

9

The Immutability of God

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

It is hard for anyone to go a day, even an hour, without changing in some way. Our thoughts and emotions are in a constant state of flux. Even our greatest desires and plans change over time. God, however, never changes His mind or His course of action in the world. He is an immovable rock, a mighty fortress, and the only sure anchor in an ever-changing world. In this lesson, Dr. Lawson explores the biblical view of God's immutability, showing how His character, Word, plan, and salvation never change.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 102:25–28; Isaiah 14:26–27

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To explain the nature of God's immutability and how it affects the Christian's life
2. To encourage reliance upon Him who never changes
3. To inspire praise for the One whose eternal and glorious plan will never be thwarted

QUOTATIONS

The greatest and only consolation of Christians in their adversities, is the knowing that God lies not, but does all things immutably, and that His will cannot be resisted, changed, or hindered.

—Martin Luther

However unstable I may be, however fickle my friends may prove, God changes not. If He varied as we do, if He willed one thing today and another tomorrow, if He were controlled by caprice, who could confide in Him? But, all praise to His glorious name, He is ever the same. His purpose is fixed, His will is stable, His word is sure.

—A.W. Pink

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. Unchangeable in Character

- A. God's personality is eternal and unalterable.
 - i. He never increases or decreases (Ps. 102:26–27).
 - ii. All of God's attributes are constant and steadfast.
- B. We have Scripture's guarantee that the God whom we serve is the same each day.
 - i. Though our lives unfold in various stages, the same God is with us throughout.
 - ii. When we lift our prayers to Him, we do not have to anticipate divine inconsistency or mood swings.
 - iii. Moreover, when God is present in all places, He is present in the fullness of His being.

II. Unchangeable in Word

- A. God's Word can never be altered or abridged.
- B. God's Word cannot fail to come to pass.
- C. God neither lies nor takes back what He has said (Num. 23:19).
 - i. Fallen human beings, on the other hand, tend to twist the truth, change their minds, or mislead others intentionally or unintentionally.
 - ii. Even human laws change, but God's Word stands forever (Isa. 40:8).
- D. Jesus taught that it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for a single stroke of God's law to fail to be accomplished (Luke 16:17).
- E. In all generations, God's standards are the same, and His plan of salvation is the same.

III. Unchangeable in Plans

- A. God's eternal decrees can never be altered.
- B. He is never forced to change His plans or adopt a "Plan B."
- C. God's purposes override and encompass human plans (Ps. 33:10–11; Prov. 19:21).
- D. No one can frustrate or annul God's plans (Isa. 14:26–27).

IV. Unchangeable in Salvation

- A. Though God's redemptive work advances throughout human history, His plan of salvation has remained unchanged.
- B. From eternity, God has set apart His elect, and He will not reject or fail to save even one of His children.
- C. The spiritual rebirth that believers experience is a new birth unto eternal life and is not a merely short-term sample of divine favor.
- D. God's promises to believers are given unconditionally and with absolute certainty.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. While it is true to say that God does not change with respect to His being, He is nevertheless able to adjust His plan in history so as to bring more glory to Himself.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Put the following events in the order that they appear in Romans 8:29–30.
 He justified
 He called
 He predestined
 He glorified
 He foreknew

3. Which of these is not correct?
 - a. Immutability relates to God's character.
 - b. Immutability means that the number of those saved will neither increase nor decrease.
 - c. Immutability is best understood apart from God's other attributes.
 - d. Immutability also applies to God's Word.

4. Malachi 3:6 states that the sons of Jacob are not consumed because of God's mercy.
 - a. True
 - b. False

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If God never changes, how is it that our relationship with Him can change over time?
2. How should reflection on the unchangeableness of God's plan, including His plan for your life, lead you to thanksgiving when things go well and comfort you when they do not?
3. How can Christians affirm God's immutability in light of the incarnation of the Son of God? Did the Son not change when He became man?
4. How does God's unchangeableness with respect to His Word inspire confidence in your study of Scripture?