

## The Almighty God

**Lesson Scope:** Psalms 68, 76, 93, 135

### Lesson Focus

The title of this lesson implies the existence of other gods. There is only one true God, however; all others are false and nothing. God's plagues upon Pharaoh and his people clearly demonstrated the inferiority of Egypt's gods. The fire from heaven in answer to Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel publicly proclaimed the powerlessness of Baal and the omnipotence of Jehovah.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." God faithfully manifests His power over all things. He can, at will, set aside nature's laws for His purpose, because He created those laws in the first place.

God is sovereign over the affairs of all men. No man can go beyond the boundaries of divine permission. Even the choices of the wicked can be made to accomplish His purposes.

Can finite man know an infinite God? Yes, in the sense that through Jesus Christ we can begin a relationship with God (Revelation 3:20). Yet we will never know Him completely, since He is infinite, and we will always be finite. Only God is infinite. A god whom we could understand completely would not be God. Knowing Him is a process that will always be increasing and expanding for those who are His own. Knowing Him is both an experience and a process, and both must begin in time if they will continue in eternity (Revelation 22:11).

"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he." Mortal man is in no position to question the eternal One's motives or methods.

**Lesson Aim:** To see truths related to God's omnipotence.

**Theme Verse:** Psalm 96:10. Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

## Lesson Text

### "Thou Art Terrible"

**Psalm 68:32-35** <sup>32</sup> Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: <sup>33</sup> To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice. <sup>34</sup> Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the clouds. <sup>35</sup> O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed *be* God.

### "Thou Art More Glorious"

**Psalm 76:1-12** <sup>1</sup> In Judah *is* God known: his name *is* great in Israel. <sup>2</sup> In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. <sup>3</sup> There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah. <sup>4</sup> Thou *art* more glorious *and* excellent than the mountains of prey. <sup>5</sup> The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands. <sup>6</sup> At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. <sup>7</sup> Thou, *even* thou, *art* to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? <sup>8</sup> Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, <sup>9</sup> When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah. <sup>10</sup> Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. <sup>11</sup> Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared. <sup>12</sup> He shall cut off the spirit of princes: *he is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

### "The LORD Reigneth"

**Psalm 93:1-5** <sup>1</sup> The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. <sup>2</sup> Thy throne *is* established of old: thou *art* from everlasting. <sup>3</sup> The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. <sup>4</sup> The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea. <sup>5</sup> Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.

**Psalm 135:1-15** <sup>1</sup> Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD. <sup>2</sup> Ye that stand in the

house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, <sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant. <sup>4</sup> For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, *and* Israel for his peculiar treasure. <sup>5</sup> For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods. <sup>6</sup> Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. <sup>7</sup> He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries. <sup>8</sup> Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. <sup>9</sup> *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants. <sup>10</sup> Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; <sup>11</sup> Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan: <sup>12</sup> And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people. <sup>13</sup> Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; *and* thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations. <sup>14</sup> For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants. <sup>15</sup> The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

### Questions for Study

#### "Thou Art Terrible"

1. What does the thought of God riding upon the heavens do for us?
2. In what way is God "terrible"?
3. What steps must we take to receive strength and power from God?

#### "Thou Art More Glorious"

4. How was God known in Judah and Zion?
5. What difference does faith make in the midst of life's battles?
6. What is the only rational response to an omnipotent God?
7. Why do many choose to rebel against God?

#### "The LORD Reigneth"

8. List words from this passage that describe the Lord and His kingdom. Explain how each inspires trust.
9. What is the value of the certainty of the Lord's testimonies (93:5)?
10. Why do we owe God praise and worship?

### Analyzing the Passage

The closing verses of Psalm 68 communicate an overwhelming sense of God's majesty and power (Psalm 68:33-34). Yet He is deeply interested in each person, and He actively meets the needs of His people (68:35).

Salem (Psalm 76:2), meaning "peaceful," the home of Melchizedek in Abraham's time, was an ancient name for Jerusalem. Here God dwelt with His people. "O God of Jacob" (Psalm 76:6) emphasizes the frail humanity of God's people. He owns and protects them in spite of their weakness and failures.

God's position and power withstand every challenge. The certainty of His power is asserted in the words "Thy throne is established of old" (Psalm 93:2). The dead idols of the heathen stand in stark contrast to the living God, who "endureth for ever" (Psalm 135:13-15).

## **Principles and Applications**

### **"Thou Art Terrible"**

1. The eternal One rides in the highest heavens (Psalm 68:33). Uncreated, eternal, infinite, and incomprehensible, God is sovereign over all. We limp toward Him and lisp His wonders; finite human minds that by faith catch a glimpse of God are awed and humbled to the utmost. "Eternal Father, when to Thee, / Beyond all worlds, by faith I soar, / Before Thy boundless majesty, / I stand in silence, and adore."

2. The Lord is the source of strength for His people (Psalm 68:35). Omnipotent and almighty mean virtually the same thing. Both words describe God, and His passion is for us to experience His power, if we will only let Him into our lives (Revelation 3:20). Omnipotence means "superiority." No other power can match God's power. Is this kind of power manifested in your life and mine? God means it to be so.

### **"Thou Art More Glorious"**

3. God dwells among His people (Psalm 76:2). To think that the Creator of the universe actually finds satisfaction in dwelling with a fallen race on this tiny speck of rock and dust we call earth is beyond human imagination. Yet we accept this by faith because the Bible tells us so.

4. The Lord defeats the enemies of His people (Psalm 76:3-6, 12). This fact brings hope and light in the darker moments of our lives. Israel many times could not see how they could possibly be delivered from their enemies, but they were delivered from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, from Goliath, and from countless other enemies when victory appeared hopeless from a human perspective. "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?" (Isaiah 50:2). It is always easier to see the way through for others in distress than it is for ourselves when we are. But God is still able to see us through every

difficulty. In fact He screens every one of them to be sure we are able to take what comes (1 Corinthians 10:13).

5. No man can withstand the presence and judgment of the Almighty (Psalm 76:7-10). To many, God seems far away; they live according to their own desires, not God's. All expressions of unbelief that are so prevalent in time will be silenced at the moment of coming into the presence of this almighty and glorious God. The man without the wedding garment in Jesus' illustration of judgment was speechless (Matthew 22:12).

6. Vows, sacrifices, and fear are appropriate responses to our great God (Psalm 76:11). Authority figures can strike fear in the hearts of their subjects because of the power of their position. But those authorities are still mere men. God is the ultimate authority, infinitely greater than any man, absolutely holy, and perfect in all His judgments. Fear, worship, and commitment are the only proper responses to Him. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

### **"The LORD Reigneth"**

7. The Lord's reign withstands every challenge and will endure forever (Psalm 93:1-5). Earthly kingdoms have their moments of glory, but they are only moments in light of eternity. They glow only until a brighter and more powerful kingdom advances, eclipsing the first into oblivion. The Lord's kingdom is unlike all earthly kingdoms in this respect. It is invincible, unrivalled, and eternal, because its Leader is immutable.

8. God deserves praise for who He is (Psalm 135:1, 5). "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me" (Isaiah 45:5). Creator and Sustainer of the universe, King of kings, and Lord of lords, we owe our all to Him. "O Thou in all Thy might so far, / In all Thy love so near, / Beyond the range of sun and star, / And yet beside us here.... / Yet though I know Thee but in part, / I ask not, Lord, for more; / Enough for me to know Thou art, / To love Thee and adore.

9. The Lord deserves praise for His marvelous work in creation (Psalm 135:6-7). "The heavens declare the glory of God.... Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Psalm 19:1-2). All creation manifests His glory. The size of the universe, its order, and its beauty all point to a God who is worthy of worship. "Before Thy boundless majesty, I stand in silence and adore."

10. God deserves praise for His mighty acts on behalf of His people (Psalm 135:8-12). Pharaoh, Sihon, Og, and all the kings of Canaan were

no match for the God of Israel. Was it because Israel was so much better than those people? God reminded Israel that they were a "stiffnecked people" (Deuteronomy 9:4-6). It was His mercy upon Israel that moved Him to act on their behalf. The right response was to fear Him and to praise Him. We too are unworthy of God's mercies. Yet He showers them upon us. Can our response be any less than God expected from Israel?

### **Important Teachings**

1. The eternal One rides in the highest heavens (Psalm 68:33).
2. The Lord is the source of strength for His people (Psalm 68:35).
3. God dwells among His people (Psalm 76:2).
4. The Lord defeats the enemies of His people (Psalm 76:3-6, 12).
5. No man can withstand the presence and judgment of the Almighty (Psalm 76:7-10).
6. Vows, sacrifices, and fear are appropriate responses to our great God (Psalm 76:11).
7. The Lord's reign withstands every challenge and will endure forever (Psalm 93:1-5).
8. God deserves praise for who He is (Psalm 135:1, 5).
9. The Lord deserves praise for His marvelous work in creation (Psalm 135:6-7).
10. God deserves praise for His mighty acts on behalf of His people (Psalm 135:8-12).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What does the thought of God riding upon the heavens do for us?  
This thought gives us a glimpse of the limitless and incomprehensible nature of God. The heavens are far beyond our comprehension; how much more the One who rides upon them!
2. In what way is God "terrible"?  
Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5) as well as Peter (Luke 5:8) and the other disciples (Mark 4:41), when seeing the mighty power of God, were astonished, overwhelmed, and filled with a profound fear.  
A proper fear of God does not immobilize one with terror, but rather brings one to the end of himself and forces him to choose for or against God.
3. What steps must we take to receive strength and power from God?

We must first understand our own lack of strength and power. We then come in faith to God for what we lack (Hebrews 11:6). We gain strength by feasting on God's Word, by exercising our faith, and by resting on His promises.

4. How was God known in Judah and Zion?

God lived among Israel (Psalm 76:2) and protected them (Psalm 76:3). An honest view of history clearly revealed to the Old Testament saints an almighty and caring God who took a deep interest in His chosen people.

5. What difference does faith make in the midst of life's battles?

Faith sees God in charge and has confidence that He will work things out right in the end. In the midst of disappointments and trials, the man of faith believes that God is working out His plan (Romans 8:28).

Unbelief causes one to respond to difficulties with brokenness, emptiness, and despair. Escape is sought in drugs, alcohol, and the sinful pleasures of this world in an attempt to find relief.

6. What is the only rational response to an omnipotent God? The only rational response is voluntarily submitting to God and presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to Him.

7. Why do many choose to rebel against God?

The problem is twofold. First, fallen humans fail to see themselves as they really are—sinful, weak, and spiritually dead. They wish to control their own life and destiny. They resent the idea of submitting to a higher authority.

Second, they fail to see God as He really is—holy, omnipotent, and the only source of life. The Bible may be somewhere in their houses, but it is left unread. They believe that they will have time later to think seriously about God, morals, and eternity.

8. List words from this passage that describe the Lord and His kingdom. Explain how each inspires trust.

Reigneth (Psalm 93:1)—the fact that God is sovereign assures us of ultimate victory. Clothed with majesty and strength (Psalm 93:1) work together and inspire worship and submission. Stablished (Psalm 93:1) and everlasting (Psalm 93:2) speak of stability and a continuity that every saint wants to be a part of. Mightier (Psalm 93:4) knowing there is nothing too hard for the Lord gives us comfort. Holiness (Psalm 93:5)—God is omnipotent in an absolutely good way. Power used

wrongly is devastating. To know that God is absolutely holy is comforting. Every child of God can have supreme confidence that God's power will be used for rather than against him (Psalm 56:9).

9. What is the value of the certainty of the Lord's testimonies (Psalm 93:5)?

God's testimonies answer the basic questions of life—where we came from, why we are here, how we should live, and where we are going. They thus give us meaning, morality, and hope for the future. Relativism and lack of certainty leave all the questions of life unanswered. This makes life confusing and empty. God's Word makes life worth living.

10. Why do we owe God praise and worship?

He created us for that purpose (Isaiah 43:7, 21). "Thy life was giv'n for me, Thy blood, O Lord was shed, That I might ransomed be, And quickened from the dead: Thy life was giv'n for me; What have I giv'n for Thee?"

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

God's power is truly incomprehensible and ultimately irresistible. Earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, and hurricanes all remind us of our mortality and our utter weakness in the face of an omnipotent God. He will have the last word. It is insanity to resist the limitless power of God. Knowing God is all-powerful will temper every thought, word, and action of those who believe in Him.

### **Research Guide**

1. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Seeking to know God is a never-ending quest, because we are finite and He is infinite. In our humanity, we can only catch glimpses of Him—after all, that is all we can handle. We see Him as "through a glass, darkly." Isaiah 40:9-31 and Psalm 145 give us a few of these glimpses.

2. Psalm 115:3-9 gives us a realistic perspective of the only true God versus the imitations that mortal men design.

3. The first chapter of "The Heart of God" by David G. Burkholder, entitled "God Is Great," is a good introduction to the aim of this lesson.