



Is God Biased? (Part 2)

1 Peter 2:9: (NKJV) "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"

Last week we began to look into whether or not God is biased. The working definition we used was, "An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter." Why is this question an important enough matter to continue with this week? Think about it - if God were to be biased, then by definition he would be making His judgments and decisions based on a prejudiced perspective. Would you trust a God whose basis of operation was not squarely built upon justice, wisdom and love? Stay with us as we continue our examination of what the Bible tells us about the character of God - this time focusing on the New Testament and the eternal reasons that God has for allowing our race to go through such difficulties.

Questions for consideration:

1. If God is truly righteous, why would He choose between people?
(See previous study last week)
2. Can we do the same as God?
3. What is the end result of God's choices among men?

Let's first recap last week's focus on the Old Testament:

Genesis 1:25-28: (NRSV) ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." ²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; 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 have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

This text gave us important principles with which to begin:

- God created mankind in His image - we are therefore subservient to the creator as He created;
- Mankind was to be fruitful and multiply - a procreation process - one not of subservience, but one of eventual equality (generational respect notwithstanding).

There is a difference in humankind procreating its own race versus God creating our race. There is a difference in our dealing with each other and our dealing with God.



So, what had we learned about God and His creation - with nations in the picture and with Israel, despite having been privileged acting out of accordance with God's will?

- Ⓢ 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.

So far, had we seen any evidence of bias on God's part?

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.

Reviewing the actions of God in the Old Testament, what can we learn?

- ✓ There are no surprises - God is as good as His word.
- ✓ God's actions are always born of wisdom for the purpose of eternity.
- ✓ Bias arises on the part of mankind frequently.
- ✓ When we act in a biased manner, we pollute goodness.

Isaiah 55:8-11: (NKJV) *"⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰"For 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."*

God as the Creator is different than we are and takes a long term view.

1. If God is truly righteous, why would He choose between people? Adding thoughts from the New Testament...

The "favored people" status definitely continued in the New Testament:

Matthew 10:5-6: (NKJV) *"⁵These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. ⁶But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

(The mission later expanded to include the Gentiles.)



There was a massive gulf between those in and those out of favor:

Matthew 15:21-28: (NKJV) *"²¹Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.' ²³But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, 'Send her away, for she cries out after us.' ²⁴But He answered and said, 'I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' ²⁵Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!' ²⁶But He answered and said, 'It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.' ²⁷And she said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.' ²⁸Then Jesus answered and said to her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour."*



Observations:

- Jesus' mission was clearly to Israel;
- This Greek woman, of all the wrong belief systems, pursues Jesus;
- He tells her that she is "out of favor;"
- Her faith persists;
- Jesus grants healing because of that great faith in the RIGHT things.

Therefore, great faith in the right things brings God's favor! Sound familiar?



So, what have we learned about God and His creation - with nations in the picture and with Israel, despite having been privileged acting out of accordance with God's will and now with Jesus in the picture?

- 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.
- **God, through Jesus, reveals the great favoring power of focused faith, no matter who has it.**

So do we see any evidence of bias on God's part in the actions of Jesus?

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.



The principle of focused faith bringing favor proves to be both a great invitation as well as a great responsibility:

Matthew 23:37-39: (NKJV) ³⁷O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"

- ✓ God, through Jesus, verifies God's righteousness by saying "no" when faith and obedience cease.

Once the door of favor is closed due to unfaithfulness, it finds an opening of faith elsewhere:

Acts 10:30-37: (NKJV) ³⁰So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, ³¹and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' ³³So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God." ³⁴Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—³⁷that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:"



Observations:

- Cornelius was a Gentile;
- His focused faith was honored by God even when he was outside of a favored condition;
- At God's appropriate time, Cornelius' faith would bring great favor;
- Peter's own focused faith sees and embraces this great change of age;
- Peter proclaims God's impartiality.

2. Can we do the same as God?

Proverbs 21:2-3: (NRSV) ²All deeds are right in the sight of the doer, but the LORD weighs the heart. ³To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."

(Source: Answers.ask.com: "How can Bias be identified?") "Glad you asked...bias can usually be identified through adequate sampling of the subject in question and then comparing it to its known distribution. If there is sufficient distortion from the normal distribution a bias is present. Then again, this answer might help you...bias is generally defined as people being in favor of one thing over another. This is typically done in a prejudiced sort of way. Bias actually comes up in many different areas. Detecting bias may be difficult at times because sometimes bias can be incredibly subtle in nature. Although it can be subtle, it can be detected by means of a simple phrase or word within the information given. This phrase or word will generally show some kind of favor. Sometimes bias can be blatantly obvious. Subtle bias is actually very dangerous as this bias has the appearance of being neutral."

prej·u·dice - *noun*

1: injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights; especially : detriment to one's legal rights or claims 2(1): preconceived judgment or opinion (2)a: an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient



knowledge b: an instance of such judgment or opinion c: an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics.

Once the door to Gentile favor was opened, it opened a can of worms with it, for the Jews had for thousands of years been taught to be separate so as to maintain an unpolluted focus on God. Even though they continually messed this up, they were still programmed to be separate. Now all of that was supposed to change! This spelled trouble! The early church was faced with "tradition" versus "grace."

Acts 15:6-20: (NKJV) *"6Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, 9and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." 12Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. 13And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: 14Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; 17So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things.' 18"Known to God from eternity are all His works. 19Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. "*



Observations:

- This would be a test to reveal Christian bias!
- Gentile Christians and the Law was a BIG issue - so this was a BIG meeting;
- Peter (appropriately) lays the groundwork of God's equal favor to Gentile Christians;
- Barnabas and Paul continue with factual accounts of God's favor;
- James ties it all together with prophecy from Amos 9:11-12;
- James verifies God's impartiality - "Known to God from eternity are all His works."



So, what have we learned about God and His creation - with nations in the picture and with Israel, despite having been privileged acting out of accordance with God's will, with the backdrop of Jesus' teaching and example and now with a young Christian Church faced with issues?

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- Ⓜ God, through Jesus, reveals the great favoring power of focused faith, no matter who has it.

- Ⓜ **God gives us His impartiality as the ideal comparison when we are dealing with OUR bias.**

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.

So do we see any evidence of bias on God's part, or Jesus' part or the efforts of the early Christians? (The early Christians were still working on it at this time!)

However, are WE biased?

God's impartiality regarding the true Christian Church:

Galatians 3:21-29: (NKJV) *"²¹Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²²But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

Great! We have this abounding favor for the faithful, solely based on the content of their character and the degree of their dedication! What about everyone else? Just because someone was born at the wrong time or in a place never reached by the Gospel, or into a culture that hated the Gospel, does this mean they never have an opportunity for favor? Wouldn't that be a biased plan?

3. What is the end result of God's choices among men?

God's "favor" is based on eternity. Jesus taught us to pray for God's Kingdom to come on earth - if that's the case, then why are Christians supposed to go to Heaven?

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.



Could it be that there are two parts to salvation and those "left out" in the Galatians 3:21-29 text are not really left out at all?

The Christian's path is supposed to be a path of sacrifice, not a path of ease or unmatched wealth. We know this because we are to follow our example, Jesus.

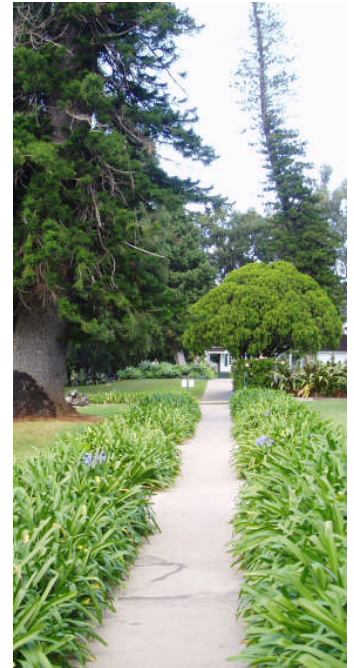
Jesus defined the path of sacrifice:

Isaiah 53:3-5: (ASV) *"³He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*

Luke 6:22-23: (NRSV) *"²²Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets."*

How does it work?

Galatians 3:27-29: (KJV) *"²⁷For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*



What promise is this referring to?

Genesis 22:15-18: (KJV) *"¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, ¹⁶And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: ¹⁷That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ¹⁸And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."*

The Apostle Paul is saying that as Abraham's seed, we will bless all the families of the earth. How is that possible?

1 Timothy 4:10: (KJV) *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, **specially** of those that believe."*

1 John 2:2: (NIV) *"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."*

If you ask the question, "is God biased," you have to address the issue of what happens to everybody else? We get a good sense of how Christians are judged, but how are the "everybody else" judged? These scriptures seem to indicate there is something good in store for "everybody else" through the true Christians.



Romans 8:16-21: (KJV) *"¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, ²¹Because the creature (humankind) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."*

This is a very inclusive promise. So it seems as though there are different classes of people - "them" - those on the outside currently not in a favored light and "us" - those on the inside, who are committed to God's will.

1 Peter 2:9-12: (NRSV) *"⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. ¹²Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge."*

See how God's impartiality brings all of mankind into favor! Notice in the following scriptures how the principles of justice, wisdom and love are all present together. These principles are truly the foundation for impartiality:

John 5:28-29: (ASV) *"²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, ²⁹and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."*

1 Corinthians 15:20-22: (NRSV) *"²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²²for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ."*



We keep talking about God being just, wise and loving. We saw that through Adam, humans were all condemned to death. Here is the justice - there was a life given for a life. We are all subject to death in Adam; therefore we are all subject to life in Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5-6: (KJV) *"⁵For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; ⁶Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."*

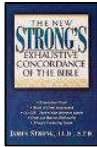
God's partiality is all in the context of eternity. What looks like bias is actually an impartial plan to bring everyone into an equal standing before God.

Colossians 1:18-20: (NRSV) *"¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him (Jesus) God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."*

This is the peace that comes from the ransom Jesus offered through his sacrifice. That was the satisfaction of justice so that all mankind could eventually live; whereas now they are all condemned to die.



1 Timothy 2:3-4: (KJV) *"³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; ⁴Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the **knowledge <1922>** of the truth."*



Knowledge: Strongs #1922. epignwsiv epignosis *ep-ig'-no-sis*; recognition, i.e. (by implication) full discernment, acknowledgement

So, if all are to be saved, where and how does it happen?

Remember the "dominion" over the earth that God gave to Adam originally? Here are some scriptures dealing with the "everybody else:"

Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NRSV) *"⁸Therefore wait for me, says the LORD, for the day when I arise as a witness. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all the heat of my anger; for in the fire of my passion all the earth shall be consumed. ⁹At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord."*

At the time when God's indignation and anger is poured upon the earth, that's setting up for all the people on the earth to have a pure speech so they can call upon the name of the Lord. This is a very dramatic set of events, where God's anger at sin yields righteousness on the earth. This isn't a literal fire, this is the "fire of His passion."



Isaiah 65:21-25: (NRSV) *"²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD--and their descendants as well. ²⁴Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent--its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD."*

That is a very startling picture of the result of God's judgments on the earth. This is the building up of society yet man still has dominion. People want to be able to live in a society peacefully. People still have the authority over the earth given to them by God in this prophecy. The Christians went to heaven; these prophecies are talking about the "everyone else." Where do the millions fit who never heard the name of Jesus Christ, or had the opportunity? If God is not biased, doesn't He have a plan for them? The resounding answer is, "yes!" Remember when Jesus said in his prayer, "...thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is done in heaven..." so when you look at these prophecies against the backdrop of Jesus' prayer, we can see these prophecies are a fulfillment of what Jesus was instructing us to prayer for.

Jeremiah 31:29-34: (NRSV) *"²⁹In those days they shall no longer say: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (How often now do we suffer for something someone else did - Adam's sin, for example. We don't have a choice to be born in sin. Later on, that level of curse will be taken away.) ³⁰But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge. ³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant*



with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt--a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more."

God is essentially saying, "Remember the chosen people of the Old Testament and they messed up? They will no longer be under the disadvantage of living in sin because they were born that way. Now, if there is going to be sin, each one of them is going to be personally responsible for their own actions."

Micah 4:1-5: (NRSV) ¹In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, ²and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." (This has never happened before...) For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; (there is a change going on...) they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; ⁴but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. ⁵For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever."

Is God biased? Think about the wonderful promises of equity we have amongst all men.



So, what have we learned about God and His creation - with nations in the picture and with Israel, despite having been privileged acting out of accordance with God's will, with the backdrop of Jesus' teaching and example, with a young Christian Church faced with issues, and now with a plan of Salvation revealed for every man woman and child throughout history?

- ⓐ He is the Creator;
- ⓑ He set the rules;
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- ⓓ He allowed Satan to choose;
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- ⓙ He gives fair warning to the masses regarding the consequences of their actions.



- ② God, through Jesus, reveals the great favoring power of focused faith, no matter who has it.
- ② God gives us His impartiality as the ideal comparison when we are dealing with OUR bias.
- ② **God so loved the world, that he provided eternal life for all of them right from the start!**

God, in His dealing with humanity for over 6,000 years, shows us there is a plan in place that makes it so each and every human who ever lived, because of the sacrifice of Jesus, will have an opportunity to live and make their life good. It will be according to their own choices and judgment, made possible by the resurrection provided by Jesus, canceling out death provided by Adam.

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.

So do we see any evidence of bias on God's part, or Jesus' part or the efforts of Christians or in the fullness of God's plan?

We maintain God is NOT biased...
but He IS brilliant!

***So is God biased?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!***