

The Power of God (2LCF 2.1f)

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[0:00] You might have heard the question posed to Christians where they ask, 'Can God make a rock too heavy for him to move? Or is God so powerful that he can create an object for him to move?'

And it's kind of a trick question because it's phrased in a way that it's a yes or no answer, but both yes and no is a wrong answer. It's a trick because if you say yes, then that means that God doesn't have the power to move the rock, that we have the creative power.

And if you say no, then that means that God does not have the creative power. So it's an incoherent question and it misrepresents the omnipotence of God, of God's almighty power.

God is almighty and he has, it's not that he has, he doesn't have something, he doesn't possess something that's not his essence, but he being power does accomplish all of his holy will.

Now in Jeremiah, in chapter 31, we see the promise of the new covenant. And then in Jeremiah 32, Jeremiah prays to God.

[1:10] Let's see what it says, starting in verse 17. Ah, Lord God, behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm.

There is nothing too hard for you. You show loving kindness to thousands and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them.

The great, the mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt to this day and in Israel and among other men. And you have made yourself a name as it is this day.

You have brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror.

[2:19] You have given them this land of which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed your voice or walked in your law.

They have done nothing of all that you commanded them to do. Therefore, you have caused all this calamity to come upon them. Look, the siege mounds.

They have come to the city to take it. And the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans, who fight against it because of the sword and famine and pestilence.

What you have spoken has happened. There you see it. And you have said to me, O Lord God, buy the field. You have said to me, O Lord God, buy the field for money and take witnesses.

Yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Now this section starts off by talking, with talking about God's almighty power, his outstretched arm and creating all things.

[3:30] And then it goes on to explain that man is frail and weak and vulnerable, but God is all powerful. Our great God, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for the time we have to be in it this evening. We thank you for the means of grace.

And we pray, Lord, that you would indeed increase our faith and enlighten our minds, and that you would guide us in our understanding, our knowledge and our understanding of this text.

And I pray, Lord, that you would grow us in our awe and reverence of you as a God who is omnipotent, a God who is almighty, and that we would more adore you, and that we would more trust you in your power to save your people.

Pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now the first section, it starts off by showing us God's almighty power. In verse 17, which says, So the heavens and the earth encompasses everything that's not God.

So everything that's not God is made by the power of God. And that's the tone that this text sets for us as we then look at God's power in redeeming his people and the people's response in Israel. [4:58] And we see, I'm going to skip to the end, that man is weak. Now Israel was enslaved in Egypt. They were in bondage in Egypt.

And Israel, God's people, needed to be redeemed from bondage in Egypt. Now something to understand for the context of this is that Israel was the children of Abraham.

God made a promise to Abraham in a covenant, covenantal promises to Abraham that he would have multiplied descendants, the inheritance of the land of Canaan, and that through his seed would come the one through whom the nations would be blessed.

So Abraham's seed, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, all of Israel is this, are these descendants of Abraham. And they find themselves in Egypt, enslaved and in bondage and needing to be redeemed.

Now the Israelites are a, while it's still in Egypt, it's a, when they get in the promised land, it's not an eternal kingdom.

[6:06] It's an earthly kingdom of Israel. So God, by his almighty power, his strong hand and outstretched arm in verses 21 to 22, redeemed his people.

So let's look at those two verses specifically. 22, you have given them this land of which you swore to your fathers. Actually, I'll start back in 21. You have brought your people, Israel, out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. You have given them this land of which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. So the redeeming of God's people out of bondage and slavery in Egypt and bringing them into the promised land is according to God's almighty power.

So God has the power to do this with his people, Israel, and redeeming his people from bondage and, of course, as we know, leading them through the wilderness on their way, on their pilgrimage and into the promised land.

He, by his almighty power, redeemed them from bondage, led them through the wilderness and into the promised land of rest. And then once Israel was in the promised land of rest, we, of course, see that it's a state of glory and nobody ever sins anymore and they're not capable of sinning and that is not true.

[7:27] Think of the book of Judges. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes and the cycle of always doing what the nations did and rejecting, forsaking God and going after the false gods. So we see God's almighty power in creating all things.

We see God's almighty power in redeeming his people from bondage and slavery and bringing them, leading them through the wilderness and entering into the promised land and we see God's almighty power, God's almighty power and God's almighty power and then we see the people's response is that they are weak, that they are frail and that they are prone to wander.

Man is weak. That's something that is very apparent in this text is man's frailty, man's weakness. Mankind is weak and frail and prone to wander and mankind is subject to sin.

So we see from this text that mankind is subject to sin. We also see that mankind is subject to calamity and pay attention also to where the calamity comes from.

But being weak, mankind is subject to calamity. Mankind is subject to being defeated by the sword. Mankind is subject to famine.

[8:41] Mankind is subject to pestilence and mankind is subject to siege. Mankind is weak. Look at verses 23 and 24. And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed your word or walked in your law.

They have done nothing of all that you command them to do. Therefore, you have caused all this calamity to come upon them. Look, the siege mounds.

They have come to the city to take it and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it because of the sword and famine and pestilence.

What you have spoken has happened. There you see it. And you have said to me, O Lord God, buy the field for money and take witnesses. Take the city.

Yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans. So mankind is weak. We see God's almighty power on display in creation and in redeeming, but yet mankind is weak.

[9:41] And sinful mankind needs to be redeemed not only from bondage and slavery in Egypt, but sinful mankind needs to be redeemed from bondage to sin.

So this exodus that we see a glimpse of, the exodus of being redeemed from Egypt through the wilderness and the promised land, there needs to be a greater exodus being redeemed from the bondage of sin and death.

And God, by his almighty power, redeems his people from bondage and leads them through the wilderness pilgrimage of this world and safely into the promised rest.

And in so doing, is on display the almighty power of God. So we have here a small glimpse of it in redemption, sorry, in the exodus and more greatly in the greater exodus.

God's power on display, his almighty power. So mankind is weak. We see that throughout the text. But man being frail, weak and vulnerable, God is powerful.

[10 : 45] God is almighty. Now notice in the text when it describes God's power, power, it talks about his outstretched arm.

And we know, of course, that God does not have a body, that God is spirit. So what does this mean to have an outstretched arm? We've spent much time in the past. We're not going to spend more time going over pronunciation of terminology.

But God does not have a body. What this is signifying is power. Now, some of God's attributes are communicable and some are not. For example, we looked at God's timelessness or his eternity, his eternality, and that is incommunicable as in that is not shared.

No creatures are eternal. Only God is eternal. But power is something that is communicable, that is shared. While it is in part, creatures have some power.

And in having some power, we in part get the concept of what power is. Although in creatures, it is weak and frail. Now, by saying an outstretched arm, when we think in human terms, according to the manner of men, an outstretched arm helps us, it gives us an analogy, analogically signifying power.

[12 : 04] We have some power. An example would be how a husband has the power to open a pickle jar for his wife. We have some power.

We accomplish things. How do we accomplish things? It's through the strength of our arm. So it's analogically speaking about the power. God's outstretched arm or strong right arm, which is also referenced, is his power in creation, which we see in verse 17.

And think of even the hymn, How Great Thou Art. And we think of God's outstretched arm in creation. We're just continually confronted with the fact that it's analogical language to reference God.

Because if before God created all things in creation, before the foundation of the world, there was nothing created, then how does God have an arm?

So it's analogically speaking. And then people who think that they're smart and clever, they'll ask the question, Well, what was God doing with his outstretched arm before the foundation of the world, before he created the world?

[13 : 16] And Augustine, in the 300s, he responded kind of tongue-in-cheek by saying that God was preparing hell for people who pry into such mysteries. In verse 17, God's almighty power in creation.

John Webster wrote, As first cause, God is not merely possessed of supreme power with greater range than a finite cause.

His power is not what he has, but what he is. We have power as something that is external to us. God is power.

All that is in God is God. God's very essence is power, the perfection of power. God is on display. the power of God in creation that we see in verse 17 is on display. So the power of God is on display in creation. The power of God is on display in new creation.

[14 : 23] We see the power of God in the Exodus and we also see the power of God in the greater Exodus. We'll unfold that a little bit, but more specifically, the power of God in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ.

I'm actually going to flip over there in Ephesians 1, 19 to 23. The power of God on display through God's work of redemption.

Ephesians 1, 19 to 23. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion in every name that is named not only the age in this age but also in

that which is to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body the fullness of him who fills all in all. So we're starting to see that there is some sort of a link between God's almighty power and it being on display for his glory in his work of redemption and work of creation and new creation.

Does God's power have any limits? Bollinger replied saying God is true to his nature and cannot do anything contrary to it.

[16:05] Still God can do all things specifically in the sense that he can do anything that he wills and all that he wills is in accordance with his nature.

Now there are things that God cannot do. For example God cannot die. God cannot lie. God cannot sin. God cannot suffer.

Such things God's God not being able to lie or die or sin or suffer these things aren't limits. It doesn't limit God's power. If God was capable of these things it would show that he is not almighty. It would limit it would weaken his omnipotence. So it doesn't limit God's omnipotence that he can't die or that he can't suffer whereas that would weaken it.

Rather such things if they were possible would weaken God and show his omnipotence to be deficient and defective. So God's omnipotence is in reference to divine activity in external operations.

[17:12] We've mentioned that all that is in God is God. God's divine power not to be too repetitive God's divine power is not something that is outside of himself that he has to possess to himself to use it but divine power is divine essence.

God is almighty God is power and divine essence is infinite. So if divine power is God's essence and God's essence is infinite then God's power God's almighty power is infinite.

God is almighty to accomplish all his holy will. The power of God is his perfect ability to effect what he wills so much so that God's willing is his doing.

Especially when we start to consider other things we've looked at like the timelessness of God God's eternity that there's no succession that God doesn't have to wait for an event to happen and then to react or to respond that God is God's willing is his doing and creation is more of an inner act of willing than an external act of craftsmanship that progresses over time.

So I want to focus a little bit more on the doctrine of divine omnipotence but again God does not have power and that might sound awkward at first how could you say God doesn't have power but it's the have that's the problem God is power God is omnipotence God is all powerful God is almighty and God does all his holy will there is no power external to him that prohibits him from accomplishing all of his holy will his holy will is redeeming Israel from bondage in Egypt and leading them through the wilderness into the land of promise God accomplishes all his holy will if God's holy will is to redeem his people through Christ and lead them through wilderness wandering and into into the promised heavenly rest in the new Jerusalem God is almighty and he will accomplish all of his holy will picked it on this he wrote in God will is power itself

[19:39] God does not have a will without the power to affect his will his very willing is power itself also Zanke we can just condense his name to Jerome for now Jerome Zanke said God can do all that he wills his power does not by way Zanke is an Italian reformer if you're not familiar with him but God can do all that he wills his power does not extend beyond his will nor his will beyond his power so there is a link between divine omnipotence and dominion notice the link God's dominion is his strength rule and authority over everything outside of himself that he is able and willing to do and does everything that's outside of God which encompasses everything is God's dominion and there is a direct link between divine omnipotence and dominion and dominion to have dominion over something it necessitates power

God has both jurisdiction and strength he is the potentate of potentates in Hebrews 1:3 it says through whom also he made the worlds upholding all things by the word of his power God is almighty and God's almighty power is on display in creating all things and in upholding all things and in new creation so if God is all powerful and this question could really be posed and people probably have asked it or they will ask it but in different forms but if God is all powerful and if God is good then why doesn't he do what we think he should do which of course that's not how people are going to word it but if God is all powerful and God is good and I think God should do this why doesn't God do this or if God is all powerful and God is good then why do all these bad things happen or if God is all powerful is he not good or if God is good and evil exists is God not all

powerful

God's attributes are not just almighty and good and to ask that question would limit almighty and good and it would define good according to our preferences but God's attributes are not just almighty and good God is also holy God is also righteous and God is also just as well as being loving and gracious and merciful and without evil and without sin and without suffering then we would not today know by experience the boundless love of God towards his blood bought people through his beloved son so what are some concluding uses that we can take from this text we see in verse 17 God's almighty power on display in creation in all of creation and we see God's power on display in redeeming his people from bondage to slavery in Egypt leading them through the wilderness and into the land of promise we see

God's almighty power on display in new creation in redeeming his people from the bondage and slavery to sin and death and leading them through this wilderness pilgrimage and into the promised land of rest the greater exodus displays for us God's almighty power and we see God's almighty power in raising Christ as I read in Ephesians 1 19 to 23 and God's power is on display will be on display in raising the redeemed Psalm 106 8 says nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake that he might make his mighty power known so I want you to think upon the fact that scripture tells us that God is putting his power on display in his creative work his redemptive work his work of creation and new creation so why is God's power on display and why is our attention being brought to it what is it what is to be accomplished here so that he might make his mighty power known what's the significance of that well we see here in

Psalm 106 that God saved them for his name's sake to make his mighty power known that's in the exodus but in Romans 9 we kind of get a glimpse back into the beginnings of the exodus in 16 so then is it not of him who wills nor of him who runs but of God who shows mercy so but the context before this is hardening Pharaoh and which sorry so it goes on to say in verse 17 the greater exodus in verse 18 therefore he has mercy on whom he wills and whom he wills he hardens and then further on in 22 it says what if

[25 : 42] God wanting to show his wrath and to make his power known endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy God's power is on display that it may be made known to us who are his people that we may marvel at him and that he might make known to us the riches of his glory being vessels of mercy so there is a link between God's power on display and redeeming his people to the praise of his glory such as in Ephesians 1 19 23 God's power on display in raising Christ from the dead and then when you turn the page over to Ephesians 2 you see God's power on display and saving dead sinners and quickening those whom are walking according to the course of the world and then in Revelation 19 6 and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings saying before

I read the rest of it remember the link of God's almighty power being made known to his glory in our enjoyment of God in our adoration of God and then we see here this heavenly glimpse of the saints in glory the sound of mighty thunder saying hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigns the title which is used to glorify God is the Lord God omnipotent all powerful God's power on display of people to himself and then revelation 19 7 it says let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory so while we are not in a state of glory God's almighty power is on display to us and let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory and on the nature of our praise of God often our praise of God is focused on what he has done for us not that there's anything wrong with requesting supplications or praying for what

God has done for us but often our focus and prayer is on what God has done or what we would like him to do! whether our salvation or things related to our daily lives the things which God provides for us or that we are saved yet here the praise of the saints in revelation 19 6 the praise of the saints is centered on who God is the Lord God omnipotent reigns and what he has done entirely apart from the circumstances of our individual lives let's pray