

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

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Webpage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

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This month's article is a departure from the "Israel and Judah" series of articles. "[God and Demographics](#)" is the title of the Doctrinal article for this month.

Evangelical Thinking about Salvation

In a 1981 article "Untold Billions: Are They Really Lost?"¹ author J. Ronald Blue writes,

"Are the unevangelized billions really on their way to a place so fearfully described in the Bible as hell? It is awesome enough to ask the question; to answer affirmatively is considered by some people as an affront to the loving nature of God."

• Blue, "Untold Billions," p. 341

It is an affront to God's loving nature to misdirect scriptural statements regarding the salvation of all. Yes, according to Prof. Blue, those who never heard the gospel of orthodox Christianity (the untold billions) are indeed lost. "... **these people are not only unreached but are living where there is no Christian contact. They are sometimes called 'hidden peoples'** (Blue, "Untold Billions," p. 349).

This admits God's impotence. Prof. Blue weaves a story line that unless there are people evangelizing these lost billions, they will never hear, because God works through human agents to "save" lost people. While calling for more teachers to teach preachers, he points out that ninety-five percent of all missionaries work among peoples already evangelized. If true, the "untold billions" are not being reached. A poll of 5,000 young Christian respondents at a 1970s Urbana conference² produced surprising results:

- only 37% believed that those who do not hear the gospel are eternally lost,
- only 42% believed that unbelievers will be punished in a literal hell fire, and
- only 25% believed that a person is saved or lost on the basis of how he followed what he knew.³

It is likely a substantial percentage of young (teenage and college age) evangelicals do not believe the standard hell doctrine espoused by Christian orthodoxy. Prof. Blue notes that the usual argument against hell is an ecumenicalism that all religions have some truth and the untold billions

"will be judged according to the light which they have received" from God. Prof. Blue replies,

"First, Scripture confirms that God indeed does abandon or give up those who, not knowing of Christ's redemption, have suppressed divine truth; and second, God has revealed the nature



¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138 (1981). Prof. Blue was Chairman and Associate Professor of World Missions at Dallas Theological Seminary when he wrote this article. He is still at Dallas Seminary at the time of this Newsletter.

² Urbana is an InterVarsity Christian Fellowship gathering that began in 1946.

³ Prof. Blue cited Arthur P. Johnston, "Focus Comment," *Trinity World Forum* 1 (Fall 1975): p. 3.

of His arrangements in Scripture.

... the basis of His judgment is not on unrevealed truth but on the clear revelation received and rejected by those who are condemned."

• Blue, "Untold Billions," pp. 344, 347

Blather. The teachers Prof. Blue opposes are as wrong as he is, he and his orthodox Christian allies who teach an unbiblical but traditional hell doctrine.

"... it is abundantly clear that God has judged the unevangelized billions of the world. His judgment is just. It is based on revelation clearly and willfully refused by the defendant. His sentence is fair. It is a release by God for man to pursue his own destruction and eternal death. The world's untold billions are lost!"

• Blue, "Untold Billions," p. 349

God's judgments are indeed just, but they do not result in "eternal" punishment and torture. God's judgments occur so the person will pay attention to God's grace. It is true that **"as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment ..."** (Hebrews 9:27), that judgment is not the end of God's redemptive process. The great white throne judgment for the untold billions will be instructional. Their deaths will be reversed, they will be made alive and then taught about their redemption through Christ. They will pay attention!

Professor Blue believes the opposite:

... The conclusion is clear. The untold billions are lost. They are desperately lost! There is no way for well-meaning Christians or conscientious unbelievers to bridge the gap between a righteous God and a reprobate mankind. Only the God-man Jesus Christ, can reach across the gulf between a perfect God and a perverse human race. If the unevangelized billions are truly lost, one burning question remains. How will they hear the unique message of hope? Human agents must be mobilized ..."

• Blue, "Untold Billions," p. 349

This is incredibly sad, and it comes from a chair of World Missions at a leading evangelical seminary. Prof. Blue and teachers like him actually believe, contrary to Scripture, that God will torture and burn "untold billions" for a (false) eternity for making an "informed decision" based on the "light" they have been given. It appears that God's human agents are failing, which means God and Christ are failing.

Good News about the Byte Show

John Evans has learned the complex procedure to download recorded shows, and has put online the recording of "[Chapter 20, Remember the Sabbath Day](#)" of Dr. Ernest Martin's *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*. (It will be uploaded to the *Essentials* page soon.) John and I hope to complete the final thirteen chapters in the coming weeks. There already is a complete reading of *Essentials* by Charlie Corder, and I strongly recommend listening to Charlie's and then my reading (or reverse the order) to gain nuances of Dr. Martin's teachings. An added benefit is to "read along" in the book or online while Charlie or I read the text.

Thank You

My God does not fail. My God has already saved me, and no amount of belief on my part can lead me to Christ. That is God's act. Knowing these facts make us all highly blessed. We should all be in awe of the extent of God's grace, that He is indeed the savior of all mankind (1 Timothy 4:10). This fact of everyone's salvation through Christ is **"faithful and worthy of all acceptance [welcome]"** (1 Timothy 4:9).

Thank you for supporting ASK and letting us teach to you and others the nuances of God's love and grace for all mankind. We need your continued support in all manner of ways. May God bless you, as we on our part, strive to teach the full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

David W. Sielaff
david@askelm.com