

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of God: The Attributes of God Part 2

The Heights Church November 8, 2015

God's Incommunicable Attributes

3. Omnipresence:

God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places.

- **Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. Psalm 139: 7-10**

God's Incommunicable Attributes

3. Avoiding misconceptions of Omnipresence:

- **God is not an infinite unending space bigger than the universe.**
 - **God has no size or dimensions.**
 - **Before creation there was no space yet God existed.**
- **God is present everywhere in creation but in no way part of the creation.**
- **God is immanent and transcendent.**
- **As a result of technology our image and voice can be in many places at the same time but not everywhere in all of creation.**

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4. Unity:

God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times.

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.

Exodus 34:6-7

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4. Unity:

God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times.

- **No attribute of God is more important than another and every attribute is completely true of God and is true of all of God's character. For example, God is not part light, part love, part wrath and so on.**
- **God is not a collection of attributes added together. He is entirely loving, entirely merciful, entirely wrathful.**
- **Each attribute is one aspect of God's total character or being.**
- **God is not wrathful at one point in history and loving at another point. He is always the same God.**

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5. Immutability: *God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.*

- **Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. Psalm 102: 25-27**
- **For I the Lord do not change; Malachi 3:6**
- **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17**

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Common questions about Immutability:

1. Is God impassibile (without passion)?

God is “without passions.” Westminster Confession of Faith 2:1 “**Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like passions with you, KJV** Acts 14:15 **We also are men, of like nature with you, ESV**

Homoiopathēs means having similar circumstances or experiences or a similar nature NOT passions.

- **God does not have sinful passion or emotion. BUT God does have passion/emotion. He rejoices (Isaiah 62:5); is grieved Ephesians 4:30); loves (Psalm 103:17) and so forth.**

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Common questions about Immutability:

2. Does God sometimes change his mind?

God responds differently to different situations. God's attitude or intention changes as the situation changes. Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:9-14; Isaiah 38:1-6; Jonah 3:4-10

- And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. Genesis 6:6**

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And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever." And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. Exodus 32:9-14

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In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover." Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, and said, "Please, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: "Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city. Isaiah 38:1-6

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Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. Jonah 3:4-10

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Common questions about Immutability:

3. **Process Theology is in error:** Process and change are essential aspects of genuine existence. Therefore God must be changing like the universe he created. Charles Hartshorne

- If God is unchangeable nothing we do matters. So as we act and the universe changes God is affected and changes to become something he wasn't!
- God in the Bible does not act or is unable to respond differently to different situations.

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Common questions about Immutability:

4. Why is immutability important?

- If God could change any change must be for the better or worse.
 1. If God changes for the better, then God was/is imperfect.
 2. If God changes for the worse God could become progressively evil leaving us to spend eternity with an omnipotent evil (perhaps wholly evil God).
- Our faith, hope and knowledge depends upon a person who is absolutely unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes and promises.
- Unlike all other systems of theology biblical Christianity sees God as both personal and infinite