

LDS Doctrine—PME is Fair, Just & Loving of God



5 Important Questions:

1. What is the necessary condition in the NT for salvation?
2. Are we condemned only AFTER we reject Christ?
3. What revelation have we ALL received that renders us culpable and condemned before God?
4. To whom has God obligated Himself to send the **special revelation** of the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?
5. What should be the ultimate standard of God's *justice* if, as the Bible declares, our hearts are deceitful?

Where can you look in all the world for a faith which teaches the justice of God in granting to all men the same or **an equal right to receive salvation**? I mean by this, where the chance is given to every soul, whether living or dead, to obtain the remission of sins and find the way into the kingdom of God, through obedience to the gospel?

Are not the creeds of men narrowed in this respect to include only those who have believed in Christ in this mortal life? **Is such a narrowing warranted by scripture?** Is such a doctrine consistent with reason, with justice, with eternal love?

... Let us reflect for a moment on this teaching that only those who confess the name of Christ or who are baptized in this life shall be saved; that all who have died without confessing Christ, or without having had the privilege of hearing him, are forever lost and are cast into hell; that there is no salvation for them, **although it is no fault of their own that they did not hear**. Think of the countless multitudes who have died without the privilege of hearing of Jesus Christ! Are all these to be eternally consigned to torment with the damned? And this, because they were unfortunate as to time and place of birth!

... **Would that be fair? Would it be just? No!** The Lord is going to give to every man the opportunity to hear and to receive eternal life, or a place in his kingdom. We are very fortunate because we have had that privilege here and have passed from death unto life.

Joseph Fielding Smith, 10th LDS Prophet & President
Doctrines of Salvation, 1955, 2:129-130, 132

Biblical Doctrine—Answers to 5 Important Questions

1. What is the necessary condition in the NT for salvation? Answer: Faith in Jesus Christ.

John 3:14-16 NIV

¹⁴ [Jesus declared] "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 6:40 NIV

⁴⁰ [Jesus declared] "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 11:25-26 NIV

²⁵ Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Acts 16:29-31 NIV

²⁹ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."

Romans 10:9-10 NIV

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

- **Attention:** For evangelical "inclusivists" who hold that those who never hear the Gospel in this life may be saved on the basis of a relatively generic *faith in God*, the following Scriptures would be included: **John 14:6; Acts 2:38; 4:12; Romans 10:13-15.**

2. Are we condemned only AFTER we reject Christ? Answer: No—before & after!

All Sin

Galatians 3:22 NIV

²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Romans 3:9-10 NIV

⁹ What shall we conclude then? Are we [Jews] any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.

¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;"

All Sin; Therefore, All Are Already Condemned by God

Romans 5:12 NIV

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Romans 5:9-10 NIV

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Ephesians 2:1-3 NIV

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

- **Comment:** *Prior to our rejection of Christ, all die, because all sin. Moreover, all are under God's wrath and considered by God to be His enemies and therefore NOT reconciled to Him. This is the biblical revelation!*

3. What revelation have we ALL received that renders us culpable and condemned before God?

Answer: The general revelation of creation and moral conscience.

The General Revelation of Creation Condemns

Romans 1:18-25 NIV

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

- **Comment:** All are under God's wrath for suppressing the truth that there is an eternal Creator of the physical universe and that He *alone* IS to be worshipped. The **general revelation** of God's creation is sufficient, therefore, to condemn mankind, NOT to save mankind. God's verdict is that ALL are culpable and "without excuse"—and this *before* ever having rejected Jesus Christ.

To hold that God's verdict here in Romans 1:18-24 is unfair and unjust is more evidence of the truth we suppress despite it being "clearly seen" (v. 20).

The General Revelation of Moral Conscience Condemns

Romans 2:12-15 NIV

¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,

¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

- **Comment:** The apostle Paul declares here that non-Christian Gentiles “perish” on the same basis as the Jews—namely, sin. Gentiles, though not having the law of Moses, are nevertheless culpable before God because of the moral law He has written on their hearts. Their consciences, and thus their sense of right and wrong, are self-condemning, “because [they] who pass judgment do the same things” (2:2c NIV).

4. To whom has God obligated Himself to send the special revelation of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: To those who truly seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6 NIV

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

- **Comment:** One of the axioms of biblical Scriptures is that if we have not found God it is proof positive we have not truly sought Him. Conversely, God’s promise is that when we do truly seek Him we will find Him (see Dt. 4:29; 1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:2; Ps. 9:10; Jer. 29:13). Therefore, because being reconciled to God comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, God promises to send the ***special revelation*** of Christ to those who truly seek Him.

Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 8:26-35 NIV

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.

²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Peter & Cornelius the Gentile

Acts 10:1-5 NIV

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.

² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.

⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.

Acts 10:19-22 NIV

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say."

Acts 10:34-36, 43-47 NIV

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism

³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said,

⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

- **Comment:** The Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius the Gentile are two examples of God's promise to send the **special revelation** of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ to those who truly seek God.
- **Comment:** God is no more obligated to send all men the **special revelation** of Christ today than He was to warn all men of the Flood in Noah's day. The God of the Bible is omniscient—God knows "the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:10 NIV) and He "alone knows the hearts of all men" (1 Kings 8:39 NIV). Consequently, God may NOT send the Gospel to those whom He knows would NOT receive it. The Gospel "will be preached in the whole world" (Mt. 24:14 NIV), but it is evident that NOT *everyone in the world* will hear it before dying.

5. What should be the ultimate standard of God's justice if, as the Bible declares, our hearts are deceitful?

Answer: God's Word in the Bible

The Heart Is an Unreliable Judge of God's Justice

Jeremiah 17:9 NIV

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Proverbs 28:26 KJV

²⁶ He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

God's Word Is the Reliable Judge of God's Justice

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 NIV

¹² For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- **Comment:** Even with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we must submit ourselves to God's sovereign will and revelation in biblical Scripture, particularly when it is difficult and painful. This is because until we are glorified in heaven our sinful hearts are prone to temptations of the flesh (see Ro. 7:15-20; Jas 1:13-15) and of "the tempter" (1 Thess. 3:5 NIV). The Word of God is subject to no such temptations; therefore, it reliably reflects God's truths.