

Biblical Notes – Jeremiah 18:8

8 – if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it.

חִנֵּשֶׁב נָגֵי כִּי הַאֲמָרָתָה אֲשֶׁר דָּבַרְתִּי עַל-הָרָעָה וְנַחֲמָתִי לְעַשְׂתָה לוֹ:

“I will repent of the evil...I will repent of the good - All God's dealings with mankind are here declared to be conditional. God changeth not, all depends upon man's conduct.”

— Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible, Commentary on Jeremiah 18:8.

“If that nation, against which I have pronounced, shall turn from their evil, I will b repent of the evil that I thought to do to them. When the Scripture attributes repentance to God, it is not that he does contrary to that which he has ordained in his secret counsel: but when he threatens it is a calling to repentance, and when he gives man grace to repent, the threatening (which ever contains a condition in it) takes no place: and this the scripture calls repentance in God, because it so appears to man's judgment.”

— Geneva Study Bible, Commentary on Jeremiah 18:8.

“Repent — God herein adapts Himself to human conceptions. The change is not in God, but in the circumstances which regulate God's dealings.”

— Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, Commentary on Jeremiah 18:8.

“...he is said in Scripture to repent: not that the phrase implies that there is any change in Him, but in us; and that his behaviour towards us, provided his denunciations were not conditional, is the same as if he repented, or changed his mind.”

— Thomas Coke, Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible, Commentary on Jeremiah 18:8.

“I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them; I will also turn from the methods of my severe providence which I had resolved in case of their impenitency to proceed in against them. There is a difference betwixt repentance in man, and repentance as it is attributed to God; repentance in man must be, not only a change in action, but a change of heart; repentance as attributed to God never signifieth a change of heart, or purpose, or counsels, but only a change in action, all alteration of the course of his providence. Hence God in Scripture is said to repent, as in this text, and Jonah 3:10. And it is also said of him, that he is not as man, that he should lie or repent, Numbers 23:19 1 Samuel 15:29. God never changeth his counsels or purposes, though he often varieth his actions of providence, according to the behaviours of his creatures.”

— Matthew Poole, Matthew Poole's English Annotations on the Holy Bible, Commentary on Jeremiah 18:8.

So as we can see from the countless commentaries there is no change from the end of God in respect to his providence, decree, plan, counsels, or purposes. God is not a man that he should lie or repent (Num 23:19). This is a call to repentance, not that they could repent without God anyways (2 Tim 2:24-25). *If* man would change God would relent. Man *won't* change therefore God will not relent.