



Does God Play Favorites? Part II

1 Peter 2:9: (NASB) *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*



Several weeks ago, we talked about God showing favoritism to the Jews in the Old Testament. We looked at the reasons for it and how God's favoritism progressed from individuals to a family to a nation. We need to look at the New Testament - funny thing about this - not only is there favoritism, but it is seemingly concerning eternity! Why would God do that? What kind of benefit comes from this? Stay with us as we delve into God, Jesus, the New Testament and favor!

How do we sum up the Old Testament and John the Baptist as relating to God's favoritism?



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.
- 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.
- We'll add one more since our Part I program: God through Jesus verifies His righteousness by saying "no" when faith and obedience cease.

According to God, with the privilege of favor comes responsibility...God gave instruction regarding Israel's "separate" existence as a favored people.



Remember the following?

Deuteronomy 7:1-12: (NKJV) 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 societies.
- No mixing of worship.
- You are a different people than those around you.
- No mercy on those who perpetuate sinful practices.
- No breaking of His promise to protect them if they remain true.

Matthew 3:4-10: (NASB) ⁴Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; ⁶and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; ⁹and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

John perpetuated the favoritism but issued a warning that they were living sinfully. The plan of God would soon take another step in favoritism to Israel.

Did Jesus use favoritism when he taught and healed?

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.

This great news was to be limited. Why did Jesus do this...?

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?

Earth is deadly especially to kids, God is not love, [anubis2814, youtube.com](#)

- *The earth is deadly...beautiful, but deadly! The earth is an equal mix of life and death. Science, however, has allowed us to live where life is the norm... Having large families was required until the 20th century because two to three of every five children were going to die of some horrible disease, especially smallpox. Death was as common as birth and it still is in impoverished countries. Parents didn't even get attached to their children until a certain age where they survived the diseases they would have.*

Matthew 13:10-15: (NASB) ¹⁰And the disciples came and said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables? ¹¹Jesus answered them, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹²For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

There is an obvious separation here between followers and non-followers.

¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them. (This is quoted from [Isaiah 6:9-10.](#))

Jesus is clearly saying that this Isaiah prophecy is coming true and that he is purposely NOT converting the masses of the favored people. He is, in effect, encrypting the Gospel message.

Did Jesus have favorites among the favored?

Why does God play favorites, [AskGodTV](#), [Woman on the Street \(WOTS\)](#)

- *God, why are some people blessed with so many advantages? It's not necessarily the ones who merit it who receive it. So my question is, why do You play favorites?*

Jesus called twelve to follow him:

Matthew 20:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, ¹⁹and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify him, and on the third day he will be raised up.

Jesus had three of those twelve who seemed to be special, part of his "inner circle." Why?

This is but one of many instances of the three receiving special treatment:

Matthew 17:1-3: (NASB) ¹Six days later Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before



them; and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as light. ³And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him.

He had one whom he specially favored: (Likely this was John.)

John 21:4-7: (NASB) ⁴But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵So Jesus said to them, Children, you do not have any fish, do you? They answered him, No. ⁶And he said to them, Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch. So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. ⁷Therefore that **disciple whom Jesus loved** said to Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.



A test for social justice, Van Jones, Guilford College, North Carolina, January 19, 2011

- *Here's how you know if you live in a society where there is social justice: Would you be willing to take your life, write it on a card, throw it in a big pot with everybody else, reach in at random and pull out another life, with total confidence that it will be a good life?*

Even Jesus' teachings about those called to him showed some manner of favoritism.

The ending of the parable of the laborers...

Matthew 20:8-15: (NASB) ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first. ⁹When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius. ¹⁰When those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they grumbled at the landowner, ¹²saying, These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day. ¹³But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. ¹⁵Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?

They each agreed to work for that wage. Interestingly, this parable gives a clear perspective of why the idea of social justice would fail. All receive the same, but there is the inherent "it's not fair" grumbling by some as a result.

When the favored fail, what happens next?

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!

This was directed to the Scribes and Pharisees.



Does God play favorites, AskGodTV, Woman on the Street (WOTS)

- *God kinda lets things run on their own and wouldn't say that He plays favorites...*



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 but very supportive of Jewish thinking.
- 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.



God heaps suffering on all, God is not love, [anubis2814, youtube.com](#)

- *So no, I don't believe a loving God made the universe, nor was it designed. If a deity did make this universe, he basks in our suffering because apparently our distant ancestors ate an apple when they weren't even given the knowledge of good and evil. He heaps suffering and plagues on humans and requires animals to kill each other on a daily basis to survive, when they did nothing to incur God's wrath.*

Galatians 3:21-25: (NASB) ²¹Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. ²²But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

God's grand design is shown here. His plan begins with identifying sin for the masses (the Law) and then giving a way to understand we can't live up to perfection, so grace is shown. His plan for man is a long process that goes in stages, which is why it seems to take so long. We need to look at it from God's long-range perspective.



Is it "playing favorites" if you appreciate the uniqueness of an individual? What is the cost of God's favoritism through Jesus?

The cost of Christian favoritism is steep! It began with Jesus...

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.

We are to follow in his footsteps:

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.

God looks at the value of our sacrifice from our heart. God's favoritism is based on our desire to serve Him.

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) ¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

So being favored means living your life after a pattern that is acceptable to God and not yourself. Conformity to that which is natural is out - transformation to Christ-likeness is in. This self-abasement is called a "spiritual service of worship."



God's power and free will, [Greg Koukl, str.org](http://GregKoukl.com)

- *God is all powerful. That means He has all the power He needs to do anything power can do, but there are some problems that power can't solve and this is one of them: Could God through power remove all evil from the world? Sure! But what He would have to do is destroy something good - destroy morally free creatures. Moral freedom just is the possibility to do evil or good. You cannot create a morally free creature that has no possibility of going south on you. This is not possible!*

God has shown favoritism in the Old Testament to the Jews and every human being is not called in the New Testament. And yet, we are led to a conclusion that leads us to a greater conclusion. Free will means the ability to choose wrong exists. God chose to create free will beings, so how does it eventually work out for everyone's best benefit? Is it even possible to have free will and have a "happily ever after" ending?

Where does this self-sacrifice bring us?

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.

Heirs! Finally something to inherit from this favoritism!



So, what do we inherit?

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.

If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's seed. The inheritance is one of position and opportunity - we become children of Abraham, and with that position we are able to bless all nations of the earth!

Who does the favoritism in the Bible REALLY favor?

Does God play favorites, AskGodTV, Woman on the Street (WOTS)

- God puts things in our lives so we can learn from them and grow from them and become more mature.
- God plays favorites probably because he has a quota to fill, so many people per day have to have problems and so many people per day have to have a good life - so He just picks!

Now the theme text with its context to begin to uncover the universal value of God's favoritism:

1 Peter 2:9-12: (NASB) ⁹But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹²Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Socially just vs. legally just, Van Jones, Guilford College, North Carolina, January 19, 2011

- In a socially just (as opposed to a legally just) world, since we are all pretty much born equally ignorant, we should have roughly equal chances to have good lives. You didn't do anything spectacular at birth to deserve all this... What it means in a country like ours is we will constantly be striving, we won't ever arrive there. We won't have a perfect union but we strive for "a more perfect" union.

How does God ultimately solve inequality?

What does it mean that they will "glorify God in the day of visitation?"

The word for visitation means: 1) investigation, inspection, visitation 1a) that act by which God looks into and searches out the ways, deeds and character of men, in order to judge them their lot accordingly, whether joyous or sad. This certainly sounds like the Day of Judgment!

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.



The day of visitation is a day of inspection in which those in such circumstance have an opportunity to prove themselves. We believe the Day of Judgment is the time to look back at the experience of creation to gain experience and then make decisions. *That* is the way to provide equality!

Favoritism is part of God's process in place to bring down the present evil society.

So what happens in the context of the coming of that day?

Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NRSV) ⁸*Therefore 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 that time, the day of visitation, there is difficulty and then the next verse changes the speech of the people so they may "all call upon the name of the Lord..." God's favoritism through the ages brings us to this point, all pivoting on the sacrifice of Jesus, who suffered the most and paid the price so that justice could be served. The world Jesus ransomed is raised because of his sacrifice. That's equality and justice!

It is here we begin to see the ultimate reasons for all that favoritism through human history:

Isaiah 65:21-25: (NRSV) ²¹*They 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.*

Each will be responsible for themselves, but all have the opportunity to "build."

Those that follow after Jesus get something special - they are recognized as answering the call. But the rest of mankind receives paradise restored back on earth.

Favoritism plays an important part in the sequential plan that brings things to a "happily ever after" to every man, woman and child that every lived.

God favors a few, so that he may ultimately favor all!

*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.
- God through Jesus verifies His righteousness by saying "no" when faith and obedience cease.

Now some further discussion regarding the "new" favor to the Gentiles: 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 spells trouble!

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: ¹⁶After 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. ¹⁸Known 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."

A few more scriptures showing the "pending" favor to be given to the rest of the world:

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.*

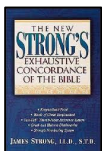
1 John 2:2: (NIV) *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Romans 8:16-21: (KJV) ¹⁶*The 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 itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6: (KJV) ⁵*For 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.*

Colossians 1:18-20: (NRSV) ¹⁸*He 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 God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.*

1 Timothy 2:3-4: (KJV) ³*For 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: Strong's #922 epignwsiv epignosis ep-ig'-no-sis; recognition, i.e. (by implication) full discernment, acknowledgement

Again, the Scriptures show us that God not only has a Plan, they show us that His plan is just, wise, loving and powerful and they show us that His plan makes favoritism work on behalf of all!