

f. The Importance of God's Unchangeableness: At first it may not seem very important to us to affirm God's unchangeableness. The idea is so abstract that we may not immediately realize its significance. But if we stop for a moment to imagine what it would be like if God *could* change, the importance of this doctrine becomes more clear. For example, if God *could* change (in his being, perfections, purposes, or promises), then any change would be either for the better or for the worse. But if God changed for the better, then he was not the best possible being when we first trusted him. And how could we be sure that he is the best possible being now? But if God could change for the worse (in his very *being*), then what kind of God might he become? Might he become, for instance, a little bit evil rather than wholly good? And if he could become a little bit evil, then how do we know he could not change to become largely evil—or *wholly* evil? And there would be not one thing we could do about it, for he is so much more powerful than we are. Thus, the idea that God could change leads to the horrible possibility that thousands of years from now we might come to live forever in a universe dominated by a wholly evil, omnipotent God. It is hard to imagine any thought more terrifying. How could we ever trust such a God who could change? How could we ever commit our lives to him?

Moreover, if God could change with regard to his *purposes*, then even though when the Bible was written he promised that Jesus would come back to rule over a new heaven and new earth, he has perhaps abandoned that plan now, and thus our hope in Jesus' return is in vain. Or, if God could change in regard to his *promises*, then how could we trust him completely for eternal life? Or for anything else the Bible says? Maybe when the Bible was written he promised forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who trust in Christ, but (if God can change) perhaps he has changed his mind on those promises now—how could we be sure? Or perhaps his omnipotence will change someday, so that even though he wants to keep his promises, he will no longer be able to do so.

A little reflection like this shows how absolutely important the doctrine of God's unchangeableness is. If God is not unchanging, then the whole basis of our faith begins to fall apart, and our understanding of the universe begins to unravel. This is because our faith and hope and knowledge all ultimately depend on a *person* who is *infinitely worthy of trust*—because he is *absolutely* and *eternally* unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.

3. Eternity. God's eternity may be defined as follows: *God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.*

Sometimes this doctrine is called the doctrine of God's infinity with respect to time. To be "infinite" is to be unlimited, and this doctrine teaches that time does not limit God.

This doctrine is also related to God's unchangeableness. If it is true that God does not change, then we must say that *time* does not change God: it has no effect on his being, perfections, purposes, or promises. But that means that time has no effect on God's knowledge, for instance. God never learns new things or forgets things, for that would mean a change in his perfect knowledge. This implies also