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## 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) *<sup>1</sup>When 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:

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.

**The "favored people" status definitely continued in the New Testament:** Matthew 10:5-6: (NKJV) *<sup>5</sup>These 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. <sup>6</sup>But 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



**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) <sup>10</sup>And the disciples came and said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables? <sup>11</sup>Jesus 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. <sup>12</sup>For 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.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup>In 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; <sup>15</sup>For 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: 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: He had one whom he specially favored: (Likely this was John.) John 21:4-7

))) 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: 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.

The principle of focused faith bringing favor proves to be both a great invitation as well as a great responsibility: Matthew 23:37-39: 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

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) <sup>21</sup>Is 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. <sup>22</sup>But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup>But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. <sup>24</sup>Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup>But 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.

The cost of Christian favoritism is steep! It began with Jesus...Isaiah 53:3-5 We are to follow in his footsteps: Luke 6:22-23: 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) <sup>1</sup>Therefore 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. <sup>2</sup>And 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](#)

- *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: Heirs! Finally something to inherit from this favoritism! **So, what do we inherit?** Genesis 22:15-18: 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!

Now the theme text with its context to begin to uncover the universal value of God's favoritism: 1 Peter 2:9-12

))) 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) <sup>28</sup>*Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice,* <sup>29</sup>*and 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: 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) <sup>21</sup>*They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.* <sup>22</sup>*They 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.* <sup>23</sup>*They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD-and their descendants as well.* <sup>24</sup>*Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.* <sup>25</sup>*The 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...!***