**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**What About Those Who Have Never Heard The Gospel?**

Thank you and good morning. Welcome to our program.

There are many people who hear the gospel of Christ, but reject it and refuse to obey it. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 that those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ will *“be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”*

Someone might be thinking, “OK, I can understand why one who hears the truth of the gospel and then rejects it will be lost, but what about the one who has never heard the gospel of Christ, and then dies having never heard? Will he be punished with everlasting destruction?”

This is the question I want to address on the program today. “What about those who have never heard the gospel of Christ? What about the one who was, let’s say, born in the jungles of Brazil. He grew up there lived his life there, spent all of his days not traveling any more than a couple of miles from his village. And during his life he never encountered a Bible, never heard anyone talk about Jesus, never heard the gospel plan of salvation. What about this person on the judgement day?

I want to share with you four things about those who have never heard the gospel of Christ.

First of all, the fact that there are some who have never heard the gospel in no way changes the facts that underlie what we as Christians believe. The things that we believe are based on overwhelming evidence and are true even if there are people in Brazil who never hear the gospel. Consider with me what I am talking about. First, God still exist even if there are people in the world who have never heard the gospel. Look with me in Psalm 19 verses 1-4, *“1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.”* Look at the world around us. Look at the amazing world of living things that reveal very intricate systems that display order and design. Where did all of that come from? I know there are those who say that nature did it all by itself by sheer chance, but no one who really wants to know the truth will come to that conclusion. No right thinking person will conclude that this world came into existence by chance. The amazing design of our world says that there had to be intelligence behind it, a Designer, a Great Conductor that brought it all together. And the Psalmist says that the heavens and the firmament utters this speech and reveals this knowledge. He says *“there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and there words to the end of the world.”* There is no nation or people on the earth who do not hear this speech. The fact that some in the world have not heard the gospel of Christ does not change the fact that God exist and that anyone in the world can know it.

And also, the Bible is still the word of God even if there are people in the world who have never seen a Bible. The Bible claims to be the word of God, 2 Tim. 3:16, and there is overwhelming evidence that that claim is true. We don’t have time to get into this in detail, but we could go back into the Old Testament and dig into some of those amazing prophecies where the prophets stated with pinpoint accuracy events that would take place, sometimes hundreds of years in the future, things that, there was no way they could know on their own, which demonstrates beyond any doubt that these men did not write on their own, but they were guided by God. They had to be. There is no other explanation that is reasonable. And when you consider the scientific accuracy of the Bible, the historical trustworthiness of the Bible, the continuity of the Bible, and purity of its ethics, the only reasonable conclusion we can come to is that it is what it claims to be, the word of God. Dear listener, the Bible is the word of God whether there are people who hear the gospel or not.

And also, Jesus is the only Savior whether people hear the gospel or not. The Bible states concerning Jesus, *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12) If there is a God and the Bible is the word of God, then this also true. Jesus is the only Savior.

Whatever conclusion we come to about the man who has never heard the gospel of Christ, it does not change these facts. There is a God. The Bible is the word of God, and Jesus is the only Saviour. These facts are beyond dispute. They are supported by overwhelming evidence. They cannot be lightly brushed aside or dismissed as we wrestle with the question of what we do with the person who dies, having never heard the gospel of Christ.

The second thing we must understand about those who have never heard the gospel is that they are not innocent. Some people may try to give you the impression that some of these primitive cultures tucked away in some jungle somewhere are uncorrupted by the evils of modern culture. They don’t have cell phones or computers. They don’t have materialistic minds, or any envy. They don’t have to wrestle with pornography or gang violence. They are just these picture perfect cultures of people treating others as they want to be treated. But this is not the case. Consider with me two things. First, those who live in these primitive cultures all have a sense of morality just like we all do. I don’t care where you go in the world, whether you are in the biggest city or in the most remote spot on this planet, the people you find there will still be possessed with a sense of morality. Everybody has it, that is a sense that certain things are right and certain things are wrong, and that I ought to do what is right. And the second thing I would say about those who live in these primitive cultures is that they know what they are doing. They know that they are doing things that are wrong, things that they ought not to do. This is true of people whether they live in New York City or in the jungles of the Amazon. If the fact be told, primitive cultures can be just as wicked and violent as our own culture. My point is, all people wherever they live on this planet have a moral sense and they all have violated that moral sense, and they know it. They have the same problem in the remote villages of Zimbabwe that they have in downtown St Louis. They are sinners. Confronted with the choice of right and wrong they choose to do wrong just like we do. The Bible declares *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Rom. 3:23).

This brings me to my third point concerning those who have never heard the gospel, and that is since they are sinners, they need to hear the gospel to be saved from sin. If we are going to talk about those who have never heard the gospel it seems to me we should say about them what Jesus said. Look with me in Matthew 28:19. Jesus said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Jesus said, “make disciples” of whom? – “of all the nations” Let me ask you, when Jesus said, “make disciples of all the nations” did that include China? Does it include Zimbabwe? Does it include Brazil? Jesus said in Mark 16:15-16, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”* If the gospel is to be preached in every nation and to every person in every nation, what does that tell us about every nation and every person? It tells us that they are lost in sin, otherwise they would have no need for the gospel. Some have the idea that one is not lost in sin until he hears the gospel and then rejects it. However, these passages tell us that they are already lost because of sin, and the gospel needs to be preached to them that they might be saved. Look with me in 1 Thessalonians 2:16. Paul says that the Jews who were persecuting them were *“forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved….”* This passage says that the Gentiles needed to have the gospel spoken to them “that they might be saved.” This implies that they were already lost because of sin, and that they needed to have the gospel spoken to them that they might be saved. If those in the jungles of the Amazon are not lost because they have never heard the gospel, then I suggest that one of the worse things we could do to them is to go and preach it to them. If they are OK without it, then leave them alone so they will not be accountable. Romans 1:16 says, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”* The only way anyone in this world will be saved from his sins is by coming in contact with the saving power of the gospel of Christ. We must all hear the gospel and believe it if we are to be saved.

But my fourth point concerning those who have never heard the gospel is they are not beyond the reach of God. God has always made it possible for those who are seeking Him to find Him. In Acts 17 Paul was preaching to idolaters concerning the one true God. He said concerning God that *“He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”* No matter where one lives in the world, he is not far from finding God if he will search for Him. We have already mentioned that the heavens and the world around us declare the glory of God. Anywhere in the world anyone can hear this message from God and know there is an eternal, powerful God. The logical response to seeing God in the things that are made is to seek after Him. God promises that those who do seek will find.

In Acts 8 we read of how God worked it out so that the Ethiopian eunuch, a sinner who was seeking the truth came in contact with Philip who was a preacher of the truth. God made sure that the preacher of truth found the seeker of truth so that he could hear the truth and be saved. In Acts 10 we read of where God made sure that Cornelius, a Gentile, who had an honest and good heart, came in contact with Peter, a preacher of the gospel, so that Cornelius and his household could hear the gospel and be saved. What do we see? We see God working to bring searching souls to those who can give God’s message to them. And isn’t this what Jesus said in Matthew 28:20 when He said *“and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Jesus did not say, “Go, good luck, I hope this works out.” No, He said “Go, and I will go with you.” God is with His people today working with them in their efforts to carry the gospel to the world, to get the gospel to searching hearts. When a man wants to know the truth, God can get it to him.

Our time is gone for today, and we thank you for listening, but before we close I want to announce a special series of meetings conducted by the St. James church of Christ in St. James. This series of meetings begins today May 5 and continues through Friday night of this week, May 10th. David Thomley of Spring Hill, Tennessee, is with us and he we will be presenting lessons dealing with the question, “Does Truth Exist?” We are now living in a time in which truth is no longer held in high esteem by many. Many people question whether we can know what is truth. Mr. Thomley will address these important issues. That’s May 5-10. We will meet this morning at 9:30 and 10:15, Sunday evening at 5:00 and then Monday through Friday of this week we will meet at 7:00 PM. Come and be with us. Our building is located at 685 Sidney Street in St. James where Sidney Street and Highway B intersect.

Before we close we want to invite you to check out our website. On this website you are able to hear sermons on a variety of Bible topics, and you also are able to hear previous Bible Talk radio broadcasts. The web address is sjchurchofchrist.com, that’s sjchurchofchrist.com.