



Does God Play Favorites?

Proverbs 21:2-3: (NASB) ²Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. ³To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice.



We all have our favorites. Favorite colors, seasons, sports, teams, foods. Sometimes we have favorite people, places and things. We may have a favorite chair, movie or song or a favorite saying, website or group. When you think about it, our "favorites" can really dominate our lives. Do you schedule your time around your favorite TV show? Do you get especially quiet when your favorite song comes on? Do you

have a favorite early morning Christian Talk Show? 😊 Yes, our favorites are important and that leads us to an important question: Does God have and does God play favorites? If He does, does this mean there is there some level of inequity in His plan? Stay with us as we look into God, favoritism and the human race.

Let's start at the beginning...

Genesis 1:1: (ASV) *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

What does this verse tell us about God?

- Are we here by chance or by design? We believe there is a purpose with design.
- Do those who are created have the same rights and powers as the Creator? Technically, are we God's actual children or His creation?

<i>God's Creation of Humans</i>	<i>vs. Human Offspring</i>
<i>The Created = a lesser result</i>	The Reproduced = same family, could be greater
<i>The Created = choice of building materials</i>	The Reproduced = DNA built in to the parents - no choice of building materials
<i>The Created = a product of planning and design</i>	The Reproduced = design is "built in"
<i>The Created = a result of thought + creativity</i>	The Reproduced = result of genetic combination

Who sets the definitions - the Creator or the created? We as the created can't set definitions for the Creator.



Is God unfair, God not obliged to all, [Greg Koukl, str.org](http://GregKoukl.com)

- *God is not under obligation to rescue all or to even make the rescue available to all equally...If two people owed me a million dollars and I forgive one debt, I am not obligated to forgive the other simply because I was gracious to the other person.*

Psalms 89:11-14: (NRSV) ¹¹The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them. ¹²The north and the south—you created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name. ¹³You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand. ¹⁴Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

Everything is God's. He and His character are great!

Deuteronomy 32:3-4: (NRSV) ³For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴The Rock, his work is perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God, without deceit, just and upright is he.

So, God is righteous and above question...does that mean we are not *capable* of understanding the whys and wherefores of His plan? Of course not! What we can do is use His righteousness as a basis for our understanding and then piece together how the parts fit - especially those parts that seem to be incongruous with the character of God just laid out...

If God does have favorites, where did it start?

Genesis 1:27-28: (NASB) ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Seems like mankind was the "favorite" of His creation! He created us differently from the beginning. Humans were put above the rest and given special instructions to multiply and have dominion.



Observations on this creation account and the rules of man's favored state:

- Man made in the image of God. Human beings are capable of so much more than any other part of creation.
- Man given dominion (rule) over all the living things on the earth just as God ruled the universe.
- Man given the special task of obedience, with a penalty of death for failure (not in this text).
- Man given an open door to populate the earth.

So mankind was given the Earth and all in it for their use. In this perfect environment this would have been a wonderful responsibility.



Well, as we know, sin entered and changed some things:

Genesis 3:17-19: (NRSV) ¹⁷And to the man he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, You shall not eat of it, *cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

Notice the elements of the curse on man (colored above).

But even through all of this difficulty to happen upon this favored creation, the dominion is NOT REMOVED! It is, however, placed in a much more difficult context.

No longer would this dominion develop within the confines of the perfect garden, to be expanded as the human family expanded. Mankind, now in prison to sin, was doomed to a life of toil and difficulty. This was the result of sin - of disobeying the Creator. (Note: Adam and Eve *did* obey, however, they changed their allegiance and obeyed the wrong spiritual power.)

Why God allows evil, God and evil logically compatible, William Lane Craig

- *We can prove that God and suffering and evil in the world are compatible by adding the proposition that God has morally sufficient reasons for permitting the evil and suffering in the world. As long as that is even possible, it shows that God and evil are compatible.*



So, how is God's "favorite" looking now? Hmmmm.....

Thus far, what observations do we understand about God's favoritism?

- He is the Creator.
- He set the rules.
- His rules are based in righteousness and justice. (We are so glad for this! He tells us this over and over again.)
- He allowed Satan, as a highly created angel, to choose. (Allowing choices inherently allows evil to arise.)
- He allowed man to choose.
- He is true to His word.

Did God decide on a new "favorite" once the world went bad?

First let's remember how far away from God man was going:

Genesis 6:5-8: (NASB) ⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷The LORD said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them. ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.



Noah and his family attempted to live righteously in a very unrighteous world. The people he preached to had the opportunity to be favorites but chose not to be.



Your will may grant others free will, C.S. Lewis on free will

- *Anyone who has been in authority knows how a thing can be in accordance with your will in one way and not in another. A mother can say that she wants the children's room to be kept tidy, yet leave it to them to do it. It is her will for it to be tidy, yet it is her will that left the children free to be untidy.*

If God gives us the will to choose, we have the ability to choose right or wrong. But there has to be justice reflected.

Another chosen person is established...

The first promise of unique, far-reaching favor:

Genesis 12:1-3: (KJV) ¹Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: ²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Why was Abram (later called Abraham) given this unprecedented promise? This wasn't random - Abraham was willing to follow God! Abram would be tested on his dedication, especially with the test regarding Isaac.

Genesis 22:18: (NKJV) *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*



What additional observations do we have about God's favor?

- He rewards those who diligently follow His precepts.
- His timetable is much longer than ours - He allows suffering to seemingly drag on.

God's favor continued with Abraham's son.

This text is God talking to Isaac:

Genesis 26:3-5: (NASB) ³Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.

God's favor continued with Abraham's grandson.

This text is God talking to Jacob:

Genesis 28:12-14: (NASB) ¹²He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. ¹⁴Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.



The promise is repeated and grows. We know that Jacob's name was changed to Israel and that his 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel. God's unmistakable favoritism was shown to one man, Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. Is that fair?

Once they were delivered from the slavery in Egypt, (which by the way is an "interesting" way for God to show his *favor* to them) and once they finished wandering in the wilderness for 40 years (another example of God's favor), they were *finally* in position to inherit their long-promised land.

Here is what God's favor required of them: (It was not arbitrary favoritism - something bigger was involved.)

Instruction regarding their "separate" existence as a favored people: Deuteronomy 7:1-12: (NKJV)

No mixing of societies - ¹When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you... You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

No mixing of families - no mercy on His own people if they turn from Him: ³Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

No mixing of worship - ⁵But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

You are a different people than those around you: ⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

 **That's not fair, kids on youtube**

- *When your brothers or sisters do something bad and your parents aren't there to see it, you can get the blame for it. I don't think that's fair.*
- *That's not fair! That's not fair! That's not fair!*
- *I don't like it when you be unfair. [sic] It's frustrating.*

A child's perspective looks at a situation bigger than they are and can't see that they are being taught a lesson. We can be like that, too. If every time a child said, "that's not fair," and the parents changed the rules to bend to that, where would that get us? They would get a sense of entitlement that things are as they want them to be, not as they need them to be. That would be bad parenting.

No mercy on those who perpetuate sinful practices: ⁹Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; ¹⁰and He repays those who



hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

No breaking of His promise to protect them if they remain true: ¹¹Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them. ¹²Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.

God was serious about Israel's being a separate people but He had requirements for their own good.

Can God's favorite people ever override His Rules?

According to God, with the privilege of favor comes responsibility.

The following is a marked example of what can go wrong, even with privilege in place:

1 Samuel 8:1-22: (NKJV) ¹Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. ²The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. ³But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. ⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵and said to him, Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But why not just ask for new and better judges? Israel wanted to be like everybody else. All the other nations had kings - it somehow seemed more glorious. So God decided to give them what they asked for.

⁶But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to the LORD. ⁷And the LORD said to Samuel, Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. ⁸According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. ⁹Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.

God puts the request in perspective - man's sinful mind seeks for the glitter of the king and forgets the goodness that got them here. History told them, miracles told them, and blessings told them that they were special, yet how easily these things were forgotten!

 **That's not fair, line for cookies, kids on youtube**

- *There is a line for cookies, I was the first one in line, but everyone else went in front of me. That's not fair.*
- *If you invited someone and then changed your mind, that's not fair. They should come with us.*


¹⁰So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. ¹¹And he said, This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. ¹²He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. ¹⁴And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. ¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. ¹⁶And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young



men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. ¹⁸And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

As God's mouthpiece, Samuel provides full and fair disclosure of the *dominion* of man turning into the *domination* of men. They traded in following after God's way in favor of something else - they became traitors.

(Note: We are not supposed to play favorites. God's favoritism is for the sake of bringing all men to Himself...so we are glad that God chose favorites. It is for the benefit of not only the favored, but all mankind.)

 **Traitor in your midst, *The Chronicles of Narnia***



- *Witch: (picturing Satan) "You have a traitor in your midst, Aslan."*
- *Aslan the lion (picturing Jesus) "His offense was not against you."*
- *Witch: "Have you forgotten the laws upon which Narnia was built?...Every traitor belongs to me. His blood is my property... Aslan knows that unless I have blood as the Law demands, all of Narnia will be overturned and perish... that boy will die on the stone table, as is tradition."*

So, with all of this new information, what did Israel do?

Is God's favor worth the trouble?

Continuing the account of Samuel, Israel and their desire for a king:

¹⁹Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, No, but we will have a king over us, ²⁰that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

Wow! God was fighting their battles but they wanted a king to do it instead. They were rejecting God. God's favorites are for lessons in the moment and eternally.

 **That's not fair, cleaning house, *kids on youtube***

- *We went up to clean our house once and my sister got five bucks and I only got two. That's not fair!*
- *They got to go out to eat and I didn't, that's not fair!*

²¹And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. ²²So the LORD said to Samuel, Heed their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said to the men of Israel, Every man go to his city.

God allows their childishness to reign.

Here is where our theme text really rings true!

Proverbs 21:2-3: (NASB) ²Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. ³To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice.

God's favoritism is for the good of all mankind.



What do we observe about God's favor thus far - now that there are nations in the picture, and now that Israel having been privileged is acting out of accordance with God's will?



- He allows the masses to choose.
- Like a good father, He gives fair warning to the masses regarding the consequences of their actions.

Sometimes God's favor brings challenge...:

Amos 3:1-2: (KJV) ¹Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, ²You only have I known of all the families of the earth: **therefore** I will punish you for all your iniquities.

...other times it brings us GREAT HOPE and SECURITY:

Isaiah 55:8-11: (NKJV) ⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.



True meaning of sacrifice, The Chronicles of Narnia

- *If the witch knew the true meaning of sacrifice, she might have interpreted the deep magic differently, that when a willing victim who has committed no treachery (Jesus) is killed in a traitor's stead (mankind), the stone table will crack and even death itself will turn backwards. (resurrection)*

So even when it looks like we are utterly alone...:

Psalms 22:1-2: (NASB) ¹My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. ²O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; And by night, but I have no rest.

...we can surely count on His favor!

Job 13:15: (NASB) *Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.*

God does play favorites out of what He knows is the right plan for His chosen people and the world of mankind. His favoritism brings ransom and restitution. It is what brings the world back to Him.

**So does God play favorites?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!**

**And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!**





First a summation regarding God and His favoritism:

- He is the Creator.
- He set the rules.
- His rules are based in righteousness and justice.
- He allowed Satan to choose.
- He allowed man to choose.
- He is true to His word.
- He rewards those who diligently follow His precepts.
- His timetable is much longer than ours - He allows suffering to seemingly drag on.
- He allows the masses to choose.
- He gives fair warning to the masses regarding the consequences of their actions.

Here is a Psalm that puts the greatness of God and His judgments in clear perspective. The first several verses are sweeping statements of the big picture of His greatness:

Psalms 145:1-7: (NKJV) ¹I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. ²Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. ³Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable. ⁴One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. ⁵I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. ⁶Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. ⁷They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.

These next verses get into much more intricate details of God's greatness, especially in relation to His prophesied kingdom, in which His favoritism will once again expand to all, due to the paid Ransom of Jesus:

Psalms 145:8-21: (NKJV) ⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. ⁹The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. ¹⁰All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. ¹¹They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, ¹²to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. ¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. ¹⁴The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down. ¹⁵The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. ¹⁶You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. ¹⁷The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. ¹⁸The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. ¹⁹He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. ²⁰The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. ²¹My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever.

A future CQ program will revisit the topic of Favoritism in the New Testament, exploring these questions:

*Can justice be served in the context of favoritism?
Does God now have two favorite people - Jews and Christians?
Are we capable of the same type of favoritism as God?*