**Bible Exceptions**

Usually the way Exceptions work, a general rule is given, and then an exception is given to that general rule.

A baseball runner that is caught off base when a fly ball is caught is declared out, except he tags up.

Let’s look at some Bible examples of exceptions and see what we learn.

**Gen 2:16-17**

**Eat Of Every Tree, But …**

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

3:2-3 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

The word “every” does not mean there is no exception.

Words used to state an exception can be - except, but, saving.

**John 6:39 / John 17:12**

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing …

John 6:39 is used by the Once Saved Always Save advocates, and on the surface I could see how one might get that idea from the verse. But we also have …

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, **but the son of perdition** …

So whatever John 6:39 means, it can’t mean it is impossible for a Christian to lose his salvation, because John 17:12 provides us with a clear exception. If John 6:39 is saying it was impossible for the any of the apostles to be lost, then John 17:12 is stating a clear exception to that. Judas would be a case of someone losing their salvation.

Really this OSAS argument from John 6:39 ignores the difference (that even Calvinists recognize) in God's predestined will and God prescribed will. "God's predestined will is unconditional and therefore, unstoppable." That is mentioned in passages like Acts 2:23. God's prescribed will is what God wants, but does not necessarily force to happen. A good example of God's prescribed will is found in I Thess 4:3 ("For this is the will of God ... that ye should abstain from fornication"). This verse doesn't mean it is impossible for Christians to commit fornication; instead it means God desires that Christians not commit fornication. It should be obvious then that John 6:39 is talking about God's prescribed will since Judas is offered as an exception to the rule stated.

**Jesus’ Authority**

Matt 28:19 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. – NKJV

If all we had were this verse, we might think there is no exception to this “all authority.” But we have for example …

I Cor 15:27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is **excepted**, which did put all things under him.

The Father remained head over the Son – I Cor 11:3.

**Believing In Jesus**

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, **but** by me.

John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for **except** ye believe that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins. (ASV)

The general rule is implicit here. All will be lost because all commit sin – “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).

The exception to that general rule given by John 14:6 and John 8:24 is that if you believe in Jesus, you won’t be lost.

**Repenting Of Sin**

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, **except** ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

The general rule is implicit here. All will perish because all commit sin – “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).

The exception to that general rule given by Luke 13:3 is that if you repent, you won’t perish.

**Born Of Water**

John 3:5 Jesus answered, 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 general rule is implicit here. All will miss the kingdom of God (heaven) because all sin – “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).

The exception to that general rule given by John 3:5 is that if you born of water and the spirit, you won’t miss heaven.

Two strong reasons to conclude “born of water” here refers to water baptism:

* Water baptism is the only thing of spiritual significance in the NT that involves water
* Rom 6:3-4,6 teaches the new birth is completed at baptism – “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. … Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Forgiveness and the new walk/person begins at baptism.

**Blasphemy Against The Holy Ghost**

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matt 12:31-32 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Do you see how the first part of Matt 12:31 (“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men”) is stating the exact same general rule as we find in I John 1:9?

We see from other passages one must repent to be forgiven. So Matt 12:31a is really saying (“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men” if they repent. Repentance is understood. And so repentance should be understood in the ‘b’ part also – else the ‘b’ part is not giving the one exception to that “forgiveness if repent” general rule.

**General Rules And The Exception**

Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Matt 19:9 … 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.

The same general rule is given but the second verse states the one exception to that general rule, right?

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matt 12:31 … All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

**The same general rule is given** but the second verse states the one exception to that general rule, right?

**If Repentance Is Understood In The First Clause**

**Then It Must Be Understood In The Second Clause Also**

All manner of sin & blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men (if they repent is understood from other passages) but the blasphemy against the HG shall not be forgiven unto men. (if they repent must be understand here also or the second clause is not really an exception to the first clause)

an exception to a rule is an exception to the rule it is an exception to - duh

* RSV - Whoever divorces his (scriptural) wife, except he divorces his (scriptural) wife for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery
* A runner that is caught off base when a fly ball is caught is declared out (baseball is understood), except he tags up (baseball is still understood).
* “Any citizen can vote” (if they are 18 is understood from other statutes) is the general rule
* “except they are a felon” (even if they are 18 or this would not be an exception to the stated general rule)

If “blasphemy against the HG shall not be forgiven” because they won’t repent, then it is just like any other sin. It is no exception at all!

**Submission To Government**

I Pet 2:13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake …

That is the general rule, but there is a class of exceptions …

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

The idea is we should obey every law of the land unless such law would cause us to disobey God’s law.

**Forgiving Others**

Matt 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is an absolute. Even a person who is being baptized will not be forgiven if he is not willing to forgive others.

But there is an exception – Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him

**Divorce And Remarriage**

Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

That is stating the general rule, and Matt 19:9 states the same general rule with one exception …

Matt 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.

**How Does This Exception Work?**

John 3:3 **except** a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God → no other way to enter the kingdom

Luke 13:3 **except** ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish → rules out all other ways to avoid perishing

John 8:24 **except** ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins (ASV) → no other way to avoid dying in sin

**Matt 19:9a Whosoever shall put away his wife, EXCEPT it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery → rules out all other scriptural causes to divorce and remarry**

**The Exception Proves The Rule**

Some say we shouldn’t emphasize the exception, but I think the very opposite.

First, we shouldn’t oppose divorce for fornication. God does not “hate” that.

Second, emphasizing the exception strengthens the rule. It helps people see the general rule is not just an “ideal” (as some use the term).

**Other Verses Stating This Same General Rule**

Mark 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Mark 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Rom 7:2-3 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

**Another Verse That States This One Exception**

Matt 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Matt 5:32 is different than Matt 19:9 in that it is stating divorce by itself is wrong (the divorcer’s remarriage is not mentioned). And then it gives the one exception to that “no divorce” general rule.

The general rule for no departing (divorce/separation) is stated elsewhere:

* I Cor 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:
* Matt 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder
* I Pet 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel …

Conclusion: Divorce / Marital Separation is wrong, except for fornication, even if no remarriage follows.

**An MDR Related General Rule And Exception**

I Cor 7:3-5 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, **except** it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

only reason for a married couple to suspend sexual relations is:

* for fasting and prayer
* mutual agreement
* temporary

That is the force of the exception.

**No Man Can Come To Jesus, Except God Draw Him**

John 6:44 No man can come to me, **except** the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Calvinists are right God must draw us to Christ (that’s how exceptions work), but the question is - **How** does the Father draw sinners to Jesus?:

* next verse 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.
* Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
* Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
* II Cor 5:10-11a For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men … - I like to call this **Divine Persuasion**
* I Pet 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.
* Eph 6:17 And take … the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
* II Thess 2:14a Whereunto he called you by our gospel …
* this is how “the Lord opened … Lydia’s … heart” (Acts 16:14) – thru the preaching of the gospel
* the same way Paul opened the eyes of the Gentiles - Acts 26:17-18 … from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins … - nobody thinks Paul opened the Gentiles’ eyes by miraculous force; even Calvinists understand it was thru Paul’s preaching of God’s word (divine persuasion)