

# God is... UNCHANGING

God is ... #5 – Pastor Gary Combs – June 23, 2024 – Hebrews 6:13-20

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We are in week 5 of our 8-week sermon series entitled “God is.... In this series we’ve been exploring the attributes and character traits of God. This is a worthy pursuit as John says...

**Series theme:** John 17:3 (ESV) And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

As theologian and author J I Packer said, “What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God... Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul.” — J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 19, 33.

So that’s what this series is about... knowing God. In this series so far, we’ve considered God’s love, His might, His mercy, and His fatherhood. Now, this week, we will consider that God Is... Unchanging. That God is immutable. God never changes.

**Need:** In a world where everything is in flux and constantly changing, don’t you wish you had something or someone that you could depend on? Someone who didn’t change? Listen to these words from Spurgeon:

“Would you lose your worries and fears this day? Then you must immerse yourself in the immensity of God...He never changes. His being, and nature, and perfections can’t be altered. Nothing can be added to the infinite God and nothing can be taken from Him. What God is today He always was. What God is today He shall always be...He is all-wise; He need not change. He is perfect; He cannot change.” — Charles Spurgeon

**Trans:** God is unchanging. That’s what we want to “know” more about God today.

**BODY:** In Hebrews chapter 6, believers were reminded that they could hold fast to an unchanging God in an ever-changing world. We can hold fast to an unchanging God in an ever-changing world. How can we hold fast to an unchanging God in an ever-changing world? The text gives **four reasons** we can hold fast to an unchanging God in an ever-changing world.

**TEXT:** Hebrews 6:13-20 (ESV) <sup>13</sup> For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” <sup>15</sup> And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup> For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. <sup>17</sup> So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, <sup>18</sup> so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup> We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup> where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

## WE CAN HOLD FAST TO AN UNCHANGING GOD IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD...

### 1. Because of God’s unchanging perfections.

**EXP:** Look at v.13. God “swore by himself.” Why? Because there is “no one greater.” He is the greatest person with the most perfect character. The perfections of God are his attributes. Some of these perfections are: God is eternal, just, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy... God is love. He is perfect in all of these.

“**Greater**” (13, 18 - 2x) (μέγας, *megas*)- great of measure, rank, power, authority, virtue...

“**Swear, swore**” (13, 15 - 3x) (ὀμνύω, *omnyō*) - to swear, affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath.

“**Unchangeable**” (17, 18 - 2x) (ἀμετάθετος, *ametathetos*) - immutable, unchangeable, fixed, unalterable. NKJV translates it: “the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath.”

“**Impossible for ...**” (18) (ἀδύνατος, *adunatos*) - without strength, impotent, powerless, impossible. “**God to lie**” (18) (ψεύδομαι, *pseudomai*) - to lie, to speak deliberate falsehoods; to deceive one by a lie. “The impossibility is a “moral” impossibility.” (Barnes) Why? Because of His character, His personality.

**ARG:** **God’s immutability is one of His perfections. In Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology*, he writes...**

“That perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, purposes and promises.” — Louis Berkhof

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## God does not change:

Malachi 3:6 (ESV) “For I the Lord do not change...”

James 1:17 (ESV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

**ILL:** Three logical reasons for God’s immutability as it relates to His perfections:

1. God is eternal. Change takes place over time, but God stands outside of time.
2. God is perfect. Change for the better or worse implies a change in God’s perfection.
3. God is omniscient. Change would imply that God has forgotten or learned something new.

**APP:** Does everything around you seem to be changing and life is overwhelming and confusing? Hold fast to God and His unchanging perfections. In our ever-changing world, we can count on our never-changing God.

## 2. Because of God’s unchanging promises.

**EXP:** Because God is unchanging, his promises are too. Circle the word “promise” (3x). God is a promise-making and a promise-keeping God.

**“Promise” (13, 15, 17 - 3x)** (ἐπαγγελία, *epangelia*) - In v.13, literally, “having made promise” (verb: Aorist, Middle, Participle) In verse 15 and 17, in the noun form: “a promised good or blessing.”

**“Surely I will bless you...” (14)** - This is a quote from Gen. 22:16-17 after Abraham had shown his willingness to sacrifice Isaac:

Genesis 22:16-18 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— <sup>17</sup> blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup> In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

**“Patiently waited” (15)** - Abraham waited 25 years for the birth of Isaac. In that sense he “obtained” the promise, but he did not see the fulfillment in its entirety. For the “Seed” is Jesus:

Galatians 3:16 (NKJV) Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

**“Oath” (16, 17 - 2x)** (ὄρκος, *orkos*) - that which has been pledged or promised with an oath. In a courtroom, a witness is asked to place their hand on the Bible and take an oath: “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” “I do.” God swore by Himself.

**ARG:** **God does not lie. He fulfills His promises.**

Numbers 23:19 (NIV) God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

**All of God’s promises are “yes” in Christ.**

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

**ILL:** (Hold up a \$100) “This is a promissory note from the US. It promises to be worth \$100. But because of inflation it has lost considerable value. Indeed, \$100 in 1980 = \$399.93 in 2024. It’s lost 75% of its value since my wife and I were married. But God’s promises are unchanging. No inflation. Fixed. Permanent!

**APP:** Does your 401K look like a 101K? Do you worry about our declining economy and culture? Trust God’s promises. In our ever-changing world, we can count on our never-changing God.

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## 3. Because of God's unchanging purposes.

**EXP:** Look at v. 17. Circle "purpose." God's purposes are unchanging.  
"Purpose" (17) (βουλή, *boulē*) - counsel, purpose, will.

**ARG:** God's purposes will stand.

Proverbs 19:21 (ESV) Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

**God is working out His purpose for your life.**

Romans 8:28 (KJV) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

**ILL:** In the book of Genesis, Jacob's son, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his own brothers. Yet, later God elevated him to 2nd in command in Egypt. After Jacob died, his brothers were afraid, but Joseph told them:  
Genesis 50:20 (HCSB) You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.

**APP:** Do you worry about the direction of things in the world? Hold fast to God. His purposes will stand. In our ever-changing world, we can count on our never-changing God.

## 4. Because of God's unchanging High Priest.

**EXP:** Look at v.20. Who is our High Priest? Jesus! He's the One we to whom we can "hold fast" (18).

"Fled for refuge" (18) (καταφεύγω, *katapheugō*) - to flee away, flee for refuge. (City of refuge?)

"Strong encouragement" (18) (παράκλησις, *paraklēsis*) - consolation, comfort, encouragement.

"Hold fast" (18) (κρατέω, *krateō*) - hold (by, fast), keep, lay hand (hold) on, obtain, retain, take (by).

"Hope" (18-19) (ἐλπίς, *elpis*) - expectation, hope; expectation of good, confident hope.

"Sure and steadfast anchor" (19) (ἀσφαλή τε καὶ βεβαίαν) - sure: firm (that which can be relied on), certain, true, suited to confirm; steadfast: stable, fast, firm. sure, trusty.

"Inner place behind the curtain" (19) (καταπέτασμα, *katapetasma*) - a veil spread out, a curtain; the name given to the curtain that veiled the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place.

"Forerunner" (20) (πρόδρομος, *prodromos*) - one who is sent ahead, one who comes in advance to a place where the rest are to follow.

"High priest" (20) (ἀρχιερεύς, *archiereus*) - chief priest, high priest. "Order of Melchizedek" - Lit., "King of Righteousness." The king/priest of Jerusalem to whom Abraham paid a tithe.

**ARG:** Jesus is unchanging.

Hebrews 13:8 (ESV) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

**ILL:** This past week, I was with my family at Nags Head. My granddaughter, Addy, was trying to boogie board and catch a wave, but the waves were too rough. She needed someone to anchor her in place, while she caught the next wave. I was her anchor. I was tall enough and strong enough to stand, holding her in place.

**APP:** Are the storms and waves of this life pounding against you? Don't you wish you had someone or something to anchor you, hold you fast? That's Jesus. And He never changes. He promises to never leave nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5). He's the anchor for your soul.

**CONCLUSION:** In our ever-changing world, we can count on our never-changing God. We can hold fast to God's unchanging perfections, promises, purposes and His Great High Priest, Jesus! Let's pray.