



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The LORD Almighty--Omnipotent (Isaiah 40:25-26)

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Paul Meinsen / PO Box 891, Jefferson City, MO 65102 / paul.meinsen@capitolcom.org

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

- **Tuesday, February 21, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, February 21, 8:30 PM in Room #301**
(Speaker Pro-Tem's office)

My son, Benjamin, and I have been backpacking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. Being surrounded by the beautiful majesty of the mountains can be quite refreshing. The mountains are used by the Biblical writers to teach many things about God. His power is seen in establishing the mountains (Psalm 65:6; Amos 4:13) and in removing the mountains (Job 9:5). His immensity is seen as He weighs the mountains on a scale (Isaiah 40:12). His eternal presence is observed by Moses as he writes, "Before the mountains were born ...even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalm 90:2; Habakkuk 3:16). He surrounds and defends His people like the mountains surround Jerusalem (Psalm 125:2). His majesty can be noted as the mountains, majestic in themselves, melt like wax in His presence (Psalm 97:5; Micah 1:4). God's holy anger causes the mighty mountains to quake (Isaiah 5:25). His righteousness is like the mountains of God (Psalm 36:7). And "...the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you..." says the LORD who has compassion on you" (Isaiah 54:10).

By camping in the mountains, one can also notice the stars shining ever so brightly. It is as if you can reach out and pluck them from the sky. Then, one comes to realize that what can be seen is only the thin surface of the heavens--as the Milky Way galaxy is believed to have 200,000 million stars and that the total number of stars in the observable universe is estimated to be 10²⁵. In reality, no one knows the actual number.

INTRODUCTION

It is to the night sky that Isaiah directs the attention of God's people to remind them of God's incomparable power. After Isaiah lined up the incomparable comparisons of God with the nations, idols, and rulers, he directs the people's thoughts to the greatness of God's might.

Isaiah 40:25-26 "To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing.

It is a short passage, read it again: "**To whom then will you liken Me That I should be his equal?** (We have heard this rhetorical question already and the answer is still "no one") **says the Holy One** (A reminder of Isaiah's great vision of chapter 6, "I saw the Lord high and lifted up and the angels cried out to each other 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD God Almighty'"). **Lift up your eyes on high** (An imperative, not a suggestion) **and see who has created these stars,** (Genesis 1:14-15 "Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so). **The One who leads forth their hosts by number** (like a general going before his army), **He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power** (He draws the night sky across the horizon like a light curtain is drawn before a window--Isaiah 40:22b), **not one of them is missing."**

**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.**

--STEPHEN CHARNOCK

What is the view that Isaiah is painting? What is this new perspective? Lift up your eyes and see God's majestic power. **Yahweh is God Omnipotent!!**

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #301

TRUMAN BUILDING: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, 4THFLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

Missouri

The LORD Almighty--Omnipotent (Isaiah 40:25-26)

I. GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE--A DEFINITION

The term "omnipotent" cannot be found in Scripture but it is still a proper term when considering the biblical teaching on God's power. One aspect of God's power is similar to what was discussed in an earlier study and it is the fact that God can do whatever He pleases.

Job 23:13 "But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does.

Job 42:1-2 Then Job answered the LORD and said, "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Psalms 115:3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

Psalms 135:5-6 For I know that the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

Another aspect included in the understanding of "omnipotence" is that nothing is too hard for God to do.

Jeremiah 32:26-27 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

Genesis 18:13-14 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?' "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."

Luke 1:34-37 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Matthew 19:25-26 When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Theologians and philosophers have discussed and debated back and forth concerning the meaning of God's omnipotence. It seems best to understand God's power is His ability to do anything compatible with His attributes.¹ Even this definition is somewhat circular and has its problematic issues. John Frame concludes that in the end, we cannot define "precisely" what God is able to do, but we can be confident that He can do what the Scriptures describe Him as doing, and much, much more.²

The purpose of this study is not to focus on all the nuances and facets of this great doctrine; though, there is much which can be discussed and meditated. We are not going to dive into the question "If God is all-powerful, can He make a rock that He cannot move?" (The answer is 'yes', by the way).

The purpose of this study is the same as Isaiah's--"Look at the stars and be reminded of God's great power."

It is the eternal, magnificent power of God which gives substance to the familiar passage that will be examined next week. The people of God can soar like eagles and they can walk and not be weary for their God never grows weary or faint. He is the One, who each night, leads out the stars and calls them by name and not one is missing.

II. GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE--USES AND APPLICATIONS

Numerous applications and uses can be brought to mind in light of the marvelous power of God. The following are only a few.

FEAR

No matter how strong (physically, politically, authoritatively, etc) one may think he or she is, there is no real comparison when measured up with God. People must always be humble before Him and submit to His power and authority. It is true that His children (those who follow after His Son) may boldly or confidently go before Him in prayer and praise (Hebrews 4:16), but they can never go flippantly. They must always remember who He is and who we are.

Missouri

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Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Fear God—and you will have nothing else to fear.

ASSURANCE/HOPE

Because God is all-powerful, He can keep every promise that He has declared. All of His promises either have or will come true, nothing can stop Him—no matter how “unnatural” the promises may sound.

Job 42:1-2 Then Job answered the LORD and said, "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Romans 4:21 (about Abraham) ...and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

Let this teaching bring great hope, friend. Remember the promises God gave to the believers in the Scriptures: that their mortal bodies will be clothed with immortality and “Death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:50-54), that no one can take them out of the Father’s hand (John 10:29), that their work will not be done in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58), and that He will never leave nor forsake them (Hebrews 13:5b). Remember that Jesus told His disciples that His Father’s house has many rooms and He has gone to prepare a place for them, and that one day He will come back to take them there (John 14:1-3). If God is not omnipotent, these promises are hollow—giving no assurance of being fulfilled.

MOTIVATION TO PRAY

God’s power is a motivation to pray. Why pray to a god that cannot answer prayers? That is like the one who foolishly makes and talks to idols (Psalm 115:4-8; Isaiah 44:9-20). It is one thing if God answers “no” to our requests. It is totally different if He would say “I would like to, but I can’t.” God’s all mighty power brings boldness to pray for God’s will to be done.

BOLDNESS

Three times in one chapter, God told His servant Joshua to “Be strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:6, 9, 18). Why? For He promised that “LORD your

God is with you wherever you go” (1:9b). There would be no confidence for Joshua, if God was weak and powerless.

God’s people have the same promise today. The writer of Hebrews instructs the reader to be free from the love money and content with what he or she has for “*He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"*” (Hebrews 13:5b-6).

The children of God can confidently stand for righteousness and do what He commands, regardless of the consequences, for their God is with them.

COMFORT

This attribute brings great comfort knowing that God will not permit anything that He does not want permitted. One may not understand what or why something has happened (like Job), but one may be assured that it did not happen outside of God’s reach. Couple omnipotence with God’s wisdom and God’s goodness, one can believe that everything that happens is for His glory and the believer’s benefit.

This comfort is also sure as God is a refuge and protection.

Psalms 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

Was David “over the top” when he declares “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:1-2, cf. Psalm 46:1)? Not when he knew God to be all-powerful. An understanding of God’s omnipotence naturally produces great faith and great praise.

PRAISE

Sometimes, friend, a sermon is preached or a lesson taught for the sole reason of raising your thoughts about God with the prayer that it will elate your heart in praise. Praise is ultimately the chief end of all that we do.

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Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you".

CONCLUSION

To draw this to an end, note the following quote by the 17th-century Puritan, Stephen Charnock:

"The power of God is that ability and strength whereby He can bring to pass whatsoever He pleases, whatsoever His infinite wisdom may direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of His will may resolve...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. God's power is like Himself: infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; it can neither be checked, restrained, nor frustrated by the creature."

This Omnipotent One can and is willing to forgive your sins--are you interested?

¹ Feinberg draws three typical approaches to God's power. The first can be called "absolute omnipotence" which places no restrictions on God's power. The second gives God only finite power due to the various logical and theological problems associated with "absolute omnipotence." The third approach (of which I personally hold) places specific limitations to God's power but yet still hold to a meaningful sense of omnipotence (John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2001), 283). In other words, God is unable to sin or do anything illogically possible (such as, create a four-sided triangle or a married bachelor). These limitations, though, do not discredit His attribute of omnipotence.

² John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, Penn.: P & R Publishing, 2002), 523