

Faith in Christ: Is It Necessary? • Part 5

Lesson 11

"Inclusivism has become an enormously influential position among evangelicals at the end of the twentieth century....It certainly makes a powerful appeal to our emotions....The acceptance of this biblically unsupportable opinion carries an enormously high theological cost. One hopes that large numbers of evangelicals already committed to inclusivism will see these dangers and recognize the weaknesses of the position they have accepted..."

~Ronald Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*

🔊 **Asking the Hard Question:** Is conscious FAITH in Jesus necessary for salvation?

Four Arguments Determine Inclusivism

1. The "FAITH Principle" Sets a Standard Low Enough for Those Who Have Never Heard of Jesus to Be Saved...or Does It?

Inclusivists argue...

- A GENERAL faith in a generic God is **sufficient** to save. *Hebrews 11:6*

Exclusivists answer from the Bible...

- A SPECIFIC faith in the particular person, the Lord Jesus Christ, is **required** to be saved. *Hebrews 12:2; Romans 10:17*

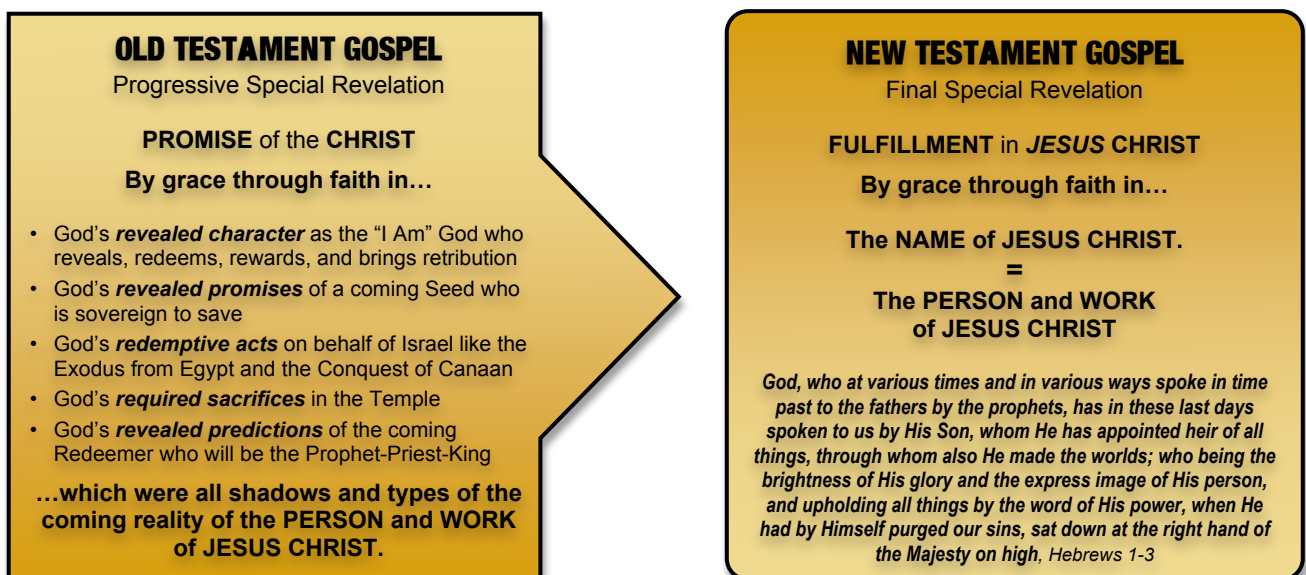
2. GENERAL Revelation Is Sufficient to Save...or is It?

Inclusivists argue...

- The general revelation of creation, conscience, and culture (even conflicting world religions) is sufficient to save WITHOUT hearing the gospel and placing one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Exclusivists answer from the Bible...

- Romans 1–3 clearly teaches that the general revelation of creation and conscience is not sufficient to save. Instead, the lost SUPPRESS the truth about God and SUBSTITUTE it for the lie of idolatry and unrighteousness. *Romans 1:18-23, 28-32*
- The content of biblical faith has always been progressively revealed by God through His redemptive plan, but the focus of that content has always been the special revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 1:1-3*



3. OT "Holy Pagans" Provide a PATTERN for "Informational BC Believers" to Be Saved...or Does It?

Inclusivists argue...

- Like some supposedly “holy pagans” in the OT, people who are now “informationally BC” (never heard of Jesus Christ or been exposed to special revelation), can be saved through general revelation.
 - 1) One inclusivists lists **12** OT people who were supposedly saved outside of Israel and without special revelation: **Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abimelech, Lot, Ruth, Namman, Rahab, Queen of Sheba, Melchizedek**, and **Jethro** (Moses’ father-in-law).
 - 2) But this same inclusivist admits that **10** of the **12** had some sort of exposure to God’s people and special revelation. **Melchizedek** and **Jethro** are the only 2 remaining, and we simply have **no information** about **how** they came to be believers.
- Two **KINDS** of saved people: **“Believers”** are those who have never heard of Christ, but sincerely believe in God through the light they have to be saved. **“Christians”** are those who have heard of Christ and consciously repent and place their faith in Him to receive “the fullness” of salvation.
- Believers still need to be evangelized in order to become Christians and experience the **FULLNESS** of their salvation.

Exclusivists answer from the Bible...

- Making two kinds of believers in this present age is an attempt to turn back time and creates all kinds of problems regarding the Body of Christ and indwelling Holy Spirit. *1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:14-18; 3:6*
- There is not a **SINGLE**, clear example in either the OT or NT of anyone being saved **apart** from special revelation.
- Cornelius, the inclusivist’s poster boy of an “informational BC believer”, is clearly said to be unsaved and in need of hearing the gospel. *Acts 10:22, 33-44; 11:13-18*

4. Exclusivists Make **EXCEPTIONS** for Babies and Those Incapable of Understanding the Gospel, So More Exceptions Should Be Made...or Should They?

Inclusivists argue...

- Since many exclusivists make an exception for infants and the mentally challenged, why is this gracious exception limited to only them and not applied to all who die without being able to hear and make a decision?

Exclusivists answer from the Bible...

- Comparing those who have never heard of Christ to infants and the mentally challenged is like comparing apples and oranges.

Comparison Questions	Infants and Mentally Challenged	Those Who Have Never Heard of Christ
Born Sinners and Deserving of God’s Eternal Wrath?	YES	YES
Able to Know?	NO	YES
Able to Understand?	NO	YES
Able to Respond?	NO	YES
Actively Rejected the Light They Have Received?	NO	YES

- While the Bible is virtually **silent** on the salvation of infants and the mentally challenged, it speaks very **CLEARLY** to the state and fate of those who have never heard of Christ. *Romans 1:18-32*
 - 1) The Bible is not silent about the **state** of those who never heard of Christ. *Romans 1:19-32; 2:1-3, 14-16; 3:9-20, 23*
 - 2) The Bible is not silent about the **fate** of those who never heard of Christ. *Romans 1:18, 32; 2:2-3, 5, 8-9, 12; 3:5; 1:24, 26, 28; 6:23*

How Do I Think or Act Like an Inclusivist?

Do I believe people are being saved without someone bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ?

*Am I more concerned about the eternal destiny of infants than the eternal destiny of adults I am accountable for reaching with the Gospel?
What am I doing about getting the special revelation of the Bible and the message of the salvation to the lost here at home and around the world?*