

THREE “EXCEPTS”

By Keith Greer

Today we want to examine three ways the word "**except**" is used in the Scriptures:

Except you repent. "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." {Luke 13:3} Men must repent {Acts 17:30}. Repentance is a mind change that results in a conduct change. All men have sinned; thus, all are required to repent. One's conduct cannot change until his mind determines to go in a different direction.

Except a man be born again. "Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, except one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

Under Moses' Law, one became God's child through physical birth. Christ's Law is much different because physical birth does not place one in Christ's family. Only a spiritual birth can do that. A believer must be born of water (baptism into Christ) and spirit (acceptance of God's truth revealed by the Spirit). Christians must undergo spiritual birth because God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, thus requiring a spiritual birth to gain access.

Except you be converted. "Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." {Matthew 18:2,3}

Being converted is defined as "to change into another form; transformed." The one who comes to Christ must become a new person, with a new direction and new attributes. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." {2 Corinthians 5:17} Sadly, many who become Christians are never truly converted. God's children must live different lives, by a different standard, and mold their character to become like Christ.

Obedience to the gospel of Christ is the most important decision one will make in their life. Commitment of one's life to Christ should be given careful and prayerful consideration. Still, it's a choice one will never regret if made and one that will be eternally regretted if one fails to make it. Dear reader, have you experienced these three "**excepts**?" ***