

Is God Really Fair?

Recently someone asked about the fairness of God during Old Testament times when He would command that the Israelites were to battle with a city or a nation and kill every man, woman and child. Perhaps another question closely related to this is, "On the judgment day, will it be fair for God to actually send any person to be tormented in a devil's hell so graphically described in the pages of the New Testament?"

Consideration must first be given to the nature of God. The Bible describes God's nature as being "light, in whom is no darkness at all," 1 John 1:5. In other words, He is perfection in every possible way, Matthew 5:48. Since God is pure, eternal association with impurity is impossible.

The Scriptures illustrate to His creation just how God can interact with mankind. Since all sin, Romans 3:23, all need forgiveness of that sin in order to enjoy a relationship with God. It is only through an extreme measure to remove the guilt of man's sin that God can enjoy any kind of relationship with His creation. This, man could not accomplish by himself. However it was something God could and did accomplish through the sacrifice of Jesus, Genesis 3:15, Romans 5:10.

Yet, some would argue that God is impatient. But, is He really impatient? When He called Abraham to go to the land He would show him, there God told him that his descendants would be great. He also promised that the land of Canaan would be given to his descendants for a possession. However, at the time of the promise, the land was already inhabited by others. The Amorites and Canaanites still lived in the land. So, God told Abraham that his family would have to be away from the land for 400 years, Genesis 15:13. His reasoning was that "the iniquity of the Amorite was not yet complete," Genesis 15:16. So, as the Old Testament records, the children of Abraham moved to Egypt during the days of Jacob, Abraham's grandson, and there they stayed for 430 years, Exodus 12:41. At the end of their time in Egypt, Moses led the people back to take possession of the land God had promised Abraham.

But why did God tell the Israelites to kill every man, woman and child in the taking of the land? Perhaps some insight might be found on an occasion hundreds of years after the conquest of Canaan, when Israel had a king named Ahab. In describing how bad Ahab was as a king, the Lord said, "He acted very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel," 1 Kings 21:26. Did you see it? The Amorites were idolaters! Also note that the Bible says that "the LORD cast out" the Amorites, "before the people of Israel." The Amorites were cast out 430 years after God said their iniquity was not complete, Genesis 15:16. So, how fair is God? Did the Amorites have time to repent as a people? Above four centuries to change a nation's ways is not only fair, but overly patient as well.

When the Israelites were told to go into the land and kill every man, woman, and child, God's patience had run out for the Amorites. Though Israel

was His weapon to cast them out, it was God who was exercising His vengeance, His judgment on Israel.

Peter said, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance," 2 Peter 3:9. If obedience to His will does not take place while we are alive, death will bring forfeit to any further opportunity to avoid a devil's hell, Hebrews 9:27. Once before the judgment seat of Christ it will be too late. Judgment will be fair, and it will be eternal. Hell will never stop!

Is God being fair with you?

—Scott