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**DOES GOD EVER REPENT?**

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**GOD IS PERFECT!** This is the very nature of God – He is perfect. In II Samuel 22:31 and Psalm 18:30 it says, **“As for God His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him.”** God never made a mistake so that He had to change His mind! God has always known all things; He never had to learn anything or amend any of His ways or words. There is a false philosophy going around in Evangelical circles which is known as “Openness Theology.” This ridiculous view says that God doesn’t know everything and that He doesn’t know the future. What an insult! For example: According to them, when Adam and Eve hid themselves, God asked “Where art thou?” because He didn’t know where they were. Amazing! How can such a God help us? Be sure of this, God knows all! In Acts 15:18 it says, **“...known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world...”** In Psalm 139:1-6 we read: **“O, Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O, Lord thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast set me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”** How in the world could one trust the Bible, God’s Word, if God was mistaken here are there and had to amend it? Away with such nonsense! Psalm 119:128 says, **“Therefore, I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”** Yes, God got everything right the first time for He always knew everything perfectly. And it will be that way forever. **“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.”** ~*Psalm 119:160.* Amen! There’s nothing more to say.

**THE BIBLE SAYS GOD DOES NOT REPENT.** In Psalm 110:4, it is recorded: **“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent...”** If God is all knowing and perfect, then, it only stands to reason that God does not repent. There is nothing on His part that needs changing. Numbers 28:19 records: **“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent; hath He said and shall he not do it? Or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?”** O, Yes, man needs to repent (though he is very reluctant to do it); but God never needs to change, amend, update anything He has ever done. In Malachi 3:6 we read: **“For I am the Lord, I change not...”** No statement could be more clear – God does not change! There is no need for it because it was all perfect from the beginning. It says of Jesus: **“Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever.”** ~*Hebrews 13:8.* He is unchangeable! I don’t know about you, but my attitude concerning God’s Word has for many years been that I do not allow myself to believe there can be any errors in it. I may not understand it all, but I know God’s Word is perfect (that’s a subject for the future). I know that sounds a little absurd to many, but remember, we are not speaking of any old writing, but of the very Word of God. However, some years after I came to that conclusion, I was very encouraged to read in one of Spurgeon’s sermons the very same thought. Of course, the world has a very low opinion of God and even some professed Bible believers do not think very highly of Him.

**THE BIBLE SAYS GOD REPENTED.** Here is the rub; we *seemingly* have a contradiction in God's Word. In Genesis 6:6 we read: **"And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth and it grieved Him at His heart."** Can this possibly be a contradiction in the Bible? Furthermore, in Jonah 3:10 it says, **"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He said He would do unto them; and He did it not."** As we mentioned above, we must come to the Bible with the understanding that there can be no contradictions, for the Word of God is perfect. There must be some viable explanation which maintains that position, for it is what the Scriptures themselves declare. One thing we must take into account is the proper interpretation of Scripture. We are told: **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** ~II Timothy 2:15. Note it says, **"rightly dividing the word of truth."** There are many who divide (interpret) it whatever way they want to. It is amazing the way some people carve up the Word of God. However, there are a number of rules for correct Bible interpretation. One is the "Analogy of Faith." It is a rather simple rule: The Bible must always agree with itself. If you think there is an error, a contradiction, you need to realize the error is on your part not God's. You need to look for another interpretation. Of course, a good many people are more interested in making the Bible say what they want it to say, than in discerning the truth. Then, also, the Bible has many enemies – those who do not like it and thus do whatever they can to discredit it.

**WHAT IS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION?** The answer plain and simple is that God does not repent as man does. We have already seen that from Scripture. But how do we harmonize these *seeming* contradictions? Actually, there are three parts to the answer. First of all, we must go back to the basic statement that God does not repent – i.e. as man needs to change his mind. **GOD NEVER NEEDS TO REPENT!** He is perfect and all His ways are perfect. Nothing He ever said or did needs to be altered, improved, or cancelled! There certainly would be no inspired, infallible Bible if God had to alter His plans or decrees along the way. Then, while God changes His dealings with man from time to time (Dispensational Truth), He Himself does not change **and HIS PRINCIPLES NEVER CHANGE!** For example, it is one of the basic principles of God that when He pronounces judgment on someone or some people, that if they will repent (man often needs to repent – change his mind) God will remove the judgment. There are numerous examples in the Word. Ezekiel 18:21 says, **"But if the wicked will turn from all the sins which he hath committed, and keep my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."** This is a basic rule of God! How could we be saved from our sins if God did not remit the penalty of them when we trusted in Christ? In Jeremiah 18:7,8 it reads: **"At what instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up and pull down and to destroy it, if that nation...turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."** God is not changing His mind – in His purposes, when man repents, God removes the judgment. Of course, that is what happened when Jonah preached to Nineveh; they repented and God removed the penalty – this is a part of His mercy and love toward man. As we said, there would be no salvation otherwise. God does not change for it has always been a part of His nature and His providence to forgive sin and remove the judgment if man will do what God says – repent! Also, God often speaks in terms that are readily understood by man. Theologically speaking, these are called anthropomorphisms; God speaking to man in terms man can easily grasp. **THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT GOD IS IMMUTABLE!** Among many Scriptures: **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning."** ~James 1:17. **"I am the Lord, I change not."** ~Malachi 3:6; **"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever."** ~Hebrews 13:8. Either God is immutable, unchangeable, or He is not! I sometimes like to explain the nature of God and His purposes as a mighty river. Let's say the river flows from North to South, that is the direction of the current. Each man is in his little boat in that river. As long as man goes with the current, as long as he goes from North to South, the current aids and helps carry him along. But if he decides to turn around and go from South to North, the river is against him. To the man, there is a definite change, but the river hasn't changed. It is still going in the direction it has always gone. God does not change and simply cannot change. Praise the Lord!

**A CLOSING THOUGHT.** All of this means little if you are not saved from your sin. You are a sinner, and whether you think so or not, you need to repent, you need to change your mind about your sin. How can I be free from my sins? In Acts 2:38 God says, **"Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."** (*Baptism doesn't save, it is an outward testimony to an inward repentance and faith in Christ*). You need to repent – not God! You need to believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died on the cross to save you from your sins. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."** ~Acts 16:31. Do it NOW!