

## He is Unchangeable

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb. 13:8)*

We are at the end of 2020 which has been unquestionably, the most unusual year of my life.

Every year, when we turn the page from December to January, that moment usually comes with a mixture of conflicted feelings—some good and some not so good.

... and regardless of how good/bad the year ending was, many of us will make some kind of resolution(s) about improving our lives in the coming year.

And although the overwhelming evidence concludes that we are terrible at keeping New Year resolutions ....

... there is something emotionally resonant about the possibility of turning over a new leaf and starting fresh ...

In truth we have learned to value both the ending and the beginning of things.

... most people plan and start new diets, fitness regimes, and schedules on the first day of the week.

... there is something very self-empowering about being able to turn the page end something old and start something new.

... it's like an emotional "hot shower" ... on Monday morning we step out dry off and begin anew.

However, no matter how passionate we are about these resolutions at the start of the new year or new week, most of them are doomed to fail soon as the afterglow wears off.

... most surveys reveal at least about 80% of all New Year's Resolutions are discarded somewhere between mid-January and February.

... now I'm not against making New Year's resolutions. I am a big fan of every effort someone takes to improve themselves.

However, because most of us fail in keeping most of the resolutions we make throughout the year there is this underlying belief that people never change.

That was actually one of the tenants of Sigmund Freud's convoluted psychology.

He wrote ....

*"Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened by responsibility."*

In other words, people lack the strength, discipline, character (whatever) to change.

But the hard reality is that we are all changing.

Research, involving 19,000 participants uncovered that most people fail to realize how much their personality and values change as they live life.

(This isn't just about less hair and a larger waistline.)

... it about personality and values.

And most of us, looking back, if we are self-aware, can see some of that change.

However, Daniel Gilbert, the leading researcher at Harvard University, concluded that when you or I try to come up with an estimate of how much we've changed ... we always under estimate.

Gilbert said, "We all change more than we realize. Change is slow but it doesn't stop, and it isn't as slow as we think it is."

This is why it is the height of foolishness to place your trust in any man, any movement or any organization ...

... even in yourself.

On Jesus Christ *is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb. 13:8)*

## 1. The Character and Nature of Christ is Unchangeable

Because we are changing, our lives are constantly changing ...

... vacillating between joy and grief ... sorrow and laughter ...

We need an UNCHANGEABLE Lord!

That is exactly how the writer of Hebrews describes Jesus back in chapter 1.

***<sup>8</sup> But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. (Heb. 1:8)***

Notice what he calls Jesus (the Son of God) in this verse –GOD

The writer of Hebrews declares that Jesus is God and then in verse 10 ascribes to Jesus the work of creation.

***<sup>10</sup> And "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; (Heb. 1:10)***

But look at what he writes in verse 11 and 12:

***<sup>11</sup> they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment,<sup>12</sup> like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." (Heb. 11-12)***

- Some of us have looked into the great chasm of the Grand Canyon
- ... flown over the Oceans
- ... stood on the bank of the great Mediterranean and Aegean Seas
- ... stood atop Masada and looked over cliff's edge to the Dead Sea in the distance
- ... stood at the spot where Abram freed Lot and his family from the captivity of Chedorlaomer King of Elam
- ... even plumbed the depths of the oceans in military submarines

And to us the this created world seems to be so stable/permanent/changeless

... but in fact, this created universe will be changed like a garment, but Jesus remains the same and His years will not come to an end.

What the intellects and academics of this world regard as the baseline of stability is, in fact, not—one day all of this is going to pass away.

This visible universe with all its laws (that the scientists bank so heavily on as unchanging) is like dirty laundry compared to the Lord Jesus Christ!

And how is this possible?

*And He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [the Father's] glory and the exact representation of His [the Father's] nature, and upholds all things by the word of His [Jesus] power. (Heb. 1:3)*

The UNCHANGEABLENESS of our Savior comes from the reality that He is the eternal God.

His unchangingness is the unchangingness of God the Father.

In other words, ...

### **God is unchangeable and Jesus Christ is God!**

This is what theologians call the doctrine of God's immutability.

Every creature is continually becoming, but the creator is.

The creature is changeable, constantly striving, seeking rest and satisfaction but as created things we cannot find rest or satisfaction in ourselves ... no matter how long or hard we look.

... and might I add that the only reason we exist (and continue to exist) is because HE is UNCHANGEABLE!

*"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Mal. 3:6)*

*He cannot change for the better, for He is already perfect; and, being perfect, He cannot*

*change for the worse. —A.W. Pink*

## **2. Throughout Time and Eternity Christ Remains Unchangeable**

When the writer of Hebrews says in 13:8 that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever," he says this based on the reality of the revelation of Hebrews 1:8 that Jesus is God.

... and this is meant to be a powerful incentive help us to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ even in a rapidly changing world.

**Let me say it this way ...**

The statement .... "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" does not mean that Christ can't respond differently from day to day .... from one circumstance to the next.

... rejoicing with you or over you one day and grieving with you or over you another day.

Hebrews 4:15 calls Jesus our "sympathizing High Priest."

... and BECAUSE Jesus Christ is unchangeable in **his nature and character throughout time and eternity**, He can and does respond differently **to us** and **with us** in each unique circumstance and situation.

Let me explain by beginning with a verse from the Old Testament story of God taking the kingdom away from Saul and giving it to David.

... in that story the prophet Samuel says...

***"Also, the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." (1 Sam. 15:29)***

Now once you read that verse, isolated from the rest of scripture, you are prompted to ask ...

**... Question: Aren't there verses in the Bible that say God changes his mind?**

Yes, there are.

In fact, one of them is right here in this same chapter

... which is why this verse about the unchangeableness of God is so crucial.

*(1 Sam. 15:11) "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands."*

*And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel. (1 Sam. 15:35)*

The Hebrew word for "change his mind" in 1 Samuel 15:29 is the same as the word used in verse 11 and verse 35 for regret.

So, in two verses it says God changes his mind about Saul but then in verse 29 it says, "God will not lie or change His mind for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

Isn't that a contradiction?

No, in fact the very reason that Samuel makes the statement that "**God cannot lie or change His mind**" is so that we will not misunderstand what is happening in the text and mistakenly call it a contradiction.

What we are seeing happen in 1 Samuel 15 is a changing in the relationship between God and King Saul.

God "regrets" that He made Saul king, but God is not a man that he should change his mind."

... in other words, **God's changes are not like man's changes.**

... God changes in his behavior with us through various situations, but His character and nature remain eternally constant.

God never changes in who He is, but we change in who we are.

God, who is unchangeable, changes in his behavior with King Saul, because Saul changed ...

... Saul disobeyed the commands of God!

**Here is a weak example but hopefully it will illustrate the point I am trying to make.**

You have a child who is happy, positive, obedient ... oh, how you delight in that child ...

... but then the teenage years come, and overnight that happy positive child becomes sullen, negative, and withdrawn.

Do you change in your character and nature with that child? NO!

... but your behavior with that child changes dramatically.

... AND so, it is with God.

The difference with us is that we are learning and adapting through time.

God is not. ... He is NOT "learning" or "changing" who or what He is ...

... In His infinite unchangeable way He is dealing with us based upon our finite, erratic, changeableness.

**Unlike the us in the illustration...**

God is all knowing, and He knows what our behavior will be in the future and He knows how He will respond.

... He knows that his response to your future behavior will be different from his response to your present behavior.

And so, God's "change of mind" is not based on ignorance or the process of learning something ...

... God's behavior It is planned and foreknown throughout time and eternity.

Question

**Why is it essential that the Jesus Christ of today be the same as the Jesus Christ of yesterday and tomorrow?**

Why is it important that throughout time and eternity Christ remains unchangeable?

**Yesterday:** It is critical that Jesus Christ be the same yesterday that He is today because yesterday is when Jesus Christ showed us in history what He is really like.

- *We cannot know the Christ of today unless He is the same as the Christ of yesterday.*
- *We know the Lord Jesus Christ and commune with him through the Word of God which tells about him from yesterday.*
- *If we skip the historical once-for-all self-revelation of Jesus Christ found in the Old Testament, messianic prophecies, the record of His birth, life, death, burial and resurrection ... then we cannot not KNOW Him.*

**Today:** It is critical that Jesus Christ be the same today as yesterday because **today** is where we have fellowship with Him. **Today** is where we know of Him through the biblical historical record of His redemptive work.

- *What we know about Jesus from yesterday enables us to know him personally now, by his Holy Spirit.*
- *The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them real, personal, and present our lives now.*

**Tomorrow:** It is critical that Jesus Christ be the same tomorrow as He was yesterday and is today because all our hope for everlasting joy hangs ultimately on our relationship and fellowship with Him.

This historical, factual Christ whom we have come now to know, love, cherish and glory in is the Christ we will increasingly know and enjoy forever and ever - if He is the same forever.

And that is why it is so important to know that Throughout Time and Eternity Christ Remains Unchangeable.



### 3. If Christ is Unchangeable Then So Is His Truth

*(Heb. 13:5-6)<sup>5</sup> Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have;*

In light of our certain, eternal, unchangeable Savior, don't make the mistake of trusting in uncertain riches.

... don't become possessed with the desire to be rich, it can destroy you.

AND HERE IS WHERE HE TAKES AWAY THE SOURCE OF SO MUCH WORRY.

*(Heb. 13:5-6) ... for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"<sup>6</sup> so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"*

In other words, if we have all of our hopes rooted and grounded in an absolute confidence that our UNCHANGEABLE Christ will never leave us nor forsake us then we will have **true and lasting satisfaction**.

AND ... If Christ could be trusted to be the helper of those Hebrew believers who refused to love money and were content with what they had...

... then Christ can be trusted today and tomorrow and in every generation to come.

- His love is the same
- His righteousness is the same
- His wisdom is the same
- His power is the same.

Here at the end of 2020, I want to encourage you to set your face like flint against every message of fear ... that comes across the TV and Social Media.

When the devil roars like a lion to devour you, you can confidently and boldly proclaim:

- "The Lord is my helper!

- He will never leave me.
- He is enough.
- He is UNCHANGEABLE and I will not be afraid!

And he is always the same. I am content."

I want to leave you with this final exhortation.

*<sup>9</sup> Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, (Heb. 13:9)*

I do not believe that the Devil's **fearmongering** will end on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

... This year it has proven to be one of his most effective strategies against the church.

In his last letter the Apostle Paul warned Timothy that in the last days difficult times would come where people would be lovers of self and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ...

... religious people who have a form of godliness and claim that God has power ... but live as if God is powerless

... these evil imposters will increase from bad to worse ... deceiving and being deceived.

Paul says, don't be distracted by all of this ... endure difficulty and continue in the truth...

*I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season ... (2 Tim. 4:1-2)*

We don't need or want a new doctrine or a different faith ... Jesus is UNCHANGEABLE, and He is all we need.