

King's Online Bible School

Doctrine 101: *Learning about God* — Spotlight Studies

(adapted from Wayne Grudem's *Bible Doctrines* & R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths*)

God Is Omnipotent (Lesson 5)

1. Infinite Power

"Omnipotent" is derived from two Latin words: *omni* - "all" + *potens* - "powerful." It literally means "all powerful."

"The Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty'" (Gen 17:1).

God introduced Himself to Abram this way because "since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made" (Rom 1:20).

For Jeremiah, as well, the creation was the evidence of God's unlimited power.

"Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You" (Jer 32:17).

He Who possesses infinite power is infinite Spirit. There is no physical property to His being. Jeremiah pictures God's action in creating as what any powerful action by a man requires — "an outstretched arm." In His act of creating, God did not exert Himself more than speaking.

"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
And all their hosts by the breath of His mouth. . . .
For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps 33:6, 9).

Only one thing can explain the ongoing existence of matter and animate life in this world from generation to generation.

"He is before all things
And in Him all things hold together" (Col 1:17)

"Lift up your eyes on high
And see Who has created these stars,
The One Who leads forth their host by number,
Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power,
Not one of them is missing" (Isa 40:26).

"He upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb 1:3).

". . . In Whose hand is the life of every living thing
And the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10).

"He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; . . . for in Him we live and move and have our being . . ." (Acts 17:25, 28).

Every ability, strength, accomplishment, natural phenomenon, and technological achievement the world has ever known is, first of all, the exercise and demonstration of God's creating, sustaining power. The ability of anyone or anything to function — indeed, its very existence — depends constantly on Him.

"They all wait for You
To give them their food in due season. . . .
You hide Your face, they are dismayed;
You take away their spirit, they expire
And return to their dust.
You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the ground.

Let the glory of the Lord endure forever!
Let the Lord be glad in His works!" (Ps 104:27, 29-31)

God is not limited to doing what He has done or to all He ever will do. All of the resulting expressions of His power together will only be finite. The power He possesses in His Person is immeasurably, infinitely greater. He is absolutely powerful.

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Is the Lord's power limited?'" (Num 11:23).

"With God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

2. Infinite Character

No exercise of God's infinite power will ever violate any of His intentions or nature. This is why it is right and necessary to understand that **there are some things God cannot do.**

a. God cannot violate His will

There is no inconsistency or conflict in God's being. He is perfectly one within Himself. He cannot do what is not His will because all His acts and words are pure and exact expressions of His heart and His determinations. If ever they were not, He would no longer be in harmony and whole within Himself.

"Ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He" (Deut 32:3-4).

Because He is faithful, He cannot do imperfect work.

"...All His work is done in faithfulness" (Ps 33:4).

Because He is absolutely faithful, we can be certain that God cannot leave undone anything that His absolute goodness, guided by His absolute wisdom, knows to do (*cf.* Jms 4:17).

Because He is righteous, He cannot do anything that is in any way unjust.

"He Himself tempts no one" (Jms 1:13).

"It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb 6:18).

"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 it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num 23:19)

"For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes" (2 Cor 1:20).

b. God cannot violate His own character.

"He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13). He cannot act against His nature.

"God cannot be tempted with evil" (Jms 1:13).

God's will has no need to resist evil. No wrong consideration can enter it. Sin is impossible for Him because one cannot sin without willing to sin. God cannot commit sin because He never wills it. This is why God's omnipotence is more precisely defined by saying that **God is able to do all His holy will.**

Job expressed the heart of this matter when he said: "I know that You can do everything and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2).

3. Infinite Control

Because God's power is infinite He can accomplish whatever He wills to do. Nothing can withstand the power of God.

No one and nothing in the universe is able to prevent anything God has determined.

Every created person and thing is completely and constantly dependent on Him just to continue existing. Every ability and strength a person possesses and exercises is only possible because God is enabling it. Apart from His will and empowering, we are helpless.

God's sovereign will is secured and assured in His omnipotence. His will is infinite in itself and it is unlimited in His power to perform it.

God is not hindered by anything outside of Himself.

"Our God is in the heavens;
He does whatever He pleases" (Ps 115:3).

"All the nations are as nothing before Him;
They are regarded as less than nothing and meaningless" (Isa 40:17).

"The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations;
He frustrates the plans of the peoples" (Ps 33:10).

No one can restrain God from what He has determined to do in our lives and circumstances.

While He has determined that we must make decisions and He deals with us accordingly, we cannot prevent the ways He chooses to influence our decisions or to act in response to our choices and our ways.

"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hands of the Lord;
He turns it wherever He wishes" (Prov 21:1).

"The lot is cast into the lap
But its every decision is by the hand of the Lord" (Prov 16:33).

"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28)

"Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose Who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:11).

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know . . . what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph 1:18-19).

"The Lord Jesus Christ . . . will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Phil 3:20-21).