



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“Attributes of God: The Immensity and Omnipresence of God”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] ...Thee for the word of God, and we thank Thee that it is living, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, that it pierces even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And we are extremely solemn, Lord, as we think it is with this word that we have today and that this word shall be our judge in the day in which we as Christians appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

And we pray that as we stand before that judgment seat, we may not be ashamed. And so may this hour tonight be an hour in which we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we also grow in the knowledge of our Father and of the Holy Spirit. May the attributes of properties of our great God become very plain to us so that they may be sources of comfort and bases upon which we may trust in our personal lives and in the day in which we live. We commit this hour to Thee, and we pray that Thy voice may be heard through the Scriptures.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Our subject tonight is the continuation and conclusion of our last study which was, Where is God? or the Spirituality, Infinity and Immensity of God. For our Scripture reading which has to do with the omnipresence or immensity of God, let’s turn to Psalm 139, and let’s read verses 7 through 12. Psalm 139, verses 7 through 12. David writes in the seventh verse -- and I am reading from the New American Standard Bible, in case you notice some differences.

“Where 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 will lay hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light about me shall be night; Even the darkness is not dark to thee, But the night is as bright as the day: The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

We are studying the attributes of God, which we have defined as the perfections of the divine essence set forth in the Scriptures or visibly exercised in his works of creation, providence, and redemption. And we have divided them into two classes. These two classes are incommunicable and communicable. The incommunicable attributes are those that bear little analogy to the properties of human nature. The communicable attributes are those that bear considerable analogy to the properties of human nature. And as you can tell by that simple diagram which I have drawn for our overhead projector, you can see that we’re dealing entirely with the incommunicable attributes. And we’ll have looked at his self-existence, his simplicity unity and so on. Those that are communicable are attributes such as, for example, God’s righteousness, and that attribute is an attribute which bears a great deal of analogy to the properties of human nature or God’s love. And we shall deal with them in due course, but we have

dealt with these six or five incommunicable attributes up to this point. We dealt briefly with his self-existence, and we pointed out that this was his independence.

Now, remember these attributes are true of each of the three persons of the trinity. In other words, the Father possesses all of the attributes, both incommunicable and communicable. The Son possesses all of the attributes. And the Spirit possesses all of the attributes. If it were true that the Holy Spirit possessed all but one of the attributes, he would not be God as the Father is God or as the Son is God. And the same would be true of each of the three persons of the trinity. They each possess all of the attributes, and so they each are independent. This attribute is that which marks him out as completely self-sufficient. His existence is not from someone else. His existence is from himself. And so the existence of the Father is from himself. The existence of the Son is from himself. The existence of the Spirit is from himself. Each one of them is self-existent.

Now, we speak of God as the first cause. And so our great triune God is the first cause and yet he is uncaused in himself. Now, remember that the text that we used particularly was the text in Exodus chapter 3 when God was met -- when God met Moses and when Moses asked him his name he said I am who I am. I am the self-existent one, and I cannot be defined by anyone else. I am God, and that is really all we can say. We can say that God is this and God is that and God is the other thing, but no one can define God for there is no standard by which we may measure him. So he is self-existent.

Often you hear preachers and you have heard me a number of times say that Jesus Christ, for example, is very God of very God.

Now, that is an expression that, strictly speaking, if you were a good theologian you probably check me up and say, Dr. Johnson, have you forgotten the source of that expression very God of very God? It was an expression that was used in the Nicene Creed by those who were associated in the controversy over Athanasius and between Athanasius and Arius over the question of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And

Athanasius, the great presbyter of Alexandria, who prevailed fortunately at that conference and who contended strongly for the deity of the Son contended that nevertheless was very God of very God. In other words, he said that the Father had being from himself but the Son had being from the Father. He was very God from very God. That is the Father.

Now, Calvin, years later, contended very strongly against this and caused quite a bit of difficulty in the ranks of the theologians of the sixteenth century because it was Calvin’s contention that Jesus Christ was self-existent himself and that he did not derive his being from the Father. He was not very God of very God. And Calvin, of course, was right. It was one of those cases where it was necessary for one to stand up for what the Bible taught as over against what the creeds had been saying.

Now, I believe in creeds in the sense that we have to, each one of us, express what we believe. We may not necessary follow every detail of the Heidelberg Catechism or the Westminster Confession of Faith, but every one of us has some kind of creed. In Believer’s Chapel, we don’t have any creed in the sense of that type of creed. If you were to go to Mr. Pryor and say now what is the doctrinal statement of Believer’s Chapel? I’d like to know if I agree with what you preach and believe here. He loves for someone to do that, by the way, because he likes to get a Bible out and just hand you a Bible and say, now this is what we believe.

Well, now, that is precisely what we believe. We believe what is found in the Bible but of course, we must define what is found in the Bible, and it is the responsibility of the elders of the church to determine under the ministry, illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, what they think the word of God teaches. At the same time, we should be prepared to change our views if we discover that we have wrong in teaching. And Calvin, fortunately, stood very strongly for the self-existence not only of the Father but of the Son -- that he was God himself in every way. The Greek expression was *autotheotus*. And so the Father is self-existence. The Son is self-existent. The Spirit is self-existent. And while we still go on saying he is very God of very God, we must be careful to say

that Jesus Christ really is, if pressed, very God. In fact, I think I’m going to just let it stay there. The Father is very God. Very is the old word for truth. Truly God. The Son is very God or truly God. The Spirit is very God or truly God. So that each one of the persons of the trinity possesses the attribute of self-existence.

Now, very quickly we discussed simplicity. I don’t think this attribute is as important as self-existence, but we said that this meant that God was free from compositeness and from distinction. He does not grow in the experiences of personality as you and I grow. He does not grow in knowledge. He does not grow in wisdom. He does not grow in grace. He does not grow in love. We may grow in the experience of his grace or in the knowledge of his love and so on, but he does not grow. He is simple. He is free from compositeness and from distinction. You cannot divide God up and have a little bit of God over here and a little bit of God over there.

Then we said he possessed the attribute of unity, the oneness and the uniqueness of God. He is one. There are not three Gods. There is one God who subsists in three persons but not three gods. We do not believe in a tri-theism but in a trinity, a tri-unity, a unity of three personalities -- persons, the better term. And since there is this one God, he is unity.

Now, therefore any other kind of God or any other representation of a God is an idol. And so that is why in the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments warn Israel against idolatry and why in the New Testament too. We read near the end of it, little children keep yourselves from idols. Any kind of idol is a misrepresentation of God. Put a little figure on your mantle and say that is God and you have already libeled the character of God and blasphemed his incorruptibility. For example, we said God possessed spirituality, his immaterial subsistence, and that implies that he is a self-conscious, intelligent, emotional, and volitional moral agent. He is a spirit, or he is a person. He is not a material substance, and so do not look for God anywhere. He is of an entirely different type of makeup.

And we said that he possessed infinity. Shedd says that infinity is the divine essence viewed as having no bounds or limits which necessarily involves his perfection and that pervades the essence and all of his attributes. In other words, he is not just infinite in his incommunicable attributes, but he is infinite in his communicable attributes. And so these attributes often pervade all of the properties of God, infinity.

Now, tonight we are going to come to his immensity and omnipresence. And these are very closely related attributes, and so I’m going to consider them together, immensity and omnipresence. Now, you may remember our outline last time, and this is the conclusion of it. We discussed the spirituality of God. We discussed the infinity of God. And then the third point was the immensity and omnipresence of God.

Now, this is the remainder of the outline, the immensity and omnipresence of God and, Capital A, some definitions and distinctions. This teaching of the immensity and omnipresence of God is of the greatest importance. It is didactic. That is, it is something that instructs us in truth that we need to be instructed in. It is consolatory in the sense that it is a comforting teaching, and if we come to understand it, we will be comforted and consoled, better able to face our Christian lives and responsibilities. And it is also auditory in the sense that when we come to understand this doctrine, it should be an incentive to us to a deeper Christian experience.

Capital A, some definitions and distinctions.

Now, let’s attempt to explain and distinguish this instruction. And I’m going to give you five points and discuss them just briefly. First, immensity is an aspect of God’s infinity. Immensity is an aspect of God’s infinity. If we were thinking about God’s infinity in relation to time, if we were in a theological class and just a few of us in the classroom and I knew you real well and that you wouldn’t get too far off the subject I’d ask you the question, but I’ll just ask it rhetorically tonight. If we were thinking of God’s infinity in relation to time, what would we say about his infinity? Well, if you were a good student

you would say well we would say that God was eternal because his infinity in relation to time is a reference to his eternity. Now, we shall study his eternity shortly.

Now, in relation to space God’s infinity is his immensity. So if we think of his infinity with reference to time, we are thinking of his eternity. If we’re thinking of his infinity with reference to space, we are talking about his immensity. Now, what does immensity mean? Well, immensity is an English word that comes from the Latin expression *immensus*. And those of you who took Latin two three generations ago may remember that the Latin verb *measure, mensura, mensus* is the verb that meant to measure. And so in is like the negative, and so in *in* plus *mensum* the passive participle means that which cannot be measured. And so when we think of something as big -- it’s so big we just are awed by it -- we say it is immense in English. It is as if could not be measured, it is so large. So when we’re thinking about immensity, we are thinking about God’s infinity in relation to space, and we’re calling it his immensity because we are thinking of him as a person who cannot be measured.

Second, not only is immensity an aspect of God’s infinity, but we may define immensity as that perfection of the divine being by which he transcends all spatial limitations. That perfection of the divine being by which he transcends all spatial limitations, and yet is present in every point of space with his whole being.

Now, let me give that again. It’s very important that you get what this involves. God’s immensity is that perfection of the divine being by which he transcends all spatial limitations and yet is present in every point of space with his whole being. Now, it has its negative side, as you can guess. The divine being is not limited to space. He transcends all spatial limitations. You cannot put God in anything. You cannot even put him in his universe. There is nothing in which you can put God. And it has a positive aspect. He fills every part with his whole being. In other words, within space we have all of God at any one point within space.

Now, that’s an amazing thing, isn’t it? Think about God. He is so immense that he transcends all spatial limitations and yet he is present at every point within his creation with his whole being. Now, young people say that blows my mind. [Laughter] Well, that blows my mind, too. That’s why he’s the infinite God. But he is completely here just as much as he is completely there. And he is completely there, and this is true throughout the whole of the universe. He is everywhere wholly and completely at every point and yet he transcends all of space itself. He’s immense, immense theologically. Three, we may distinguish -- theologians have distinguished three modes of presence in space. We may distinguish three modes of presence in space. Bodies are in space circumscriptively C-I-R-C-U-M-S-C-R-I-P-T-I-V-E-L-Y, circumscriptively. Circumscribe. Circumscriptively. Bodies are in space circumscriptively. for they are bounded by it on every side. My body is up here before you circumscriptively, because I am bounded by space on every side. I am completely within space.

Now, I’ve heard my wife occasionally say I’m not feeling very well. My head is off in the woods. [Laughter] and I understand a lot of women occasionally have that feeling and some men do. But that is purely a mode of speaking. That body, in spite of the fact that your head feels like it’s off in the woods, is still circumscriptively right here. Now, finites spirits are in space definitively. In other words, finite spirits finite spirits like an angel -- finite spirits are in space definitively. That is they are throughout space. They pervade space but they are always somewhere. They are at a certain definite place. They’re not everywhere.

Now, take one of the angels like Michael. He’s not everywhere. Michael is somewhere, and he is a spirit being for he is an angel. Satan is a spirit being, and so he is somewhere but he’s not everywhere. People have the idea often that Satan is everywhere. He’s attacking you. He’s attacking me. Attacking four thousand or fifty thousand other people at the same time. That’s not true. He has his organized hierarchy of little demons, and he sends them after you because he’s not particularly interested in

most of us. He doesn’t need to handle us directly. He sends one of his little demons who is very strong and powerful and able to get us out of the will of God without him bothering himself. He himself occupies himself with larger goals and more significant more difficult tasks perhaps. And so while Satan is a spirit being, he is not omnipresent. He is a definitively related person to space.

Now, God fills space repletively. Let me spell that. There is no other word I know that is as good as this old theological word. God fills space repletively. R-E-P-L-E-T-I-V-E-L-Y. You know this is why everybody should have taken Latin, not two years at least four and preferably eight, because if you did you wouldn’t have a whole lot of difficulty with the English language since over seventy five percent of our words until relatively recent time came from Latin. Repletively. The word means to fill, And consequently repletively means that God fills space fully. His essence fills all of space. He is included in space. Let me change that. That was not right. He is included, included, in most space. He is excluded from none. He is included in most space. That is, there is no space that can include all of God and he is excluded from no space.

God is a circle, it has been said, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. In other words, he is everywhere in all of his being and yet he is not contained anywhere. He is immense. Immense.

Four, by virtue of his immensity he is omnipresent. By virtue of his immensity he is omnipresent. By immensity he transcends all space. By omnipresence, he fills every part of space with his whole being. Let me say that again so you can think about it a little. By immensity he transcends all space. By omnipresence he fills every part of space with his whole being.

Now, immensity stresses then his transcendence. He is not only in space, but he is over all space and beyond, the unlimited immense God. His omnipresence stresses his immanence. That is, he is within space at every point in space with his whole being. I-

M-M-A-N-E-N-C-E. Immanence. Remember the Latin words if you just knew your Latin, you’d say my goodness Dr. Johnson go on all that’s simple. Immanence. *Maneo* means to remain or abide, remember. And so his immanence is stressed by his omnipresence. His transcendence by which he is over all is stressed by his immensity. One relates him to space abstractly. He is immense. The other relates him to his creatures personally. He is omnipresent. Charles Hodge, one of our great theologians, has said he is equally present with all his creatures at all times and in all places.

Now, if God is really omnipresent as well as immense, then I think we can see the error of many of the ancient religions and some of our more modern philosophers and even literatures who have held to the doctrine of pantheism in one form or another for centuries. Pantheism is erroneous. The name itself is a relatively modern thing but you can trace pantheism back to the Brahmins of India, the Stoics. Spinoza, a relatively modern Jewish philosopher, has within his system one of the most perfect expressions of it. Hegel has had within his system aspects of pantheism. Wordsworth, Horange and others were pantheists. The era of Pantheism is two-fold. It denies the transcendence of God.

Now, the Pantheists God is all and all is God. This is God. This is God. And God is all this. In other words, God is all and all is god. Now, if it were true that God is the stick and God is the stone and God is the tree and God is the stars and God is the sky and God is all of these benches that are before us here. And this God and all is God and God is all. In effect, we are denying the transcendence of God because Pantheism allows for no transcendent God who is over all. At the same time, the assumption that he is the substance of all things is wrong, for he distinguishes himself from his things which he has created. He is above all. Cannon Holmes of India who preached the word as a Christian there told of seeing Hindu worshippers going around tapping on trees and stones and whispering, are you there? Are you there? And of course, receiving no answer.

Now, a Christian would answer yes. He is there, but he is more than just there. He’s over here. He’s over here. He’s over there and furthermore he’s outside of this whole here-ness because he is the transcendent God.

Now, this doctrine that God is immense also is a denial of the doctrine the deists. The deists believed in God. They believed that God really was the creator of things but that when he created things he went back to his house and went into his house and sat down by the fire and let everything run on its own ever since. And consequently they thought that God was present with his power but not with his being and with his nature. But the Christian doctrine of the immensity of God and the omnipresence of God, the doctrine that he is both transcendent over all and the fact that he is imminent in all, that is operating the Christian doctrine is contrary to that.

Five, he is not equally present and present in the same sense with all his creatures. He is not equally present and present in the same sense with all his creatures. He does not dwell on earth as he does in heaven. He does not dwell in animals as he does in men. He does not dwell in the wicked as he does in the righteous. He does not dwell in the church as he does in Jesus Christ. And so there are different ways in which God is omnipresent and we must recognize them. As Charnock says, “God is in heaven in regard of the manifestation of glory, in hell by the expression of his justice, in the earth by the discoveries of his wisdom, power, patience, and compassion, in his people by the monuments of his grace, and in all in regard of his substance.” In other words, he is omnipresent. He is at every point in space with the whole of his being but there are different senses in which he is present, and we need to recognize that.

All right. Now I’ve said all of these five points so you can learn to distinguish between his immensity which stresses his transcendence and his omnipresence which stresses his immanence.

Now, let’s move on to Capital B, the logical evidence for the teaching. His omnipresence may be deduced from the fact of his simultaneous action and knowledge

everywhere and perpetually throughout his universe. The power of the cause must be where the effect is. As Charnock contends, if therefore God have an infinite essence he has an infinite presence. An infinite essence cannot be contained in a finite space as those things which are finite have abound in space wherein they are. So that which is infinite have an unbounded space for as infiniteness speaks limitedness so infiniteness as finiteness speaks limitedness so infiniteness speaks unboundedness. In other words, Charnock, as others have argued since God is infinite, he therefore must be transcendent. He cannot be limited. So he must be immense because he is infinite.

You might argue it from his immutability too. Now, we haven’t come to that. We’re going to discuss his immutability one of the great practical attributes of God, but that doctrine essentially says that God does not change. Now, if it were true that God were over here at one time and then were over here at another time, there would be distinct change in God and consequently the fact that he is immutable argues for his omnipresence fully at every point in space at all times and for his immensity that he is beyond space.

Now, I think if you’ve been listening to what I’ve been saying and trying to follow and if you’re having difficulty, that’s all right. You do not learn the doctrines of the nature of God by sitting in a lecture hall for a few minutes. This is something upon which you must reflect and upon which you -- in which you will probably grow as the years go by. But I think if you will reflect for a moment upon the fact that God is omnipresent and immense, then you’re not going to be greatly impressed by the human expressions that men manufacture for God. They call God for example the man upstairs.

Now, it’s obvious that that kind of name for God is actually a blasphemy of his character and of his attributes, and you probably could think of a great deal of he’s not only the man upstairs he’s the man on the ground floor. He’s the man in the basement. He’s the man everywhere. He’s not even a man. He’s God, and so he’s different.

Well, let's go on now to, C, the scriptural evidence for the teaching. I like to deal with these things logically and ask ourselves, could we prove these things without reference to Scripture knowing what we already know about Scripture but in the final analysis we're going to look at the word of God, and so let's now turn to God's special revelation, the Bible. And let's see what it has to say. First of all, let's turn to 1 Kings chapter 8 in verse 27, and I think I'll even ask you a question tonight. 1 Kings chapter 8, verse 27. After we read this text. 1 Kings 8:27.

Now, this is the chapter in which Solomon addresses after the ark is brought into the temple, and we read -- let's begin reading in verse 25,

"Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, keep with Thy servant David my father that which Thy have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way to walk before Me as you have walked.' "Now therefore, O God of Israel, let Thy word, I pray, be confirmed which Thy have spoken to Your servant, my father David. "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built!"

Now, Solomon wondering that God would appoint a temple to be erected to himself since the heaven of heavens of could not contain him affirms what doctrine, his omnipresence or his immensity? Which? His immensity, right. Notice he says in verse 27, not Behold, heaven and the highest heaven does not cannot contain Thee but cannot contain Thee. In other words, his universe cannot contain him. He transcends all of this universe. He is immense.

Let's turn to Psalm 139. Psalm 139. And here we look at that section which we read for our Scripture reading. The Psalmists says verse 7, Psalm 139,

“Where can I go from thy presence? Where can I flee...or Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me.”

He goes on to point out that God is in the darkness and in the light. If there were a region no matter how large to which God were restricted in the presence of his being he would be a finite God. Thus the psalmist speaks not only of his pervading power but of his imminent presence. He is talking about his omnipresence. He is saying no matter where I go in this universe there you are, not part of you. There you are. And we’re not to think of God as scurrying about in order to be there when we get there, but he is there. He is there everywhere. He does not have to move. He does not have to race around to anticipate us.

Now, the gods of the heathen were entirely different. They were local deities. The gods of Egypt, the gods of Syria, the gods of Bisque, the gods of Betts, the gods of the other thing, the gods of Dallas, the gods of Fort Worth if we had lived in those days, but it’s a rather striking thing, isn’t it, that Israel had a God like this. Israel after all is just an ordinary rude people. They lived in the land of Palestine where, surely, one would say there was not the highest of ancient civilization. Actually the highest of ancient civilization would be found in an Egypt or in a Babylon but not in the land of Palestine. How is it that this rude people, just escaping from the bondage and degradation of slavery, reveal to the ancient world and to us a sublime of theology then the theology of the porch or of the lyceum of Aristotle or of the academy a theology that is sublimer than any ancient leading philosophers ever dreamed of? A theology that is greater than Plato’s or Aristotle’s? How is it? They tell us about a spiritual and eternal and omnipresent and infinite God, and it is the pervading doctrine of the entire revelation which they possess.

Now, to me that is one of the many, many proofs that the Bible is an inspired book because it is absolutely inconceivable that a people who had their history should give us such a theology if it had not been given to them by God. As a matter of fact, the theology that that ancient people gave us as the mediators of it is higher than anything that any modern philosopher attempts to give to men today. That’s an amazing thing.

Now, you can see from this that God is what? Psalm 139. omnipresent. Well, how foolish of Jonah to suppose that God was not in the West just as in the East when he raced from the presence of the Lord. An integral father wrote upon a wall in his house wishing to instill his infidelity into his little boy. And he wrote the words God is nowhere N-O-W-H-E-R-E. The little boy looked up at the words for a moment, and he said you know daddy that’s exactly what my teacher’s been telling me. God is now here.

[Laughter] No matter what try to say or no matter how you attempt to flee from the truth, it’s ultimately grasps you. And one of the greatest of the truths is the omnipresence of God. You will notice, of course, that psalmist is no pantheist. So far from saying that nature is God he distinguishes between the creator and the created things right here in this little section. Talks about thy spirit, thy presence, thou art there, thy hand, darkness hideth not from Thee, so forth.

Isaiah 66:1. Isaiah 66:1. Now, we don’t have time to expound all of circumstances of the remainder of our texts but I do want to read them. Isaiah 66 in verse 1.

“Thus saith the Lord...” “Thus says the LORD...” it says in my text. “...”Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?”

He speaks to those are to return from Babylon to the land and who are thinking in their mind to construct the temple to God. And so he asks them where is a house that you could build for me? Why heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool.

Now, class what is he speaking about? his omnipresence or his immensity here? His immensity right, because heaven and earth comprehend everything we know about but he sits in heaven. And if he sits on heaven he’s outside and beyond it. He is immense and earth is nothing but his footstool. Think of that. Just think of the picture that Isaiah has given. And so Jehovah condemns those who think that they can construct a temple in which they may place God when he sits in the grandest temple of them, all even grander than St. Peter’s in Rome. Heaven is his throne. The earth is his footstool.

You know that’s why it is so silly, so silly for us to think we can come in a building like this and contain God within it. The Lord is in his holy temple that all the earth keep silence before him. That text of course has always been a striking to me because all you have to do is work back the context and notice it’s a text of judgment, and he’s called the nations to judgment before him and he’s saying the Lord is in his holy temple. He’s going to execute judgment on men. Everybody keep quiet. It’s a courtroom scene and what do we do. Why some person thumbing through the Bible a few generations back looking for some little thing to play when the church service begins on Sunday morning at eleven o’clock. And my what a wonderful little text he used then, and so they set it to music and so it’s the Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silent before him and we sing it or we listen to it Sunday morning as if everybody is going to come in everybody is going to by nice. Dr. Barnhouse used to like to say it, it really means it’s eleven o’clock Sunday morning. It’s eleven o’clock Sunday morning. It’s eleven o’clock Sunday morning. It’s time everybody to come to church. And it’s so different from the context of Scripture. It’s a context of judgment. There is no church in which God may be held. The church is bigger than this building, and God is immense.

So by the way did you notice what Isaiah goes on to say. He says,

"My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word."

Now, isn't that an amazing thing? This God who sits on the throne of heaven and has earth as his footstool, this immense, omnipresent God why he's the man who looks at and searches for the one who is humble, contrite of spirit, and he trembles at his word. Think of that. This immense God is interested in the person who trembles at his word.

And whenever I read this text, I think of an old story of Adam Clark. Adam Clark has written an old well-used commentary in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. And there is an incident about his youth that is associated with this particular text by one of the commentators or authors of a book on Scripture. There is a text over in Proverbs that says the eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it.

Now, how about that children? The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it. That's a good text to give to your children around the breakfast room table. [Laughter] Now, I'm sure that some modern Christian education philosopher would tell us that it would be bad to read a text like this, but nevertheless in the old days they just read the Bible and didn't bother what about what people might say about it. And Adam Clark had been instructed in this and one day he was disobedient and he walked out of his house and he happened to look up at the skies and he saw a raven up there and immediately that text came to his mind, and he put his hand over his eyes and rushed into his mother trembling. And we all laugh at this, of course, because it does seem silly but you know it's precisely the attitude that God is looking for in a person. He's looking for a person who trembles at his word. And the author who told that little story made that point of it,

trembling at God’s word. Now, that’s the kind of person I would like to be, a person who trembles at God’s word.

Let’s read some more. Jeremiah chapter 23, verses 23 and 24. Quickly. Jeremiah says verse 23, chapter 23,

“Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares the LORD " Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.”

And again this is omnipresence. There is nowhere that you can go that God does not see you. He hears everything that you say, and he’s not disturbed because I’m saying one thing. You’re saying something else. He’s not disturbed by the cacophony of sounds. He hears everything distinctly always. He’s everywhere.

Let’s turn over to Acts chapter 7. Acts chapter 7, verse 48 and 49 just illustrates for us that the apostles and the deacons and the evangelists of the early church read the Old Testament Scriptures for Stephen in his message says in Acts 7:48,

“However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says: 'HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET; WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME?' says the Lord, 'OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE? WAS IT NOT MY HAND WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?’”

And then Acts chapter 17 in verse 28 Paul says in his sermon in Athens,

“for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.’” Verse 27, “that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us”

He is omnipresent. He does not absorb everything within himself but he sustains everything within in universe.

And finally Hebrews chapter 1 in verse 3. Hebrews chapter 1 in verse 3. Now, this text is a text which implies God’s omnipresence indirectly for we read in Hebrews 1, verse 3,

“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”

In other words, what our author is saying is that he is the governor of the universe, for he upholds all things by the word of his power. We are not to think of our text here in Hebrews 1 as suggesting that God is a kind of atlas who has the globe on his shoulders and who is burdened by the weight of it. You know bent over like this with the globe on his shoulder. The word for uphold is a word that is used of governing. It’s the word that was used of Moses’ leadership of the children of Israel through the wilderness. He was bearing Israel along to the Promised Land and so God bears all things along by the word of his power. He is moving all of the affairs of human history to the great consummation of the kingdom and on into the eternal state.

Now, if a person is a one who governs all things, moving all things on to a foregone conclusion, then he must be in control of everything, everywhere at every time. And to be in control of everything, everywhere, every time means that he is omnipresent. And so his governments is an argument for his omnipresence.

Now, you put all of these things together and it would be very difficult to find Scriptures that would be plainer in their teaching that God is immense and God is omnipresent.

Now, what may we say of the practical effects this teaching. Well, in the first place, I think we could say that this confirms the spiritual nature of God. It argues for his providence. His immensity fits him for government. Charnock says, “As his eternity renders him king always, so his immensity renders him king everywhere.” It infers his omniscience, for if he is everywhere in all of his being, he surely has full knowledge of everything that is going on. It infers his incomprehensibility so far as we are concerned, for he is greater than our understanding. And I think also it teaches something that should terrify sinners, that God is everywhere. I know we think we could get away with things with God. We think if we are not around the saints and if we do something that we have really put something over on God but, my dear friend, God was right there all the time.

Now, that’s an amazing thing. There isn’t one thing you can think that he doesn’t not know. He’s there, right there. Go to heaven. Go to hell. There he is. Go to the sea to the depths of it. Ho out in the darkness; he’s there; in the light; he’s there. He’s everywhere. He’s there. And the Christians of all people who know God is omnipresent is to fear sin.

Now, it is tremendously consolatory, too. If his omnipresence is a terror to evil and to evil men, it’s a comfort to one who has been justified, for he is always with us everywhere. He’s a comfort to us in our temptation for he is always with us. He never abandons us. He is always at our right hand. It is a comfort to us in our sharp afflictions and in any special task that we might have.

You know, the devil has a tremendous problem. He must prevail in his enmity against God so as to make God cease to be God if he is going to have any affect on the saints. As one of the writers has said, he must prevail so far as to make God cease to be God before he can make him to be distant from us. And while this cannot be, the devils in men can no more hinder the emanations of God to the soul than a child can cut off the

rays of the sun from embellishing the earth. He is our omnipresent God, and I think this should be tremendously [indistinct] to us as well.

What soldier would do a dishonorable deed in the presence of his general? You ordinarily would do that when the general is not around. In the same way, God’s presence should have its effect on us. What was the cause of Job’s integrity? Well, the Bible says that it was because God’s wave was before him. What was the reason for Jacob’s awe at Bethel? Why it was because he said he had seen God in this place. And so the presence of God had tremendously moved him -- moved him to awe and to wonder.

I am not suggesting my dear Christian friends that if you recognize the omnipresence of God everything is going to be a continual of jubilee, that you’re going to go around being happy all the time. It is striking the Bible says very little about happiness. As a matter of fact, I’m not really sure I would like a happy life. A happy life is ordinarily is an artificial, superficial life. I would like a joyous life but at times it’s necessary for God to do things in our lives that are not very happy.

Like a little child that comes with a splinter in its hand, mother takes the little child up in her arms and she gets her needle or her instrument and she picks and soon the child is crying and -- wincing or crying or moaning over what has happening, but it’s all good. And so it is necessary often for us to have experiences like that. Life is not a continue of jubilee, but because we have an omnipresent God then in the midst of the crying and in the midst of the tears in the midst of the tragedies we can know that he is with us and we shall not be moved. Time is up.

I am really tremendously glad I have an omnipresent God and I think I understand better what Jesus Christ meant when he said, know I am with you always even to the end of the earth. Let’s bow in prayer.

“The Immensity and Omnipresence of God” by S. Lewis Johnson
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[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee that we have such a great God. And that
Moses we would like to say ascribed the greatness to our God immense and omnipresent.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.