

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Except”

Almost every day, we are faced with certain and various *exceptions*. *Exceptions* are exclusions that must be met in order to qualify for a given thing. A basketball player must shoot the ball through the hoop in order to add points to the teams score. The condition to scoring points is, *except* the ball goes through the hoop, no points are scored. We can understand this! Another illustration—*except* you have a ticket for the basketball game you cannot enter the arena to watch the game. All would agree this means that only those who have a ticket may enter the arena to watch the game. We can understand this too! Can we not?

In the Bible, there are numerous *exceptions* that are easily understood just like the examples above. Consider these passages:

Amos 3:3 - *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* Two cannot walk or work together if they do not agree. There must be cooperation and agreement by both parties involved in order for there to be true unity.

Matthew 5:20 - *“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* The scribes and Pharisees were “models of righteousness in their own sight and in that of the people.” Hence, Jesus sets a higher standard with the stated exception.

Matthew 18:3 - *“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* In a sense, the Lord’s disciples were acting like children (c.f. 1 Cor. 13:11). Jesus taught them that in order to be His disciples, they must turn from their sin of selfish pride and humble themselves as a child is humble in spirit and dependent upon their parents.

Luke 13:3 - *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* The meaning of this statement of Jesus is clear! Those who do not repent will perish spiritually (c.f. Acts 17:30).

John 3:2 - *“The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”* Nicodemus correctly concluded that the miracles Jesus performed confirmed that He was with the Son of God.

John 3:3 - *“...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* In order to enter the kingdom of heaven, one must be born again spiritually.


John 3:5 - *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* The new birth involves two elements—being born of the water and the spirit. Thus, those not born of the two elements mentioned by Jesus, cannot enter the kingdom of God!

Without a doubt, most brethren understand and agree on the force of the word “*except*” in these passages. The word “*except*” in these passages carries with it the idea off, “*if and only if.*” But, one other passage must be considered:

Matthew 19:9 - *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”* Does not the word “*except*” in this passage have the same meaning and force as in the other passages we have considered so far? If not, why not?


Countless dodges and excuses have been made by many of my own brethren in an attempt to avoid the force of the word “*except*” in this passage. Justification for divorce for any and every cause is made by some. Some say “*we*

can't know for sure" what the truth is on divorce and remarriage. One preacher was asked these questions: Do you believe God's law on marriage is universal in application to believers and unbelievers? Do you believe one put away for the cause of fornication may scripturally remarry? Do you believe repentance demands separation for those in unscriptural marriages? Do you believe 1 Corinthians 7:15 constitutes authority for one who is deserted by an unbeliever to be remarried? He responded by saying in part, "I don't know whether to envy or pity those who are so sure of themselves on this subject...I don't want to appear rude, but I won't be specifically answering your questions."

I am made to wonder how this brother can be "so sure" on the subject of water baptism? How would he answer the question: "What must I do to be saved?" John 3:1-5 deals with the new birth, but the word *baptism* is not found in this text. Can this brother be "so sure" that being "**born of the water and the spirit**" includes water baptism? Is he "so sure" and confident that he would affirm to those of denominational persuasion that water baptism is "**for the remission of sins**" and use this passage as a proof text? Shall we "envy or pity those who are so sure of themselves" on the meaning of the word "**except**" in Amos 3:3; Matthew 5:20 and 18:3; Luke 13:3; John 3:2, 3 and 5? Yet, when faced with the obvious truth of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:9—that the only scriptural cause for divorce is if one's mate is guilty of committing the sin of fornication (sexual immorality), many can't seem to figure it out (or maybe they don't want to)! It sure seems strange to me that they can understand, and we can agree, on the meaning and force of the word "**except**" in most Bible passages, **EXCEPT** when it comes to "**EXCEPT**" in Matthew 19:9! Think on these things. – *tgmc* 

The Bible and the Cell Phone

Author Unknown

Do you ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone? What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets? What if we flipped through it several times a day? What if it were so important to us that we turned back to go get it if we forgot it? What if we used it, not to receive text messages, but to receive messages from the sacred text? What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it? (Matt. 4:4) What if we gave it to young people as valued gifts? What if we used it when we traveled? What if we used it in case of emergency? What if we consulted it often to find special guidance for each day? Have we forgotten that prayer is the greatest wireless connection? And there are no dropped calls because "**the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers**" (1 Pet. 3:12). Also the Bible never loses its charge, because it's power does not depend upon anything on earth. It is living and powerful, just like its Author (Heb. 4:12). Don't let the electronic age rob you of these wonderful spiritual realities! 


The Anvil of God's Word

By John Clifford



Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; then with a twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages, skeptics blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone. 



Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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