



QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS

**WHAT ABOUT THOSE
WHO HAVE NEVER
HEARD?**



QUESTION



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In John 14:6 Jesus says, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* This idea that Jesus Christ is the one and only way to salvation; the one and only way to forgiveness and eternal life; and the one and only way to heaven and God offends our modern, secular, pluralistic sensibilities.



SKEPTIC

Many skeptics of Christianity ask; what about those who have never heard of Jesus or been presented with the gospel?; they don't have a chance to be saved! what is their eternal fate?; it would be deeply unjust for God to send those who have never heard about Jesus to hell for all eternity for not believing in Jesus.

AS CHRISTIANS HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO THIS TROUBLING OBJECTION? THE TWO MOST COMMON RESPONSES ARE:



1

God saves people who respond positively to general revelation, even if they never hear the gospel.

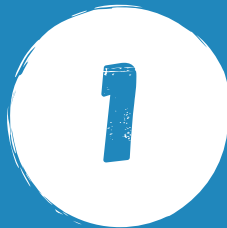
2

God will take it upon Himself to get the gospel to those who respond positively to general revelation.

Before we explore in more depth these two most common responses, it's important to remember that God is not unfair. God is perfectly holy, loving and just. Deuteronomy 32:4 states that, "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, for all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He."

In each and every situation, no matter what an individual's circumstances are, God will always judge fairly.

Furthermore, God desires all to be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4 states that God *“wants all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”*



The first most common response to this question is that God saves people who respond positively to general revelation, even if they never hear the gospel. Broadly speaking, general revelation refers to two ways God has made himself known to everyone, everywhere.

(1) God has revealed Himself to us through the natural world around us.

The apostle Paul in Romans 1:20 states, *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."*

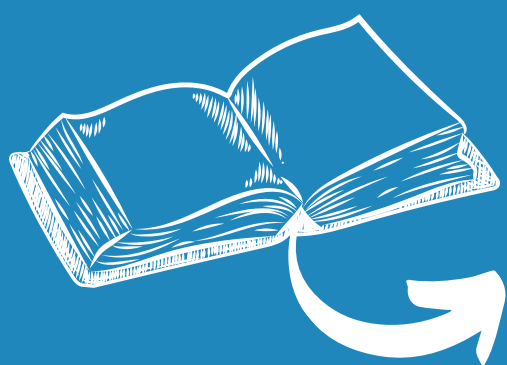


(2) God has revealed Himself to us through the objective, universal moral law. We all know this through the conscience within us.



Again the apostle Paul in Romans 2:15 states, *"they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them."*

Every one of us has a moral sense of right and wrong that points us to God. So, those who may have never heard about Jesus Christ can still respond to God through the light they have been given in nature and conscience. They can respond to this general revelation and put their faith in God for forgiveness and new life. The Bible itself provides examples of individuals who lived thousands of years before Jesus and had nothing but general revelation, but nevertheless heard from God and believed by faith and were saved.



Romans 4:3 states that, *"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

People living prior to Christ can still be saved through Christ even though they had never heard of Christ. The power of Christ's death and resurrection is retroactive. Those who don't respond to general revelation freely separate themselves from God by rejecting His self-revelation.



At this point the skeptic may object and contend that maybe these individuals would have believed in Jesus Christ if only they had heard about Him explicitly.

Are they really separated from God for all eternity for simply being born in the wrong place or at the wrong time and missing out on hearing the gospel? Are they simply eternal victims of unlucky timing? The answer is no.

According to the Bible the times and places we live are not random, arbitrary, or accidental. God decides when and where each person will live.

Acts 17:26-27 states, "From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us."

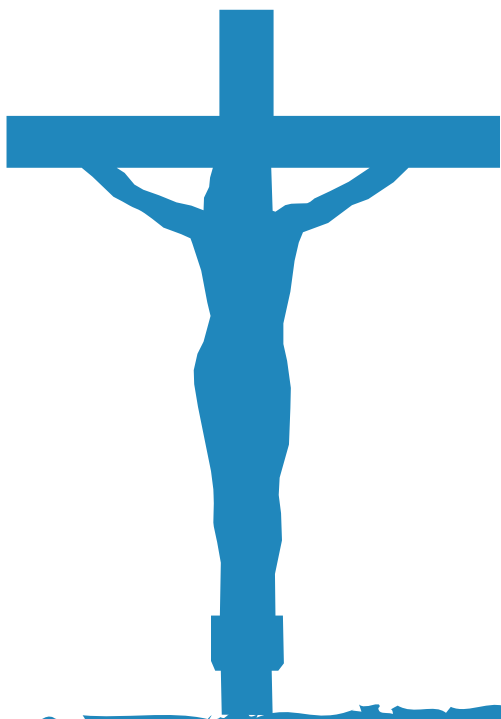
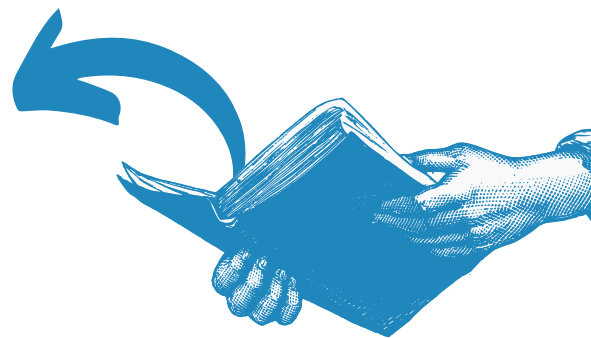
It is possible that God has so ordered the world that anyone who would believe in Jesus if they had heard about Him does in fact live in a time and place where they do explicitly hear about Him. Thus, no one is lost because they simply missed out on hearing and receiving the gospel.



2

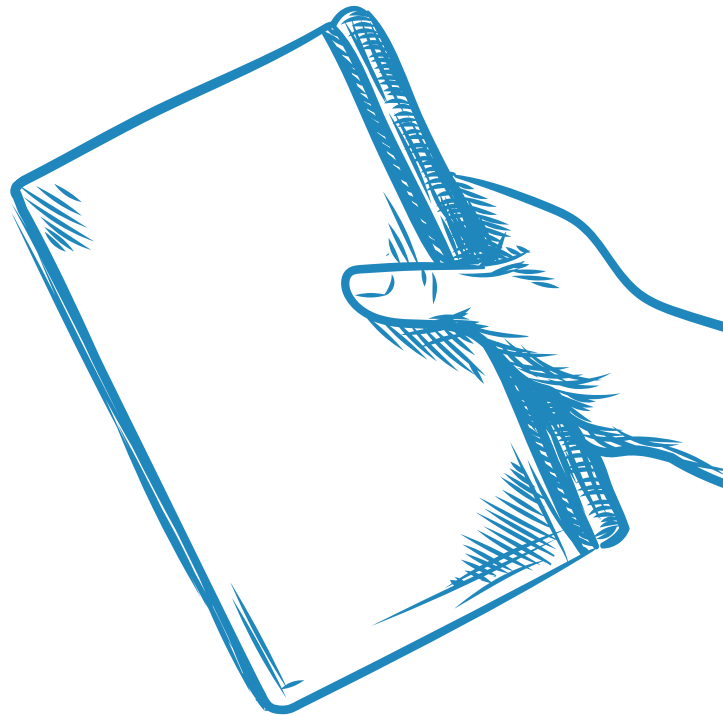
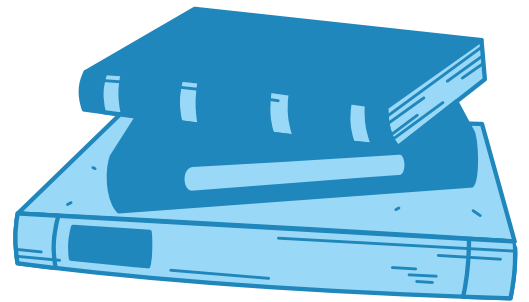
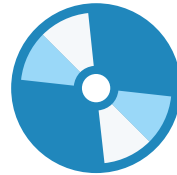
The second most common response to this question is that God will take it upon Himself to get the gospel to those who respond positively to His general revelation. This position holds that salvation comes only by hearing and accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12 is clear, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”*



Apart from the name of Christ, there is no salvation. However, God is just and loving and will get the good news of Jesus Christ to those who respond to His general revelation.

God can and does reach people through a myriad of different ways; both conventional and unconventional. God uses TV and radio programs, websites, print media, missionaries and even dreams and visions. There are countless testimonies of ex-Muslim's who have converted to Christianity due to a dream or vision of Jesus Christ.





AS YOU BEGIN TO INVESTIGATE THIS QUESTION FURTHER IT'S HELPFUL TO KEEP THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN MIND:

1

God is perfectly loving, holy, fair and just. In each and every situation, no matter what an individual's circumstances are, God will always judge fairly and also God wants everyone to be saved.

2

God has revealed Himself to everyone, everywhere through general revelation; the natural world around us and through the conscience within each of us.

3

One way to respond to this question is that God saves people who respond positively to general revelation, even if they never hear the gospel.

4

A second way to respond to this question is that God takes it upon Himself to get the gospel to those who respond positively to general revelation.



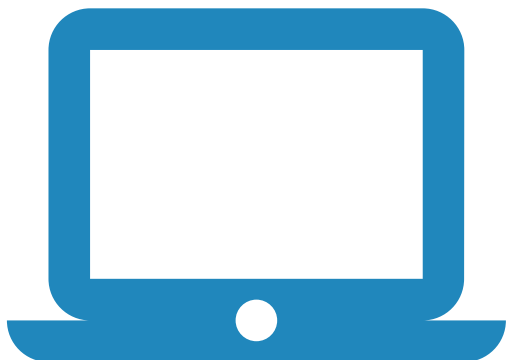




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