

## THEOLOGY PROPER (39)

### (Incommunicable Attribute #3) - Immensity.

This is the attribute that means God is not limited by Space. God is unlimited in space. It is legitimate when thinking of this attribute to say that it means God is infinite in space, that is He is without any limitations. This, as all of these attributes, places God far beyond every other created thing or being, for every created thing and being is limited by space. Space is everywhere, therefore God is everywhere. God is never any less or more in one place at one time or another time. He is unlimited in space, therefore where there is space, there is God. Many passages support this attribute:

- 1) I Kings 8:27 - The statement is very clear, God cannot be contained or confined by anything, including space itself.
- 2) Isaiah 66:1 - God is not limited by anything space related, including heaven and earth.
- 3) Acts 7:48-49 - Nothing in space can contain God.
- 4) Acts 17:24 - God is the Lord of all of space including the heaven and earth.

This attribute of immensity makes both a positive and negative assertion concerning God: On the positive side, this attribute asserts that God is above, beyond and in all of space. On the negative side, this attribute asserts that God cannot be limited by space.

As we will see there is a similarity between God's attribute of Immensity and God's attribute of Omnipresence. However there is also a major difference. The attribute of Immensity is focused on God's Transcendence (God is far superior to everything else). The attribute of Omnipresence is focused on God's Immanence (God is closely connected to all of His creation). **Immensity** places God far Beyond anything in space. **Omnipresence** places God Near everything in space.

There are three ways that something may relate to or exist in space:

- (Way #1)- Something may be Confined by space (i.e. human body or building).  
(Way #2)- Something may be Definite in space (i.e. angel of departed soul).  
(Way #3)- Something may be Indefinite in space (i.e. ONLY GOD).

There are several ways this attribute is and applicable to us:

1. It should cause us to stand in awe of the majesty of God.
2. It should cause us to realize how limited we really and truly are.
3. It should cause us to realize nothing can contain our God.
4. It should cause us to never fear anything in space.
5. It should cause us to pray realizing we are praying to an unlimited God.

## THEOLOGY PROPER (40)

### (Incommunicable Attribute #4) - Immutability.

This is the attribute of God which means that God is not capable of Change. God is a Being who cannot change in His person, perfections, purposes and promises. It is impossible for God to be at any time more or less than He always is. Change and development are impossible for God. Change means something develops for the better or worse and this is totally impossible for God. He is always the same God who cannot change. Many passages support this attribute:

- 1) Ps.102:27 - The clear statement is "Thou art the same... ". God cannot change in any way and be the same. He is immutable. Everything else will change, including the world.
- 2) Mal.3:6 - God makes it clear that He does not change which in this context guarantees the existence and preservation of Israel.
- 3) James 1:17 - There is no "variation" or change with God. God is always the same and He cannot "shift" or "change" in any area.
- 4) Heb.1:12 - God is always the "same" meaning change is not possible for God.

When it comes to this important attribute, **there must be a clear distinction made between immutability and immobility**. Immutability means God cannot change, whereas immobility would mean God cannot move. For example, God is moving His program through time. In the O.T, prior to the coming of Christ, God permitted the sacrifice of animals to cover sin. In the N.T., after the coming of Christ, God permitted the sacrifice of His Son to take away sin. In some respects there appears to be change, however God was moving His program and the one unchangeable constant required to cover or remove sin was shed blood.

**All of the perplexities and problems which seem to surround the attribute of Immutability can be resolved by keeping immutability and immobility in clear focus. God makes it very clear that He does not change, but He also makes it very clear that He does move and in fact may be moved.** When an individual pursues the path of righteousness, God makes it very clear that He moves in a variety of blessed ways. When, however, an individual pursues the path of unrighteousness, God makes it very clear that He moves in other ways. It is not that God changes, it is that He moves depending on the change in man. It is, as Dr. Berkhof said: "In reality the change is not in God, but in man and in man's relation to God." (p.59)

If, for example, a believer continually persists in practicing some sinful activity, he is inviting God to move in His treatment of the believer from that of blessing to chastisement. God has sovereignly ordained **unchanging** principles that will cause Him to move one way or another. Once such example is repentance. If a person repents, God views that person in a completely different way. He is able to move in a positive direction toward the individual in a variety of ways. If a person, on the other hand, does not repent, God is not able and won't move a positive direction, but a negative direction. These are not issues of immutability for this will always be the same. These are issues of mobility- the way God moves (i.e. Jer.18:7-11).

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Understanding this important doctrine is critical for understanding God and for properly interpreting the Bible. This immutability/immobility matter enables us to reconcile certain passages and statements:

- 1) Genesis 6:6- God grieved in His heart that He had made man on the earth  
Numbers 23:19- God cannot repent of anything.
- 2) I Sam. 15:11,29,35- When Saul moved one way, God moved another in His thinking. In this instance, He moved the right to be King from one- Saul, to another- David.
- 3) Jonah 3:9- The possibility of God not pouring out wrath is due to the decision of Nineveh. God could move one way or another depending on the response to His word.
- 4) James 5:16- God is able to move and heal and answer prayer of a righteous person.

In every one of these passages, God reveals an unchanging principle- namely He can and will move in judgment or He can and will move in grace or blessing. The movement of God is determined by the change and movement of man. The issue here is not immutability, but mobility.

Charles Baker gives an interesting illustration of this very principle by using the illustration of the wind and the weather-vane. Which changes the wind or the weather-vane? In a true sense, it is the wind that changes. The weather-vane will always move in the direction of the wind. Depending on the direction of the wind, the weather-vane moves. The weather-vane is unchanging in this principle. It will always move in accordance the wind. In this case, the weather-vane is immutable, it is the wind that changes, the weather vane just moves in accordance with the wind (Charles Baker, A Dispensational Theology, p. 137).

God is immutable- He cannot change- but God is not immobile- He can move. This is clearly the teaching of the Word of God. It is, as Dr. Chafer said, God "is not capable or susceptible of change, either by increase or by decrease, by development or by self-evolution; unchangeable, invariable; permanent; as, God is immutable. (Vol.1, p.217) This precious attribute is meaningful in a variety of ways:

- 1) It should cause us to recognize the eternal stability of God.
- 2) It should cause us to realize the fickle instability of ourselves- We change our moods, attitudes, views and opinions.
- 3) It should cause us to realize our salvation is secure- God must keep His word (i.e. John 3:16),
- 4) It should cause us to realize God cannot ever change His judicial decrees- i.e. justification
- 5) It should cause us to realize God will always fulfill His word and promises.
- 6) It should prompt each of us to move our live in a direction of moving God to blessing,
- 7) It should prompt us to move our character in a direction of Biblical stability.