

Say, What About The Innocent Native?

Category: Gospel Spread – Innocence and Fairness

Example A)

“Say, what about the innocent native who lives deep in the African jungle?”

Food for Thought

The basic question should truly be, how fair is it for God to send a person to Hell and eternal torment if the person hasn't even heard the name of Jesus? Obviously, if God is just, a person who has never heard the name of Jesus and knows nothing about sin, a savior, and salvation should be given mercy. So it seems to most folks.

There are many versions of the question and assertion above. Let's look at the components as they make their appearances.

A. The Innocent Native

He does not exist.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath just as the others.”

Ephesians 2:1-3

So our innocent native, let's call him Tao, is proclaiming his innocence. In fairness, the questioner, not Tao, is proclaiming Tao's innocence.

Ephesians 2 asserts that Tao is “dead” in sin. Tao walks according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air. Tao, apparently, is not innocent; Tao is a subject of Satan's kingdom. Hmmm, it also appears that Tao is a son of disobedience.

Oh yeah, Tao conducts himself in the lusts of his flesh. If not persuaded before that Tao isn't innocent, how about now?

Tao is a guilty native, an enemy of God, and a subject of Satan and sin. Tao is a guilty native.

B. Fairness

Can we agree that by fairness we mean that Tao should be treated justly? Ok.

Will God judge Tao fairly, justly? Of course, God is, by nature, just.

"Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?"

Genesis 18:25

Wait, Bill, wait. Tao didn't reject Jesus, isn't that all that matters?

In a word, "No". Your Sunday school teacher fed you some bad doctrine. Tao will be justly tried. Let's admit it, Tao is one guilty man. No one can defend poor Tao.

Good news! God will only assess the punishment that fits Tao's crimes. God will judge every thought and intent of Tao's heart and every one of Tao's actions. Since Tao knows that God exists because Tao has been staring at God's creation each and every day of his life, God will also look into Tao's gratitude (or lack of it).

"For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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 because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God nor were thankful..."

Romans 1:18-21

It only gets worse in chapter 2 of Romans.

"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the

righteous judgment of God, who “will render to each one according to his deeds” eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ...”

Romans 2: 5-16

So, Tao is guilty of ingratitude.
 So, Tao gave no glory to God.
 So, Tao was born selfish and proved it.
 So, Tao reveled in the lusts of his heart.
 So, Tao has a hard and impenitent heart.
 So, Tao has continually been storing up wrath.
 So, the law of God is written on Tao's heart.
 So, Tao has continuously disregarded the accusations of his conscience.
 So, let's not even delve into the dark things in Tao's life.
 Okay, Bill, Tao is guilty and deserves Hell. But, God is merciful, right?

Right. Think mercy can be owed? Maybe? No, justice is owed; mercy is not.
 Mercy may be shown.

Hmmm. Okay then Tao goes to Hell and is punished like everyone else, I guess.

Do you mean equally punished along with everyone else?

Yes.

No. *There are degrees of punishment in torment, each man paying exactly what he owes. The more wrath Tao has stored up, the greater the torment.* Tao is rewarded justly for his wickedness.

Are you kidding?

No, but that's enough for now. I hope you can see God is just, Hell is just, and Tao is anything but "innocent".

The idea of an "innocent native" is ludicrous.

The Real Question

But there is a question that should haunt you. Then, why was mercy shown to me? Why me?

You cannot imagine how anxious I am to answer that question, but it will have to wait for now.

Folks, pondering the depths of grace has occupied and does occupy a large portion of my time. I trust the same is true in your case. The good news about this discussion is that it opens the door quickly to sin and guilt and the only remedy for both in the universe - the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man.

A man must learn that he is terminal before he will seek a physician and a remedy. A discussion about a not-so-innocent native may end up with a listener being convicted by the Holy Spirit. Never shy away from this discussion, or any discussion of justice. All such discussions lead to discussions of mercy, precious mercy.