

GOD CAN CHANGE HIS METHOD BUT NEVER HIS PURPOSE

Romans 9



When you read through the Bible, either through an isolated story or even the Bible as a whole, one can get the impression that God changes. For example, by looking at the story of Hezekiah in Isaiah 38, it opens up with a death sentence from God to the king, and after praying God adds 15 years to his life. And at that moment it seems as if God changed His mind about taking King Hezekiah's life.

On a more general scale, it seems as if the God of the Old Testament appears to be very different from the God of the New Testament. And again one may end up concluding that God changes (His mind). With the above biblical examples, the question to answer is, DOES GOD CHANGE?

To best answer to this question we need to hear what God says about Himself in His Word and how He describes His nature. The reason why we look into His Word is that His word is true. Paul wrote to the Romans saying “Let God be true, and every human being a liar” (Romans 3:4a), so God will always stand true in everything He says or does. Now, this is God speaking about Himself in Malachi 3:6a saying “For I am the Lord, I change not”.

To add to what has been said, the Bible goes on to say that “God is no mere human! He doesn't tell lies or change His mind. God always keeps His promises” and that’s in Numbers 23:19 (CEV).

Anything that changes indicates a lack of perfection, therefore God doesn’t need change because He is already perfect.

Since it is established in His word that He is the same ‘yesterday, today and forever’, why does it appear as if He changes?

God is God, and also Lord, His ways are infinite compared to the finite ways of man. And He sees the bigger picture in everything, whereas men are limited to what’s presented to them. Looking at God with a wrong pair of lenses can lead to a misinterpretation of His character, He is not a man, but He is God.

His ways are way above our ways (see Isaiah 55:8-9). So what seems to be a change on God’s side, is not a change of His character but a change of His method.

Because we deal with human beings on a daily basis, we tend to think of God as a human fellow. And the issue attached to that view is that one ends up projecting man's attributes on God. As a result, we fail to trust Him or take Him at His word. Hence whenever there's a slight shift in God's working, we conclude that God has changed, when it's just a lack of understanding from our side. His nature is set without any variations or shadow of shifting, but His method can change from time to time.

God spoke through the prophet's writings and saying, "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please' (see Isaiah 46:10).

It's important to know the difference between His METHODS and His SOVEREIGN PLAN. Otherwise, we would end up thinking that God has changed whereas He's only changed His methods and approach in order to achieve the very same plan or purpose. Though the method may change, His purpose remains the same, so does His nature.

And the reason why God may sometimes change His methods is to accommodate the FREE WILL and ADAPTABILITY of man, and that's because He is loving and full of mercies. He gave us the free will to choose His ways or ignore it, and when we ignore it, He still finds a way to accomplish His sovereign plan through a different method. The other reason why God changes His method is for the sake of man's adaptability. This is to help you with the times that you struggle to adapt to certain conditions.

An example of how our free will can change the method is found in 1 Samuel 8. God appointed prophets and judges for His people (Israel) because He Himself always wanted to rule as their King. But because of their free will, they wanted a king like other nations.

In this instance, He changed His method and gave them kings but He still came through as Jesus Christ to still be The Only King.

An example of how God changes methods for the purpose of adaptability is how salvation and righteousness aren't about fulfilling the law. Initially, salvation and righteousness were about efforts and human strength, but now it's all about putting your trust in Jesus. "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17 NKJV). Both the law and Jesus point to salvation, but the law was hard to keep and brought out the worst of everyone, whereas Jesus offers grace.

However, even with the knowledge that God doesn't change even when it seems as if He's changed, many find it difficult to adapt to His new method. Though He has given us enough reason for us to trust Him, there are many things that can hold people back from moving with God's new method. Just like many still strive to keep the law as a way to salvation and ignore the works of grace in one's life.

There are factors that contribute to someone resisting God's new method, firstly is one's attachment to the old way of which things were done and past experiences. "In Egypt, we could eat all the fish we wanted, and there were cucumbers, melons, all kinds of onions, and garlic. But we're starving out here, and the only food we have is this manna" (Numbers 11:5-6 CEV). They were so accustomed to the ways of Egypt that they rejected God's journey, and wanted to go back. How many times have we found ourselves wanting to go back to what God saved us from?



Another reason for resisting God's new method is the comfort that comes with familiarity; when someone is so used to something, any change that occurs brings discomfort. So similar when God seems to change His methods, many find it hard to get into the new program because of the comfort that comes with old habits. There's also a fear that one has when something new is introduced and that is called the fear of change. This is the fear of coming out of your comfort zone, and not knowing what awaits you. To this none exhaustive list, other reasons we struggle to trust God when He introduces a new method is the lack of consciousness to the change. And also the desire to control how God should do things, so we approach God with our own method in mind.

So in as much as there are so many reasons that one might find to not trust God's new method (change), it's always important to learn how to move with His movement.

There is a danger when we don't move with God, the same method He used before to your favour will become a stone that causes you to stumble. The same law that we were supposed to be saved by, is the same that condemn us today.

So trust God today in everything even when it seems as if there's a change in His method. He remains faithful, He's perfect and He has your best interest at heart.

His nature gives enough reason to trust Him in season and even out of season, "He never changes or casts a shifting shadow" (James 1:17).

