

## **THANK GOD FOR EXCEPTIONS!**

Exceptions may be good, or they may be bad, depending upon how they are used. One of the main reasons, if not the primary reason, that the English language is so difficult to learn is because it is full of exceptions. Almost every rule in the English language seems to have an exception, maybe even numerous exceptions. In this case, exceptions make life more difficult. On the other hand, we come across a few exceptions in God's word. Fortunately for us, these make life easier and they make our lives worth living. Without these exceptions, our lives would truly be miserable. Let us notice a few of these exceptions.

Jesus stated, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt.18:3). The rule: "ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Why is this so? Because of man's problem with sin (Is.59:1,2). However, our gracious God offers an exception: "Except ye be converted and become as little children." Those who manifest an humble spirit, a forgiving attitude, and a simple trust in God, as little children do, will be exceptions to the rule. Sin will not bar these from entering into the kingdom of heaven. It is a sad reality that most in this world will choose to adhere to the rule.

Another exception offered by our Lord is this: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk.13:3). The rule: "ye shall all likewise perish." Why is this? Again, the answer is man's problem with sin. Yet, the Lord extends his mercy and grace in providing an exception: "Except ye repent." All men who are led by godly sorrow (2 Cor.7:10) to repentance can escape this sentence of death (Rom.6:23). When one comes to realize the devastating effects of sin, and makes a commitment to turn away from sin and live for God, this individual has truly repented. True repentance will lead one to change his mind about sin, and change his life in regard to his changed mind. He will become an exception to the rule, rather than one who falls prey to the rule itself.

Jesus gave another exception when he stated, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn.3:3). The rule is this: "he cannot see the kingdom of God." Why? The answer remains the same—man's sin problem. However, the exception is provided: "Except a man be born again." Anyone who obeys the gospel (born of the Spirit), culminating in his immersion into Christ for the remission of sins (born of water) has been born again, and has become an exception to the rule. One who is born again is a Christian, and has been admitted into the kingdom of God, the church (Ac.2:47).

Thankfully, God has allowed man these few exceptions so that we may have the opportunity to live in heaven with Him for all eternity. What a sad situation man would be in had our gracious and merciful Lord not allowed man these exceptions. These exceptions show that we do not have to fall victim to these rules. We can overcome sin by the blood of Christ! Let us all resolve in our hearts and in our minds that we will not follow these rules. Let us resolve to be the exceptions to these rules!

*Patrick Morrison*