

THEOLOGY PROPER (42)

(Incommunicable Attribute #5) – Omnipotence.

This attribute that means God is unlimited in Power. To state the meaning another way, this is the attribute that means that God is all powerful. God has the power to do anything and everything, however, God cannot and will not use that power to do anything contrary to His perfect character. God must always use His power in accordance with Himself. The Omnipotence of God is part of the character of God as all the other attributes, which means Omnipotence may not be utilized apart from His other attributes.

There are some things that God's character will not allow. For example, God cannot Lie (Titus 1:2); God cannot do Evil (James 1:13); God cannot Deny Himself (II Tim. 2:13). **A true understanding of omnipotence is that God is totally unlimited in power, He has the power to do whatever He desires do, and He cannot desire to do anything with His power which is contrary to His character and His other attributes.** There are many passages, that clearly speak of the unlimited power of God:

- 1) Gen.1:3,6,9 - Here is amazing power- God speaks things into existence. To speak something into existence out of nothing is the ultimate demonstration of God's omnipotence. We have the power to make something out of something else, but God has the power to make something out of nothing (Rom.4:17; Heb.11:3).
- 2) Job 42:2 – God has the power to do all things according to His own purpose.
- 3) Is.40:26 – Creation, which we can see, like the stars in the sky, speaks of Omnipotence.
- 4) Jer.32:17 – God has so much great power that NOTHING is too difficult for Him.
- 5) Matt.19:26 – God has power to do all things that are possible to do.
- 6) Luke 1:37 – God is so powerful that nothing is an impossibility for Him, including creating a baby in a virgin.
- 7) Rev.19:6 – God is “Almighty” God and He reigns with all power and might.

Dr. Richard Watson said of this attribute: "It is a mighty conception to think of a power from which all other power is derived, and to which it is subordinate, which nothing can oppose; which can beat down and annihilate all other powers whatever; a power which operates in the most perfect manner; at once, in an instant, with the utmost ease: but the Scriptures lead us to the contemplation of greater depths, and those unfathomable. The omnipotence of God is inconceivable and boundless. It arises from the infinite perfection of God, that his power can never be actually exhausted; and in every imaginable instant in eternity, that inexhaustible power of God can, if it please him, be adding either more creatures to those in existence⁷ or greater perfection to them. (Chafer, Vol.1, p.212).

Some theologians subdivide God's omnipotence into two categories:

(Category #1)- God's Absolute Power- this would refer to God's power and ability to do all things Possible.

(Category #2)- God's Ordered Power- This would refer to God's power and ability that does all things Actual.

THEOLOGY PROPER (43)

Omnipotence does not mean that God **uses** all of His power, it simply means God **has** all power both possible power and impossible power. When God names Himself "El Shaddai" (i.e. Gen. 17: 1), He was clearly emphasizing the fact that He is the Omnipotent God, who has all power and all might. God will always use His absolute and ordered power in ways fully consistent with Himself and all of His other attributes. There have been those who have tried to discredit or downplay God's attribute of omnipotence, which argumentation such as- "If God has power, why doesn't He use this power to end such things as poverty, war, suffering and death?" In giving a theological answer to this question which is Biblically correct several factors need to be remembered.

Factor #1- Omnipotence is only one of God's attributes.

Factor #2- Omnipotence must function with all other attributes.

For example, we know that death is a penalty for sin (i.e. Rom.5:12). If God were to use His power to eliminate death, He would do something contrary to His attribute of justice, holiness and truth. Since all attributes are all equally part of that which makes God, God, they must all function together and cannot function contrary to each other. Furthermore, often times in Scripture, poverty, war and suffering are actual punishments sent by God against those who have forsaken Him and His principles (Is.66:4; Prov.1:24-32). In such instances, it is actually God's omnipotence that is part of the reason for the punishment. One remarkable illustration of God's omnipotence is seen in the implications of I Timothy 2:1-3. The implication is that praying for political leadership is something God will honor in keeping war from a land. Clearly the implication is that God can powerfully control war in a specific land.

Factor #3- Omnipotence does not mean God uses all of his power.

God could speak the world out of existence today if He so desired to do so (Is.48:13). However, God uses His power in accordance with His will and He does not do this not because of a lack of power, but because of a choice of His will. A good illustration may be seen in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul had some thorn in the flesh that he asked God to remove three times (II Cor. 12:8). The determining factor of taking the infirmity away was not a matter of the power of God, but a matter of the will of God. God, in this case, knew that this infirmity would be something beneficial to Paul, which would prompt Him to rely more and more on God's grace (II Cor. 12:9). Another good illustration is that of the Lord's betrayal and arrest. When the multitude came with Judas to get Christ, Peter slashed off the ear of a servant of the high priest. The Lord informed Peter that He could appeal to His Father and he would send legions of angels to help Him (Mt.26:47-54). Again the issue was not the power of God, but the will of God. The will of God and the word of God demanded that Christ had to be crucified. This attribute is very practical and meaningful

- 1) This attribute should cause us to stand in total awe of God and His power.
- 2) This attribute should cause us to pray more to the God of all power.
- 3) This attribute should cause us to realize God has power to do anything in any situation.
- 4) This attribute should cause us to realize God has power to meet all of our needs
- 5) This attribute should cause us to realize that God has power to help in any situation.
- 6) This attribute should cause us to realize that God has power to give life or take life.
- 7) This attribute should cause us to realize God has power to save, condemn, exalt or destroy.
- 8) This attribute should cause us to realize that God has power to control past, present and future.