19-28 (Scriptures 4 – The Rich Man and the Beggar Luke 16:19-28)**, Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and the beggar. The rich man seems to go straight to hell and sees the beggar in heaven.

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The story (Jesus' parable) never said the beggar sacrificed blood or followed all the Jewish laws, but was humble. The rich man was greedy and prideful. And he didn't help others in need.

Then there are also scriptures like these:

John 5:28-29 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

These scriptures could possibly suggest people are judged by the way they lived.

So possibly, could all people before Christ (Jews and Gentiles) and all unreached people after Christ will be judged by how they lived? Good or bad? Maybe, but that's just a theory. The Bible doesn't explain it. I'd imagine if God tried to explain it to us, we would not be able to comprehend it.

I definitely do not believe that all those people would go to hell. The God I know is kind and just. He doesn't want any person to go to hell. He loves us all.

I also believe if a person has heard the good news about Jesus and rejects it, they will be judged for their sins and condemned to hell. Jesus did say that the only way to get to heaven is through him (Jesus) (**Scriptures 5 – Salvation Comes Only Through Jesus Acts 4:11-12, John 3:5-6 & 16, John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-10**). That has been made perfectly clear in the Bible. This article is not about people who have heard the good news of Christ, but for those who have not.

Us Christians should be extremely grateful that we are covered by the blood of Jesus. We may mess up now and then, but Jesus will get us on the right track again. Since we follow and live for Christ, God sees us as righteous. White as snow.

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Scriptures 1. Cain Brought Fruit for Offering

Genesis 4:1-7

Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?"

Scriptures 2. Abraham to Sacrifice Isaac

Genesis 22:1-13

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you." Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

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Scriptures 3. God Spoke to Moses in Person

Numbers 12:6-8 "When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD.

Scriptures 4. The Rich Man and the Beggar

Luke 16:19-28

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

Scriptures 5. Salvation Comes Only Through Jesus

Acts 4:11-12

Jesus is " 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

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Scriptures 5. Salvation Comes Only Through Jesus - continued

John 3:5-6

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.