

Is Belief In Christ Absolutely Necessary?

John 3:16 reads "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Almost all understand this to mean that a sinner has to believe in Christ to be saved. For example an atheist will not be saved. But some preachers want to hedge ...

Some will ask, but what about someone (like in a third world country) who has never heard the gospel?

The answer is not that those people don't have to believe. If God requires some to believe but others are not so required, then God would be showing favoritism.

The answer is that God has guaranteed that those who truly look for God will find him:

- Matt 7:7 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:"
- II Chron 5:2 "...if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

So nobody is going to be saved in their unbelief. Instead, if they are sincere, they will be given an opportunity to learn about Christ and either accept or reject Him and his way.

Next some will ask about the Jews and other religions. Even though they don't believe Jesus is the son of God, since they are faithful to their religion, won't they be saved?

Billy Graham is famous for teaching in crusade after crusade that people needed to come forward and accept Christ in order to be saved. But in an interview with Robert Schuller (5-31-1997), Mr. Graham said "Whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the body of Christ because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light they have and I think they're saved and they're going to be with us in heaven." In McCall's magazine (Jan 1978) Graham said "I used to believe that pagans in far-off countries were lost — were going to h-e-l-l — if they did not have the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. ... I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God—through nature, for instance—and plenty of other opportunities, therefore, of saying 'yes' to God."

But God clearly says ...

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 8:24 "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Now since God requires belief in Christ to be saved, and no exceptions are made because of ignorance, the same is also true about repentance and baptism.

Luke 13:3 " ... [except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.](#)"

So repentance is absolutely required. Those who believe in Christ but are not following what He says - will not be saved - they have not repented. This would include:

- the gay church
- the Catholic church
- the Calvinistic churches
- any denomination that is not following the truth (John 8:32 - "[And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.](#)")

Acts 2:38 "[Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.](#)"

That verse make both repentance and baptism absolutely essential to salvation. There are no exceptions for those who are never baptized, even for believers, even for those who were sprinkled but not actually immersed, or for those who were only baptized when they were babies.

We have to believe and obey the truth in order to be saved - I Pet 1:22a - "[Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth ...](#)"