

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO NEVER HEAR THE GOSPEL?

EXCLUSIVISM

- **Key Scriptural Support:**¹
 - **John 14:6** - *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."*
 - **Romans 10:17** - *So faith comes from hearing the Good News, and people hear the Good News when someone tells them about Christ. (NCV)*
 - **Hebrews 9:27** - *It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgement.*
 - **Romans 1:18-20** - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*
 - **Romans 3:11** - *There is none who understands; there is none who seeks for God.*
- **Theological Assumptions:**
 - Jesus is ontologically and epistemologically necessary for salvation. Death seals your fate.
 - General revelation² is not salvific; it only condemns.
 - People, left to themselves, do not seek God; they flee from God.
 - Unbelief in God is inexcusable.
 - Pre- and Post-incarnation faith requires at least some special revelation. Content of faith may vary.
 - Unevangelized are condemned for rejecting the light given to them in General Revelation.
- **Ancient and Modern Proponents** - Augustine, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Carl Henry, Ronald Nash

INCLUSIVISM APART FROM EVANGELIZATION (Wider Hope View)

- **Key Scriptural Support:**
 - **Hebrews 11:6** - *The one who has faith must believe God exists and that He rewards seekers.*
 - **You will seek Me and find Me** - Duet. 4:29, 2 Chron. 15:2, Prov. 8:17, Is. 55:6, Jer. 29:13, Lam. 3:25, Amos 5:6, Luke 11:9-10, Acts 17:27
 - **Luke 15** - *Parables that illustrate God loves and seeks the lost: the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son.*
 - **John 16:8** - *The Holy Spirit draws people to seek God, by convicting them of the root sin of unbelief in God, which is clear from general revelation.*
 - **Acts 10** - *Cornelius the centurion responded in faith to the light he had.*
 - **OT believers (apart from special revelation)** - *Job, Melchizedek, Jethro, Rahab*
- **Theological Assumptions:**
 - Jesus is ontologically necessary, but not epistemologically necessary.
 - Seekers will find God (Holy Spirit at work in the world)
 - General revelation is salvific when a person responds with faith in God.
 - Unbelief in God is inexcusable.
- **Ancient and Modern Proponents** - J. Martyr, Clement of Rome, J. Wesley, CS Lewis, C. Pinnock, John Sanders, Peter Kreeft, NT. Wright

¹ New American Standard Version

² General revelation - God clearly reveals Himself through the works of creation (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:19-21), rational capacities of human nature, such as understanding the concept of eternity (Ecc. 3:11) and moral knowledge (Rom 2:14-16), and general awareness of the sin of unbelief in God (John 16:8).

POSTMORTEM EVANGELISM (Divine Perseverance View)

- **Key Scriptural Support:**
 - **Mark 16:15-16** - *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*
 - **I Peter 3:18-4:6** - *Jesus went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark.*
 - **I Timothy 2:4** - *God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
- **Theological Assumptions:**
 - Jesus is ontologically and epistemologically necessary.
 - General revelation is not salvific.
 - Unbelief is inexcusable.
 - Only the person who explicitly disbelieves in Jesus Christ will be condemned.
 - Salvation is universally accessible.
 - Death does not seal your destiny.
 - Christ descended into hell and offered salvation to the dead.
 - It is not a second chance doctrine, but a first chance doctrine; however, it is not an indefinite offer.
- **Ancient and Modern Proponents** - Clement of Alexandria, Origen, George MacDonald, Donald Bloesch, Gabriel Fackre

UNIVERSAL EVANGELISM (God Will Send the Gospel)

- **Key Scriptural Support:**
 - **Hebrews 11:6** - *The one who has faith must believe He exists and that He rewards seekers.*
 - **John 16:8** - *The Holy Spirit draws people to seek God by convicting them of the root sin of unbelief in God, which has been made clear to reason from general revelation.*
 - **Acts 8:26-40** - *The account of the Ethiopian eunuch and Phillip.*
 - **Acts 10** - *The account of Cornelius.*
 - God sometimes gets things done by communicating directly through dreams and visions without a human messenger (**Abimelech - Gen. 20; Nebuchadnezzar - Dan. 2; Ananias - Acts 9:10**)
- **Theological Assumptions:**
 - Jesus is ontologically and epistemologically necessary.
 - General revelation is clear, but not salvific.
 - Unbelief is inexcusable.
 - The Holy Spirit convicts all people in all ages of their sin of unbelief in God. This grace is sufficient to bring about the search for God.
 - Seekers will find God.
 - Salvation is universally accessible before death.
- **Ancient and Modern Proponents** - Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, Francisco Suarez, Hugh of St. Victor, W. Shedd, John Stott, J H Newman