

# UNIT 1: The Attributes of God

## Section 11: God's Power

*Assigned Reading:*  
A. W. Pink – The Attributes of God  
The Power of God

### Introduction:

Having discussed God's Aseity, Unity, and Immutability in our previous weeks, it is appropriate to move on in our discussion to attributes of God that are typically grouped together under the heading of God's Infinity or Infinitude. These help give fuller description of what we mean when we speak of God being "perfect" in His existence... He is not bound or restricted by anything, for everything is a creation of His. He is unlimited in regards to time, space, power, and knowledge. We'll be looking at each of these specifically in coming weeks: Eternality, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience.

This morning we will be studying God's Power. We'll see what implications God's Infinitude has in our understanding of God's power/ability.

**Q1:** What do we mean by power?

**Q2:** How much power does God have?

**Q3:** Are there any limits to God's Omnipotence (are there things God cannot do)?

### Outline:

#### **I. Defining God's Omnipotence**

##### *A. Various Theologians*

1. Omnipotence comes from two Latin words – *omni* "all" & *potens* "powerful"
2. **Charnock**, "As His essence is immense, not to be confined in place; as it is eternal, not to be measured in time; so it is almighty, not to be limited in regard of action."
3. **Pink**, "He who cannot do what He will and perform all His pleasure cannot be God."
4. **Grudem**, "God's omnipotence means that God is able to do all his holy will."
5. **Ryrie**, "God is all-powerful and able to do anything consistent with His own nature."
6. **Erickson**, "God is able to do all things that are proper objects of His power."
7. **Culver**, "God is able to do all things that are objects of power and that He is able to do so without diminution of His infinite strength." – **Tozer**, "God gives, but does not give away"

##### *B. The Scriptures*

1. The Almighty (58x in NAU) – *the possessor of all power and authority*
  - a. *English* "Almighty" – *never used of anyone but God Himself!*
  - b. *Hebrew* – אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי *el-shaddai* – **God Almighty**
    - (1) **Genesis 17:1** Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.
    - (2) **Exodus 6:3** and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.
    - (3) **See Job 22:17-26 (repeatedly used in Job)**

- c. Greek – ὁ παντοκράτωρ – *ha pantocrator* – **The Almighty**
  - (1) **2 Corinthians 6:18** "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.
  - (2) **Revelation 1:8** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."
- 2. God's Power:
  - a. **Psalm 62:11** Once **God** has spoken; Twice I have heard this: That **power** belongs to **God**;
  - b. **Genesis 18:14** "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."
  - c. **Psalm 24:8** Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.
  - d. **Ephesians 3:20** Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
- 3. **In Creation... Being the source of everything, God has all power!**
  - a. **Jeremiah 32:17** '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, v27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"
  - b. **Rom 1:20** For 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, so that they are without excuse.
  - c. **Pink**, "Before man can work he must have both tools and materials, but God began with nothing, and by His word alone out of nothing made all things."
- 4. **The Incarnation:** Gabriel to Mary **Lk 1:37** "For nothing will be impossible with God"
- 5. **In Salvation:** **Matt 19:26** And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
- 6. **In Judgment:** The Flood, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Death (God's preservation of the damned in hell) – **Rom 9:22**

## II. Discussing God's Omnipotence

### A. Clarifications – Limitations?? Are there things God cannot do?

- 1. Natural Limitations... God cannot will or do anything denying His own character.
  - a. **Titus 1:2** in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie [ὁ ἀψευδὴς θεὸς – **lit.** "the unlying God"], promised long ages ago,
  - b. **Hebrews 6:18** so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie [ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι [τὸν] θεόν – **lit.** in which impossible/unable to lie God], we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.
  - c. **James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil [ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπείραστός ἐστιν κακῶν – **lit.** for God not tempted is by evil], and He Himself does not tempt anyone.
  - d. **2 Timothy 2:13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself [ἀρνήσασθαι γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται – **lit.** for to deny Himself not able].

2. Self-Imposed Limitations...
  - a. God is able to do more than He actually does (He does whatever He desires)
  - b. **Psalm 115:3** But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.
  - c. **Guard against presumption...**
    - (1) **Exodus 32:10** "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."
    - (2) **Matthew 3:9** and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.
  - d. God can choose what He pleases... His will is never frustrated...
  - e. ***God is not a "slave of omnipotence" – He does not have to do all He can!***
3. **Grudem**, "God cannot lie, sin, deny himself, or be tempted with evil. He cannot cease to exist, or cease to be God, or act in a way inconsistent with any of His attributes... Although God's power is infinite, His use of that power is qualified by His other attributes (just as all God's attributes qualify all His actions)."
4. **All of these "limitations"** are not *weaknesses* but *strengths*. **Erikson**, "The inability to lie or do evil or fail is a mark of positive strength rather than of failure."

#### B. Theological Questions for Omnipotence...

1. *Can God change the past?*
2. *Can God: Make 1+1=3? Make Square Circles? Make Triangles with Four Corners?*
  - a. **Culver**, "We say that God is able to do all things that are 'objects of power' [because] the law of non-contradiction and such other abstractions are not objects amenable to or commensurate with power. Power has nothing to do with them."
3. *The Paradox of the Stone – See Theological Paper...*

#### C. Practical Benefits

1. When we pray, it is never a question of God's ability... He is able!
2. What comfort we draw from this doctrine! Our God is all-powerful!
  - a. All power/authority is derived from God! All power/authority is subject to Him!
  - b. **Pink**, "No prayer is too hard for Him to answer, no need too great for Him to supply, no passion too strong for Him to subdue; no temptation too powerful for Him to deliver us from, no misery too deep for Him to relieve."
3. **Stephen Charnock**, "As holiness is the beauty of all God's attributes, so power is that which gives life and action to all the perfections of the Divine nature. How vain would be the eternal counsels, if power did not step in to execute them. Without power His mercy would be but feeble pity. His promises an empty sound, His threatenings a mere scarecrow."
4. **Tozer**, "Omnipotence is not a name given to the sum of all power, but an attribute of a personal God whom we Christians believe to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all who believe on Him to life eternal. The worshipping man finds this knowledge a source of wonderful strength for his inner life. His faith rises to take the great leap upward into the fellowship of Him who can do whatever He wills to do, for whom nothing is hard or difficult because He possesses power absolute... the Lord God

omnipotent can do anything as easily as anything else. All His acts are done without effort. He expends no energy that must be replenished.”

5. **We ought to respond in fear/reverence/worship before God!**

- a. **Pink**, “To treat with impudence One who can crush us more easily than we can a moth, is a suicidal policy. To openly defy Him who is clothed with omnipotence, who can rend us in pieces or cast us into Hell any moment He pleases, is the very height of insanity.”
- b. **Reminder of Edwards “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”**
- c. **Exodus 15:11** "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?"