

God's Change of Mind

Commentary for September 1, 2017 — If He Doesn't Change His Mind, All Will Die

Nuclear weapons were not predicted by any prophet or science prognosticator that I know of, until a few decades before its invention. However, the highly negative and catastrophic role of science in the fate of mankind was written about in April 1862 letter by a 24 year old scholar who went on to become a preeminent historian of science. The writer was Henry Brooke Adams. One year after the American Civil War began, Adams wrote:

"Man has mounted science, and is now run away with. I firmly believe that before many centuries more, science will be the master of men. The engines he will have invented will be beyond his strength to control.

Someday science may have the existence of mankind in its power, and the human race commit suicide, by blowing up the world."

• Henry Brooke Adams, 1838–1918 ¹

Adams seems to have had a good understanding of human nature, although I do not know if he made his statement from a biblical perspective.

Jesus' Statement About Human Survival

Only since the 1970s has science given mankind the true ability to destroy all life on earth. Scripture confirms that possibility even though it will not happen. Note two related prophetic texts that directly bear on the subject of human annihilation:

"For then shall be great tribulation [*thilipsis* in Greek], such as was not since the beginning of the world [*kosmos* in Greek] to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

• Matthew 24:21–22

"For in those days shall be affliction [*thilipsis* in Greek], such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he has chosen, he has shortened the days."

• Mark 13:19–20 ²

The upheaval of the **"great tribulation"** and **"affliction"** (the same Greek word *thilipsis*) will be greater than anything **"since the beginning of the world"** and that includes the flood in the days of Noah. However, more than just 8 people will survive. Why? It is because the elect will be on earth. They are surviving believers of Jesus Christ, believers in His death and resurrection. Their presence causes God to shorten the tribulation and affliction on the earth

¹ "Letter to Charles Francis Adams Jr.," London, 11 April 1862. In J. C. Levenson, E. Samuels, C. Vandersee and V. Hopkins Winner (eds.), *The Letters of Henry Adams: 1858-1868* (1982), Vol. 1, 290.

² Some say that "no flesh will be saved" refers only to Israel and its people, but the context refers to the "world" or *kosmos* in Greek.

before Christ returns.³ Did you know that our personal actions influence YHWH as to how long we live?

“The fear of YHWH prolongs days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.”

• Proverbs 10:27

Do we see today the wicked having shorter lives as this Proverbs passage says?⁴

This month’s article: “The Repentance of God and Influencing God,” introduced by the [“September 2017 Newsletter,”](#) informs us about God’s control of all factors in the important events in our lives: birth, life, death, how much we know about God, and our relationship with Him (or no relationship at all). All of these and thousands of other events are important to each of us. God Himself (through Christ) influences us and guides us to make decisions that fulfill His will, even though evil continues to result in this present physical life.

As believers we have a tiny measure of greater freedom in our lives than do others.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, ‘If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

• John 8:31–32

As we learn from Scripture and respond to God’s truth, we increase the measure of freedom we have in our personal lives. The freedom we gain is the freedom to love others, and yes, that is very difficult sometimes. Receiving and growing from truth is a learning process. **“To continue in my word”** means to read or hear, then study, and meditate on the Scriptures. Jesus then made a promise: **“the truth shall make you free.”** Having and living God’s truth increases your freedom in your everyday life. That is a promise you can count on. Even if you see very little progress, God sees your growth and He is pleased.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com

³ Here are the two passages side by side from the Concordant Literal Version:

Matthew 24:21–22	Mark 13:19–20
<p>²¹ for then shall be great affliction, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world</p> <p>till now; neither under any circumstances may be occurring.</p> <p>²² And, except those days were discounted, <u>no flesh at all would be saved</u>. Yet, because of the chosen, those days shall be discounted.</p>	<p>¹⁹ for in those days will be affliction such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation which God creates</p> <p>till now, and under no circumstances may be occurring.</p> <p>²⁰ And, except the Lord discounts the days, <u>no flesh at all would be saved</u>. But because of the chosen, whom He chooses, He discounts the days.</p>

⁴ The *Net Bible* has an interesting comment on this verse:

“This general saying has to be qualified with the problem of the righteous suffering and dying young, a problem that perplexed the sages of the entire ancient world. But this is the general principle: The righteous live longer because their life is the natural one and because God blesses them.”

I agree. God changes His mind with regard to the behavior of individuals, yet paradoxically, that behavior, good and bad, is also within His complete control.