

Title: All Powerful

Text: Jeremiah 32:17; Job42:2; Matthew 19:26

Main Point: What God's omnipotence means and how it connects to life.

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Series: That's My God

INTRODUCTION

I have said several times that I believe everything ultimately comes down to power. By God's power, He spoke, and creation came to be (in contrast to evolution). Several biblical passages explain God's supreme or sovereign power.

- Psalm 115:3, "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."
- Psalm 135, "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps."
- 2 Chronicles 20:5-6, "And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said, 'O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.'"
- Daniel 4:35, "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"
- Isaiah 40:28, "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable."
- Hebrews 1:3, "He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."
- Colossians 1:16-17, "For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

It is unquestioned, biblically, that God is sovereign over all; His power rules His creation. Yet, the Bible also describes an army of evil angels with significant power. Their mission is to destroy or ruin all good. They wield their power in attempts to stall God's work from advancing. Human creation is the target of these evil angels; they wish to stop the spread of good by using power to distract, confuse, hurt, and ruin God's people, so that they will be overwhelmed and quit the fight for good.

When I said above, "everything ultimately comes down to power," I meant that on a cosmic scale, although not equal, the two greatest powers in the universe are at war. Demonic forces refuse to yield to anything but a greater power (God) that forces compliance.

THE COSMIC WAR DESCRIBED

Matthew 4:1-11 describes this battle.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written,

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

By the power of God’s word, the devil submitted to Jesus. Only a supreme power could cause the devil to leave. Understanding and using God’s power is necessary for living the Christian life successfully.

GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE

1. Theologians regularly refer to God’s ultimate power as His “omnipotence.”
- 1.1. “The Latin term *potentia* means ‘power’ and the prefix *omni-* means ‘all’; hence omnipotent means “all-powerful.” (Justin Stratis, “God’s Omnipotence,” in Lexham Survey of Theology, ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018)).
- 1.2. Omnipotence indicates that there is no weakness or deficiency in God’s power. For this reason, the Bible says, God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases” (Psalm 115:3). Because He is the only one who holds “all power,” there exists no power sufficient to withstand His purpose.
- 1.3. Throughout Christian history, debates occurred concerning God’s omnipotence. “A question arose among the Schoolmen [*scholastic theologians and philosophers of the Middle Ages who taught in the emerging universities and cathedral schools of Europe*] in regard to divine omnipotence, and some of them asserted the absolute omnipotence of God in the sense that he could do whatever could be conceived of, either logically or illogically, whether good or evil, whether self-contradictory or not.” (William Greenough Thayer Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, ed. Alan W. Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2003), 290.)
- 1.4. I disagree with the position of the “Schoolmen.” God’s omnipotence does not mean that He uses His power in contradictory ways. For example, God does not use His omnipotence to create a square circle (logical contradiction). Neither does He use His omnipotence in contradiction to His nature: God cannot lie, do evil, sin, break His promise, punish an innocent person, deceive people (all of these are counter to His holiness), forget (contrary to His faithfulness), and violate His goodness (this would be a lie against what God said is true (Titus 1:2)).
- 1.5. I define “omnipotence” as God’s ability to do whatever He wills without contradicting His nature.

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE AND LIFE

1. Unless God is omnipotent, there is no need to pray for a miracle. Craig S. Keener has written a scholarly, two-volume work titled *Miracles: The credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, published by Baker Academic © 2011. This is a significant work that footnotes miracle upon miracle.
 - 1.1. He documents many events in which the lame walk, the blind see, and the dead are raised to life again (the same type of ministry as Jesus).
 - 1.2. Keener also has a section titled “Nature Miracles.” In this section, he recounts an event that occurred in Saxony, Germany, in 1866. Workers were digging a well on December 8 when the sand strata collapsed, burying the workers. The local pastor led his people in fervent prayer for the workers. Others agreed to recover the corpses. However, the pastor has an overwhelming sense that the workers were alive. A week and a half later, on December 19, all men were found alive. When the sand collapsed, the workers fell into a cavity protected by wooden planks to prevent the sand from suffocating them. Rainwater seeped into the cavity, providing water.
 - 1.3. In 1999, the singing group *Greater Vision* wrote and performed the song “God Wants to Hear You Sing.” It centers on the Apostle Paul and Silas in prison in Acts 16.
 - 1.4. (The song opens) “Their chains were fastened tight down at the jail that night, Still Paul and Cylus would not be dismayed, They said, ‘It’s time to lift our voice, Sing praises to the Lord, Let’s prove that we will trust Him, come what may.’
 - 1.5. (The Chorus) “God wants to hear you sing, When the waves are crashing round you, When the fiery darts surround you, When despair is all you see, God wants to hear your voice, When the wisest man has spoken, And says your circumstance is as hopeless as can be, That’s when God wants to hear you sing.”
2. “Chance” has no place in the Christian life because God is omnipotent, the almighty God.
3. Since God is omnipotent, Christians face death with confidence, secure in Jesus Christ.
4. God’s omnipotence provides a basis for unshakable hope, as echoed in the words of Jesus: “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).
5. God’s omnipotence is a warning to those who refuse to follow Jesus: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).