



*“College Life Class”*

***The Attributes of God:  
Omnipotence & Omnipresence***

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## God's Omnipotence

Literally, omnipotence means that ***God has unlimited power***. According to the standard Hebrew lexicon, the word *shadday* (shaddai) means “self-sufficient” or “almighty”.

The Septuagint (LXX) translated it by the Greek word *pantokrator*, which means all-powerful. The same is true in the NT, where *pantokrator* means “almighty” or “all-powerful”.

Theologically, “omnipotent” means that God can do whatever is possible to do. His power is unlimited and uninhibited by anything else.

## God's Omnipotence (cont.)

Negatively, omnipotence **does not** mean that God can do what is contradictory. Scriptures affirm that God cannot contradict His nature (Heb. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:13; Titus 1:2):

“...in which it is impossible for God to lie, ...” Heb. 6:18

<sup>13</sup>“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.” 2 Tim. 2:13

αρνησασθαι = to act quite unlike oneself

<sup>2</sup>“in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,”  
Titus 1:2

## God's Omnipotence (cont.)

He cannot force freedom, for ex.: Matt. 23:37. He works persuasively, not coercively.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and ***you were unwilling.***” Matt. 23:37

Omnipotence does not mean that God must do all that He ***can*** do. It simply means that He has the power to do whatever is possible, even if He chooses not to do some things.

God is free to use His omnipotence whenever He desires; that is, God is free to limit His ***use*** of His power, but He is not free to limit the ***extent*** of His power. God must know all that He knows, but God does not have to do all He can do.

## God's Omnipotence (cont.)

### The Biblical Basis for God's Omnipotence

The biblical basis for omnipotence rests in several facts:

- use of the words *almighty* and *infinite* of God,
- phrases that imply He has all power, and
- acts that entail His unlimited power.

“Almighty” means “all-powerful”

*pantokrator*, translated “almighty” and the NT means all-powerful each of the times it appears in the NT (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22).

## God's Omnipotence (cont.)

### The use of the word “*infinite*” and “*almighty*” in reference to God

- God is said to be “infinite” in His understanding (Ps. 147:5)
- The usage of the word “almighty” in the Bible reveals that it means “all-powerful.”
- The almighty God is said to be exalted above creatures (great) in power (Job 37:23)
- He has no limits (Job 11:7-11)
- He has the power to complete all He promises (Gen. 28:3-4)
- No one can contend with Him (Job 40:2)
- He can establish an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:1, 7)
- He operates with perfect justice (Job 8:3)
- He has power to execute final wrath on the world (Rev. 19:15)
- He operates from a position of supremacy (Job 31:2)
- He can perform miracles (Rev. 15:3)
- He is without limits in His power as well as in knowledge (Ps. 147:5)

## God's Omnipotence (cont.)

### Phrases implying God's omnipotence:

“Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him” (Ps. 115:3)

“And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand. I work and who will reverse it?” (Isa. 43:13)

“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jer. 32:17)

“Who is like Me and who can challenge Me?” (Jer. 49:19)

“...surpassing greatness of His power” (Eph. 1:19)

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

“What is impossible with men is possible with God” (Luke 18:27).



## God's Omnipotence (cont.)

### Acts Implying God's Omnipotence:

- Creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*) Rom. 4:17; John 1:3; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 4:11)
- Truly supernatural acts (John 2:7-11; 6:15 ff.; 10:18)
- The execution of our salvation (Isa. 46:10-11; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:19)
- None of these activities can be performed by finite power.



## **An important implication of omnipotence:**

Omnipotence solves the problem of evil!

The classic statement of the problem of evil is as follows:

1. An all-good God would defeat evil
2. An all-powerful God can defeat evil
3. But evil is not defeated
4. Hence, there can be no such God.

However, this argument overlooks an important factor implied in omnipotence, which can be **restated** this way:

1. An all-good God would defeat evil
2. An all-powerful God can defeat evil
3. But evil is not **yet** defeated
4. Hence, evil will yet be defeated. It is a fact that an all-good, all-powerful God assures us that this will happen. In short, since God is both all-good and all-powerful, evil will be defeated.

To put it another way, since God is all-good, He has the **desire** to defeat evil. Since He is all-powerful, He has the **ability** to defeat evil. Whoever has both desire and ability to defeat evil **will** defeat evil.

## Omnipotence Provides Assurance that God Will Keep His Word

Omnipotence also provides us with assurance that God will keep His word, whether it is made in predictions about the future or promises to us in the present.

For example, an all-knowing God can predict the future, but an all-powerful God can perform what He predicts.

Likewise, an all-loving God can promise salvation, but only an all-powerful God can accomplish what He has promised (cf. 2 Tim. 1:12).

In short, God's predictions and promises are no better than His power to perform them.

Without all power, God cannot keep all predictions and promises He makes.

God **is** all power and He **is** all good.

<sup>12</sup>“...For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day .” 2 Tim. 1:12



## **Objections to God's omnipotence**

### **Objection One--Based on the notion that omnipotence is contradictory**

The skeptic argues:

- An all-powerful God can do anything.
- An all-powerful God can make a stone too heavy for him to lift.
- But if God cannot lift it, then he cannot do everything.
- Therefore, God is not omnipotent.

### **Response to Objection One**

In response to this objection, it has been pointed out that both premises are false.

- “an all-powerful God can do anything.”
- “an all-powerful God can make a stone too heavy for him to lift.”

First, an all-powerful God cannot do what is impossible.

Omnipotence only means that God can do whatever is supernaturally, naturally, and morally possible to do. God cannot do what is logically or actually impossible to do.

## **Objections to God's omnipotence**

### **Objection One--Based on the notion that omnipotence is contradictory**

#### **Response to Objection One**

First, an all-powerful God cannot do what is impossible.

Omnipotence only means that God can do whatever is supernaturally, naturally, and morally possible to do. God cannot do what is logically or actually impossible to do.

Further, it is impossible for God to make a stone too heavy for Him to lift, for whatever God can make, He can move. God cannot make another infinite, and what is finite He can move.

God cannot make another infinite (He alone is infinite), and whatever is finite He can lift. So, it is impossible for Him to make a stone He cannot lift.

Also, God cannot create another God equal to Himself. It is literally impossible to create another being that is not created. There is only one uncreated Creator (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:18). Everything else is a creature.

## Can God create a rock so big He cannot lift it?

“People pose many questions that contain contradictory assumptions. The question, “What will happen when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?” is technically nonsense since the two things could never exist at the same time. If a force were truly irresistible, then there could be no immovable object, and vice versa.

To ask, “What lies beyond the end of space?” is to assume that you have reached a terminal point which is not a terminal point. To ask, “What happens at the end of our individual existence?” presupposes that our existence comes to an end and that it does not come to an end.

“Atheists often taunt theists with cute little questions like, “Could God create a rock He couldn’t lift?” Such questions usually demand the exercise of omnipotence or omniscience and the denial of the same traits at the same time. Since they contain contradictions they are strictly meaningless.”

*Don't You Believe It!* by A.J. Hoover, o.p., p. 17.

## A Suggested Approach to the “Big Rock” Question

*Remove God from the question so as to concentrate on the idea of contradiction.*

If someone were to ask you: “Could God create a rock so big He could not lift it?”, respond with:

**“I’ll answer that question if you can answer this question.**

**“What will happen when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?”**

Pause. Let him think about it.

Both questions are technically nonsense because the two things could never exist at the same time. If a force were truly irresistible, then there could be no immovable object, and vice versa. It is a meaningless question. Let the problem of contradictions sink into the questioner’s mind.

## Objections to God's omnipotence

### Objection Two--based upon God's love

The Bible teaches that God is omnibenevolent (all-loving, all good). As such, God desires to save all people (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9); however, all people will not be saved (Matt. 25:40: 41;2; Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20). Hence, God cannot be all-powerful: if He were, then He could accomplish all that He desires, including the salvation of all people.

### Response to Objection Two

God cannot do *any thing*: for instance, He cannot do what is logically or morally impossible. It is impossible to save people against their will; *forced freedom* is a contradiction in terms. God's love works persuasively, not coercively. Thus, if God is love but man is free, then God cannot save all He desires to save--He can only save those willing to be saved.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but *you were not willing*” ~ Jesus (Matthew 23:37)



## God's Omnipresence

Technically speaking, omnipresence is not an attribute of God, but rather it flows from His attributes.

Omnipresence results from His relation to His creation, like transcendence and immanence.

Since God is infinite in Himself, His omnipresence does express a certain characteristic of God that becomes manifest when there is a creation to which He can be everywhere present.

God's omnipresence distinguishes orthodox theology from contemporary unorthodox views such as pantheism and process theology.



## Definition of Omnipresence

- Omnipresence means that God is everywhere present at once. Negatively stated, there is nowhere that God is absent.
- Omnipresence does not mean that God **is** creation (that is pantheism).  
In theism God **created** the world; in pantheism God **is** the world.
- Omnipresence does not mean that God is **in** creation (that is panentheism).  
In theism God created the universe **ex nihilo**; the universe is not an extension of God (not an emanation of God). [Rm 4:17; Rev 4:11; Heb 11:3; Jn 1:3; Isa 66:1-2]
- Previously we saw that God is not in space (non-spatial);  
God is not in time (non-temporal)  
God is not in matter (immaterial).  
God is pure Spirit.

## Definition of Omnipresence (cont.)

Omnipresence means that ***all of God is everywhere at once***. As an indivisible Being, God does not have ***one part here*** and ***another part there***, for He has no parts. God is ***present to*** but not ***part of*** creation. God is ***everywhere***, but He is not ***any thing***. He is ***at every point in space***, but He is not ***spatial***. He is ***at*** every point in space, but He is not ***of*** any point in space.

There is, of course, a sense in which God is “in” the universe but not “of” it; He is “in” it (better yet, it is in God) as its Cause (Col. 1:16). However, He is not part of the effect. All of God is everywhere, yet no part of God is anywhere since He has no parts.

Some illustrations of omnipresence are good, and some are not.

A better illustration is that God is “in” or present to the whole universe:

- the way a mind is in its brain, or
- the manner in which beauty is present in a work of art, or
- that thought is in a sentence.

## The Biblical Basis for God's Omnipresence

“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you” 1 Kings 8:27

<sup>7</sup>“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. <sup>9</sup>If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup>even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast” Ps. 139:7-10

<sup>23</sup>“Am I only a God nearby,’ declares the LORD, “and not a God far away? <sup>24</sup>Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” Declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” Jer. 23:23-24

<sup>6</sup>“When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Mt. 6:6

## **The Biblical Basis for God's Omnipresence** (cont.)

### **As the Sustaining Cause:**

- Col. 1:17 “in Him all things hold together”
- Heb. 1:3 “the Son is... sustaining all things by His powerful word”
- Rev. 4:11 “... by Your will they were created and have their being”

So God is present to all creation as its Creator, not as being part of it. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that has been made.

In His infinity, God is not locked out of any corner of creation. Indeed, were it not for His causal presence, creation would not exist.



## **Objections to God's Omnipresence:**

### **Objection One--Based upon the Incarnation**

According to orthodox theology, Christ-incarnate is God, and yet He was not omnipresent. He was located in one place at a time. Therefore, God-incarnate is not omnipresent.

### **Response to Objection One**

Christ *as God* was everywhere at once, while Christ *as man* was in one place at a time.

Christ has two natures, and they must not be confused--what is true of one is not necessarily true of the other.

For example, Christ was infinite and uncreated in His divine nature, but He was finite and created in His human nature. Likewise, as God, Christ was omnipresent, but as man He was not.

## Objections to God's Omnipresence (cont.) :

### Objection Two--Based upon the Invocation of His Presence

If God is everywhere, then why ask Him to be *with us*? This is what Jesus asked us to do, promising that “where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them” Matt. 18:20

#### Response to Objection Two:

Here we must distinguish *the different ways that Christ is with us*.

General way: He is always with us as our Sustainer.

Special way: The Bible speaks of Christ being with us to judge, to answer prayer, or to bless us.

Since Christ can be with us in more than one way, there is no contradiction here!

- Jesus told a man that his sick servant at home was healed, although Jesus never went to the man's home (Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).
- A woman asked Jesus to cast a demon out of her daughter, and Jesus told her that the demon had left the girl. When the mother returned home, she found her daughter free of the demon (Mark 7:24-30).
- Jesus knew Nathaniel before they ever physically met (John 1:47-49).



## **God's Omnipotence and Omnipresence**

God is all-powerful, unlimited power

To create and sustain creation

To defeat evil and death

To keep His Word and promises

God is everywhere present

To sustain us

To be with us and fellowship with us

To know and answer our needs and prayers



Created  
to Worship