

Monday, April 21, 1997

Subject: Those who have not heard of Christ

Dear Dr. Ryrie: I have had a hard time lately witnessing to a friend because I am unable to answer the following question, which I hope you can answer: Will those who have never heard of Jesus at all (e.g., many in Third World countries) go to heaven or hell? If hell, how can they be held accountable when they've never heard the gospel message? -- Doug M.

Dear Doug: God makes it very clear in Romans 1:18-32 that all people everywhere can know something about the true God from His creation, namely His eternal power and divine nature (v. 20). Psalm 19:1-6 says the same thing. But if they reject that much of His revelation about Himself, then they are justly condemned. If they accept what they can learn from creation, then God will send them more of the truth as He did for Cornelius (Acts 10). Nevertheless, Acts 4:12 is all-too-plain that today no one can be saved unless he believes in the name of Christ. Therefore, we need to get that message to the whole world. As far as your friend is concerned, you should remind him that he has heard and will be held responsible for what he does with Christ. He does not come from a country which has not heard the gospel message and should not use the question of their salvation as an excuse to duck facing Christ's claims for himself.

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