

# *Immutability*

*John Kershaw*

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Compliments of:  
Agape Chapel Ministries  
P.O. Box 59084  
Norwalk, CA 90650  
USA

E-mail: [acm@sounddoctrine.net](mailto:acm@sounddoctrine.net)  
Web-site: [www.sounddoctrine.net](http://www.sounddoctrine.net)

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## Immutability

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*“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”  
(Hebrews 13. 8.)*

What a mercy, my hearers, that our Jesus, on whom we build our souls' eternal all, is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever”! Whatever we look at, save the God of our salvation, we see changing. Look at the world and the things of the world — its fashion is changed. The Psalmist David had his mind awed with a view of the world, as we find in the concluding part of Ps. 102; and Paul brings David's language forward in Hebrews 1, showing that all things are fleeting, but the Lord is unchangeable. “He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” (Ps. 102. 23-27.) Our Jesus was in the beginning the Creator of the

heavens and the earth, and all that therein is; our Jesus is the same Almighty God today, and He will be the same tomorrow and for ever. O what a mercy that our Jesus, the God of our salvation, is so unalterable, so eternally immutable!

Again, on the negative side of the question: if we look at nations, and empires, and monarchs, they rise and fall; but there is no alteration in our Jesus. Hear His voice: "By me kings reign and princes decree justice;" He upholds one and puts down another at His sovereign pleasure. God's ministers are to exalt Him: "Say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth" as the God of nations, and will cause all things to work together for His honour and the good of His chosen family.

Further, if we look at families, what changes there are in them! Where are our fathers? do they live for ever? No; one generation goes, another comes. But not so with our Jesus: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

Look at churches; what changes take place in them! Ministers that have stood on Zion's walls and blown the silver trumpet of the everlasting gospel are removed. They are the subject of mortality, like the high priest under the law; and the loss is frequently greatly felt. But our Jesus, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, will never die; He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" and the church is as near and dear to Him as ever it was. But as we see the Lord's servants removed from the sphere of usefulness into the immediate presence of the divine Master, we are to "pray. . . the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." The residue of the Spirit is with Him.

Look at members of Christian churches; do they continue? No. How many that have worshipped God in this place, that have stood in church fellowship with God's Zion here, have been removed from the church militant to the church triumphant in glory. But our Jesus still lives; He still remains; He was "the same yesterday," and He is the same "to-day," and He will be the same "for ever." We sometimes greatly feel the loss of our brethren and sisters in the Lord, with whom we have taken sweet counsel, and walked in peace and soul-union in the house of God; when death has overtaken them we have sorrowed, but our sorrow has not been as those that have no hope. I have abundant reason to feel in this sense, as the pastor of a Christian church. In the midst of bereavements of this

when we have gone to glory we shall shout, "Victory through the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony! That blood will still maintain its power.

Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power.

It has had a power, it has a power now, and it will have a power,

Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more!

Cowper

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." As the Church's advocate in heaven to plead her cause Christ has taken possession of the inheritance in our nature. He

Looks like a Lamb that has been slain,  
And wears his priesthood still;

and He enables His people to look to Him, and to commit their cause into His hands. The child of God may sometimes think that he is going backwards, or else standing still; but there is such a thing as taking deep root, growing upwards and downwards at the same time. You may be sure that religion is progressing in our souls if we are getting every day more and more out of love with ourselves, and feeling more and more our need of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are cleaving to Him, hoping in Him, panting after Him, longing for Him, and desiring to be "found in him," conformed to His image, and to His honour and glory. It is Jesus by His Holy Spirit that causes the Dragon of self to fall, and exalts Himself in our hearts and affections; "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

It may be that I may never speak to you in the name of Jesus any more; but if I do not, Jesus Christ still remains. If His ministering servants die and His people die, Jesus lives; and He ever had His witnesses, and ever will have. He ever had a seed to serve Him, and a generation to call Him blessed; and in spite of sin, men and devils, He will have; and He will carry on His work till all the ransomed of the Lord, the whole election of grace, are gathered in. "Then shall the end be," the world be burned up, the judgment take place, and the spouse be for ever in the presence of the dear Redeemer. Amen.

our Lord Jesus Christ, to exalt Him, and enable you to increase your confidence in Him, in His power, in His ability, and in His glorious all-sufficiency.

III. We now observe, "Jesus Christ" is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," in *His salvation*. A large field opens to us here, but we can only briefly glance at it. The salvation that we have in Jesus Christ is not a changing or uncertain salvation; it is like Himself, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Harken to the voice of God; there is such a solemnity and majesty in His word when the Holy Spirit is pleased to apply it with power to the mind: "Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation." Jesus has "obtained eternal redemption for us," Abraham rejoiced in Jesus and His salvation; he rejoiced to see His day, and he saw it, and was glad. Jacob died in the enjoyment of this salvation: "The angel of the covenant that hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Job exulted in it: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The church, in the days of the prophet Isaiah, sang of it: "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid." Come into the New Testament; it is still Jesus: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus.

O the everlasting salvation that we have in Jesus Christ! He is the same, and will be the same for ever and ever! and, the righteousness He has wrought out for us is like Himself; it is an everlasting righteousness. It covered our first parents. It is true, they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves, but God rejected them, as He will reject our self-righteousness, and clothed them with the skins of beasts that had probably been slain in sacrifice. Abraham had to look to this Jesus for righteousness, and so had the prophets, and so have we. It is an everlasting righteousness, covering all the election of grace in ages gone by, covering them all today, and that will cover them all tomorrow; making them accepted in the presence of a holy God. As it is written, we are "accepted in the Beloved," beheld all fair and perfect in the Lord Jesus. And as respects the blood of this salvation, it is "the blood of the everlasting covenant." All the church of God in ages past have been purged from sin in the blood of Jesus; and the church of God at this day is looking by faith to the blood of the slaughtered Lamb; and it will be the same to us tomorrow and as long as we live; and

description, we have this consolation, that whatever the Lord takes away from the church on earth to the church in heaven, He never takes away Himself. O no! Jesus is here still: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday," that dwelt in the church in the wilderness in the prophetic dispensation, in the days of the apostles, in the days of our persecuted fathers the Puritans, that dwells in the church "to-day," and will still dwell in it when we are dead and gone. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." One text in particular has greatly soothed my sorrows arising from bereavements in the loss of near and dear friends, is where the Psalmist David says, "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted," He ever did live; He lives now; He lives in the hearts of His people; He lives in Zion; and He will be there tomorrow, and the next day, and for ever. O the immutability, the constancy, and firmness of the dear Redeemer!

We observe again, that sometimes there are many changes in our own minds. We are the subjects of change and mutability. What is more fickle than we are? Sometimes we are on the mount of enjoyment: "Bless the Lord, O my soul;" sometimes we are in unbelief and temptation: "Is his mercy clean gone for ever?" Jesus lives, whatever be the state of our minds. Sometimes we are walking in darkness, under the hidings of our heavenly Father's face; sometimes we have the liftings up of the light of His countenance; but Jesus lives when we are in the dark as well as when we are in the light. There is no alienation nor the least shadow of a turn with our blessed Jesus.

The Lord enable us to make a few remarks upon Jesus, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

I. In the first place, we may look at the Lord Jesus Christ in *the love of His heart*. We pause upon that; it is a pleasing subject for us to look at; the love of His heart, His fond affections, firmly fixed upon the objects of His eternal choice from before all worlds. The concluding part of that memorable chapter, Proverbs 8, abundantly proves that His delight was with them before any part of creation was begun. Christ loved His people from the beginning with an everlasting love; as the effect of that love, He became their covenant Head, their Surety, and Mediator. It was the love of His heart that constrained him to "throw His radiant glory by," and veil His Godhead in a clay tabernacle; that constrained Him to suffer,

bleed, and die, "the just for the unjust." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us," and that "when we were enemies," as the effect of that love, "Christ died for us." And having finished and completed salvation's work in fulfilment of His covenant engagement He has entered into heaven itself, and is the church's Head and representative in glory; with the love of His heart firmly fixed on His church to this day; and, blessed be His name, He does not love His church in glory one jot or tittle more than His church on earth. The church in glory is more happy and blessed, but not more near and dear to the Redeemer, not more locked up in His heart, than His spouse, His bride, in this her militant state of trial and difficulty on earth. Neither our corruption inwardly, nor our sins outwardly, nor the powers of darkness unitedly, can ever turn the loving heart of Jesus away from His people. It is always the same. Harken to the solemn declaration; there is food in it for our souls: Jesus "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." His love does not, cannot change as ours does.

In His love to His people, our Lord Jesus Christ "sticketh closer than a brother." Amongst brethren there is sometimes love, and a very blessed and comfortable thing it is to walk in the fear of the Lord, and the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace; but Satan makes inroads, our evil hearts are stirred up, and there is "a crook in the lot," something of a perplexing and trying nature, and our love one to another begins to wax cold, and sometimes angry words ensue; and when this is the case it is very painful. Paul and Barnabas were two of the most blessed men of God that ever had an existence as Christians and as ministers; and yet they strove together about taking Mark with them, and the contention between those good men was so sharp that they parted one from another. When we take one view of the matter, we are ready to say, "What a pity that those two good men should thus fall out by the way and separate." But take another view of the subject; Paul says it turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. The Lord overruled it for good; Paul went one way and Barnabas another, and they preached the glad tidings of the gospel, and thus the Redeemer's kingdom was spread. But, Jesus' loving heart never altered to either of them. His love is fixed upon His church in all her trials and in all her difficulties. He is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

grace! The Lord is able to keep His people; they cannot keep themselves: "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." And His power is like Himself, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." These things have a very blessed place in my heart; they are very comfortable to my soul and I turn them into prayer; and when I read, "He will keep the feet of his saints," then I pray, "Do thou keep me, for I cannot keep myself; hold me up by thy power, and I shall be safe." Let the Lord be our upholder, and we are safe and secure. O that we may ever grow in confidence in the power, and ability, and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and that our heart and our eyes may be daily up to Him! He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," in His power and in His ability.

See this immutability in another respect. Are any of my brethren and sisters shut up in their souls as in a prison? God's people often know what it is, as David says, to be shut up: "I am shut up, and cannot come forth." They know what it is to sigh and groan in their prison-house. "Let the sighing and groaning of the prisoner come up before thee." Now they do not wait till they can deliver themselves. Some people talk of believing and acting faith as though it were a very easy matter; but that is not the faith that stands in God's wisdom and power. The children of God that are shut up in the feelings of their own minds could no more effect their own deliverance from bondage into the glorious liberty of the gospel than they could keep God's holy law. The Lord has reserved this power to Himself: "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to set at liberty them that are bound." If we want liberating, we must look to the Lord alone to liberate us: the power is His. When David cried to Him, He lifted him up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and set his feet on a rock, and put a new song of praise and thanksgiving into his heart. So that Jesus, in His power, is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

If you are hemmed up in providence, and cannot see your way, look to the Lord and His power to liberate you. All the gold and silver is His, and, when He wants it, He can have it out of a fish's mouth; all hearts are in his hand, and He can turn them as rivers of water. Look to the Lord; all power is with Him. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, he will sustain thee" "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." My aim in labouring in the ministry of the word is to set forth

brought down thousands since. The power of Jesus that brought Zaccheus down the tree, that shook the prison and the gaoler's conscience; the power of Jesus, that arrested the dying thief on the cross; this power is still working, for He is in reference to His power, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Let us look back for a moment. Was it our own power and ability that changed our heart, renewed our will, and turned our feet heavenward? Instead of my power and ability having anything to do with effecting it, my carnal heart fought against it. O the opposition that there is in the soul of the sinner to the work of God! But when the day of the Lord's power comes, the stoutest heart must obey, the loftiest looks must be brought down, and the Lord in His almighty power be exalted. He clothes with power the word spoken by His sent servants: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power." Ah! we want this power. How my soul longs for power, to attend to the word preached, power to be felt in my own soul! Without this power there is nothing that will really stand the test; for religion without the power of God is but like the shadow without the substance. Religion begins with the power of God, it is maintained by the power of the Lord, and it is completed by the power of the Lord. Jesus, then, had the power in His hand "yesterday," He has the power in His hand "to-day," and He will have the power in His hand "tomorrow." When you and I are gone to heaven He will have the power still, and He will gather in the number of His elect, and bring His sons from afar and His daughters from the ends of the earth.

Further, He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," in the power of His Spirit and grace in the souls of His people. Do we feel very weak and helpless? We are the more safe and secure. Peter did not see and feel himself so weak and helpless when he said, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee," as Paul did when buffeted with the "thorn in the flesh," and trembling for fear of falling, and crying to the Lord to save him. The Lord keep us day by day feeling our weakness, the depravity of our nature, and the evils of our heart! Dear Lord, increase a godly jealousy in our soul; forbid that we should place any confidence and trust in ourselves, but that our confidence and trust may be in Thee and the power of Thine arm, the power of Thy Spirit and

We should take into consideration, that the eye of Jesus Christ our King, Lord, and Law-giver, is ever upon us. He has given us many precepts and exhortations in His word; it is for His honour that we walk in them; it is for our comfort and consolation that we obey them. "In keeping his commandments there is great reward;" but if we disobey the directions our blessed Lord and Master has given us, He "will visit our iniquity with a rod, and our transgressions with stripes." This He does in love, for His lovingkindness will He not take away from us, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. Zion once thought that the Lord had forgotten her, and that He ceased to love her, and had forsaken her. She said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." "Ah!" says the devil, "and he will never be favourable to thee any more; he will never look upon thee in love and mercy, nor visit thee again!" It is a lie; and the devil was a liar from the beginning. What says our Lord? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" I have known mothers turn their backs even upon their infants; but the Lord Jesus says, "I will not forget thee." "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me;" and "I will not forget thee."

What a mercy that our Lord Jesus is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!" He does not love His people's sins, nor their failings, nor their infirmities; He did not love Peter's denial of Him with oaths and curses; He did not love David's fall, for "the thing that he did displeased him;" but He loves His children, and will never leave them nor forsake them. Paul exulted in this: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Shall any or all of these things combined dissolve the union that exists between Christ and His church? No; it is an indissoluble union; for "we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." O what a blessing that Jesus Christ is the same! "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." If our Jesus were not immutable, we could not stand; it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. The mercy of the Lord is like Jesus, "from everlasting to everlasting;" The mercy of the LORD endureth for ever." So that the loving heart of the Lord Jesus Christ is ever firmly fixed upon His spouse; and He is the same in His regard for her "yesterday, and to-day, and for

ever." He "rests in his love." The Lord enable us to rest where He rests.

Young Christians are very prone to judge of their state according to the frame of their mind. When they are very happy and comfortable, and enjoying the sweet love of Christ in their souls, they say, "I am a child of God, I love the Lord, and all is right." When the Lord withdraws the light of His countenance, and they have no sweet feeling of the love of Christ in their souls, but have hard, cold, and barren hearts, a backwardness to do what is good and a forwardness to do what is evil, Satan assails them at every point, inbred corruption stirs up, "the flesh lusting against the spirit," and misery and wretchedness is felt in their soul. Then Satan takes advantage and says, "The Lord does not love thee, and thou dost not love him;" and thus the mind of the young Christian is shaken, because he judges his state according to the feelings of his own mind. But that is not wise judgment. "Who is there among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD" — in the name of the Lord Jesus, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" — "and stay himself upon his God;" for Jesus is his God, and will ever remain so.

Heaviness may "endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Job was well instructed, but look at the argument that he raised when he was in darkness and could not find the Lord, though he sought Him on the right hand and on the left, behind and before, but felt himself in a very wretched state of soul. He said, "He knoweth the way that I take;" "I am in the crucible; I am being tried by feeling the depravity of my nature, the vileness of my heart; I am being tried by the temptations of Satan; I am being tried by my friends that persecute me; and I am being tried in God's afflicting dispensations in providence." But see the hope, the blessed confidence at the bottom: "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He is Jesus still! He will "refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried;" and then He will say, "It is my people" after all, and will own them still; and they shall say, "It is my God; it is my Jesus, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'" Bless His name for His immutable love!

II. But we observe, secondly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," in *His power and ability*. He possessed power and ability to create the

heavens and the earth, to speak them out of nothing into existence. He possessed power enough to bring Israel out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. He had power and ability to cause the Red Sea to flee before them: "The sea saw him, and fled; Jordan was driven back." He had power and ability enough to supply the wants of Israel in the wilderness; power and ability enough to bring down the walls of Jericho; power and ability enough to deliver the various idolatrous nations into their hands. In more personal circumstances, see the display of His power in the case of Daniel, and in the case of the three Hebrew children; see His power in providing for the prophet in the wilderness, in increasing the poor woman's meal, and providing for her and her son. Innumerable instances might be adduced from the book of God expressive of the greatness of the power of our blessed and glorious Lord Jesus. Now, the same Jesus that appeared as the Captain of the Lord's host upon the walls of Jericho, in the days of Joshua, is our Captain; the same blessed Son of God that appeared in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace is our Jesus; and, bless His precious name, he will be the same powerful, helping Jesus to the end.

Again the Lord Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," in His power, as the God of grace and salvation. I have no power in myself; I am one of those that the prophet speaks of when he says, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." I am often faint, and as weak as water; but when my blessed Jesus reveals Himself in His power, and I can claim an interest in His person, I feel my heart warm in me directly, and such texts as these have come with savour on my spirit: "All power is given to me in heaven and earth;" "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory;" "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and they shall talk of thy power;" "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." It is not by creature might or power that God's cause is maintained in this sinful, crooked, and rebellious world, in spite of all opposition, but it is by the power of the Spirit of our God and of His Christ. He says, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." In allusion to this, David, in Ps. 110. 3, says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." The power of Jesus, that brought down the lofty looks of Saul of Tarsus, has