

Our Immutable God

Roxborough Bible Chapel

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Outline

- Review of the characteristics of God (in general)
- Introduction to the Immutability of God

The immutability of God is far from just a theological observation or a hypothetical truth. It is a life-transforming truth from which we can draw a number of implications for our lives.

- Introduction

The immutability of God:

1. has implications regarding the Bible (the Word of God).
2. is an assurance for Christians
3. is a standard for Christians.
4. is a warning that God will fulfill His Word regarding judgment for sin.
 - The wicked frequently misapply the immutability of God, making it a pretext for living in sin without fear of retribution.
5. is the only means by which sinful men can be changed so as to enter into God's eternal blessings.

General - Characteristics of God

What are some Characteristics (Attributes) of God?

Eternal	Loving
Omniscient	Gracious
Omnipotent	Merciful
Omnipresent	Faithful
Infinite	Immutable
Wise	Trinity
Sovereign	Just
Holy	Good

General - Characteristics of God

- Why is it important to study the characteristics of God?
 - To know God better
 - Knowing God = Salvation
 - We ask people, “Do you know the Lord Jesus?”
 - which really means, “Are you saved (from the punishment of your sins)?”
 - John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
 - For those who may not be saved, understanding who God is and acknowledging His existence and characteristics (shown through the Lord Jesus) will bring them to salvation.
 - It helps us to know God, the One from whom we have received eternal life.

General - Characteristics of God

- Why is it important to study the characteristics of God?
 - To glorify God
 - Westminster shorter catechism (also in the earlier Heidelberg catechism) The most famous of the questions (known to a great many Presbyterian children) is the first: Q. What is ***the chief end of man?*** A. ***Man's chief end*** is to ***glorify God***, and to ***enjoy him forever***.
 - I Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
 - To praise and worship God
 - If we know God better, we should appreciate Him more and thus praise and worship Him, giving Him the honor and glory due to Him.

General - Characteristics of God

- **Knowledge of God is important – God wants us to know Him (intimacy)**
 - **Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**
- **Knowing God fully is impossible (inexhaustible)**
- **Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**
- **Knowing God better should help us well up in worship and praise (God's desire for us to have an intimate relationship with Him)**
- **Knowing God better helps us to live appropriately (pleasing God) since He wants us to be like Him – Therefore this can also be practical teaching!**
 - **Grounding ourselves in doctrine (the knowledge of who God is (as revealed in the Scriptures)) is foundational in transforming our lives to be in obedience to His calling.**

Introduction

- **God is immutable (unchanging) – He remains the same**
 - His divine nature
 - His plans and purposes
 - His attributes
 - His will
- **Change is typically for the better or the worse**
 - God cannot be better since His is absolutely perfect
 - God cannot be worst because He would be less than perfect
 - He can never be wiser, more holy, more just, more merciful, more truthful, (or even less so)
- **God is eternal (no beginning and no end)**
 - If He had a beginning or end, He would have had to change

Introduction

- We live in a world of constant change.
- But God does not change.

Scriptures

- Numbers 23:19 "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?"
- James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
- Psalm 102:12 But You, O LORD, shall endure forever, And the remembrance of Your name to all generations.
- Psalm 102:25-28 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens *are* the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. But You *are* the same, And Your years will have no end. The children of Your servants will continue, And their descendants will be established before You.
- Malachi 3:6 "For I *am* the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.
- Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- Hebrews 6:17-20 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, 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*. This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence *behind* the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The immutability of God has implications regarding the Bible (the Word of God)

- Where is the sense of distance and difference, then, between believers in Bible time and ourselves?
 - It is excluded. On what grounds? On the grounds that God does not change.
- Fellowship with Him, trust in His word, living by faith, 'standing on the promises of God', are essentially the same realities for us today as they were for Old and New Testament believers.
- The immutability of God is closely related to the immutability of the Word of God. If God does not change, neither does His counsel or truth,
 - Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.
 - Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
 - I Peter 1:22-25 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "ALL FLESH IS AS GRASS, AND ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF THE GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND ITS FLOWER FALLS AWAY, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.
- This means His Word is never out of date, never irrelevant to our lives or our times.
 - Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

The immutability of God is an assurance for Christians

- **Assurance provides stability and confidence in times of uncertainty and circumstances that appear threatening.**
 - Placing your confidence in someone who is undependable is a very unpleasant experience,
 - Proverbs 25:19 Confidence in an unfaithful *man* in time of trouble *is like* a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.
- **Because our God is unchanging, His promises and His purposes are certain; they cannot, and they will not fail.**
- **We have an incorruptible sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has accomplished eternal redemption for all who receive it.**
 - Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
- **We have a “kingdom which cannot be shaken”**
 - Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.
- **We have a God who deals with us consistently with His character and His Word (James 1:12-18).**
- **We have a Great High Priest who “abides forever and holds His priesthood permanently”**
 - Hebrews 7:24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

The immutability of God is an assurance for
Christians - Hope when we fail

- **God ever stands ready to forgive us when we humbly confess and repent of our sins.**
 - **I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

The immutability of God is a standard for Christians

- As the “sons of God,” we are to emulate God, to reflect Him in our daily lives.
- While there is much need for change in our lives there is also the need for us not to change.
 - We are not to allow the world to change us by conforming us to its ungodly mold
 - Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
 - We are not to change by losing heart and abandoning our confession of faith (Hebrews 6:11-20; 10:19-25, 32-39)
 - We are not to change by forsaking our commitments when fulfilling them is costly to us
 - Psalm 15:4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He *who* swears to his own hurt and does not change;

The immutability of God is a warning that God will fulfill His Word regarding judgment for sin

- God's immutability is not only a comforting assurance concerning the blessings which God has promised, but it is also an awesome warning that God will fulfill His Word regarding judgment for sin.
- When God spoke to Judah concerning the judgment about to come upon this nation for their sins, He spoke of a judgment that was certain, which would not change because He would not change His mind:
 - Jeremiah 4:27-28 For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it.
- In Jeremiah 18:7-8, God promised He would relent of the disaster He pronounced against a wicked nation if they would repent.
 - Jeremiah 18:7-8 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.
- But in Jeremiah 4, God indicates the judgment of which He speaks is irreversible.

The immutability of God is a warning that God will fulfill His Word regarding judgment for sin

- **There is a time for repentance, and during that time men may repent with the assurance that God will forgive their sins and turn from the judgment He threatened. But the time for repentance ends, and then men must face the consequences of their sins. In Jeremiah 4, God urged Judah to repent**
 - **Jeremiah 4:14 O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, That you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?**
- **But this plea was ignored, and so judgment came. Once the time for repentance has passed, God's wrath is sure to follow. From this point, God will not turn from the judgment He has announced through His prophets.**
- **Such was the case in the days of Noah. The gospel was proclaimed for over 100 years, but once God shut the door of the ark, the time for repentance was past and the time for judgment had arrived.**
- **God will most certainly not "change" regarding judgment, once the time for repentance has passed.**
- **Do not make a mistake by looking upon God's grace and mercy in giving a time for repentance as an evidence of divine apathy and assurance that God will not judge men for their sins.**
- ***Judgment is certain and sure for sinners who rebel against God.***

The wicked frequently misapply the immutability of God, making it a pretext for living in sin without fear of retribution

- **Sinful men and women often abuse the doctrine of the immutability of God.**
- **The immutable God is the One who is the sustainer of all things. Of course, all things continue as they have from the foundation of the world. The constancy of the world in which we live is a matter of common grace, and it is one which testifies of His goodness and grace. Unbelievers misinterpret the consistency of the order of creation, interpreting this to be “proof” that God is not going to judge the world for sin.**
- **How then can we be certain of His judgment?**
 - **(1) Because God’s Word warns us of judgment, and God’s Word, like God, does not change.**
 - **(2) Because Bible history is filled with examples of God’s intervention into human history to judge sin.**

The unchanging God is the only means by which sinful men can be changed so as to enter into God's eternal blessings

- While God does not change, sinful men must change in order to enter into the kingdom of God. This “change” is from one who is a vile sinner, deserving of God's eternal wrath, to a forgiven sinner, who now stands clothed in the righteousness of God, through faith in Christ
- Do we ever thank God for not being moody? Are we thankful that God is always the same, that He is consistent, and that He does not keep changing the rules on us?
 - II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- God ever stands ready to forgive us when we humbly confess and repent of our sins.
 - I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- What comfort would it be to pray to a God, that like a chameleon changed colors every day, every moment?
 - What encouragement could there be to lift up our eyes to one that were of one mind this day and of another mind tomorrow?
- How comforting to know that the God whom we serve is not fickle, but rather is dependable and His standards and expectations are unchanging from generation to generation.