

What Our Father In Heaven Cannot Do

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Our Great God and Father in heaven has provided for all men a living hope and place for reconciliation in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and in the subsequent founding of the church of Christ. He is a loving all-knowing and omnipotent God. While we ought to appreciate these positive qualities, there are also some negative ones that deserve our consideration.

1. **The Father cannot lie.** “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19). Men are adept at lying, deceiving and leading others to reach false or wrong conclusions. People often lie about others; they lie about where they were, what they have done, and sometimes they even lie about lies they told! Deceit is contradictory to the character of God but is the *consistent* and principle fabric of the Devil’s work (Deut. 32:4; Jn. 8:44). The Holy Spirit revealed, “that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us” (Heb. 6:18). God’s word is as true as God Himself is. For Him to abandon truth He would have to abandon being God (Ps. 33:4; Rom. 3:4; Titus 1:2). He cannot lie and because of that, we can run to Him as our refuge. The hope that is set before us is not some wishful thinking, but rock solid hope based on God’s work and consistent word. Ethan contemplated on Jehovah’s nature of keeping His word, “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations” (Ps. 89:1). It is because of this quality that the Bible stands out and above the works of men. It is because of this quality that we find God keeping his word to Abraham in bringing his children into the Promised Land (Deut. 9:5). With that we could consider the promise given to David of having an enduring kingdom (2 Sam. 7:11-16; Lk. 1:32). Later, Solomon stated that not one word failed from which God promised through Moses (1 Kin. 8:56). David said that “...Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds” (Ps. 36:5). Who among men can it be said that they are true to their word and that their faithfulness reaches into the heavens? Men often fail their words miserably, they often say and do not, and they often violate their covenants which they vowed to keep. But God is altogether different. He says what He means and means what He says. He keeps His word.

By this quality, the Bible as the word of God, is filled with unbroken promises and prophecies. When the Father promised to send His Son, born of a virgin, Who would grow up as a tender plant, teach in parables, live righteously, be put to death and yet rise again, He fulfilled it to the very word in Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Is. 7:14; 9:6, 7; Is. 53; Ps. 2; 16:10; Ps. 78:2; Jn. 10:15-18; etc.).

2. **The Father cannot hear your prayer when you do not heed His word.** God’s movement is measured by ours. “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (Jas. 4:8). If we “draw near” or seek to approach Him, then He draws nearer to us. He has already displayed His love to us by sending forth His Son (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4, 5; 1 Jn. 3:1; 4:9, 10, 19). It is our responsibility to reciprocate that love back to Him. The blind man who was made to see correctly observed, “Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him” (Jn. 9:31). This correlates well with James 4:8 of drawing nearer to God. Those who open their heart and ears to hear and do the will of God will actually open God’s ears to their cries. Peter agrees when He penned, “For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.” Where do the eyes of the Lord go? They love to behold the righteous. “For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright” (Ps. 11:7). To be righteous is to love to do what pleases the Lord. His ears are delightfully open to such a one. “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 Jn. 3:22).
3. **The Father cannot tempt or be tempted with evil.** “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone” (Jas. 1:13). This passage is not teaching that God cannot “tempt,” that is “test” or put the faith of one under trial (cf. Jas. 1:2, 3; Gen. 22:1; etc.). Rather, James eliminates two wrong conclusions that some may assume to be valid. One, God may be tempted with evil as man is. Two, God may tempt man with evil. But God cannot be tempted *by evil!* That is, He has no attraction, no craving, no lust for what would be

wicked. There is nothing in sin that allures Him (see. 1 Jn. 1:5). It is similar to when Jesus stated, "...for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me" (Jn. 14:30). There is no fellowship, concord or hold between Christ and Satan. Likewise, God cannot tempt with evil. Such is the clear implication of James 1:13. The idea centers upon the concept of "evil." God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone *by evil*. The design of a trial from God is to make our faith better, stronger and more suitable. However, the temptations of Satan are to collapse and break down our faith. Satan's desire is to lead us away from holiness and into darkness. The Father's desire is to lead us into things approved, not into things condemned. "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. 5:9, 10).

4. **The Father cannot give you eternal life except through His Son.** "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 Jn. 5:11, 12). Jesus came that we might have an understanding of God and be saved (1 Jn. 5:20). Rejecting Jesus is rejecting the Father's choice. Jesus likewise made it very clear when He replied to Thomas who inquired about the way, saying, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6). The Son stands as the doorway to the Father and giver of truth and life. The veil that concealed the entrance into the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom when He died and now, Heaven's Holy place is open to those who enter through that death (Mk. 15:38; Heb. 9:3-14; 10:19, 20). We can therefore enter with boldness by the blood of Jesus. By repentance and baptism we are granted to receive those many spiritual blessing that flow from the death of the Son of God (Rom. 5:9, 10; 6:3, 4; Eph. 1:3).

While we ought to be impressed with all that the Father (and the Godhead in general) can do, we should equally be impressed with what our great God *cannot do*.