

The Doctrine of Heathenism and God-Consciousness

- I. **Introduction:** This Doctrine will first of all define what God-Consciousness is, namely recognition of the existence of a Supreme Being. It will also demonstrate that nearly all human beings reach a point of God-Consciousness relatively early in their lives and such can be documented biblically (some exceptions do exist – II Sam. 12:23) .

This Doctrine will also answer the question of what happens to all those who do not hear the Gospel Message and demonstrate how God is 100 % righteous and just in sending such ones to Hell and the Lake of Fire.

- II. God-consciousness develops early in the life of people who have normal mental faculties. Rationales which may lead to God-consciousness include:
- A. Ontological Approach: Since people possess the idea or concept of a supreme being, it follows that such a being must exist.
 - B. Cosmological Approach: The intuitive law of cause and effect demands the existence of God as the “uncaused cause”. In no way can the Universe be its own cause or, put another way, the universe could not cause itself.
 - C. The Teleological Approach: The structure of the Universe demands a designer or, put another way, the universe possesses evidence of *intelligent design*. The earth and celestial bodies of the cosmos display order, design, arrangement purpose and adaptation behind which there must be a Master Planner.
 - D. The Moral or Anthropological Approach: The principles of right and wrong which people are taught and to which our soul bears witness demands an ultimate source. Where does virtue and morality come from if not from a divine Creator?
- III. Regardless of how one reaches this condition, he/she will come to realize God’s existence and either chose to have or chose not to have a relationship with Him.
- A. The knowledge the unbeliever possesses about God extends to the specific attributes of His essence (Rom. 1:18-20; 2:14, 15; Acts 14:16, 17).
 - B. Creation argues for the existence of God and forms the unwritten witness of who and what God is (Psa. 19:1-6).
- IV. The issue at God-Consciousness
- A. The issue at God-consciousness is whether or not person wants a relationship with God or not. All of humanity can be classified into three categories (Rom. 2:5-11).
 - 1. Seekers (true +V which desires a relationship with God)
 - 2. Non-seekers, those who do not want a relationship with God (the majority of the human race).
 - 3. Pseudo-seekers represent a *subcategory* of non-seekers, those who only want a relationship with God if they can have it on their own terms but do not want to accept or honor what God has to offer (Cain is a prime example of this mentality - Gen. 4:1ff).

4. This explains why people can be unbelievers but may claim to believe in God, or at least a 'higher power' and may behave religiously and even make considerable sacrifices for their beliefs.
 - B. Only true seekers constitute true +V at God-consciousness and will accept the Ph1 Gospel once it is preached to them, while non-seekers (to include pseudo-seekers) represent those of the human race who are not interested in pursuing a relationship based on God's standards.
 - C. Everyone in his life knows of God and either chooses for Him or against Him at God-Consciousness (Rom. 1:21; 2:7, 8 cp. Acts.17:27).
 - D. For those who are -V, God does not attempt to enforce His will on theirs. He allows them to have free will and demonstrate their -V just as He allowed 1/3 of the angelic host to choose against Him (Acts 14:16, 17 cp. Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19; Rev. 12:4).
- V. God-consciousness and the Ph1 Gospel
- A. Being +V at God-consciousness does not save any one person (James 2:19).
 - B. God, in His perfect omniscience, knew in eternity past all who would be +V at God-consciousness would believe once given the Gospel.....eventually at least (Rom. 2:7, 10; 8:28-30).
 - C. Those who are -V at God-consciousness will not believe, even if they hear (I Cor. 1:18; II Cor. 4:3).
 - D. Hence, volition is tested at two points, God-consciousness and Ph1 Gospel Hearing. Those +V at GC will be +V at the hearing of the Gospel and vice versa!!!
 - E. The fact that many hear the Gospel and reject it demonstrates their -V. Since God knew of their -V before the foundation of the world, they are therefore not chosen to be part of God's elect (Matt. 22:1-14).
 - F. While they profess themselves to be 'wise' they actually become 'fools' (Rom. 1:22; I Cor. 1:18).
- VI. Heathenism is the Result of -V at the point of God-consciousness
- A. Heathenism may be defined here as "The religious system or rites of heathens; idolatry; paganism". We are reminded of the many false religions of ancient history as well as those that still exist today to include the worship of Gaia the "earth mother" tied to the modern environmental movement.
 - B. When people reject God at God-consciousness, they worship the creation rather than the creator.
 - C. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit takes up an entire section of his letter to diagram exactly what has happened to most of the human race due to -V at God-consciousness.
 1. Those who reject God seek to suppress the truth of God and His plan for the human race. As a result God's wrath is revealed against such ones (Rom. 1:18).
 2. That which can be known about God and His essence is revealed through creation to those who are -V at God-consciousness (Rom. 1:19, 20).
 3. Even though the unbeliever knows God at the moment of God-consciousness, they reject Him and opt for foolish speculations instead (Rom. 1:21).

4. While they seem wise in their own eyes, they simply expose themselves as fools (Rom. 1:22).
5. They exchange the glory of the incorruptible God for various images, some human, some of animals (Rom. 1:23).
6. As a result, God gives them over to their own -V and stupidity with the result that they worship the creation rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:24, 25).
7. Such a rejection of God includes but is not limited to impure sexual practices (Rom. 1:24-28).
8. Rejection of God leads to all kinds of immortality as people no longer have any fear of violating His perfect standards (Rom. 1:30, 31).
9. Such ones not only practice such things but give 'heartly approval' to others doing the same (Rom. 1:32).

VII. The Problem of Heathen and God-Consciousness

- A. It is easy to view people who have been isolated from the spread of the Gospel while at the same time isolated from the type of technology that may spread the Gospel message preached in other nations, as some how being passed up or treated unfairly.
- B. What happens to the people who are completely surrounded by false religion or no religion at all? What happens to those who have never heard the Gospel and had a chance to believe?!!
- C. While it may appear God is unfair in sentencing such people to Hell. Such an assessment does not stand in light of Bible Doctrine.
- D. Doctrine makes it clear that such ones have come to know about God's existence and essence as a result of having seen His unwritten witness to the human race (Rom. 1:18-20).
- E. Every human being has a moment of God-consciousness in which they understand that a perfect God must have designed the Universe. Most reject the idea of having a relationship with Him. Thus they are culpable. The Bible tells us that such ones have known God and rejected Him (Rom. 1:21).
- F. God could fill these nations, tribes and peoples with millions of evangelists, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their own native tongues. However not one of them would believe unless he had been +V at God-consciousness!!!
 1. The Pharaoh of the Exodus is a stark reminder of this fact (Exod. 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1; 11:10; 14:8).
 2. Those on the earth during the time of the flood also demonstrate this category of people (Gen. 6:1ff cf. II Pet. 2:5).
- G. Are there people who grow up isolated and are +V at God consciousness?
 1. The answer is "yes". Sometimes there are people whose society is completely isolated from the Gospel of the Judeo-Christian Belief System.
 2. In such instances God will either get that person to the Gospel in another local or else bring an evangelist to their jurisdiction.
 3. We are reminded of this phenomenon in Jesus' trip to Decapolis (Luke 8:26-39).
 4. Jonah's trip to Nineveh is another stark example God's use of Evangelism (Jon 1:1ff).

5. The Queen of Sheba serves as an example of God moving a person away from her country (temporarily) to a place where she can receive a Gospel message (I Kings 10:1-9 cf. Luke 11:31, 32).
6. Rahab was a sinner enmeshed in paganism and she was still +V at God-consciousness and God brought Joshua and the nation of Israel to her door step (Josh. 2:1ff cf. James 2:25).

VIII. Not One Person who is +V at God-Consciousness will fail to believe

- A. God does not lose track or fail to get the Gospel to +V (John 17:2 cp. I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9).
- B. Stumbling blocks which interfere with belief among those +V at God-Consciousness
 1. Power/Achievement: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:1ff).
 2. Wealth: The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27).
 3. Whatever stumbling block is keeping a person who is +V at God-consciousness from accepting the Gospel, God will remove it (Mark 9:43-48).

IX. Even having all the advantages and having universal access to the POG will not keep millions of people from rejecting the Gospel message if they are –V at God-Consciousness (Rev. 20:7-15).

X. Evangelism and God-Consciousness

- A. Evangelism has occurred in every generation and dispensation (Acts. 17:6; Rom. 4:3 Col. 1:6; I Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 2:5).
- B. The Church is the institution for Evangelism (Matt. 28:16).
- C. Not one person who is +V at God-consciousness in this or any other Dispensation will be overlooked and not end up accepting the Gospel (John 17:2, 20-22).
- D. God knows all who are +V at God-consciousness as they are “seekers”. He lets them find Him (Acts. 17:26, 27, Rom. 2:7).
- E. Paul and the Apostles, along with their associates were committed to preaching the Gospel wherever God led them and to whomever would give it a hearing (Rom. 1:15, 16).