

WHAT ABOUT THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD OF JESUS?

Our Heavenly Father “left not Himself without witness” – Acts 14:17

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OUR HEAVENLY FATHER tells us that He has always, and will always ensure that the earth has a witness of Him.

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Psalms 19:1-6 The BIBLE

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Acts 14:16-17 The BIBLE

EARLY PROPHETS OF GOD

An early name for, “prophet,” was, “seer,” (1 Samuel 9:9), as he was said to ‘see’ the will of God, or to see into the Spiritual world; this ability was what Balaam spoke of in Numbers 24:3b-4; 24:15-16, quoted below. While he wasn’t of the Israelite Nation, God nonetheless had bestowed upon him a Spirituality (anointing of the Holy Spirit? – not necessarily so, as some are given a measure of supernatural, “seeing,” ability by God from birth, and some even have some kind of, “seeing,” ability demonically) which enabled God to be enquired of by him. Almighty God has always ensured that those who sincerely want to know Him have the opportunity (Jeremiah 29:13). We see that Balaam wasn’t the only such early spokesman of God. Balaam was of the same tribe as Moses’ father-in-law, and, arguably therefore, of also the same religious sect. Both were deeply spiritual, Jethro’s being, “the Priest of Midian” – Exodus 2:16, 3:1, 18:1, and Balaam, of the same Tribe, being so spiritual and in-tune with God that he was known for it internationally.



Moses' wife, Zipporah, was Ethiopian (Numbers 12:1) (which irritated his siblings) and therefore presumably her father, Jethro, was also. So, potentially, God had similarly already placed His spokesmen also in Africa, from which they apparently had migrated. (To this day the Ethiopian Amharics claim a deep affiliation with the Jews (and even to have possession of the Ark of the Covenant), and Nigeria's Igbos are said to be ethnically Hebrew.)

Even in the days of Abraham, Melchisedek, the king of Salem (later, "Jerusalem") was, "...the priest of the most high God," (Genesis 14:18) "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually," - Hebrews 7:3, so possibly a pre-incarnation of Jesus, a "Christophanie," or earthly role on earth of Jesus Himself?

Egypt, of course, had its magicians (Exodus 7:11-22); indeed, God had even given to Pharaoh a special spokesman of God: Joseph, son of Jacob, to provide him spiritual instruction (Genesis 41)! And He gave Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Belshazzar (Daniel 4,6,7) to instruct them Spiritually. When Jesus was born, "wise men," from the East were able to recognize the birth of the Son of God, and come, search Him out. The existence of all these spiritual men testifies to the fact that, while Israel was the People that God had chosen to be His witnesses to the world, there were others, also, in lands geographically distant, who, also, were cognizant of the One Great God, and were in touch with His Spirit. Just how much they understood and followed Him cannot be known until we are able to ask our Lord in Person, but we do know how much they *were potentially able* to know; this, we shall see in a moment!

God made the Hebrew people/the Jews/Israel God's witnesses and spokesmen to the world:

7 Even every one that is called by My Name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

8 Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

10 Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I Am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.

11 I, even I, Am the LORD; and beside Me there is no saviour.

Isaiah 43:7-11 The BIBLE

And, while the Nation of Israel was the spokesmen of God to the world, Jesus said that it was impossible that Jerusalem (His people) would ever be without a spokesman of God to speak *to them* from Him (Luke 13:33; John 14:15-17; Acts 14:17):

31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto Him, Get Thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill Thee.

32 And He said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.



33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: **for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.**¹

Luke 13:31-33 The BIBLE

For this reason, when some of the Pharisees warned Jesus to get out of Jerusalem because of King Herod's plot to kill Him, Jesus said that He would not, indeed COULD NOT, "get out, and depart hence," could not leave Jerusalem, as He still had a job to do being a prophet in Jerusalem, casting out devils, doing cures, etc. ("walking" among men – verse 33²), and then being perfected on the third day. Jesus knew His responsibility!

JUST HOW MUCH ARE THE ISOLATED HEATHEN ABLE TO KNOW OR RECEIVE OF GOD?

Our Heavenly Father tells us in Scripture:

- 1) God has given everyone an understanding of truth and righteousness;
- 2) God requires, for salvation, a sincere heart desiring Him and His truth and righteousness;
- 3) God knows who has/will have a sincere heart desiring Him and His truth and righteousness;
- 4) God will make sure that everyone with a sincere heart desiring Him can and will receive Him.

1) God has given everyone an understanding of truth and righteousness

9 That (*Jesus*) Was the true Light, which lighteth **every** man that cometh into the world.

John 1:9 The BIBLE

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 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:

21 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.

Romans 1:18-21 The BIBLE

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

¹ That Jesus wasn't speaking, here, of the location where He would be crucified, but of the fact that He had to remain in Jerusalem, the 'headquarters' of God's people, to be the Spokesman of God there, is seen in the Book of Hebrews:

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore **Jesus** also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, **suffered without the gate.**

13 **Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp**, bearing His reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Hebrews 13:11-14 The BIBLE

² 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people.

Leviticus 26:12 The BIBLE



15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.

Romans 2:14-16 The BIBLE

2) God requires, for salvation, a sincere heart desiring Him and His truth and righteousness

29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, **if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.**

Deuteronomy 4:29 The BIBLE

13 And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me **with all your heart.**

Jeremiah 29:13 The BIBLE

8 Blessed are the **pure in heart:** for **they** shall see God.

Matthew 5:8 The BIBLE

3) God knows who has a/will have a sincere heart desiring Him and His truth and righteousness

Scripture tells us that, from the foundation of the world, God knew who would desire Him, and His truth, and He wrote in His Book of Life every detail of their being and their life:

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are His.** And, Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity.

II Timothy 2:19 The BIBLE

13 For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 **Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.**

17 How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with Thee.

Psalms 139:13-18 The BIBLE

27 And **He that searcheth the hearts knoweth** what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are **the called according to His purpose.**

29 **For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

30 **Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.**

Romans 8:27-30 The BIBLE



8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and **go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world,** when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Revelation 17:8 The BIBLE

4) God will make sure that everyone with a sincere heart desiring Him can and will receive Him

35 And Jesus said unto them, I Am The Bread Of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.

37 All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.

39 And this is the Father's will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:35, 37-40 The BIBLE

When one asks how those who have never known of Jesus can possibly be said to have the opportunity to receive Him, he can remember that our Heavenly Father, in his Divine wisdom and foreknowledge, knew, "before the foundation of the world,"³ exactly who was or was not going to desire and seek Him with a whole heart! And those who were, during their lifetime, going to be sincere in this way, our Heavenly Father has given the greatest opportunity to find Him! Our Lord and Saviour knows exactly how best to distribute present and future populations across the earth, and to place the most sincere individuals where will be presented and encountered the greatest opportunities to hear and receive the Gospel. And, similarly, our Heavenly Father knows also where to place those individuals who will have the least sincerity toward the Gospel: in locations where opportunity to hear and receive it will be the least.

8 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:8 The BIBLE

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Acts 17:26 The BIBLE

And, even then, He sends His emissaries, His missionaries, even those simply fleeing persecution for their faith, into the whole world to provide every nation with abundant opportunity to repent and to follow after God and His righteousness!

15 And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

³ John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; I Peter 1:20

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Mark 16:15-16 The BIBLE

14 And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Matthew 24:14 The BIBLE

And our Heavenly Father Is in fact so determined that salvation shall be brought to all who seek Him with a sincere heart that, even if those who are commissioned by God as missionaries fail to fulfill their calling, He ensures that others will obey Him and provide salvation to those seeking God (but those who failed to go when called by God will have to answer for their disobedience; Jonah discovered this!). Mordechai warned Esther:

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14 The BIBLE

God owes nothing to mankind. For people who want nothing to do with Him and righteousness He can do absolutely nothing more than He has already done for thousands of years! He has sent His messengers, and He has sent even His only begotten Son! What more could He possibly do?!

1 I Am sought of them that asked not for Me; I Am found of them that sought Me not: I said, Behold Me, behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My Name.

2 I have spread out My hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

Isaiah 65:1-2 The BIBLE

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew 23:37 The BIBLE

To those who our Heavenly Father recognizes as actually wanting truth and righteousness, He gives an even greater understanding of His truth and righteousness than they already have. And to those insincere and sinful in heart, He takes away from them even that understanding and righteousness that they already do have! Jesus didn't speak in parables to make the truth of God easier to understand; those who are sincere toward God, to whom our Heavenly Father has therefore given the Holy Spirit, don't need parables to understand the truth of God! But for those who are insincere toward God and sinful in heart, Jesus spoke in parables to make the truth of God impossible to understand! Our Heavenly Father wants only those who truly want His truth and righteousness!

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance:



21b ... He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Daniel 2:21b The BIBLE

but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Matthew 13:9-16 The BIBLE

14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I Am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

15 And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Jeremiah 3:14-15 The BIBLE

