

## The Impartiality of God

People are often *partial* (as in *biased, prejudiced, unfair*), but God isn't. Peter declared in Acts 10:34-35 that "God is not one to show *partiality*, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him." Most believers realize this, at least until something in life doesn't go the way they expect it to, and their fervent and sincere prayers aren't answered the way they desire. Then, in their minds, "God is *unfair!*" (somewhat ironically, usually because He didn't show them *partiality* in the matter!). The truth is that life here below in this sin-tainted world is not always "fair"- "bad" things happen to "good" people too. But God never promised anything contrary to that in the here and now, even for the faithful. In fact, He predicted that because of faithfulness to Him, more "bad" things would happen, cf. John 15:18-20; 2Tim.3:12.

However, even *morally benign* "bad" things (those not directly tied to sinful choices and behaviors) happen to "good" people also. Faithfulness to God does not provide some sort of protective bubble against "here and now" financial ruin, natural disaster, heartbreak, disease, or even death, (cf. Luke 16:19-25 regarding *Lazarus*). Thus, God is *impartial* in these areas too.

But the *impartiality* of God, as to which Peter was specifically referring in Acts 10, is particularly beneficial in *spiritual* regards. His *impartiality* means that ANYONE who turns to, believes, and obeys Him will be *eternally* saved and therefore "welcome" to and by Him into heaven. With all the uncertainty, hardship, and unfairness of "this" life, the security and blessing of the "next" life is more than fair- it's *merciful* and *gracious!*

Unfortunately, most folks living in and focused on the "here and now" want their "heaven on earth"... and thus "here and now" rather than "hereafter." And when their cursory "belief" in God doesn't produce the results they desire in the "here and now," God is proclaimed to be "unfair" (and thus *partial*), and rejected.

One of the primary causes of this basic breakdown in our understanding *impartiality* is also currently manifested more generally in society as a whole. It is the confusion of "equal *opportunity*" with that of "equal *outcome*." Hopefully 1Cor.10:1ff will help us to observe a fundamental difference in them. Note that:

- V.1, "**all** were under the cloud and all passed through the sea;" and,
- V.2, "**all** were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" and,
- V.3, "**all** ate the same spiritual food;" and,
- V.4, "**all** drank the same spiritual rock... and the rock was Christ."
- V.5, "Nevertheless, with **most** of them God was not well pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness."

Despite "all" having the same *opportunities*, "all" did NOT have the same *outcome!* Why? Was God being *partial* to some? Hardly! Note v.6 for the explanation, "Now these things happened to them (ie. those "laid low in the wilderness") as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as **they** also craved." The *impartiality* of God provided them "**all**" with "equal opportunities," but not with "equal outcomes," precisely because the "outcomes" were up to **them**. Those who **chose** *idolatry* and *immorality*, and to *try/test* and

*grumble* against the Lord (cf. vv.7-10) rather than to believe and obey, were “*destroyed.*” Why? Precisely because “*God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.*” Such requires that the inverse is also true: those who *reject Him* and *do what is wrong* will be punished. This is the rule for EVERYONE in EVERY NATION because God is *impartial*.

We ALL have the same *opportunities* to know and believe the truth “*For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to ALL men,*” Titus 2:10; it is available to ALL because God is *impartial*. However, this “*grace*” that brought “*salvation to all men*” did so in the form of “instructions” which have to be obeyed by ALL to produce the same *outcome* of salvation for ALL, Titus 2:12-14! Since ALL won’t obey those instructions, ALL won’t be saved, Matt.7:13-27.

So, either generally in life or specifically in spiritual matters, don’t confuse “equal opportunity” with “equal outcome.” We should ALL be for “equal opportunities,” but not even God guarantees “equal outcomes” for ALL because the outcome is dependent upon *individual* choices made and actions taken. Otherwise, God would no longer be *impartial*. Think about it, won’t you? (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at [vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com](http://vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com); email to [mrpcstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:mrpcstrong@hotmail.com))