

Exodus 32:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Analysis

The startling statement וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה (vayyinnachem Adonai, the Lord repented/relented) doesn't indicate God sinned or changed His mind in essence, but rather He responded to intercession by not executing threatened judgment. This anthropopathic language shows God's personal, responsive nature—He is not an abstract force but a covenant-keeping Person who genuinely responds to prayer. The evil (הַרָעָה, hara'ah) He 'repented of' was the threatened destruction. This demonstrates God's desire for mercy, inviting intercession before executing deserved judgment (cf. Jonah 3:10).

Historical Context

This pattern repeats throughout Scripture: God threatens judgment, His servants intercede, God relents (Jonah 3:10, Amos 7:3). It reveals God's desire for mercy to triumph over judgment (James 2:13).

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's responsiveness to intercession encourage persistent prayer?
2. What does this teach about God's desire for mercy versus judgment?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּתְּנוּ	יְהוָה	עַל	הָרָעָה	אֲשֶׁר	דָּבַר	לַעֲשׂוֹת
repented	And the LORD	H5921	of the evil	H834	which he thought	to do
H5162	H3068		H7451		H1696	H6213

לְעַמּוֹ:
unto his people
H5971

Additional Cross-References

Jonah 3:10 (Repentance): And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Psalms 106:45 (Repentance): And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

Jeremiah 26:13 (Repentance): Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

Jeremiah 18:8 (Repentance): If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

1 Chronicles 21:15 (Repentance): And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

2 Samuel 24:16 (Repentance): And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel

that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

Jeremiah 26:19 (Repentance): Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

Jonah 4:2 (Repentance): And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Joel 2:13 (Repentance): And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.