

THE IMMUTIBILITY OF GOD

(2nd in a series)

Sermon to the servants and saints of the Most High God at Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas, on February 13, 2022.

Last time, I began this series, and urged that 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. I hope to expand on these points today and in the future. But why would I want to talk about this? Look at **Matthew 22:34-38**:

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

One of the ways in which you love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, is to read the Bible and make it your primary goal in life to read it until you understand it, and thereby inform yourself of what it reveals about the true nature and attributes of God. You cannot and therefore you do not love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind if you are ignorant of his true nature and attributes as he has revealed them. How can you? Ignorance breeds hatred; knowledge enables true love. We are living in a world of hatred towards God; people are willingly ignorant about God's true nature and attributes.

There are 7.7 billion alive on the earth. Google it! Do we live in a generation of 7.7 billion God-haters? Ignorance of God's true nature and attributes is a major contributor to that hatred. *“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord.” (John 15:17-20a)*

Today, I suggest to you that a very good starting place to learn of the true nature and attributes of God is to study the Bible about his immutability.

God, being an infinite and uncreated Spirit (**John 4:24**: “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*”), and free from composition in every sense, is entirely and perfectly immutable. And since he is "eternal" (**Deuteronomy 33:27**: “*The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.*” **1 Timothy 1:17**: “*Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*” **Hebrews 9:14**: “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*”), there can be no change of time with him.

Time does not belong to God, but only to a creature, which is the measure of its duration; and began when a creature began to be, and not before. But God is before all creatures (**Colossians 1:17**: “*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*”); they being made by him (**Colossians 1:16**: “*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him*”), and so before time. He was the same before the day was as now, and now as he was before; “*even the same today, yesterday, and for ever.*” (**Hebrews 13:8**). Though he is “*the ancient of days*” (**Daniel 7:9, 13 and 27**--because he is from everlasting, and without beginning of days; but chiefly because he is permanent, and endures for ever; his years fail not, and of his days there will be no end), he does not become older and older; he is no older now than he was millions of ages ago, nor will be millions of ages to come.

His eternity is an everlasting and unchangeable "now." “*He is the same, and his years shall have no end*”, **Psalm 102:27**; **Hebrews 13:8**. Seeing he is infinite, immense, and omnipresent; there can be no change of place with him. For he “*fills heaven and earth*” with his presence (**Jeremiah 23:24**: “*Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.*”) He is everywhere, and cannot

change or move from place to place. God is the "most perfect" Being, and therefore can admit of no change in his nature, neither of increase nor decrease, of addition nor diminution.

If he changes, it must be either for the better or the worse; if for the better, then he was imperfect before, and so not God: if for the worse, then he becomes imperfect; and the same follows. Or if he changes from an infinitely perfect state, to another equally so, then there must be more infinities than one, which is a contradiction in terms. Again, if any change is made in him, it must be either from somewhat within him, or from somewhat without him. If from within, he must consist of parts; there must be "another" and "another" in him; there must be not only something active in him, to work upon him, but a passive power to be, wrought upon; which is contrary to his simplicity. If he changes from somewhat without him, then there must be a superior to him, able to move and change him.

But he is the "*most high*" God; there is none in heaven nor in earth above him; he is "*God over all, blessed for ever*" (**Romans 9:5**). **Psalm 47:2**: "*For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.*" **Psalm 57:2**: "*I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.*" **Psalm 83:18**: "*That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.*" **Daniel 4:17**: "*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*" **Acts 16:17**: "*The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.*" **1 Chronicles 29:12**: "*Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*" **2 Chronicles 20:6**: "*And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" **Psalm 103:19**: "*The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*" **Romans 10:12**: "*For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*" **Ephesians 1:22**: "*And hath**

put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”

The unchangeableness of the divine nature is not disproved by the incarnation of Christ. For though he, a divine Person, possessed of the divine nature, was "*made flesh*" (**John 1:14**), or became man; the divine nature in him was not changed into the human nature, nor the human nature into the divine, nor a third nature made out of them both. Was this the case, the divine nature would have been changeable; but so it was not. Christ remained what he was, and assumed what he was not; and what he assumed added nothing to his divine person. **Philippians 2:6-8**: "*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* He was only "*manifest in the flesh*" (**1 Timothy 3:16**); he neither received any perfection, nor imperfection, from the human nature; though flesh received glory and honor by its union to him (**Hebrews 2:9**), and was adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure, and is now advanced at the right hand of God (**Hebrews 1:13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2, 1 Peter 3:22**). Nor was any change made in the divine nature by the sufferings of Christ; the divine nature is incapable of suffering, and is one reason why Christ assumed the human nature, that he might be capable of suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people. And though the Lord of life and glory was crucified (**Acts 3:15; 1 Corinthians 2:8**), and God purchased the church with his own blood (**Acts 20:28**), and the blood of Christ is called the blood of the Son of God (**1 Corinthians 10:16, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 6:6, 9:14, 10:19, 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:7**); yet he was crucified in the human nature only, and his blood was shed in that, to which the divine person gave virtue and efficacy (e.g., **Isaiah 53:10** (and see my sermon on **Isaiah 53**)), through its union to it; but Christ received no change by all this.

God is unchangeable in his perfections or attributes; of which are the following examples:

- He is the same in his power as ever; though that has been displayed in various instances, in creation, providence, etc. it is not exhausted, nor in the least diminished. His hand is not shortened. **Isaiah 50:2**: "*Wherefore,*

when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.” And see, **Isaiah 59:1**: “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.” **Genesis 18:14**: “Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” **Numbers 11:23**: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD’S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.” His strength is everlasting, his power eternal, invariably the same. **Isaiah 26:4**: “Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” **Romans 1:20**: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”

- His "knowledge" is the same (**Colossians 2:3**: “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”); his "understanding is infinite" (**Psalms 147:5**); it can be neither increased nor lessened. The knowledge of angels and men increases gradually; but not so the knowledge of God. He knows no more now than he did from all eternity, he knew as much then as he does now; for he knows and sees all things together, and at once, in his vast eternal mind. He does not know one thing after another, as they appear in time, as do humans, and that very imperfectly and under huge natural limitations. Things past, present, and to come, are all beheld by God in one view. See for example: **Isaiah 46:10**: “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”
- His "goodness", grace, and mercy, are immutable. See, e.g., **Psalms 23:6**: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” **Psalms 52:1**: “« To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech. » Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.”

Let us take a moment here and examine the context of this first verse of **Psalm 52**. A more outrageous series of events is hard to imagine. Let's examine the record. See **1 Samuel 21:1 through 1 Samuel 22:23**:

“Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me. And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. ... David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. ...

When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;) Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar,

escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

These events occasioned David to write: "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually." (**Psalm 52:1**).

As to the "*goodness of God endureth continually*," Gill says: "that is, the love, grace, and mercy of God; this is observed as what is the matter of the saints' boasting, in opposition to the wicked boasting of Doeg; they glory in the love of God, and in that they know him who exerciseth lovingkindness, which is the source of all the blessings of grace and goodness; and in Christ, through whom all are communicated to them; and in him, as made every blessing to them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: they ascribe the whole of their salvation, and all they have, to the grace of God, and glory in nothing as of themselves, and as though not received of the Lord. Moreover, the psalmist may take notice of this, as what was his support under all the persecutions he endured from men; that he had an interest in the grace and goodness of God, which is immutable and everlasting, invariably the same in all states and conditions; and that he was encompassed about with the favour of God as with a shield; and that it was not in the power of his most implacable enemies to separate him from the love of God; and therefore it was egregious folly in Doeg to boast himself in mischief; for, be he as mighty as he might, he could not prevent his sharing in the divine goodness, which always continues."

And, see **Psalm 107:1**: "*O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*" Even though there has been such an overflowing of his goodness to his creatures (e.g., **Romans 5:5**: "*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*"), and so many good

and perfect gifts have been bestowed on them (e.g., **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.*”), it is still the same in him, without any abatement. He is abundant in it (See, e.g., **Exodus 34:6-7(a)**: *“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,”*) and, and it endures continually the same: and so is his grace, which has been exceedingly abundant (**Ephesians 3:20**); he is as gracious and merciful as ever; *“his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, to them that fear him”* (**Psalms 103:17**).

- His faithfulness he never suffers to fail; even though men believe not, he abides faithful; and the unbelief of men cannot make the faith or faithfulness of God without effect. **Deuteronomy 7:9**: *“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.”* **Psalms 36:5**: *“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”* **Psalms 89:33**: *“Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”* **Psalms 119:90**: *“Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.”* **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.”* **2 Timothy 2:13**: *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”* **1 Corinthians 1:9**: *“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”* **1 Corinthians 10:13**: *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* **1 Peter 4:19**: *“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”*

Cue the music-#40 in the blue hymn book: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

- He is "glorious" in "holiness", that perfection never receives any tarnish, can never be sullied, but is always illustriously the same. **Exodus 15:11:** "*Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*" There is no unrighteousness in God, he cannot change from holiness to unholiness, from righteousness to unrighteousness. **Psalm 92:15:** "*To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*" **Romans 9:14:** "*What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*" He is the just one, that neither can nor will do iniquity; and so he is unchangeably good, and immutable in every perfection. **Acts 7:52:** "*Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.*" **2 Chronicles 19:7:** "*Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.*" **Ps 136:1:** "*O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*" **Malachi 3:6:** "*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*"

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (**Hebrews 13:20-21**).