

The Immutable Nature Of God

Text : Hebrews 6: 17-20 ; James 1: 12-18

INTRODUCTION :

A. Think back to your youth.

1. Wasn't life so much simpler then ?
 - a. You felt safe and secure.
 - b. You could stick out your thumb and a neighbor would give you a ride.
2. Back then you wished that things would change, but they seemed to just stay the same.
 - a. Then, when you got out on your own, there was a flurry of changes.
 - b. However, you adapted and life was again reduced to sameness.

B. Though human nature remains constant, people change.

1. After 20 years of marriage, a person tells his spouse that their marriage is over.
 - a. Spouse was taken totally by surprise.
 - b. The complaining spouse refuses to discuss it before moving out.
 2. Many men have come home from war with a totally different personality.
 3. Honest people turn into criminals.
 - a. Man sustains serious injury in an accident
 - b. Became hooked on pain pills and progressed into harder drugs.
 - c. Life begins to revolve around drugs which lead to crimes.
 4. People also change for the better.
 - a. Drug addicts sometimes get cleaned up in jail and turn their life around.
 - b. Evil person becomes a Christian and sanctifies his life to God.
- * **People change ... It is said that** *"The only constant in life is change."*

C. Even nations change.

1. Many now living remember the once mighty soviet empire falling apart in days.
 - a. The soviets were bent on world domination and constantly expanding.
 - b. Growing up in the "cold war" affected the world view of an entire generation.
2. Countries come and go; ... compare a map from 100 years ago with the current.
3. Just look at the *"Arab Spring"* which is happening today, kings are being dethroned.
4. Our own country is being "fundamentally transform" from democracy to socialism.

D. Our culture is changing rapidly.

1. Wealth has changed the way we live and what we value.
 - a. The modern household appliances are equivalent to having many servants.
 - b. Electricity eliminated the cutting of wood, the making of candles, etc. (*ice*)
 - c. Knowing we can get more makes us desire to do so. (*greed ... covetousness*)
2. Cheap fast transportation has changed the way we live.
 - a. People are no longer required to live near the place the work. (*68% drive 15 mi.*)
 - b. High quality medical care is available even to those in rural areas.
 - c. Even people of modest means are able to travel great distances for pleasure.
3. Business is now able to be conducted on a global scale.
 - a. Air-freight now brings goods to and from anywhere in the world.
 - b. Businesses can build factories all over the world making part in multiple nations.
 - c. Only those businesses that adjust to the global marketplace will survive.

E. Technology is changing every aspect of life everywhere on the planet.

1. The pace of change is faster than at any time in history.
 - a. There have been more changes in the past 30 yrs. than in the previous 300 yrs.
 - b. Each new innovation opens the door for many more.
2. The space program sent only a few men to the moon but it changed the world.
 - a. The space program propelled the development of the computer industry.
 - b. Because of the space program miniaturization and solid state circuitry was invented.
3. Technology changed communications which in turn changed people's world view.
 - a. The fax machine was invented in 1843, but not popular for 100 yrs.+ because it was thought that no one needed to conduct business that fast.
 - b. First there were party line telephones, then private lines, and now each individual in a family has a phone he carries everywhere.
 - c. Social medias are changing the dynamics of relationship. (*facebook friends*)
 - d. Pornography is reaching epidemic proportions. (*also online gambling*)
4. Evil people have been highly motivated to use the new media to advance their cause.
 - a. Evil of all sorts is available to people in the privacy their home.
 - b. In the private settings people can go astray without stigma or social pressure.
 - c. Internet content knows no bounds; it is completely uncensored.

How should the man of God respond to the changing nature of this world ?

I. Societal changes will of necessity affect the church.

A. Change is inherently neutral.

1. Right or wrong is not determined by the duration of a practice or a teaching.
 - a. A sin does not mellow with age.
 - b. Virtue never grows old.
2. Change for the sake of change often promotes folly. (*chasing numbers*)

B. Most living things change with time.

1. Trees grow up and out, but rocks just sit there and weather.
2. As people grow physically, they are expected to mature and change to act adult.
3. Things that are not living and dynamic tend to decay with time.

C. Churches are made up of people who are changing.

1. Christians who grow in the faith change, but those who don't stay the same.
2. Churches that do not change isolate themselves from those they hope to reach.
3. Doctrine does not change, **but** practices can, do, and **MUST** change. (*Amish*)

D. As attitude and moral values decline in America they are affecting religion.

1. In the past being religious was considered a plus in most quarters, but now it is considered a negative.
2. In the past high moral standards were encouraged and *taught*, but now forbidden.
3. Rather than opportunity, people expect to receive without giving. (*entitlement*)
4. These attitudes carry over into the church.
 - a. People expect to receive salvation without being required to produce for God.
 - b. Some feel they are doing God a favor if they attend and giving is over the top.
 - c. They do not accept the sovereignty of God to rule over their lives.
"God will have to understand this is just the way I am."

E. God does not change when society changes. (*His will is immutable.*)

1. In Christ we have a great deal of liberty, **but** God still sets our limits.
I Cor. 4:6- Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, ...
2. Though we **must** adapt our practices, we **can never** altar our doctrine.

II. Because of His divine nature God cannot change.

A. By definition God is infinite in **ALL** of His attributed.

1. If anything applies to God it is total and complete :
 - a. All knowing
 - b. All powerful
 - c. All loving, merciful, compassionate, present, Holy, etc, etc.
2. This being the case, ... God cannot change.
 - a. Change requires being different ... *less or more of something, better or worse.*
 - b. If God becomes less, He is not God.
 - c. If God becomes more, He was not God to start with.

B. The scriptures affirm that God is an unchangeable being.

1. The O.T. comforts us that God will never change.
 - a. **Malachi 3: 6-** For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.
 - b. **Psa. 102: 23-27** He has weakened my strength in the way; He has shortened my days. **24** I say, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days, Your years are throughout all generations. **25** 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 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.
2. The N.T. reconfirms comforts the unchanging nature of God.
 - a. **Heb. 13: 7-8** Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. **8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
 - b. **James 1: 16-17** Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. **17** 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.

III. Immutable does not mean immobile.

A. God is not so inflexible that He cannot deal with changing situations.

1. Sometimes the scriptures appear to indicate that God changes, but He really doesn't.

2. God deals with wicked men differently than He does with the righteous.
 - a. **I Sam. 15: 11-10** Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, **10** I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.
 - b. God was not saying he made a mistake, acknowledging that Saul had changed in a way the necessitated a change in the way He (God) dealt with him.
 - c. Being “omnificent” God knows all that will happen before hand. (**Psa. 139**)

B. The book of Jonah is the best example of this principle.

1. He dealt differently with Jonah when he obeyed than when he ran away.
 2. He did not destroy the wicked city because they repented. (*They changed.*)
 3. It is only when man changes that God changes the way He deals with him.
- * **THE SAME SUN THAT MELTS THE CANDLE HARDENS THE CLAY.**

IV. Why is God’s “immutability” important to us ?

- A. It is important because we can be assured that God’s attitude toward man will never change.
 1. His love for His creation will never cease.
 - a. **Jer. 31: 3-** The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying,
“I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.
 - b. **Luke 13: 34-** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!
 - c. **I John 4: 7-11** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
 2. God’s desire for our salvation and His plan to bring it about will never change.
 - a. **II Tim. 1: 8-9** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, **9** who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

- b. **Eph 3: 11**- This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, (cf - **I Pet. 1: 20**)

B. Because God will never change, His will is never going to change.

1. God's word was established in Heaven.
 - a. **Psa. 119: 89** - Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.
 - b. Having been established in Heaven, His will cannot be changed on the earth.
2. Once delivered, God's word is permanent and unalterable.
 - Jude 3**- Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.
3. Thus, we can be confident that the rules will never be changed on us.

C. Much confusion has arisen over the coming of God's plan of salvation.

1. God ruled the nation of Israel and as their King He gave them a law.
 - a. Moses delivered and administered that law to govern the nation of Israel.
 - b. That law was never given as a plan of salvation.
2. From before the foundation of the world salvation was always to be by grace through faith.
3. There were three aspects to the law given to Israel. (*and only to Israel*)
 - a. Civil
 - b. Ceremonial
 - c. Moral
4. Both the civil and Ceremonial aspects of the law ceased when Israel was destroyed.

D. The moral aspects of the law are eternal because God never changes.

1. Anything that God ever viewed as a sin is still sin today and forever.
2. If God approved of something in the past, He approves of it in the present.
3. THEREFORE : our studies in the O.T. are important because they teach us the mind and heart of God.
 - a. One cannot develop spiritual discernment without knowledge of the O.T.
 - b. The key is to look past the elaborate ceremonies and see God's workings.
 - c. We learn how God views obedience, disrespect, giving, honesty, etc.

CONCLUSION :

Though salvation in Christ is presented in the N.T. one must study all of His revelation to come to know God.

Lesson Texts :**Hebrews 6: 17-20**

17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, **18** so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. **19** This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, **20** where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

James 1: 12-18

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. **16** Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. **17** 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. **18** In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

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