

**The
Fairness
Of
God**

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Table of Contents

Preface	3
Introduction	4
Fairness in Rewarding of Hired Labourers.....	6
Fairness in Distribution of Talents	9
Fairness in Choosing Jacob over Esau	13
Fairness in Hardening the Heart of Pharaoh	15
Fairness in Having Mercy on Some	20
Fairness in the Trials and Tribulations of Job	26
Fairness in the Jailing of John the Baptist	27
Fairness in Only One Way to Obtain Salvation	29

This is another book that is part of a sermon preached concerning the perception of the fairness of God. The fairness of God is a subject that is often misunderstood by Christians. This is especially the case when Christians do not spend much time in the words of the living God. They spend so much time in the words of fallen men whether they be Christians or people of the world and as a result, they imbibe the wrong concept on the nature of God concerning God's dealings with fallen men. They look at the operations of the world with lens from the world. They measure what is fair or unfair, what is right or wrong with the wrong yardstick. Their standard of measurement is man centred instead of God centred. The Bible becomes just another book and is no longer the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. What is recorded in the Scriptures is conveniently explained away based on the wisdom from this world which is foolishness with God. This misunderstanding of the fairness of God is made even worse when they malign the nature of this gracious God and misrepresent the way God calls and elects sinners. This gives sinners the excuse to blaspheme God and they refuse to believe in the atoning sacrifice of the blessed Son of God for sinners that is all sufficient to save their sinful soul from hell fire.

When the fairness of God is not correctly learned from the Holy Bible, Christians very easily succumb to disappointment and discouragement when circumstances become unfavourable to them. The workings of Almighty God in this fallen world are misunderstood and very often Christians live their lives just like any other sinners in this world murmuring and complaining whenever they do not get things their way. It is the author's hope that Christians will seriously examine the way God dealt with men in the Holy Bible and adjust their expectation and surrender their will to the will of this most benevolent God who loves us so much that He sent His only Begotten Son to die on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the whole world. Only then will a Christian be able to accept good and evil which may come his way all the days of his life and wait upon this gracious Lord and Saviour to work out circumstances for him and reward him in due time. This will enable a Christian to live a victorious Christian life to glorify the Lord who loves him so much who will not shortchange him on anything that is good for him.

The fairness of God is an issue that fallen men always have to grapple with in relation to the way God deals with them. There is a widespread perception that Almighty God has been unfair in His dealing with men. This is especially the case when circumstances are unfavourable to them. Fallen men blame God for all the bad things that happen to them. They cannot accept the fact that the God of love will allow evil to come into this world, especially for evil times to befall them. If there is a God of love, why does He allow evil to enter into this world? Why did God allow the tsunami to strike last year in the Indian Ocean that exterminated a quarter million inhabitants in the region? They question God's dealing with men according to what they can see, feel and understand with their fallen mind. So they reject a God who cannot prevent evil from happening and they look to some other gods that are more relevant in meeting their own whims and fancies. They will only worship a god that is fair to them. They pray to gods for prosperity. They go to mediums to look for answers and good fortune so that they will prosper in wealth and health. They want fairness measured horizontally with other men. This misconception is made worst by some pushing the false doctrine of God deliberately bypassing some fallen men and not giving them a chance of obtaining salvation based on the wrong understanding of God's calling and election of sinners. The apostle Paul in defending the way God deals with men asked: **“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.” (Romans 9:14)**

Fallen men are prone to look for fairness before they will accept what they perceive to be right or wrong. They justify their actions and decisions based on the impact on them they perceive as being fair or unfair. They are only interested in what is there for themselves before they will accept whatever happening, new policy or demand on them to be true and right. They are constantly engaged in a horizontal comparison mode with others whether life, circumstances, rules and regulations are being fair to them. The measure of fairness as far as men is concerned is one of personal benefit and gain whether tangible or intangible. However, they are rather subjective in the practice of fairness in their own life concerning the application and distribution of their resources to achieve their desired goals. They will not practise fairness in the writing of their own will concerning the disposal of their assets after their death. They will their estates in such a way to be distributed based on their judgment on who have been good to them or who are more capable in managing their estates after their decease. Then why should fallen men expect God to deal with them in absolute fairness according their own perception of fairness when they cannot even be

consistent about such application of fairness in their own dealings with others? This study is a brief analysis on God's dealings with men whether God has to conform to fallen men's notion of fairness in order be accepted and respected by fallen men as their Maker and their God.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. (Matthew 20:1-16)

According to this passage, we have an employer, the lord of the vineyard, hiring workers at five different time periods. The first group was given a contract with a wage package of a penny for a day's work. The rest were not given a contract of a fixed rate for wages but a verbal promise of payment in the future. The first group accepted the offer and went to work in the vineyard. The rest of them accepted the verbal offer with uncertain remuneration by faith and went to work trusting in the goodness of this employer not to cheat them. One group was banking on a contract with fixed term of payment while the others were relying on the trust and honour of the lord of the vineyard with uncertain payment. They might have thought that their remuneration was based on the amount of work and effort put in and be paid accordingly. The first group already knew in advance how much they would be paid but there was no mention of how much work were required of

them except that the time of employment was fixed. They had certainty of payment while payment for the rest were uncertain as far as the absolute monetary rewards were concerned. Those who want certainty must pay a premium and the premium for the first group required of them is the whole day's work. The rest of them had no certainty of amount of payment so they worked by faith perhaps hoping to be adopted into a more privileged position like the first group to come into fulltime employment sometime in the future with a known fixed rate of payment.

When payday came, everyone received a penny for the work done. The last group that was hired at the eleventh hour was paid first and they received a penny. They probably did not even know that the first group was promised a penny for a whole day's work. They thought that this one penny was the rightful amount for the amount of work they had performed for the day. The other groups also likewise received a penny at the end of the day. There were no complaints coming from these groups with no fixed rate of payment promised to them. However, when those who were engaged for a penny for a day's work saw that those hired after them received a penny, they expected to be paid more. They had forgotten that they had a binding agreement with their employer. So when this first group saw that the rest were paid a penny like them, they were obviously unhappy because they had done more work but they received the same as those who had done very little assuming they were all working at the same rate. They went into comparison mode and started finding fault. They chose the group with the greatest contrast to bring up a case against the employer. They contended that the last group hired during the eleventh hour did not deserve to be paid as much. If this last group was paid a penny, then they should be paid a lot more. They complained that they had borne the burden and heat of the day while this last group only suffered very little yet they were paid just as much. They accused the employer for making the rest equal with them. Perhaps if the employer had paid the last group lesser, it would make this first group happier. Self-interest is at stake here and selfishness manifests its ugly head. They did not mind being paid a penny so long as others must be paid lesser. So they accused the employer for unfair wage practice. This employer had been unfair to them. This is self-righteousness just like Israel for they think too highly of themselves.

However, this employer did not shortchange them. They received their pay according to their acceptance of the offer. Was this employer being unfair to them? Does the first group have a case against this employer for

unfair wage practice? According to man's point of view, this employer appears to be unfair and practises favouritism. This is not good business practice and the human resource department would not sanction such practice. Those who were unhappy looked horizontally instead of looking upward. This is where all the problem starts. From the point of view of the employer, he did no wrong. He paid the first group as agreed.

He needed not pay the rest the same rate but he was being good to them. The resources were all his and it was up to his good pleasure to dispense as he pleased. The lord of the vineyard was being good but the eyes of those who were unhappy were evil. This is the way God deals with fallen men over different periods of time. Almighty God gave fallen men different requirements during different time periods to get to know Him and do His work. He gave the children of Israel the Law of Moses to keep. He gives us spiritual laws to keep instead of attending to a literal temple offering literal animals sacrifices during this day and age. Do you think this is fair to the Old Testament saints? Do you think the Jews have reason to complain about the work and effort they had to put in in comparison with ours during the church age?

But God needs not be fair according to fallen men's definition of fairness in order to be God. He suffers no drop in esteem in His character and attributes and He tarnishes not any aspect of His holiness in this regard of exercising His rights to deal with fallen men according to His own way. God needs not be fair but God is just in His dealings with men. Fallen men will not acknowledge that they too practise unfairness in many aspect of their lives but they will not allow Almighty God to deviate an inch from their own perceived notion of fairness in this fallen world.

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. (Matthew 25:14-29)

In discussing the fairness of God, it would be incomplete if we do not consider the different talents God gives to different men. It is perfectly normal for God to give to different people different talents to test their stewardship. The three servants here received different amount according to their several ability. Is God being unfair to some? Why not give everyone the same amount of money? Why is God prejudiced against some and gave them only one and two talents instead of the top receiver of five talents? If God gives everyone the same amount then it will eliminate the trouble of

comparison. That is the way some self-conceited people might argue. But is it the way this world works? Do fallen men practice fairness this way all the time? Then why must God conform to some unreasonable demand just to please fallen men in order for them to accept this Almighty Being. So God needs not be fair but God is just. Unto whom much is given, much is required. The time of reckoning would soon come.

The servant who received only one talent and being unhappy and buried that one talent would be judged. This servant even had the gall to accuse the Lord to be a hard man. This is clearly outrageous. He was accusing the Lord to be unreasonable and hard to please. His mitigating factor for not putting that one talent to produce result was just an excuse for his own slothfulness. The real motivating factor for this servant for not doing the Lord's will is not actually fear of the Lord but wickedness of his heart. The Lord called this man a wicked and slothful servant. The Lord brushed aside his alibi and pinpointed to him his wickedness. If he really feared losing the one talent given to him, there were other options available for him to invest the money. He could have placed this money in a bank and earned interest from this principal sum than to bury the money. Was he unhappy because he received only one talent compared with others? If he had been given more than one talent, would he bury them all as well? This servant was not ignorant of other investment instruments available. He was simply wicked and slothful. In all likelihood, he despised the one talent given to him. He was unhappy that he received only one talent. He might even have a greater risk appetite for more gain from many other investment opportunities but one talent was simply not worth his effort to invest his time and effort. His underlying inability to invest the one talent was not because of fear but wickedness of his heart. There was no reason why he should not at least put the money in the bank. He did not discharge his duty as a good steward. He wanted to spite his Lord by returning that same one talent given to him. Perhaps he felt the Lord had looked down on him by giving him just one talent to manage. In all likelihood, he thought the Lord had been unfair to him. He probably believed he was a great fund manager who did not deserve to manage only one talent. This was the best way to get back at his Lord. So the one talent given to him made no gain on the day of reckoning. The Lord did not gain from this one talent because of this wicked servant who deliberately refused to invest the money.

Hence the Lord did not accept his explanation but rebuked him for not investing his money as expected from this servant. The Lord did not

entertain any perception of unfairness in his distribution of his resources to maximize the potential gain that is expected from his own money. The servants were employed for this task of maximizing the returns of investment from their Lord's money. So the one talent was taken away from this wicked servant and given to the top achiever who was given five talents and gained the other five talents. Is this Lord being unfair? This servant already had ten talents now but why did he need more? The Lord is not interested in the equal distribution of wealth. He is only interested in maximizing his profits. All the talents belong to the Lord and not the servants. The servants were simply employed to manage his funds to bring in profit. This Lord needed not be fair to his servants for they were simply servants employed for a task to bring in maximum profit at the end of the day. The Lord was not unjust in his dealings with his servants. In fact he told the wicked servant the least expected of him was to put his money in the bank to gain just the minimum profit with a low risk investment vehicle. But this wicked servant refused to do the least expected of him. He went into great depth to ensure that he would not loose the one talent to thieves by burying it. Burying something required effort. He ensured that the one talent would still remain the same one talent when his Lord returned. He tried justifying himself to prevent any loss to his Lord but he had no intention or any inclination whatsoever to ensure the Lord would enjoy even the slightest gain from his own money. This is a calculated measure to prevent the Lord from gain and at the same time protecting himself from blame for losing the money. This is a very crafty and wicked man. Those who gain more were given more to manage. The wicked servant who did not discharge his duty was rebuked and sacked.

So those who used God's gifts and reaped a harvest in proportion to what had been given them would be rewarded. It is not what has been given that counts but what is reaped that is important. Had God been fair according to fallen men's ideal of fairness and gave to everyone the same amount to invest, would everyone reap the same amount of money in return? This would not be the case. Man in this fallen world has never been created equal. Some are rich and some are poor. Some are strong and some are weak. So God needs not be fair but God is just. The Lord gives to men according to their several ability to test their stewardship. No one has the right to question the way God deals with men. Those who proved to be diligent and good stewards would be given a larger portfolio to manage the Lord's resources. Those who do not proved to be good stewards would have their stewardship removed and become castaways. This also calls into question God's calling

and election of sinners. The perception of God being unfair in this regards is made worse by false teachers insisting that because God is sovereign, therefore, God deliberately bypass many sinners and refuse to grant them salvation. Paul addressed this matter of God being perceived to be unfair in His dealing with men in the book of Romans.

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. (Romans 9:6-14)

Romans chapter 9 and 11 are often misunderstood, misinterpreted and misapplied. God's election is discussed here by the apostle Paul. He started off by asserting the fact that not all Israel, which are of Israel and not all the seed of Abraham are counted as children. So the fairness of God is brought into question. It concerns the calling of Abraham to bring forth the Seed of the woman to be a blessing to all the families on earth (Genesis 12:1-4). This Seed was passed on to Abraham's son Isaac. From Isaac, the choice had to be made between his two sons Esau and Jacob. Before the two children were born their fate were already sealed. Is this fair? God told Rebecca that the elder shall serve the younger. Is it fair to choose the younger over the elder to make him a great nation? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Is it without a cause in God's choice and God's choosing? The Lord revealed that the elder shall serve the younger according to foreknowledge. God even went as far as to put on record that He hated Esau. So God not only bypassed Esau but hated him. Is it fair for God to bypass the elder and even hate him? When did God say He hated Esau? It was mentioned in the last book of the Old Testament in the book of Malachi, recorded 400 years before Christ came. God said He hated Esau more than 1000 years after what took place where Esau showed his character defect as a fornicator and a profane person who sold his birthright. Esau was simply not interested in spiritual things. He was simply not fit to bring forth the Seed of the woman to be the Messiah for the whole world. What choice did God have in such a situation? Here God is dealing with the Seed of the woman promised after the fall of Adam (Genesis 3:15). This Seed could come through either Esau or Jacob, both were sons of Isaac, Abraham's son. God has to choose right?

Why not when men have been always choosing what they want all their life? Did not God have a right to choose which son of Isaac the Messiah should come from? This passage is not talking about God deliberately giving faith for some to believe in Christ and rejecting others by withholding faith from them to believe in God's Son. This is a perverse doctrine that maligns the character of Almighty God. So is there unrighteousness with God for choosing Jacob over Esau? God forbid. Then Paul went on to discuss God's dealing with Pharaoh to dispel any notion of unfairness of God as perceived by fallen men.

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Romans 9:15-24)

So here is the passage that apparently supports God's deliberate act of bypassing many sinners and His refusal to save them just because God is sovereign. Verse 18 is the favourite verse used by false teachers to conclude that God does deliberately limit the salvation offer to many fallen men. As such, atonement to fallen men is limited to those chosen before the foundation of the world. The precious blood of Christ is shed for the elect only. So when Christ claimed that when He was lifted up He would draw all men to Him, Christ meant he would draw all the elect only (John 12:32). Moreover when Paul preached that: **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:** (Acts 17:30), Paul meant that God commands only the elect that they should repent. In fact, they cannot actually repent because they are totally depraved. It is God who will grant them repentance because they are chosen before the foundation of the world. Not only this, when Paul told Timothy God's desire for all men: **Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.** (1 Timothy 2:4), God actually meant the elect chosen before the foundation of the world to come unto the acknowledging of the truth. Hence fallen men blame God for who they are and they refuse to accept Christ as their Saviour. God is not being fair to them. God is only interested in showing mercy to His chosen, His favourite. God is practicing favouritism. Is that so?

Foolish Christians believe John Calvin and insist that this is so because God is sovereign. Who did not know God is sovereign? But is the character of God as such that God refuses to give everyone a chance to obtain salvation? God has the right to create sinners and then burn them in hell for His personal pleasure? Is this really the case? This gives God the glory? So is God a sadist? Then we read about the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). We also read in Ezekiel: **Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. (Ezekiel 18:23&32)** So God must be crying crocodile tears and God is completely insincere at all.

But Calvinists insist that their understanding of God's election is correct. They claimed: **The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. (Proverbs 16:4)** But did God create them to be wicked? Who is responsible for their wickedness? Is God the cause of their wickedness? But the Solomon also said: **Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. (Ecclesiastes 7:29)** So is God responsible for fallen men's wickedness or is fallen men's understanding of the Scriptures flawed? Some Christians are just hell bent in slandering God and His attributes. They are so eager to justify their pet heresy or perhaps they need an alibi to justify their sinning in the flesh. They can then blame God after this because God made them to be wicked. They are still hopelessly waiting for true repentance from heaven when repentance through Christ has been made available. God had already sent His only Begotten Son to die for sinners. What more do they want? But there are sinners still waiting for God to grant them faith to believe in His Son and they want God to do the believing for them. Can anyone believe something as ludicrous as this? When God commanded men everywhere to repent, they claim they cannot repent. God is being unreasonable and even ridiculous, perhaps.

So we are told God is showing mercy to whom He will have mercy. Is this passage talking about salvation for individuals? This passage is talking about God dealing with nations, raising up Egypt and judged them for their idolatry and delivering the children of Israel from bondage. This is part of God's redemptive plan for mankind to raise up Israel to bring forth the Messiah for the whole world. Egypt who worshipped false gods was the

vessel fitted for destruction just like the Amorites whose iniquities were full after 400 years told to Abraham. God had endured their idolatry for so many years and the time was up for this vessel of wrath to be destroyed. Israel is the vessel of mercy promised to Abraham and indeed is the vessel of mercy to bring forth the Messiah, the Saviour for the whole world. Is God showing mercy to sinners unconditional? We will have to go back to when God dealt with Egypt and get the context of this passage right instead of slandering God for being unreasonable and unrighteous in His dealing with fallen men.

Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. (Exodus 3:16-20)

Here Moses met God in the burning bush after forty years of conditioning and training to bring the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. God told Moses that Pharaoh would not let Israel go according to foreknowledge. Pharaoh would only let the children of Israel go after his country was almost destroyed. Does anyone think Moses was listening? But Moses was busy arguing with God why he should not go to Egypt to deliver the Jews. He was still bitter and lacked confidence after being rejected by his own people some forty years ago. He gave all kinds of excuses to God why he should not be the one to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. He requested that God sent someone else instead. When he finally reluctantly agreed to go, he was given more information and instruction for the task ahead.

And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have

put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. (Exodus 4:21-23)

God now told Moses He would harden Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the children of Israel go. This was new information to him. Moses was also told to deliver a message to Pharaoh that God threatened to kill his firstborn son if he refused to let the children of Israel leave Egypt. Anyone reckons Moses was still listening? So when Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go and punished them instead, Moses became disappointed and upset. Why? Had he believed every word that God spoke to him? Was he paying attention when the Lord spoke to him? He even watered down the message he was supposed to deliver to Pharaoh that God would kill his son.

And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. (Exodus 5:1&2)

So we see Pharaoh's reaction according to God's foreknowledge that he would not let the children of Israel go. This gives God the basis to deal with Pharaoh and to make an object lesson out of him that the whole world would hear about this Almighty God. Thus God raised up Pharaoh for this purpose of glorifying His name for this wicked creature who thought he could fight against the will of Almighty God. God would harden Pharaoh's heart who hardened himself against Almighty God. No one could harden himself against God and prosper. No flesh shall glory in God's sight. At this point, God had not hardened Pharaoh's heart yet until chapter 7. Is there unrighteousness with God in hardening Pharaoh's heart? God forbid. Had Pharaoh obeyed God, he would receive mercy just like king Abimelech in the past before him during Abraham's day who took Abraham's wife without knowing she was his wife. King Abimelech received mercy because he did not harden himself against Almighty God. Had he hardened himself against God like Pharaoh and refused to let Sarah go, he would not find mercy and he would be destroyed together with his kingdom (Genesis 20). But God blessed him and multiplied him and his household when he obeyed God and responded in a way that was in accordance to the will of God. It

was God's will that the children of Israel leave Egypt because God wanted them to exterminate the Amorites because the iniquities of these people were full after 400 years. So why did God say that He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy? Can anyone demand that God grants him mercy according to his own terms and conditions? To understand why God said what He said, one must go back to the time and place where God said He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy.

And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. (Exodus 19:3-9)

The children of Israel had already left Egypt where this nation had become a basket case after Pharaoh hardened himself against Almighty God. They had come to the place to meet Jehovah God to receive instruction where they should go from hence. The children of Israel were given a choice whether to obey God and serve Him. They promised to do God's laws having witnessed all the signs and wonders that God did in Egypt. Moses then told these words to God. God will hold them to their words. Moses rehearsed this event in another passage with additional information given.

These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. (There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea.) And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them; After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei: On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying, The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the

vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them. Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:1-10)

Here is when Moses told them God would be showing mercy to those who love Him and keep His commandments. So God showing them mercy is connected with the Law given them to obey. Moses went on and gave them the rest of the Ten Commandments. The following was their response after hearing the commandments.

And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! (Deuteronomy 5:23-29)

The children of Israel were frightened to death on the arrival and appearance of Jehovah God on the Mount. They suggested to Moses to be their mediator instead of hearing God's commandments directly from heaven. They promised to do God's Law and God will then grant them

mercy according to what they promised they would do. So here is the context when God said He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy. It is regarding keeping the Law given to the children of Israel. If they kept the Law, God would have mercy on them. If they refused to keep the Law as they promised, they would not find mercy. Joshua also reiterated this matter before he died.

And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. (Joshua 24:16-25)

Under the leadership of Joshua, the children of Israel once again promised they would keep God's laws and serve Him after the death of Moses. They were supposed to keep the end of their bargain. But did the whole nation of Israel keep the Law consistently over the years? We know that no one can be saved by keeping the law alone. **Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)** Salvation did not come by keeping the Law alone. Keeping the law would not save them but not keeping the law would certainly kill them. The Law was their schoolmaster that would bring them to Christ. They would be kept under this schoolmaster until Christ came to fulfill the Law as the perfect Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. They know that no matter how diligently they

keep the law, their conscience is still defiled each time after offering their sacrifices (Hebrews 10:2). They will eventually have to trust in God having mercy on them though they try their very best to keep the Law.

David is a case where God showed him mercy apart from the Law. He committed adultery and murder and under the Law there is no redemption and no animal sacrifice would avail. He was to be put to death according to the Law but he found mercy when he truly repented. The Law alone could not save anyone. God must show mercy to whom He will show mercy. Is this unfair? Those who diligently keep the Law will obtain mercy and those who trust in God's mercy will also obtain mercy according to the sure mercies of David (Isaiah 55:3). David did not wait for God to grant him true repentance. He repented and went before Jehovah God with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and he obtained mercy. So God will have on mercy on those whom He will have mercy because they obey His words and keep His commandments and put their trust in Him. God is the Judge of all the earth who will do no wrong. Those who did not obey and serve God will not find mercy. The Lord also told Moses the same thing when he requested to see God's glory. **And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. (Exodus 33:18-20)**

So is God showing mercy to whom He will show mercy conditional or arbitrary? Is it in the nature of God to be callous and arbitrary showing mercy to some and denying mercy to others? Is it fair for God to act that way? What was the context in which God said that He would show mercy on some and not others? Who were the targets for God to show mercy? Is it not the children of Israel? What did God expect the children of Israel to do? To love God and to keep the Law right? If they keep the Law, though the Law could not save them until the precious blood of Christ is shed on Calvary's cross some 1500 years later, God will still show them mercy. When they died in faith trusting in God's goodness and mercy, they went to Abraham's bosom before Calvary waiting for the shedding of the blood of Christ to take away their sins. They could not go to heaven direct unless it is a special case like Enoch, Moses and Elijah taken to heaven. For us Christians to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Is not this what God meant

when He claimed to show mercy on some and not on others? What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Did the children of Israel keep their end of the bargain by keeping the Law? **If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. (Deuteronomy 28:58&59)** Well, God could wipe out Israel just like other nations that were completely destroyed. God is justified in doing so since Israel failed to keep the Law God gave them. But God is good and has been good to them. God has some better thing installed for Israel in the future.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:33&34)

This putting of the law in their inward parts and writing them in their hearts have not happened yet. God will write His Law in their hearts instead of having them written on tables of stone which they fail to keep. One day all of Israel shall be converted to the Lord and all will be saved. Romans 9 and 11 address this matter and not on salvation for individuals. Paul also wrote on this: **This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews 10:16&17)** Whenever Christians refuse to make a distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church, they will never understand the Scriptures and will not be able to rightly divide the word of truth. They will wrongly associate the word of truth and confuse themselves to their own shame.

If Christians are foolish enough to be brainwashed by this world and its values, and start looking horizontally for fairness instead of looking upward trusting in God's mercy and justice, they will be disappointed and

disillusioned. For Solomon told us: **I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth. (Ecclesiastes 10:7)** Is it fair for servants to be exalted above the princes? Servants are certainly not fit to sit upon horses while princes walking as servants. But such things happen from time to time in this fallen world. Why look for fairness in this fallen world? There will be injustice in this world till the Lord returns to set up His everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth. So why not look upward unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith?

What about the case of Job? **There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. (Job 1:1)** Job was an upright man who feared God and eschewed evil. But all the evil he feared that would come to him happened to him. He suffered like no other fallen men. Is it fair for God to allow all the trials and tribulations to come to Job who feared God and eschewed evil? God had a quarrel with Satan and God bragged about Job to Satan. Is it fair for God to treat this righteous man who feared Him and put him through such unimaginable fiery trials to prove a point to Satan? Job's three friends who came to comfort him turned out to be miserable comforters and physicians of no value. They served as the devil's servants and provoked Job. The author of this book got so upset with Job and his three friends and he wrote: **Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. (Job 32:2)** He accused Job of justifying himself even though he was put through fiery trials not of his own making. No doubt Job did not think it was fair for him to go through all those trials and tribulations. Who would not complain when they have to go through such terrible trials? Would not anyone complain and blame God for the trials and tribulations that might come his way though he might be doing all he should and could in serving the Lord? Does anyone not think that God has been unfair to him from time to time?

Hence, God rebuked Job for this: **Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? (Job 40:2&8)** It is not what one is going through that counts but the final outcome. For the Lord is gracious and merciful to His children. **Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (James 5:11)** Though the Lord might seem to be unfair in His dealings with His people, God is just. God will not forsake His people and forget what they went through for His name's sake. God will not be unrighteous to forget His people's act of obedience in responding to His dealings with them because God has promised to show mercy on whom He will show mercy. God's mercy is available and no man will be denied mercy if he responds to God according to God's will for them.

What about John the Baptist? He was used by God to manifest the Messiah to Israel. He was instrumental in preparing the ground for the arrival of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. While Christ was prospering in His ministry with the whole nation in upheaval waiting for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, he was languishing in jail for doing right. He was upset and disillusioned. So he sent his disciples to Christ to enquire: **And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? (Luke 7:19)** In his moments of weakness suffering unjustly in jail, he had his doubts. He became unsure whether he had introduced the correct man to Israel to follow as their Messiah for the nation of Israel. Is it fair for John the Baptist to suffer that way, especially for doing right by telling king Herod that it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife? If John the Baptist was a crafty politician, he could have answered the king in a more appropriate way that would not cause offence. He could have pointed out to the king in such a way that was open to interpretation. But John the Baptist was not that kind of man. What was the reply he got that day from the Lord?

When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. (Luke 7:20-23)

John the Baptist got assurance that Christ was the Messiah by the signs He performed. But the action he expected from the Lord was not something he would probably consider to be fair. In his mind, he thought the kingdom would soon be established. But why must he be left in jail then? Is not the Lord going to issue him with an invitation to His coronation ceremony? He was told not to be offended in the way the Lord ordered his circumstances. He would continue to languish in jail. He would be blessed if he did not take offence to the Lord's dealing with him in such a manner. Eventually, he had his head cut off by the wicked wife of king Herod. Does anyone think this is fair? But God is just. God needs not give an answer to any man as far as His dealings with the world and all its inhabitants are concerned. God is not going to operate on the perception of fairness by

fallen men. God is going to bring His redemptive plan for mankind the way He sees fit according to His perfect will and timing and no man can demand that God shows him mercy the way he wants it on his own term.

Is it fair that God provides fallen men with only one way to obtain salvation? Is it fair that Jesus is the only way, the truth and the life and no man can go to the Father except through Christ? Why not offer many ways of salvation to fallen men so that more people will obtain mercy? Why not cast a wider net to catch more fallen sons of Adam by offering them many ways to reach heaven? But God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy His way and on His own term. No one can will it another other way to be saved. Nevertheless, in the Bible there are actually two ways to be saved. There is one more way outside of Christ to be saved coming from the mouth of God. Some might think that I am preaching heresy but the words of the living God said so and I simply believe what God said. Consider what God told Job.

Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee. (Job 40:6-14)

This was what God told Job how he could be saved. Job could save himself if he could perform all those works God told him. Does anyone think he can save himself by the requirements given? I will not even entertain such thoughts for a moment. I will gladly trust in Christ Jesus my Saviour to save me. The Lord has been more than fair to me all these years. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. No one can demand God grants him mercy on his own terms. No one has the power or right to will that God grants him mercy.

If anyone wants to have mercy from God, he must accept God's term. If anyone wants mercy, he must go to Calvary and look at the Saviour. He must accept Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour if he wants mercy. God needs not be fair according to fallen men's definition of fairness to be God. God is just and He will show mercy to those who love Him and keep His words.

Those who reject His words and refused to believe in God's only Begotten Son will not get mercy. Fallen men do not like the way God deals with them. They think this is unfair. They want to work their own way to achieve salvation by their own work of self-righteousness. They cannot stand it when God makes others who trust in God's goodness and mercy to be equal with them. They cannot not bear to see their effort of self-righteousness despised and undermined. They had borne the burden and the heat of the day in their work of self-righteousness. Those who trust in God's goodness and mercy and accept God's terms by faith will find mercy.

God needs not be fair to them by providing them with other alternatives to make the sufferings of Christ on the cross a mockery. God did not spare His Son but gave Him up to die for sinners. God will not spare those who reject His Son on judgment day. God needs not be fair according to fallen men's definition of fairness. God is just. Christians should not look for fairness in this fallen world. Christians should look to the Saviour for mercy, grace and help in times of need. The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. Christians will not be disappointed if they look to Christ who is their expectation. The psalmist said: **My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. (Psalm 62:5)**

Those who wait upon God and expect great things from God will not be disappointed. Christians should never look horizontally like the people in this world to look for fairness. Fallen men's perception of fairness is subjective and inconsistent in application. Christians should look upward waiting for the appearing of this great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Those for trust in Christ believing in God's words will find mercy. May the Lord help Christians to look to the Saviour for all things. Indeed our expectation is from the Lord who loves us and gave Himself for us. What more can we not expect God to do for us who has given us His only Begotten Son? Therefore Christians should never look for fairness in this world and blame God and become bitter whenever circumstances become unfavourable. For God is just and He will recompense many more folds to those who love Him and trust in His bountiful care because Christians are already accepted in the Beloved.

<p>If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kjb-asia.com.</p>
