

Does God change His mind?

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The Lord is unchangeable in His Being, and in His purpose with this world and with us humans. His purpose with creation has not changed, not even after humanity's fall into sin. He remains the Creator and keeper of this world. He says: "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose" (Isaiah 46:10). Therefore, James writes in his letter: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17).

God is reliable

That God is unchangeable in His Being, also means that He is reliable in His speaking. Balaam has to prophesy: "God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?" (Numbers 23:19). In Psalm 110:4 we read: "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind."

The same goes for God's deeds. In 1 Samuel 15:28-29, we read: "And Samuel said to him, The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also, the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for He is not a man, that He should have regret." What God is doing, is completely in line with His will and His whole Being. He stands completely behind it.

God's regret

And yet, we read in Genesis 6:5-6: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart."

How can this be, if He first created man and said it was all very good? That is possible because humans have changed so much by sin. Humans are no longer how God had meant them to be. God's purpose thus remains unchanged, but He is very disappointed by the results. Like a husband who would rather not have married a

woman at all, than be deceived by her and live with the disastrous results.

Vulnerable, but good

By creating humans with free will, the Lord made His creation very vulnerable. But at the same time, this made creation so very good, because it created the possibility of true love and a real relationship. God's love for man meant that He trusted him fully and gave Himself fully to him. When humans rejected this love and broke this relationship, the worst drama on earth took place. The spoiling of the best, is the very worst. That is exactly what God did not want, and what He considers very bad.

God is personal and concerned

This shows that God's unchangeability is not rigid and dispassionate, but personal and concerned. When Noah offered a sacrifice after the flood, we read: "And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done” (Genesis 8:21).

God’s warning

Exactly since God is like this, He can cancel or decrease foretold judgments upon prayer and repentance. Examples of this are recorded in Exodus 32:11-14; 2 Samuel 24:25 and Jonah 3:10.

In Jeremiah 18:7-11, God urgently calls people to repent, because this will save them from the evil He announced upon them: “If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan

against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.’”

Unchangeability including change

God’s unchangeability thus includes the possibility of change; not of His Being, plans, purposes, or promises, but of some of His thoughts and resolutions. If required by the execution of His plans, the achievement of His goals, or the fulfillment of His promises, God will change His thoughts – and thereby essentially remain the same. That way, He is reliable.

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