



SAVED TO SERVE

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DOES GOD REPENT?

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will understand what it means when the Bible says that God repents. Is it the same as man's repentance or does it have another meaning?
 2. Read Numbers 23:19. The first phrase says, "God is not a man, that he should lie". Can God lie? What happens when God speaks? Titus 1:2; Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 33:8-9
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3. The second phrase of Numbers 23:19 says that God is "neither the son of man, that he should repent". To understand what this means, let us first look at what it means for man to repent. What do the following scriptures teach us about man's repentance? Acts 3:19; Jeremiah 8:6; Mark 1:4
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4. **Note:** The repentance of man is being sorry for sin and deciding to turn away from it. (1) God's repentance is Him being grieved by the choice of men to sin. (2) It also points to God "changing His mind" about sending judgment/punishment upon mankind when they turn from sin and choose to obey Him. (3) The opposite is also true: God sometimes repents or changes His mind about blessing man if they turn from Him and choose to sin. Let us confirm these points.

5. In Genesis 6:5-6, what word describes the meaning of the Lord "repented"? _____

6. What did God do to mankind as a result of their wickedness? Genesis 6:7; Genesis 7:4
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7. **Note:** Genesis 6:6 says, "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth". God already knew that mankind would sin when He created the world; the fact that men sinned was not a surprise to Him. **However, God deals with humanity based upon how they live in that moment; He interacts with men in real time.** Therefore, the wickedness of man in the time of the Flood, made the heart of God sad. He was grieved that they chose not to walk in His commandments and thus, He decided to bring punishment upon them instead of blessings. See 1 Samuel 15:11, 26 as another reference.

One may argue, doesn't God say in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I change not". **This is what we must understand about God's repentance: His original purpose and eternal goal does not change. In His interactions with humans, when the situation changes, He changes His actions and His responses to us based upon our obedience or disobedience.** For example: God's desire was to deliver Israel from slavery and Egypt and bring them straight into the promise land, an 11-day journey (Deuteronomy 1:2). However due to disobedience and unbelief, God altered His plan of an 11-day journey and made it a 40 year journey (Exodus 16:35; Numbers 14:33). See the following questions for additional examples.

8. What was God's original plan and purpose for mankind when He created Adam?

a) Genesis 1:27-28

b) Genesis 2:15

9. What warning did God give to Adam? Genesis 2:16-17
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10. **Note:** God intended for man to remain perfect and reflect His image. However, God warned Adam that if he disobeyed, He would die. This shows us the important principle that God's word has conditions. When Adam sinned, God officially put into action the plan of salvation to restore the image of God in man, which was lost by sin. We see through this account that God's original purpose did not change (saving man so they reflect His image), but He altered His method of fulfilling it due to man's choice to sin. Likewise in Genesis 6, although mankind was wicked and God decided to destroy them, He used

righteous Noah to preach and build an ark of salvation to save all who would obey and turn from their sins.

11. Read the following scriptures and write down the meaning of God "repented". Exodus 32:12; 1 Chronicles 21:15; Jeremiah 26:3, 13.

12. Under which circumstances will God BLESS us and repent from pouring out punishment? Jeremiah 18:8; Deuteronomy 28:2

13. Under which circumstances will God REPENT from blessing us and doing good to us? Jeremiah 18:10; Deuteronomy 28:15

14. **Note:** God's word has conditions, and because He gives us freewill, He will respond to us according to our decisions. Let us now study the account of Jonah to see how the repentance of God applies to our lives by giving us the hope of salvation.

15. What is Nineveh called in Jonah 1:2? _____

a) What came up before God from Ninevah? Jonah 1:2 _____

16. Which entity is called a "great city" in the last days? Revelation 18:10, 18, 21 _____

a) What, from Babylon, reaches unto heaven? Revelation 18:5 _____

17. What did God tell Jonah to preach to the Ninevites? Jonah 3:1-2, 4

18. What judgments are pronounced upon Babylon in Revelation 18:8?

19. When the Ninevites heard God's message, what did they do? Jonah 3:5, 8

20. How many have sinned, and what is the penalty of sin? Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23

21. The Ninevites repented when they heard a message convicting them of sin. We all have sinned and are guilty to be punished by God unless we repent as the Ninevites did. What does true repentance look like? Write down the experience detailed in Joel 2:12-13.

22. What reasons does Joel give why we should turn our heart to the Lord in prayer and fasting with examination of our hearts or characters? Joel 2:13-14

23. Read Jonah 3:9-10. When Nineveh repented of their wickedness, God held back His judgments upon them. Why did God turn or repent of the evil He intended to pour out on Nineveh? Jeremiah 18:8; 2 Peter 3:9 (Note: This is hope for us as individuals!)

24. What is God's message of warning and mercy to those in Babylon? Revelation 18:4

a) Those who surrender to God and come out of Babylon will be saved. In Revelation 18:4, what will God “repent of” or turn back from pouring out upon those who COME OUT of Babylon?

25. **Note:** Based on the previous scriptures, God’s mercy, love, and grace are seen in the call for His people to come out of Babylon because He will not render unto these repentant souls, the plagues of destruction. They repented of their sins and God will repent of the evil or destruction that was previously for them when they were unrepentant.

26. In Matthew 12, Jesus was speaking to the Jews who desired a sign that He was sent from God (Matthew 12:38). What fearful warning did He give to them? Matthew 12:41

27. What lesson was Jesus trying to impress upon the Jews which He is also teaching us today? **Answer:** Matthew 21:31, “... Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” If we, as God’s professed people, are not careful to repent of our sins and appreciate the light of truth which has been so graciously given to us, those who we now think are sinners in Babylon, along with men from Nineveh, will enter into the kingdom of heaven while we perish in our sins.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” {DA 555.6}