

Title: **“I CHANGE NOT!”**

Text: Malachi 3:6

Subject: *God’s Immutability*

Date: Sunday PM — November 8, 2009

Tape: Malachi #13

Readings: *Merle Hart and James Jordan*

Introduction:

In Malachi 3:6, the Lord our God declares, “*I change not!*” That is my subject. — **“I CHANGE NOT!”** The Apostle James describes our God as “*The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*” (James 1:17). And in our text, the Lord God himself declares, — “*I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*”

How great that God must be who is unchanging and unchangeable! Nothing reaches God. Nothing touches God. Nothing affects God. Nothing moves God. Nothing changes God. — God reaches all things; but nothing reaches him. — God touches all things;

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but nothing touches him. — God affects all things; but nothing affects him. — God moves all things; but nothing moves him. — God changes all things; but nothing changes him!

- God is immutable. Sitting upon his high and glorious throne, with the ease and serenity of total and absolute sovereignty, God looks down upon the heavens, down upon the angels, down upon the earth, down upon men, the worms of the earth, down upon hell, the fallen angels, and Satan himself and declares, — *“I am the LORD, I change not!”*
- Satan led a revolt against his throne; but God changes not!
- Sin entered into the world; but God changes not!
- Nations rise and nations fall; but God changes not!
- The heavens and the earth shall vanish away; but God changes not!
- A new heaven and a new earth shall be made; but God changes not!

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- God’s elect shall enter into the bliss of eternal glory, and the damned shall be cast into hell forever; but God changes not!

God alone is unaffected. God alone is immutable. God alone never changes.

Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day,
Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay all around me I see —
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

PROPOSITION: Immutability belongs to God alone.

- This world is not immutable.
- You and I are not immutable. — “*Man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity.*”

Illustrations: The Fall
Life in this World.
All Temporal Affairs.
All Spiritual Affairs.

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“God alone is, in and of himself, immutable”
(John Gill).

Divisions: — God is immutable.

1. In the essence of his being.
2. In the perfections of his nature.
3. In his purposes and decrees.
4. In his love toward his elect.
5. In the promises of his covenant.

I. GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN THE ESSENCE OF HIS BEING.

God is the eternal, infinite Spirit. He cannot change or be changed by anything. He who says, “**I AM THAT I AM**” (Exodus 3:15), can never experience change. He is immutable. I realize that it is far easier for me to say what God is not than it is for me to say what he is. But, of this you may be certain, **whatever God is in the essence of his Being, he cannot change** (Psalm 102:25-27). — He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever!

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(Psalms 102:25-27) “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. (26) They 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: (27) But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.”

ETERNALITY will not permit change. — That which is eternal must of necessity be. And that which necessarily exists from eternity can never be changed. God is eternal. He is the only Being who is without cause. He is, because he is. Therefore, he cannot change or be changed.

PERFECTION will not permit change. — Perfection cannot be increased or diminished. God, who is perfect, cannot change for the better, because he is perfect already. He cannot change for the worse, for that would make him

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imperfect. — God never learned anything. Perfect knowledge cannot learn.

Though God created the world, he never changed.

- It was his will to create from eternity.
- Creative power was in him from eternity.
- And the creation of the world has had no effect upon him.

God underwent no change when Godhead was united to manhood in the incarnation of Christ (Isaiah 9:6).

- God did not cease to be God.
- Godhead and manhood were united in one glorious Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of God’s elect. — (Hypostatic Union).

Do you see this? God is eternally and perpetually the same. He is immutable in the essence of his Being.

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II. GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN ALL THE PERFECTIONS OF HIS NATURE.

God’s attributes are those perfections of the Divine character which are essential to his Being as God. In all the attributes of his nature God is immutable.

The power of God is immutable. — It is never exhausted, or even slightly diminished.

The knowledge of God is immutable. — God has never learned anything. And he has never forgotten anything. I rejoice to hear him say, *“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”* But that is a revelation of his grace, not a description of his omniscience. And that non-remembrance of our sins was an act of eternal grace.

The goodness of God is immutable. — God’s goodness extends to all his creatures. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. But God’s

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goodness is never in short supply. It is immutably abundant.

The faithfulness of God is immutable. — His faithfulness never fails! Though we believe not, “*He abideth faithful.*”

- To His People.
- To His Purposes.
- To His Promises.
- To Himself.
- To His Son.

The glorious holiness of God is immutable. — God’s holiness is never tarnished. He is the immutably just and righteous one. His holiness is always illustriously the same.

- Satan has not tarnished it.
- Man has not tarnished it.
- Grace has not tarnished it.

III. GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS PURPOSES AND DECREES.

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John Gill wrote, “There is a purpose for everything, and a time for that purpose. God has determined all that ever was, is or shall be” — All that comes to pass comes to pass according to the sovereign, eternal, immutable counsel and decree of God. And his counsel, his purpose, his decree is immutable (Hebrews 6:17; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 11:36; Proverbs 16:4).

(Proverbs 16:4) “The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”

(Romans 11:36) “For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

(Ephesians 1:11) “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

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(Hebrews 6:17) “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:”

The purposes of God are always executed. They are never frustrated. It does not lie within the realm of created power to frustrate the purpose of the Creator. — “*The counsel of the Lord stands forever*” (Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 14:24, 27; 46:10).

(Psalms 33:11) “The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

(Proverbs 19:21) “*There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*”

(Isaiah 14:24) “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so

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shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand:”

(Isaiah 14:27) “For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

(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:”

God’s purposes are in himself (Ephesians 1:9). That which God has purposed in himself cannot change until he changes. And he cannot change until he ceases to be God. And that cannot be!

God’s purposes and decrees are eternal (Ephesians 3:11; Romans 8:28-30).

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that

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love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) 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. (30) 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.”

(Ephesians 3:11) “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:”

No new thoughts arise in his mind. No new resolutions are formed in his heart. No new decrees come forth from his lips. His counsels are of old, from everlasting.

Note: God’s purposes and decrees are called his counsel because they are wisely and deliberately formed. Yet. we must never imagine that his counsels are like the counsels of men. God sees

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and knows all things at once. He declares the end from the beginning!

Nothing unforeseen can ever arise to make him change his mind. — He is able to perform what he has purposed. — Changes in providence do not imply any change in God (Job 23:10-14).

(Job 23:10-14) “But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (11) My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. (12) Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*. (13) But he *is* in one *mind*, and who can turn him? and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth. (14) For he performeth *the thing that is* appointed for me: and many such *things are* with him.”

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God’s immutability is not inconsistent with the prayers of his people. Prayer will not change God’s purpose (Jeremiah 15:1).

(Jeremiah 15:1) “Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, *yet* my mind *could not be* toward this people: cast *them* out of my sight, and let them go forth.”

Prayer is one of the instruments by which God accomplishes his purpose (Ezekiel 36:36-37; 2 Samuel 7:25-27).

(Ezekiel 36:36-37) “Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places*, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*. (37) Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet *for* this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.”

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(2 Samuel 7:25-27) “And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said. (26) And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. (27) For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.”

IV. **GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT** (Jeremiah 31:3; John 13:1).

(Jeremiah 31:1-3) “At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. (2) Thus saith the LORD, The people *which were* left of the sword found

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grace in the wilderness; *even* Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. (3) The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

(John 13:1) “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”

God’s love is like himself. It is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. “*God is love.*” And **God’s love for his elect is...**

- Without beginning!
- Without cause!
- Without limitation!
- Without change!
- Without end!

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Though we fell in Adam, God’s love never changed. — **Though we lived long** in rebellion and sin, God’s love never changed (Ezekiel 16:6-8; Ephesians 2:4-5; Titus 3:3-5; 1 John 3:1; 4:9-10).

(Ezekiel 16:6-8) “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live. (7) I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare. (8) Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”

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(Ephesians 2:4-5) “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”

(Titus 3:3-5) “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. (4) But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”

(1 John 3:1) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore

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the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

(1 John 4:9-10) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

Though we often sin against him still, God’s love never changes. — He hides his face from us; but he does not cease to love us (Isaiah 54:7-10). He afflicts us; but he does not cease to love us (Hebrews 12:6-11).

(Isaiah 54:7-10) “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. (8) In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. (9) For

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this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. (10) For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.”

(Hebrews 12:6-11) “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. (7) If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (8) But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (9) Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (10) For they verily for a few days

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chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. (11) Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

God is immutable in (1.) the essence of his being, (2.) in the perfections of his nature, (3.) in his purposes and decrees, (4.) and in his love toward his elect.

V. AND, FIFTHLY, GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN THE PROMISES OF HIS COVENANT
(2 Corinthians 1:20).

(2 Corinthians 1:20) “For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”

The everlasting covenant of grace was made with Christ before the world began. And it stands

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fast with him. All the blessings of the covenant are called “*sure mercies.*” They flow to us from the free and sovereign grace of God through Christ. And they cannot be reversed (Romans 11:29).

What has God promised in the covenant?
(Hebrews 8:10-12).

(Hebrews 8:10-12) “For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (11) And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (12) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

He promised...

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- Regeneration
- Adoption
- Revelation
- Mercy
- Forgiveness

To whom are these promises made? (Psalm 89:19-37).

- To Christ.
- To All Who are In Christ.

(Psalms 89:19-37) “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people. (20) I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: (21) With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. (22) The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. (23) And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. (24) But my faithfulness

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and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. (25) I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. (26) He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. (27) Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. (28) My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. (29) His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. (30) If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; (31) If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; (32) Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. (33) Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. (34) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. (35) Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. (36) His seed shall endure

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for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. (37) It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”

The promises are made to all who believe on the Son of God (Isaiah 55:3, 6-7).

(Isaiah 55:3) “Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.”

(Isaiah 55:6-7) “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: (7) Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

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Will God ever break his promise? (Hebrews 13:5). Never! He will never turn away from you to bless you and do you good.

(Hebrews 13:5) “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

- He will never take away his gifts of grace.
- He will never charge his own elect with sin.
- He will never cease his own to cherish!

APPLICATION: “*I am the LORD, I change not.*”

1. Here is solid comfort (Isaiah 54:10).
2. Here is the Foundation for faith (Micah 7:18-20). — “*He delighteth in mercy!*”

(Micah 7:18-20) “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his*

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heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. (19) 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. (20) Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

3. Here is encouragement for prayer (1 John 5:14). — “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*”
4. Here is terror for you who will not seek God’s mercy. — “*I will deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them*” (Ezekiel 8:18).
5. Here is assurance and security for every believer. — “*I am the LORD, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*”

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Praise the Lord! He never changes!
Come, extol His worthy name!
Yesterday, today, forever
Behold, God remains the same!
Satan led his great rebellion;
And our father Adam fell.
Yet our God remains unshaken,
And unaltered is His will!

Though God’s Son assumed our nature,
He is still unchanged, our God!
Christ alone could make atonement,
For this Man is truly God!
Though His chosen, ransomed people
Could not, would not seek His face,
God’s purpose, unchanged, abides; and
He’ll save all the chosen race!

Therefore we, the sons of Jacob,
Though we’re weak and full of shame,
Are secure and have assurance. —
God, unchanged, remains the same!
Praise the Lord! He never changes!

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Come, extol His worthy name!
Yesterday, today, forever
Behold, God remains the same!

Amen.