

## **THE IMMUTABLE GOD**

### **PSALM 102:23-28**

Introduction:

The psalmist wrote more than he intended and understood. He was simply recounting his own sufferings and struggles and how that he had sought help in the Lord. He was bearing testimony to the encouragement that the nature of the Eternal God brought to him. But in the doing of this he provided the words that the writer of Hebrews would later use to support the uniqueness of Jesus as the Son of God and His superiority to the angels.

The words are prophetic. The spirit of prophecy was on the unnamed psalmist. All we know about him is what the subscription indicates—“A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours his complaint before the Lord.”

No one has been able to confidently identify the particular time of affliction that prompted the psalm. However his ultimate solace was found in the immutability of God in the midst of an ever-changing world. This is a truth about God which we rarely ever mention, but it was precious to this suffering soul.

The dictionary defines immutable as something that cannot change, and cannot be changed. It is a truth that the author of Hebrew put on the lips of

the Father in eternity past as He addresses the Son about the upcoming incarnation and mission of salvation. Though the psalmist does not use the word, the basic truth of God's immutability, His unchangeable nature is set forth clearly.

Let's consider this revelation about our Savior. It may be just the pillow that we need as rest for our weary heads in a troubled, broken, ever-changing world. When I consider the world about us, I am almost overwhelmed by the change. When I think about you as a church, I am burdened by the change that you have undergone. When I think about our lives individually, everything seems to be changing—Yet He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Blessed be His name.

I. HIS IMMUTABILITY SETS HIM APART FROM THE  
CREATION. (v. 25-26)

The contrast is rather dramatic.

Psalm 102:25-26 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens *are* the work of Your hands. <sup>26</sup> They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed.

1. He is the Creator—they are the work of His hands.

The God that the psalmist worships and serves is greater than the creation.

He is the Creator, and the Source of all that is. “Of old You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure.”

Does this suggest that this old world, as we know it, was never meant to be permanent? Did the Creator design it to be disposable? We ought not to be surprised by the signs of the aging and decaying of this world system. Only the Creator never changes or ages.

2. He is Eternal—they are perishing.

The world in which we live and nature that surrounds us is perishing. And we share in the perishing nature of the world. “They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them. And they will be changed. But you are the same!”

3. He is Unchanging—they are ever changing.

What a comfort! My mother will celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in a couple of weeks, and my Dad has already returned to the dust. My grandparents that I knew as a youngster are gone, and my uncles and aunts are like me getting older. They are not what they once were. Most of the leaders that I knew in my early years of ministry are gone—they went the way of all the earth. But

there is One who does not change. He is unlike anything else in the created order—He is separate from the creation and the source of the creation. He changes not!

My perceptions and understanding of Him have changed, but He has not changed. He is the same!

## II. HIS IMMUTABILITY REVEALS HIS ESSENTIAL GLORY. (v. 27)

The old theologians thought deeply and wrote extensively about the attributes of God. Stephen Charnock, an old Puritan writer, wrote a large volume on the Existence and the Attributes of God. How it lifted my spirit as I thought with that wise pastor about the essential glory of our God. His immutability is one aspect of His unique and eternal glory.

### 1. He is perfect—there is no room or need for change.

We can and do change for good and we change for the worse. We are not complete or perfect in ourselves. But there is no need for change in the One who eternally perfect in Himself. Change would indicate that He had become better—but this impossible. How can perfection ever become better? Or might suggest that a deficiency had been found in Him, but there is no deficiency in the Eternal One. He is now what He has always been, and will always be what He is now.

2. He has life in Himself—so He is not affected by circumstances.

The psalmist declared, “They will perish, but you will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and Your years will have no end.”

God has life in himself, eternal life. The only life that we have is received from another, but He has no need to receive life. Circumstances can affect us, but not Him. The change in the weather can affect me. Every passing day makes a little change in me—and you! But not Him! He is as full of life now as He was in the first morning of Creation. He has been giving from all eternity, but He is not diminished in the least—He is still full of life and all that is essential for being. Blessed be His name—He is God.

### III. HIS IMMUTABILITY COMFORTS HIS SUFFERING PEOPLE.

(v. 27-28)

We know nothing for sure about the Hebrew man who wrote this hymn. We only know that life was difficult for him. He has enemies that threatened him. He felt the pain of getting older day by day. Life was a burden and it was heavy to bear. The only comfort that He could find for Himself was in the unchanging nature of His God.

It is most encouraging when we recall that the writer of Hebrews applies these words to the Lord Jesus.

## 1. His Person never changes.

By person we mean His character. All of us have had acquaintances that have been changed by changing circumstances of life. We have watched with heavy hearts as they became angry and bitter, vengeful and dangerous. While they were once approachable and helpful they became strangers to us. God is not like that! The Person revealed in Jesus Christ is the unchanging, immutable face of God. God will always be what the world saw as Jesus of Nazareth walked through Judea and Galilee. He will always be just as merciful and compassionate. He will always be just as trustworthy and truthful. He will always be just as generous and powerful. He will always be such a person of love. He changes not!

## 2. His Purpose never changes.

This is what comforted the unknown psalmist. “The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendents will be established before you.” Do you worry that the flood of change that comes at us may actually overwhelm the people of God, and that the church will cease to exist? Relax! The changes that men make in the world, and even those that God himself initiates, will not cancel the saving purpose of God’s grace. God will always have a people.

Does this mean that this church and our convention of churches will prevail?

No! But God's saving purpose will not change. There will be at the last day a throng from every tribe and language group that stands before the throne dressed in white singing the praises of our Lord. If we maintain our faith in the unchanging God and His unchanging Word, we will be a part of that blessed multitude.

### 3. His Power never changes.

He is the same today that He has always been. The faithful activity of God in the past on behalf of His people is our encouragement for the future. He is still the God of the Exodus. His power has not changed. He is still able to subdue His enemies and to deliver His people. He is still the God of Easter. He is still able to deliver His Son from death and exalt Him to His own right hand. He is still able to finish what He has begun.

Whatever fears you have of the future, lay them aside. Place your hope in the God who cannot fail. Let's face the New Year with our trust in the Immutable God, the One who does not change.