



Heathenism

Heathenism is not a synonymous term with an aboriginal group of people or culture. There are two points in life that need to be considered in the study of heathenism, God-consciousness and Gospel hearing. Negative volition at the point of God-consciousness results in personal heathenism. Negative volition at the point of God-consciousness and Gospel hearing results in a heathenistic culture or nation.

Positive volition at the point of God-consciousness creates a vacuum into which Gospel information is drawn. Negative volition at the point of God-consciousness creates a vacuum into which religion is drawn.

Heathenism starts from man's volition. Any negative volition decisions are detrimental to a person's children and to their grandchildren. In Exodus 20, iniquity of the father resulted in iniquity in the third and fourth generations. This pattern can only be broken by positive volition at God-consciousness and Gospel hearing.

What about the heathen? Are they lost? In Romans 1:20, God indicates that the heathen are without excuse. The question is often asked, "What about the people who have never had a chance?" Reference, of course, is to a group of people who are termed heathen. By "heathenism" they mean the people who apparently have never heard the Gospel because of their environment, geographical location, or failure of Christians to bring the Gospel message of salvation to them. This question should be answered accurately.

"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 1:20, NASB)

Is it true that even if a person has never "heard" the fact that Jesus Christ died for them on the Cross they will still go to hell? Is this justice from God's standpoint? John 3:36; 1 John 5:12.

""He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."" (John 3:36, NASB)

"He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 John 5:12, NASB)

World Evangelism

Let's think about history for a moment. From the standpoint of history, people have really very little awareness of what God has done in the past. For example, in the 6th century AD, there was a generation in China that had perhaps more Christian believers than unbelievers. Other nations such as India, Ethiopia, other parts of Africa were completely evangelized (doesn't mean everyone was saved) as effectively as America has ever been in modern times.

The Word of God indicates that the whole inhabited world was evangelized in every century and in every generation. Rom. 1:8; Acts 17:6; 1 Thess. 1:8; Col. 1:16; Acts 2; Psalms 19:1-3; Rom. 10:18.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world." (Romans 1:8, NASB)

"When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities,



shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also;" (Acts 17:6, NASB)

"For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything." (1 Thessalonians 1:8, NASB)

"For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard." (Psalms 19:1-3, NASB)

"But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."" (Romans 10:18, NASB)

1 Timothy 3:16 indicates that the whole inhabited earth had the opportunity to believe in Him. Gentiles were evangelized and many believed. Secular history records evangelizing through the centuries. For example, Cambridge-Oxford Ancient History - the standard top-notch historical reference series on history is a good one to see the backdrop of human events in the light of God's dealing with man.

"By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory." (1 Timothy 3:16, NASB)

Often the problem of those who apparently "never heard" is a problem of our own historical interest. We really are historically ignorant of what God has done in times past and now. For example, now the biblical plan of salvation can be heard by 97% of the world's population. Granted, a great deal of this is by radio and the Internet and presupposes that they can get a radio or connect to the Internet so they can hear. Often we assume that nothing has been done, but the whole earth has been evangelized several times in history.

Every human, in every age, in every racial group, has the chance according to the Bible to be born again. We also want to remember that the Word of God is our absolute authority. That is, if the Word of God states such and such to be true, regardless of whether we have the historical facts or not, the Bible is still true.

The Five Points of Heathenism

The first three points of heathenism are from the standpoint of God with the last two points from the standpoint of man.

The Application of Divine Essence

Divine essence is the character of God, what God is like. The character of God includes sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability, and veracity. The sum total of His attributes, the outshining of them is His holiness. God's sovereignty means that He is not willing that any perish. God's justice means that He cannot render a bad judgment. 2 Peter 3:9.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)

Because God is absolute righteousness, it is impossible for God to do, to think, to practice anything that is wrong! God's absolute righteousness plus eternal life plus immutability make it impossible for God to



be unfair. His immutability means He cannot change His character. God has always been righteous.

God's omniscience means that God is cognizant of individuals. He knows what everyone is thinking or will ever think. God's omnipresence means God cannot overlook anyone! God's omnipotence means He is able to do anything consistent with His other attributes. Therefore, God can only be fair.

Regarding the character of man, man has always been sinful after the Fall in Genesis 3. No human being has absolute righteousness apart from the imputed act of God received when they accept Christ as their Savior. Man is unstable. However, man's instability never affects the character of God.

Based on the character of God, it would be absolutely impossible for God to be unfair to any member of the human race whether it involved a Laplander, a Zulu, a Hottentot or an American. God cannot be unfair. God cannot be unrighteous. God cannot change. You see, we often imply that God is unfair to the heathen. Or we assume that something just a little unfair is going on.

Our assumption is based on ignorance of human history, of what God has done, ignorance of the facts of the Word of God, or an ignorance of His character. But also, do not assume that God allows anyone to slip into heaven without conversion, that is, the normal person who reaches the point of God-consciousness.

Application of Unlimited Atonement

Remember God is sovereign and in His sovereignty, He made a decision. The Trinity solved the plan through grace. God the Father was the originator of the plan. God the Son was the executer of the plan. God the Holy Spirit was the revealer of the plan. Through the death of Christ on the Cross, the barrier between unholy man and holy God was removed so that man could participate in the perfect plan of God through faith.

Unlimited Atonement is defined as Jesus Christ dying spiritually on the Cross as our substitute not only for our own sins, but the sins of the entire world. He died for every sin ever committed by any member of the human race anywhere that includes the Laplanders, the Hottentots, and the Apaches. He died for the geographically isolated as well as the so-called civilized world and died for all sin, past, present and future.

This means that God desires that every person of the human race be converted. Do you believe that? You certainly should! Now, if the Lord Jesus Christ had died only for the sins of the USA, and Canada, then someone could come up and say God was unfair. But He died for everybody! Every person, every sin ever committed was included in His substitutionary spiritual death.

This does not mean that everybody in the world is automatically saved. You have to believe in Him as your personal Savior. 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Tim. 4:10; John 3:15; John 3:36.

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, NASB)

"who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:6, NASB)

"so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." (John 3:15, NASB)

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36, NASB)

In 1 Timothy 4:10, "who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers" doesn't mean that all men are



automatically saved, but that it is available to all men. Check also Titus 2:11, Hebrews 2:9, 2 Peter 2:1, and 1 John 2:2.

"For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers." (1 Timothy 4:10, NASB)

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11, NASB)

"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:9, NASB)

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." (2 Peter 2:1, NASB)

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)

The principle is that inasmuch as Jesus Christ died for the sins of the entire world, it is impossible for God to be unfair to any member of the human race regardless of geographical, linguistic, or racial barrier, or any other factor. It is impossible for God to be unfair or to assign anyone to the Lake of Fire. The individuals themselves, by rejection of the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross on their behalf, put themselves there.

Application of Divine Volition

There is a coexistence of two wills - the sovereignty of God (absolute will of God) and the free will (volition) of man. Psalms 135:6.

"Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps." (Psalms 135:6, NASB)

Man is allowed by God to act independently of God's will. God's sovereignty gave man free will. In 2 Peter 3:9, repentance is a change of mind! A change of mind is the only difference between rejection and acceptance. Repentance is the mental attitude manifested when you believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)

"who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4, NASB)

Remember, God always keeps His Word. It is God's will that all be saved and He has provided the perfect and only plan. His divine desire, His will, His commandment is to believe. 1 John 3:23.

"This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23, NASB)

There may appear to be certain groups of people who have seemingly not heard the Gospel. Why? Because of what they are thinking. Repentance is a thing of the mind, a mental attitude. So the conclusion of the first three points is that God is not unfair. Not at all. Now the next two points are from man's side.



Application of God-Consciousness

Any person, any heathen, who desires information with regard to God when he reaches God-consciousness shall receive that information. On the basis of that information, man can make a decision to know God or to reject God. This applies to anyone who reaches the age of accountability because of what they think. Accountability is that point which an individual becomes God-conscious. There has entered into every normal person the thought of God whether they deny it or not. Even the thought of God has entered into the so-called atheist.

God-consciousness can come at a very early age in a Christian home. But once a person reaches accountability, there is in every person the desire to know God, to have relationship with God, to have fellowship with Him. Do the heathen strive to do this? Yes. Note that in John 7:17, "If" is a third class condition and means maybe he will and maybe he won't. If he will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine of salvation from of God.

"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." (John 7:17, NASB)

Application of Human Volition

It is God's will that all be saved. God created freedom of choice in all of His creatures. Before the creation of man, God created angels with volition. Satan, the most intelligent and gifted of the angels chose to act independently of God and against God. Satan said "I will" five times. Elect angels went with God and fallen angels went with Satan. God sentenced Satan. Satan impugned the character of God: "How can a loving God cast His creatures into the Lake of Fire?" God's answer was the creation of mankind with volition. This was the start of the Angelic Conflict. Isaiah 14:12-15; Matt. 25:41.

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit." (Isaiah 14:12-15, NASB)

"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;' (Matthew 25:41, NASB)

Man has volition with positive and negative poles. There are two tests. In the Garden, the tree was the first test where man failed the test. The result was spiritual death and the genetically-formed old sin nature. Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12, NASB)

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22, NASB)

Once out of the Garden, the second test is the Cross. The decision is always left with man's free will. The choice is now God's work or man's work. Man can choose for God or against God through their free will or human volition. This is called free will or freedom of choice. Man is free to reject or accept truth, as God makes that truth clear to them.

There are two points regarding man's awareness of God – God-consciousness and Gospel hearing. Acts 17:27 and Psalm 42:1-2 state that man seeks after God and means seeking in the manner of the existence of God or God-consciousness.



"that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;" (Acts 17:27, NASB)

"For the choir director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalms 42:1-2, NASB)

Psalms 10:4 and Romans 3:11 state that man does not seek after God and means man does not seek Gospel hearing. At the point of God-consciousness, man can desire to know God with positive volition or not desire to know God with negative volition.

"The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."" (Psalms 10:4, NASB)

"THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;" (Romans 3:11, NASB)

If a person goes positive at God-consciousness, God is obligated to put that person in a position where they will hear the Gospel. At the point of God-consciousness, man uses volition. At the point of Gospel hearing man uses volition and faith. If any member of the human race, regardless of geographical isolation or linguistic barrier desires to know God (the point of God-consciousness), they will receive doctrinal information on which to make a decision about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. John 7:17; Titus 2:11; Jer. 29:13.

"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. " (John 7:17, NASB)

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11, NASB)

"You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13, NASB)

If it is God's will that all be saved, and it is, why then are not all saved? Go back to John 7:17 and read it. "He will know." Know what? Know the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of salvation. Every person who has responded to God-consciousness in a positive way ends up knowing Jesus Christ as personal Savior regardless of where they live.

If man rejects God at the point of God-consciousness, then God has no responsibility to present the Gospel to them. The result is they are judged on the basis of negative volition, no desire to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is rejection of Jesus Christ. However, many times God will still give the Gospel as He did with Pharaoh.

Jeremiah 29:13 is looking at someone who is accepting the Gospel of Jesus Christ made perfectly clear by God the Holy Spirit in their heart. He has become God-conscious so he has started to search. He wants fellowship with God. The word "heart" is the Hebrew is לֵב (lêbâb) and means the mind, the heart, the will. Note also that the mind is the area of the search. God says that they shall find Jesus Christ as personal Savior no matter where they live.

How do people arrive at God-consciousness? Do you remember any time when you were never aware of God? Difficult, but possible, from the adult standpoint. Man universally believes in God. Therefore, God must exist. Why, even the heathen believe in some kind of a deity. Some people become conscious of God in this way.

Conversations about God often awaken people to God-consciousness. Yes, He does exist. For example,



home Bible classes and written Bible doctrine may often awaken a person to the fact that God is real, very real. They awaken to God-consciousness and a desire to know the Savior Jesus Christ. The moral approach means that man has a conscience and can choose between right and wrong. So behind it must be a principle of right and wrong. Absolute righteousness is God. God does exist.

Every design has a designer. Since God is perfect, He must have designed quite uniquely and perfectly. Every atom is perfect in structure, for example. So is every snowflake perfect and unique. There is design everywhere. There must be a designer for man cannot come close to doing it.

The law of cause and effect means that an adult or child's mind can grasp this. The child says, "Where did this come from?" "Why did they do that?" Keep going back and you arrive at God. "What caused that?" For every effect there is a cause and the absolute cause is God. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Go back as far as you can in eternity past and delve into the creation story. The answer is that the chicken was created first. If you don't believe the Bible record, just remain ignorant, it is your God-given privilege.

So there are many ways to arrive at God-consciousness. And when you once arrive at God-consciousness and start sending out positive signals (acceptance), before long you'll arrive at the Cross. This is what happens when a missionary comes on the field and finds a heathen who says, "I've been waiting all my life for this."

The principle is this. When a person reaches God-consciousness, at that moment there is an issue. Either positive or negative volition is exercised. If they desire a relationship with God (positive volition, acceptance), they will receive information with which to make a decision for Christ. If they put up negative signals (rejection), the issue may go no further.

The conclusion is that Heathenism is not a place, but a person who has been exposed to God-consciousness or the Gospel (or both) and rejected it. Heathen are not heathen because they have never heard, but because they rejected God-consciousness and/or the Gospel when they heard it.

Any area of the world today, whether it be America or Africa, that has rejected God-consciousness or the Gospel is heathen territory. Remember, accepted God-consciousness leads to the Cross. But the problem is that they suppress the truth. There is only one way to be saved and that is by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 1:16.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16, NASB)

God-consciousness can be suppressed, but the result is wrath. In Romans 1:18, "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" is negative volition at Gospel hearing.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness," (Romans 1:18, NASB)

Every individual is made aware that God exists from His creation and that God made it evident to them all. Heathen are heathen because they have used negative volition at the point of God-consciousness and/or at the point of Gospel hearing. Rom. 1:19-21.

"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. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their



speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:19-21, NASB)

In Romans 1:19, "evident within them" is the point of God-consciousness and "knew God" is the point of Gospel hearing where they chose to reject the work of Jesus Christ for their sins. In Romans 1:21, "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks" means they rejected God and rejected the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

God is fair. If they reject His light, they are without excuse. No one can accuse God of ever being unfair. Rejection of truth results in a depraved mind. Rom. 1:24-25.

"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:24-25, NASB)

A reprobate or depraved mind is a mind abandoned to follow completely the whims and desires of the old sin nature. The list of sins in Romans 1:26-32 describes a depraved mind.

"For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper," (Romans 1:26-28, NASB)

"being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." (Romans 1:29-32, NASB)

Heathenism is what you think in terms of rejection! The USA has civilization, but has as many heathen per capita as any other nation. The issue is always believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. They can take it or leave it as far as unbelief is concerned. John 3:36.

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36, NASB)

Liberalism

Negative volition suppresses the truth and seeks a substitute which leads to the rise of Heathenism and Liberalism. This substitute may be Socialism, Communism, or some other system of philosophical materialism, but always follows the same pattern of man seeking to establish perfect environment by man's activity and ability.

Heathenism and Liberalism begin without the truth. If your premise is without truth, then no matter what the conclusion, it too will be without truth. Rom. 1:18-19; Rom. 1:24-25.

"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." (Romans 1:18-19, NASB)

"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the



creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (Romans 1:24-25, NASB)

Liberalism exploits the ignorance of people by appealing to the basic lust and emotional patterns. Socialism destroys all basic institutions and human ingenuity. Liberals satisfy their ego by trying to play God. Everyone is equal, they say, but they have not the ability or character or make everyone so.

Liberals seek a perfect world apart from God. They do not have the capacity to do this either. Hence, the principle of Liberalism is just an extension of Heathenism. Heathenism rejects the truth and seeks a false god and false truth. Heathenism rejects Jesus Christ as Savior. Liberalism is another manifestation of Heathenism, without the aboriginal or primitive culture.

Heathenism sets up a society without God and seeks to replace or fill the vacuum with other gods or religions such as Pantheism (God and universe are one) or Polytheism (deism--idealism). Liberalism is designed to appeal to the unsaved intellect, embraces their humanistic culture and claims to be able to solve his problems. An endless number of programs and gimmicks are tried, but the solution is never found. In the many such heathenistic programs come many destructions, and down goes the nation!