

Chapter 4 – The Supremacy of Christ as the Conscious Focus of All Saving Faith

Reading and Reflection

What is the main question posed by this chapter, what three questions are contained in it, and why are the answers to these questions so significant for the cause of missions? What is the chief way in which the author proposes to answer these questions? Why is this the most appropriate starting point for the Christian? Should philosophical argumentation, emotional appeal, or other means be used in the discussion as well, and if so, what role should such devices play? (pp. 111-116)

With your own Bible, review all the biblical texts cited on pages 116-122 describing the wrath of God in hell. Write down each description of hell you come across: what it will look like, how long it will last, who will be there, etc. Why is hell described in such vividly awful and horrendous ways? What does the horror of hell echo?

What is meant by the phrase “the universality of the work of Christ”? How do texts like Romans 3:9-20 show that it was necessary for the work of Christ to be universal? How does the universality of Christ’s work form the foundation for the work of missions? (pp. 122-125)

Based on the context of Acts 4:12, and the wider biblical concept of the name of Christ/God, What does it mean to be saved “by the name of Christ” (cf. pp. 124-125, 138-140)?

What is “the mystery of Christ,” according to texts like Ephesians 3:4-10 and Romans 16:25-27? How was it a “mystery” in Old Testament times? How has it now been revealed with the coming of Christ, and what tremendous implications does this have on the cause of missions? (pp. 126-128)

What are “the times of ignorance,” and in what way did God “overlook” them? Why might God have ordered history in such a seemingly odd way? Cite Scripture in your answer. (pp. 129-132)

How does the author suggest saints in the Old Testament attained salvation (cf. pp. 133, 147, 152)? Why is it inappropriate to suggest that because these individuals were saved without knowing the full gospel of Jesus Christ therefore individuals today who have never heard the gospel may be saved by trusting in the revelation available to them?

What is the “profound theological reason why salvation did not spread to the nations before the incarnation of the Son of God” (p. 127-128)? Describe the “tremendous significance” that the New Testament places upon “the historical turning point of the incarnation” (p. 133-134).

How does Romans 10:14-15, when understood in its context, rule out arguments that people can be saved without hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ (pp. 142-147)?

Imagine that you are talking with someone about the possibility of salvation for those who never hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Reflecting upon what you read in this chapter, and searching through Scripture for yourself, write out a loving and gentle response that would affirm the justice and holiness of God, his love and compassion for the lost, and the supremacy and necessity of Jesus as the only way of salvation.

Becoming World Christians

- This week seek out international peoples who live and work near you, and make an effort to interact with and befriend someone from a different part of the world. Often thinking in the abstract about the destiny of eternal conscious torment for those who never hear the gospel and for the areas of the world where there is no established church witness does little to stir up deep compassion for those lost peoples. They seem so foreign, and so distant. But many of the nations are literally in our backyards—e.g., international students at universities, refugees, immigrant workers, ethnic neighborhoods. Opportunities to learn more about these peoples and to establish relationships with them firsthand are some of the best ways to stir up a greater passion to reach those areas of the world and peoples of the world who have not yet heard the gospel.