

## “The Infinite God”

On August 6, 2007 Rabbi Harold Kushner was interviewed by Minnesota Public Radio about the August 1 collapse of the 35W Minneapolis bridge into the river below. Kushner made the astonishing claim during the discussion that God is not all-powerful and he does not control the laws of nature. Such a limited God may sound odd, yet this thinking is not novel among religious leaders. For example, Christian leaders and teachers such as John Sanders and Gregory Boyd have advocated a view of God known as Open Theism. This theology claims that since the future absolutely free acts of human beings have not taken place yet and their outcome is still undecided, then God cannot truly know these things ahead of time. So, God does not know all the future.

What many people have done is to tame God and belittle Him so much that He is no longer sovereign, He is no longer all-powerful, and He no longer knows all things. In other words, He has limits. Now, if God has limits, we are faced with a dilemma. How can we trust Him? How do we know that what He has promised He will accomplish? Such views of and questions about God remind us of how important it is that we believe and understand that He is infinite.

In our last reading we introduced the definition of God contained in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, #4. We also looked at what it means that God is spirit. Now, we must take up this all-important concept that God is infinite.

In the 1828 edition of Webster’s American Dictionary Of The English Language we learn that the term connotes that which is “without limits; unbounded; boundless; not circumscribed; applied to time, space and qualities.” In that entry we also learn that “God is infinite in duration, having neither beginning nor end of existence. He is also infinite in presence, or omnipresent, and his perfections are infinite.” The 17<sup>th</sup> c. British Baptist pastor, John Gill, agreed when he said the following about God’s infinity (A Body Of Doctrinal Divinity, I, 6):

*When we say that God is 'infinite', the meaning is, that he is unbounded and unlimited, unmeasurable or immense, unsearchable and not to be comprehended. This attribute chiefly respects and includes the 'omnipresence' and 'eternity' of God; these are the two branches of it; he is not bounded by space, and therefore is everywhere; and he is not bounded by time, so he is eternal.*

WSC Q. 4. What is God? A. God is a Spirit, **infinite**, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, **power**, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. (emphasis added)

“[God] is infinite in that he is not subject to any of the limitations of humanity, or creation in general.” -Wayne Grudem, Bible Doctrine, 75

The reality that God is boundless or not subject to the limitations of humanity or creation involves the truths that He is omnipresent (present everywhere) and omniscient (knows all things). We looked at these attributes in our last reading. God's infinity also involves the fact that He is eternal (which we will look at in our next reading). The aspect of God's infinity we must focus on presently is the fact that He is omnipotent.

Omni=all + potent=powerful.

When we affirm that God is omnipotent we are saying that God "is able to do all his holy will" (Grudem, Doctrine, 98). We define it in this manner since God will never do that which He does not want to do (Psalm 115:3; Eph. 1:11), nor will He do that which contradicts His nature (1 John 1:5).

Psalm 115:3: "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

One of the biblical texts in which we see God's omnipotence with the greatest clarity is Matthew 19:26. In the preceding context we read about a young rich man who asked Jesus, "What good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (Mt. 19:16) After the man rejected Jesus' answer which would have involved giving up his many possessions, Jesus taught the disciples the following: "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." (23-24) At these words, the disciples were astonished and thought that perhaps no one can be saved. (25) Though not always the case, in this particular situation they were wise enough to catch what Jesus was saying, namely, that the rich will often not see their need for the Savior. And, if this were the case, they concluded that left to self no man would be able to see his need for Jesus Christ. We then see the glorious words from Jesus in 19:26: "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Jesus affirmed that certainly no man could change himself or cause someone to be converted, nevertheless, God can do it because all things are possible with Him!

1 John 1:5: "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

This is not the only place in the Bible we learn that God is able to do all His holy will. Consider the following examples:

- In Genesis 17:1 God revealed Himself to Abram as "God Almighty".
- Job 42:2: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

- Psalm 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 on earth, in the seas and all deeps.”
- Luke 1:37: “For nothing will be impossible with God.”
- In Ephesians 3:20 Paul said of God: “[He]...is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think....”

“But seeing that He is clothed with omnipotence, no prayer is too hard for Him to answer, no need too great for Him to supply, no passion too strong for Him to subdue; no temptation too powerful for Him to deliver from, no misery too deep for Him to relieve.” –Arthur W. Pink, The Attributes Of God

Family Discussion:

1. What does it mean that God is infinite? What does it mean that God is omnipotent?
2. Why is it important to our faith and/or to prayer that God is omnipotent?
3. What is one thing going on in each family member’s life right now concerning which it would be helpful to know that God is omnipotent? Why?
4. What is the greatest struggle you have when it comes to believing that God is omnipotent (can do all His holy will)?