

# Attributes of God - Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence

by William MacDonald

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*This sermon explores the attributes of God, specifically omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, and their practical applications in our lives.*

**Duration:** 37:06

**Scripture:** Genesis 17:1, Genesis 18:14, Exodus 34:23-24, Job 42:2, Psalm 139:16, Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37, Ephesians 2:7

**Topics:** "Attributes of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that we are defenseless and surrounded by enemies, such as the Hittites, Hivites, Amorites, Canaanites, and Philistines. However, God promises to cast out these nations and enlarge our borders if we obey Him. The speaker highlights that God's power is evident in creation and in sustaining the universe. He shares a conversation with a scientist who couldn't explain what holds matter together, emphasizing the limitations of human knowledge. The sermon concludes by reminding listeners that man cannot successfully fight against God, and the speaker reflects on his own past struggle with being ashamed of Jesus.

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## Transcript

The last session together we came to the omniscience of God, and we had turned to Psalm 139, and just let's turn back to that again. Incidentally, in studying the attributes of God, you do come to some big words, don't you, like omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence. We shouldn't be afraid of those words.

I make no apology for them. Just get used to them. Omniscience.

Omni means all. Science means knowledge. Science today has a more restricted meaning, but basically it means knowledge.

And the omniscience of God teaches that God has perfect knowledge of everything. He has never learned anything, and he cannot learn anything because his knowledge is absolute. And in Psalm 139, as you know, the psalmist David is celebrating the omniscience the omnipresence and the omnipotence of God.

And that's the next three attributes that we're going to be taking up, and they're all found in this one psalm. Beautifully nestled together. All right, the omniscience of God.

Psalm 139, verse 1. O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there's 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 high. I cannot attain unto it.

Let's read a couple of other verses. There are many in the Bible, but just one or two other passages that teach the omniscience of our Lord. Matthew chapter 10, verses 29 and 30.

Matthew chapter 10, verses 29 and 30. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Dr. Ironside used to say, God attends the funeral of every sparrow.

Isn't that wonderful? We were thinking of something of the grandeur and majesty of God. The God who put the stars in their places. And he even attends the funeral of the sparrow, and he legislates about birds' nests in the Old Testament.

What a great God he is. Romans chapter 11 and verse 33. Romans chapter 11 and verse 33.

It says, oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again.

For of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen. Then, of course, in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 13, we're reminded that all things are open and naked unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

And in 1 John 3 20, it says, God knoweth all things. Just think of all the knowledge that all the men of the world have today. I was thinking that this afternoon as I was pondering the omniscience of God.

I was thinking of the knowledge that some of you have with regard to things agricultural, with regard to things chemical. Think of all the knowledge and all the libraries of the world today. It's really so massive that men have to become specialists nowadays, don't they? No, nobody tries to learn it all.

They couldn't anyway. Let's just think of God having all that knowledge and all the rest of the knowledge that there is. Man with all his knowledge, he can fly to the moon, but he can't cure the common cold, can he? He can do marvelous things, but he can't understand how a bee flies according to all the laws of aerodynamics that bee can't fly.

But the bee doesn't know it and just keeps on flying. Because he has a life principle within him some way or other. It's marvelous all the secrets that God has hidden in this wonderful creation of his.

He has all knowledge. He has never learned and he can never learn. And how wonderful to think of the Lord Jesus coming into the world, being born of the Virgin Mary, growing in wisdom and stature in favor with God and man, and yet in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

I tell you, it's a divine paradox, isn't it? And I don't believe there was a time in his life when he didn't have all knowledge. It's true, he did say, of that hour knoweth no man, not even the son of man. But I really think that that means that the time of his coming was not given to him by God the Father to reveal to us.

That's what I believe it means. The servant knoweth not what his master doeth. I believe that he veiled his Godhead in a body of flesh, but I believe it was all there all the time.

Wonderful, wonderful Lord Jesus. Isn't that wonderful to think of him walking along with men down here in Nazareth and Capernaum, and he knew exactly what they were thinking all the time. But he never needlessly embarrassed them.

Mind you, he could have. He could have, but he never did. You think of all the people in the world today and God knows all about them.

Though infinitely glorious and gloriously grand, he knows the eternal story of every grain of sand. It isn't just that he could know it if he wanted to know it. That's not the point.

He does know it, and there's nothing hidden from him. Now, what is the practical application of this in our lives? We'll never be omniscient. We'll never have full knowledge, even in heaven.

We're going to go on learning throughout all eternity. It says that in Ephesians 2, 7, that in the ages to come, he might show, if he's going to be showing, what are we going to be doing? Learning, that's right. That he might show exceeding greatness, his kindness, and his love toward us through Christ Jesus.

And heaven is going to be a school, and God is going to be the teacher, and the Bible is going to be the textbook. And what you learn about it here will be your initial investment. You and I are determining our capacity for enjoying the glories of heaven right now by what we do with the sacred scriptures day by day.

I love those lines in the first hymn that Che gave out. It said, hearing his voice in every line, making each faithful saying mine. That's it, friends.

Hearing his voice in every line, but not stopping there, making each faithful saying mine. The practical application of this, first of all, there's a warning in this to men, is there not? God sees everything I do. Thou, God, seest me.

Somebody has said, secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven, right? Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. Nothing secret there. God knows all.

Be sure your sins will find you out. And I think it's so wonderful that our children learn this in Sunday school. You know, little eyes, be careful what you see, right? Little ears, be careful what you hear.

Why? Because there's a father up above looking down in tender love, and he knows all about it. We teach our children the omniscience of God from their earliest days. So there's a word of warning.

But, you know, there's a word of comfort here, too, for our hearts tonight. The omniscience of God, he knows what his people are going through. Isn't that wonderful? He knows what we're going through.

He knows the way that I take, Job said. He knows the way I take. I love those words just taken out of the context in the letters to the churches, where the Lord Jesus says, I know.

But I get great comfort from them. Psalm 56 and verse 8 says, and this is beautiful. He counts our tossings and numbers our tears.

How do you like that? It's OK to say amen or praise the Lord. Sometimes I wonder how we can be so unmoved by the contemplation of the majesty of God. Psalm 56, verse 8. He counts our, how do you like that? You're having a sleepless night.

Maybe the care of all the churches upon your heart. You can't sleep at night. He knows every time you turn over in bed and counts it.

Isn't that wonderful? And he numbers our tears. They don't mean as much to us oftentimes as they do to the blessed Lord. The omniscience of our wonderful God.

And what a tremendous encouragement it is to me, the omniscience of God. It's an encouragement to me, for instance, to know God knew all about me before he saved me and he saved me anyway. Isn't that wonderful? I tell you, he knew what a failure.

He knew what a flop. He knew how I disappoint him and break his heart. And he saved me anyway.

Nothing ever came as a shock to him in my life. He knows, too, what we feel in worship and in prayer, but can't express. I oftentimes have that feeling.

My heart is so overflowing with gratitude and love and worship to the Lord. I can't find words to express it. But he knows.

He knows what's going on in my heart. And the Holy Spirit puts it into words before him. And I like this, too.

He knows what we would like to be able to do for him, but for some reason or other are prevented from doing for him. David. David wanted to build a temple for the Lord.

The Lord said, no, David, you can't do it. Nevertheless, in as much as it was in my heart. And I think that David will get the reward for building the temple, even if he didn't.

I think there are people tonight in the world and God knows that they'd really like to go the mission field, but for reasons beyond their control, they just can't do it. There are people tonight who really like to give more lavishly to the work of the Lord. They're already given beyond their means.

God knows all about that. God rewards that, too. Isn't that wonderful? The omniscience of the Lord.

You know, what really stops me in my tracks is this. When God forgives me my sins, he forgets them. Now, would you please tell me how an omniscient God can forget? I don't know.

But I know he does. He buries them in the sea of his forgetfulness. He cast them behind his back.

He'll never remember them again. How great he is and greatly to be praised and his greatness is unsearchable. This is our blessed Lord Jesus.

God manifests in the flesh, the omniscient God. Then in Psalm 139, we go on and we see the omnipresence of God, the omnipresence of God. And the omnipresence of God teaches us that God is in all places at one and the same time.

He fills heaven and earth. God is in all places at one and the same time. He fills heaven and earth.

Let's read verses 7 through 10. 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 Sheol, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. Turn also please to Jeremiah chapter 23 verses 23 and 24. Jeremiah chapter 23 and verses 23 and 24.

Says, 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? And Matthew chapter 18 verse 20, familiar to all of us, for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, a special promise of his special presence when people gather together in his name. God is in all places at one and the same time, but this is not the same as pantheism. You know, there is a false teaching in the world today known as pantheism, and that equates God with things, with forces, with laws.

With the tree, for instance, growing out in the yard. When we speak of the omnipresence of God, we're not speaking of pantheism. We're saying that God is everywhere, and you cannot hide from his presence.

I've known people across the Atlantic to get away from God, and he was waiting for them on the dock in New York. And he caught up with them, and they got saved. The atheist once wrote out on the wall, God is nowhere.

And a little child came along and put the space between the W and the H. God is now here. She was right. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength because of thine enemy.

God can do that. God is nowhere. God is now here.

God is present everywhere, though he is not manifest everywhere. Sometimes his presence is more hidden than at other times. Okay, once again in this great truth of the omnipresence of God, we come to a wonderful paradox.

The Lord Jesus, as a man here on earth, and yet he could say the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father. Could he be here as a man on earth in a specific location and still be omnipresent? I believe he was. He didn't have to be present to heal a person of his illness.

No, no. He's omnipresent. So how can that be different? I don't know.

I just bow and worship. I just accept it by faith and leave the question with God. But there's a wonderful warning here too.

Man can't hide from God. My, what a ridiculous thing to try to hide from this God who is present everywhere. What a wonderful comfort in this truth.

God is with his people. People say, people, I've had people say to me, where was God when the concentration camps were going on? My answer was God was with his people to the concentration camps. And when they go through the fire, he's with them.

And when they go through the flood, he's with them. He never leaves us. We're never, we're never alone.

Alone. It's a wonderful thing to go on through life as a Christian, counting on and believing the constant presence of the Lord. But I tell you, it's a wonderful challenge in this truth of the omnipresence of God.

And that challenge is this. My, if I'm going to walk with his God, I want to walk in holiness. We mentioned that when we spoke of the holiness of God, how can two walk together except they be agreed? I want to walk in separation from the world.

Indeed, I do. And that brings us to the subject of the omnipotence of God. And the omnipotence of God means, of course, that God is all powerful.

He's able to do anything that is not inconsistent with his own nature. Now, you notice we qualify that. We say he is able to do anything that is not inconsistent with his own nature.

The attributes of God cannot fight against one another. They must all be always in perfect agreement. The attributes of God cannot fight against one another.

They must all be always in perfect agreement. People have problems with that. They say, can a God of love send people to hell? Yes, because a God of love is a God of judgment too.

And there's no contradiction at all. No contradiction at all. So the omnipotence of God says that he's able to do anything that's not inconsistent with his own nature.

You say, what do you mean? Well, he can't sin, can he? That would be inconsistent with his holiness. He can't lie. God is not a man that he should lie.

But he can do anything that's not inconsistent with that. Now, in Psalm 139, you say, well, does he speak about the omnipotence there? Well, I think he does. And you know how he speaks about it? In connection with the birth of a baby.

And I think that's beautiful. David says, I'm just going to take one instance of the omnipotence of God and that's my own birth. But I don't know how many times in recent weeks I've heard and read statements to the effect, I don't see how anybody can stand in the delivery room and see the birth of a baby and not believe in God.

And I thought of that. I thought of Psalm 139 when I heard that. It's been a refrain over and over again.

All right. It says in verse 13, for thou hast possessed my reins. Thou has 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 unperfect. And in thy book, all my, well, it said members in the King James version, maybe if you have another version of the Bible, you'll find a different word there. There's some versions say days.

Does anybody have a version that says that? Days? No. Members, everybody? Days. What is that? New American Standard? RSV.

We'll mention it. We'll comment on it when we come to it. 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. Oh 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. Now let's go back to verse 13. It says thou hast possessed my reigns.

Thou has possessed my reigns, formed my reigns. And thou hast literally, it says, knit me together in my mother's womb. The marvelous formation of the baby and the mother's womb and the knitting together of the sinews, the muscles, the arteries, the veins.

What more appropriate word could you use than that word knit together? Beautiful. David is contemplating the wonderful subject of birth, an omnipotent God. And he begins with us.

And when he begins with us, dear friends, you look at that word reigns in verse 13. And our beginning was smaller than the dot over the eye. Really, smaller than the dot over the eye in reign.

He says, I will praise thee for I am fearfully and marvelously made. Marvelous and I work so that my soul knoweth right well. Then he says my substance.

And once again, if you have another version of the Bible, it might say my frame. And it means my skeletal structure, my skeletal frame, the skeleton. Wasn't that a marvelous thing? Marvelous thing to know that when that baby began, that whole baby was programmed, including the bony structure.

You know, some people are born of stock, large boned people. You know, other people are more slight. Well, it's all programmed right there from the very beginning.

And that's what David is saying here. My skeletal structure was not hid from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the lowest parts of the earth. There, I believe, is a figurative expression, a literary expression for the mother's womb.

I mean, the baby isn't born in the dirt, you know, not born out there in the in the ground, the lowest parts of the earth. I believe it's a figurative expression for the mother's womb. And I believe that's exactly what you have in Ephesians 4, when it speaks about the Lord Jesus coming down from heaven to the lower parts of the earth.

It means he entered life through the antechamber of the Virgin's womb. Isn't that wonderful? Really is wonderful to think of the great God coming down and going through the process of birth, being born as a baby in Bethlehem stable, cradled in a manger, mothered by the Virgin Mary. Thine eyes did see my substance.

That means my unperfect substance. This is the formation of the fetus in the mother's womb, yet being unperfect. And in thy book, all my members, if you want it, I notice that members is an italics there.

Dan's version says days. I like days. I think it means all my days were written when as yet there was none of them.

What does that mean? It means the whole diary was written. That wonderful. All my days were written when as yet there was none of them.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God. Oh, how great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.

When I awake, I don't know when I, I think it means when the birth takes place. That's what I think it means. I've never read that in any commentary.

And it may be wrong, but it seems to me that David's saying, when I see the light of day, I'm still with thee. Isn't that beautiful? And this is the omnipotence of God that he's tracing. He just uses that as a single example of it.

The marvelous miracle of birth. Just to think that the Lord Jesus, our wonderful savior went through that miracle. The omnipotence of God.

Let me read you some other verses from the scripture before we go on that deal with the omnipotence of God. I am the almighty God. Genesis 17, one walk before me and be thou perfect.

See the almighty God. Genesis 18, 14. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Nothing.

Job 42, two in the new American standard version. It's beautiful. It says, I know that thou can't do all things.

And that no purpose of thine can be thwarted. You like that? I know that thou can't do all things. And that no purpose of thine can be thwarted.

Matthew 19, 26. With God, all things are possible. Luke one, a 37 for with God, nothing is impossible.

And then the Bible ends on that note. Revelation 19, six. It says the Lord God omnipotent reign.

Think of the omnipotence of God in creation. Think of the power that by the word speaks worlds into being. By faith, we know that the worlds were framed by the word of God.

Think of the marvelous power of the Lord Jesus in sustaining this universe. Allowing my, what a, what a marvelous work he does. Colossians chapter one, 17 for by him, all things consistent.

I remember flying across the Irish sea once at a young, well, a gentleman sat next to me and we got engaged in conversation. He was a, he was a scientist. And I said, oh, I'm so glad to sit next to you.

I have a question to ask you. And he said, what is it? And I said, what holds matter together? And he said, um, cosmic glue. And I felt like saying, thanks for nothing.

Cosmic glue is a way of saying, we don't know. He was saying to me, oh, I wish we knew. But we know, don't we? Colossians one, 17 for by him, all things consist.

Think of the omnipotence of God and the providence of God in this world. The marvelous converging of circumstances. Think of the omnipotence of God in the Exodus, leading his children across the red sea and dry land.

I think the greatest display of God, that power that ever took place in the universe was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead. Spoken of in Ephesians one is the greatest display of power ever. Why? Well, I believe that all the hosts of hell were encamped at that tomb, at that sepulcher to prevent the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

God reached down, raised him from the dead and eventually took him back to heaven where he seated at his right hand. And I think of the omnipotence of God in the salvation of sinners. Wonderful, isn't it? I think of the omnipotence of God in that final day of judgment, the judgment at the great white throne.

Well, there are very practical lessons to be learned from the omnipotence of God. One of them is this, man can't fight successfully against God. It's like a gnat trying to fight against the blast furnace in the steel mill in Gary, Indiana.

Imagine, imagine man fighting it. It's so ludicrous and yet I did it at one time. Against the God who built the sky, I fought with hands uplifted high, despised the mention of his grace, too proud to seek a hiding place.

And he finally pinned me down. I found out that God is a better runner than I am. And he finally pinned me down with a verse of a hymn, ashamed of Jesus.

Can it be a mortal man ashamed of thee? Ashamed of thee whom angels praise, whose glory shines through endless days. Well, I realized that was me, stupid me, ashamed of my creator and savior. And I bowed the knee and turned myself over to the omnipotent Lord.

Man can't fight successfully against God. There's no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. Proverbs chapter 21, verse 30.

Lovely, isn't it? There's no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. Man can't fight against the Lord. Second lesson is that the believer is on the winning side.

Ah, that's wonderful. It's wonderful to be on the side of divine omnipotence, isn't it? Now, you and I will never be omnipotent. We'll never have all power.

But I'd like to share a little secret with you tonight. Man never comes closer to omnipotence than when he prays in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you and I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of God, it's just exactly the same as if the Lord Jesus were asking the Father of the family for that.

And when you realize that, it's a marvel we don't pray more. Isn't it? Prayer seems to be the last thing we want to do. I'll tell you, you announce a night of prayer, or an all-night prayer meeting, and the people will stay away in droves.

Who knows? You announce a potluck. Different story. The believer's on the winning side.

If God be for us, who can be against us? And God has a wonderful way, you know, of controlling the intellects and the emotions and the wills of men in his great omnipotence. And I'll tell you, this must be a great encouragement to missionaries on the foreign field. Turn back to Exodus chapter 34 and 24.

Exodus chapter 34 and 24. And I hope this will even thrill you so much that you might even say amen. Praise the Lord.

You know, a lot of people that come into our meetings think we're awfully dead. You know that? They wonder how we can scan the mystery o'er and not be moved to love and mourning. And not be more enthusiastic about the Lord Jesus.

Well, I wonder. Exodus 34, 24. Just a little background.

It says in verse 23, God is speaking to the children of Israel, thrice in the year, show all your men children, all your males appear before the Lord, the God of Israel. He said, I want your men folks to leave their homes thrice in the year and come up to Jerusalem to worship. And I can hear the wives and the kids saying, wait a minute, you leave us without the men? We're defenseless.

And you know that we're surrounded by enemies, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Philistine, all of them, you know, and they'll just swoop down on us like the Assyrian, like the Assyrian wolf swooping down on the foe. Listen to the next verse. Thrice in the year, verse 23, thrice in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.

For I will cast out the nations before thee and enlarge thy borders. Neither shall any man, what? Desire thy land. When thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord, thy God thrice in the year, God says, you obey me and I'll control the volition, the desires of your enemies.

So they won't even want your land. I tell you, that's a myth, isn't it? And he's still the same today. He's still the same today.

And we look about us and we see the forces of evil masked against the church. And we think the waves are beating against us. Yes, but the tide is sure to win.

One with God is the majority. And I mentioned about prayer that we never come closer to omnipotence than in prayer. And, you know, the wonderful thing is that in prayer we can deal in the realm of the impossible.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees and looks to God alone, laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done. If it's impossible, it can be done. And in prayer, by faith, we deal in that realm of the impossible.

And then finally, the omnipotence of God is a tremendous encouragement to us. Tremendous encouragement and comfort to our souls, the omnipotence of God. And let's put it this way.

The Savior can solve every problem. The tangles of life can undo. There's nothing too hard for Jesus.

There's nothing that he cannot do. Some of you are saying, yeah, but I got a problem. There's just no solution to it.

I prayed and nothing happened. Listen, the Savior can solve every problem. He solved the worst problems in the world.

Already solved. The tangles of life can undo. There's nothing too hard for Jesus.

There's nothing that he cannot do. When my weakness leans on his might, all seems light. The omnipotence of our God.

How we just bow and worship him tonight. Blessed God, our hearts are full. We feel tongue-tied when we think of your greatness, your omniscience, your omnipresence, your omnipotence.

What a great God you are. And just to think that you care for us. Just think, just to think that you took the initiative in our salvation, sent your lovely son into this world to be our sin-bearer.

That he came and aside he threw his most divine array and veiled his Godhead in a garb of clay. And in that garb, this wondrous love display, restoring what he never took away. And just to think, oh Father, that you've destined us to eternal glory.

That your love could not stop short of that. That you would not be satisfied till we would be there with the Lord Jesus and like him, the fruit and travail of his soul. As we contemplate your majesty, your glory, your greatness, and your goodness.

Deliver us, Lord, from the things of this earth that tie us down. And may we truly reign in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. We ask it in his worthy name and for his sake.

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