

Wesleyan Studies

The Optimism of Grace

Wesley's Understanding of Sin – Episode 3 – Is Ignorance Sin?

If it is Wesley's theology that sin is a _____, how do we account for ignorance? If people don't know it is sin, can they be guilty of sin? We do, at times, find people that do not know God's laws or commands...at least in theory.

If you are ignorant, are you innocent? Is that something the Bible supports? Ignorance, or indifference, is not something that _____. Ignorance can be willful (I _____, _____) or indifferent (_____, I _____).

Romans 1:18-20 says "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is _____; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse." Paul's reference is to the Gentile world who do not have the Ten Commandments or Law of Moses, but were created with a _____.

Verse 21 reads "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.

"When God made it evident _____ them" is evidence of _____. "When God made it evident _____ them" is evidence of _____.

Romans 2:12-15 "For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for it is not the _____ who are righteous before God, but the _____ who will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law instinctively perform the requirements of the Law, these, though not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law _____, their conscience testifying and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them."

Paul's letter to the Romans seems to suggest that those who do not have the known Law have the Law written on their hearts. The idea that ignorance has innocence might, in fact, be wishful thinking.

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In Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis said “In human nature, there is this irritating sense of right and wrong that seems to be deep and hardwired into our nature.”

The tenor of the Bible seems to suggest that God has given enough _____ and enough _____ to people and within their hearts that they stand before Him needing forgiveness through the work of Jesus Christ.

So, any attempt to justify oneself, either _____ or by being _____, falls short against the teaching of the Scriptures.