

## ***A Brief Announcement***

Eleutheros Books will release “A Portrait of Jesus” soon. The book is 175 pages long and contains 37 chapters in 5 sections: Jesus Before Time Existed; Jesus in Old Testament Times; Jesus in New Testament Times; What Jesus is Doing Now; What Jesus Will Do in the Final State. Check it out on the website: [www.eleutherosbooks.com](http://www.eleutherosbooks.com)

## ***The Glory of Salvation in Christ***

This month we will begin a series on the magnificence of the salvation Jesus offers to all who believe in Him. We begin with thoughts on how God planned our salvation.

*As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him ([John 17:12](#)).*

Although there is consistent agreement among Christians that God has devised a plan of salvation in general, there is considerable debate about its specific details.

On these points all agree: God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world. He was virgin born, lived a sinless life, bore the sins of the world in His body while dying on the cross, shed His blood to pay for mankind’s salvation, and rose from the grave on the third day. Those who repent of their sins and place their faith solely in Him are immediately saved by the grace of God, and an eternity in heaven with Him and others who have likewise believed is assured.

That having been said, several questions arise. Did God plan ahead of time the salvation of every believer? If so, does that mean only certain ones will be saved? Can such a plan be considered fair? Can such a plan be demonstrated Biblically?

It is not this writer’s intent to offend anyone who may come from backgrounds in which they were taught differently (and therefore may disagree with him on certain points), but rather to present the truth in love. There are many on both sides of this issue, and in reality the only way to resolve it is to look closely at what Scripture teaches.

To answer the question about fairness, first consider Noah and his situation. In [Genesis 6:5-7](#) it is clear that man’s sin in Noah’s day was very wicked. It was so offensive to God that He said,

*I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast....*

Some might say that it was *unfair* for God to say such about the entire human race. Should He not have given sinful man more of a chance to survive? To ask such a question, however well-intended it may be, is to misunderstand that nature of man’s condition and the absolute holiness of God. The Bible declares that

*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all ([I John 1:5](#)).*

The point is that God cannot stand even one sin! His holiness simply will not allow such. It was only God's forbearance that allowed the people of Noah's day to live as long as they did. The same can and should be said about our world today!

And yet God, as angry and disgusted at man's sin as He surely was, looked at one particular man (and his family) totally differently.

*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord ([Genesis 6:8](#)).*

Was there something in Noah that made him better than everyone else on earth? Be careful in answering this question because the definition of grace is *unmerited* favor. Some point to [Genesis 6:9](#) which indicates that Noah was *a just man*, but this good result came about because God had demonstrated His grace earlier. The answer is that Noah was a sinner as all others. Read [Genesis 9:19-29](#) to see the sin of Noah and his family after the flood. Noah was not better than all others of his day.

Some might say it was not *fair* for God to choose Noah out of the millions, perhaps billions, of people, of people who lived on the earth at that time. In fact, it might be appropriate to ask if it is "fair" for God to choose anybody, for

*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God ([Romans 3:23](#)).*

Serious issues as these require a suitable solution. The Biblical answer is that *God is better than fair* because He shows grace! Thank God for that, because if God were "fair" with mankind, He would treat us all equally and give us exactly what we deserve. The Apostle Paul declares

*For the wages of sin is death... ([Romans 6:23a](#)).*

It is clear that some need to understand more completely what is involved in God's sovereignty (His absolute lordship over creation). [Romans 9](#) is an important passage on this subject.

*What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 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 that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy ([Romans 9:14-16](#)).*

*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, over the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another vessel unto dishonor ([Romans 9:18-21](#))?*

Paul asks a very significant question in verse 20: "who art thou that repliest against God?" What man is there who has such authority, intelligence, or holiness? To put it another way, what

legal body in all the universe has the moral standing to tell the eternal God of the universe what is and what is not fair?!

Preposterous imagination!

We are forced by all this to say that God is not under any obligation to be “fair” and that nobody even has the right to question that fact.

Just as surely, we are compelled by Biblical truth to fall on our hands and knees daily, and with hearts full of love and praise for our Savior, to proclaim, “My God, how great Thou art!”

A word of caution here. A little knowledge on a Biblical subject can be a dangerous thing. Perhaps this simple illustration will help:

Imagine there is a young couple in your church that is planning to be married soon. The young man decides to study the Bible to see what it has to say about marriage. His investigation brings him to [Ephesians 5:22-24](#), but that is the extent of his awareness of Biblical teachings about the subject of marriage. Here is what he has read:

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

Nobody would argue that the young man had learned Biblical truth, but because this is *all* he knows about marriage, it would be very likely that major problems/misconceptions develop because of insufficient knowledge. Clearly, partial knowledge about any subject in Scripture can create difficulties. The young man needs also to understand verses [25-31 of Ephesians 5](#). He is to love his wife as *Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it* (verse 25).

That same young man would do well to read [1 Corinthians 13](#) to understand how demanding How demanding God’s love (*agape*) really is.

The same thing can be said about God’s planning of our salvation. An overemphasis on His planning of it (without the knowledge and appreciation of all teaching on this subject) can lead one to think that since God planned it all before the world began that man is basically a “robot” on this earth and has no responsibilities once he is saved. After all, God did it all, and since we are merely recipients of His grace, it might appear that we can ignore living a holy life, serving God, or telling others about “so great salvation.”

Knowledge about God’s planning of our salvation is a precious subject, but it must be balanced with all the relevant Biblical teaching. We will consider the subject of salvation in future newsletters.

*He loved me ere I knew Him,  
And all my love is due Him!  
He plunged me to victory  
Beneath the cleansing flood!*

**Victory in Jesus**  
E.M. Bartlett