

*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?
Numbers 23:19*

- God's counsel is **CERTAIN** because His **TRUTH** is **ABSOLUTE!**
 - In God's attributes, He is absolute truth and adheres to His truth absolutely, hence His attribute of veracity. Also, God is immutable, i.e., not subject to or susceptible of change; unchangeable, unalterable, and changeless.
- But what about the many passages that indicate that God, indeed, does "repent?"
 - Gen. 6:6; Exo. 32:14; Jonah 3:9, etc., etc.

- REPENT: **נָחַם** [nacam] = (from TWOT) "The origin of the root seems to reflect the idea of "breathing deeply," hence the physical display of one's feelings, usually sorrow, compassion, or comfort. The KJV translates the Niphal of [nacam] "repent" 38 times. The majority of these instances refer to God's repentance, not man's. The word most frequently employed to indicate man's repentance is [shub], meaning "to turn" (from sin to God). Unlike man, who under the conviction of sin feels genuine remorse and sorrow, God is free from sin. Yet the Scriptures inform us that God repents....

On the surface, such language seems inconsistent, if not contradictory, with certain passages which affirm God's immutability. When [nacam] is used of God, however, the expression is anthropopathic and there is not ultimate tension. From man's limited, earthly, finite perspective it only appears that God's purposes have changed. Thus the OT states that God "repented" of the judgments or "evil" which he had planned to carry out."

μετανοέω [metanoeeo] = a combination of [meta], meaning "after" plus [noeeo], meaning to think - hence, to think after or again. Therefore, to change one's mind.

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- The issue of God "repenting" --- whenever God describes Himself as responding to a situation or a circumstance or an event or an incident that has Him emphasizing the LIVING NATURE of His being in connection with His creation, He utilizes the terms that are perfectly fitting to describe His response just as we would describe it if we were the ones in His position responding to it and experiencing it ourselves.

- The issue has to do with, and what it all comes down to, is what is involved in what it means when God calls Himself, "THE LIVING GOD." And when God speaks of Himself as the "living God" He is not merely trying to state that He is living as opposed to a dead god - (for there can be no such thing as a dead god!) - so what He is pointing to is the fact that He not only is alive, but that He has FUNCTIONAL life. That is, He functionally lives with His creation. He functionally has a relationship with it.

- Note that God is spoken about as being a "living God" throughout all the Bible; in every program and every dispensation:
 - Deu. 5:26; Jos. 3:10; I Sam. 17:26, 36; II Kings 19:4, 16; Psa. 42:2; 84:2; Isa. 37:4, 17; Jer. 10:10; 23:36; Dan. 6:20, 26; Hos. 1:10; Mat. 16:16; 23:63; John 6:69; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; II Cor. 3:3; 6:16; I Thess. 1:9; I Tim. 3:15; 4:10; 6:17; Heb. 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Rev. 7:2

- Wherefore any time that God describes Himself in terms of a SENTIMENT that He Himself is experiencing, it is not describing something that He really doesn't have in terms or language that only we can understand, (i.e., an anthropathism), but He really is describing a real sentiment that He really does, in fact, possess.

- Therefore, any time that God talks about Himself "repenting" in the context of Genesis 6 or with Moses or Jonah, or Ezekiel, etc., He is expressing that sentiment in the context of being in a living relationship with His creation. And He's in a position that, based upon that living relationship, He is NOT unaffected by what is going on. He is, in fact and all reality, affected by what is going on. He's not just a casual observer of what is going on: He is personally involved in what is going on. And He acts and reacts to what is going on. (All of which are aspects and features and attributes and components of Him being the "Living God.")

- And when He describes that to us in His word, it is not a description of something that God does not possess. (This is where the idea of something like this being an anthropathism fails!) Saying that God "repents" is just the use of an anthropathism, describing a sentiment that God really doesn't possess, but utilizing language of accommodation to put it in terms that we can understand, etc., etc. NO! God really does have sentiment! God really possesses those sentiments! And He doesn't simply talk about them to make an analogy or to put it in terms that we can understand.

- The thing that separates a LIVING GOD from another kind of God (a non-functioning, non-sentimental god) is that those sentiments are REAL! And that's why you find God talking about His soul and His heart - He's actually got one! And when He created man to be a godly creature, the reason why mankind has got a soul, a spirit, and sentiments, is because God has got those things, too. And part of godliness on man's part is the issue of having sentiments like God does. And man's sentiments, by nature, and as a sinful creature, are all out of whack. But in connection with regeneration and the renewing of the mind unto godliness, the product of the 3 components of godliness, functioning within us, also produce the same kind of godly sentiments that God has!

- Note that even though God is God, He is not a detached, impersonal, or unaffected God, as He clearly testifies. Rather, He has a direct, interactive and personal relationship with His creation as a whole; and more specifically with His people.

- Because of this, God is personally affected by what occurs, having not only purposed and designed for this to be so, but also having enabled it to be so. And this is true both in His program with Israel and with us in this present dispensation of His grace.

- With this being so, God acts and reacts with real actions and reactions; not merely with sentiments that are anthropathisms in description, but true sentiments in nature. For God is not only the "true" God, He is also the "living God."

- As such God lives and has a living, involved relationship both to us and with us. So much so that He is neither a casual, nor detached, nor unaffected observer of us or of what occurs with us. Instead God is genuinely touched by us and by what occurs with us; and this is true and real with God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, and even with the Holy Ghost that dwells in us.

- And godly sentiments are designed to be produced as one advances in "sonship" edification (viz., Phase II, Level I) - and we get introduced to them in Romans 15. (Romans 15:5, 13, 33)

- Sentiments are a product of both the spirit and the soul working together. A sentiment is not simply a thought - a sentiment is a thought PLUS a feeling (an emotion) working together. And when they're working together and lined up properly, they are a wonderful thing! And for a "saint," they're designed to be a **GODLY** thing!!! And therefore, a godly sentiment.

- In fact, this actually occurs in the life of Abraham when his godly edifying had produced in him that sentiment issue for which he would be referred to as "the friend of God" - and that is what really determines friendship: mutual sentiments!!!!

- And note that in the field of being educated and edified as "sons," these godly sentiments are of a nature that you don't have to have them taught to you. Godly edifying is designed to produce them. And they just occur in you as you proceed in sonship edification. They are scattered throughout the entire curriculum for our sonship education - and they occur in the order in which they are confronted in that curriculum - and you CAN NOT get them out of that order!

- The development of godly sentiments is the normal thing in connection with sonship education and edification in general.

- When it comes to the issue of (in the best sense of the expression) "like Father, like son" - when a father is educating his son (especially in the ability of his son to function with him in his business) there are character attributes that the father wants to develop in his son along with merely learning the business of the father. And those character attributes are going to make it so that the ones in the father's business that are going to deal with the son, just as they had been dealing with the father, himself - the father not only wants those who had been dealing with him to recognize the same level of competence in his son, and that equal to what the father has, but that father also wants it so that the ones who he does business with will deal with his son and notice NO DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER!!!

- And when it comes to wrapping up that whole package of "no difference whatsoever" the father wants produced within the son his very own character, integrity, and sentiment.

- But God has designed it so in the creation of His intelligent creatures (whether they be angels or men) that, while they are to possess their own individual personalities, they are designed to have His character!

- And as "godliness" in its 3 components mature throughout the curriculum for godly sonship edification, the character of God is also produced. (II Peter 1:4)

- The point being, these godly sentiments are MARKERS the Father looks for in the son that tells him a level of wisdom has been achieved that has produced a measure of His own character in that son.

- And the result of all this is that what scholars commonly refer to as anthropathisms, more often than not are not that at all. A shallow understanding of the Bible, along with a total failure to understand and appreciate sonship edification results in tossing anything that looks like a contradiction in terms of sentiments used to describe God into the 'box' of anthropathisms, which sounds scholarly, and indeed, is, but is not at all adequate to understand godly sentiments, Biblically.