

Series: God Is Unchangeable #1711

Title: Various Scriptures
Unchangeable In His Being

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Thus far we have had two introductory broadcasts and podcasts on the unchanging nature of who God is. Beginning today my task is to show you from the Bible ways in which God is unchangeable. We have a few of these to look at, more than we can do in one day, so please stay tuned. The first is that God is unchangeable in His being, or if you prefer in His essence. God's being is His essence. To know who God is, who He is in His being, in His essence is to know that He is unchangeable.

This can be proven from reason. This can be proven from the Bible. Let's start with reason. Power up your mind to think; to understand. For God to be God, God must be perfect. Would you want to worship an imperfect God? I do not think you would. Me neither. God is perfect. Furthermore, as we have already learned, God is self-sufficient. He is from Himself. He is *a se*. He has no cause, outside of Himself, responsible for His being. He is the only independent Being, with a capital B. Therefore, He can be changed by no one. Are you with me? This may help.

Let's contrast God with us. (The Creator with the creatures.) Think about this. God cannot be changed for the better nor for the worse. God cannot be changed for the better because He is the best. And God cannot be changed for the worse because He would cease to be the most perfect. That is what theologian Francis Turretin said and then he quoted Saint Augustine, "Whatsoever is changed from the better for the worse, and from the worse for the better, is not God, because perfect virtue can neither change for the better, nor true eternity for the worse (205)." End quote.

I want you to hear that again. We're busy people, with minds moving a mile a minute. Let's slow down and think about this. Hearing truth again and again helps us process it. God cannot be changed for the better nor for the worse. God cannot be changed for the better because He is the best. And God cannot be changed for the worse because He would cease to be the most perfect. As Augustine said, "Whatsoever is changed from the better for the worse, and from the worse for the better, is not God, because perfect virtue can neither change for the better, nor true eternity [change] for the worse (205)." End quote.

All of the sound theologians insist upon this. Listen to a few others. The Puritan Thomas Watson said it this way, "In God there is nothing that looks like a change, for better or worse; not better, because then He were not perfect; not worse, for then He would cease to be perfect. He is immutably holy, immutably good; there is no shadow of change in [God] (*A Body of Divinity*, 67)." Louis Berkhof says improvement and deterioration are equally impossible in God. And Arthur W. Pink, closer to our time, says that God has not evolved, grown nor improved. "All that He is today He has ever been, and ever will be (*The Attributes of God*, 46-47)."

We are the opposite to God in this regard. We *do* change for the better and we *do* change for the worse. The good news is we can change for the better because we are not the best. The bad news is we can change for the worse because we are not perfect. Think back on your life as I think back on mine. Haven't there been areas of improvement? Yes. Haven't there been areas of deterioration? Yes. For example, we grow in wisdom, sometimes merely by getting older and paying attention to our experiences. Our wisdom improves. And yet, even then, we do the unwise thing in certain situations. But God is all-wise. He never gains in wisdom and He never loses any wisdom. He has all the wisdom. He does not change.

Still, employing our reason, and thinking about the contrast between the Creator (God) and the creatures (you and me), it is true that all creatures are subject to change. Another word for change is mutable. So, to quote John of Damascus from the seventh century AD, "All created things are mutable (quoted in *Institutes of Elencitic Theology, Volume I*, 205)." All created things are mutable or changeable.

Why? God has no beginning and God has no end. He is infinite. So God is as He has always been and always will be. He is the same at the beginning, He is the same throughout all history, He is the same today and tomorrow and forever. Therefore, He can know no change. I am coming to more Scripture in a minute, but this is the perfect place for James chapter 1 and verse 17. James 1.17 says God is, **“The Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”** In God there is no change, not even a slight variation or something as small and quick as a shifting shadow.

But we have a beginning and we have an end. And we derive our being from someone other than ourselves. I am not God. You are not God. We are not self-sufficient. We are not independent beings, even though we like to think we are. We derive our existence from God. In Him we live and move and have our being. So that while I change, while you change, God does not change. He remains the same. His being, His essence is as it always has been and will forever be because His being, His essence is from within Himself. But our being, our essence is different from His. We can put it this way: God changes us, but we do not change Him. God can and does change us because He created us. He made us. And He made us to be changeable beings. He is immutable. We are mutable.

Friends, we will see more on this as we move along. All we are doing now is to establish that, first, God is unchangeable and this can be established using our reason. Our reason tells us God cannot be changed for the better nor for the worse. And our reason tells us that all of us are subject to change, whereas God is not.

God is unchangeable in His being. We can prove this from reason. And we can prove this from the Bible. These will be Scripture verses you should write down and read, meditatively, for yourself. I will come back to these throughout our time together, but let's get them on our minds now and in keeping with what has been said regarding God's being, God's essence. The most poignant of these is what God says about Himself in Malachi chapter 3 and verse 6, **“I, the Lord, do not change...”** It is hard to argue against that! God says of Himself, “I do not change.” Malachi 3, verse 6. Pink calls this God's “own unqualified affirmation (47).”

Psalms 102 is a prayer for the afflicted person when we are faint and when we pour out our complaint before the Lord. If you are in distress and despair this very moment, pray the words of Psalm 102. Beginning in verse 25 the Psalmist speaks about how God's creation, like the earth and the heavens, will change. Even the creation will change, but the Creator, God, will never change. I am reading Psalm 102, and verses 25-27. **“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.”**

Meditating on this text, Thomas Watson says, “The heavens shall be changed, but not He who dwells in heaven (66).” And what is really enthralling about these verses is that over in Hebrews chapter 1 these words are applied to Jesus Christ. Read Hebrews 1 and you will see the writer quote several Old Testament Scriptures, applying them to the Lord and in verses 10-12 he quotes what we have just read from Psalm 102. As proof for the deity of Christ, Hebrews says Jesus is unchangeable! God is unchangeable, therefore Jesus is unchangeable, because Jesus is God. Psalm 102 says God is eternal (“Your years will not come to an end”) and God is changeless (“You are the same”). And Hebrews applies this to Christ. How marvelous.

God is unchangeable in His being. Let's talk more about this next time as we continue to discover who God is.

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