

Faith in Christ: Is It Necessary? • Part 6

Lesson 12

"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 Another Hard Question: How were OT believers saved?

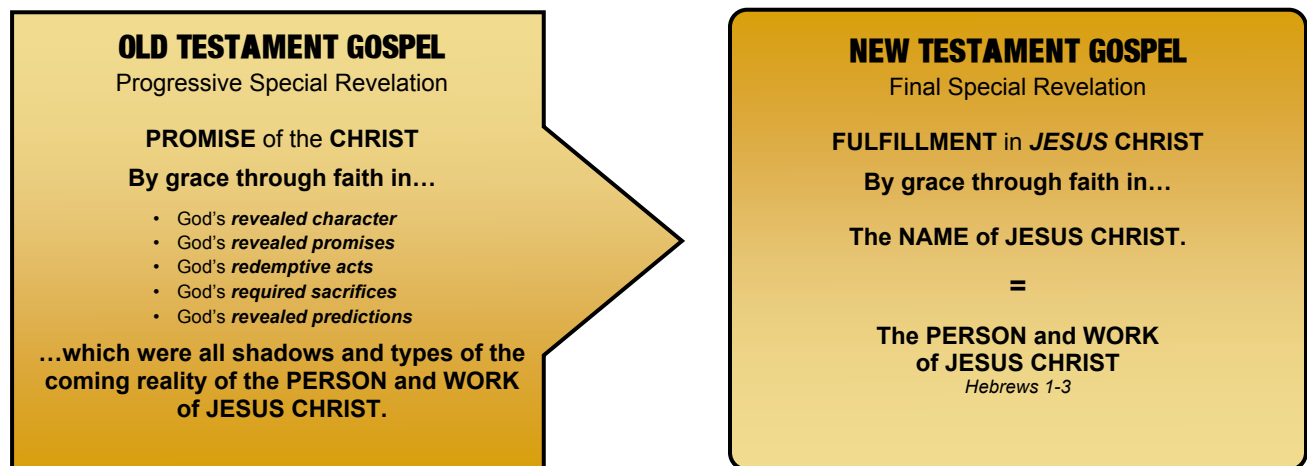
Inclusivists* argue...

- Some supposedly "holy pagans" in the OT were saved by grace through a **general faith** in a **generic God** known through the **general revelation** available **without exception** in creation, conscience, or culture (including conflicting world religions).

OT Believers	Those Who Have Never Heard of Jesus Christ
Were Chronologically BC	Are Chronologically AD
Were Informationally BC	But Still Informationally BC
Therefore, those who have never heard are in the SAME SITUATION as the OT Believers and can be saved in the SAME WAY without hearing and knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord!	

Exclusivists* answer from the Bible...

- All OT believers were saved by grace through **specific faith** in the **promises of the coming Christ** known through the **special revelation** given **without distinction** by the LORD Himself or His people (including redemptive acts in history like the exodus from Egypt, the conquest of Canaan, and the splendor of Solomon's Temple).
- The content of biblical faith has always been progressively revealed the LORD through His redemptive plan, but the **FOCUS** of that content has always been the special revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Gen 3:15; Hebrews 1:1-3*



- There is not a **SINGLE**, clear example in either the OT or NT of anyone being saved **apart** from special revelation.

- 1) **Creation** (*Hebrews 11:3; Genesis 1-2*)
- 2) **Adam and Eve** (*Genesis 3:1, 15, 21-24*)
- 3) **Abel and Cain** (*Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:6-15*)

* There are a variety of positions held by a diverse number of people for each of these arguments. I am simply providing the most common arguments to introduce the issue.

- 4) **People Begin to Call on the Name of the LORD** (Genesis 4:26)
 - 5) **Enoch** (Hebrews 11:5; Genesis 5:21-24; Jude 14-15)
 - 6) **Noah** (Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:3, 8, 12-14, 17-18; 7:1, 23; Matthew 24:38-39; Luke 17:28-30; 1 Peter 3:19-20; 2 Peter 2:4-9)
 - 7) **Abraham** (Hebrews 11:8-19, Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; Galatians 3:7-9, 16; Romans 4:1-4)
 - 8) **Melchizedek** (Genesis 14:18-24; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:1-10)
 - 9) **Moses** (Hebrews 11:24-29; Exodus 2-3; 11-12)
 - 10) **Jethro** (Exodus 3:1; 18:1, 8-12)
 - 11) **Rahab** (Hebrews 11:30-31; Joshua 2:9-11)
 - 12) **Ninevites** (Book of Jonah)
 - 13) **OT Believers did not receive the promises in the sense of their ultimate fulfillment** (Hebrews 11:39-40)
 - 14) **NT Believers look unto Jesus the Author and Perfecter of faith and the fulfillment of the promises** (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- 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 10:1-6, 22, 33-44; 11:12-18

CONCLUSION:

1. The pattern of the biblical revelation and redemption history is that of an **exclusive** or particular salvation: *It is the few rather than the many who are saved.*
2. Salvation has always been by God's **grace**: *He takes the initiative to reveal Himself and the message of salvation in the promise and fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ.*
3. Salvation has always been through an obedient **faith**: *Those to whom God has revealed himself and the message of salvation are not deserving or worthy of such gracious salvation.*
4. Salvation has always been focused on the Person and work of **Christ**: *Those in the OT looked to the promise of His coming, and those in the NT look to the fulfillment of His coming and His promise to come again.*
5. Salvation has always been offered to people without **distinction**: *Those who have been recipients of God's special revelation and gracious salvation include Jews and Gentiles, men and women, young and old, rich and poor.*
6. Salvation is the result of God using **means**: *His messengers (Himself, angels or people) going on His mission to share His message and miracles with the lost.*
7. Salvation since the coming of Christ (incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension) requires a specific **response**: *All who are saved hear the promises of the gospel, repent of their sins, and place their faith in Christ and His finished work for salvation.*
8. Salvation has always been the gift of a holy, loving, just, merciful, sovereign **Savior**: *The living God is lovingly just to condemn all humanity to eternal hell; He is also justly loving to save some by grace through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

How Do I Think or Act Like an Inclusivist?

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