
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Can God ever change how He deals with man without Himself changing into a different kind of god?**

This may sound like an unusual question, but here is why I pose this to you. In the past we have demonstrated from the scriptures that things God once accepted, He does not accept any longer and things God used to do, He no longer does. For example:

- God used to accept mechanical music in worship, but He no longer accepts this in NT worship (Eph. 5:19).
- God used to save men without baptism in water, but now He requires baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- God used to work miracles thru men, but He no longer does this (1 Cor. 13:8-10).
- God used to reveal His will to men thru visions, dreams, and by speaking "face to face" with men, but He no longer does this (Jude 3).

When all of these things are mentioned, someone will always bring up the passage:

Hebrews 13:8

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

They argue that since Jesus and God remain the same and do not change, this means they do not change in how they operate. They argue that if God ever did change how He operated, then He would somehow be changed into a different god.

Is this true? Is this logical? And so our question this week is: **Can God ever change how He deals with man without Himself changing into a different kind of god?**

CHANGE IN ACTION

The first thing I wish to point out to you is that a change in action does not mean a change in character. A person may change the way he does something, but still be the same person he always was. If an ordinary person can do this, then so can God!

In the very chapter which discusses the ending of miracles, the apostle Paul deals with the idea that a man can change his actions without changing his character:

1 Corinthians 13:11

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

This points out that, although a man acts differently when he matures, he's still the same person he always was. He's not a different person just because he behaves differently.

The same is true of God. Just because He may do things differently now, this does not logically mean He has changed. His character remains the same. What I mean by this is:

- No matter how God deals with mankind, it will always be just, merciful, and with longsuffering, because God is always just, merciful, and patient. He never changes in His character.
- Again, no matter how God deals with the world, He will always be pure, righteous, and perfect, because this is His character. His character never changes.

So, God will never change in His character. He and His Son are "the same yesterday, today, and forever." They are always pure, just, merciful, patient, loving, and forgiving. However, although they themselves do not change, they have changed how they deal with men.

PROOF THAT GOD'S METHODS CHANGE

Now let's briefly examine some scriptures to demonstrate, that although God Himself does not change, yet how He deals with mankind has changed.

Hebrews 7:12

12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

This passage demonstrates clearly that God has changed the law by which men are governed. We are not under the same law today which men were under in ancient times. This explains why instrumental music was formerly acceptable, but is no longer acceptable: **the law has changed, although God has not changed in His character.**

Genesis 8:21

21 And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

Here we see the principle demonstrated again, God changed His methods of dealing with mankind, yet He Himself has never changed.

Joshua 10:14

14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

Once again, we see God doing something He never did before and which He will never do again. His methods have changed, but He Himself has never changed.

Other examples we could give:

- God, in the beginning, created man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). Yet, God has never done this again. Does this mean He has changed and become a different kind of god? No, He's the same God He has always been.
- After creating the man, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, took a rib from his side and from the rib made a woman (Gen. 2:21). God has never done this again. Does this mean He has changed and become a different kind of god? No.
- When God sent Jesus into the world to die on the cross, He had never done this before and He would never do it again (Heb. 9:28). Does this mean He has changed into a different kind of god? No.

The point is clear -- God has certainly changed His methods of dealing with men, yet He remains the same.

- Though He used to accept instrumental music, the NT clearly teaches He no longer does (Eph. 5:19), yet He is the same God He has always been.
- Though He used to work miracles in the world, the NT clearly teaches He no longer does so (1 Cor. 13:8-10), yet He remains the same God He has always been.
- Though He used to reveal His will directly to men, the NT clearly teaches He has revealed "all truth" to the apostles and there will be no more revelations (2 Pet. 1:3 and Jude 3), yet He remains the same God He has always been.
- Though He did not formerly require men to be immersed in water for the remission of sins, He does require such now (Acts 2:38), yet He remains the same God He has always been.

Please think about these things carefully. If you have any comments to make at the sound of the tone, I will consider your point of view just as you have considered mine.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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