

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 11, Incommunicable Attributes, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 11, Incommunicable Attributes, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's "Theology Proper, Session 11" explores **God's communicable attributes**, specifically focusing on **omnipresence** and **omnipotence**. The lecture defines omnipresence as God being fully and simultaneously present everywhere, distinguishing between his general presence and his special covenantal presence with believers. Peterson then examines omnipotence, defining it as God's unlimited power to do anything consistent with his nature and highlighting its manifestation in creation, providence, and redemption, even ascribing these powerful acts to Christ. Ultimately, the session emphasizes the comfort and encouragement these attributes offer believers.

**2. 26 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 11 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Theology Proper:
God).**



**Peterson_TheoProp
er_Session11.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 11, Incommunicable Attributes, Part 2

Briefing Document: Communicable Attributes of God - Omnipresence and Omnipotence

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 11 of his Theology Proper lectures, focusing on two incommunicable attributes of God: omnipresence and omnipotence. Peterson provides definitions, biblical support, theological implications, and addresses potential misunderstandings of these divine attributes.

I. Omnipresence:

Main Theme: God is fully and simultaneously present everywhere.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Definition:** Omnipresence means "God is fully and simultaneously present everywhere."
- **Interrelation with other attributes:** Peterson highlights the connection between omnipresence and God's nature as spirit and his infinity.
- As spirit (not physical), God's presence is spiritual but genuine.
- As infinite, omnipresence is essentially God's infinity related to space.
- **Biblical Support: Jeremiah 23:23-24:** This is identified as a key passage, contrasting God's nearness and farness, emphasizing that no one can hide from Him and that He fills heaven and earth.
- Quote: "Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him, declares the Lord? Do I not fill heaven and earth, declares the Lord?"
- **Isaiah 40:22:** God is "enthroned above the circle of the earth," highlighting his transcendence.
- **1 Kings 8:27 & 2 Chronicles 6:18:** Even the highest heaven cannot contain God, further emphasizing transcendence. Quote: "So that quote, even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain him."

- **Acts 17:28:** "In him we live and move and have our being," emphasizing God's immanence.
- **Isaiah 40:11:** Depicts God's caring and near presence, "He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in the fold of his garment."
- **Distinction between General and Special Presence:** God is universally present due to his omnipresence.
- God has a special, covenantal, or saving presence with believers.
- **Matthew 28:20:** Jesus' promise, "I am with you always to the end of the age," assures believers of His special presence.
- **John 6:63 & John 14:17:** The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of life and truth" and dwells in believers. Quote: "It is the Spirit who gives life... the words I have spoken to you are spirit and life... the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive... You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."
- **Old Testament Example:** God's special dwelling in the tabernacle and temple in Israel (1 Kings 8:13, 16, 20).
- **New Testament Application:** Believers, corporately (1 Corinthians 3:16) and individually (1 Corinthians 6:19), are now God's temple where He especially dwells.
- Quote (1 Corinthians 3:16): "Do you not know that you, plural, are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"
- Quote (1 Corinthians 6:19): "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"
- **God's Presence in Hell:** God is omnipresent in hell.
- However, His presence in hell is different from His presence in heaven. He is present in holiness, justice, power, and wrath, not in grace, comfort, and blessing (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Revelation 14:10).
- Hell is a place "away from the presence of the Lord" in terms of relational blessing and fellowship. Quote (2 Thessalonians 1:9): "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

- Christ is present in hell as judge. Quote (Revelation 14:10): Idolaters "will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb."
- **Encouragement and Warning:** God's omnipresence and special presence are a great encouragement to believers (Psalm 139:7-10) but serve as a warning to unbelievers.

II. Omnipotence:

Main Theme: God has unlimited power to do anything He wants to do.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Definition:** Omnipotence means "God has unlimited power to do anything he wants to do," often referred to as "the Almighty."
- **Interrelation with other attributes:** Omnipotence is linked to God's sovereignty (authority/domain) and infinity (related to the category of power). Omnipotence is the foundation for sovereignty.
- **What God can do:** Anything He pleases, and no power in the universe compares to His. His power is unlimited and beyond measure.
- **Misinterpretations to Avoid:** Omnipotence does not mean God can do logically impossible things (e.g., make a square circle, a married bachelor, or a rock too large to lift).
- Quote (C.S. Lewis): "Nonsense remains nonsense even when we talk it about God."
- "God cannot" statements in Scripture (e.g., cannot be tempted, sin, or lie) are not limitations of power but reflect His nature. Omnipotence means God can do anything that power can do.
- **Connection to God's Character:** God's power is not disconnected from His other attributes (holiness, love, goodness, truth). He uses His power in accordance with who He is. Quote: "God can do whatever he wants but what he wants is not free-floating or capricious. It is linked to his love, holiness, goodness, and all that he is."
- **Biblical Images of God's Omnipotence: Warrior (Exodus 15:3):** Demonstrates God's powerful deliverance. Quote: "The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name."

- **Potter (Isaiah 29:15-16):** Illustrates God's power and authority over creation. Quote: "Shall the potter be regarded as the clay...?"
- **Biblical Evidence of God's Power Throughout Scripture: Law (Deuteronomy 4:37):** Deliverance from Egypt by "great power."
- **Writings (Psalm 89:13):** "You have a mighty arm; your hand is powerful."
- **Prophets (Isaiah 40:26):** Power displayed in creation. Quote: "Because of his great power and strength, not one of them is missing."
- **Gospels (Matthew 19:26):** "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
- **Acts (Acts 4:7-10):** Power manifested in healing through Jesus' name.
- **Epistles (Ephesians 1:19, Revelation 11:16-17):** "The immeasurable greatness of his power to us who believe..." and God taking His "great power" to reign.
- **Christ's Divine Power:** Scripture ascribes the same divine power to Christ, indicating His deity.
- Exercise in creation (John 1:3), providence (Hebrews 1:3), healing and exorcism (Acts 10:38), and raising Himself from the dead (John 2:19, John 10:17-18).
- Quote (John 10:17-18): "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down and take it up again."
- Transformation of believers' bodies in resurrection (Philippians 3:21).
- **Ramifications of God's Omnipotence for Believers:** He loves us (2 Corinthians 6:18).
- He protects us (Psalm 91:1).
- He keeps us saved (1 Peter 1:5).
- He empowers us to live for Him (Isaiah 40:29, 2 Peter 1:3), especially in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Quote (2 Corinthians 12:9): "My power is made perfect in weakness."
- He gives the power to spread the gospel (Acts 1:8).
- **Deserved Praise:** God's omnipotence warrants our praise now and forever (1 Corinthians 2:9, 11; Revelation 4:8).

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's lecture provides a foundational understanding of God's omnipresence and omnipotence. He emphasizes their scriptural basis, clarifies potential misunderstandings, and highlights the profound implications these attributes have for both believers and unbelievers. God's constant and full presence offers comfort and accountability, while His unlimited power assures believers of His ability to save, protect, and empower them.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 11, Incommunicable Attributes, Part 2

Study Guide: The Omnipresence and Omnipotence of God

Key Concepts:

- **Communicable Attributes:** Aspects of God's character that he shares in some measure with humanity.
- **Incommunicable Attributes:** Aspects of God's character that are unique to him and not shared with humanity.
- **Omnipresence:** God is fully and simultaneously present everywhere.
- **Transcendence:** God is outside of and beyond his creation.
- **Immanence:** God is present within his creation, though not part of it.
- **Special Presence:** God's unique and covenantal presence with his people, distinct from his general omnipresence.
- **Omnipotence:** God has unlimited power to do anything he wills, consistent with his nature.
- **Sovereignty:** God's ultimate authority and rule over all things.
- **Infinity:** God's limitless and boundless nature.
- **Divine Perfections:** The attributes or qualities that fully describe God's being.
- **Divine Passive:** A grammatical construction in Scripture where God is the implied agent of an action.
- **Election:** God's sovereign choice of individuals for salvation.

Quiz:

1. Define omnipresence and explain how it relates to God being both spirit and infinite.
2. According to Peterson, how does Jeremiah 23:23-24 illustrate God's omnipresence? What two aspects of God's relationship to creation does this passage highlight?

3. Distinguish between God's general omnipresence and his special presence. Provide biblical examples of God's special presence in the Old Testament.
4. Explain how the concept of believers as God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19) relates to God's special presence.
5. In what way is God present in hell according to the lecture? How does this differ from his presence in heaven? Reference 2 Thessalonians 1:9 in your answer.
6. Define omnipotence. What is the relationship between God's omnipotence, sovereignty, and infinity?
7. What are some examples of things God cannot do, and why do these limitations not contradict his omnipotence? Explain C.S. Lewis's quote in this context.
8. Describe two biblical images used to illustrate God's omnipotence and provide the corresponding scriptural references.
9. How does the New Testament, particularly the Gospel of John, ascribe divine power to Jesus Christ? Give at least two examples.
10. What are some of the ramifications of God's omnipotence for believers, according to the lecture and cited scriptures?

Answer Key:

1. Omnipresence means that God is fully and simultaneously present everywhere. This interrelates with God as spirit because his presence is not limited by physicality, and with God as infinite because his omnipresence is his unlimited being related to space.
2. Jeremiah 23:23-24 asks if God is only a God at hand and not far away, and if anyone can hide where God cannot see. This illustrates that God is both transcendent (far away, beyond creation) and immanent (near, present in his creation).
3. God's general omnipresence means he is present everywhere in his being and power. His special presence refers to his unique, covenantal presence with his people, such as dwelling in the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament.
4. Paul states that believers, both corporately and individually, are God's temple where his Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19). This signifies a unique and special indwelling presence of God among his people, distinct from his universal presence.

5. God is present in hell through his omnipresence, meaning his being and power are there. However, he is not present in hell in the same way as in heaven, lacking the presence of his grace, comfort, and blessing (2 Thessalonians 1:9 speaks of suffering eternal destruction away from the Lord's presence of glory).
6. Omnipotence means God has unlimited power to do anything he wills, consistent with his nature. Omnipotence is the foundation for sovereignty (God's authority in action), and it is essentially God's infinity related to the category of power, indicating his limitless ability.
7. God cannot do things that are logically impossible or contradict his own nature, such as making a square circle, a married bachelor, or sinning. These are not limitations on power itself. C.S. Lewis meant that nonsensical statements remain nonsensical even when applied to God; omnipotence is about what power *can* do.
8. Two biblical images of God's omnipotence are the **warrior** (Exodus 15:3, the Lord is a man of war, illustrating his powerful deliverance) and the **potter** (Isaiah 29:15-16, showing his power and authority in creation and shaping).
9. The New Testament ascribes divine power to Jesus through his role in creation (John 1:3), his exercise of providence (Hebrews 1:3), his power to heal and perform exorcisms (Acts 10:38), and uniquely in John's Gospel, his ability to raise himself from the dead (John 2:19-21, 10:17-18) and his role in election (John 15:16, 19).
10. Because God is omnipotent, he loves and protects believers (2 Corinthians 6:18, Psalm 91:1), keeps them saved (1 Peter 1:5), empowers them to live for him and spread the gospel (Isaiah 40:29, Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 1:3), and makes his power known especially in their weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of understanding God's omnipresence for the life and faith of a believer. How does the distinction between his general and special presence impact this understanding?
2. Explore the interconnectedness of God's omnipresence and omnipotence as presented in the lecture. How do these attributes relate to his transcendence and immanence?
3. Analyze the ways in which the lecture uses Old Testament scriptures to lay a foundation for understanding God's omnipresence and omnipotence. How are these attributes further revealed in the New Testament, particularly in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
4. Critically evaluate the lecture's discussion on the limitations of God's omnipotence. How does the concept of logical possibility and God's nature inform a proper understanding of his all-powerful being?
5. Examine the pastoral implications of God's omnipresence and omnipotence, both for believers and unbelievers, as highlighted in the lecture. How should these attributes shape our worship, evangelism, and understanding of judgment?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Communicable Attributes:** Characteristics of God that humans can reflect in a limited way, such as love, wisdom, and holiness.
- **Incommunicable Attributes:** Characteristics of God that are unique to his divine nature and cannot be possessed by humans, such as omnipresence, omnipotence, and infinity.
- **Omnipresence:** The attribute of God by which he is fully and simultaneously present in all places at all times.
- **Transcendence:** The aspect of God's nature that emphasizes his being infinitely beyond and distinct from his creation.
- **Immanence:** The aspect of God's nature that emphasizes his presence within and involvement with his creation.
- **Special Presence:** God's unique and particular way of being with his covenant people, marked by grace, blessing, and fellowship.
- **Omnipotence:** The attribute of God by which he has unlimited power and is able to do anything that is consistent with his perfect nature.
- **Sovereignty:** God's ultimate authority, control, and rule over all things according to his will and purpose.
- **Infinity:** The attribute of God that describes his boundless and limitless nature in all his perfections; he is not subject to any limitations of space, time, or power.
- **Divine Perfections:** The various attributes of God that are essential to his being and perfectly describe who he is.
- **Divine Passive:** A literary device used in Scripture where the agent performing an action is God, but is not explicitly stated, often implied through the passive voice.
- **Election:** God's sovereign and gracious choice before the foundation of the world of individuals to be saved and conformed to the likeness of his Son.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 11, Incommunicable Attributes, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about God's Omnipresence and Omnipotence

1. What does it mean that God is omnipresent? Omnipresence means that God is fully and simultaneously present everywhere. He is not limited by physical space and exists completely in all locations at all times. This is connected to his nature as spirit (not physical) and his infinity in relation to space. There is nowhere that God is not.

2. How can God be both transcendent and immanent at the same time? God is transcendent in that he is outside of and beyond his creation, not trapped within it. Scripture states that even the highest heavens cannot contain him. However, he is also immanent, meaning he is present within his creation. As Acts 17:28 says, "In him we live and move and have our being." These two aspects are not contradictory; rather, God is both far and near.

3. Is God's presence the same everywhere and with everyone? While God is omnipresent in the sense of existing fully and simultaneously everywhere, his presence is not equally manifested everywhere or with everyone in terms of his covenantal or saving presence. He is present with believers in a special way through the Holy Spirit, indwelling them individually and corporately as the church, which is now God's temple.

4. How does God's omnipresence relate to the concept of hell? God is present in hell due to his omnipresence. However, his presence there is different from his presence in heaven. In hell, God is present in holiness, justice, power, and wrath as judge, while in heaven, he is present in grace, comfort, and blessing. Those in hell are "away from the presence of the Lord" in terms of his joy, grace, and fellowship, signifying a banishment from his special covenantal presence.

5. What does it mean that God is omnipotent? Omnipotence means that God has unlimited power to do anything he wills. He is the Almighty. This power is related to his sovereignty (authority and domain) and his infinity in relation to power. There is no power in the universe that can compare to his.

6. Are there things that God cannot do, even though he is omnipotent? God's omnipotence means he can do anything that is consistent with his nature and is logically possible. Therefore, he cannot do things that are inherently contradictory, such as making a square circle or a married bachelor. Similarly, he cannot make a rock too heavy for him to lift, as this is a logical absurdity. Furthermore, God's power is always aligned with his other attributes, such as holiness, love, and truth, so he cannot use his power to sin, lie, or betray his people.

7. How is God's power demonstrated in Scripture? Scripture illustrates God's power through various images, such as the Potter and the Warrior. His power is evident in creation (bringing forth the stars), providence (sustaining all things), and redemption (delivering his people). The New Testament also ascribes divine power to Christ, demonstrated in his works of creation, providence, healing, exorcisms, his resurrection, and the future transformation of believers' bodies.

8. What are the implications of God's omnipotence for believers? Because God is all-powerful, he loves and protects his children. He keeps believers saved, empowers them to live for him, and gives them everything they need for eternal life and godliness, especially manifesting his power in their weakness. Specifically, God gives believers the power through the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel. Ultimately, God's omnipotence is a reason for believers to offer him praise and worship.