



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Character of God” Series Lesson 4 – August 21, 2016

Incommunicable Attribute of Immutability (Unchangeable)

I. Lesson Starters:

Last week we started to look at the specific Incommunicable attributes of God, the first being Independence/Self-Existence. Today we will look at Immutability or being Unchangeable, which can be summarized as follows:

God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, will and promises; yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

II. Evidence in Scriptures:

Psalms 102:25-27

25 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 26 They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. 27 But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

- God has always existed before the creations of the earth and will exist into eternity
- God causes the universe to change, but He remains the same

Malachi 3:6

6 “I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

- God uses a general statement of his unchangeableness to refer to some specific ways in which he does not change

James 1:17

1 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

- Good gifts come from God, we can be confident that they will continue in the future
- His character never changes in the slightest degree

Isaiah James 46:9-11

9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ 11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.

The definition given in scriptures about God being unchanging refer to God’s own being or to some attribute of his character. God is unchanging with respect to all of His attributes, purpose or character. God is unchanging in His promise. He does not change and can always be trusted to be faithful.

III. Does God Sometimes Change His Mind?

When we talk about God being unchanging in his purpose or character, we may wonder about places in Scripture where God said he would judge people and then because of prayer or the people’s repentance, God relents and does not bring judgement.

- Moses successful intervention in prayer to prevent the destruction of the people of Israel (Ex 32:9-14)
- Adding of 15 years of life to Hezekiah (Isa 38:1-6)

- Failure to bring promised judgement upon Nineveh when the people repented (Jonah 3:4,10)

The question we have to ask is whether these are situations where God's purpose changed? Others cases state that God is said to being sorry that he had made upon the earth (Gen 6:6) or sorry that he had made Saul king (1 Sam 15:10). Did God's purpose change in these cases?

- These should be understood as true expressions of God's present attitude or intention with respect to situation as it exists at that moment
- If the situation changes, then God's attitude or expression of intention will also change

IV. The Importance of God's Unchangeableness

How could we ever trust a God who could change? How could we commit our life to Him? Reflection on God possibly changing forgiveness of sins, eternal promises, His purposes, attributes changing to not being totally holy; all show how absolutely important the doctrine of God's unchangeableness is.

- If God is not unchanging, then the whole basis of our faith begins to fall apart and our understanding of the universe begins to unravel
- Our entire faith depends on a God who is infinitely worthy of trust; because he is absolutely and eternally unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes and promises.
- To accept the above two points, this draws into question our total understanding of God's sovereignty and how "planned out" each occurrence really is?

V. Group Questions:

1. What does God's unchangeable attributes mean to you personally? Focus on God's will, promises and holiness; why are they so important to be unchangeable?
2. In reviewing the 3 situations listed above in scriptures where God appears to change his mind(Moses, Hezekiah and Nineveh), discuss how this is "different" from God's attributes changing?
3. Discuss how God's feelings or expression of His attitude relating to current situations are different from His attributes.
 - a. Discuss how God can be Unchangeable, but yet change His mind?
 - b. Do you think God changed His mind?
 - c. If so, then discuss the implication of how our choices and actions affect the ultimate outcome of God's plan?
4. Do you agree that God's immutability is the foundation of our faith to believe in our God? Why or why not?