

## RULES AND EXCEPTIONS

Texts: Galatians 6:16

INTRO: The first two definitions found in the Oxford American Dictionary for the word rule are these: (1) A statement of what can or must or should be done in a certain set of circumstances; (2) The customary or normal state of things or course of action.

Among other definitions, the word exception is defined: A thing that does not follow the general rule.

In almost every area of life there are rules and exceptions. For instance, in the English language plurals are usually formed by adding an "s" but there are several notable exceptions: men, geese, sheep. I'm not sure how the rules of language came to be. I only know that *I* didn't make the rules, and *I* can't make exceptions to them and still speak the language correctly. Apparently, whoever makes the rule must also define the exception.

We, as parents, set up a set a rules for our children: in bed by 9:00, or home by 11:00 or no TV till all homework is finished, etc. Since we made those rules, under certain circumstances, we may decide to suspend them or make exceptions to them -- but it is not up to our children to change the rules without our approval.

When I was working with the church in Exton, the men in the business meeting set up a budget for the year. There were 2 or 3 fellows who couldn't seem to understand that if some emergency situation developed, we could make exceptions to the rules we ourselves had made.

This is also true Biblically. When God makes the rule, only God can make the exception.

### I. IT IS APPOINTED FOR MEN TO DIE ONCE, (Heb. 9:27).

For as in Adam all die... (1 Cor. 15:22)

A. But God, who made the rule, made exception in the cases of Enoch and Elijah.

By faith Enoch was translated so that he did not see death... (Heb. 11:5).

...Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (2 K 2:11)

B. There will be some living when Christ returns. These will also be exceptions in that they will not have to

experience physical death.

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. (1 Cor. 15:51) See also 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

C. God also apparently made a different kind of exception in the cases of those who were raised from the dead by Jesus & others that we read about in the Scriptures. The rule is to die once but those who were raised back to the earth life apparently had to die again a second time.

## II. WATER BAPTISM IS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

A. John baptized for the remission of sins, Mark 1:4.

B. Those who came to him for baptism came confessing their sins, Matt. 3:6

C. Jesus taught that baptism was a condition of salvation.  
Mark 16:16

D. Peter, by divine inspiration, commanded people to be baptized for remission of their sins, Acts 2:38;  
1 Pet. 3:21.

E. But there was One great Exception! READ MATT. 2:13-17

1. Jesus was the One exception to the rule.

2. Permit it to be so NOW -- no other exception.

## III. WE ARE TO OBEY EVERY LAW OF THE LAND.

READ I PETER 2:13-15

NOTE: But the same inspired teacher noted that there is ONE legitimate exception: When man makes a law that would put us in violation of the known will of God, "We ought to obey God rather than men," (Acts 5:29).

## IV. IT IS GOD'S RULE THAT MARRIAGE IS UNTIL DEATH.

For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is

released from the law of her husband. (Rom. 7:2).

A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. (1 Cor. 7:39).

NOTE: The Lord who gave the law, recognizes only ONE exception:

But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason EXCEPT sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. (Matt. 5:32).

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, EXCEPT for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. (Matt. 19:9).

V. ALL HUMANS WHO HAVE EVER LIVED WILL FACE A FINAL JUDGMENT AT THE END OF THE WORLD.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10).

READ ROMANS 14:10-12

NOTE: There are several Scriptural indications, however, that those who have not developed into a state of proper maturity are not held responsible for their deeds and will not be held accountable in the judgment. These will be exceptions to the general rule that everyone will give account in the day of judgment.

A. When God judged Israel unworthy of entering the promised land, He made an exception of those who were too young & too immature to have taken part in the rebellion.

Moreover your little ones & your children who you say

will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good & evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, & they shall possess it. (Deut. 1:39).

B. The apostle Paul seems to have recognized this same principle in his own situation.

Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life & I died. (Rom. 7:9).

**CONCLUSION:** We need to realize that any exceptions to God's laws must be made by God Himself. Otherwise, we must appear before the Lord and be judged accordingly. Are you ready for the judgment?

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, December 12, 1999