

IS GOD EMOTIONAL?

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9.11.24

I spoke last week about a widespread misunderstanding of God's nature and character. **Millions believe that ... since God is sovereign ... He is personally responsible for everything that happens.**

Scripture shows otherwise! **God often does doesn't get His will.** Many outcomes are due to man's free choices and the inevitable consequences.

There's another widespread misunderstanding I'd like to review today — **the idea that God has no feelings or emotions.**

I don't think you'd get that idea from reading the Bible ... but millions of believers ... preachers ... churches really believe God cannot feel any emotions.

They claim God is "impassible" (don't confuse with impassable or impossible!)

One web site: "Impassibility, a corollary of immutability, means God does not experience emotional change in any way, nor does God suffer. To clarify, God does not merely choose to be impassible; He is impassible by nature. Impassibility is intrinsic to His very being".

The Westminster Confession of Faith ... (used by many churches — Church of England ... Presbyterian ... Baptist ... etc) ... described God as "without body, parts, or passions, immutable". By "passions" it means emotions.

The origin appears to be Ancient Greek philosophers — Plato ... Socrates ... Aristotle ... similar. **They reasoned that God must be "perfect" — and therefore cannot change — in any way** (He would no longer be perfect). **Hence "immutable".**

If God started out perfect and became angry ... wrathful ... jealous or even rejoiced — He would have changed. No longer perfect.

It might make logical sense to a Greek philosopher ... but contradict Biblical revelation!

Is that the God that you pray to? One who has no feelings? No emotions?

But churches claim to have some Biblical support. I'm sure it is of Greek origin — Augustine or Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Malachi 3:6

6 “For **I am the LORD, I do not change**;
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

I DO NOT CHANGE.

God's character — His nature — does not change. He is always HOLY ... RIGHTEOUS ... MERCIFUL ... PATIENT. His mood and mind do change.

Hebrews 13:8

8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

JESUS IS THE SAME ALWAYS.

His character is the same. LOVE ... LOYALTY ... FAITHFULNESS ... MERCY.

James 1:16-17

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from **the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.** (*His character doesn't change*)

However — **the Bible is clear that God can change His mind if circumstances alter.**

Jonah 3:1-4

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,

2 **“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.”**

3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.

4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, **“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”**

An important message from God to Nineveh. That was God’s intent and will — expressed in writing. But — God changed His mind.

Jonah 3:5-10

5 **So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.**

6 Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. (They humbled themselves)

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

10 **Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.**

GOD RELENTED!

Jonah 3:10 (NRSV)

10 ... **God changed His mind!**

It doesn’t look like “immutable”?

2 Kings 20:1

1 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And **Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him,** “Thus says

the LORD: **'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.'** ”

Hezekiah was going to die.

2 Kings 20:2-3

2 **Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD,** saying,

3 **“Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight.”** And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Hezekiah prayed.

2 Kings 20:4-6

4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 **“Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you.”** On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

6 And **I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.”** ’ ”

GOD CHANGES HIS MIND.

1 Samuel 15:1-3

1 Samuel also said to Saul, **“The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.”**

2 Thus says the LORD of hosts: **‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.’**

3 **Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them.** But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ”

GOD CHOSE AND ANOINTED KING SAUL.

1 Samuel 15:9-11

9 **But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.**

10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,

11 **“I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king,** for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

GOD REGRETTED IT. (Other: I am sorry ... I repent)

1 Samuel 15:20-23

20 And Saul said to Samuel, “But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”

22 **So Samuel said:**

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

23 **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.**

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.”

GOD APPOINTED SAUL AS KING. NOW HE REJECTS HIM.

GOD CHANGED HIS MIND! He also suffered sorrow and regret (passions and feelings!)

Many churches teach that God is impassible — has no feelings or emotions.

But what does scripture reveal?

Numbers 14:11-12

11 Then the LORD said to Moses: “**How long will these people reject Me?** And **how long will they not believe Me**, with all the signs which I have performed among them?

12 **I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them**, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

GOD WAS ANGRY AND EXASPERATED.

Numbers 14:15-17

15 Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,

16 ‘Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.’

17 And **now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken**, saying,

Moses intercedes.

Numbers 14:18-19

18 **The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression**; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.’

19 **Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy**, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

GOD IS LONGSUFFERING — YET MERCIFUL.

The definition of impassible — “God does not suffer”. **GOD SAYS HERE THAT HE SUFFERS LONG!**

2 Peter 3:8-9

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, **but is longsuffering toward us**, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

GOD IS LONGSUFFERING.

Exodus 34:5-7

5 Now the LORD descended in the cloud and **stood** with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (**“Stood” — God is standing on His feet. The Westminster Confession of Faith is rubbish!!**)

6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, **“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,**

7 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.”

A KEY ATTRIBUTE OF GOD IS THAT HE SUFFERS LONG — and despite that — HE IS ALWAYS ABUNDANT IN MERCY.

Ezekiel 6:1-3

1 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

2 “Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,

3 and say, ‘O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys: **“Indeed I, even I, will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.**

Ezekiel 6:8-10

8 “Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries.

9 Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, **because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me**, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations.

10 And they shall know that I am the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them.”

GOD WAS CRUSHED.

Ezekiel 6:9 (ESV)

9 **I have been broken over their whoring heart**

GOD WAS BROKEN-HEARTED!

Nahum 1:2-3

2 **God is jealous**, and the LORD avenges;

The LORD avenges and **is furious**.

The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,

And **He reserves wrath** for His enemies;

3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,

And will not at all acquit the wicked.

The LORD has His way

In the whirlwind and in the storm,

And the clouds are the dust of His feet.

GOD IS JEALOUS ... FURIOUS ... WRATHFUL.

Sounds fairly passionate — emotional? Not an unfeeling God?

Isaiah 63:8-10

8 For He said, “Surely they are My people,

Children who will not lie.”

So He became their Savior.

9 **In all their affliction He was afflicted**,

And the Angel of His Presence saved them;

In His love and in His pity He redeemed them;

And He bore them and carried them

All the days of old.

10 **But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit;**

So He turned Himself against them as an enemy,

And He fought against them.

GOD “SHARED” THEIR AFFLICTION.

THEY GRIEVED HIS HOLY SPIRIT (KJV: VEXED HIS HOLY SPIRIT)

It wasn't all negative. At times God was delighted — rejoiced.

Isaiah 62:4-5

4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken,
Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate;
But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah;
For **the LORD delights in you**,
And your land shall be married.
5 For as a young man marries a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you;
And **as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,**
So shall your God rejoice over you.

GOD REJOICES LIKE A BRIDEGROOM — EXCITED ... ELATED ... IMPASSIONED.

Zephaniah 3:16-17

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear;
Zion, let not your hands be weak.
17 **The LORD your God in your midst**,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.”

GOD REJOICES — WITH LOVE SONGS.

This is not a Being who has no feelings — no passions?

**Jesus is the EXPRESS IMAGE OF THE FATHER (HEBREWS
1:3).** Does He have feelings and emotions?

Mark 1:40-43

40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”

41 Then **Jesus, moved with compassion**, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once,

JESUS WAS MOVED — EMOTIONALLY AND WITH COMPASSION (AMP: PITY AND SYMPATHY)

John 11:32-37

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, **He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.**

34 And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

35 **Jesus wept.**

36 Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

37 And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

JESUS WEPT!

Jesus was really moved with emotion. He was moved by the circumstances.

The church scholars are wrong! Greek philosophers are wrong. All nonsense. QUITE HARMFUL!

God and Jesus have emotions... feelings... passions. They can fully understand us when we're down ... and anxious ... troubled.

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 Seeing then that **we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our confession.

15 **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are,** yet without sin.

16 **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

JESUS CAN SYMPATHISE — HE’S BEEN THERE — DONE THAT.

Hebrews 4:15 (KJV)

15 **For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;**

It’s good to know that Jesus and The Father can be “touched” with the feeling of our weaknesses.

We’re made in God’s image. Our emotions and feelings correspond to His — though His are always appropriate — correct for the situation — and always under complete control.

We can talk to God about our feelings. He gets it! He sympathises with us.

We’re not talking to an unfeeling Heavenly robot.