

"IT REPENTED THE LORD."

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth." – Gen. 6:5-7.

THE question naturally arises, If God is omniscient, knowing the end from the beginning, how could he repent of his course in creating man?

The word "repent" means, according to *Webster*, "To change the mind, or course of conduct, on account of regret or dissatisfaction with what has occurred." The question then is, Did God change his mind [plan] or his course of conduct? We claim that, knowing the end from the beginning, God's *mind* could not change; hence "repent" in this text must signify *change of conduct*. That is, God did change his *course of dealing* with man because of man's wickedness which grieved him, but he did not need to change his *mind* or plans, because these plans had from the very first recognized the corrupting and degrading tendency of sin, and provided (in purpose of mind) the Lamb of God – "slain from the foundation of the world," as the redemption price. – Rev. 13:8; 17:8.

It is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend this, because for us to change our course of action usually means to change our minds or plans as well – because of our shortsightedness. To comprehend Omniscience and Omnipotence is as difficult as to comprehend eternity or the infinitude of space. But what no one can fully comprehend, we, as God's children, may at least apprehend by faith, guided by his revelation to us. To those whose eyes are anointed with eyesalve (Rev. 3:18), the fulfilments of the prophetic statements of God's Word, in both the Old and the New Testaments, now discernible, give ample *proof* that God does know the end from the beginning; that he changes not from his original purpose. (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 14:27.) God's plans were perfect before

they began to be executed; hence all the changes of God's course or conduct are working out the accomplishment of his *original purpose* which contemplated these very changes. Those who recognize the gradual development of God's original plan can see clearly that the various *changes in his course or dealings*, as displayed in the Jewish, Gospel and Millennial Ages, do not at all indicate so many changes of his mind or plan, though they are doubtless so misunderstood by many.

It is asked, Why then is this passage so expressed as to give the impression that because God's heart was grieved by reason of man's wickedness, his mind as well as his action changed? We answer, This matter is stated in a manner suited to convey to the general reader as much as he is able to comprehend of God's reasons for the change. God was very much grieved and displeased by man's rapid progress in wickedness; that, instead of loathing his sinful condition and looking to God for relief, he took pleasure in still further [R2027 : page 203] degrading himself; and God, according to his original purpose, changed the course of his dealings and ended that age by blotting out of existence for a time those who were so unworthy, that their gross depravity should not interfere in the further development of his plan.* Thus also when God speaks of the sun as rising and setting, he addresses himself to men according to their comprehension; as is the custom of both the learned and unlearned to-day.

*Under the strict discipline of the Millennium, those who then will not even attempt righteousness will be compelled to conform to it and to taste of its advantages over sin and its results, so that there will be no excuse for the failure of any to choose life and live forever.

It was then, and still is, impossible for the fallen natural man to clearly appreciate and realize these matters; and God's purpose seems to be to *prove* to man the Omniscience as well as the Justice and Love of his Creator, rather than to tell him of them.
