

God Changes His Mind

God Changes His Mind

- Does God change His mind?
 - Mal. 3:6 - “For I am the LORD, I do not change”
 - 1Sam. 15:29 - “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent.”
 - James 1:17 - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

God Changes His Mind

- God does not change his mind as a man does
 - Man's life is governed by the irreversible march of time
 - God who foresees all things has already changed His mind in the past in response to the changing exigencies of human fickle choices.
 - The difference is that God is not ignorant of the choices and behaviors that you will do tomorrow. He knows what it will be and He knows how He will respond.
 - And He knows that His response to your future behavior will be different from His response to your present behavior if your behavior changes. It is foreknown and planned.

God Changes His Mind

- God does not think as a man thinks
 - Isa. 55:8-9 - “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

God Changes His Mind

- God responds to differing situations and behaviors in differing ways: He rejoices over some behaviors and disapproves of others.
- He foresees our changes and knows the perfect, wise, and righteous response to each change.
- Man cannot foresee all that is coming, but God always foresees what is coming and changes His mind only in response to that foreseen situation.
- God's variations, as we experience them, are part of a unified and unchanging plan to accomplish His great purposes. This is seen by man as changelessness in God.

God Permits Man Choose His Destiny

- Sending man out and guarding the Garden of Eden
 - Gen. 3:22-24 - “Then the LORD God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever - 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

God Permits Man Choose His Destiny

- Regretted making man and determined to destroy him
 - Gen. 6:3, 5-6 - “And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

God Permits Man Choose His Destiny

- Bargaining with Abraham over Sodom
 - Gen. 18:23-33

God Permits Man Choose His Destiny

- Jonah and Nineveh

- Jonah 3:4, 10 - “And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!...
10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.”

What Has God Said About His Will?

- God will change in how long He will bear with humankind
 - Psalm 103:9 - “He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever.”
 - Isa. 57:16 - “For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made.”

What Has God Said About His Will?

- God will change in how long He will bear with humankind
 - Mic. 7:18 - “Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.”
 - 2Peter 3:9 - “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

What Has God Said About His Will?

- He makes it contingent on what human beings do
 - Rom. 11:22 - “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.”
 - John 15:2 - “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”
 - Heb. 3:14 - “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end”

What Has God Said About His Will?

- He makes prayer mean something when He promises to respond to it
 - Luke 18:1 - “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart”
 - James 5:14-18 - “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”

What Does Not Change?

- We must learn to distinguish between God's absolute will and God's permissive will
 - God's absolute will cannot change without Him ceasing to be God
 - God's permissive will is contingent on what man chooses.

What Does Not Change?

- His eternal power
 - Eph. 1:19-20 - “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places”

What Does Not Change?

- His infinite wisdom
 - Rom. 16:27 - “To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever.”

What Does Not Change?

- His limitless love

- Rom. 8:38-39 - “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What Does Not Change?

- His unbreakable promises
 - Heb. 6:17-19 - “Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil”

What Does Not Change?

- His immutable word
 - 1Peter 1:25 - “But the word of the LORD endures forever.”

What Does Change?

- The grace of God requires that He change the destiny of the obedient believer
 - Eph. 1:7 - “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”

What Does Change?

- The mercy of God requires that He change the destiny of the penitent
 - Heb. 4:16 - “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

What Does Change?

- The love of God requires that He be patient with the erring
 - 1John 4:9 - “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

What Does Change?

- The righteousness of God requires that His judgment of all is based on their own choices
 - 2Cor. 5:10 - “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

God Changes His Mind

- It is ironic that the Ninevites changed their ways, and God changed His plans for them, but Jonah was the only one who did not change
- “To live is to change, and to be perfect is to change often” (C. Newman)
- The willingness to change in this world is essential to growth and becoming more like our Father in heaven

God Changes His Mind

- It is reassuring that when God promises salvation in Christ and a home in heaven for the saved, it is absolute and unchangeable
- It is also reassuring to know that if we change our ways, God will change our eternal destiny