

# 1 I Believe in God who is Unchangeable

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Belgic Confession of Faith (比利时信条) was written in 1561 by **Guido De Bres** in the south of The Netherlands. That part is now called Belgium, hence the name *Belgic Confession of Faith*. **It is one of the three doctrinal (教义的) standards that we hold in the URCNA. We call them the 3 forms of unity.**

The Belgic Confession of Faith was written during a time of severe persecution (逼迫) of Christians by Roman Catholics. De Bres was murdered by the Roman Catholics. He was publicly hanged for teaching these truths.

Today we will continue our study of God, the most important doctrine in the world! We will consider the fact that **God is unchangeable.**

Our headings are:

**The doctrine of the unchangeableness of God**

**The implications of the unchangeableness of God**

## **The Doctrine of the Unchangeableness (不变性) of God**

### **Article 1: The Only God**

We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that there is a **single and simple spiritual being**, whom we call God—eternal, incomprehensible (无法测透的), invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty; completely wise, just, and good, and the overflowing source of all good.

### **1. God is unchangeable.**

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.  
James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow (hint) of turning.

Numbers 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? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

The technical word for unchangeable is "immutable." (永不改变的 God did not change from before the world began. God cannot change.

**This is a difficult concept in a world where change is the norm.** Remember when your watch was for telling time—not a GPS, a compass, a voice recorder, a TV, a phone, a radio, a source of weather and sports news, or a calendar?

**People change too.** You know how a husband changes his mind about doing the dishes after he is married? You know how a boss promises a promotion or a pay raise and then fails to deliver?

**But God doesn't change. He can't change. He doesn't want to change.**

### **2. God is unchangeable - immutable - in 3 distinct categories (areas).**

#### **a. God is immutable in his essence (实质, 本质).**

There was never a time when God was not. God never discovers anything, like you! All that he is today, he always was.

Exodus 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

**Can that which is perfect improve on perfection if he made a different decision? No. Can that which is perfect in essence fall from that position? No.** Both answers would require that God be, by essence, unchangeable. If God were to change his mind it would be he wanted to be better! But that is impossible.

#### **b. God is immutable in his attributes (属性).**

He is never loses his desire for justice (公义). He never loses his holiness. He demands death for sin, always! Sin is always sin. He doesn't save by good works and then then save by the blood of Jesus. He always saves the same way!

#### **c. He is immutable in his counsel (旨意) - his decisions.**

It is this third category that draws much attention. Many, many Christians deny this, especially when it comes to the issue of election. But if God says he will do something, you can be sure that he will do it. But, for example, he does not want to, nor can he change the number of the elect ones in Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined (预定的), these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified (称义); and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

### **3. God does not need to change because he is fully self-contained (独立的, 自给自足的).**

Everything he needs to know, he knows. Everything he needs to do, he can do it.

Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.'"

### **4. But now learn how you can explain to doubters what appears to be God changing his mind.**

**First, consider Jonah.**

Jonah 3:10 Then God saw their works, that they **turned from their evil way**; and God relented (发怜悯) from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

God did not change his mind and then decide not to punish Nineveh. **The people of Nineveh changed their minds.** God's plan was always to save Nineveh (he has foreknowledge), after the Ninevites repented. **Even before Jonah was hiding out in the sinking ship, God planned to "change his own mind" and save the Ninevites.** It only appeared to man that God changed his mind. **God willed that Nineveh repent** and she did. God was not surprised by Nineveh's repentance.

**Second, consider the time before the Flood.**

Genesis 6:6 And **the LORD was sorry that He had made man** on the earth, and He was grieved (哀愁的) in His heart.

Again, God **used language that man might more easily understand what he said.** If you have to spank your child you are sorry...but you still do it...and you don't regret having children if you have to spank them.

**God often describes himself as having hands, eyes, and ears.** But all of those things were to teach about his care for his people. And by using that language, man more easily understands. Look again:

Psalms 78:65 Then the **Lord awoke as from sleep**. Like a mighty man who shouts because of wine.

Jeremiah 7:13 "And now, because you have done all these works," says 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,

Surely God doesn't sleep...and therefore doesn't wake up! God is unchangeable in his inner being, his attributes, his purposes, and his promises.

### **5. Before we move on, there are some Christians who have misunderstood this doctrine, trying to explain away #4 above.**

They argue that God's is immutable only in his ethics (道德标准). (He is always loving, holy, etc.) But if God were only unchangeable in his ethics, that would make God unpredictable. **He could save a sinner, for example, in some other way!** But God is not unpredictable. If God changed his mind he would no longer be God...**as it would mean he "improved."**

## **Implications (应用) of the Unchangeableness of God**

### **1. God does not change: Once you saved, you are always saved.**

**God does not change his mind about your salvation.** He does not have a magic eraser next to the Lamb's Book of Life.

Isaiah 46:4 **Even to your old age, I am He**. And even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; Even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Hebrews 13:8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

**God's immutability is inextricably (密不可分地) tied to your salvation.** If he weren't immutable, your salvation could be up in the air every second. (He loves me, he loves me not!) Imagine the uncertainty! **You would have no finger nails!** And when you **think of your sins, you will be overwhelmed!**

Romans 11:29 For the **gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (不可撤销的).**

Job 23:13 "But He is unique, and **who can make Him change?**

What the Lord promises he will do...because of his unchangeable nature.

**Because I did not understand this doctrine as a child, I lived in fear!** I feared that Jesus would return and I would be left behind because I had a single unconfessed sin. I had nightmares about this! If only I had been taught better!

This past week I learned of a young assistant pastor who had committed suicide (自杀) and the church refused to allow his body to be brought into the church with because, as the pastor said, he was in hell! But that young Christian was simply overwhelmed by his suffering. God does not cancel his election (拣选) based on our good deeds!

**2. Because God does not change, those without hope in Jesus Christ will face eternity (永恒) in hell.**

Deuteronomy 32:39 'Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.'

Look again:

Ezekiel 8:18 "Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

This means that there is no other way of salvation. Muslims won't go to heaven. Hindus won't go to heaven.

**3. Because God does not change, there is a certain type of predictability in life.**

Acts 17:28 "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own

poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

God is stable. He holds all things together. Atoms don't break off and go flying off in every direction.

Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant (约) of peace be removed." Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

You don't need to panic that global warning will cause the whole earth to flood.

You don't need to panic that Donald Trump would destroy the whole world, as one news analyst (解析家) recently said.

You won't feel abandoned by God though the world seems to have sold itself to the Devil.

God will ultimately bring the wicked low and established the humble (谦卑的人), as Mary said in the Magnificat (马利亚的尊主颂) .

**4. Because God does not change, there is a predictability in prayer.**

He will give you what he has promised. As Pink wrote: What good would it do to pray if God were like a chameleon (变色龙) ?

God promised he would do what is best for his children, and when you pray you can be confident in this fact!

God is not lying down on his back, laughing, and pounding on the floor as he plays games with you! No, you can be confident he will listen and answer every prayer you make.

**5. Because God does not change, his message does not change.**

It is this message of salvation that you must bring to the lost.

It is this message of sanctification (成圣) that you must bring to the church.

Let me illustrate using the Word and prayer – the means by which we are sanctified.

Hillary Clinton said that the church needed to adjust its teaching on homosexuality (同性性行为) and abortion (堕胎) . She is telling God he needs to change. Her daughter said this week that it is un-Christian not to support abortion!!!

**Roman Catholics (until recently) only allowed bishops (主教) , not priests) to forgive abortions** (as if they could). God forgives all sins of his children who come to him through Jesus Christ – even the sin of murder.

**6. Brothers and sisters, you are the ones who contend (战斗) at the gates of the church – the place of battle – to fight and protect her, and you must fight for truth.**

In this case, fight to defend the doctrine of the unchangeableness of God and then show what the implications of this doctrine are. If you fail to defend and apply truth the church will fail. God forbids that we fail. **God gave the weapons with which you must fight for the expansion and stability of the church: Those weapons are solid Christian doctrines.**

**Conclusions:**

God does not change. That is an established fact from the Bible.

Brothers and Sisters:

**1. This means you can be confident in your salvation that you have received through Jesus Christ.** You are saved forever. Live like you know this!

**2. This should motivate you to take the Gospel to the lost...knowing that the Gospel is the unchangeable means for men to be saved.**

**3. This should give you hope when you face the future – regardless of what you face.**

**4. This should give you confidence when you pray- there are no moving goalposts (球门柱) with God.**

**5. This should make you confidently work for and worship your Heavenly Father.**

Finally, **only God's child can work for and worship him.** So if you are not God's child, I invite you to receive the life and death of Jesus as a substitute (代替) for you! How do you get Christ's life and death as yours? Ask him. After that you can come to God and receive all his benefits...and work for his eternal kingdom.