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Is God really fair, or does He just give lip service to the idea? If God is really fair then why are those who go to the celestial kingdom the only ones who are allowed to have a companion and a family for eternity? What about the majority of all God's children who will go to other kingdoms? Why can't they have a companion or families?

We have always been taught that God, our Father loves us with a perfection we cannot even comprehend. If that is the case then why are some people allowed to go into the rest of eternity with a spouse, but everyone else is deprived of that opportunity? Why would some be granted what seems to be such basic relationships, a spouse and a family, while others are denied those relationships for eternity?

Note: My wife tells me this article is too academic and not personable enough. If that is true I apologize. My goal is mainly to explain why judgment is fair. I will try to be more personable in part 2 of this series. :)

Basic laws

We need to remember that there are basic laws at play here that govern everything that happens to us from the moment we leave the presence of God to the moment we are resurrected and sent to our final destination. Those laws that determine how we are judged, and the blessings or punishments associated with our judgment, were laid

down by God long before Satan was cast out of heaven. In Doctrine and Covenants 130:20-21 the Lord explains it this way.

> 20 There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—
>
> 21 And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

The gist of these verses is that God cannot just willy-nilly judge us on a whim. If any blessing or punishment is meeted out on the day of judgment, it is a direct result of our obedience (or violation) of the laws associated with how we choose to live our life each day. That can come across as sounding rather harsh and letter-of-the-lawish, but there is room for mercy as well. But the Lord is very clear that even mercy cannot rob justice. So if we have violated God's laws, there is only so much the Savior can do to save us from ourselves.

Law #1 - All blessings are based on obedience to existing laws.

When I say that the Savior can only do so much to show us mercy, why is that? That brings up the second law, and that is that God has given us moral agency, and He will never interfere with our use of that agency. If He were to give someone an advantage that another person didn't get then He would be what the scriptures call "a respecter of persons." And God has always told us that He is not partial to one person over another. His love is universally the same for all His children.

With the same moral agency God gave to Christ, you have people who chose to use it differently, and hence you have everything from the righteousness of Jesus to the rebellion of Satan himself. God's children fall all along the full spectrum of choices. This is the power of moral agency, it can either exalt us or damn us, and God leaves it completely up to each of us to decide how much we want to experience for eternity. Those who fully embrace the opportunities of agency to experience good can become like God, Himself. Those who decide they want to do what they want to do, no matter what anyone else tells them they need to do, are allowed to make those choices, but law no. 1 still applies.

Law #2 - Moral agency is given equally to all of God's children, and God will never interfere with that agency until they are called to answer for their choices in the day of judgment.

Ever wonder why the prophets in the Book of Mormon refer to the day of judgment as the "restitution of all things?" It is because the day of judgment is when we are called to answer for the choices we made with the moral agency God gave us. God has always told us that we will be given exactly what we want. If we want eternal damnation then that is what He will give us. If we choose eternal life - to live with Him and have all the blessings He enjoys - then that is what He will give us.

What we need to remember is that He knows what we really want, not by what we say with our lips, but with how we live our lives. It is through the choices we make from moment to moment that tells Him where our heart's desires really are. And those desires can be changed by our choices. We might be very selfish creatures when we are young, but as we grow and mature we may change and desire more righteous things. That is what God hopes will happen, that we will want to become more than we are today. And that only happens through the choices we make to do something different. This is the whole basis for what makes the atoning sacrifice of Christ work.

Christ's atonement for our sins makes repentance possible, but it doesn't make repentance mandatory. Mandatory repentance would cancel our moral agency, something God has decreed He will not do. And we have proof that He will not interfere with His children's ability to make stupid choices. It was because of the moral agency God gave His children that one third of them chose to follow Satan in his great rebellion, which got them cast out of heaven and damned for eternity. It was their choice, their consequence. God did all in His power to help them make a different choice, but in the end it was what they wanted, because they chose it.

How these laws work in mortality

The plan of salvation has more laws than just these two already mentioned, but these are two of the main governing laws behind everything else that governs what happens in the plan. Let's talk about how these two governing laws affect our choices in mortality. By mortality I mean from the time we came to earth to the time we are resurrected, which includes our time on the other side of the veil in the spirit world. Both sides of the veil make up our time of proving to see what we really want to do with our lives for the rest of eternity.

Christ told Abraham in Abraham 3:24-26 that the purpose of the earth's creation was as a place to prove or test us to see if we would be obedient to the Lord in all things.

Those who choose to obey God will have glory added upon their heads forever. Those who choose not to obey will not.

> 24 And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;
>
> 25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;
>
> 26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

Notice that verse 26 refers to the possibility of three possible outcomes. There are those who didn't keep their first estate, and they won't have the same glory as those who do keep their first estate. Then there is the glory of those who kept their first estate, but didn't keep their second estate. Finally, there is the glory received by those who keep their first and second estates. These will have glory added upon their heads forever.

We have all kept our first estate. That is why we are currently here in mortality. Mortality is our second estate. If we pass this part of our test we will have glory added upon our heads forever. That means that if we fail to keep our second estate, meaning we flunk our test of obedience, we will still get the glorified body we were promised in the day of resurrection, but it can't be a body that can have glory added upon it forever. That privilege is reserved for those who repent of their sins, make covenants, and live righteous, obedient lives.

Again, it all comes back to the choices we choose to make, and the laws we choose to obey, ignore, or deliberately toss aside. All blessings can only be had based on the laws we choose to keep. The laws that bring us all the good things we need to be happy are called commandments. All commandments generate within our lives a greater state of happiness. That is their purpose and function, to bring us happiness. God lives in never ending happiness. Yes, He experiences sorrow, but His joy always exceeds His sorrow. That is because He has learned to live these same commandments, and others, perfectly.

Explaining our eternal reward

I explain why some people get to be married for eternity and have a family around them by saying that it was because of their choices. God has declared that it is through covenants that He will exalt His children. Without those covenants no exaltation is possible. Covenants are given to us as a result of the laws God has put into place for our exaltation. They are necessary, and mandatory, for our growth and progress. Only those who choose to accept God's covenants with His children, and keep those covenants, can return home to live with Him and Christ forever. Only covenant makers and covenant keepers can be changed by the Holy Ghost into people who are worthy of the supreme privilege of having procreation and added glory forever.

Has it ever occurred to you that procreation is how God has glory added upon Him forever? It is through His children that His glory increases. He is already perfect and all powerful. Glory is honor that is bestowed outside of yourself. That honor cannot be self created, it must be voluntarily given by someone else. It is sort of like the priesthood authority mentioned in Hebrews 5:4.

> 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

As an example of glory and honor, we can look at our most immediate example in Christ. He has never glorified himself. Why? Because you can't glorify yourself, it must be given by someone else. God glorifies Christ. We glorify Christ. Christ has never tried to glorify himself. The same goes for us. When we choose to live worthy of the celestial kingdom God will glorify us and give us the privilege of having a spouse and a family. Our family will glorify us. Their children will glorify us, as will their children after them. And so it continues for eternity, with glory being added upon our heads forever. It is honor, a recognition of righteousness and righteous behavior that is the ultimate blessing - that and being surrounded by righteous, loving family forever.

Does God have other kingdoms prepared for His children who don't choose to make and keep covenants faithfully? Yes. But even though they will have a glorified body for eternity, they can't have the privilege of godhood, because they didn't make the moral choices during their time of testing to earn that blessing. Yes, I said it - earn. We do earn our final reward through the choices we make and because of Christ's atoning sacrifice that makes repentance possible. It truly is by grace we are saved, but we also have to do all in our power to be worthy of that saving. Anything less than all we can do would be ungrateful for His sacrifice on our behalf.

So to answer my initial question, yes, God is fair. His plan for our salvation is fair. No one has an advantage not available to each and every other child of God. All the differences in what is rewarded to each of us in the end boils down to the choices we each choose to make in mortality.

Click the link below for a PDF version of this article you can print.

Of Judgment and Choices - Part 1

You can read part 2 of this series Here.