

# God is Unchanging

*The God Who is Immutable in His Perfections and Plans*

## I. Introduction

### A. What we have seen so far. God is:

1. Spirit: not having a body/parts/physical
2. Independent: eternally self-existing and self-sufficient
3. Omnipresent: without spacial dimensions and filling all creation with his presence.
4. Today, we will see that God is Unchangeable

### B. All his attributes are inseparable.

Herman Bavinck writes, "Every change is foreign to God. In him there is no change in time, for he is eternal; nor in location, for he is omnipresent; nor in essence for he is pure being."<sup>1</sup>

## II. Defining God's Immutability

### A. Definition: "God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations"<sup>2</sup>

### B. Explanation & Illustration

1. His being and **perfections**: His existence, nature, and character/attributes do not change.
  - a. If he is infinitely (fully and forever) good, righteous, holy, etc., what reason would he have to change?
  - b. If he is eternally self-existing, would he ever move to non-existence?
2. His **purposes**: His plans do not change
  - a. Why do your purposes and plans change? Cf. to God (omniscient, omnipotent, wise)
  - b. God does not have reason to change his plans, nor does he change them.
3. His **promises** don't change
  - a. Why do you go back on promises? (realize it was a bad promise, deficient character, lack the ability to keep it).
  - b. God has none of those limitations: He knows all (Is. 41:22, 42:8-9; Ps. 139), his character is not shadowy and shifting (James 1:17), he is sovereign and omnipotent (Is. 44:6-7).

### C. Key Passage: Psalm 102:25-28

## III. Biblical Evidence of God's Immutability

### A. God is unchanging in his perfections

1. *Ontologically*, in His very essence, being, He does not change.
2. Unchanging in his being (Psalm 102:25-27, Mal. 3:6)
3. Unchanging in character (goodness James 1:17, love Lam. 3:22-23)
4. "The attributes of God can no more change than Deity can cease to be."<sup>3</sup>

### B. God does not change his plans

1. His plans stand forever (Psalm 33:10-11, Is. 46:9-11)

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Mark Jones, *God Is: A Devotional Guide to the Attributes of God*, 59.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 163.

<sup>3</sup> A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 37.

2. God's eternal purpose in Christ and election of individuals (Eph. 3:11, 1:4)
3. "What God does in time, he planned from eternity. And all that he planned in eternity he carries out in time."<sup>4</sup>

**C. God does not change his *promises***

1. "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29)
2. God's promises are not made with his fingers crossed behind his back (Rom. 8:29-30).

## IV. Questions (Avoiding Misunderstandings)

**A. Can God really relate to us if he is unchanging?**

1. The biblical evidence shows that he does relate to his creation while remaining unchangeable in his perfections, plans, and promises.
2. Because his character and attributes, plans, and promises don't change, he does change the way he relates to us.
3. Example: When people repent, God relents (due to his unchanging promises and character). See Jonah 3:4, 10; Ephesians 2.

**B. Is God "impassable?" Does he not have true feelings?**

1. If by this one means he has no feeling, that is not correct (see Zeph. 3:17)
2. Rightly understood, *God is not controlled by passions*
3. "God is impassible—not in the sense that he is devoid of true feeling or has no affections but in the sense that his emotions are active and deliberate expressions of his holy dispositions, not (as is often the case with human emotions) involuntary passions by which he is driven."<sup>5</sup>

**C. What does the Bible mean when it says "God regretted" (e.g., 1 Sam. 15:11, 29).**

1. It does not mean he changes his mind (1 Sam. 15:29).
2. "The reference in each case is to a reversal of God's previous treatment of particular people. . . . But there is no suggestion that this reaction was not foreseen, or that it took God by surprise and was not provided for in his eternal plan. *No change in his eternal purpose is implied when he begins to deal with a person in a new way*"<sup>6</sup>

## V. Application

**A. Be drawn to worship this transcendent and immanent God**

**B. Find peace in the midst of tumultuous times and trials in God's stable promises, plan, and perfections.**

1. We are live in the midst of change (technological revolution, government, daily life).
2. God's immutability means he is the ONE and ONLY foundation and shelter (A "rock" and "refuge" as Psalms says).
3. Meditate on Lamentations 3:22-23 or Ps. 42:1-2.
4. His promises and plans won't die out like a flame that comes to the end of the wick.
5. His character won't shift, like a change in the weather.

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<sup>4</sup> JI Packer, *Knowing God*, 80.

<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [\*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 170.

<sup>6</sup> Packer, 80.