

# **EQTH105 Basic Bible Doctrine**

## **Unit 1c Present Everywhere and All Powerful**

Presented by the



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In the last lesson, we looked at God's omniscience. He is all-knowing. In this lesson, we will see that God is omnipresent and omnipotent. So to start. The Bible teaches that God is everywhere present, omnipresent. In every place in the universe, God is present. He's not limited by space. The psalmists wrote, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." [Psa 139:7-12] David said that God's presence couldn't be eluded through space, speed, or darkness. In other words, nothing in the universe can hide a person from God.

Now, this is not to say that God has eyes everywhere. Nor is it to say that God's form is spread out so that parts of him exist in every location. God is spirit. He has no physical form. He is present everywhere in that everything is immediately in his presence. At the same time, he is present everywhere in the universe. No one can hide from him, and nothing escapes his notice. The prophet Amos records God as saying, "Though they dig into hell, from there My hand shall take them; though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on top of Mount Carmel, from there I will search and take them; though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, from there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them." [Amo 9:2-3] In the book of Jeremiah, God says, "'Am I a God near at hand,' says the Lord, 'And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?'" says the Lord; 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?'" says the Lord?" [Jer 23:23-24] The Bible is clear that there's no place in the universe that is away from God's presence. His presence is everywhere. Genesis 28:15-16 says, "'Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that which I have promised you.' Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.'" For God is everywhere present, and Scripture testifies that God is present in both heaven and earth at the same time. Deuteronomy 4:39 says, "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other." In Jericho, Rahab the prostitute acknowledged, "When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." [Jos 2:11] In Proverbs, we read, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good." [Pro 15:3] Isaiah wrote, "Thus says the Lord, 'Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is there a place that I may rest?'" [Isa 66:1] From earliest times, people recognized that God saw them wherever they went. Hagar said in Genesis, "Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'; for she said, 'Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?'" [Gen 16:13]

Now, to be clear, the idea that God is everywhere present is not the same as pantheism. Pantheism is a religious belief that says that God is the same as the universe, that God is nature, and that nature and God are the same thing. Pantheism is similar to the Force, if you're familiar with the Star Wars movie analogy. The Force described in Star Wars movies is everywhere. But that is not God. Pantheism is not the same thing as being present everywhere. The doctrine of God's omnipresence says that he is present everywhere in the universe, *not* that he is the universe.

As we study this, we see that there is a comforting truth for the believer. The fact that God is everywhere present is a constant and consistent source of security. Wherever the believer may go, whatever we may encounter, we will find ourselves in the protection of God's presence. There is no place where a believer can get away from God's reach. His presence may be experienced at any time and at any place. God has promised the believer that he will be with them always. In the Book of Isaiah, we read, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you." [Isa 43:2] In the Book of Hebrews, we read, "For He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.'" [Heb 13:5]

So the attribute of omnipresence tells us that the universe which God created finds the Creator everywhere. He is everywhere present. There is no place that a person can hide and no chance that a believer will be out of his protective care. He is everywhere present in his works and his personality. Now, this does not mean that God is the same as the universe, as we said, merely that he is present everywhere in the universe. The truth of God's omnipresence is comforting for the believer, for no one can escape God's notice.

Now, let's talk about God being omnipotent, the attribute that says that God is all-powerful. The Bible often speaks of God as being an all-powerful or that he's omnipotent. The word omnipotent comes from two Latin words: *omni* meaning all, and *potentia* or *potens* which means power. Hence, the God of the Bible is the God of all power. The Bible says, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, as the sounds of many waters, and the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns." [Rev 19:6]

Now, there is an interesting part of God's power, and that is, that in Scripture, it says that he upholds all things. In Hebrews 1:3, we read, "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Remember, we said that the attributes of God cannot be divided, and that specific reference was of Jesus Christ. And Scripture tells us specifically that Jesus Christ is said to hold together all forces of the universe. "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." [Col 1:17].

Being all-powerful, God is free to do whatever he pleases. He can do anything that can be done. There is no limit to his power. He can get people to carry out his purpose, for example. The Bible says, "For God has put it in their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God will be fulfilled." [Rev 17:17] In the Book of Romans, it says, "So then he has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses." [Rom 9:18] Now, remember, we also said that one attribute cannot negate another attribute. Even though God can do anything, that does not mean that he will do something that is contradictory. For example, he can't do something evil. He can only do things that are consistent with him, for reasons known only to himself.

Within this, there are two sides to God's omnipotence. First, he has the freedom to do all that is consistent with his nature. Second, he is able to carry out all that needs to be done. We talked about knowing the attributes of God, and we said that some of his attributes are seen in creation. The omnipotence of God is illustrated in nature. The very first verse in Scripture tells us, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." [Gen 1:1] The psalmists wrote, "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." [Psa 33:9] God spoke and it came about. Imagine that power. He said, "'Let there be light,' and there was light." [Gen 1:3] He willed that light would appear, and it appeared. God said that nothing was too difficult for him to do. Anything that can be done, God can do.

Jeremiah the prophet tells us, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" [Jer 32:27] The psalmists testified of his power. "Come and see the works of God; he is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the river on foot. He rules by His power forever; his eyes observe the nations; do not let the rebellious exalt themselves." [Psa 66:5-7] So we see that God is powerful. And in his power, no purpose of his can be stopped. God's plan cannot be thwarted. Job said of the Lord, "I know that you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted." [Job 42:2] Daniel the prophet said, "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does what he wills with the host of heavens and the inhabitants of earth." [Dan 4:35]

Now, I don't know about you, but after exerting a great deal of effort, I get tired. It's part of either the human condition or growing old or both, I guess. But God does not ever grow tired. Isaiah, who was himself pretty old, said, "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom." [Isa 40:28] All things are possible for God. Jesus tells us, "for mortals, it is impossible. For God, all things are possible." [Mat 19:26] Now, not all things that seem impossible and contradictory are really so. Many things that are impossible for humans are possible for God. God's power is shown in his ability to save and keep the believer. Peter wrote, "Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." [1Pe 1:5] God raises believers from the dead. His power was demonstrated when he raised Jesus, and will be demonstrated when he raises the believers from the dead. "By his power, God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also." [1Co 6:14]

Now, I have to say, there are no limits to what he can do. Remember that skeptical question, "Can God make a rock so big he can lift it? Can God destroy himself? Can he make a being that he cannot control? Can God make two plus two equal five?" Well, the answer to all of those is no. God cannot do what is logically or actually impossible. He cannot contradict his nature or character. That is not within the realm of his power. For example, the Bible says that God cannot lie. "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began." [Tit 1:2] God cannot sin, nor can he be tempted to sin. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone." [Jas 1:13] God cannot deny himself. "If we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself." God also stated that he cannot go back on his word. In Psalms, we read, "Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven." [Psa 119:89]

Since there are certain things that God cannot do, how can he be all-powerful? Well, to answer that, a proper understanding of God's omnipotence is needed. Omnipotence does not mean that God cannot exercise self-limitation. God cannot contradict his nature or the nature of things as they are. It is not possible for God to either lie or to die. Neither can he make two plus two equal five. The biblical God has limited himself only to acts that are consistent with his righteousness and his loving character. Therefore, God's power is self-restrained. He cannot do evil and he cannot do anything irrational. He cannot go back on his word. He is all-powerful when it comes to doing things that are right, but he has no power to do things that are wrong. So when we speak of God being omnipotent or all-powerful, we must understand what that means. It means that God is able to do anything that is consistent within his holy character. He is not able to lie, to do anything sinful, or to do anything that is logically impossible. This does not limit his power. He can and does everything that is holy and wise.