

Ignorance of God's will is inexcusable. "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10).

The burden is on us who know, who are *enlightened* (cf. Eph 1:18; Heb 6:4) to share our knowledge with others. We might identify this as *evangelism*. Or, as one good brother defined it — "One beggar telling another beggar where he found bread."

I pray we will lovingly and boldly tell the truth of God's requirement for sin — "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:3–4).

Dorothy Brasiel + Jo Byrnes (*fibromyalgia*)

Betty Cannon + Joyce Coones + Sleatha Gore

Essielene Henderson + Ethel Jones + Faye Kilpatrick

Randy McElroy + Gary Ogden

### Gospel Meetings

March 8–13 + Spring Warrior (Perry) + Rickie Jenkins, preaching + 7:30 PM Monday through Friday.

### This Week's Birthdays

Rachel Bailey (*Tuesday*) + Margery Knisley (*Saturday*)

***Singing Class in the classroom building—4:30 PM.***

Chiefland Church of Christ

Meeting at 211 NE 2nd Street in *beautiful* Chiefland, Florida  
PO Box 2539 • Chiefland, FL 32644 • (352) 493-1242

# THINGS ABOVE

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth"

—[ Colossians 3:1–2 ]—

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## Does Ignorance Excuse Sin?

By Jamey Hinds

**D**oes ignorance of sin make it go away? If we learned of a debt that we owed, could we legitimately argue that it is not ours based upon our ignorance of it?

Consider an example: A driver might ignorantly and thus unintentionally run through a red light. It's possible in some of our larger cities that a camera will capture the offense. We may never realize we've done it, but the camera captures the image of the vehicle, its license plate, and its driver. And the laws of the land dictate appropriate punishments to satisfy the debt of one who commits this transgression of the law. So, when the bill is sent out we might choose to ignore it because we weren't aware it happened in the first place! But this does not satisfy the debt; and the

process of securing payment to satisfy the law begins in earnest despite our ignorance of the offense.

Consider another example: A child in her innocence goes against the laws of gravity. She is unaware of the laws of gravity and is thus unaware of the consequences of breaking the laws of gravity. Does her ignorance protect her?

Finally, and more seriously: A person might do something that goes against the *moral* laws governing all mankind by the One who created us all. This person's sin is real; and the punishment against his sin is real despite ignorance of God's will. The issue then becomes awareness of what to do when we find out we owe a great debt that we cannot begin to pay.

Jesus said, "And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. *But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating.* Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more" (Lk 12:47–48).

The apostle Paul proclaimed to people who did not know about the Old or New Testaments — "*The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead*" (Acts 17:30–31). In another place, the apostle Paul wrote,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known

about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. . . .*

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 hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus (Romans 1:18–20; 2:12–16).

Paul's claim of ignorance did not excuse his guilt. He did those things which were sinful, which things were against the will of God. And whether or not Paul realized that they were against the will of God was immaterial. But, because of his ignorance, he found mercy from God — "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. *Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;* and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 1:12–14).

Once we become aware of our sins we must appropriately deal with them — this means we must do what God commands. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). 