

 **Sermon 4/26/2020 Incommunicable Attribute: The Immutability of God**

Of old you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

They will perish, but you will remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.

You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away,
²⁷ but you are the same, and your years have no end.

Psalm 102:25-27

Definition:

*God is without change in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God is active in this world, and he acts differently in response to diverse situations.*⁵

Explanation:

God's immutability means that God is without mutation.

God never changes in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.

God is pure being, there is no becoming in God. This distinguishes between God and creatures.

We as creatures are constantly changing, learning, growing, maturing, or digressing, departing, deteriorating, and dying. Yet God is constant. Eternal. Simple (not composed of parts in his essence).

God is pure being.

God is not learning; for what knowledge can you add to Omniscience. (All-Knowledge)

God is not growing in wisdom; for how can you add to Omnisapience. (All-wisdom)

God is not growing physically; for God is Spirit, not contained in space, so where is a place void of omnipresence, (Where can we flee from his presence?)

God is not maturing in perfections for what can be added to perfect character. (God is our standard of perfection)

(God is not maturing in his graciousness or love or justice. He is who He is. (I am who I am Ex. 3:14)

Confession:

We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that there is a single and simple spiritual being, whom we call God— eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty; completely wise, just, and good, and the overflowing source of all good. **BELGIC CONFSSION**

Scripture:

Malachi 3:6

"For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (KJV=*with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*)

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Proverbs 19:21

"There are many 'devices' (kjb) or 'plans' (ESV) or (intentions) in a man's heart;
Nevertheless, the counsel of the LORD, That shall stand."

Psalm 33:11

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

Isaiah 14:24

"As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,

Job 23:13

But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does.

⁵ The four key words (*being, perfections, purposes, promises*) used as a summary of the ways in which God is unchanging are taken from Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939, 1941), p. 58.

Objections:

What about passages that explicitly state a seeming change in God's plan or his mind?

And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (Genesis 6:6)

And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people (Exodus 32:14).

Although the language is strong we must not forget one of the main hermeneutical principals of correct interpretation of scripture... The biblical authors were not stupid nor were they ignorant! They would not contradict themselves or historic teachings so we must interpret scripture with scripture.

Numbers 23:19

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

1 Samuel 15:29

And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."

"Those passages of Scripture in which God is said to repent, are to be interpreted on the same principle as those in which He is said to ride upon the wings of the wind, or to walk through the earth. These create no difficulty."¹ (Charles Hodge)

We ascribe passages that say God repents, regrets or changes his mind to Anthropomorphism

(Gk. anthropos [human] + morphe [form]). Assignment of human attributes to nonhuman things. The use of human terminology to talk about God is necessary when we, in our limitations, wish to express truths about the Deity who by his very nature cannot be described or known.

Examples: God redeems Israel from Egyptian bondage with an outstretched arm (Exod 6:6).

Other texts refer to the back, face, mouth, lips, ears, eyes, hand, and finger of God.

The expression, "the Lord's anger burned" (Exod 4:14) is interesting. A literal translation of the Hebrew is "the nose of the Lord burned."

So God is the same but acts differently to diverse circumstances and people. "*God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble*" James 4:6. *C.H. Spurgeon says...* "The same sun which melts wax, hardens clay. And the same Gospel which melts some persons to repentance hardens others in their sins." God is the constant people are the variant.

Application:

Warning: God is immutable. He is constant in who he is and how he acts. This is a great comfort to the repentant and great warning to the wicked. God will not have a change of heart on judgement day! He will always punish the wicked. His wrath always burns hot against sin, which will never change. Jesus is the only way to salvation, and without Christ you will suffer the eternal indignation of God who never changes.

Comfort: This also means that God doesn't have a bad day or wake up on the wrong side of the bed. He is steadfast in his patience and loving kindness. He is eternally faithful to his covenant, His promises are yes and amen, his word remains forever.

Hope and faith:

Hebrews 6:19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Deuteronomy 32:4 The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

Psalms 18:2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Isaiah 26:4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;
As thou hast been Thou forever wilt be. (Thomas O. Chisholm)

¹ Hodge, C. (1997). [Systematic theology](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 390–391). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Discussion on the immutability of God:

Everything changes. Our physical bodies change. Our physical world is changing. People change for the good or for the bad. Your mood changes constantly (Even more if you're a girl.. hehehe) , Our cravings change, Our abilities change, Our character changes over time, Our responsibilities change. "Someone once said the only thing that doesn't change is the fact that everything changes." *Oh How wonderful it is that in a world of change, God remains the same!*

- ***Discuss how this truth about God help us in this current pandemic situation?***

Have you ever promised someone you would do something only to change your mind and not follow through? Thankfully God is not like this. He is faithful. His promises are sure! In fact the scriptures say that God is a Rock!

- ***What does it mean that God is a rock?***
 - ***How is God's immutability a warning to the wicked?***
 - ***How is God's immutability a comfort to the repentant?***
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Communicable Attribute: The Patience of God

Scripture:

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

2 Peter 3:8-9

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;

Col. 1:9-11

Quote:

Impatient people are weak, and therefore dependent on external supports — like schedules that go just right and circumstances that support their fragile hearts. Their outbursts of oaths and threats and harsh criticisms of the culprits who crossed their plans do not sound weak. But that noise is all a camouflage of weakness. Patience demands tremendous inner strength. - **John Piper**

Definition:

God's patience is a way that He powerfully and lovingly interacts with unbelievers for repentance, His children for sanctification, and with all for His glory.

Discussion on the Patience of God:

- What are some ways that God has been patient with you and all of mankind?
- What kinds of things cause you to feel impatient and how do you sometimes respond?
- If impatience is a sign of weakness, what does your source of impatience show you are weak in?
- Take a moment now or at the close of service to ask God to be strong in your weakness.