

GOD INCARNATE
The Fullness of Christ's Deity
 Omnipotence

If you were to ask a stranger what some of the greatest studies there are out there to pursue and to engage the mind in, they would probably respond to you with something in the medical field, law, neuroscience, psychology, engineering, forensics, and so on. Among the host of answers, it's very unlikely that you would hear Theology Proper. The word theology comes from Theos and logos/God and Word = a word about God. Theology Proper then is the study of the Person of God (His names, nature, works and existence). And yet, it is without a doubt the greatest study one can engage themselves in. Because we are finite beings with limited perspectives and capabilities, it's mind-stretching to try and grasp the infinite Creator God. And knowledge of God isn't an end in itself. Knowledge of God allows us to deepen our love for God¹ and contentment in God. No wonder there is so much discontentment in the world: people don't know God. But knowing Him is the greatest counseling program there is and I can't think of a better time to focus on Him.

As we come to an end of this crazy year, nothing could be better for our souls than to meditate on who God is and to do that in light of the incarnation, His becoming flesh. The book of Colossians, we've studied, says that Jesus Christ is God of very God – He is God Himself – **the fullness of God in bodily form** (2:10). Hebrews says He is the exact imprint of His image and radiance of His glory (1:3). Jesus said, "He who has seen Me, has seen the Father." If this is true, we should be able to study any attribute of God, and then turn around and see it somehow in the life of Jesus Christ. I guess you could say we're testing these comments.

Remember that an **attribute** is just like a characteristic of something, something intrinsic to its object that makes that object what it is. And part of what makes God who He is, is His omnipotence.

I. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

What we mean when we say that God is **omnipotent** is that God is **all-powerful**. It's a two part word with *Omni* meaning *all* and *potent* meaning *power*. We sometimes speak of strong smells as potent smells – powerful smells. We say things like, "*Boy, that onion is potent!*" But when we talk about God's potency, we're talking about His ability to do what He wants *without hindrance*. He has the power to do all that He wants to do because He is all-powerful and nothing and no-one is more powerful than He is.

The prophet Jeremiah acknowledges God's omnipotence this way:

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

Jeremiah 32:17

So Jeremiah acknowledges that God created this universe by His great power and makes the logical conclusion that if God can do that, *what is too difficult for Him?* Nothing. Creation is one of the greatest evidences of His power.

Romans 1:30 says,

*“For since the creation of the world **His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature** have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made.”*

God, by His power, brought everything that exists into existence and everywhere you look in creation you see evidence of His power. You see His power in the mobility of life we have. I don't know if you've thought about it but science can't explain where life comes from – except from God who is Life and grants it to us. We see His infinitude as we gaze on the innumerable stars. We see His faithfulness in the steady sunrises. He has the power alone to keep all of creation steady and hold it all together – even to hang the earth on nothing. This is power that belongs to God alone.

Psalm 62:11

*“**Power belongs to God.**”*

1 Peter 5:11

*“For all **power** belongs to God, now and forever. Amen.”*

And because God is infinite, there is no limit to His power.

❖ **There is no limit to God's power.**

He'll never run short on power. He never has less or more of it – He's constantly all powerful. He never has degrees of difficulty in doing things like we do. He does all things with ease.ⁱⁱ A.W. Tozer said since He has at His command all power, *“the Lord God omnipotent can do anything as easily as anything else. All His acts are done without effort. He expends no energy that must be replenished.”* He is a constant source of power. Stretch your mind on that for a minute. Because **He is the source of all power**, He does not look outside Himself for the replenishing of lost power.

Illustration: Hunting the Brooks Range

Recently I was watching a film recently about a man who went on a Dall Sheep hunt in the Alaskan Brooks Range mountains. This man worked hard to prepare for this physically grueling hunt. Over the course of 2 years getting ready, he lost 75 pounds and trained his legs to climb steep hillsides. Yet, the country where these animals live is so rugged that even after 2 years of preparation, he was ready to give up just 4 days into the hunt. That's what hiking 10 miles a day in some of the steepest of mountains does. He was wearing out and ready to crash and to give up.

However, his guide, Billy, who had been on 40+ sheep hunts in his life, told him that the main reason he was wearing out was because he wasn't replenishing the energy that he was expending. He was expending more energy than he was replenishing. So the guide told him, “From now on, you're going to eat when I eat and drink when I drink,” which was a lot more than his hunter. So they sat down and the guide made him drink two full bottles of glacier water and eat all the food left in his pack and after a little more rest that night, the hunter then went on to hike for 5 more days and finally took his trophy ram.

If we go and go and go, and don't take time to replenish ourselves (and I might add, spiritually or physically), we wear down. Our batteries die. Our engines run out of gas. But God never does because He is the source of all power. He has all might.

This is why we call Him **El Shaddai, the Almighty**.

❖ **God alone is Almighty.**

Psalm 91:1-2 says,

*“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the **Almighty**.
I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”*

Why run to Him when you need a refuge and fortress? Because He is Almighty. He’s a fortress that cannot be broken into – a wall that will not fall. No one has power over Him. Listen to these verses:

Psalm 115:3

*“Our God is in the heavens;
He does all that He pleases.”*

Psalm 135:6

*“Whatever the Lord pleases, He does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.”*

Ephesian 1:11

God “works all things after the counsel of His will”

Why is this important? Because you need to know that whatever happens in life isn’t because it’s out of God’s control or doesn’t have the power to stop or prevent things. As you’re laying on your death bed someday as we all will, you’d better know in your heart that God is all-powerful. In the times like we’re living in, you’d better know in your heart God is all-powerful. That **He still has the whole world (and universe!) in His powerful, Almighty hands and that it never leaves His hands**. The psalmist, undergoing an intense situation, recalled God’s powerful sovereignty.

Psalm 31:15

*“But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord,
I say, “You are my God.”
My times are in Your hand.”*

The psalmist can trust God because his difficult times are in the hand of God, who alone can carry His world. Don’t try to be like Atlas and carry the world on your back. Let God be God.

Omnipotence Cannot Be Isolated

When reflecting on God’s omnipotence, however, it’s important to take in the full revelation of it because witty atheists sometimes like to pick on unsuspecting Christians by asking them, *“Is there anything God can’t do?”* And the Christian, good-willed and wanting to glorify God, says, *“No, He can do everything.”* To which the atheist asks, *“Can He make a rock so big that He can’t pick it up?”* It’s a trick question. obviously. It’s like asking for a square circle.ⁱⁱⁱ It’s illogical.

But when we say that God is omnipotent and can do all things, full revelation knows that **He only does what is in accordance with the rest of who He is**. God is love, but He's also just. God is all-powerful but He is also Righteous. This means there are some things God can't do.

❖ **Attributes cannot be isolated from other attributes.**

James 1:13 says He **cannot do evil** or tempt us with evil (Test us, yes. Tempt us, no). Titus 1:2 says God **cannot lie** (Titus 1:2). And 2 Timothy 2:13 says God **cannot deny Himself**. And this is such good news for us because it means that, for example, **God's promises are good** (not evil), **truthful** (not lies), **and faithful** (cannot not be kept – will be kept). Even if we at times we are faithless, 2 Timothy says He remains faithful. I think that's a strong statement about the security of the believer. If He makes a good promise to us in Christ that we'll have eternal life, He has the power to keep that promise and because He is immutable (unchangeable) cannot break that promise.

❖ **God has the power to keep His promises. He has keeping power.**

And that's something that we see in the incarnation because the incarnation was something promised as far back as Genesis 3:15 and all throughout the OT. Jesus is proof that God is able to keep His promises. Let's look a little closer at His life now.

II. **THE POWER OF GOD EVIDENT IN THE INCARNATION.**

By the word incarnation, again, we're referring to God taking on flesh, becoming flesh. I always think of the Spanish word "*carne*", which is meat or flesh. Carne asada is grilled meat. Carne – flesh – is in *Incarnation*. John says the Word became flesh (Jn. 1:14).

A. **Jesus's Birth**

You'll recall the words of the angel to Mary, that it was by the power of Most High that she would bear a Child, even as a virgin.

*"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the **power** of the Most High will overshadow you."*

Luke 1:35

The incarnation was a powerful creative act that only God could do. It was a special miracle and a surprise use of His power.

We also see the omnipotence of God in His miraculous ministry.

B. **Jesus' Miracles**

If you've been with us through the gospel of Mark in recent months, you know that Jesus Christ gave display after display after display of **divine power** during His ministry. He healed the sick that no doctor could heal, sometimes from miles away or without even having to lay hands on them. He made the lame walk by commanding them to get up. He raised some people from the dead – not everyone – but a widow's son, a little girl, and Lazarus after he'd been in the grave for days. If you remember, they even told Jesus not to remove the tombstone because the stench would be too powerful (potent). He demonstrated His power over Satan and darkness by casting out demons. He fed the multitudes bread and fish (two crowds in the thousands) that He created in His hands. Shortly after, He walked on water and calmed storms to prove His power over creation to the disciples.

These have all been **powerful displays of His Deity** – that He is God. And all of these miracles during His first coming demonstrate that He possesses the powers necessary to completely redeem and restore us and this earth to the way it was before the Fall. That's mostly what miracles are – a restoration to the state of things before the Fall – before lameness and blindness and death.^{iv} The Bible calls His miracles the "the powers of the age to come," (Heb. 6:5) when He lifts the curse

from creation. The fullness of His power, willingly restrained now, will be fully revealed at His Second Coming. His enemies will be exposed to the fullness of His divine power and glory in judgment and warfare as Scripture reveals (Mt. 24:29-30; 25:31; Rev. 19:11-12, 15).^v

Jesus' Resurrection

The greatest, most-comforting expression of God's power though, has to be the bodily resurrection of Jesus, where He revealed that He had power over death.

Acts 2:24

*"But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since **it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.**"*

The power of God overwhelmed the power of the grave – the power of death was swallowed up by His power of life. It was *impossible* for the power of the grave to overpower God's power! Jesus proved He is the Almighty One.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:8

And because of the resurrection we can know that everyone who believes in Him like He says, will be saved and resurrected to life themselves when He returns for us. That is the good news: that everyone who believes in Him, receiving Him as their Savior, will be saved from sin. That's the gift of salvation – the greatest gift anyone can open by faith.

❖ **The Gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is the power of God to save.**

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the **power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.**"*

Romans 1:16

That verse right there makes it clear that it is **not by our power**, our strength, or our ability that we're going to be able to enter heaven and have everlasting life with God. **It's by His power in the gospel.** *It, the gospel, is the power of God to bring salvation to those who believe.*

And the apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesians would know...

“...what is **the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us who believe**, according to the working of His great might that he worked in Christ when he raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 1:19

God's power is directed towards us in Christ. We have power over the sin nature by the power of the Holy Spirit. His power will one day swallow up death completely giving us glorified bodies – we will renew our strength, running and not growing weary as Isaiah said. And until then Romans 8:38-39 tells us there is **no power that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.** He has the power to keep us in His hand. There is no powers that can separate us from Him.

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, **nor any powers**, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Romans 8:38-39

If you are feeling like most people are this day in age, who aren't well, my prayer is that you to **find your strength in our omnipotent God**. And be reminded that through His Spirit who lives in you, you can experience some serious victory in this life over the sin nature (power over the flesh – Rom. 6). His power mightily works in us through the Holy Spirit, Paul said (Col. 1:28-29), and that allows us to live and experience the resurrected life now (Rom. 6:4).

But there's another element about God's power that is crucial for us to know. Coming to Christ doesn't make all of our problems go away overnight and for the rest of our lives. If you have been walking with God for any length of time, you know that ***there are some things He allows to remain in our lives to demonstrate His power most clearly.***

❖ **His power is perfected in weakness.**

When Paul asked God to take away whatever his weakness was (probably physical), God replied,

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Corinthians 12:9

I think what this tells us is that we shouldn't always try to overcome our weaknesses, but to trust the Lord to use them. It's our weaknesses that remove our pride and push us back to God. Weaknesses give God glory because He comes through in them by His power. Why was it that the Lord waited until Abraham and Sarah were clearly beyond child-bearing years? So that His glory and power would be revealed when He gave them a son, Isaac, by His power.

Weaknesses are kind of a funny thing for us because they're something that we have in this life that we just won't have in the next life. So as much as we dislike them, they're **temporary opportunities**. They're something that we have in this life to glorify God with, accepting them as from Him and trusting Him to use them. That's a surprise use of His power to this world.

If the incarnation teaches us anything today about God's power, it is that He doesn't use His power the same way we would. We would use His power to remove all weakness but God is much wiser than that. Removing all weaknesses would prevent character and perseverance and hope from being built in us. It's interesting, isn't it, that **we don't have any record in the Bible of Jesus using His power to benefit Himself alone** – to somehow live above the weakness of the human flesh He took on. He didn't. He used it always to edify others and only as the Fathered willed.

In fact, if we had the power Jesus had, you know what we would've done? We would've succumbed to Satan's temptation in the wilderness... we would've turned the stones to bread when we were hungry. We would've thrown ourselves off the temple mount to prove ourselves. But Jesus didn't do that because He didn't use His power to benefit Himself like that. He used it to bless others. He had the power of restraint so that we could be blessed by His weakness.

When we accept our weaknesses as character-builders and hope-producers (that make us long for His return), I'm telling you they glorify God like nothing else. And I don't mean by that, that we just need to grit our teeth and bear them, but to **take them to God in wonder and in trust** – trusting

Him to use them and wondering how He will use them. This is rarest diamond and purest gold in a world that is bitter and angry and anxious about weaknesses.

Illustration: The Cracked Pot

Maybe this illustration will help you internalize this. There's a water-bearer in India who daily carried two large pots that hung on opposite ends of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots developed a crack in it, while the other was perfect. The one always delivered a full portion of water at the end of a long walk from the stream to the master's house, but the cracked pot always arrived only half full. After several months in this condition, the poor cracked pot, ashamed of its imperfection and failure, and being slightly jealous at the perfection of the other pot, said one day to the owner by the stream, "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize for only being able to deliver half my load. Because of my flaw [weakness], you don't get full value for your efforts."

But the water-bearer showed compassion for the cracked pot, saying, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." So the pot took notice and enjoyed the flowers but still didn't understand. So the bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path and not on the other side? That is because I have always known about your weakness and I have taken advantage of it by planting those flower seeds that I now grace my master's table with."

You see, we are as unaware as the cracked pot sometimes of the divine intention in much of what we do. Despite our impairments, we are actually equipped by God's power in them to fulfill the unique purpose for our existence. We are what we are, weakness and all, to do the works He has prepared for us to do. Nothing encourages us like someone who has an incredible weakness and yet lives for the glory of God through it all. I think of ministers today like Justin Peters with cerebral palsy or quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada. Their ministries are powerful because they have great weaknesses. The Lord uses our weaknesses, as He used the incarnation, when the Son of God took on the weakness of human flesh.

Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

Through the weakness of His flesh, He demonstrated His love for us which became the magnet that draws all men unto Himself (Jn. 12:32). His weakness on the cross (2 Cor. 13:4) is so powerful that it can swallow up the hardest thing there is in this world: the proud and depraved human heart.

ⁱ Justin Peters, Didache Podcast, *Welcome to Didache – Episode 1*, accessed 17 December 2020.

ⁱⁱ David Jeremiah, *The God You May Not Know*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord, Come!* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 26.

^v Ibid, 37.