

# The Attributes of God - Part 1b

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## IMMUTABLE (UNCHANGABLE)

Watch and listen to Charles Haddon Spurgeon's message on "The Unchangeable Christ" ([The Unchangeable Christ, A Sermon No. 2358](#)) (Here is the text of his sermon -- [Hebrews 13:8 The Unchangeable Christ](#))

**Immutability** means that God is not subject to change through time or circumstances. He is invariable. In His nature and character, God is absolutely without change. In God's essence, attributes, consciousness and will, He is unchangeable. Ponder the significance of this truth, in light of other truths about God such as "God is love." (1Jn 4:8, 16). What does the truth of immutability add to the truth that God is love? Below is **C H Spurgeon's** "answer" to this question...

Every Christian is to be a testifier. He is to be a witness with heart and lips. All the other creatures speak not with words. They may sing as they shine, but they cannot sing vocally. It is the believer's part in the great chorus to lift up voice and heart at once, and as an intelligent, living, loving, learning witness, to testify to God. In the first place we have known that God's love to us is undeserved. Another thing we can bear testimony to, is this — that the love of God is unconquerable. We strove against God's love, but it conquered us. We can say concerning His love that it has never been diminished by all the sins we have ever committed since we believed. We have often revolted, but we have never found Him unwilling to forgive.

**We have known and we have believed  
the love of God to us to be perfectly immutable.**

I will make but one other remark here, and that is, we can bear our willing witness that the love of God to us has been an unfailing support in all our trials. This great truth is the groundwork of Christian encouragement.

The trustworthy 1915 edition of the **ISBE** says

It is the perfection of Yahweh that He changes not in character, will, purpose, aim (Orr, James. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: 1915 Edition)

**Douglas** adds that immutability is...

The perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change in essence, attributes, consciousness, will, and promises. No change is possible in God, because all change must be to better or worse, and God is absolute perfection. No cause for change in God exists, either in Himself or outside of Him. (Douglas, J.D.; Tenney, Merrill Chapin: New International Bible Dictionary, Zondervan, 1987)

As **Kuiper** spares no words declaring that **"To deny the immutability of God is to deny that He is God."**

Still restless nature dies and grows,  
From change to change the creatures run:  
Thy being no succession knows,  
And all Thy vast designs are one.

**Isaac Watts**

**A W Tozer** offers an interesting contrast - The immutability of God appears in its most perfect beauty when viewed against the mutability of men. In God no change is possible; in men change is impossible to escape. Neither the man is fixed nor his world, and he and it are in constant flux.

**Tozer** adds that "If God is self-existent, He must be also self-sufficient; and if He has power, He, being infinite, must have all power. If He possesses knowledge, His infinitude assures us that He possesses all knowledge. Similarly, His immutability presuppose His faithfulness. If He is unchanging, it follows that He could not be unfaithful, since that would require Him to change. Any failure within the divine character would argue imperfection and, since God is perfect, it could not occur. Thus the attributes explain each other and prove that they are but glimpses the mind enjoys of the absolutely perfect Godhead.

Frail as summer's flower we flourish,  
Blows the wind and it is gone;  
But while mortals rise and perish  
Our God lives unchanging on,  
Praise Him, Praise Him, Hallelujah  
Praise the High Eternal One!

[\(Play\)](#)

**Warning!** Beware of the radical (and radically heretical) false teaching that is being propounded by some so called "[process theologians](#)" who hold the belief that God's own nature is evolving. They are directly refuted with God's our Word of Truth "I, the LORD, do not change." (Malachi 3:6).

**Youngblood** writes that...

God does not "mutate" from being one kind of God to being another, nor is He subject to the limitations of time and space, since in Christ He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3-note). He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8-note). Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8-note). God is the God of steadfast love (Deut. 5:10; Ps. 103:4; Is. 63:7). ([Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#))

**A. W. Pink** reminds us that...

God cannot change for the better, for He is perfect; and being perfect, He cannot change for the worse.

**John Phillips** writes that...

**Jehovah** ("I Am") being God's covenant name, it reminds us that God is immutable. His promises and His purposes are as changeless as He.

**C H Spurgeon** quotes Samuel Rutherford...

There be many Christians most like unto young sailors, who think the shore and the whole land doth move when they ship, and they themselves are moved. Just so not a few do imagine that God moveth, and saileth, and changeth places, because their giddy souls are under sail, and subject to alteration, to ebbing and flowing. But the foundation of the Lord abideth sure. (from Feathers for Arrows)

### More Spurgeon

Perfect stability belongs alone to God; he alone, of all beings, is without variableness or shadow of a turning. He is immutable; he will not change. He is all-wise; he need not change. He is perfect; he cannot change.

If we are inclined to grieve because everything around us changes, our consolation will be found in turning to our unchanging God.

There are some persons who talk about God changing his purpose; such people do not know what God is at all. How could God change? God must either change from a better to a worse, or from a worse to a better. If he could change from a worse to a better, he is not perfect now; and if he could change from what he is to something worse, he would not be perfect then, and he would not be God.

But no converted man ever found an apology for sin in the immutability of divine affection; nay, but this is the greatest condemnation of our sin, that we transgress against a God who still loves us; that we dare to play the traitor to him who never for a moment was inconstant in his love to us. If the husband were unstable in his marriage love, there were some excuse for the unfaithful wife; but the firmness of our Great Husband's love to our souls makes it the blackest treason, and the most accursed unchastity, if our hearts turn aside from our Best beloved to follow after idols.

They that love not have no hate, no jealousy, but where there is an intense, an infinite love, like that which glows in the bosom of God, there must be jealousy.

### Dr S Lewis Johnson in his lecture series explains that...

As omni-presence resulted from God's immensity, because he is transcended over space, he is therefore everywhere in space, so immutability is a natural result, a natural issue of God's eternity. Also, His eternity is a natural issue of His immutability and so these are very closely related. One of our theologians has said, "That which has no evolution and no succession is the same yesterday, today, and forever." When the ancients wanted to illustrate immutability, they did not speak about Charlie Brown or one's wife's nagging, but they spoke about a cube, and they used a cube to illustrate God's immutability, because a cube, no matter where you test it, will always be in the same posture because it is equal to itself in all its dimensions. And so they thought of a cube when they thought to illustrate immutability. Immutability. Now what does it mean in connection with God?

**God is immutable in His essence.** Now since he is infinite in his being, we have spoken of this, he cannot change. He cannot be something that he was not before. If he were able to be something that he was not before, then we could not have said that he was infinite then. And so he is, since he is infinite in his being, he cannot change. He cannot increase. He cannot decrease. He cannot self-evolve. He cannot develop. God's essence is immutable. It is unchangeable. He cannot have any new attributes which would suggest change in his essential being. He is exalted above all becoming, if he were to become something, then he would be something he was not before. And so consequently God is immutable in his essence. He is immutable in his being. When we speak about immutability we are speaking about his being. He is immutable in his being.

**He is immutable in His attributes.** Now if any perfection could be separated from God, he would cease to be God. If we were, for example, to think of a God from whom his goodness were taken, then of course he would not be the infinite God that he was before. He cannot be wiser than he was before, he cannot be holier than he was before, he cannot be more righteous or more merciful than he was before, he cannot be less merciful than he was before.

Unchanging is the love of God,  
From age to age the same,  
Displayed to all who do His will  
And reverence His Name.

If we think of an immutable God, we not only think of a person who cannot change in his essential being, but we must also think of a person who cannot change in his attributes. And so when we think of God and when we worship God and when we praise God, we do not praise him because he is a little better today than he was

yesterday. He is the same in his being and he's the same in his attributes. He has everlasting strength, he has omniscience in his wisdom, and so on at all times.

**Furthermore, thirdly, His immutability means that He is immutable in His will.** He is immutable in his plans and purposes. He does not, for example, purpose something today that he changes tomorrow. He does not change his mind. Furthermore, he does not have to sit and think now what shall I do? Shall I do this or shall I do that? Well I think today I'll try this, or I think tomorrow I will try that. Because God is infinite in his wisdom, then there is no error in the conception of his plans. All of his plans are perfect, and he does not have to reason them out. He has within himself the power to know that which is the finest plan.

I often hear theologians say God could have used several different plans, but that is not true of God. There is only one plan that is his plan, because there is one plan that represents the product of his infinite wisdom. And so he is infinite in his will. Since he is infinite in power there can be no failure in the accomplishment of his plans which fall out of his will either. So he always expresses himself or to us, but he always attempts to carry out, or carries out, the perfect plan, and he always carries it out perfectly, because he is infinitely wise and infinitely powerful. So he is immutable in his will.

**Fourth, He is immutable in His consciousness.** Since infinite experience is a fixed quantity, then nothing is added to God's consciousness and nothing old is taken from it. He is immutable in his consciousness.

**And finally, He is unchangeable in his place.** Charnock, who has written an outstanding book on the attributes of God, has said, "He cannot be changed in time because he is eternity. And he cannot be changed in place because he hath ubiquity." That is, he is everywhere present. **(For the full discussion including Mp3, Pdf or MS Word format see [The Repentance and Unchangeability of God- by Dr S Lewis Johnson](#))**

The **psalmist** affirms God's wonderful attribute of immutability...

Of old Thou didst found the earth; And the heavens are the work of Thy hands. 26 "Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed. 27 "But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not come to an end. (Ps 102:25-27)

In short, in our changing world, we can always depend on our unchanging God and thus can confidently pray...

Keep Thou my way, O Lord, be Thou ever nigh;  
Strong is Thy mighty arm, weak and frail am I;  
Then, my unchanging Friend, on Thee, my hopes depend,  
Till life's brief day shall end, be Thou ever nigh.

**A W Pink** writes that

Immutability is one of the Divine perfections which is not sufficiently pondered. It is one of the excellencies of the Creator which distinguishes Him from all His creatures. God is perpetually the same: subject to no change in His being, attributes, or determinations. Therefore God is compared to a **Rock** (Dt 32:4, etc.) which remains immovable, when the entire ocean surrounding it is continually in a fluctuating state; even so, though all creatures are subject to change, God is immutable. Because God has no beginning and no ending, He can know no change. He is everlastingly "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). (A. W. Pink in *The attributes of God*.)

**Spurgeon** commenting on the great and magnificent and unchangeable promises of the unchanging God in 2Peter 1:4 (note) says that...

besides meditating upon the promises, seek in thy soul to receive them as being the very words of God. Speak to thy soul thus,

"If I were dealing with a man's promise, I should carefully consider the ability and the character of the man who had covenanted with me. So with the promise of God; my eye must not be so much fixed upon the greatness of the mercy—that may stagger me; as upon **the greatness of the Promiser**—that will cheer me."

My soul, it is God, even thy God, God that cannot lie, Who speaks to thee. This word of His which thou art now considering is as true as His own existence.

**He is a God unchangeable. He has not altered the thing which has gone out of his mouth, nor called back one single consolatory sentence.**

Nor doth He lack any power; it is the God that made the heavens and the earth Who has spoken thus. Nor can

He fail in wisdom as to the time when He will bestow the favours, for He knoweth when it is best to give and when better to withhold.

**Therefore, seeing that it is the Word of a God so true, so immutable, so powerful, so wise, I will and must believe the promise.**

If we thus **meditate** upon the promises, and consider the Promiser, we shall experience their sweetness, and obtain their fulfilment. (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening July 27 AM)

**F W Robertson** wrote that...

God is not affected by our mutability; our changes do not alter him. When we are restless, he remains serene and calm; when we are low, selfish, mean, or dispirited, he is still the unalterable I Am. The same yesterday, today, and forever, in whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning. What God is in himself, not what we may chance to feel him in this or that moment to be, that is our hope.

**Immutability of God** by **C. H. Spurgeon**...

It has been said by some one that "the proper study of mankind is man." I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can compass and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go our way with the thought, "Behold I am wise." But when we come to this master-science, finding that our plumb-line cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought, that vain man would be wise, but he is like a wild ass's colt; and with the solemn exclamation, "I am but of yesterday, and know nothing." No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God. We shall be obliged to feel "Great God, how infinite art thou, what worthless worms are we!" But while the subject humbles the mind it also expands it. He who often thinks of God, will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe... I dare say it does, but after all, the most excellent study for expanding the soul, is the science of Christ, and him crucified, and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity. ([Immutability of God](#))

**Immutability** "is that perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, and in His purposes and promises ... and is free from all accession or diminution and from all growth or decay in His Being or perfection. (**Louis Berkhof**)

All God's attributes or perfections are included in His immutability. There can be no increase nor decrease in their number, capacity, or power. God could not be more or less holy, righteous, omnipotent, etc. It would be an absurdity to suppose He could. Immutability, however, is not immobility. It does not mean that God cannot change His actions, or way of dealing with men in different situations and times. It simply means His character and attributes do not change. It means that His eternal purposes does not change, for He has even purposed all things that come to pass. Reason teaches immutability. God must be immutable; there can be no change in Him, either for better or worse, since God is infinite and absolute perfection. If God could change for the better or the worse, it would indicate a weakness in His Being. There can be no cause for change in God who is perfect.

The immutability of God raises an important question. If God is immutable, what is meant by such statements found in the Bible that speak of God repenting or changing His mind?

Jonah 3:10 And God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them? (KJV) (For comments on Jonah 3:10 related to Mal 3:6 see [The Repentance and Unchangeability of God- by Dr S Lewis Johnson](#))

Ge 6:5-6 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. (KJV)

These passages are not suggesting there was a change in the character of God, only in His actions toward man based on the actions of men. It is man who changes and due to the changeless character of God, He must change His actions or dealings with man. God must deal with men in accord with His holy character. He must eventually deal with sin in judgment as He did in Genesis 6, or He acts in mercy when men repent as He did with Nineveh. But God's actions are always consistent with His character. For instance, the Genesis passage does not say that God changed His mind in the sense that He wished He had not made man, but

only that He was grieved over man's behavior. The translation of the NIV makes the point clear.

[Genesis 6:5-6](#) The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.<sup>6</sup> The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. (NIV)

Compare also the translation of the NIV for Jonah 3:10: When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. (NIV)

When used of God as in some translations, the term "repentance" is simply an *anthropomorphism*, a term ascribing human feeling or emotion to God to show us God's attitude toward sin.

The **immutability of God** is a terror to the wicked because it means that God must always deal with men in accord with His holy character and plan. God make no deals and accepts no man's person apart from His plan of salvation in the person and work of Christ. On the other hand, **God's immutability is a constant comfort to believers because it means God is faithful, always, to His promises and the principles of His Word.** For this reason, God is called "the Rock" (Deut 32:4) for when the entire world around us seems to fluctuate and shake (especially if one lives in California) God is the one safe and faithful place of anchorage.

Deuteronomy 32:4 The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. (See related resource - Click for Scripture chain on Christ, the Rock, the Stone -- would make a great Sunday School series)

Psalms 18:2, 31 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 31 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God (See Spurgeon [Commentary on 18:2, on 18:31](#))

People will often let each other down. Our friends as well as we ourselves often prove fickle, but the Lord who never changes, never lets us down. He is our Rock of blessing, support, and deliverance. This is why our trust should never be in man as [Jer 17:5](#) warns, "Cursed be man that trust in mankind and makes flesh his strength." This does not mean that God always answers our prayers and desires according to our wishes for He does not. It means, however, we can count on the fact that He is faithful to always act in accordance with His wisdom, love, and purposes. Let's note some of the ways that God is faithful: (See also God's Attribute **Faithfulness**)

He is faithful to forgive sin when we confess it (1John 1:9-note).

He is faithful to discipline us in love when we need it (He 12:5-note; Ps 119:5- [Spurgeon Commentary](#)).

He is faithful to support us in our suffering as the faithful Creator (1Pe 4:19-note).

He is faithful to keep His promises according to the principles of His Word (Ps 119:86 [Spurgeon's note](#), Ps 119:138-[Spurgeon's note](#); Deut 7:9; Isa. 49:7; 55:3; 1Co 1:8,9)

He is faithful to strengthen us in the midst of testing or temptation (1Co 10:13-see commentary). ([Oswald Chambers on "Temptation"](#))

It is out of His faithful that He answers our prayers (Ps 143:1) ([Spurgeon Commentary on Ps 143:1](#))

We close this attribute with these verses:

Lamentations 3:21-23 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 *They* are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.

Psalms 36:5 Thy lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Thy faithfulness *reaches* to the skies ([Spurgeon Commentary on 36:](#))

**Source:** For full discussion see: [What God Is Like](#) by Hampton Keathley III Well done summary the character of God, including His attributes

## QUOTES ON DIVINE IMMUTABILITY

See onsite commentary on "I the LORD do not change"

God is where He was.--Anon.

God may change our circumstances, but our circumstances never change God.--John Blanchard

God never 'becomes'; God is.--John Blanchard

Whatsoever is eternal is immutable. -- Stephen Charnock

If God could be proved there would be no need for faith.--Rob Frost

The immutability of God's holy character is itself the absolute and the final court of morality. --Os Guinness

The unchangeableness of the divine purposes is a necessary consequence of the unchangeableness of the divine nature.--Johann Keil

God is the most obligated being that there is. He is obligated by his own nature. He is infinite in his wisdom; therefore he can never do anything that is unwise. He is infinite in his justice; therefore he can never do anything that is unjust. He is infinite in his goodness; therefore he can never do anything that is not good. He is infinite in his truth; therefore it is impossible that he should lie.--J. Gresham Machen

Nothing created can ever alter the Creator.--Stuart Olyott

God cannot change for the better, for He is perfect; and being perfect, He cannot change for the worse--A. W. Pink

We have an unchanging Gospel, which is not today green grass and tomorrow dry hay; but always the abiding truth of the immutable Jehovah. --C. H. Spurgeon

Standing, as it were, at the world's end, at the grave's mouth, and at hell's door, the cross of Jesus reveals love to the utmost end, and is a grand display of the immutability and invincibility of the affection of the heart of Jesus. -- C H Spurgeon (Flashes of Thought)

To suppose that God has a multitude of plans, and that he changes his plan with the exigencies of the situation, is to make him infinitely dependent upon the varying wills of his creatures, and to deny him one necessary element of perfection, namely, immutability. -- Augustus H. Strong

With God the only difference between the future and the past is that certain truths which are as eternal as God himself have not yet become part of human history.--W. Ian Thomas

All God's reasons come from within his uncreated being. Nothing has entered the being of God from eternity, nothing has been removed and nothing has been changed.--A. W. Tozer

Human unbelief cannot alter the character of God.--A. W. Tozer

The law of mutation belongs to a fallen world, but God is immutable, and in him men of faith find eternal permanence. --A. W. Tozer

What peace it brings to the Christian's heart to realize that our heavenly Father never differs from Himself. In coming to Him at any time we need not wonder whether we shall find Him in a receptive mood. He is always receptive to misery and need, as well as to love and faith. He does not keep office hours nor set aside periods when He will see no one. Neither does He change his mind about anything. Today, this moment, He feels toward His creatures, toward babies, toward the sick, the fallen, the sinful, exactly as He did when He sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for mankind. -- A W Tozer

Since God is self-existent, He is not composed. There are in Him no parts to be altered.--A. W. Tozer

Note that **immutable** does not mean God is **immobile**, for He acts in history. God's immutability is dynamic, not static. --Personal paraphrase

(Most but not all of the above are from [Blanchard, John: Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians](#) OR [Computer Version](#) - One of the best compilations of quotations available - Highly Recommended)

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**GOD TAKES HEED TO YOUR EVERY NEED** - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb 13:8

An unusual phenomenon can be seen at the Bay of Fundy on the eastern coast of Canada. Near the mouth of the St. John River, where it flows into the bay, are the Reversing Falls Rapids. They are created by the rise and fall of the extreme tides in the Bay of Fundy, and the flow of water from the St. John River.

At low tide the river flows in thundering rapids out to the sea. But at high tide that great current is changed and water surges upstream, reversing the flow of the falls. In the period of time when the tide is slack and the river and bay are at equal levels, that mighty torrent appears as calm as a mill pond.

How like human nature are those changing tides. Our emotions and actions vary with the day—and sometimes by the hour. But this is not so with our immutable God, who has revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ. His truth, grace, mercy, and love for us remain constant.—P R. Van Gorder

**THE BEST WAY TO FACE LIFE'S CHANGES  
IS TO LOOK TO THE UNCHANGING GOD.**

**Malachi 3:6: The Unchanging Lord  
Sermon by Alexander Maclaren**

'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'—MALACHI 3:6

The scriptural revelations of the divine Name are always the basis of intensely practical admonition. The Bible does not think it worth while to proclaim the Name of God without building on the proclamation promises or commandments. There is no 'mere theology' in Scripture; and it does not speak of 'attributes,' nor give dry abstractions of infinitude, eternity, omniscience, unchangeableness, but lays stress on the personality of God, which is so apt to escape us in these abstract conceptions, and thus teaches us to think of this personal God our Father, as infinite, eternal, knowing all things, and never changing. There is all the difference in our attitude towards the very same truth if we think of the unchangeableness of God, or if we think that our Father God is unchangeable. In our text the thought of Him as unchanging comes into view as the foundation of the continuance of the unfaithful sons of Jacob in their privileges and in their very lives. 'I am the Lord,' Jehovah, the Self-existent, the Eternal whose being is not under the limitations of succession and time. 'Because I am Jehovah, I change not'; and because Jehovah changes not, therefore our finite and mortal selves abide, and our infinite and sinful selves are still the objects of His steadfast love.

Let us consider, first, the unchangeable God, and second, the unchanging God as the foundation of our changeful lives.

**I. The unchangeable God.**

In the great covenant-name Jehovah there is revealed an existence which reverses all that we know of finite and progressive being, or finite and mortal being, or finite and variable nature. With us there are mutations arising from physical nature. The material must needs be subject to laws of growth and decadence. Our spiritual nature is subject to changes arising from the advancement in knowledge. Our moral nature is subject to fluctuations; circumstances play upon us, and 'nothing continueth in one stay.' Change is the condition of life. It means growth and happiness; it belongs to the perfection of creatures. But the unchangeableness of God is the negation of all imperfection, it is the negation of all dependence on circumstances, it is the negation of all possibility of decay or exhaustion, it is the negation of all caprice. It is the assurance that His is an underived, self-dependent being, and that with Him is the fountain of light; it is the assurance that, raised above the limits of time and the succession of events, He is in the eternal present, where all things that were and are, and are to come, stand naked and open. It is the assurance that the calm might of His eternal will acts, not in spasms of successive volitions preceded by a period of indecision and equilibrium between contending motives, but is one continuous uniform energy, never beginning, never bending, never ending; that the purpose of His will is 'the eternal purpose which He hath purposed in Himself.' It is the assurance that the clear vision of His infinite knowledge, from the heat of which nothing is hid, has no stages of advancement, and no events lying nebulous in a dim horizon by reason of distance, or growing in clearness as they draw nearer, but which pierces the mists of futurity and the veils of the past and the infinities of the present, and 'from the beginning to the end knoweth all things.' It is the assurance that the mighty stream of love from the heart of God is not contingent on the variations of our character and the fluctuations of our poor hearts, but rises from His deep well, and flows on for ever, 'the river of God' which 'is full of water.' It is the assurance that round all the majesty and the mercy which He has revealed for our adoration and our trust there is the consecration of permanence, that we might have a rock on which to build and never be confounded. Is there anywhere in the past an act of His power, a word of His lip, a revelation of His heart which has been a strength or a joy or a light to any man? It is valid for me, and is intended for my use. 'He fainteth not, nor is weary.' The bush burns and is not consumed. 'I will not alter the thing that has gone out of my lips.' 'By two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we have strong consolation.'

**II. The unchanging God as the foundation of our changeful lives.**

In the most literal sense our text is true. Because He lives we live also. He is the same for ever, therefore we are not consumed. The



foundation of our being lies beyond and beneath all the mutable things from which we are tempted to believe that we draw our lives, and is in God. The true lesson to be drawn from the mutable phenomena of earth is—heaven. The many links in the chain must have a staple. Reason requires that behind all the fleeting shall be the permanent. There must be a basis which does not partake of change. The lesson from all the mutable creation is the immutable God.

Since God changes not, the life of our spirits is not at the mercy of changing events. We look back on a lifetime of changing scenes through which we have passed, and forward to a similar succession, and this mutability is sad to many of us, and in some aspects sad to all, so powerless we are to fix and arrest any of our blessings. Which we shall keep we know not; we only know that, as certainly as buds and blossoms of spring drop, and the fervid summer darkens to November fogs and December frosts, so certainly we shall have to part with much in our passage through life. But if we let God speak to us, the necessary changes that come to us will not be harmful but blessed, for the lesson that the mutability of the mutual is meant to impress upon us is, the permanency of the divine, and our dependence, not on them, but on Him. We may look upon all the world of time and chance and think that He who Himself is unchanging changeth all. The eye of the tempest is a point of rest. The point in the heavens towards which, according to some astronomers, the whole of the solar system is drifting, is a fixed point. If we depend on Him, then change is not all sad; it cannot take God away, but it may bring us nearer to Him. We cannot be desolate as long as we have Him. We know not what shall be on the morrow. Be it so; it will be God's to-morrow. When the leaves drop we can see the rock on which the trees grow; and when changes strip the world for us of some of its waving beauty and leafy shade, we may discern more clearly the firm foundation on which our hopes rest. All else changes. Be it so; that will not kill us, nor leave us utterly forlorn as long as we hear the voice which says, 'I am the Lord; I change not; therefore ye are not consumed.'

God's purposes and promises change not, therefore our faith may rest on Him, notwithstanding our own sins and fluctuations. It is this aspect of the divine immutability which is the thought of our text. God does not turn from His love, nor cancel His promises, nor alter His purposes of mercy because of our sins. If God could have changed, the godless forgetfulness of, and departure from, Him of 'the Sons of Jacob' would have driven Him to abandon His purposes; but they still live—living evidences of His long-suffering. And in that preservation of them God would have them see the basis of hope for the future. So this is the confidence with which we should cheer ourselves when we look upon the past, and when we anticipate the future. The sins that have been in our past have deserved that we should have been swept away, but we are here still. Why are we? Why do we yet live? Because we have to do with an unchanging love, with a faithfulness that never departs from its word, with a purpose of blessing that will not be turned aside. So let us look back with this thought and be thankful; let us look forward with it and be of good cheer. Trust yourself, weak and sinful as you are, to that unchanging love. The future will have in it faults and failures, sins and shortcomings, but rise from yourself to God. Look beyond the light and shade of your own characters, or of earthly events to the central light, where there is no glimmering twilight, no night, 'no variableness nor shadow of turning.' Let us live in God, and be strong in hope. Forward, not backward, let us look and strive; so our souls, fixed and steadied by faith in Him, will become in a manner partakers of His unchangeableness; and we too in our degree will be able to say, 'The Lord is at my side; I shall not be moved.'

## Malachi 3:6

### The God You Can Depend On

**Bruce Goettsche** writes that...

In a world where consistency is a rare commodity, God is someone you can depend on. In a world where public opinion changes with the wind ... God remains constant. Listen to a few of the verses that proclaim God's immutability:

Psalm 102:25-27 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Malachi 3:6,7 -"I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty."

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

In James 1:16-18 (see notes )- "Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

In fact, the name that God gave to Moses, the name Yahweh (or Jehovah) means "I am". The point is simple: there was never a time when God was ... or God will be. The way He is now is the way He has always been. He is perfect and complete. Nothing can

be added to Him ... because He lacks nothing...

Every one of God's attributes drives us to the point of commitment. We are reminded that our God is a great God. I hope you have seen that the immutability of God is more than an academic statistic. God's unchanging character is a truth that brings comfort, strength, stability, and a new sense of wonder. Look at our first four attributes:

Because God is omnipresent it means He is here

Because God is omniscient it means He understands what is going on in your life

Because He is omnipotent it means He can help

And because He is immutable it means this will never change

No matter where you are in the journey or what you are currently going through ... our Lord can help you. He is the one who can make you new. He is the one who will stand with you through any situation. He is the one you can trust. And He is the one you have been looking for and dreaming of. His arms are open. Draw close so He can wrap you in His love. There is no better place in the world to be. ([Read the full sermon message on God's Immutability](#))

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Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be. ([Play Vocal by Cece Winans](#))

**Spurgeon on** (Malachi 3:6) It is well for us that, amidst all the variableness of life, there is One whom change cannot affect; One whose heart can never alter, and on whose brow mutability can make no furrows. All things else have changed—all things are changing. The sun itself grows dim with age; the world is waxing old; the folding up of the worn-out vesture has commenced; the heavens and earth must soon pass away; they shall perish, they shall wax old as doth a garment; but there is One who only hath immortality, of whose years there is no end, and in whose person there is no change. The delight which the mariner feels, when, after having been tossed about for many a day, he steps again upon the solid shore, is the satisfaction of a Christian when, amidst all the changes of this troublous life, he rests the foot of his faith upon this truth—"I am the Lord, I change not."

The stability which the anchor gives the ship when it has at last obtained a hold-fast, is like that which the Christian's hope affords him when it fixes itself upon this glorious truth. With God "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." What ever his attributes were of old, they are now; his power, his wisdom, his justice, his truth, are alike unchanged. He has ever been the refuge of his people, their stronghold in the day of trouble, and he is their sure Helper still. He is unchanged in his love. He has loved his people with "an everlasting love"; he loves them now as much as ever he did, and when all earthly things shall have melted in the last conflagration, his love will still wear the dew of its youth. Precious is the assurance that he changes not! The wheel of providence revolves, but its axle is eternal love.

"Death and change are busy ever,  
Man decays, and ages move;  
But his mercy waneth never;  
God is wisdom, God is love."

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**SCRIPTURES ON IMMUTABLE:** For the greatest benefit from the following Scriptures, read the text, not passively but instead consciously and actively "interrogating" the text (interrogate with the 5W'S & H), making a list in your life journal of what the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9-note) teaches you (1Jn 2:27, Jn 14:26, 16:13) about God and about man. Obey any instructions or commands you encounter, as you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and to "cultivate faithfulness" (NAS, Ps 37:3-[see note](#)). Then offer prayers and praise to your Father for graciously teaching you these profitable, eternal truths (cp 2Ti 3:16, 17-note).

Nu 23:19,20; 1Sa 15:29; Job 23:13; Ps 33:11; 102:27, 119:89, 90, 91; Pr 19:21; Eccl 3:14; 7:13; Isa 31:2; 40:28; 59:1; Ho 13:14; Mal 3:6; Ro 11:29; Heb 1:12, 6:17,18; 13:8, Jas 1:17

Nu 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? 20 "Behold, I have received a command to bless; When He has blessed, then I cannot revoke it.

1Sa 15:29 "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

Through every age, eternal God,

Thou art our rest, our safe abode;  
High was Thy throne ere Heav'n was made,  
Or earth Thy humble footstool laid.

[Isaac Watts](#)

**APPLICATION OF THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD'S IMMUTABILITY:** Every time you see a rainbow remind yourself that you know the immutable God. And remind yourself that a God who is unchanging in His love and kindness to you deserves your unchanging love, loyalty, devotion, and service. If He promises, it will not break His promise.

Who trusts in God's unchanging love  
Builds on the Rock that cannot move.

[\(Play\)](#)

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John MacDuff...

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD - "You are the same." - Psalm 102:27

What a fountain of comfort is to be found in the Immutability of God! Not one ripple can disturb the calm of His unchanging nature. Were it so, He would no longer be a perfect Being- He would undeify Himself- He would cease to be God! "Change is our portion here." "They shall perish," is the brief chronicle regarding everything on this side heaven. The firmament above us, the earth beneath us, the elements around us- "all these things shall be dissolved." Scenes of hallowed endearment- they have fled! Friends who sweetened our pilgrimage with their presence- they are gone! But here is a sure and safe anchorage amid the world's heaving ocean of vicissitude- "You are the same." All is changing but the Unchanging One. The earthly scaffolding may give way, but the living Temple remains. The reed may bend to the blast, but the living Rock spurns and outlives the storm!

How blessed, especially, to contemplate the unchangeableness of our Great High Priest, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever!" True, He is, in one sense, "changed." No longer the Man of sorrows- the homeless wanderer. He is enthroned amid the glories of heaven. Seraphs praise Him- Saints adore Him. But His Heart knows no change. His ascension glories have not obliterated His tender human sympathies. We can think of Him receiving an outcast sinner, or stilling the storm, or standing at the gate of Nain, or weeping tears of pity over a lost city, or tears of sympathy over a buried friend, and write over all these, "You are the same!" The name which He bequeathed by angels to His Church until He comes again is- "that same Jesus!" His own Patmos title is His memorial for all time- "I AM He that lives!" Believer! has He ever seemed to change towards you? Are you even now mourning over the withdrawal of that countenance whose smile is heaven? Are you saying in the bitterness of your spirit, "Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious?" The change is with yourself, not with your God. Behind the clouds of your own departure, the Sun of His love shines brightly as ever. "He faints not, neither is weary."

Or, it may be, you are laboring under other trials. The hand of your God may be heavy upon you. The secret thought may be harbored that some tear might have been spared; that your chastisement might have been less severe- that your bereavement, with its dark accompaniment, might have been mitigated or averted. Look upwards and take the Psalmist's antidote as your own, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." Think that the same Hand which was for you nailed to the Cross, is now pleading for you on the Throne; ordering and controlling every trial; and over every dark providence writing the unanswerable challenge, "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Oh! thus pillowing your head on the Immutability of Jesus, amid the rude buffetings of a changing world, you will be able, night after night, to say, until the dawn of a morning breaks on you, which knows neither night nor vicissitude, "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8  
(From - [THE NIGHT WATCHES by John MacDuff](#))

## IMMUTABLE, UNCHANGEABLE IN THE GREEK

Immutability, Unchangeable ([276](#))(*ametathetos* from *a* = without + *metatithemi* = change condition or place, transfer, put in

another place) literally never changing, not to be transferred. The idea is that which is fixed, unalterable or immutable. This word was used in secular Greek in the context of wills and contracts and signified a stipulation that could not be disregarded or annulled. Once properly made a will was *ametathetos* unchangeable by anyone but the maker. The writer of Hebrews uses this word (in the only 2 uses in Scripture in Hebrews 6:17 [note] and Hebrews 6:18 [note]) with powerful, well known forensic (legal) ramifications (immutability of a legally written will) to add to the force of the encouragement the words of the book of Hebrews extended to the readers.

The Immutable, Unchangeable God makes a covenant (both Abrahamic and especially the New Covenant) which is eternally unbreakable! If you think you can lose your salvation, then you need to meditate on this attribute of God - He is Immutable. He will not go back on His promise of the New Covenant. If you are believed in Jesus, that covenant has been in a sense "signed in blood" by your Faithful, Covenant Keeping Savior. You cannot be lost. You may feel sometimes like you are lost (especially when you are in the desert of unconfessed sins!) but you are never lost from the Omniscient, Omnipotent eye of your Lord! Believe it! It is true! Jesus bears the marks of covenant on His body eternally as visible evidence of His immutable covenant of grace! John saw those marks on the resurrected, gloried Lord Jesus Christ testifying...

And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain...  
(Revelation 5:6-[note](#))

**Comment:** John uses the **perfect tense** which signifies a past completed, historical act or event (the piercing of Jesus' hands, feet and side on Calvary over 2000 years ago-Ps 22:16, 19:23, 34, 37, cp Zech 12:10, ) with abiding effect (His scars will remain visible throughout eternity beloved!) Do you believe this? Or are you like Jesus' disciple Thomas?

The other disciples therefore were saying to him (Thomas), "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint (tupos) of the nails, and put my finger into the place (print -tupos) of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "**Reach** (command) **here your finger**, and **see** (command) **My hands**; and **reach** (command) **here your hand**, and **put** (command) **it into My side**; and be not unbelieving, but believing." (John 20:25-27)

#### See related resources:

- Why the New Covenant is Better than the Old Covenant
- New Covenant in the Old Testament
- Abrahamic vs Old vs New Covenant

## RELATED RESOURCES IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

- [Does God change His mind? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does prayer change God's mind? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [The Divine attribute of immutability](#)
- [What is the immutability of God?](#)
- [Does prayer change God's mind?](#)
- [What is the immutability of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [R. B. Chisholm, Jr., "Does God Change His Mind?" BSac 152 \(1995\): 387-99.](#) 13 page paper
- [Robert Chisholm - Does God Change His Mind?](#) - short discussion by Robert Chisholm
- [Attributes of God - The Repentance and Unchangeability of God- by Dr S Lewis Johnson](#) - Recommended Resource - includes Mp3, Pdf or MS Word document. This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- The Immutability of God by A. W. Pink
- [God Unchanging](#) by Ray Pritchard - recommended resource
- [The Immutability of God](#) by A.W. Tozer
- [The Immutability of God](#) by Thomas Watson (scroll down)
- God's attribute of Immutability - notes by C H Spurgeon
- [God Does Not Repent Like a Man](#) by John Piper

- [Divine Immutability](#) by John MacDuff
- [Malachi 3:6 The Immutability of God](#) by [Charles Simeon](#)
- [The Immutability of God](#) by [Bob Deffinbaugh](#)
- [Hebrews 13:8 The Immutability Of Christ](#); - C H Spurgeon
- [Hebrews 13:8 The Unchangeable Christ](#) - C H Spurgeon
- [I Change Not](#) by [Richard L. Strauss](#)
- [Immutability, Immutable](#) in the International Std Bible Encyclopedia
- [A God of Absolutes - Devotional](#) from Our Daily Bread
- [The Unchangeable God](#) by David Legge

### Hymns Related to God's Unchanging Nature

- [Always and Ever](#)
- [Ere Mountains Reared Their Forms Sublime](#)
- [God Has Spoken by the Prophets](#)
- [God of Eternity](#)
- [Great God, How Infinite Art Thou!](#)
- [Great Is Thy Faithfulness](#)
- [Have You Not Known, Have You Not Heard](#)
- [Honor and Glory, Power and Salvation](#)
- [I Hear the Words of Love](#)
- [Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise](#)
- [Lord, Through All the Generations](#)
- [New Wonders of Thy Mighty Hand](#)
- [None Else but Thee, Forevermore](#)
- [O God, the Rock of Ages](#)
- [Power of God, The](#)
- [Roll Out, O Song, to God!](#)
- [O Lord, Thy Perfect Righteousness](#)
- [Through Every Age, Eternal God](#)
- [We Come Unto Our Fathers' God](#)
- [Year Is Swiftly Waning, The](#)

## IMPARTIAL

**Impartial** means not partial and speaks of God's attribute whereby He treats all men and women equally, not demonstrating favoritism. God does not show prejudice towards or against any person or party.

With an **impartial** hand, the Lord  
Deals out to mortals their reward;  
The kind and faithful souls shall find  
A God as faithful and as kind.  
([Isaac Watts - Play hymn](#))

Moses in his exhortation to Israel to circumcise their hearts (referring to spiritual circumcision = not relying on works or sacrifices to attain righteousness, but personally expressing faith in God's promised, prophesied Messiah - see discussion of meaning of circumcision related to Covenant) spoke the following words to motivate them to seek the LORD while He could be found...

For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome **God Who does not show partiality**, nor take a bribe. ([Dt 10:17](#)) (for God... "does not delight in sacrifice, [nor] with burnt offering [but] the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart [God] will not despise) ([Ps 51:16-Spurgeon's note](#) and Ps 51:17-[note](#))

**Jehoshaphat the king of Judah** warned the judges he appointed throughout Judah to think carefully before pronouncing judgment and to

let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in

unrighteousness, or partiality, or the taking of a bribe. (2Chr 19:7)

**Jeremiah** conveys a similar thought asking

O LORD, do not Thine eyes look for truth? (Jer 5:3)

In first Samuel the author reminds us that...

The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart (1Sa 16:7).

### **Other Passages Related to the Impartiality of God...**

Dt 10:17 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show **partiality**, nor take a bribe.

Job 34:18 Who says to a king, 'Worthless one,' To nobles, 'Wicked ones'; 19 Who shows no partiality to princes, Nor regards the rich above the poor, For they all are the work of His hands?

Job 36:5 "Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding.

Job 37:24 "Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart."

Mt 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you 45 (note) in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Acts 10:34,35 And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show **partiality**, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.

Acts 15:8 (Taking his stand before his saved Jewish brethren, Peter defends God's salvation of the Gentiles) "And God, Who knows the heart, bore witness to them (Gentiles), giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us (Jews) and them (Gentiles), cleansing their hearts by faith.

Ro 2:6 (God) WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:... 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 (Why?) For there is **no partiality** with God. (Notes on Ro 2:6, 2:9, 2:11)

Thy sun Thou bidd'st his genial ray  
Alike on all **impartial** pour;  
To all, who hate or bless Thy sway,  
Thou bidd'st descend the fruitful shower.

[\(Play\)](#)

Ro 10:12 (note) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

Gal 2:6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no **partiality**)-- well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

Col 3:25 (see notes) For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without **partiality**.

Eph 6:9 (see note) And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is **no partiality** (prosopolepsia - word study) **with Him**.

**Partiality** ([4382](#)) (**prosopolepsia** [prosopolepsia] from **prósopon** = face, presence, person + **lambáno** = receive, take into account) literally means to "receive face" or receive one's countenance or one's person which was a Hebraic concept (see TDNT below). The idea is that of looking to see who someone is before deciding how to treat them! In other words, one judges by appearance and on that basis giving special favor and respect (or the converse - refuses to give respect). This noun then pertains to judging others purely on a superficial level, without consideration of the person's true merits, abilities, or character.

The Oriental custom of greeting was to bow one's face to the ground. If the one greeted accepted the person,

he was allowed to lift his head again. The accepting of the appearance of a person was a Hebraic term for "partiality". To reiterate, the meaning of **prosopolepsia** is to judge another on the basis of externals or pre-conceived notions, and thereby demonstrate partiality or favoritism. In short, it means to make unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another.

1Pe 1:17 (see notes) And if you address as Father the One who **impartially** (**aprosopoleptos** - word study) judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth

**Impartially** ([678](#)) (**aprosopoleptos** from **a** = not, without + **prósopon** = face + **lambáno** = receive) (this verse is only Scriptural occurrence) literally means "not receiving face" which then came to mean "without respect of persons".

**Aprosopoleptos** is derived from a Hebrew idiom "**to receive the face**" of someone which meant to show partiality or favoritism. This word reflects the respectful oriental greeting in which one humbly turns one's face to the ground upon meeting another person. If the person greeted raised the face of the man, this was a sign of recognition and esteem. Here the word is the opposite or negative aspect of this well known practice and thus means "does not receive face." That is, God does not receive anybody's face. He is impartial. Outward appearance, wealth, culture, social position, family background, education, beauty, intellect, all things that more or less sway the opinions of man, do not count with God when it comes to appraising a person's character or worthiness.

## RELATED RESOURCES

### IMPARTIALITY

- [There Is No Partiality With God. Part 1 \(The Gospel\)](#)
- [There is No Partiality With God. Part 2 \(Justification\)](#)

## INCOMPREHENSIBLE

### (INSCRUTABLE)

**Richard Baxter** put it well noting that...

You may know God, but not comprehend him.

Or as **Stephen Charnock** wrote...

It is visible that God is; it is invisible what he is.

The ninth tenet in the Athanasian Creed is "The Father **incomprehensible**, the Son **incomprehensible**, and the Holy Spirit **incomprehensible**."

Hail, co-essential Three,

In mystic Unity!

Father, Son, and Spirit, hail!

God by Heaven and earth adored,

God incomprehensible;

One supreme, almighty Lord,

One supreme, almighty Lord.

[\(Charles Wesley - Play Hymn\)](#)

According to Webster's Dictionary, something that is **incomprehensible** is "not capable of being comprehended, something that no limits can contain, unintelligible, ..." So it is with our God. He is incomprehensible to us. We cannot know Him by our own power.

Even as we venture into this study of "The Knowledge of God", we must be ever mindful that God is, in His essence, unknowable. He is far above us; exalted infinitely higher than we, His creation; infinitely above our conception, thought, and language. God's essence (i.e. what He is in and of Himself) is hidden from us and beyond our ability to understand. We are finite, limited beings. The finite cannot fully grasp the infinite. God has given us the ability and information (His Word) to know that He is, but not to totally know what He is. The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God. It assumes it as fact. "In the beginning God ... " ([Genesis 1:1](#))... Therefore, while Scripture teaches the absolute incomprehensibility of God ([Job 38-41](#)), it also presents a doctrine of God that fully maintains His knowability. And He has revealed, at least in part, His purpose for doing so—that we may worship Him as God and have eternal life (see **notes** Romans 1:20; 21; 22; 23; [John 17:3](#)). Our great God can be **known**, but He cannot be **fully comprehended**.

In vain our haughty reason swells,

For nothing's found in thee

But boundless inconceivables

And vast eternity.

### **Isaac Watts**

May the very incomprehensibility of God move us to adoration and worshipful awe. As A W Tozer said...

If God can be understood and comprehended by any of our human means, then I cannot worship him.

As **Augustine** said

We are speaking of God. Is it any wonder that you do not comprehend? For if you comprehended Him He cannot be God. Let this be a pious confession of great ignorance rather than a rash profession of knowledge. To have a very slight knowledge of God is a great blessing. To comprehend Him is altogether impossible.

**Samuel Wesley** (1691–1739) expressed God's incomprehensibility in verse writing from his hymn [Hail Father, Whose Creating Call](#) ([play hymn](#))

Hail, Father! Whose creating call

Unnumber'd worlds attend;

Jehovah! comprehending all,

Whom none can comprehend.

**Martin Luther** (1483–1546) wrote that

God's actual divine essence and his will, administration and works—are absolutely beyond all human thought, human understanding or wisdom; in short, that they are and ever will be **incomprehensible**, inscrutable, and altogether hidden to human reason.

Puritan **Thomas Manton** (1620-1677) wrote that

We know God but as men born blind know the fire, they know that there is such a thing as fire, for they feel it warm them, but what it is they know not. So, that there is a God we know, but what he is we know little, and indeed we can never search him out to perfection; a finite creature **can never fully comprehend** that which is infinite.

Puritan **Richard Sibbes** asks

How should finite comprehend infinite? We shall apprehend Him, but not comprehend Him.

And as another Puritan **Richard Baxter** (1615-1691) wrote

You may know God, but **not comprehend** him.

Puritan **John Owen** wrote the following thoughts on the "**incomprehensible**" God:

(1) What the mind cannot comprehend the heart doth admire and adore, delighting in God, and giving glory unto him in all.



(2) Faith which is truly divine, is never more in its proper exercise--doth never more elevate the soul into conformity unto God--than when it acts in the contemplation and admiration of the most incomprehensible mysteries which are proposed unto it by divine revelation.

(3) In case we are brought unto a loss and disorder in our minds on the contemplation of any one infinite property of God, it is good to divert our thoughts unto the effects of it, such as whereof we have or may have experience... I cannot comprehend the immensity of God's nature; it may be I cannot understand the nature of immensity: yet if I find by experience, and do strongly believe, that he is always present wherever I am, I have the faith of it and satisfaction in it."

**Blaise Pascal** (1623–1662)

Incomprehensible? But because you cannot understand a thing, it does not cease to exist... It is incomprehensible that God should exist, and it is **incomprehensible** that He should not exist.

**A. W. Tozer** (1897- 1963)

We cannot speak of measure or amount or size or weight and at the same time be speaking of God, for all these tell of degrees and there is no degrees in God. All that He is He is without growth or addition or development. Nothing in God is less or more, or large or small. He is what He is in Himself without qualifying thought or word. He is simply God. God is in and beyond Everything.

**Tozer** also reminds us that

Our concepts of measurement embrace mountains and men, atoms and stars, gravity, energy, numbers, speed, but never God. We cannot speak of measure or amount or size or weight and at the same time be speaking of God, for these tell of degrees and there are no degrees in God. All that He is He is without growth or addition or development.

**Tozer** said

We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire his wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.

**Tozer** once said that

In theology there is no "Oh!" and this is a significant if not an ominous thing. Theology seeks to reduce what may be known of God to intellectual terms, and as long as the intellect can comprehend, it can find words to express itself. When God Himself appears before the mind, awesome, vast and **incomprehensible**, then the mind sinks into silence and the heart cries out "**Oh Lord God!**"

On a more practical note **Tozer** adds that

If we would bring back spiritual power to our lives, we must begin to think of God more nearly as He is.

**From A. W. Pink's chapter [The Contemplation of God](#)** found in his book "Gleanings in the Godhead" we find:

From this contemplation of His attributes, it should be evident to us all that God is, first, an incomprehensible Being; and, lost in wonder at His infinite greatness, we adopt the words of Zophar, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" ([Job 11:7-9](#)). When we turn our thoughts to God's eternity, His immateriality, His omnipresence, His almightiness, our minds are overwhelmed.

But the incomprehensibility of the divine nature is no reason why we should desist from reverent inquiry and prayerful striving to apprehend what He has so graciously revealed of Himself in His Word. Because we are unable to acquire perfect knowledge, it would be folly to say we will therefore make no efforts to attain to any degree of it. **C. H. Spurgeon** has well said:

Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued, investigation of the great subject of the Deity. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ and Him crucified and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. The proper study of the Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the doings, and the existence of the great God which he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a

contemplation of the divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can comprehend and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go on our way with the thought, "Behold I am wise." But when we come to this master science, finding that our plummet cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought "I am but of yesterday and know nothing" ([The Immutability of God](#) a sermon on Malachi 3:6).

Yes, the incomprehensibility of the divine nature should teach us humility, caution, and reverence. After all our searchings and meditations we have to say with Job, "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him?" (Job 26:14). When Moses besought Jehovah for a sight of His glory, He answered him "I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee" ([Ex. 33:19](#)); as another has said, "the name is the collection of His attributes." (for full article click "[The Contemplation of God](#)" )

**NAVE'S TOPIC:** For the greatest benefit from the following Scriptures, read the text, not passively but instead consciously and actively "interrogating" the text (interrogate with the 5W'S & H), making a list in your life journal of what the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9-note) teaches you (1Jn 2:27, Jn 14:26, 16:13) about God and about man. Obey any instructions or commands you encounter, as you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and to "cultivate faithfulness" (NAS, Ps 37:3-[see note](#)). Then offer prayers and praise to your Father for graciously teaching you these profitable, eternal truths (cp 2Ti 3:16, 17-notes).

Ex 20:21; Dt 4:11; 5:22; 1Ki 8:12; Job 11:7, 8, 9; 15:8; 37:1-24; Ps 18:11; 97:2; Eccl 3:11; Is 40:12-31; 55:8,9; 1Co 2:16

Isaiah 40:27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"? 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. **His understanding is inscrutable** (unsearchable, cannot be penetrated, discovered or understood by human wisdom) (Play the very pretty chorus related to Isaiah's question [Do You Not Know?](#))

O Mind immutable!  
O Light **inscrutable!**  
Thine is the eye that guides the lightning fire,  
In Thee the ages live,  
Thou dost their limits give,  
Who can Thy praises reach, Eternal Sire?  
Thou art beyond the dreams of men;  
Beyond the reach of mind, or highest angel's ken.

Eternity springs from His Infinite Mind—  
All time and all space from His fingers unwind,  
His intricate, limitless, unbounded skill  
Spins threads of His sovereign, **inscrutable** will.

### **The Incomprehensible**

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

FAR in the Heavens my God retires:  
My God, the mark of my desires,  
And hides His lovely face;  
When He descends within my view,  
He charms my reason to pursue,  
But leaves it tir'd and fainting in th' unequal chase.

Or if I reach unusual height  
Till near His presence brought,  
There floods of glory check my flight,  
Cramp the bold pinions of my wit,  
And all untune my thought;  
Plunged in a sea of light I roll,  
Where wisdom, justice, mercy, shines;  
Infinite rays in crossing lines

Beat thick confusion on my sight, and overwhelm my soul...

Great God! behold my reason lies  
Adoring: yet my love would rise  
On pinions not her own:  
Faith shall direct her humble flight,  
Through all the trackless seas of light,  
To Thee, th' Eternal Fair, the infinite Unknown.

## RELATED RESOURCES: INCOMPREHENSIBLE

- Incomprehensible by C H Spurgeon
- [What God Is Like](#) by Hampton Keathley III - well done
- [The Importance of Thinking](#) by David Legge
- [Knowing Your God](#) by David Legge

## INFINITE/INFINITY

**INFINITY** of God means that He is limitless, measureless and boundless. Divine infinity indicates that the limitations of finite creatures do not apply to him. Whatever God is (love, faithfulness, righteous, wise, etc), He is without limit, and whatever He is cannot be measured. He is not bound or restricted by space, time, or matter. There is no point, edge, or line confining God, and no size or weight that can catalog Him.

Great God, how infinite art Thou!  
What worthless worms are we!  
Let the whole race of creatures bow,  
And pay their praise to Thee.  
-- Isaac Watts

One should avoid the error of applying the mathematical idea of infinitude as an endless expansion in either the time or space dimension to God. His being has neither a measurable beginning nor a measurable end. He fills eternity from everlasting to everlasting. Such truth is incomprehensible (another of His attributes) to our finite minds, for we live in a limited world where all that we know has size and weight. The distance from here to there, no matter where, is measurable and even atoms can be weighed. Infinity extends to every attribute of God as alluded to in the words of the hymn Accepted in the Beloved...

"In the Beloved" I went to the tree,  
There, in His Person, by faith I may see  
Infinite wrath rolling over His head,  
Infinite grace, for He died in my stead.

"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" (1Ki 8:27)

"Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit" (Ps. 147:5 - [Spurgeon's comment](#))

Infinite God, to Thee we raise  
Our hearts in solemn songs of praise,  
By all Thy works on earth adored,  
We worship Thee, the common Lord;  
The everlasting Father own,  
And bow our souls before Thy throne.

"Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea" (Job 11:7, 8, 9)

"The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He drove out the enemy

from before you, And said, 'Destroy!' (Dt 33:27)

"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?" (Isa. 40:12)

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts' " (Isa. 55:8, 9)

"For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy" (Isa. 57:15)

"This is what the Lord says: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' " (Isa. 66:1, 2)

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Ro 11:33-note)

Thy love I soon expect to find,  
In all its depth and height;  
To comprehend the eternal mind,  
And grasp the Infinite.

-- Charles Wesley

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col 1:17+)

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The finite can neither see nor comprehend the Infinite. The Infinite has to reveal Himself. Henry Ward Beecher said: "When Columbus drew near to the eastern coast of this continent, he could see that there were mountains, but do you believe he knew what minerals were in them? Do you suppose he knew all the trees, all the shrubs, all the vines, all the herbs there? He knew something about the outlying islands of this great continent, but he did not understand the details that went to make it up. I can understand there is such a being as God, but when it is said that He is infinite, I am so finite that my comprehension ends right there. I cannot understand infiniteness. All things in the natural world symbolize God, yet none of them speak of Him but in broken and imperfect words. High above all He sits, sublimer than mountains, nobler than lords, truer than parents, more loving than lovers. His feet tread the lowest places of the earth, but His head is above all glory; everywhere He is supreme."— Bible Illustrations

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**INFINITE** - Unlimited in extent of space, duration, and quantity. Though Scripture does not use the term "infinite" to describe God, theologians have found the term a suitable summary of several attributes of God. God is not limited by space (Ps. 139:7,8); God is not limited by time; God existed before the creation (Ge 1:1); the ordering of time is part of God's creative activity (Ge 1:5). Because God is spirit (Jn 4:24), God cannot be quantified like a material object. God is regarded as infinite in many other qualities: God's steadfast love endures forever (Ps 100:5); God's knowledge extends to the fall of a single sparrow and the number of hairs on our heads (Matt. 10:29, 30; cp. Ps 139:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6); God is "the Almighty" (Ge 17:1; Ex 6:3). (Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

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**Norm Geisler** addresses a question skeptics ask about God's limitlessness

**IF GOD HAS NO LIMITS, THEN HE MUST BE BOTH GOOD AND EVIL, EXISTENCE AND NONEXISTENCE, STRONG AND WEAK --**

(Geisler answers) When we say that God is unlimited, we mean that He is unlimited in His perfections. Now evil is not a perfection; it is an imperfection. The same is true of nonexistence, weakness, ignorance, finitude, temporality, and any other characteristic that implies limitation or imperfection. We might say that God is "limited" in that He can't enter into limitations, like time, space, weakness, evil—at least not as God. He is only "limited" by His unlimited perfection. (Geisler, N. L., & Brooks, R. M. When Skeptics Ask. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1990)

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Quotes from **A W Tozer** on God's attribute **Infinite**...

To attribute size to God is to make Him subject to degrees, which He can never be, seeing that the very idea of degree relates to created things only. That which is infinite cannot be greater or less, larger or smaller, and God is infinite. God simply is without qualification.

Infinity can belong to but One. There can be no second.

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Again, to say that God is infinite is to say that He is measureless. Measurement is the way created things have of accounting for themselves. It describes limitations, imperfections, and cannot apply to God. Weight describes the gravitational pull of the earth upon material bodies; distance describes intervals between bodies in space; length means extension in space, and there are other familiar measurements such as those for liquid, energy, sound, light, and numbers for pluralities. We also try to measure abstract qualities, and speak of great or little faith, high or low intelligence, large or meager talents. Is it not plain that all this does not and cannot apply to God? It is the way we see the works of His hands, but not the way we see Him. He is above all this, outside of it, beyond it.

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God's gifts in nature have their limitations. They are finite because they have been created, but the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus is as limitless as God. The Christian man possesses God's own life and shares His infinity with Him.

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God is self-existent and self-contained and knows what no creature can ever know—Himself, perfectly. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Only the Infinite can know the infinite.

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the word infinite describes what is unique, it can have no modifiers. We do not say "more unique" or "very infinite." Before infinity we stand silent. (Tozer, A. W., & Verploegh, H. The Quotable Tozer I: Wise Words with a Prophetic Edge. Camp Hill, PA.: WingSpread)

## RELATED RESOURCES

### INFINITE

- [Attributes of God - The Spirituality and Infinity of God- by Dr S Lewis Johnson- Recommended Resource](#) - includes Mp3, Pdf or MS Word document. This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- [What God Is Like](#) - Hampton Keathley III (Well done summary the character of God, including His attributes).
- Infinity of God - C H Spurgeon
- [God's Infinity](#) by A.W. TOZER
- [God's Infinity \(Different from above - these are Mp3's\) Parts 1-3 by A W Tozer](#)

## JEALOUS

**Jealous** - Human jealousy describes the hostility one has toward a rival or one believed to enjoy some advantage. It should be emphasized that not all human jealousy is sinful as seen in the prophet Elijah's reaction in first Kings...

And he (Elijah) said, I have been very jealous (zealous - Hebrew verb = qana) for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (KJV, 1Ki 19:10, 14, cp Phinehas' zeal for God's honor in Nu 25:11, 12, 13)

Jealousy is an emotion we often describe as seen between lovers. God was Israel's husband (Jer 31:32 - God was in covenant with Israel, cp Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage. Cp Ho 2:19, Isa 54:5, Jer 2:2, 3:14) and because of His love for His people He zealously (jealously) acted to maintain their fidelity. Divine jealousy is not the petty emotion so often seen in fallen men and women, but describes Jehovah's justifiable intolerance to any and every rival (cp idols, so-called gods). Jealousy is God's rightful demand for our exclusive affection or loyalty. In short, God's kind of jealousy is appropriate and good, for He is defending His word and His high honor. He makes a strong, exclusive demand on those who are His beloved. As such, we must treat only the Lord as God to the

exclusion of all other people and things in all the universe!

**Excursus on Marriage:** Marriage is one of many figures used in Scripture to emphasize the relationship of God to men. This illustration is used in both OT and NT to picture love, intimacy, privilege, and responsibility. In the OT, as here in Hosea 2:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, Israel is described as the wife of the LORD, though she is for a time disowned because of her unfaithfulness and spiritual adultery (idolatry, which is coveting something more than God and/or putting anything ahead of adoration of Him). Israel will by the grace and mercy of God one day in the future repent and will be restored (Ro 11:25, 26-notes, Ro 11:27-note, cp Zech 12:10). Israel's relationship with God as her husband is not to be confused with the Bride of Christ, which describes the NT relationship of the Church to Christ (John 3:29, Eph 5:25, 26-notes, Ep 5:29, 20-notes, Ep 5:31-note). In the mystery of the divine Trinity both are true. The NT speaks of the Church as a virgin betrothed to one husband Christ Jesus her Lord (2Co 11:1, 2, 3, 4, cp Re 19:6-note, Re 19:7-note, Re 19:8-note, cp Re 21:9-note).

The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters adds that...

Jealousy is the relational counterpart to zeal, primarily a focusing of emotion toward a person in the desire for a closer or renewed bond, or an envying of another person. Jealousy is often self-centered and destructive, although God is righteously jealous when His right to total allegiance by His people is infringed.

**A JEALOUS GOD** - That is a very wonderful and suggestive expression—"a jealous God." See that it be engraven on your hearts. Jesus will not endure it that those of us who love Him should divide our hearts between Him and something else. The love which is strong as death is linked with a jealousy cruel as the grave, "the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." The royal word to the spouse is, "Forget also thine own people and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." Of course, beloved, the Master never condemns that proper natural affection which we are bound to give, and which it is a part of our sanctification to give in its due and proper proportion to those who are related to us. Besides, we are bound to love all the saints, and all mankind in their proper place and measure. But there is a love which is for the Master alone. Inside the heart there must be a sanctum sanctorum, within the veil, where He Himself alone must shine like the Shechinah, and reign on the mercy-seat. There must be a glorious high throne within our spirits, where the true Solomon alone must sit; the lions of watchful zeal must guard each step of it. There must He, the King in His beauty, sit enthroned, sole monarch of the heart's affection. (Flashes of Thought)

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**T. G. Selby** has the following thoughts on The Divine Jealousy (Exodus 34:14)

Is jealousy primarily a vice masking as a much-suffering virtue, or is it a virtue that has caught many of the basenesses of a vice? May we ascribe jealousy to the holy and glorious God without reflecting the least stain of dishonour upon His nature?

I. Our literature, like that of all nations, indeed, abounds in pictures of this consuming passion. Perhaps the most familiar and impressive delineation of the passion is that presented by Shakespeare in his great masterpiece, 'Othello the Moor'. If you recall the chief outlines of the tragedy you will have a concrete illustration before you from which to start in studying the subject of the Divine jealousy.

1. Our condemnation of jealousy is not infrequently condemnation of the ignorance and infatuation with which it is mixed. Jealousy must always rank with the vices rather than virtues when, like that of Othello, it is blind—blind with the guilty blindness that will not consent to see.

2. Our condemnation of jealousy is very often condemnation of the despotic temper, in which it has its root. We class it with the vices rather than the virtues, because in many cases it is not love seeking the just return of love. How often is it thinly disguised ambition, aggressive and overbearing egotism? I have no doubt Shakespeare meant us to recognize an element of this sort in the jealousy of Othello.

3. Our condemnation of jealousy, again, is sometimes the condemnation of moral unfitness to win and to retain the love that has been vainly sought or miserably abused. The temper is often a vice, because the chilled affection that has provoked it is the just retribution of neglect, ungraciousness, intemperance of disposition and behaviour.

4. Our condemnation of jealousy is often a condemnation of the merciless and savage forms in which it expresses itself. We class it with the vices rather than with the virtues, because when the passion is once encouraged it tends to become a masterful impulse akin to homicidal madness.

II. The flaws in our current human jealousies notwithstanding, may not the very highest moral and spiritual

forces go to inform and energize this sentiment? The heart which upon just and righteous occasion is incapable of jealousy is likewise incapable of love. Love has rights it can never renounce without proving false to its own deepest qualities. And if no love can compare with God's, no right can rival the right that is inherent in the foundation qualities of that love.

All humane and civilized governments which account themselves responsible for the well-being of the people committed to their care are characterized by this temper of jealousy, and the strength of the temper is a test of their very right to exist. In such cases the passion is emphatically a virtue.

The jealousy exercised in the interests of others must be holy and beneficent. God will brook no intrusion into His work, no division of His authority, no departure from His laws. He alone can guide us through the rocks and whirlpools, and bring us to our far-off goal. That He should be supreme is the very salvation of the universe.

III. Now let us face the question: if jealousy has this high and holy basis, and if God's jealousy does not need to be held in check because of the imperfection of knowledge, the risk of mistake, or the fear lest the passion once kindled should hurry into inordinate and unconsidered excess, is not the Divine type of the passion likely to be more terribly intense and overwhelming than any of the modern types we find around us? God gives incalculably more love than others, and He is moved with a deeper indignation when you suffer a rival to reign in His place.

Mark how this feature reappears in the character and teaching of Jesus Christ, who is the image of the Father's person and glory. 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' The holy jealousy of Christ's life is as true a hint of the surpassing qualities of His love as the vicariousness of His bitter death. (T. G. Selby, The Lesson of a Dilemma)

## STUDY THE SCRIPTURES ON DIVINE JEALOUSY

You will derive the maximum spiritual benefit if you take time to go through these passages and ask the 5W's and H type questions (5W'S & H). As the Spirit illuminates the various aspects of God's attribute of jealousy, remember that you have now have the responsibility to respond to this great truth. This is a simple study but it can be life changing!

Ex 20:4, 5,7; 34:13, 14; Nu 25:11 Dt 4:23,24; 5:9,11; 6:15; 29:20; 32:16,21; Jos 24:19; 1Ki 14:22, 23, 24, 2Chr 16:7, 8, 9, 10; Ps 78:58; 79:5, 6 Isa 30:1,2; 31:1,3; Ezek 16:42, 23:25; 36:5,6, 39:19, 39:25; Joel 2:18; Nah 1:2; Zeph 1:18, 3:8, Zech 1:14; 8:2, 1Cor 10:21, 22, Jas 4:4, 5 (You are strongly encouraged to carry out your own observations of these passages before you look at the notes).

Exodus 20:4-7 You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them (idols); for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

**Comment:** God is depicted in Scripture as Israel's husband and is a jealous God (Ex 20:5) because Israel's idolatry was spiritual adultery or harlotry. Phinehas showed his faithfulness to God by killing a man and his foreign wife, and thus stayed the wrath of divine jealousy (Nu 25:11). Joshua repeated that God is a jealous God who would not tolerate idolatry and the people voluntarily placed themselves under God's suzerainty

Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. (Josh 24:19)

Israel's repeated idolatry incited God's wrath, and eventually He was forced to pour out the just punishment His people deserved for their spiritual adultery...

Thus My anger will be spent, and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I shall be appeased; then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal (Heb = qin'ah = a burning, then the colour produced in the face by a deep emotion, thus ardour, zeal, jealousy) when I have spent My wrath upon them. (Ezek 5:13)

And He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me (the prophet Ezekiel is speaking) by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to

Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the idol of **jealousy**, which provokes to **jealousy**, was located. 4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the appearance which I saw in the plain.5 Then He said to me, "Son of man, raise your eyes, now, toward the north." So I raised my eyes toward the north, and behold, to the north of the altar gate was this idol of jealousy at the entrance. (Ezek 8:3, 4, 5)

Thus I shall judge you, like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I shall bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. (Ezek 5:13, 16:38)

The **Psalmist** identified the jealousy of God as the cause of the exile and he sought God to quench his wrath against Israel

How long, O LORD? Wilt Thou be angry forever? Will Thy **jealousy** burn like fire? (Ps 79:5).

**Spurgeon:** How long, Lord?" Will there be no end to these chastisements? They are most sharp and overwhelming; wilt thou much longer continue them?

"Wilt thou be angry for ever?" Is thy mercy gone so that thou wilt for ever smite?

"Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?" There was great cause for the Lord to be jealous, since idols had been set up, and Israel had gone aside from his worship, but the psalmist begs the Lord not to consume his people utterly as with fire, but to abate their woes.

The word "jealousy" signifies not mere revenge but revenge mingled with love, for unless he loved, says Jerome, he would not be jealous, and after the manner of a husband avenge the sin of his wife. Lorinus.

Ex 34:13,14 But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is **Jealous**, is a **jealous** God. (See C H Spurgeon's Sermon on Exodus 34:14 - [A Jealous God](#))

Dt 4:23 "So watch yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the LORD your God has commanded you. 24 "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a **jealous** God.

Dt 5:9 'You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a **jealous** God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 11 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

**Comment:** To emphasize His hatred and His command against idolatry, God calls Himself Jealous, the Hebrew word Qanna. God's jealousy does not refer to our shallow, childish human emotion but emphasizes that He does not tolerate a divided heart (Mt 6:22, 24, Jas1:6, 7, 8, 1Jn 2:15, 16, 17, Jas 4:4). We are to honor God with our lives and not simply give Him lip service. To obey is always better than sacrifice (1Sa 15:22,23).

Dt 6:14 "You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,15 for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a **jealous** God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. Dt 32:16 "They made Him **jealous** with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 17 "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 18 "You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth. 19 "And the LORD saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. 20 "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness. 21 'They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them **jealous** with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation

Josh 24:19 Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a **jealous** God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.

**APPLICATION OF THE TRUTH ABOUT DIVINE JEALOUSY:** Examine your life style honestly and prayerfully. Have other persons, places or things assumed a more prominent status or role in your life than your relationship with the Lord God Almighty, the eternal, immutable Lover of your soul? If so, take some decisive and concrete steps (under grace not law, cp Ro 6:14-note, 2Co 3:5, 6) to cast out and destroy the "idols" in your life and give to Him the high and lofty position He alone deserves. Your daily choices will demonstrate whether you have done only as lip service! Are you jealous/zealous for the spiritual welfare of other believers? One



way to express your zeal for other saints is to beseech God that they might grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (cp 2Pe 3:18-note)

## RELATED RESOURCES

- C H Spurgeon's Sermon on Exodus 34:14 - [A Jealous God](#)
- C H Spurgeon's comments on God's attribute - Jealous
- 
- [A Jealous God](#) from [The Joy of Knowing God](#) by [Richard L. Strauss](#)
- [Jealousy - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

## JUST/JUSTICE

**Justice** is God's fair and impartial treatment of all people. The **justice of God** is a necessary correlate of His holiness or moral excellence. Since God is infinitely and eternally perfect, He must be impartial in His judgments and always treat His creatures with equity. Or as Abraham affirmed...

Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly? (Ge 18:25).

**God is just** and He always acts in a way consistent with the requirements of His character as revealed in His law. He rules His creation with rectitude, He keeps His word, He renders to all His creatures their due. God is **just** and fair, completely rational and predictable in His dealings, without any shadow of capriciousness.

Webster's defines **JUSTICE** as

the maintenance or administration of what is **JUST** (acting or being in conformity with what is morally upright or good) especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments

**Nelson's New Illustrated Dictionary** adds:

As a God of justice (Is 30:18), He is interested in fairness as well as in what makes for right relationships. His actions and decisions are true and right (Job 34:12; Re 16:7). His demands on individuals and nations to look after victims of oppression are just demands (Psalm 82). As Lord and Judge, God brings justice to nations (Ps 67:4) and "sets things right" in behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the victims of injustice (Ps 103:6; 146:6, 7, 8, 9). For the wicked, the unjust, and the oppressor, God as supreme Judge of the earth is a dreaded force. But for all who are unjustly treated, God's just action is reason for hope." New Unger's Bible Dictionary comments that "The **justice of God** is both an essential and a relative attribute of the divine existence. It is a necessary outflow from the holiness of God. It is that in positive form that is negatively described as holiness, or separateness from evil. And, further, it is the holiness of God as manifested and applied in moral government." ([Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#))

**Easton's Bible Dictionary** defines

"**Justice of God** — that perfection of His nature whereby He is infinitely righteous in Himself and in all He does, the righteousness of the divine nature exercised in His moral government. At first God imposes righteous laws on His creatures and executes them righteously. **Justice** is not an optional product of His will, but an unchangeable principle of His very nature. His legislative **justice** is His requiring of His rational creatures conformity in all respects to the moral law. His rectoral or **distributive justice** is His dealing with His accountable creatures according to the requirements of the law in rewarding or punishing them (Ps 89:14 Treasury of David comment). In remunerative justice He distributes rewards (Jas 1:12; 2 Ti 4:8); in vindictive or punitive justice he inflicts punishment on account of transgression (2Th 1:6). He cannot, as being infinitely righteous, do otherwise than regard and hate sin as intrinsically hateful and deserving of punishment. "He cannot deny himself" (2Ti 2:13). His essential and eternal righteousness immutably determines him to visit every sin as such with merited punishment."

**IS GOD UNFAIR?** All His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He. —[Deuteronomy 32:4](#) A couple I knew some years ago questioned God's fairness after both of their school-aged children were killed in auto accidents within a period of 3 years. Like most parents, they had anticipated much happiness with their son and daughter. Their friends saw their own children graduate from high school, but these parents were deprived of that joy. I wonder if the family of the apostle James may have questioned God's fairness too. He was executed, but Peter was miraculously rescued from the same fate (Acts 12:2,5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). It's true that life is often unfair. Some seem to be blessed with far more opportunities than others, but let's not blame God. These injustices are here because mankind's sin has invaded God's creation. The Lord allows them, but He has not caused them. He grieves over them more than we do, loves us equally, has made eternal salvation available to all, and will judge everyone by the principle: "To whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). At the end of time, the Lord will right all the wrongs of the ages, and even the people most deprived and mistreated in this life will be satisfied with God's justice. Ultimately, no one will have reason to accuse Him of being unfair. —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Life can be lived with joy and song  
Amid its heartache and its pain,  
For one day God will right each wrong—  
With peace and justice He will reign.  
—D. De Haan

**We can endure life's wrongs,  
knowing that God will make all things right.**

**V-Day** - "As believers in Christ, we know that a Victory Day is coming. The forces of Satan have caused immeasurable suffering in their war against God. It will get worse in the end times. But one day the Lord Jesus will lead the armies of heaven to do battle with the hordes of the devil. The battle will be short and decisive. Jesus Christ will be victorious. We don't know when this will happen. But we can be confident that God will someday bring about **ultimate justice** and Christ will reign over all the world. Our Victory Day is coming!" --D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A glorious day of victory is nearing,

When Christ the Captain of the host appears!

He said that one day He would be returning--

Our great anticipation through the years! --Hess

Someday the scales of justice will be perfectly balanced

**Quotes from Spurgeon on "JUSTICE":**

"Thy love to me, O Jesus, was wonderful when I was a stranger wandering far from Thee, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Thy love restrained me from committing the sin which is unto death, and withheld me from self-destruction. Thy love held back the axe when **JUSTICE** said, "Cut it down! why cumbereth it the ground?"

"The promise is fulfill'd,  
Redemption's work is done,  
**JUSTICE** with mercy's reconciled,  
For God has raised His Son."

**Commenting God's Justice in [Ps103:6](#): ([Spurgeon's Commentary](#))**

"Our own personal obligations must not absorb our song; we must also magnify the Lord for his goodness to others. He does not leave the poor and needy to perish at the hands of their enemies, but interposes on their behalf, for He is the executor of the poor and the executioner of the cruel. When His people were in Egypt He heard their groanings and brought them forth, but he overthrew Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Man's injustice shall receive retribution at the hand of God. Mercy to His saints demands vengeance on their persecutors, and He will repay it. No blood of martyrs shall be shed in vain; no groans of confessors in prison shall be left without inquisition being made concerning them. All wrongs shall be righted, all the oppressed shall be avenged. **Justice** may at times leave the courts of man, but it abides upon the tribunal of God. For this every right-minded person will bless God. Were He careless of His creature's good, did He neglect the administration of

**justice**, did He suffer high-handed oppressors finally to escape, we should have greater reason for trembling than rejoicing; it is not so, however, for our God is a **God of justice**, and by Him actions are weighed; He will mete out His portion to the proud and make the tyrant bite the dust, -- yea, often He visits the haughty persecutor even in this life, so that "the Lord is known by the judgments which He executeth."

**Commenting on God Who executes justice (Ps 146:7) (Commentary) Spurgeon writes:**

"He is a swift and impartial administrator of **justice**. Our King surpasses all earthly princes because he pays no deference to rank or wealth, and is never the respecter of persons. He is the friend of the down trodden, the avenger of the persecuted, the champion of the helpless. Safely may we trust our cause with such a Judge if it be a just one: happy are we to be under such a Ruler. Are we "evil entreated"? Are our rights denied us? Are we slandered? Let this console us, that he who occupies the throne will not only think upon our case, but bestir himself to execute judgment on our behalf."

"God's rod of mercy is ever in His hands outstretched; His sword of **JUSTICE** is in its scabbard, held down by that pierced hand of love which bled for the sins of men. "The Lord is slow to anger," because He is GREAT IN POWER."

"My soul, sit down, and behold the **JUSTICE** of God as bound to punish sin; see that punishment all executed upon thy Lord Jesus, and fall down in humble joy, and kiss the dear feet of Him whose blood has made atonement for thee."

"Hath He (Jesus) **JUSTICE**? It may seem a stern attribute, but even that is yours, for He will by His **JUSTICE** see to it that all which is promised to you in the covenant of grace shall be most certainly secured to you. And all that He has as perfect man is yours."

"Now, when the sinner is brought to the bar, Jesus appears there Himself. He stands to answer the accusation. He points to His side, His hands, His feet, and challenges **JUSTICE** to bring anything against the sinners whom He represents; He pleads His blood, and pleads so triumphantly, being numbered with them and having a part with them, that the Judge proclaims, "Let them go their way; deliver them from going down into the pit, for He hath found a ransom."

Commenting on [Isaiah 54:11](#) Spurgeon writes that...

"Our eternal hopes are built upon the **JUSTICE** and the faithfulness of God, which are clear and cloudless as the sapphire. We are not saved by a compromise, by mercy defeating **JUSTICE** or law suspending its operations; no, we defy the eagle's eye to detect a flaw in the groundwork of our confidence--our foundation is of sapphire, and will endure the fire."

"What ever His attributes were of old, they are now; His power, His wisdom, His **JUSTICE**, His truth, are alike unchanged."

"Behold His flowing wounds and thorn-crowned head! He is the Son of God, and therein He is greater than Moses, but He is the Lord of love, and therein more tender than the lawgiver. He bore the wrath of God, and in His death revealed more of God's justice than Sinai on a blaze, but that **JUSTICE** is now vindicated, and henceforth it is the guardian of believers in Jesus. Look, sinner, to the bleeding Saviour, and as thou feelest the attraction of His love, fly to His arms, and thou shalt be saved."

"His mercy is so great that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God. It is undeserved mercy, as indeed all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only a misnomer for **JUSTICE**. There was no right on the sinner's part to the kind consideration of the Most High; had the rebel been doomed at once to eternal fire he would have richly merited the doom, and if delivered from wrath, sovereign love alone has found a cause, for there was none in the sinner himself."

"My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am, or shall be, or feel, or know, but in what Christ is, in what He has done, and in what He is now doing for me. On the lion of **JUSTICE** the fair maid of hope rides like a queen."

Supreme Court Justice Horace Gray once informed a man who had appeared before him in a lower court and had escaped conviction on a technicality, "I know that you are guilty and you know it, and I wish you to remember that one day you will stand before a better and wiser Judge, and that there you will be dealt with according to **JUSTICE** & not according to law?"

Grace is getting what we do not deserve.

**Justice** is getting what we do deserve.

Mercy is not getting what we do deserve.

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A wise and just ruler established a series of laws for his people to follow. One day his mother broke one of the laws and was brought to the ruler after being caught. The penalty was twenty lashes. How could the ruler remain just and still fulfill the demands of his love for his mother? He took the lashes on his own back. **JUSTICE** was satisfied, while love was revealed in full measure.

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The story has been told of a man who was caught and taken to court because he had stolen a loaf of bread. When the judge investigated, he found out that the man had no job, and his family was hungry. He had tried unsuccessfully to get work and finally, to feed his family, he had stolen a loaf of bread. Although recognizing the extenuating circumstances, the judge said, "I'm sorry, but the law can make no exceptions. You stole, and therefore I have to punish you. I order you to pay a fine of ten dollars." He then continued, "But I want to pay the fine myself." He reached into his pocket, pulled out a ten-dollar bill, and handed it to the man. As soon as the man took the money, the judge said, "Now I also want to remit the fine." That is, the man could keep the money. "Furthermore, I am going to instruct the bailiff to pass around a hat to everyone in this courtroom, and I am fining everyone in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a city where a man has to steal in order to have bread to eat." The money was collected and given to the defendant. This is an excellent example of **JUSTICE** being meted out in full and paid in full—while mercy and grace were also enacted in full measure. (Green, M. P. 1989. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching)

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**Mercy or Justice** - It has always been my experience that those who have not yet believed in Christ react in one of two ways at the thought of God's judgment. Some simply refuse to believe it. They think quite wrongly, I believe, that judgment is inconsistent with God's character. "God is love," they argue; "how can a loving God condemn anyone?" The answer to this view is that God's love is not inconsistent with his judgment and that, whatever we may think about the matter, the Bible quite obviously speaks of these two themes as compatible.

The other objection is more dangerous. These persons believe that it is somehow ignoble of themselves to receive salvation through Christ. To receive salvation in this way is to depend on God's mercy or grace, and they would far rather deal with God's justice. "I don't want mercy from God," they will say. "All I want is a fair shake. I just want justice."

I pity the person who wants nothing from God but justice. The justice of God? The justice of God will send a person to hell; the justice of God will never save him. Justice condemns! It is only the grace of God in Jesus Christ that pardons and makes alive. (James Montgomery Boice - Genesis - An Expository Commentary)

**John Blanchard** in a thought related to Boice's comments said it well...

God is not always a God of immediate justice, but he is a God of ultimate justice. (The Complete Gathered Gold)

Or as another has said

God's mill grinds slow, but sure.

**Spurgeon** recalls...

A good old saint who lately lay dying told her pastor that she was resting on the justice of God. The good man thought that she had chosen a strange point of the divine character to rest on, but she explained, "I rest in his justice to my great Substitute, that he would not let him die for me in vain."

If we had lain in hell forever, yet divine justice would not have been fully justified, for after thousands of years of suffering there would remain still an eternity of debt due to God's justice. If God had annihilated all the sinners that ever lived, at one stroke, he would not have so honored his justice as he did when he took sin and laid it on his Son, and his Son bore divine wrath which was due to that sin. For now there has been rendered unto divine justice a full equivalent, a complete recompense for all the dishonor which it suffered.

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**Louis Berkhof** discusses God's Justice under the Topic The Righteousness of God...

This attribute of God is closely related to the immediately preceding one. It is that perfection of God by which He maintains Himself over against every violation of His holiness, and shows in every respect that He is the Holy One. Different aspects of it should be distinguished.

a. His Rectoral Justice. This is the rectitude which God manifests as the Ruler of both the good and the evil. In virtue of this He institutes a moral government in the world, and imposes a just law upon man, with promises of reward for the obedient and threats of punishment for the disobedient, Ps. 99:4; Isa 33:22; Ro 1:32.

b. His Remunerative Justice. This manifests itself in the distribution of rewards to both men and angels, Deut. 7:9, 12, 13; Ps. 58:11; Mic. 7:20; Rom. 2:7; Heb. 11:26. It is really an expression of the divine love, dealing out its bounties, not on the basis of strict merit, but according to promise and agreement, Luke 17:10; I Cor. 4:7.

c. His Retributive Justice. This relates to the infliction of penalties, and is an expression of the divine wrath. In a sinless world there would be no place for its exercise, but in a world full of sin it necessarily holds a very prominent place. While the Bible stresses the reward of the righteous more than the punishment of the wicked, even the latter stands out boldly in Scripture, Ro 1:32; 2:9; 12:19; 2Th 1:8. (Manual of Christian Doctrine)

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**John MacDuff...**

**THE JUSTICE OF GOD** - "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Your throne." Psalm 89:14

The Justice of God is "His Holiness in exercise." Let us repair to the spot marked out as the scene of its most awful manifestation. In the depths of eternity past, the summons was heard, "Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man who is my Fellow!" That mysterious commission has been fulfilled. The Shepherd has been smitten. Myriads of condemned spirits could not have borne to God's inexorable rectitude so awful a testimony, as when, on the cross of Calvary, One lone voice sent up the wailing cry, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"

Believer, rejoice! Justice, which before had demanded the execution of a righteous doom upon millions lost, can now unite with Mercy in sheathing the avenging sword and exulting over myriads redeemed. The Law which brought in a whole world "guilty before God," can exult with Mercy in seeing its every requirement obeyed, its every demand fulfilled; the Lawgiver Himself become "the Just and yet the Justifier;" unloosing every chain of condemnation, and pronouncing "Not guilty!" "O Law!" says Luther, "I drown my conscience in the wounds, blood, death, resurrection, and victory of Christ."

Wondrous thought!- Justice, the very attribute which excluded the sinner, has become the first to throw open a door of welcome; proclaiming that infinite merit has cancelled infinite demerit- infinite holiness has covered infinite sin! While "justice and judgment" are the habitation of God's throne, provision has been made whereby, in perfect consistency with every principle of His moral government, "mercy and truth" may go continually before His face!

Reader, it is well for you often and devoutly thus to dwell on the inflexible Justice of your God. It will magnify and enhance to you, the riches of His grace, the glories of redemption, the preciousness of Jesus. If the sinner is to be saved, "judgment must be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet!" "The Sinless One must be condemned," says Lefevre, "if he that is guilty is to go free. The Blessed One must bear the curse, if the cursed ones are to be brought into blessing. The Life must die, if the dead are to live!" "In prayer one evening," says Henry Martyn, "I had such near and terrific views of God's judgment upon sinners in hell, that my flesh trembled for fear of them. I flew trembling to Jesus Christ, as if the flames were taking hold of me. Oh! Christ will indeed save me, or else I perish!"

My soul! take hold of that touchingly simple assurance to which Justice has appended its seal, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish!" "Not perish!" and Justice, and a God of justice, proclaiming so great salvation- safety from the terrors of a violated law- rest from the accusations of a guilty conscience- calmness in the prospect of death- Grace here! Glory hereafter! Oh, what more can the sinner need, or the sinner's God bestow! "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8 (From - [THE NIGHT WATCHES by John MacDuff](#))

## Torrey's Topic

### The Justice of God

- Is a part of his character -Dt 32:4; Isaiah 45:21
- Not to be sinned against -Jer 50:7
- Denied by the ungodly -Ezek 33:17,20
- Acknowledge -Ps 51:4; Ro 3:4
- Magnify -Ps 98:9; 99:3,4

### DECLARED TO BE

- Plenteous Job 37:23
- Incomparable -Job 4:1
- Incorruptible -Dt 10:17 ; 2Chr 19:7
- Impartial -2Chr 19:7 ; Je 32:19
- Unfailing -Zeph 3:5
- Undeviating -Job 8:3; 34:12
- Without respect of persons -Ro 2:11 ; Col 3:25 ; 1Pe 1:17
- The habitation of his throne -Ps 89:14

### EXHIBITED IN

- Forgiving sins -1Jn 1:9
- Redemption -Ro 3:26
- His government -Ps 9:4 ; Je 9:24
- His judgments -Ge 18:25 ; Re 19:2
- All his ways -Ezek 18:25,29
- The final judgment -Acts 17:31
- Other passages - Ps 103:6 Pr 16:11 Jn 5:30 Ro 2:2 Re 15:3

## RELATED RESOURCES

### DIVINE JUSTICE

- [Attributes of God - The Justice of God - by Dr S Lewis Johnson](#) - Recommended Resource - includes Mp3, Pdf or MS Word document. This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- [Knowing God Through Job](#) 40 page booklet from Radio Bible Class
- [Justice for All](#) by [Richard L. Strauss](#) published in 1984 by Loizeaux, Inc
- [Justice of God](#) by Thomas Watson (scroll down)
- [Here Comes the Judge](#) by Michael Horton
- [Moody Bible Institute's devotional Today in the Word](#) - See this link for the beginning of a month long discussion of the Justice of God. After you have read the first devotional click NEXT PAGE at the bottom of the page to scroll through all 30 devotionals. Today in the Word often has some excellent illustrations and always has sound Biblically based discussions.
- [Justice - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

## LONGSUFFERING/PATIENT SLOW TO ANGER

**Longsuffering** or **patience** is a Divine title for God, Paul referring to Him as the **God of patience** (KJV) (Ro 15:5-note).

Believers are called to

be imitators of God, as beloved children" (Ep 5:1-note) and "as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, (to) **put on** (like a garment) a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and **patience** (longsuffering), bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." (Col 3:12, 13-note)

The next time you are tempted to seek revenge on one who has wronged you, recall the infinite patience and longsuffering He has granted to you! (see study of the Beatitude "**Blessed are the merciful**" Mt 5:7-note, Lesson 4: Matthew 5:6-8)

God is **patient** or **long-suffering** and not at all precipitous or unreasonable in His dealings with sinful, rebellious mankind. In the Old Testament, God is repeatedly described as "**slow to anger**". God's longsuffering is that power which He exercises over Himself, allowing Him to bear with sinners, forbearing long in punishing them. Nahum in his oracle against Nineveh records that

The Lord is **slow to anger** and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. ([Nahum 1:3](#))

The Puritan Stephen Charnock contrasts this "**slow to anger**" attribute of God with men, writing that

"Men that are great in the world are quick in passion, and are not so ready to forgive an injury, or bear with an offender, as one of a meaner rank. It is a want of power over that man's self that makes him do unbecoming things upon a provocation. A prince that can bridle his passions is a king over himself as well as over his subjects. God is slow to anger because great in power. He has no less power over Himself than over His creatures."

The Greek word "makrothumos" translates the Hebrew phrase "slow to anger" in Nahum 1:3 and provides added insights into God's longsuffering. **Makrothumos** is derived from **makros** meaning long and **thumos** meaning wrath or anger, which is literally a "long anger." What a picture of God's patience -- His anger praise God, has a "slow burn" or a "long fuse" so to speak.

Makrothumos emphasizes God's restraint even in the face of actions and circumstances that clearly arouse His holy wrath. God remains controlled even when confronted with presumptuous, bold faced provocation! God's longsuffering thus not only is slow to anger but also slow to punish! It is interesting to note that longsuffering is the first quality mentioned in Paul's definition of "**love**" -

"Love is **patient** (makrothumeo, the verb form)... " (1Co 13:4-note )

This same Greek word group (makrothumos, makrothumeo, makrothumia) translates "**slow to anger**" in many OT passages (see below)...

Ex 34:6 the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger**

Nu 14:18 'The LORD is **slow to anger**

Neh 9:17 But Thou art a God of forgiveness...**Slow to anger**

Ps 86:15 But Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious,**Slow to anger** and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. ([Spurgeon's Commentary on Ps 86:15](#))

Ps 103:8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, **Slow to anger** ([Spurgeon's Commentary on Ps 103:8](#))

Ps 145:8 The LORD is gracious and merciful; **Slow to anger** ([Spurgeon's Commentary on Ps 145:8](#))

Joel 2:13 Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate,**slow to anger**, abounding in lovingkindness, and relenting of evil.

Jonah 4:2 Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, **slow to anger**

In Numbers 14 Israel had spurned Jehovah refusing to believe His promise of a promised land, thus prompting Him to decree that He would

"smite them with pestilence" and then would make Moses "into a nation greater and mightier" (Nu 14:11, 12).

Moses' interceded with Him, basing his appeal on the fact that Jehovah was "**slow to anger** and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression" ([Nu 14:18](#)), the very phrase that God had earlier applied to Himself when He passed in front of Moses declaring Himself as

Jehovah, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in lovingkindness and

truth; Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin... (Ex 34:6, 7)

God's longsuffering was strikingly displayed toward sinners prior to the Flood. In Genesis Jehovah declared that His

"Spirit (would) not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (Ge 6:3)

In other words God gave all of corrupt mankind a "reprieve" of 120 years before He brought irrevocable judgment via the worldwide Flood, Peter recording that the world was

disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting (120 years) in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. (1Pe 3:20-note)

Not only did God wait patiently but He also gave the ancient world a clear witness of the way of salvation through

Noah, a preacher of righteousness. (2Pe 2:5-note)

Luke adds that

in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying (their) hearts with food and gladness. ([Acts 14:16-17](#))

In His longsuffering God did all of this even though most of mankind

did not honor Him as God or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened... and (they) exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures... (and) they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (see notes Romans 1:21, 22; 23; 25)

Paul further emphasized the restraining aspect of God's patience asking the rhetorical question

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, **endured with much patience** vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? (See note Romans 9:22)

God could have justly destroyed every sinner (which is all of us) the first time (and every time) they sinned (which we all do!). Instead He **patiently endured** (and continues to endure) rebellion rather than giving sinners what every sin deserves (immediately) -- eternal punishment! God continues to endure the unbelief, rejection, hatred, blasphemy, and iniquity, while patiently allowing time for repentance, Peter writing that

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance... 15 and regard the **patience** of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you (See note 2 Peter 3:9, 2 Peter 3:15)

God's longsuffering is imminently practical, but it is not forever. How tragic that the wicked misinterpret God's longsuffering, for Solomon records that

because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil. ([Eccl 8:11](#))

Note that although God's **patience** may be related to mercy, it is distinguished from it in Scripture, the Psalmist declaring

Thou, O Lord, art a God **merciful** and gracious, **slow to anger (longsuffering, KJV, NKJV)** and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. ([Ps 86:15](#)) ([Spurgeon's Commentary](#))

However since the **longsuffering** of God is a display of His mercy, it may not always be easy to discriminate.

The Puritan, Stephen Charnock, has defined God's **patience** as

"part of the Divine goodness and mercy, yet differs from both. God being the greatest goodness, hath the greatest mildness; mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness, the greater the mildness. Who so holy as Christ, and who so meek? God's slowness to anger is a branch... from His mercy: "The Lord is full of compassion, slow to anger" ([Ps 145:8](#)) ([Spurgeon's Commentary](#)). It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the object: **mercy** respects the creature as **miserable**, **patience** respects



the creature as **criminal**; **mercy** pities him in his **misery**, and **patience** bears with the sin which engendered **the misery**, and is giving birth to more."

The **TDNT** entry adds that

The wrath and the grace of God are the two poles which constitute the span of His longsuffering.

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**John MacDuff...**

**THE PATIENCE OF GOD** - "The God of Patience." Romans 15:5

There is no more wondrous subject than this- "The Patience of God." Think of the lapse of ages during which that patience has lasted- 6000 years. Think of the multitudes who have been the subjects of it- millions on millions, in successive climates and centuries. Think of the sins which have, all that time, been trying and wearying that patience-their number- their heinousness- their aggravation. The world's history is a consecutive history of iniquity, a lengthened provocation of the Almighty's forbearance. The Church, like a feeble ark, tossed on a mighty ocean of unbelief; and yet the world, with its cumberers, still spared! The cry of its sinful millions at this moment enters "the ears of the God of Sabbath," and yet, "for all this," His hand of mercy is "stretched out still!"

And who is this God of patience? It is the Almighty Being who could strike these millions down in a moment; who could, by a breath, annihilate the world- no, who would require no positive or visible putting forth of His omnipotence to effect this, but simply to withdraw His sustaining arm!

Surely, of all the examples of the Almighty's power, there is none more wondrous or amazing than "God's power over Himself." He is "slow to anger." "Judgment is His strange work." He "shows mercy unto thousands [of generations]." God bears for 1500 years, from Moses to Jesus, with Israel's unbelief; and yet, as a writer remarks, "He speaks of it as but a day." "All day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." What is the explanation of all this tenderness? "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord!"

Believer, how great has been God's patience towards you! In your unconverted state, when a wanderer from His fold, with what unwearied love He went after you; notwithstanding all your waywardness; never ceasing the pursuit "until He found you!" Think of your fainting and weariness since being converted- your ever-changing frames and feelings- the ebbings and the flowings in the tide of your love; and yet, instead of surrendering you to your own perverse will, His language concerning you is, "How can I give you up?" For a lifetime, your Savior-God has been standing knocking at your door; and His attitude is still the same- "Behold, I stand!"

But fainter than the pole-star's ray  
Before the noontide blaze of day,  
In all of love that man can know-  
All that in angels' breasts can glow  
Compared, O Lord of hosts! with thine.  
Unwearied! Fathomless! Divine!

How should the patience of Jesus lead me to be submissive under trial! When He has so long borne with me, shall not I "bear" with Him? When I think of His patience under a far heavier cross, can I murmur when He murmured not! No, I will check every repining thought, and looking up, in confiding affection, to "the God of all patience," "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8 (From - [THE NIGHT WATCHES by John MacDuff](#))

**NAVE'S TOPIC:**

As alluded to earlier, inherent in God's longsuffering is His power of self-restraint -- study the following passages **observing** for the truth or facts that are obvious about the patience of God, and interrogating the text with the 5W's & H questions (as utilized in **Inductive Bible Study**)

Ge 15:16 "Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

Ps 103:8-10 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. 9 He will not always strive with us; Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our

sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ([Commentary on Ps 103:8-10](#))

Isaiah 5:1-4; beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. 2 And He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it, And hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones. 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. 4 "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?

Isaiah 42:14 "I have kept silent for a long time, I have kept still and restrained Myself. Now like a woman in labor I will groan, I will both gasp and pant.

Isaiah 48:9-11 "For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, And for My praise I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off. 10 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. 11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.

Jer 7:13,23-25 "And now, because you have done all these things," declares the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, 23 "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' 24 "Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. 25 "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them.

Jer 11:7 'For I solemnly warned your fathers in the day that I brought them up from the land of Egypt, even to this day, warning persistently, saying, "Listen to My voice."

Jer 15:15 Thou who knowest, O LORD, Remember me, take notice of me, And take vengeance for me on my persecutors. Do not, in view of Thy patience, take me away; Know that for Thy sake I endure reproach.

Ezek 20:17 "Yet My eye spared them rather than destroying them, and I did not cause their annihilation in the wilderness.

Hab 1:2-4 How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And Thou wilt not hear? I cry out to Thee, "Violence!" Yet Thou dost not save. 3 Why dost Thou make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. 4 Therefore, the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore, justice comes out perverted.

Mt 19:8; He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way

Mt 21:33-41

Mt 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

Mk 12:1-9 Lk 13:6-9,34; 20:9-16

Acts 17:30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,

Ro 2:4 (note) Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Ro 3:25 (note) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

Ro 9:22-23 (note) What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

Ro 15:5 (note) Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus;

Rev 2:21([note](#)); Rev 2:22 ([note](#)) 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

## RELATED RESOURCES

### JUSTICE OF GOD

- [The Patience of God](#) by A. W. Pink
- [The Justice of God](#) by A.W. Tozer
- [The Story of a Stiff-Necked People \(God's Patience\)](#) by John Piper
- [The God of Patience](#) by Octavius Winslow
- [Slow to Anger](#) by [Richard L. Strauss](#)
- Action To Take: List some specific unbelievers whom you would like to see trust Christ as Saviour. Then begin to pray that God will give them a sense of His long-suffering and use it to bring them to Himself. Think of some recent occasions when you have been short-tempered with people. Go to them personally, ask their forgiveness, and express to them your desire to become more long-suffering.

## LOVE/LOVING

**The Baker Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology** writes that...

God is love and has demonstrated that love in everything that he does. Paul compares faith, hope, and love, and concludes that "the greatest of these is love" (1Cor 13:13).

"God Is Love." Agape (word study) the love theme of the Bible, can only be defined by the nature of God. John affirms that "God is love" (1John 4:8). God does not merely love; he is love. Everything that God does flows from his love.

John emphasizes repeatedly that God the Father loves the Son (Jn 5:20; 17:23, 26) and that the Son loves the Father (Jn 14:31). Because the Father loves the Son, he made his will known to him. Jesus in turn demonstrated his love to the Father through his submission and obedience.

The theme of the entire Bible is the self-revelation of the God of love. In the garden of Eden, God commanded that "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Ge 2:17). We are not prepared, then, when God looks for Adam after his sin, calling out "Where are you?" God seeks Adam, not to put him to death, but to reestablish a relationship with him. God, the Lover, will not allow sin to stand between him and his creature. He personally bridges the gap.

That seeking and bridging reaches its pinnacle when God sends his Son into the world to rescue sinners and to provide them with eternal life (John 3:16; Ro 5:7, 8; Eph 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). John declares, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). God's love is not based on the merit of the recipient (Dt 7:7, 8; Rom 5:7-8). Because he is love, God is not willing that any person should perish, but wills that everyone repent and live (Ezek 18:32; 2Pe 3:9). ([Love - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

**Spurgeon on love...**

Divine love had no beginning. Yon stars are babes whose eyes but yesterday were open to the light, and yonder mountains are infants newly born; but as for God's love, it is coeval with His own existence, and the objects of it are always the same.

You can trace the beginning of human affection; you can easily find the beginning of your love to Christ, but his love to us is a stream whose source is hidden in eternity.

Jesus must have found the cause of His love in His own heart, He could not have found it in us, for it is not there.

This is the glorious, the suitable, the divine way by which love streams from heaven to earth, a spontaneous

love flowing forth to those who neither deserved it, purchased it, nor sought after it.

Their poorest actions He accepts; their deepest sorrow He feels; their slenderest wish He hears, and their every transgression He forgives.

If an angel should fly from heaven and inform the saint personally of the Saviour's love to him, the evidence would not be one whit more satisfactory than that which is borne in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

Does not eternal love delight you? God is no stranger to you; he has known you long before you knew yourself; ay, long ere you were curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, in his book all your members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. Known unto God from the foundation of the earth were you; he was always thinking of you; there was never a period when you were not in his mind and on his heart.

For breadth the love of Jesus is immensity, for length it is eternity, for depth it is immeasurability, and for height it is infinity.

The Lord loves you not to-day, Christian, because of anything you are doing, or being, or saying, or thinking, but he loves you still, because his great heart is full of love, and it runneth over to you.

He loves us much better than we love our children, for we often love them so badly that we bring them up to evil, and we tolerate them in sin. He loves us better than we love ourselves, for self-love it is that ruins us; but God's love it is that saves us, and lifts us up to heaven and to perfection.

He never loves them less, he cannot love them more.

And he hath taken his only begotten and nailed him to the cross, because, if I may venture so to speak, he loved sinners better than his Son.

Did my Lord forgive me all my sin? and after that will he ever be unkind to me? Did he lay down his life for me upon the accursed tree, and can I dream that he will desert me? Have I looked into the wounds of my dying Saviour, and shall I ever murmur if he should multiply pains and sufferings and losses and crosses to me? God forbid. Such love as his forbids all fear.

Surely there is something in you which God loves, or else he would not be killing that which he hates. If he hates the sin in you, it is a good sign; for where do we hate sin most? Why, in those we love most.

If it had been set upon us because of some goodness in us, then when the goodness was diminished the love would diminish too.

Christ did not die to make his Father loving, but because his Father is loving: the atoning blood is the outflow of the very heart of God toward us.

The individuality of the divine love is a great part of the sweetness of it. God thinks of every separate child of his as much as if he had only that one. The multiplicity of his elect does not divide the loaf of his affection.

He loved them, not for anything that he could ever gain from them, for he had all things in himself, but because of what he would impart to them.

O beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, love without beginning is indeed sweet, but there is a still more luscious sweetness in love without end!

Of all the saints in heaven it may be said that God loved them because he would do it; for, by nature, there was nothing more in them for God to love than there was in the very devils in hell.

Never did his love begin, and never can it cease. It is from eternity, and shall be to eternity.

God always loves his people; but his people do not always know it. Because of their sins, they do not always enjoy it.

He began to create, he began actually to redeem, but he never began to love.

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**John MacDuff...**

THE THE LOVE OF GOD - "God is love." 1 John 4:16

"The only real mystery of the Bible," says an old writer, "is a mystery of Love." "God so loved the world that He

gave His only- begotten Son." What! that for a lost and ruined world, the Prince of Life should leave His Throne of glory, travel down to a valley of tears, and expire by an ignominious death on the bitter tree! Love unutterable! unspeakable! The reflection of the skeptic of a by-gone age, may have formed at times the musing of better minds, "This is far too great- it is far too good to be true." Infinite majesty compassionating infinite weakness! The great Sun of heaven, the Fountain of uncreated light, undergoing an eclipse of darkness and blood for the sake of a candle that glimmered in nothingness in comparison with His beams.

"God so loved the world." Man never can get farther in the solution of the wondrous problem. Eternity itself will form a ladder- the saints climbing step by step its ascending glories- but, as the prospect widens, each new altitude will elicit the same confession, "the love of Christ, which passes knowledge."

My soul! seek to enter into the secrets of this Love of your adorable Redeemer! Before all time, that love began. We have glimpses of it bursting out from the recesses of a past eternity- "Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him!" And "when the fullness of the time had come," though foreseen were all His untold sufferings- nothing would deter Him from pursuing His anguished path- "He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem;"- no, as if longing for the hour of victory, He exclaimed. "There is a terrible baptism ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished!"

Think of that love now! The live coals in the censer of old form a feeble type of the burning ardor of affection still manifested by our Great High Priest within the veil, in behalf of His own people. There He bears the name of each indelibly engraved on His breastplate; loving them at the beginning, He will love them even unto the end. Earthly love may grow cold and changeable; earthly love may die. Not so the love of this "Friend of friends." It is strong as death- surviving death, no, as deathless as eternity! Listen to His own exponent of its intensity- "As the Father has loved He, so have I loved you!" "You see in Him;" says an old writer, "an ocean of love without bottom, without bounds, overflowing the banks of heaven, streaming down upon this poor world to wash away the vileness of man!"

Blessed Jesus! how cold, and fitful, and transient has been my love to You in comparison of Your love to me! Bring me more under its constraining influence. May this be the superscription on all my thoughts and actions; my occupations and my time- 'I am not my own. Lord, I am Yours! How can I love You enough, who have so loved me! My life shall henceforth be one thank-offering of praise for Your redeeming mercies.'

Standing this night on the shores of this illimitable ocean- surveying its length and breadth- every wave murmuring, "Peace on earth and good-will to men," "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8 (From - [THE NIGHT WATCHES by John MacDuff](#))

[God Is Love](#) from "[The Joy of Knowing God](#)" by [Richard L. Strauss](#)

**Action To Take:** Look for evidences of God's love for you all throughout the day, and remind yourself often that you are the object of His endless love. Tell several others during the day that God loves them.

## TORREY'S TOPIC LOVE OF GOD

- Is a part of his character -2Co 13:11; 1Jn 4:8
- Christ, the especial object of -Jn 15:9; 17:26
- Christ abides in -Jn 15:10

### DESCRIBED AS

- Sovereign -Dt 7:8; 10:15
- Great -Ep 2:4
- Abiding -Zeph 3:17
- Unfailing -Is 49:15,16
- Unalienable -Ro 8:39
- Constraining -Ho 11:4
- Everlasting -Je 31:3
- Irrespective of merit -Dt 7:7; Job 7:17

## MANIFESTED TOWARDS

- Perishing sinners -John 3:16; Titus 3:4
- His saints -John 16:27; 17:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 John 4:16
- The destitute -Deuteronomy 10:18
- The cheerful giver -2 Corinthians 9:7

## EXHIBITED IN

- The giving of Christ -John 3:16
- The sending of Christ -1 John 4:9
- Christ's dying for us while sinners -Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10
- Election -Malachi 1:2,3; Romans 9:11-13
- Adoption -1 John 3:1
- Redemption -Isaiah 43:3,4; 63:9
- Freeness of salvation Titus 3:4-7
- Forgiving sin -Isaiah 38:17
- Quickening of souls -Ephesians 2:4,5
- Drawing us to himself -Hosea 11:4
- Temporal blessings -Deuteronomy 7:13
- Chastisements -Hebrews 12:6
- Defeating evil counsels -Deuteronomy 23:5
- Shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit -Romans 5:5
- Saints know and believe -1 John 4:16
- Saints should abide in -Jude 1:21

## PERFECTED IN SAINTS

- By obedience -1 John 2:5
- By brotherly love -1 John 4:12
- The source of our love to him -1 John 4:19
- To be sought in prayer -2 Corinthians 13:14

## RELATED RESOURCES DIVINE LOVE

- Divine Love by C H Spurgeon
- The Love of God by A. W. Pink
- [D A Carson's small book - The Difficult Doctrine of the the Love of God - excellent \(free\)](#)
- [The God of Love](#) by Octavius Winslow
- [Sense and Nonsense About God's Love](#) - 1John 4:8 by Ray Pritchard (recommended)
- [The Love of God](#) by A. W. Tozer
- [The Love of God](#) by [Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.](#)
- [The Love Of God](#) by David Legge
- From John Piper...
- [Brothers, God is Love!](#)
- [How Does a Sovereign God Love?](#)
- [How Is God's Love Experienced in the Heart?](#)
- [The Greatness of God's Electing Love](#)
- [God Demonstrates His Love Toward Us](#)
- [God Did Not Spare His Own Son](#)
- [The Love of God Has Been Poured Out Within Our Hearts](#)
- [Nothing Can Separate Us from the Love of Christ](#)
- [Thankful for the Love of God! Why?](#)
- [God Is Love](#) by [Richard L. Strauss](#)

- [The Love Of God \(MP3\); Download](#) by Jerry Bridges
- [Love - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

## MERCY/MERCIFUL

**Mercy** is when that which is deserved is withheld to the benefit of the object of the mercy. God has demonstrated this attribute in abundance with respect to mankind. We from nearly the beginning of our existence have deserved nothing but wrath; having sinned and fallen short of eternal life in glory, we can do nothing to commend ourselves to or defend ourselves before God. But thankfully, God has been so amazing in His mercy. Over and against merely having the mercy to allow us to live out our miserable lives without destroying us instantly, God has chosen us to greatness and glory by the hand of His Son. The believer finds himself in Christ and enjoys full well the fruits of God's mercy. Source: [Blue Letter Bible](#)

- **Merciful** (1655) eleemon
- **Mercy** (1656) eleos
- **Mercy Seat** (2435) hilasterion

### ISBE Entry for Mercy, Merciful...

Hebrew = checedh, racham, chanan; Greek = eleos, eleoo, oiktirmos

"Mercy" is a distinctive Bible word characterizing God as revealed to men.

In the Old Testament mercy is most often the translation of checedh (hesed, heced), "kindness," "loving-kindness" (see [Lovingkindness](#)), but **rachamim**, literally, "bowels" (the sympathetic region), and **chanan**, "to be inclined to," "to be gracious," are also frequently translated "mercy"; **eleos**, "kindness," "beneficence," and **eleoo**, "to show kindness," are the chief words rendering "mercy" in the New Testament; oiktirmos, "pity," "compassion," occurs a few times, also **oiktirmon** (see oiktirmos), "pitiful," **eleemon**, "kind," "compassionate," twice; **hileos**, "forgiving," and **anileos**, "not forgiving," "without mercy," once each (Heb 8:12; Jas 2:13).

### (1) Mercy is...

**(a) an essential quality of God** (Ex 34:6,7; Dt 4:31; Ps 62:12, etc.); it is His delight (Mic 7:18,20; Ps 52:8); He is "the Father of mercies" (2Cor 1:3), "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), "full of pity, and merciful" (Jas 5:11);

**(b) associated with forgiveness** (Ex 34:7; Nu 14:18; 1 Tim 1:13,16);

**(c) associated with His forbearance** (Ps 145:8, "Yahweh is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great lovingkindness"; compare Ro 2:4; 11:32);

**(d) associated with His covenant** (1 Ki 8:23; Neh 1:5), with His justice (Ps 101:1), with His faithfulness (Ps 89:24), with His truth (Ps 108:4); mercy and truth are united in Pr 3:3; 14:22, etc. (in Ps 85:10 we have "Mercy and truth are met together");

**(e) goes forth to all** (Ps 145:9, "Yahweh is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works"; compare Ps 145:16, "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing," the Revised Version margin "satisfiest every living thing with favor");

**(f) shows itself in pitying help** (Ex 3:7; Ezr 9:9f), supremely in Christ and His salvation (Lk 1:50,54,58; Ep 2:4);

**(g) abundant, practically infinite** (Ps 86:5,15; 119:64);

**(h) everlasting** (1Ch 16:34,41; Ezr 3:11; Ps 100:5; 136 repeatedly).

**(2) "Mercy" is used of man as well as of God**, and is required on man's part toward man and beast (Dt 25:4; Ps 37:21; 109:16; Prov 12:10; Dan 4:27; Mic 6:8; Mt 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"; 25:31-46; Lk 6:36, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful"; Lk 10:30 f, the Good Samaritan; Lk 14:12-16; Jas 3:17)

**(3) In the New Testament "mercy"** (eleos, usually the Septuagint translation of checedh) is associated with "grace" (**charis**) in the apostolical greetings and elsewhere. [Trench](#) points out that the difference between them is that the freeness of God's love is the central point of charis, while eleos has in view misery and its relief; charis is His free grace and gift displayed in the forgiveness of sins--extended to men as they are guilty; His eleos (is extended to them) as they are miserable. The lower creation may be the object of His mercy (**eleos**), but man alone of His grace (**charis**); he alone needs it and is capable of receiving it ([See Trench's](#)

[Synonyms of the New Testament](#) for comparison of **grace-charis** and **mercy-eleos**).

**(4) From all the foregoing it will be seen that mercy in God** is not merely His pardon of offenders, but His attitude to man, and to the world generally, from which His pardoning mercy proceeds. The frequency with which mercy is enjoined on men is specially deserving of notice, with the exclusion of the unmerciful from sonship to the all-merciful Father and from the benefits of His mercifulness. Shakespeare's question, "How canst thou hope for mercy rendering none?" is fully warranted by our Lord's teaching and by Scripture in general; compare especially the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:21-35)

**(5) As the rule, the American Standard Revised Version has "lovingkindness"** for "mercy" when checedh is used of God, and "kindness" when it is used of men in relation to each other. "Compassion" (translation of racham) is also in several instances substituted for "mercy" (Isa 9:17; 14:1; 27:11; Jer 13:14; 30:18), also "goodness" (translation of checedh referring to man) (Hos 4:1; 6:6). W. L. Walker

### Spurgeon on Mercy

Sin is a thing of time, but mercy is from everlasting. Transgression is but of yesterday, but mercy was ever of old. Before you and I sought the Lord, the Lord sought us.

Though the woman was made to feel great sorrows, yet those were connected with a happy event which causes the travail to be forgotten. There was a tenderness in the dread utterances of an offended God, and mainly so because almost as soon as he declared that man must labour and die he promised that the "seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." Assuredly the Lord our God is by nature very pitiful and full of compassion.

Men may be cowed by power, but they can only be converted by love. The sword of justice hath less power over human hearts than the sceptre of mercy.

He who notices God's mercy will never be without a mercy to notice.

**Philip H Towner** writes that...

Mercy is a concept integral to an understanding of God's dealings with humankind. In English translations of the Bible, it comes to expression in phrases such as "to be merciful, " "to have mercy on, " or "to show mercy toward." The corresponding term, "merciful, " describes a quality of God and one that God requires of his people. The noun denotes compassion and love, not just feelings or emotions, as expressed in tangible ways...

The Old Testament. **Mercy: A Part of God's Nature.** Although people have the capacity for showing mercy, especially toward those with whom they already have a special relationship (1Kings 20:31; Isa 49:15; Jer 31:20; cf. 1 Macc 2:57), a lack of mercy is more natural to the human condition (Prov 5:9; 12:10; Isa 13:18; 47:6; Jer 6:23; 50:42; cf. Wisd. of Sol. 12:5). Mercy is, however, a quality intrinsic to the nature of God. It is for this reason that in some situations "merciful" was a sufficient description of God (Psalm 116:5; cf. Tobit 6:17). Sometimes it appears alongside other qualities as one expression of his nature that God's children particularly observe and recount (Exod 34:6; Deut 4:31; 2 Chron 30:9; Psalm 86:15; Dan 9:9; Jonah 4:2). The experience of God's people is that God's mercy, unlike human mercy, cannot be exhausted (2 Sam 24:14; Lam 3:22). Yet divine mercy is not blind or dumb; although God tolerated Israel's rebellion with mercy for a very long time (Neh 9:17, 19, 31; Jer 3:12), ultimately ungodliness in Israel was met by a withdrawal of God's mercy, leading to judgment (Lam 2:2, 21; Zech 1:12). But even in judgment and discipline God's mercy can be seen and hoped for (2 Sam 24:14; Psalm 57:1; Isa 55:7; 60:10; Jer 31:20; Hab 3:2; cf. Tobit 6:17), for it is part of the basic disposition of love toward his people, and it directs his actions ultimately in ways that benefit his people. ([Read the full article in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

## Mercy of God

The following material is a unique resource from **Charles Simeon's** massive (13,000 pages) collection of sermons entitled **Horae Homileticae**. If you are not familiar with this great man of God read ink to [read John Piper's sketch](#) of his life.

- illustrated, [I. 536–538](#). [V. 198–201](#). [X. 337–347](#).
- Its greatness, [VIII. 174–178](#). [XIV. 356](#): especially in forbearing vengeance, [II. 62](#).
- Never sought in vain, [II. 590, 591](#).
- How it is to be sought, [II. 591, 592](#).
- Displayed in the case of Manasseh, [IV. 221](#);
- Displayed to the most obstinate sinners, [VIII. 490–492](#).
- Marvellous, [V. 39](#).
- All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, [V. 155–158](#).



- Mercies of God, enumerated, [I. 437, 438](#). On what terms bestowed, [439, 440](#).
- Past mercies pleaded before God, [I. 519–524](#).
- Past mercies to be marked, [II. 555](#);
- Past mercies to be gratefully remembered, [X. 564, 565](#);
- Past mercies - the knowledge of them perpetuated, [IX. 313–318](#).
- Past mercies - How to be improved, [III. 66](#).
- Past mercies - Memorials of them, [III. 145–150](#).
- Past mercies -The duty of commemorating them, [III. 150–154](#).
- Past mercies to be to be thankfully acknowledged, [IV. 11](#).
- The believer adoring God for his mercies, [V. 188–191](#).
- Extent of the divine mercy, [VI. 55](#).
- Mercy and judgment grounds of praise, [VI. 181–185](#).
- The duty of praising God for his mercies, [VI. 205–2](#) ; [204-209, 235–238 485–490](#); esp of God's mercy, [VI. 213, 214](#).
- The effects which national mercies should produce on us, [VI. 220–222](#).
- God the source of all our mercies, [VI. 388, 389](#).
- The acknowledgment of him in them, the truest source of the enjoyment of them, [VI. 389](#).
- A view of God in his providential mercies will encourage us to apply to him for the blessings of his grace, [VI. 389, 390](#);
- an encouragement to prayer, [VI. 411–415](#); a call to contemplate and adore God for his mercy, God the source of all our mercies [VI. 433–436](#).
- Temporal mercies a ground of praise, God the source of all our mercies [VI. 512–516](#).
- God more ready to shew mercy than to execute judgment, [VII. 147](#).
- To be praised for his mercies, especially on recovery from sickness, [VII. 105–108](#).
- Past mercies to be remembered, and made the ground of future expectations, [VIII. 296, 297](#).
- The contempt, with which God's richest mercies are treated, [IX. 105–110](#).
- The mercy of God to his people, [IX. 307–310](#).
- His mercy contrasted with our sinfulness, [IX. 311, 312](#).
- The extent of God's mercy on the renewed soul, [IX. 380–386](#).
- They are not given according to our merits, [IX. 444–448](#).
- Mercy preferred to sacrifice, [X. 61–65](#).
- The mercy of God delineated by Jonah, and illustrated in his history, [X. 269–274](#).
- The proper improvement of God's mercies, [X. 356–359](#).
- The duty of thankfulness for them, [X. 402–408](#).
- The mercy of God, specially displayed in the incarnation of Christ, [XI. 230](#).
- Sure ground of hope for all who feel their need of mercy, [XIV. 191](#).
- God's mercy to the vilest sinners, [XVI. 166–170](#).
- How Christians are to look for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life, [XX. 570](#).

## TORREY'S TOPIC MERCY

### INTRINSIC PART OF GOD'S CHARACTER

- Ex 34:6,7; Ps 62:12; Neh 9:17, Jon 4:2,10,11; 2Cor 1:3

### DESCRIBED AS

- Great -Numbers 14:18; Isaiah 54:7
- Rich -Ephesians 2:4
- Manifold -Nehemiah 9:27; Lamentations 3:32
- Plenteous -Psalms 86:5,15; 103:8
- Abundant -1 Peter 1:3
- Sure -Isaiah 55:3; Micah 7:20
- Everlasting -1 Chr 16:34; Ps 89:28; 106:1; 107:1; 136:1-26
- Tender -Psalms 25:6; 103:4; Luke 1:78
- New every morning -Lamentations 3:23

- High as heaven -Psalms 36:5; 103:11
- Filling the earth -Psalms 119:64
- Over all his works -Psalms 145:9
- IS GOD'S DELIGHT-Micah 7:18
- A GROUND OF HOPE-Psalms 130:7; 147:11
- A GROUND OF TRUST -Psalms 52:8

#### **TIPIFIED BY**

- Mercy seat -Exodus 25:17

#### **MANIFESTED**

- In the sending of Christ -Luke 1:78
- In salvation -Titus 3:5
- In long-suffering -Lamentations 3:22; Daniel 9:9
- To his people -Deuteronomy 32:43; 1 Kings 8:23
- To them that fear him -Psalms 103:17; Luke 1:50
- To returning backsliders -Jeremiah 3:12; Hosea 14:4; Joel 2:13
- To repentant sinners -Ps 32:5; Pr 28:13; Is 55:7; Lk 15:18-20
- To the afflicted -Isaiah 49:13; 54:7
- To the fatherless -Hosea 14:3
- To whom he will -Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:15,18
- With everlasting kindness -Isaiah 54:8

#### **SHOULD BE**

- Sought for ourselves -Psalms 6:2
- Sought for others -Galatians 6:16; 1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:18
- Pleaded in prayer -Psalms 6:4; 25:6; 51:1
- Rejoiced in -Psalms 31:7
- Magnified -1 Chr 16:34; Ps 115:1; 118:1-4,29; Jer 33:11

#### **Exemplified**

- Lot -Genesis 19:16,19
- Epaphroditus -Philippians 2:27
- Paul -1 Timothy 1:13

### **HYMNS THAT RELATE TO GOD'S MERCY**

- [Debtor to Mercy Alone. A](#)
- [Depth of Mercy](#)
- [Dew of Mercy](#)
- [Every Morning Mercies New](#)
- [Father, Again in Jesus' Name We Meet](#)
- [From the Depths My Prayer Ascendeth](#)
- [Give Thanks to God, for Good Is He](#)
- [God, Be Merciful to Me](#)
- [God of All Grace, Thy Mercy Send](#)
- [God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us](#)
- [God of Mercy, God of Grace](#)
- [God of Our Life](#)
- [God's Free Mercy Streameth](#)

- [Have Mercy, Lord, On Me](#)
- [Have Mercy On Us, God Most High](#)
- [I Waited for the Lord Most High](#)
- [In Thy Wrath and Hot Displeasure](#)
- [King of Kings](#)
- [Let Me Lean On Thee](#)
- [Lord, How Wondrous Are His Ways, The](#)
- [Lord, I Cannot Let Thee Go](#)
- [Lord, in This Thy Mercy's Day](#)
- [Lord Is Rich and Merciful, The](#)
- [Lord, Like the Publican I Stand](#)
- [Lord, Rebuke Me Not in Anger](#)
- [Lord, Thy Mercy Now Entreating](#)
- [Mercy of God Is an Ocean Divine, The](#)
- [Mindful of Our Human Frailty](#)
- [My Song Forever Shall Record](#)
- [Now I Have Found the Firm Foundation](#)
- [Now I Have Found the Ground Wherein](#)
- [O Fly to Him](#)
- [O God, Be Merciful to Me](#)
- [O God, Most Merciful and True](#)
- [O Lord, Turn Not Thy Face from Me](#)
- [O Thou from Whom All Goodness Flows](#)
- [O Thou My Soul, Bless God the Lord](#)
- [Of Mercy and of Justice](#)
- [Oh, How Great Is Thy Compassion](#)
- [Pilgrim's Journey, The](#)
- [Remember Not, O God](#)
- [Sweet Is Thy Mercy, Lord](#)
- [There's a Wideness in God's Mercy](#)
- [Thine, Lord, Is Wisdom, Thine Alone](#)
- [Thy Faithfulness Lord, Each Moment We Find](#)
- [Thy Lovingkindness, Lord, Is Good and Free](#)
- [Thy Mercy and Thy Truth, O Lord](#)
- [Thy Tender Mercies, O My Lord](#)
- [To Thee, O Lord, I Lift Mine Eyes](#)
- [Trembling Before Thine Awful Throne](#)
- [When All Thy Mercies, O My God](#)
- [When in the Night I Meditate](#)
- [When Morning Lights the Eastern Skies](#)
- [With Broken Heart and Contrite Sigh](#)
- [Within the Maddening Maze of Things](#)

## RELATED RESOURCES: MERCY

- Notes on Greek word for mercy eleos
- Study notes Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the Merciful: Matthew 5:7
- Commentary notes on Matthew 5:7
- Mercy - notes by C H Spurgeon
- [The Mercy of God](#) by A. W. Tozer
- [The Mercy of God](#) by Thomas Watson (scroll down)
- [Rich In Mercy](#) by [Richard L. Strauss](#)
- [The Unfailing Mercy of God](#) - notes by D. H. Kuiper
- [The Lord, a God Merciful and Gracious \(Ex 34:1-10\)](#) by John Piper

- [Thank God for the Mercies of Christ](#) by John Piper
- [I Will Be Gracious to Whom I Will Be Gracious \(Ex 33:12-19\)](#) by John Piper
- [The Mercy of God](#) by A. W. Pink
- [Mercy of God](#) by Barry Horner
- [The Mercy Of God](#) by David Legge
- Girdlestone's Synonyms of the Old Testament [Mercy](#); [Pity](#)
- American Tract Society [Mercy](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Mercy](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Mercy](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Mercy](#) [Mercy of God](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Mercy](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Mercy](#) [Mercy](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Mercy](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Mercy](#)