



Is God Biased?

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;"



Have you ever been in a situation, perhaps as a kid where you observed someone getting special treatment? Maybe it was that kid in school who seemed to get extra privileges or your brother or sister being treated differently than you? Remember how that made you kind of mad? Remember when you got some special treatment but that was different because YOU deserved it! Have you ever observed prejudice in action? We live in a time of excessive sensitivity to these things. When we look at the Almighty God, do we see any of these things? Do we see Him playing favorites? Treating one people differently from another people? Stay with us as we dive right into this question and seek to understand what and why God chooses whom He does. Is God biased?

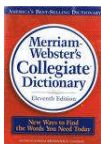
Our Question:

1. If God is truly righteous, why would He choose between people?

First of all, let's get a working definition for "biased:"

Dictionary.com: bi·as bi·ased, bi·as·ing -*noun*

1. an oblique or diagonal line of direction, especially across a woven fabric.
2. a particular tendency or inclination, especially one that prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question; prejudice.
3. *Statistics.* a systematic as opposed to a random distortion of a statistic as a result of sampling procedure.
4. *Lawn Bowling* a. a slight bulge or greater weight on one side of the ball or bowl.
b. the curved course made by such a ball when rolled.



Merriam Webster Dictionary online bi·ased

- 1 : exhibiting or characterized by bias; *especially* : PREJUDICED
- 2 : tending to yield one outcome more frequently than others in a statistical experiment
- 3 : having an expected value different from the quantity or parameter estimated

So, our working definition for bias will be:

An inclination that
prevents an unprejudiced
consideration of a matter.

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?

- Are we here by chance or by design?
- Do those who are created have the same rights and powers as the Creator?
- Who sets the definitions - the Creator or the created?

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."*

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;"*

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."*

Don't project our
human bias onto God.

We can use God's 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 that we just laid out. God chooses but is not biased.

Now, back to creation...two different accounts give us key information:

Genesis 2:15-17: (NKJV) *"¹⁵Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

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."*



Observations on those two creation accounts:



- Man was made in the image of God - the ability to have responsibility and authority in the context of what was created;
- Man was given dominion - rule - over all the living on the earth just as God ruled the universe;
- Man was given the special task of obedience with a penalty of death for failure;
- Man was given an open door to populate the earth.

Responsibility - Dominion - Choice - Ability to populate

Mankind was given the Earth and all in it for their use. In this perfect environment this would have been a wonderful responsibility. But as we know, sin entered and changed some things.

Genesis 3:16-19: (NRSV) *"¹⁶To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' 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.'"*

Adam had the ground rules of his dominion over the earth.

The elements of the curse on man:



- "cursed is the ground because of you;" (Because of Adam's choice, not because of God)
- "in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;" (This was a long-term curse)
- "thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field;" (The ground by default will bring forth thorns and thistles.)
- "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground."

Notice, the dominion is NOT REMOVED! Man still has the rule over the earth, but it is now 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.

In this disobedience, there was also obedience - *but to the wrong power!* It was obedience to the power of darkness and pride...it was obedience to Satan.



Isaiah 14:13-14: (NRSV) ¹³*You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon; ¹⁴I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High."*

The Prince of the power of the air: (notice the dominion of man is still intact - just under a now sinful spiritual administration.)

Ephesians 2:1-2: (KJV) ¹*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"*

The father of lies and a murderer: (again, dominion still intact but now under evil influence.)

John 8:44: (NRSV) *"You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*

Adam forfeited the connection with God's rule over the earth by his disobedience.

By God's grace, we can understand glimpses of His character. God would now deal with his creation in that context - a context of inequity, greed and humiliation. Though still having dominion, it would now be in a context of the curse of sin which affected man, woman and the entire earth they were to inhabit. Where such a curse rules, the dominion given would inevitably turn to domination and recklessness.



So, what do we know about God thus far?

- Ⓢ 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.

So far, do we see any evidence of bias on God's part?

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.

We maintain God is not being prejudiced, He is being true to His original word.

Now let's move on and look at God choosing one people over another.

The first promise of unique favor:

Genesis 12:1:3: (KJV) ¹*Now 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."*



God chose one person over other people. Why was Abram given this unprecedented promise? He was willing to follow God!

Abram would be tested on his dedication:

Genesis 22:15-18: (NKJV) ¹⁵Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—¹⁷blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

God isn't showing bias, he is showing justice and righteousness. "Follow me and you will be blessed." Out of that chosen person, Abram, came a chosen nation, though not without much suffering and difficulty. The nation of Israel is essentially born into slavery, and after generations they still need God's deliverance. Favor has consequences and difficulties. It is not something that shields a person from the difficulties of life.

Deliverance of a nation and further assurance of favor:

Exodus 19:3-6: (ASV) ³And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵Now therefore, **if** ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, **then** ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: ⁶and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."



So, what do we know about God thus far - now that there are nations 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.

So far, do we see any evidence of bias on God's part?

An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.

Is there some inclination on the part of God that made God prejudiced? No - they were His chosen people if they could follow Him.



Instruction regarding their "separate" existence as a favored people:

Deuteronomy 7:1-12: (NKJV) *"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you...seven nations greater and mightier than you, ²and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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:

- No mixing of societies
- No mixing of worship
- No mixing of families
- No mercy on those who perpetuate sinful practices
- No mercy on His own people if they turn from Him
- No breaking of His promise to protect them if they remain true



The other part of favor:

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."*

According to God, with privilege comes responsibility.

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

1 Samuel 8:1-5: (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."*

Samuel is passing on the responsibility to his sons of being judges of Israel. But the sons were corrupt. The system God put in place was not followed through properly. Israel then wanted to be like everyone else and have a king instead of judges. The system of having a king was even more corrupt, however.

1 Samuel 8:6-9: (NKJV) *"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 and forgets the goodness that got them there. They wanted to look like everyone else.

1 Samuel 8:10-18: (NKJV) *"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 to the domination of men. The "glitter" will belong to the king and not the people. The efforts of the people will belong to the king.



1 Samuel 8:19-22: (NKJV) 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." 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."

Sometimes with a child, this is a great way to teach them a lesson. Even though you know what they want won't be good for them, you know the consequences will teach them a lesson. God was righteously showing them ahead of time what would happen if they disobeyed Him.



So, what do we know about God 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 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; ("We want a king!")
- Ⓢ He gives fair warning to the masses regarding the consequences of their actions.

So far, do we see any evidence of bias on God's part? We see it showing love, wisdom, justice and mercy.

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."*

For next week, we will re-ask the first question about God choosing between people regarding the New Testament and see if there is any evidence of bias on God's part specifically regarding Christianity. We will end up looking at the eternal purposes for His choosing and those are things worth looking into!

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