

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

(Sermon to the elect of God gathered at Westboro Baptist Church on December 26, 2021.)

Immutability is an attribute which God claims, and challenges as peculiar to himself: "*I am the Lord, I change not,*" **Malachi 3:6(a)**. (Also see these verses: **Numbers 23:19**: "*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*" **1 Samuel 15:29**: "*And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.*" **Psalm 102:26**: "*They [earth and heaven] shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.*" **Hebrews 6:17-18**: "*Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*" **Hebrews 13:8**: "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*" **James 1:17**: "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" **Revelation 1:8**: "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*")

Mutability belongs to creatures, immutability to God only; creatures change, but he does not. The heavens and the earth, which he has made, are not always the same; but "he is the same for ever" (**Hebrews 13:8**). The visible heavens are often changing; they are sometimes serene and clear, at other times covered with clouds and darkness, and filled with meteors, snow, rain, hail, etc. The face of the earth appears different at the various seasons of the year, and is particularly renewed every spring: it has undergone one great change by a flood, and will undergo another by fire. Then "*the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; and the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*"; and "*new heavens*", and "*a new earth*", shall succeed, **2 Peter 3:10, 12, 13**. (Look at that word: the "works." It is instructive. Strong's has this: 2041 ἔργον *ergon* er'-gon. From a primary (but obsolete) ergo (to work); 1) business, employment, that which any one is occupied; 1a) that which one undertakes to do, enterprise, undertaking 2) any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, or mind; 3) an act, deed, thing done: the idea of working is emphasized in opposition to that which is less than work.)

The unchangeableness of God is opposite: "*All of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end,*" **Psalm 102:25-27**. The sun in the firmament, that fountain of light and heat, in allusion to which, God is called "*the Father of lights*", has its parallaxes, or various appearances, at morning, noon, and evening. It has its risings and settings; and never rises and sets at the same point in the heavens one day in the year, but always varies a little. It is sometimes under clouds, and in an eclipse; but "with" God "*is no variableness,*" παραλλαγη; the word is parallax. The sun, at certain seasons of the year, passes from one tropic, and enters into another, as well as casts shades on the earth; but with God there is "no shadow of turning", τροπη; the word is trope, or tropic. There is no mutation nor turning in him, nor shadow of any, **James 1:17**.

Job 23:13: "*But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*" The inhabitants of heaven and earth are changeable, even the most excellent of them, angels and men.

Angels in their original nature and state were subject to change, as the apostasy of many of them has shown; who have changed both state and place. They "*kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*" (**Jude 1:6**), being obliged to the latter, because of the former. For sinning against God, they were hurled out of heaven, and "*cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*" (**2 Peter 2:4**). The angels which stood when the rest fell, are now indeed become impeccable, and are firmly settled in their state of integrity; but then this is owing not to their own nature, but to the electing grace of God, in Christ, and to the confirming grace of Christ, their head, who is the "*head of all principality and power*" (**1 Timothy 5:21; Colossians 2:10**).

Man, at his best estate, his estate of innocence, and integrity, was "*altogether vanity.*" (**Psalm 39:5**) Though he was not sinful, yet being mutable, and left to the mutability of his will, which was his vanity, when tempted fell into sin. Though he was made upright (**Ecclesiastes 7:29**), lost the goodness of his nature. Though made after the image of God (**Genesis 1:26-27**), soon came short of that glory (**Romans 3:23**). Though he had dominion over the creatures (**Genesis 1:26, 28**), being in honour, he abode not long, but became like those he had the power over (**Psalm 49:12:** "*Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*") Though placed in the most delightful and fruitful spot in all the globe, yet, rebelling against his Maker and Benefactor, was driven out from thence by him (**Genesis 2:15; Genesis Chapter 3**). Now man is a creature subject to

innumerable changes in life; diseases of various sorts seize his body, and change his beauty and his strength, and death at last turns him to corruption and dust. He is like the changeable grass of the field; flourishes a while, is then cut down, and withers away; but God and his "**word endure for ever**" the same (**1 Peter 1:24, 25**). Good men are very mutable, both in their inward and outward estate: in spiritual affairs; in the frames of their minds, in the affections of their souls, in the exercise of grace, in their devotion and obedience to God, and worship of him. In temporal affairs; what an instance of mutability was Job, in his estate, in his family, and in his health and friends. Well might he say, "*changes and war are against me*", **Job 10:17**. And eventually he came to his great and last change, death; as all men must, even the best of men. In the future state, good men will be no more subject to change; their spirits will be made perfect, and sin no more, nor sorrow any more (**Revelation 21:4**). And their bodies, when raised, will remain immortal, incorruptible, spiritual, powerful, and glorious; but this will be owing, not to themselves, but to the unchangeable grace and power of God.

God only is in and of himself immutable; and he is unchangeable in his nature, perfections, and purposes, and in his love and affections to his people, and in his covenant, and the blessings and promises of it; and even in his threatenings.

The whole of **Malachi 3:6**: "*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" Therefore; accordingly; or consequently. Because the Lord changes not, the "therefores" are amazing. Gill: "[S]o it is owing to the unchangeable love, grace, and power of Christ, that none of his perish internally or eternally, but have everlasting life."

(FOR I AM THE LORD, I CHANGE NOT;)

Therefore, **Psalm 78:38**: "*But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*"

Therefore, **Psalm 89:34**: "*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*"

Therefore, **Psalm 103:17**: "*But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.*"

Therefore, **Psalm 105:7**: "*He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth.*"

Therefore **Psalm 105:8-10**: *“He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.”*

Therefore, **Isaiah 40:28-31**: *“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

Therefore, **Lamentations 3:22-23**: *“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”*

Therefore, **Romans 5:10**: *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

Therefore, **Romans 8:28-32**: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*

Therefore, **Romans 11:28-29**: *“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”*

Therefore, **Philippians 1:6**: *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

Therefore, **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**: *“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to*

salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Barnes: “Man would often have become weary of man’s wickedness and waywardness. We are impatient at one another, readily despair of one another. God might justly have cast off them and us; but He changes not. He abides by the covenant which He made...”.

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

Numbers 23:19. There is not enough money, influence, or power on God’s earth that could change the Lord’s purposes to bless God’s elect, on both a temporary and permanent basis. There is no variableness with God; there is no shadow of turning with him. Balak didn’t get it; he thought if he threw enough money at the “problem” that it would go away. Balak paid Balaam big bucks to curse God’s elect. But here is God’s answer at Balaam’s mouth (1st part):

How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! (Numbers 23:8-10)

All human power is utterly impotent against that power of God to bless. The Lord, the Son of God, “who is so far from cursing his people, that he has delivered them from the curses of the law, being made a curse for them, that the blessings of the everlasting covenant of grace might come upon them; and they are blessed of God in him, and for his sake, with all spiritual blessings.” (John Gill)

It “*shall not be reckoned among the nations.*” Israel lives separate and apart from all other nations; and more particularly separate from all heathen, non-elect, reprobate, workers of iniquity, non-believers, and earth-dwellers. They are thereby saved from the fate of the world. They are thereby not overcome by the world. The doctrine of sanctification is articulated here. (Note to self: Add that to the list of future sermons.) Gill: “[T]hey dwelt a separate people from all others, distinguished by their language, religion, laws, customs, and manner of living, being different both in their clothing, and in their food, from other people; nor had they dealings, nor did they company with those of other nations[.]” Gill: “[A]nd shall not be reckoned among the nations; as belonging to them, shall not be made

of any account by them, but be despised and reproached for their religion chiefly; nor reckon themselves of them, nor mix with them[.]” To which I say, “thank God!”

Who can count the dust of Jacob is an effective way of describing their numbers? “*Let me die the death of the righteous.*” JFB: “The meaning is: they are a people happy, above all others, not only in life, but at death, from their knowledge of the true God, and their hope through His grace.” Gill: “[T]heir death is different from others, not in the thing itself, but in the concomitants and consequences of it; they die in the Lord, in union to him, in faith of him, in hope of eternal life by him, and their death is precious to him; and in consequence of this they are carried by angels to glory at death and immediately in heaven with Christ, and it will be well with them to all eternity. Balaam ... bears a testimony to the immortality of the soul, to a future state after death, and to an eternal life and happiness to be enjoyed by good men.”

Balak being stubborn as a jackass and Balaam greedy for gain, he pushes on for a cursing while reminding Balaam who is paying the bills around here; but here is the 2nd installment of God’s blessing pronounced at Balaam’s mouth:

Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. (Numbers 23:20-24)

What he beholds when he looks at his elect people, is His only begotten Son, whose righteousness is imputed to them. **Psalm 103:12**: “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” **Isaiah 1:18**: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” **Isaiah 38:17**: “Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.” **Jeremiah 50:20**: “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” **Hosea 14:4**: “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.” **Micah 7:18-20**: “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he

retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.” **Romans 4:7-8:** “Saying, *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”* **Romans 6:14:** “*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”* **Romans 8:1:** “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* **2 Corinthians 5:19:** “*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”*”

As to these enchantments and divinations, see **Isaiah 44:25:** “*[I am the Lord] that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.”* They are heavily invested in their astrologers, stargazers, enchanters, diviners, etc. ad nauseum. See **Isaiah 47:12-15:** “*Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.”*”

What is the shout? “*The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.”* (**Psalm 118:15**)

“*And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.”*
(**Numbers 23:25**).

Balak, either too ignorant to understand words or too arrogant to accept defeat, pushes on for a cursing from the mouth of this false prophet, and changes location and adds more effort. This is what I say about him and a lot of rich people: He had more dollars than sense. And, Balaam, famous forever for his greediness (**Jude 1:11**), and standing as the symbol of false religious teachers thereafter to the present day, chases the opportunity.

The result is the 3rd part of the blessing of the Lord on his elect people announced at Balaam’s mouth. This is a phenomenon we still see daily: these false prophets, these government leaders, and these enemies of the cross of Christ open their mouths to curse

God's elect people; and blessings come out. Not to their credit; but the Almighty Father of Spirits is worthy of the blessing and praise. I've got the name of this sub-sermon: "**And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass,**" and blessed. **Numbers 22:28.**

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. (Numbers 24:5-9)

Figuratively this is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Low hanging fruit alert!

Psalm 84:1, 4 and 10: *"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!" "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah." "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."* **Song of Solomon 4:12-15:** *"A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."* **Psalm 1:3:** *"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."*

As to the buckets of water, consider these verses:

John 7:38: *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* **John 4:14:** *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* **Proverbs 10:11:** *"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked."* **Isaiah 12:3:** *"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."* **Isaiah 44:3:** *"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."* **Isaiah 58:11:** *"And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."* **Isaiah 59:21:** *"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and*

my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever." **Ezekiel Chapter 47:1-12** (read it) ending here: "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." **Zechariah 14:8**: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." **Revelation 21:6**: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Gill: "The grace of God, with which his churches are watered, and become fruitful by means of the word and ordinances, which is conveyed through them out of the fullness which is in Christ."

JFB reports — "The Amalekites were then the most powerful of all the desert tribes, and "Agag" a title common to their kings." Haman's father was an Agagite. **Esther 3:1**.

The second time now these blessings are articulated, centered around this language: "*he hath as it were, the strength of an unicorn.*" In bringing God's elect from Egypt to the Promised Land, there is war and constant battle; and although like Gideon we believe we have no power, the reality is that we have plenty potential power for the battle by virtue of God. He has said it and will perform it. Gill identifies the power: "[T]he strength of the spiritual Israel of God, which they have from him to exercise grace, perform duty, withstand and overcome all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world." **Ezekiel 12:25**: "*For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; ... I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.*" **Philippians 1:6**: "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*"

The second time recorded in these blessings from God at the mouth of Balaam, is language of complete defeat by God's elect over their enemies; in clear and unambiguous language. Put to shame are all the hopes indulged by the Moabitish king of the conquest and destruction of Israel. As lions, the members of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ are described as having great mastery and complete victory over their enemies. Here's the picture that comes to my mind: **Daniel 6:24**: "*And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.*" The accusation they brought against

our brother, Daniel: Daniel prayed to God. They intended that Daniel be fed to these ravenous beasts for such a crime; the Lord our God had a different menu for the lions. Of all the cats in the world, Lions are never that finicky.

I've touched upon some of these blessings from the mouth of the enemies of God's elect; they are worthy of many more sermons.

Friends, I've merely scratched the surface of this truth: The Immutability of God. I hope to turn again to this comforting doctrine, the Lord willing.

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. **Jude 1:24-25.***

I love you. Amen.