

- I. Session 84: The Immutability of God Part 1: Biblical Proofs
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall look first at the immutability of God so that we would draw implications for our lives from the truth that God is omnipotent.
  - b. Definition of the immutability of God:
    - i. Essentially this doctrine means that God does not change.
    - ii. Note: There are differences and slight nuances concerning the definition of the immutability of God among theologians, even Evangelical ones as we see below.
    - iii. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue: “God’s immutability is his perfect unchangeability in his essence, character, purpose, and promises.”<sup>1</sup>
    - iv. John Feinberg: It is “the belief that God does not change in his person (being and attributes), will (decree), or purposes.”<sup>2</sup>
    - v. Wayne Grudem: “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>3</sup>
  - c. Two verses we looked at in our last session that demonstrate that God cannot lie explicitly ground this truth in the fact that God does not change
    - i. “*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)
      1. In the context these are the inspired Word of God that the God of the Bible made the false prophet Balaam spoke to Balak, king of Moab (v.5)
      2. Here we see that God is stated as one who is not like man.
      3. In what ways is God not like man? “*That He should lie.*”
      4. Paralleling the truth “*that He should lie*” is the truth that God is not like “*a son of man that He should repent.*”
      5. So God does not repent, that is, change.
    - ii. “*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 Samuel 15:29)
      1. In the context these are the words that Samuel the Prophet spoke to King Saul (v.28)
      2. These words were spoken after the Lord has rejected Saul as king since Saul disobeyed the Lord by being impatient and went ahead to give his own sacrifice to God (v.22-23)
      3. Besides stating “*the Glory of Israel will not lie,*” the verse also states that He does not “*change His mind*” twice.
      4. The second time the verse says God does not “*change His mind*” the writer gives the reason for this truth that God being that God “*is not a man.*”
  - d. Explicit verses teaching that God does not change
    - i. “*Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 26 Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear*

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue *Biblical Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 169.

<sup>2</sup> John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 270.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 163.

*out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. 27 But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end.” (Psalm 102:25-27)*

1. Context of the passage: “In **Psalm 102**, God’s eternity becomes the psalmist’s response to his growing awareness that he has all too soon reached the end of his own life.”<sup>4</sup>
  2. **Psalm 102:25-27** contrasts how creation changes with the unchanging God.
  3. Creation being mentioned: “*Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands*” (**v.25**)
  4. Description of creation:
    - a. “*Even they will perish*” (**v.26a**)  
One way they change is that they will perish
  5. “*And all of them will wear out like a garment*” (**v.26c**)
    - a. The change of creation is described negatively: “*wear out*”
    - b. The Psalmist makes a comparison: “*like a garment.*” Don’t we know from our own experiences that clothes wear out?
  6. “*Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed*” (**v.26d**)
    - a. The comparison of God’s clothing changing negatively to clothing continues.
    - b. Here however we see that change is caused by God and certainly the change will happen.
    - c. There is a juxtaposition between the negative change of creation with God who changes things.
  7. In contrast to the changes of creation here’s the Psalmist description of God:
    - a. “*but You endure*” (**v.26**) → this is in contrast to creation perishing.
    - b. “*But You are the same,*” (**v.27a**) → shows God does not change.
    - c. “*And Your years will not come to an end*” (**v.27b**) → One way God does not change is that He will never cease being God.
- ii. “*For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.*” (**Malachi 3:6**)
1. This passage is located in the paragraph of **Malachi 3:1-7** that reveals prophetic truths about God’s purification of His saints and judgment against sinners.
  2. In **verse 6** Malachi attempts to assure his readers by invoking God’s attribute: “*For I, the Lord, do not change*”
  3. Because God does not change the prophet goes on to say “*therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.*” Thus, God’s immutability is the foundation of hope for the redeemed.

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<sup>4</sup> William Barrick, “Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician’s Melodies” at [http://drbarrick.org/files/studynotes/Psalms/Ps\\_102.pdf](http://drbarrick.org/files/studynotes/Psalms/Ps_102.pdf).

- iii. *“Every good thing given 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)*
  - 1. In this epistle James states certain truths concerning the character of God.
  - 2. For instance we see God is a good giver: *“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above”*
  - 3. We also see that God is *“the Father of lights.”*
  - 4. What does it mean that God is *“the Father of lights?”* Concerning God *“there is no variation or shifting shadow.”*
  - 5. Thus God does not “flicker” or change.
- e. Since God does not change therefore God does not change His mind
  - i. *“The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”” (Psalm 110:4)*
    - 1. This Psalm is a Messianic prophecy that is quoted frequently in the New Testament and applied to Christ.
    - 2. Here this verse mentions that God has sworn that the Messiah will be forever a Melchizedek order Priest.
    - 3. To ensure the readers that this will come true the author David invoked God’s attribute that God *“will not change His mind.”*
  - ii. *“For this the earth shall mourn And the heavens above be dark, Because I have spoken, I have purposed, And I will not change My mind, nor will I turn from it.” (Jeremiah 4:28)→* Notice the verse record God stating in the first person *“I will not change My mind.”*
  - iii. *“(for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, “The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever’”);” (Hebrews 7:21)*
    - 1. This passage is citing **Psalm 110:4** which we examined earlier.
    - 2. Once more we see the truth that the Lord *“will not change His mind.”*
    - 3. Seeing that this is a New Testament passage citing an Old Testament passage we see that there is a continuity in both Testaments concerning the truth that God is immutable.
- f. Since God does not change therefore God does not repent or need to repent: **Jeremiah 20:16, Ezekiel 24:14.**
- g. Christ as God the Son in the Trinity is also immutable
  - i. *“And, 'You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Your hands; 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they all will become old like a garment, 12 And like a mantle You will roll them up; Like a garment they will also be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end.’” (Hebrews 1:10-12)*
    - 1. This passage is citing **Psalm 102:25-27** which we examined earlier.
    - 2. Notice the passage says *“You are the same,” (v.12)* demonstrating the truth that God does not change which in contrast to His creation of *“of the earth, And the heavens” (v.10).*

3. Seeing that this is a New Testament passage citing an Old Testament passage we see that there is a continuity in both Testaments concerning the truth that God is immutable.
  4. What is interesting about this use of this Psalm in Hebrews is that **Hebrew 1** applies this Psalm to God the Son in light of the “*and*” in **verse 10** going back to “*But of the Son He says...*” in **verse 8**.
  5. Thus God the Son is also immutable.
- ii. “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*” (**Hebrews 13:8**)
    1. We see again for the second time in the book of Hebrews where it explicitly teach that Jesus “*is the same.*”
    2. Notice the duration this is true: “*yesterday and today and forever.*”
- h. Implications
- i. Have you been encouraged to trust in God more knowing that He does not change?
  - ii. Are you further encouraged to have faith in God’s Word, knowing that God does not lie rests on the truth that God does not change?
  - iii. Are you moved knowing that God is truly immutable when we see Messianic prophecies being fulfilled as demonstration that God does not change His mind?