

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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"The Exceptional God"

--By Ryan Cox

Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.'" ~ **Mark 12:29**

Jesus said to him, "I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me." ~ **John 14:6**

When asked what the greatest commandment is, Jesus answered in **Matthew 22** and **Mark 12** by quoting the *Shema*, **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**. It specifically states that there is only one God and that the one God is one, not many gods.

When Jesus informed His disciples in **John 14** that He would be leaving to prepare a place for all to be with Him, Thomas asked Him how to get there. Jesus responded by saying He is the Way.

Jesus makes it perfectly clear that there is only **ONE God** and **ONE Way** to eternal life. And yet, many in the world, including some Christians, disagree with Jesus by saying there are "exceptions."

One often-asked question is about those who never hear about Jesus. Did they never have a chance to be saved? That would seem to be awfully cruel for God to create people and then never give them the opportunity to have eternal life.

Thankfully, the apostle Paul addressed this for us. Paul wrote to

the Christians in Rome, "19...that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God... they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures" (**Romans 1:19-23**).

The Lord tells us in His Word that everyone has a chance to believe. NO ONE has an excuse for disbelief in the Creator God. From the words of Jesus and Scripture, we understand that God has not made a plan of salvation for which He will ever have to make exceptions.

In accordance with everything the Bible says, I understand that He never has nor ever will need to make any exceptions because EVERYONE of sound mind and of an age of accountability gets the opportunity.

It starts with, **Romans 1** tells us, the Creation. Even for those who do not have access to the Bible, they still have a choice. They can either:

1.) Look at the statue that their great-great granddaddy carved and say, "Yes, you made me", or

2.) They can look at the heavens above and the earth around and say, "Wow, something or someone made this" (**Psalms 19:1**).

God says it is so evident that no one has an excuse. I believe for everyone who is willing to admit this, God makes sure they hear the Gospel (**Romans 1:16**), whether by a friend or even an enemy or by a device or a missionary God sent to that remote tribe because there was one who admitted in his heart the truth of Creation.

If not, then **I John 2:2** is a lie. Praise God it is not! It is THE truth that Jesus Christ shed His blood for the entire world. We, therefore, do not worship a God of exceptions; we worship the exceptional God who is perfect in His wisdom and foreknowledge.

A second often-asked question is about those who are not immersed. Are those who are not immersed truly lost? What if they believed but could not access water to be baptized? What if they were on their way to be baptized and were killed in an accident?

In these questions of genuine concern are often found excuses for exceptions. What ends up happening with these questions is the belittling of our all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving God and the deeming of nonessential that which God has declared essential.

God did not formulate His scheme of redemption and then go, “Oh, rats. That’s not going to work for those people or for that situation. I guess I’ll have to make some exceptions.” If so, then He is not God (**Isaiah 46:10, Acts 2:23**).

Rather, God in His perfect and infinite wisdom, foreknowledge, love, and grace provides everyone the opportunity for salvation. Thus, the Lord Jesus Himself declared that those who are not born of the water and the Spirit are not saved (**John 3:5**).

Praise the Lord for the Good News that **NO ONE (Galatians 3:27-28)** is excluded from the choice of accepting or rejecting the free gift of God (**Romans 6:23**)!

The only question for you and me is: to whom have we shared the “Good News”?