

## The Immutability of God

**Intro:** I have been talking with you about the infinity of God. Another feature of God's infinity is His immutability or unchangeableness of God.

### God is unchangeable.

*Reason tells us this about God.*

How could God change in His nature without becoming either worse or better? If God is perfect, then He can neither become worse or He will become imperfect; nor can He become better, or else He was not perfect in the first place.

Immutability is the logical consequence of God's self-existence and eternal nature. If self-existence should change, it would become dependent existence; eternity would become time; perfection imperfection; and therefore God would become not-God. Thus, God is unchangeable or immutable. (Baker's Dictionary of Theology)

*Revelation tells us this about God.*

But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does. For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such decrees are with Him. (Job 23:13-14)

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 it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19)

And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind. (1 Sam. 15:29)

But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end. (Psalm 102:27)

For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)

*Since God is above the universe, He is never conditioned by it. Nothing God has created compromises His reality as God from all eternity. Thus, the Bible clearly affirms the immutability of God.*

*But how shall we deal with those verses that speak of various changes in the actions of God?*

### God's immutability is not the same as immobility

*God in His perfect freedom can become what He is not or do what He has not previously done without ceasing to be the God that He is. Even when God varies His actions they are manifestations of an immutable purpose. They demonstrate the mobility to accomplish His purposes.*

God's change in covenant from Law to Gospel was not a change in His attitude or character; but an execution of His unchanging eternal purpose.

But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, (Galatians 4:4)

God had a plan that involved sequenced steps in its accomplishment. Jesus' death was not a surprise to God but another step in His immutable purpose to save man.

this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:23)

God is not obligated to always do the same things all the time. False inferences are sometimes made on the immutability of God

*Pentecostalism uses the immutability of God to affirm that God must always work miracles.*

*Theological liberals contend that the OT god and the NT god are different and thus reject the OT picture of God.*

### **God's immutability is not the same as unresponsiveness.**

*ISBE correctly points out, "The Bible never portrays an abstract God who maintains His unchangeability by remaining aloof from the world and unresponsive to what occurs in it". God's immutability is manifest in His decision to conduct Himself by principles that cause Him to respond to man in different way in different situations.*

Because of God's unchangeable justice and holiness He treats man differently depending upon His actions. Even this change affirms is immutability as God who acts on principle.

And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. (Genesis 6:6)

"I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands." (1 Samuel 15:11)

Thus, God is said to repent when man's actions change. The change is a manifestation of God's responsiveness which is part of His unchangeable nature!

### **What are the implications of God's unchangeable nature for us?**

*God's immutability is the basis of His unchangeable word.*

When God decrees his counsels for man, no man has the power to alter it. Thus, Balaam had to admit that Balak's attempts to pay Him to alter God's purposes for Israel were in vain.

"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 it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19)

How then do men presume to do what this prophet knew should not be done? To attempt to change God's word, its statements, promises or commands is to deny the very immutability of God Himself!

*God's immutability is the basis of His patience with sinful men.*

The prophet Malachi warned of a coming day of judgment for Israel;

but in the meantime there was an opportunity for repentance on the part of those living in sin.

“For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

What if God were as emotionally reactionary to abuse and mistreatment as we are? What would have kept Him in the heat of anger from destroying us individually or even the whole world? Yet because God is immutable sinners are not consumed when their behavior could conceivably demand it. God patiently waits for sinners to repent because He is immutable.

*God's immutability is the basis of His constant generosity to His people.*

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)

Because God is immutable we can depend upon blessings from His hand just like we depend upon light from the sun! but with God there is not a cloudy forecast or a dark day. His blessings proceed from Him with unchangeable regularity to His people.

*God's immutability assures us of help when we need it.*

The Hebrew writer had just urged the people of God to remember those who had led them but now had passed on. Their life could stir the memory but they could do nothing more. But they have a living high priest in Jesus Christ, whose work as high priest abides perpetually, whose service to never ends as long as earth stands. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:23-25)

What a comfort to God's people that our immutable God and His immutable Son Jesus Christ always seek to save us and provide the help we need in times of temptation and weakness.

*God's immutability is the ground of our hope!*

Both God's word and purpose are “immutable”.

In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. (Hebrews 6:17-18)

Will God someday grow disinterested in this plan of redemption He has purposed on earth that brings men to heaven? Never!

*God's immutability gives finality to His judgments of sinful men!*

**King Saul flagrantly disobeyed the Lord. He tried blaming it on everyone else. Only when his rejection as king was announced did he begin to pretend “penitence”. And it was too late! God had already made up His mind. The kingdom would be torn from him!**

**“And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.” (1 Sam. 15:29)**

**Let this truth sink in! No man will stand before the great Judge and talk his way out of an eternal death sentence. You may be good at talking your way out of trouble here; but it will do you no good there; because God is immutable!**

**Conclusion: If the world today respected and appreciated the immutability of God, they would act differently. They would respect His word, appreciate His patience, seek His help, fear His judgment and place all their hopes on His promises. But alas, the “user-friendly” god is not that great. And thus men, even religious men disobey His commands, take advantage of His patience, rely upon themselves, and live for this world with little fear of the consequences of their sinful lives. The true God is greater than that and deserves better than that from His creatures!**

**Put your trust in the immutable God of Scripture. He is the one thing you can hold on to in this world of change. “Time is filled with swift transition, naught of earth unmoved can stand; build your hopes on things eternal, hold to God’s unchanging hand”.**