

DOES GOD CHANGE HIS MIND?

The Use of Niham (נִחַם) in the Old Testament

YES:

Exod 32:12, 14
1 Sam 2:30; 15:11
2 Sam 24:16
1 Chr 21:15
Psa 106:45, 135:14
Jer 15:6, 18:8,10, 26:3, 13, 19
Joel 2:13,14
Amos 7:3,6
Jonah 3:10; 4:2

NO:

Num 23:19 (says Balaam)
Psa 110:4 (re:Melchizedek)
Jer 4:28; 20:16
Ezek 24:14
Zech 8:14

1. The question of God changing His mind relates to whether or not God has an active will, or if His will was determined in times past and can never change.
2. The question of God changing His mind does NOT imply that God's character changes from one situation to another. In fact, a denial that God alters decisions could, in some circumstances, lead to the logical conclusion that God's values indeed do change.
3. The question of God changing His mind is most problematic for theological positions (such as Calvinism) which place an extremely high value on total predestination.
4. Some Scriptures concerning God changing His mind and/or the pliability of the future:
 - A. ROM 11:23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.
 - B. Concerning the doctrine of predestination, God can choose people and then change His mind, and/or seems to let people be tested so that He can find out information about them.
 - (1) Jer 18:1-12; Gen 22:12; 1 Sam 2:30f; 1 Cor 9:27 with Gal 1:15.
 - C. 2 Kings 13:19 the king "should have struck the ground" more times, but planned future events will be changed because he stopped. (Joash King of Israel and Elisha).
 - D. Moses, Num 14:12--God planned to drop his covenant with Abraham and build a nation from Moses; Moses talked God out of it.
5. To imply that God does not change His mind, but that God, knowing the people would repent, gave idle threats, is to argue that God is deceptive (i.e. that He had no intention on carrying out His threats). It is as if God would say, "Had you going there for a moment, didn't I!"