

# The Unchanging Gospel In a Changing World

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Most of us would have heard the adage, "The only constant in life is change". This is often said to remind us that changes are expected and to be expected. The book "Who Moved My Cheese" is basically based on this premise. We find this true in our working life where events at the top management, shareholders, regulatory policy changes, competitors' movement and earth shaking phenomena cause us to be totally unprepared for these changes. Hence stress, distress, and a host of such related issues affect our physical selves and spiritual demeanor.

So what do we do when changes do take place and catch us unaware? We find some people in the world take to drugs, alcohol and drinks, escapism and religious experiments, or finally to suicide. When these take

place, the question of God being unfair, uncaring, and shifting in allegiance to the strong, arise in the mind. Some people who are critical of the bible claim that the God who created the world, then destroyed the world in a huff of anger shows God is capable of changing. Well, is that true? If you recall in 2 Kings 3, Mesha king of Moab sacrificed his son, the crown prince, as burnt offering on the wall to defeat the combined Israelite and Judean forces. Mesha found his world changed and sacrificed his son to his god, Chemosh, to affect a change. The Aztecs and Hawaiians before the Europeans came to their lands were sacrificing humans to their gods whenever their worlds encounter changes.

Then what does the bible say about our Jehovah God during our turbulent times? Does our Jehovah God change in face of such adversity as alleged? Times when our family and friends betrayed and forsook us! Times when deepest sorrow and pain beset us as a result of our

own negligence and sins! Times when we are the betrayer and snitch!!!

We find that Joseph in Genesis 37 was greatly loved by his father but greatly hated and envied by his brothers, to the extent that they planned to murder him. When he was sold into slavery in Egypt, his world became slightly better before it changed into a nightmare of prison, forgottenness and injustice. Joseph suffered for 13 years before he became Pharaoh's right-hand man. During those 13 years, Joseph's world changed three times. Some people would have ended their lives with the perception that Jehovah God has abandoned and forgotten them. Yet we read that Joseph believed in the goodness of God and that God never abandoned him. Read Genesis 41 especially verses 51 and 52 and Genesis 50:20. Towards the end of his life, he confidently told the children of Israel that God would take them out of Egypt to Canaan.

What can we learn from Joseph's life? Despite his world being turned upside down three times, Jehovah God never changed His purpose towards Joseph. God remained steadfast in His promise to Abraham to keep Joseph safe. God's purpose never swayed an iota during those 13 years of Joseph's enforced wandering. We can therefore take comfort in that whenever we feel we are betrayed and abandoned with massive changes in our own world, God always has His eyes on us for our good. (2 Chron 16:; 1 Pet 3:12) Remember Exo 34:6-7 "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Wait, what if our world changed because we are the

cause of it? We are the betrayer! We are the covenant breaker! We caused others to sin and stumble by our actions! Would God still remain faithful and unchanging in His love towards us? Keeping mercy to us? We are reminded of King Saul to whom God did not respond either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets (1 Sam 28). How would we react? Then we must remember David, of how he allowed himself to be seduced by lust in coveting Bathsheba to the extent of murdering her husband, Uriah and forcing Joab to do the killing. It is doubtful whether any Christian today would be guilty of such sins. David paid the consequence and his world changed forever. (2 Samuel 11-18). In his old age, he had to flee from his son, see his children murdering each other, and his best friend turning against him. What massive changes in his life!

While it may be hard put to find Christians in those type of circumstances today, we may find ourselves using our eyes to commit adultery and our tongue to commit

murder via slander and backbiting. If we are found out, what would our reaction be? Probably repent thereof but will we complain that God is not justified to punish us according to our sins? Note that our world has changed, with familiar surroundings disappearing as a result of our venomous speech which kept friends and family away. We may feel lonely and dejected.

The apostle Peter denied Jesus three times during His trial. Each denial became stronger and more vehement with curses at the third denial. Yet Peter repented and became a leader of the early apostolic band. In Acts 9, he moved about strengthening the Christians and preached the first sermon to the Gentiles. Still Peter fell into sin again when we read Gal 2:11-14. Imagine the embarrassment he must have felt being rebuked publicly. In both these instances, God forgave him because he repented. How do I know? Because he lived to write Second Peter.

What can we learn from both David and Peter? Changes in their world came about because of their own actions. Yet because they repented from their heart, God forgave them and used them for the furtherance of His cause. God remained true to His oath as proclaimed to Moses. We therefore must take heart that God will forgive and use us as holy vessels when we cleanse our hearts (2 Tim 2:21).

Finally, we read that Christ forewarned the disciples that they will be beaten, hounded and killed for their beliefs (Matt 24:9,10; Rev 2:10). Such dire prediction in today's world, will turn many off from following Christ. Even in his Judean ministry, many turned away (John 6:66). Yet, Jesus promised that He will be with us always even unto the end of the world. We should take comfort that though the world surrounding us will change and may affect us to the point of death, yet God and Jesus remain unchanged in His promise to guard us and to be with us. Therefore His promises

made to the early Christians remained true and applicable to us, the latter Christians.

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