

Series: God Is Unchangeable #1710

Title: Various Scriptures

Whatever Is...Is Changing

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Welcome back as we continue with the introduction to our series on the unchanging God. Friends, God is *unchangeable*. As the Scripture tells us, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We will get to that verse and many others like it along the way, so stay tuned. I also encourage you to invite someone to join you for this part of our journey. Can you think of someone who will benefit from knowing the unchanging nature of our Great God? This might be a friend or family member or someone who attends your church or synagogue or book club? Someone from your retirement community or small group or sports team or on staff with you at your hospital or company?

Whatever the case may be, tell them about the God Is Podcast or invite them to tune their radio into this station and listen at this time every Monday through Friday. In particular, I suggest inviting people who are struggling with change, perhaps those experiencing loss like the death of someone they love or loss of job or relationship. Anyone who feels overwhelmed with change. Someone who lacks stability. These are people who will benefit from our study and conversation that began last time and will continue in the days to come. Remember, you can get every episode as a free podcast so that you can stay up-to-date. The God Is Podcast is available from godisministry.org, that's godisministry.o-r-g.

Speaking of change, let me ask you: do you like it? Are you a fan of change? In my experience, some people hate change and some people love change. Of course, there are those of us in-between. For me, it depends *what* is changing. I love the change of seasons, especially when summer turns into fall (autumn). But I do not love unexpected changes to the rhythm of my sleep schedule. I am early to bed, early to rise and if that changes I am also very grumpy. I enjoy change of locations. I love to travel. But what I do not love is a change to the scheduled air travel, delays and the like.

How about you? Change suits you well, or no? I know people who *thrive* on change. They are in a constant mode of changing. It's like they don't know what to do without it. And I know people who are change-resistant to the point where they haven't made any substantive change to their lives in decades. Everything stays the same and that's how they prefer it. The thought of doing something different or being someone different terrifies them. Whatever the case may be, one thing is true of all of us: one way or another we know what change is. We can sense it, feel it, see it coming, and experience it. Change is a reality. But, not for God. He never changes.

Did you know that change is actually a field of study. Last time I mentioned change management, which most often is applied to certain organizations, like a business or not-for-profit, a charity. Maybe you are a change management professional or consultant? Studying change goes way, way back to the ancient times. The world's first philosophers pondered change. For example, Heraclitus. *Who?* Heraclitus. I can spell that for you notetakers. H-E-R-A-C-L-I-T-U-S. Heraclitus was born in 540BC and died in 480BC. So he lived in the 6th to 5th centuries BC. He operated in Ephesus, Asia Minor and he authored a work by the title *On Nature*.

This is not a book you will find on Amazon or in the philosophy section of your favorite bookstore. Well, not in the traditional sense of a book. You see, this work has not survived. He is said to have produced it on papyrus, long since lost. However, over one hundred fragments of it survive in the work of other ancient authors and these we *do* have. These later writers quoted him and refer to his work as *On Nature*, hence the title.

Listen as I read from RC Sproul's book (*this has not been lost*) *The Consequences of Ideas*. RC writes about Heraclitus, "His thought is summarized with the Greek phrase [translated into English as] 'All things are flowing.' According to Heraclitus everything is always and everywhere in flux...For [him], whatever *is* is always changing. He illustrated this by declaring that 'you cannot step into the same river twice.'

"If you put one foot into a river, by the time you can put your other foot in the river has moved on. It has changed. Its banks, due to imperceptible erosion, have changed, and you yourself have changed – if in no other way than you are a few seconds older (*The Consequences of Ideas*, 20)." Close quote. Think about it,

Heraclitus is right. In the summertime it is refreshing to come upon a rushing river and to at least get your feet into it. That rushing river water never stays the same. It is full of constant change. And we do not stay the same either. By the time we get that first foot in the river has changed and we have changed when foot number two begins to get soaked.

Heraclitus said that the process of change is not chaotic but is orchestrated by “God.” We have to put God in quotation marks, because what Heraclitus meant by God is not what the Bible means by God. He believed in God as an impersonal force. We believe the true God is a personal being. Anyway, he is a very interesting early philosopher and if you are into philosophy I am sure you know him much better than I do. What I found interesting was his take on change. And I agree with him at least on this: change is real. We change and everything around us changes all the time.

But God – the One True and Everlasting God – is very different from us. We change. He does not change. And at least some of you, intuitively, want to challenge this statement I have been repeating. I keep saying God does not change, but you have in mind certain Scripture verses which, at least, make it sound like God does change. Let me offer you a couple of examples. The first is Genesis chapter 6 and verses 5-7. **“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The Lord said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”**

What? God was sorry that He had made man. God was grieved in His heart. And, verse 7, therefore God decided to blot out man and animal from the earth and sky? Certain translations of the Bible say God repented or God regretted the making of man and woman. That sure sounds like God changed His mind about His creation, doesn't it?

There is also Exodus chapter 32, verses 10-12. Following the sinful episode when God's people made a golden calf to worship, listen to the exchange between Moses and God in prayer. Exodus 32, verse 10 begins with the Lord speaking, **“Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.” ¹¹ Then Moses entreated the Lord his God, and said, ‘O Lord, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people.**

¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ¹⁴ So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.” Here I do not have to say “it sure sounds like God has changed His mind,” because the text says, “the Lord changed His mind.” Exodus 32, verse 14. Moses asked God to change His mind and God did change His mind.

I have time for one more: 1 Samuel chapter 15 and verses 10 and 11. Listen to God speak concerning King Saul. **“Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ ‘I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.’”** The sense we have is that God changed. He originally thought making Saul King was a good idea, but now the Lord regrets it.

So, do these verses prove me wrong? Have I not been right to say God does not change? Well, stick around. I will show you why I am not wrong. I will prove to you from the Bible that God does not change and then we will proceed to understand what these texts are *really* saying.

All of that is ahead on *God Is*. This will be profitable to do together. You and me and all these other listeners. Plus, someone you will invite to join us. If you benefit from this ministry, please do share it with others. Spread the word. And if you miss a day, get caught up on godisministry.org, and then join us next time because God Is. ---END---