

Light to every man

God has revealed Himself to every man in two ways. The first is creation (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-25; 10:18; Colossians 1:6, 23; Job 12:7-10; Acts 17:26-30; Revelation 14:6-7; etc.). Just as a building demands a builder, creation demands a Creator. The creation reveals God's power and glory and declares to each person that he is accountable to this awesome Maker: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

The second is conscience (Genesis 3:22; Job 38:36; Psalm 40:8; Proverbs 1:20-33; Acts 9:5; Romans 2:14-15; Romans 1:32; John 8:9; etc.). The Holy Spirit convicts every person's conscience of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). The moral law, written on every heart (Romans 2:15), shows each person that there must be a moral Lawgiver and it reveals our need for a Savior/Deliverer.

Those who respond to the revelation of creation and conscience will receive more light – unto salvation (John 3:19-21). However, while most people acknowledge that there is a Creator, when the Holy Spirit convicts many choose to appease their conscience through religion, ritual, or good works. Others sear their conscience to silence it rather than turn to and trust in their Creator who died to save them.

Creation and conscience is called General Revelation. A good example of this at work is when Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh. Jonah's message was simply that judgment was coming (Jonah 3:4). Based on the above Scriptures we know that the Ninevites already had general knowledge of the Creator and a God-given conscience – revealing right from wrong. The Ninevites responded to General Revelation, turned to the Lord, and were saved (Jonah 3; Matthew 12:41)! As God promises: "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13), "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:22).

Did the Ninevites understand that the Lord would become a man and pay for our sins? No. Did they say "Jesus save me"? No. But, they recognized that they had sinned against their Creator and truly repented toward the One true God – thus making Him their Lord.

God only saves through Jesus, but that does not mean that all who respond to creation and conscience and cry out to God have full understanding of this. They are only accountable to respond to the light given to them (Luke 12:47-48; John 15:22; Acts 17:30; James 4:17). If they do respond, they will receive further illumination (Mark 4:25).

Interestingly, young children and the mentally-handicapped almost always acknowledge a Creator to whom they are morally accountable to. Their conscience is awake and sensitive. New Tribes Missions reports that even the most isolated people groups know these truths.

Jesus Christ (as Creator, Lawgiver, and Savior) is "the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1:9). The light Jesus gives to every man is creation and conscience. If any person responds to this light, they will meet the Lord!