

God's Omnipotence - Part 1

by Richard Owen Roberts

God is omnipresent, meaning He is present everywhere at all times, and His presence is not limited to specific locations.

Duration: 29:42

Scripture: Psalm 139:21-24, Isaiah 55:6, Isaiah 55:8-9, Jeremiah 23:1-4, Jeremiah 23:23, Amos 9:1-4

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher explores the concept of God's omnipresence and authority over all places. He emphasizes that while we are accustomed to things having their rightful place, God exists everywhere and cannot be escaped. The preacher references Jeremiah 23:23 and Amos 9:1-4 to illustrate God's ability to see and reach every corner of the earth, even if someone were to hide in the depths of the sea or climb up to heaven. He also highlights Matthew 5:34-35 and Acts 17 to further emphasize God's authority over all places and his accessibility to those who seek him. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God fills the heavens and the earth, and no one can hide from his sight.

Transcript

But our subject this morning is simply this. I, says the Lord, fill the heavens and the earth. Now we refer to this as the omnipresence of God.

He is everywhere. And not only is he everywhere, but he fills every place where he is. Now let's read together from Psalm 139.

O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying-down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is I. I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up unto heaven, thou art there.

If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uppermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say,

surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reign.

Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

My substance was not hid from thee. When I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect. And in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand when I awake. I am still with thee. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men, for they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.

Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. One other passage that I want to ask that we turn together to and read from, Jeremiah chapter 23. This is one of the most moving of all the Old Testament portions.

If you have not done so recently, I urge you to read through the entire 23rd chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy, where Jeremiah takes to task those pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of God's pasture. But at verse 23, there is a special word that is tremendously significant in our considerations this morning. Jeremiah chapter 23, at verse 23, Am I a god at hand, saith the Lord, and not a god afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? We're used to knowing where things are.

In our minds, everything has its rightful place. We expect to see the sun in the sky. We don't expect to see it lying, steaming on the bottom of some lake.

We expect to see trees growing out of the earth. We do not expect to see them hanging down from the bottom of clouds. We expect to see birds in the air, or in their nests, or snatching a worm from the lawn.

But we don't expect to see them seated at our dinner tables with napkins about their necks and the knives and forks in their wings. In our minds, everything has its place. Every substance of which we know anything is somewhere.

And we don't know anything, really, about anything that is everywhere except God. He is everywhere. He fills every place.

This room is filled with God. But this room cannot contain God. This entire building is filled with God.

But this building cannot contain God. This city is filled with God, but it does not contain Him. Our nation is filled with God, but it cannot contain Him.

Nothing can contain Him. And yet He can and does fill everything. Now, God cannot be described as being somewhere.

You are somewhere. I am somewhere. Your possessions are somewhere.

Your friends and your family are all somewhere. But God is not somewhere. God is everywhere.

Now, a child was told that God said concerning Himself that He filled the heavens and the earth. And the child responded by saying, Well, if God is everywhere, how is there any room for us? That's not a bad question, really. I dare say some children have thought more about the fact that God is everywhere than some of us adults who have still to come to grips with any degree of adequacy with the plain-stated fact of Scripture that God does indeed fill the heavens and the earth.

We do not expect to see the sun everywhere, but somewhere. We do not expect to see the trees everywhere, only somewhere. We don't expect to find the birds everywhere, just somewhere.

We're so used to seeing things somewhere and never seeing anything everywhere that it greatly catches our simple little minds to conceive of anything including God being everywhere, filling all places at the same time. And yet that's what we must do. We must stretch our minds.

We must let them reach out as far as they can go and seek to comprehend the fact that God is everywhere. And He fills absolutely everything with His presence. Now, to try and assist you in comprehending this matter of the omnipresence of God, I want to give you in advance the outline that we will follow this morning so that you won't feel lost, that you will know precisely the direction that my remarks are to take.

First of all, we want to deal with the biblical doctrine itself. We want to see the biblical teaching of omnipresence, that God himself is present. Secondly, the ramifications of this doctrine of God's omnipresence are to be discussed.

And then thirdly, we want to see the application of this omnipresence as they should be drawn forth in our minds and in our hearts. May I say to you very directly that there is no way, no way, that one can really worship and serve God as they are if they remain in ignorance concerning His presence filling all things at all times. Some of us, if we had occasion to stand now before this group and to make testimony of our own lives, would say, if we were speaking with 100% honesty, I'm ashamed of the fact that I have never worshipped and served God as I ought.

And the major reason we have not worshipped and served God as we ought is because we have yet to embrace God in the fullness with which He reveals Himself. We know too little about Him. That, of course, is the reason for this series of twelve lessons on God.

Now then, coming to the first of these matters, the biblical teaching on the omnipresence of God. I've put this under six points. Number one, the heavens and the heavens of heaven and the earth itself and everything that the earth contains and all the space out yonder all belongs to God.

In Deuteronomy 10.14 we read, Behold, the heavens and the heavens of heaven is the Lord thy God. And the earth also and everything that is therein there is nothing anywhere that does not belong to Him. Secondly, it is impossible to build any building large enough to contain God.

I know that almost sounds foolish to say and yet honestly most people give evidence of the fact that they think God can be contained in buildings. Now, take this foolish notion I often hear expressed. We're going to church to worship God.

Now that is ridiculous. Why should we come to church to worship God? Is God here in this place? Look at this lovely room we're in. Is God here? Well, of course He's here.

But is God any more here than anywhere else? And everywhere else? Well, if you think He is, let me say to you plainly, you are wrong. If you have any notion whatsoever that God inhabits Sunday school rooms and sanctuaries more than He inhabits the woods and the fields and the bedrooms of our homes, you're mistaken. God is everywhere.

And one cannot build a building to contain Him. In 2 Chronicles 2, 6 we read, Who is able to build God a house? For seeing that the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. And Solomon then proceeded to ask, Who am I that I should build God a house? And everyone who thinks they're building a dwelling place of God ought to ask, Who am I to build God a house? In 1 Kings 8, 27 we read, Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less the house that I have built.

And these interesting words are found in the book of Acts, chapter 7, verses 47 to 50. Solomon built God a house, howbeit the most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands. As saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool, what house will ye build me? What is the place of my rest, saith the Lord? Hath not my hands, So if God made all these things, if God made everything, how could any of us, or all of us together, turn around and make something for Him? You see what an absurd notion it is that you could even begin to make something for God that He already made.

Number three, God exists everywhere, but in addition to existing everywhere, He exercises authority over all places. In Matthew 5, verses 34 and 35, in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said, I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by earth, for it is His footstool, neither by Jerusalem, said Jesus, for it is the city of the great King. Where is God? Well, He's in heaven, and He's on earth, and He's in Jerusalem, and He's in all the places in between, and all the places far removed.

In Isaiah 66, we read, Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool, where is the house that ye build me? Where is the place of my rest for all these things have my hands made? All these things have done, saith the Lord, but to this man, oh, get these words, but to this man will I look, not to this house, not to this sanctuary, but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and assembleth at my word. Furthermore, we need to add, as our fourth consideration, that it's impossible to find any place where God is not to flee to. If you want to escape God, you've got an impossible task.

Notice these words in Amos chapter 9, verses 1 to 4, I saw the Lord standing upon the altar, and he said, Smite the lintel of the door that the post may shake, and cut them in the head, all of them, and I will slay them. The last and the least is a sore. He that fleeth shall not flee away.

He that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into hell, or seal, thence shall my hand take them. Though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down.

Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them from thence. Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, then will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them. And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sore.

It shall slay them. I will set my eyes upon them for evil and not for good. Now the sum and substance of all those hard words is it is impossible to hide them.

And we read very similar words already from Psalm 139, and let me repeat again the crucial portion of that Psalm. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me. Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness will cover me, well, even the night shall be light unto me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike unto thee. Can any man hide from God? Well, obviously not.

And to try is to be perfectly observed. And notice also that for those that seek God, he is readily found. Observe these words in Acts 17.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is the Lord of heaven and of earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hand, neither is worshipped with men's hands. As though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things, and he hath made them all of one blood, all the nations of men to dwell together on the face of the earth. And he hath determined the times beforehand appointed and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord.

If, happily, they might feel after him, though he be not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our due. And let me add also in the words once more of Jeremiah, who filled the heavens and the earth, Am I a God at hand? saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord, do not I fill the heavens and the earth? saith the Lord.

God does indeed fill all places, and he is consigned in none. Now this doctrine has not really been understood by all people at all times. Whereas virtually everyone acknowledges that God is holy, not everyone admits or realizes that God is everywhere.

I think some of you will immediately call to mind this passage when I refer to it, 1 Kings 20, 36. The Syrians are in a fight with the Israelites and the Syrians are in trouble. So the Syrians are discussing among themselves what they should do.

And this is what they conclude. The God of the Israelites is the God of the mountains. The God of the Syrians is the God of the plains.

If we fight the Israelites in the mountains, their God will fight for them. But if we fight the Israelites on the plain, our God will fight for us. So let us bring the war down to the plains.

Of course, in that they acknowledge that they have no sense whatsoever of a God who fills the heavens and the earth. And some of you will also immediately recall that passage in 1 Kings 18, especially verses 27 and 28, where the prophet Elijah is in that great contest with the prophets of Baal. And you remember

that Elijah mocked the worshippers of Baal.

And he says to them, cry aloud to your God. Maybe he's on a journey. Maybe he's asleep.

Now did the prophets of Baal protest and say, stupid, stupid? God is everywhere? No, you know what they did. They raised their voices in loud cries and they beat themselves and cut themselves and sought to get the attention of the God whom they worshipped who for all they knew was on vacation or had gone on a journey or was asleep and could not hear them. And in that they acknowledged also they knew nothing of the omnipresence of God.

But let us be certain we have the matter straight. God is everywhere, wholly present. He is in this room right now.

He is in every Sunday school room in this building. And he is in the sanctuary of this building. He is in every church in this city at this moment.

He is in every church in every city right now. He is in every home in Wheaton every day. And he is in every home everywhere every day.

He is in every room of every home. He is in every palace and in every harbour. He is in every school room and in every business office.

He is in every store and in every warehouse. He is in every dormitory and in every domicile. He is in every tavern and every night spot.

He is in every place of amusement and in every den of iniquity. He is on every mountain and in every valley. He is in every car and every plane and every bus and every boat.

He is in every beautiful place and in every ugly place. He is with every race and with every tribe. He is in every hospital and in every funeral home.

He is in all the places we expect him to be. And in all the places we don't expect him. He is there.

He is on every planet. He is on the sun and the moon and the star. And if there are a million Earths scattered throughout the vast reaches of space, God is as much there as he is here.

If you could board a spaceship tomorrow morning and commence to travel outward at a speed of 5000 miles per minute and if you travelled steadily for the next five years or ten years or fifty years or a hundred years or a thousand years, you would not, in all that time or in all that distance, pass one single place where God was not as fully present as he is right here, right now. He is in all the places that we have ever heard about and in all the places of which we have never imagined and of which we have no ability really to conceive. God, the great God, whom we profess to worship is always present in all his fullness.

Don't forget it. But there are certain ramifications of this doctrine which are difficult and which will stretch the mind if you will think about that. Now God fills every place, but does he fill every place exactly the same? Does God dwell on earth in the same precise manner that he dwells in heaven? Does God dwell in animals just exactly like he dwells in men? Does God inhabit Christian men exactly as he inhabits non-Christian men? You don't have to think very long before you see there are some serious questions that those matters raise.

Now we know that the nature of sin is that it separates men from God. Now how far does sin separate men from God? Completely. If you fall into sin today, does that mean that God is nowhere around you? Consider these important words in Isaiah 55, 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.

Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord. For he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will wonderfully pardon.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Would you see the key words there? Seek while he may be found.

Call while he is near. How can we then say that God is everywhere, fully present, and at the same time say sin separates from God and the sinner must call upon God while he is near?

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