



FROM THE GARDEN TO THE CROSS

A 20-WEEK STUDY OF MANKIND, SIN, AND SALVATION

WEEK 1—HANDOUT 1-2: GOD, TIME AND CREATION

<https://ref.ly/logos4/MediaTool?MediaItemId=3451619>

God's immutability is his freedom from change and his being the same at all times past, present, and future.

The doctrine of divine immutability affirms God's freedom from all change. Existing outside of time, he is all that he is in one unchanging moment, free from the movement and development of history. But within time, his creatures experience him as unchanging in his relations to human beings and therefore perfectly worthy of trust.

Immutability distinguishes God from mutable creatures, such as humans and animals, that are born, grow, and die. It also distinguishes him from inanimate things that are molded, moved, and destroyed. Unlike these, God does not have to grow and change, nor can he be reshaped or destroyed. Any change he would undergo would be for the better or for the worse, but each of these is impossible for a perfect divine being. At the same time, God is not static and lifeless. Rather, he is free from change because he is, all at once, the totality of life and activity.

God's immutability does not prevent his involvement in the changes and transitions of history, including those described in biblical revelation. Rather, in his activity within history, God shows his changelessness. Where God is said to change his mind, to repent, or to move from one emotional state to another, we understand that he is revealing his unchanging character in judgment at one time and in grace at another. When we see a different side of God's face, it is not because he has changed, but because we have changed in relation to him. At the same time, God shows his immutability in remaining perfectly faithful to his promises. What God wills he will do, and what he begins he will complete. God's immutability is not an obstacle to human relationship to God but is the foundation for trust in him.

Passages

KEY VERSES

Mal 3:6; Jas 1:17; Ps 102:26–28; Nu 23:19; Ro 1:23 (Contrast between immortal/mortal, unchanging/changing.); Php 1:6 (God will finish what he has begun.); Heb 13:8

ADDITIONAL VERSES

Ex 3:14; Nu 23:20; 1 Sa 15:29; Heb 1:11–12; Heb 6:17–18

Recommended Resources

De Trinitate (Augustine), V, 2.

Summa Theologica (Aquinas), Prima pars, q. 9 (Aquinas).

Institutes of Elenctic Theology (Turretin), topic 3, q. 11.

Reformed Dogmatics (Bavinck) Vol. II, 153–159.

All That Is in God (Dolezal), Ch. 2, “Unchanging God.”

Find more resources on God’s Immutability

Related Topics

- God’s Eternity
- God’s Glory
- God’s Simplicity
- God’s Veracity
- God’s Self-Existence

See Also

- Immutability

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¹ Joel B. Carini, “[God’s Immutability](#),” in *Lexham Survey of Theology*, ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018).