

Can God Change His Plans?

We easily change our plans to suit ourselves. But can God also change His plans?

Genesis 6 (story)

Tension: God is grieved

⁵The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

⁶The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

Relief of tension: God makes a decision

⁷So the LORD said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds in the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.'

Result: God's grace triumphs

⁸But Noah found favor in the Eyes of the Lord. (NIV)

God created human beings to be good, but because of their own doing they lost the way. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, Cain killed Abel, and the Titans thought they were immortal. Shortly after God created everything good, the Bible tells us of humankind's failure. This has an impact on God. He regrets ever having made them.

However, this does not mean that God erred. Humankind's sins cause Him tremendous pain because He loves them. The word "grieved" in this passage literally means that His heart was filled with pain. The same Hebrew word for "grief" is used in Genesis 3:16 to describe the pain women have to endure during childbirth and in Genesis 3:17 to describe men's toil to earn a living. By deliberately using the same word, the Bible says something remarkable: Our pain and toil have spilled over to God. God is therefore not detached from or indifferent to what happens to us.

Because God is disappointed, He decides to blot out humankind and even the animals. But then something impressive happens, as the word "but" in verse 8 indicates: God changes His mind. His love for humans is stronger than His wrath. This is what is wonderful about the God of the Bible. He is not a harsh, cold and clinical despot but a God who cares and understands. That is why He is prepared to give humankind another chance. This is the meaning of *grace*—God can change His plans!



Lord, thank You for being a Father who cares and understands. Forgive me if I grieve You. Help me through the Holy Spirit not to continue in my sinful ways.

The will of God will never take you to where the grace of God will not protect you.

—Author unknown