

**Coming to Know and Trust God #2;
Understanding God's Power**

**2010 Feast of Tabernacles; 1st High Day, A.M. Service
September 23, 2010; Townsend, TN**

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Well, good morning, brethren. Here we are, now, at the morning service of this first High Day of Tabernacles, and I want to get right into the main message. I gave you the introduction last night—the opening message on the theme of my eight messages this Feast: "Coming to Know and Trust God." And so, hopefully, I set the stage and piqued your interest a little bit and made you realize that perhaps there is a little bit more depth and substance to the idea of what it means to come to know God beyond what might strike us at face value.

To know God means to appreciate Him and to trust Him, and without that solid, convicted trust—which is just another word for "faith"—and confidence in Him, it is impossible to succeed at our calling. It really is the essence of what God requires of us, as simple as that sounds. It really should be simple to understand, but it is not simple to do, at all. The hardest thing any one of us will ever accomplish is to actually learn to do this—to execute it and to make it a part of our lives. But, at least, if we begin with an understanding of what the requirement is—the gravity of it—you see, then we have a starting point from which we can begin to grow in the process of developing that character in our lives.

So we want to come to know this God—we want to come to know what makes Him tick, I like to say. He is a Being—He has a personality, He has an orientation of mind. There are things He cares about—there are things He loves, there are things He hates. And, so, getting to know Him means we have to know what He cares about, what He values and what His standards are—not only for Himself but as it extends to you and me. So we need to get to know this Being that we call God. We are not going to talk about His character today, though. Well, I am going to resist doing that. It's hard not to talk about the character of God, but I am going to try and

resist that because I have two messages on that subject which are going to follow this one over the next two days. But today, we want to begin with the physical attributes of what He can do—His capabilities, His power.

But, let's start in Hebrews 11 and verse 6—where we left off last night. As I mentioned to you, this is what I selected as my theme text, if you will, for my messages. Hebrews 11 and verse 6—this is the formula for success. This is God revealing to us exactly what it is going to take for you and me to be successful spiritually. And what does He say? Hebrews 11 and verse 6:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is [that's the first step], *and* [consequently—following through on that foundation] that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Those are the two things that are required. If you do those two things, you've got it made. You've got it made. I don't mean to make it simple; it is not. But the requirement—the understanding of the concept of what He wants from us—is basically simple. It is the simplicity of Christ to know that He is—to "believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Not only do you have to believe in God, you must believe that He is a good God—that He follows through on His promises; that He never pulls the rug out from underneath us; that He is not a secret enemy who is just masquerading as a friend. You see, that is all about the character part: What is He like? What is His behavior? What is His track record? Is He trustworthy? Can you count on Him? That is the character element. So I am going to set that aside for now and we are going to talk about the first part of that theme text. Who is this Being that we ostensibly are here to worship during this eight-day Feast?

To begin to know God, we must first acknowledge His existence and His attributes of power. You have to know His capabilities—His attributes of power. What is this Being like, I want to ask, from a physical standpoint? Of course, He is not physical, He is a Spirit, but I think you understand that as opposed to His character, we are talking about what He is like in ability—what He can do. That's what we want to talk about today.

Well, first, let's start at the very beginning. God does exist. We hinted at that last night when we talked about Psalm 14 and verse 1, and I'll do that again this morning. Remember, we read that? Psalm 14 and beginning in verse 1—a Psalm of David, who said through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The fool has said in his heart that there is no God. And there are whole a lot of people in this world who believe that there is no God—that there is no intelligent, Divine power that is responsible for all that exists, that there is no intelligent design within the universe. They are all of those who believe in "evolutionary" thought and who espouse the idea that the substance of order can come out of chaos without anybody doing anything, pulling any strings, or manipulating anything. It just kind of spontaneously occurs.

That's the whole set of these individuals who call themselves atheists, and they are closely akin to the agnostics who say, "Well, there might be a God, and there might not; we are not sure, and we don't really care because that doesn't really enter into our lives and how we make our decisions." But these are people whom God calls fools. And that's not being derogatory. It is just stating a fact. It would be no different than somebody who says, "Gravity doesn't apply to me. I can fly; I can float; I can step off of a fifty-story building, or cliff, and I am not worried about falling or getting hurt because I have tested it and I have determined that gravity does not apply to me." Now, what would you say about that individual? He's foolish—not smart. He is not aware of the reality of his environment. He has come, by his own logic and his own reasoning, to a conclusion that is just factually incorrect. That's what it means. And so, the individual—the human being—on this earth who concludes in his mind that God does not exist is a fool. He may be incredibly sincere, he may have all of his scientific ways by which he has come to that conclusion in his mind, but it is not true. God does exist, and the fact that God does exist and that He did create all things—including those human beings who are passing judgement on whether or not He exists—makes them fools. That's not being derogatory, it's just a statement of fact. There is no wisdom in that conclusion, and somebody who bases his life and his behavior on a world without God is indeed foolish, so said God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

Romans 1 and verse 20. Here is why it's important. Romans chapter 1 and beginning in verse 20. This gives us a little bit of insight. God said through the Apostle Paul: "For the invisible things of him . . ." We are talking about the spiritual things which you cannot see, you cannot handle, and you cannot put to the test by the scientific method. You know, that is what the whole of modern

science is based upon—the idea that you don't accept or acknowledge the reality of anything you cannot test and literally prove with some kind of reliable process. And, so, if there is something in what we call the "fourth dimension," which is invisible—beyond the realm of being proven by a human being—our science says that if you can't test it, if you can't put it into a beaker, if you can't heat it, if you can't manipulate the atoms, or do something with it, then it doesn't exist. It doesn't exist. God says there is an invisible realm that He has not allowed human beings to touch, and it doesn't matter that they can't prove it, it still exists, and it still absolutely acts upon you and me, and it influences our lives.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen* . . ." How? How can God say that invisible things are clearly seen? Isn't that a contradiction? I mean, they are either clearly seen or they are invisible, right? One or the other. And, yet, God says, through the Apostle Paul, "[T]he invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." How? What is He talking about? ". . . being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and [the old King James says "Godhead," but the better translation is "Divinity." Even His eternal power and Divinity]; so that they are without excuse." What does He reveal here in verse 20? He is saying that even though the whole spirit realm in which God exists cannot be touched, handled, or proven directly, He has created this world, this earth, and your living environment with the things that you can touch and handle and assess, and that Creation was designed to prove Him. That Creation was designed with such complexity that it inspires awe and wonder, and it is a natural proof that there must have been an intelligent design by an intelligent and thoughtful Creator that brought it into being. He brought into being the Creation, which is physical, which is tangible and which is provable—everything in nature upon this earth, even the astrobodies that you see in the heavens above, and all of the physical laws which affect our bodies on this earth, including gravity and the laws of thermodynamics, and all of the others which science absolutely believes in.

Those laws demonstrate that God exists. As Mr. Herbert Armstrong said so many years ago, the existence of Law requires a Lawgiver. It is impossible for a law to exist in nature without it having been put into motion—actuated and sustained by a Creator and a Sustainer—because order never comes out of chaos. Order never comes out of chaos. It doesn't happen spontaneously. And, guess what? All of these scientists that are out there trying to support "evolution"—the spontaneous generation of life out of nothingness—they are frauds, because they

have violated their very own law, or rule, in the scientific process. There is no experiment that has ever been done which proves that order comes naturally out of chaos—*NONE*. But they have to believe that in order to justify all that is in this world naturally without a God. They have to believe in "order out of chaos," in order to substantiate this Creation. How can there be a fabulous, wonderful, complex, beautiful Creation without a Creator who actually designed it and brought it into being? Who, then, are really the ones reaching on the basis of "faith" to justify something that cannot be proven? The so-called intelligentsia—the intellectuals. They are the ones that require absolute faith in an unproven thing in order to substantiate their conclusion that God does not exist. And that really is what Romans 1:20 is telling us. "[T]he invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." What he is saying is that human beings have no excuse—not even the population of the uncalled world which we talked about last night. Even though God has not opened their minds and called them to a knowledge of the Truth, they still have no excuse for believing that God does not exist. By virtue of the Creation in which they live, and their own human bodies, there is evidence of intelligent design by a purposeful God. "[T]he invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made [the physical realm], even his eternal power and [Divinity]." Even though who and what God is as a Spiritual Entity is a secret that in so many ways we can't touch or fathom, he says that this physical Creation is designed to point to, and to verify, the existence and the reality of that Creator. ". . . so that they are without excuse." All human beings, called or not, are without excuse if they deny the existence of that God. And, yet, how many of them still persist in denying Him?

Isaiah 44 and verse 6. Isaiah 44 and verse 6: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the [Eternal] of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." Beside me there is no God. Now, what do we learn about Him from this and other statements like it? You might accept the idea of an intelligent Creation: "Okay, look at this earth and look at all of the beauty and the wonders and the complexities. Oh, there must be intelligent design." Alright, but what is that intelligent design like? Now, there are all kinds of human beings who will acknowledge that they believe in a higher power and they call that "god," or more likely, "gods." They might believe there are multiple divine beings who are responsible for different aspects of everything that we see and know. So, what He further clarifies is that not only is there a Creator, but there is *one* Creator. There are not multiple gods.

It's not like the Greek and Roman gods—a pantheon of beings. And how do they view those gods? Many of you had to study Greek mythology in school like I did, which is the idea that there are a whole host, dozens and dozens, or hundreds, of these different gods—these divine, invisible beings. But, basically, they are like a bunch of bratty human beings. So, they have all of our weaknesses in character, it's just that they have all of this super power that they abuse in these big dramas—these soap operas they engage in with human beings as players in the act. You see, that is one idea of "god"—multiple gods all with different powers who are responsible for different things on this earth, or in the heavens, or whatever, within this realm. It's pure paganism.

There are many other religions that believe in higher powers. The Hindus believe in hundreds of gods that they worship. The one true God says, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." Beside me there is no God—another key, fundamental point in coming to know what the real God is like. One God. As Mr. Armstrong taught us, we are talking about one God Family. It doesn't mean that there is only one Being with that Divine power, but it means we are talking about a unified Family and they all share the same name. "God" is the Family name. And we don't get hung up like so many others on the idea of "sacred names": "Oh, 'God' is a pagan name." No, it's just a name and we don't buy all of that garbage regardless of its derivation.

There is one God—one God Family. There are two revealed members of that Family that we know about today—the one we call the Father and the one we call the Son, Jesus Christ. As we were taught, there might be more. There might be more now. If so, they haven't been revealed to us. We are just not going to put any limits on God or that Family, but it could be that there are only two. Mr. Armstrong referred to them as "God of the first part, and God of the second part," when referring to the time before Jesus Christ was born of a human mother, when He and the one who became the Father were together from the very beginning—because there was no beginning of God. They did not become Father and Son until one of them was actually born of a human mother. When God the Father begat Him, then it became a Father/Son relationship. But they had always existed in a harmonious union—a relationship of authority, one with greater authority over the other.

We are not talking about antagonists. We are not talking about two beings like the Greek, or Roman gods vying and competing with one another according to

their own personalized, vain agendas. No, we are talking about one God with one unified, collective purpose in the Work that they do—Jesus Christ being lovingly, willingly in subjection to His Father, so that the Father has the authority and the direction of all of their Work, and what they are going to accomplish. So it is one God.

Alright, what about the attributes of that God? I want to say, physically, but they are not physical since they are Spirit Beings, but I am talking about their capabilities. What can this God do? What is the length and the breadth of the power and all of the characteristics of this Being we call God?

Throughout the remainder of this morning message, I am going to give you the three elements as we were taught them so many years ago in the church. And the first one is that God is omnipotent. God is omnipotent. What does that mean? It means that God is all-powerful. That's what "omnipotent" means. Let me show you two texts in the book of Revelation where the word is used. To begin with, let's turn to Revelation 19 and verse 6. In Revelation 19:6 we read: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The Lord God omnipotent reigneth. "Omnipotent" here is the Greek word *pantokrator*—*pantokrator*, p-a-n-t-o-k-r-a-t-o-r-e, and I'm probably mispronouncing it. But this Greek word means, "the all-ruling, i.e. God (as absolute and universal sovereign)—Almighty [Almighty is what it means] and Omnipotent" [*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*]. So, when we say that God is omnipotent, that He is Almighty, we are saying that He has all power, without limit. All power, without limit.

One other use of that word. Back up to Revelation 1 and verse 8. Actually, here we find it translated as the English word "almighty," but it is the same word. Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." This is how God describes Himself: the Almighty. It's the same word—the Greek word *pantokrator*. It means "omnipotent." ". . . the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Omnipotent—this is a God who has literally all power—nothing can be withheld from Him. There is no limit to what He can do—what He can accomplish. There is no other being that can challenge Him on any kind of footing whatsoever.

No being, remarkably, can compete with this God, and yet, isn't that the concept of the world—those who call themselves Christian? Haven't they embraced this idea that Satan is an equal antagonist with God? It's the very same concept that is caught up in many other religions, including Eastern religion—Buddhism, the idea of *yin* and *yang*. That has become more prevalent in this country than we have ever seen before as concepts of Eastern religion have invaded, taken hold and have been embraced by so many. It has happened in this country and around the world. So you see the symbol with the white side and the black side as they swirl together in a circle. And the idea is an equal, good force pushing against a co-equal, bad force, keeping the universe in balance. It's the dark side versus the light side, as we saw in the *Star Wars* theme—and that is exactly what those movies are all about. The dark side of "the force" and the light side of "the force"—equal and opposite. So sometimes one exerts itself and dominates for a while—but only for a little while, because then the pendulum swings back to the light side in order to keep the universe in balance. But ultimately there is this middle ground where they offset one another necessarily—the light and the dark, *yin* and *yang*. It's totally pagan. It's not true. *It's not true.* It's the idea that was adopted into so-called Christianity: that Satan—the representative of the "dark side"—is equal to God, who represents the "light side," and that it takes both of them, vying one against the other, to keep the universe in equilibrium. *Poppycock.* It's not true. What that says is that Satan is equal in power to God. And that's what all of these so-called Christians out there believe. And so they are out there doing their missionary works around the world trying to save everybody from the clutches of Satan and the "dark side." That's what their whole focus is—snatching them away from the Devil and bringing them to "the Lord." Because they really treat Satan as though he were equally as powerful as God. Not true. It's a lie.

Guess who told the lie? Satan. Who has an interest in getting human beings to believe that he is equally as powerful as God? The one who is not equally as powerful as God. That's who told the lie. And he is the god of this world and he has deceived the whole world, and that's why human beings believe it.

But you have been called to understand the Truth, and the Truth is that the God we worship—the Creator, the Sustainer of this universe—is *ALL*-powerful. I know it sounds simplistic, but brethren, you would be amazed at the number of

things you are confronted with in this Babylonian society which absolutely attempt to refute that, and you have to be aware, and you have to be sure, so that you are able to recognize these concepts when you face them, as subtle as many of them are. Satan is not an equal adversary of God. He's not even a sub-power that is working against God. Satan only does that which God allows him to do, as long as God allows him to do it—and no longer. Satan is a tool of God. He is here doing his evil and nefarious work by God's permission and only as long as God permits it. And in the day that God's will for Satan is completed, *pffffffft*, he is going to be put in restraint in outer darkness. It's not a matter of God having to try and play this chess game and then, you know, being more wise about getting all of his pieces in the right place so that, ultimately, He can "win the battle." God is not in a battle with Satan. Satan is in a battle with God, and that is very foolish, but God is not in a battle with Satan. Satan is not a threat to God. Satan—who began as a glorified angel called Lucifer—was created by God, and there is no being, no creature, that God created that can challenge the Creator Himself. That's absurd. There is no way.

Notice Deuteronomy 32 and verse 39. Deuteronomy 32 and beginning in verse 39, God speaking through Moses: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me." He is emphasizing again the fact that there are no other gods—there are not a plethora, or multitude, of divine beings with equal power, vying with God. Nope. No other competitive god. "I kill," God says, "and I make alive." Who has total control over life and death? The real God—the one true God. "I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." Lest human beings begin to think, "I don't like the way this one God is behaving. I don't like what I am getting under His dictates, so I want an advocate that I can turn to as an alternative." Who are you going to turn to? God says there is no one else—no other being, no other power you can seek out if you don't like the way you are being treated by God. You have no other recourse. *He is It*—the one and only.

"[N]either is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever"—another attribute of this God. He is Eternal. He is Eternal, and that means not only will He live forever into the future, but He has lived forever from the past—there was no beginning for Him. And we are going to talk about this some more because it is one of those concepts that you and I, as human beings, just cannot fathom. He has not allowed our human minds to fathom the concept of eternity. We can't do it. Try as you might, you will drive

yourself crazy with the idea that He never had a beginning. He has always existed "from the beginning," but, no, there was no beginning; He has always been.

I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.

God says, "Make no mistake about it, I do have all power in my hand," and He says, "I am omnipotent." That's what it means to be the Almighty God. He has the final say—He is the Judge, and if you or I don't like His judgement, you have no alternative court, no one you can turn to. He is all—complete and total.

I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.

Again, that doesn't sound much like a loving, merciful, compassionate God. But, guess what? He is—even with these attributes. As I mentioned to you in my Trumpets message this year regarding "The Warrior King," you and I have to come to reconcile all of the different aspects and attributes of this Being before we can ever claim to know Him. And if you think that these attributes are contradictory—that He is a schizophrenic personality because He is all of these things at the same time—not so. *There* is our challenge: to come to reconcile all of these things as attributes of a loving, compassionate, merciful God. But, again, I'll put the noose on my neck and pull myself back because we are talking about His character, and I am not talking about character this morning. We are talking about power; we are talking about capability; what can He do?; what is the length, and the breadth, and the scope of His power and His ability?

Isaiah 45 and beginning in verse 5. I read part of this to you last night, but let's look at it from this particular perspective. Isaiah 45 and beginning in verse 5, and we will read all the way through verse 12. Again, we can learn so much about God if we just pay attention to what He says about Himself. He wrote these things for a reason: because He wants the called—the spiritual Israelites—to understand and literally to come to know Him. So here is one of those fabulous pieces that He wrote about Himself. Isaiah 45 and beginning in verse 5: "I am the [Eternal], and there is none else, there is no God beside me." So forget what the Hindus believe;

forget what the ancient Greeks and Romans, and all of these other pagan societies, and the aborigines, and the native Americans believe. They don't know. They never did know God and they won't know Him until God opens their minds to receive it—and that day is coming. But make no mistake about it, for you, "there is no God beside me," He says. "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." He says, "I am the one who gave you that body and that mind to think and to reason." And isn't it amazing that they use that wonderful Creation that brought them into existence, and gave them that capacity, to deny that their Creator exists, or that they were made? It's contradictory, isn't it? Stupid from God's perspective. What irony. "[T]here is no God beside me: I girded thee." He says, "I am the one who gave you what you have. You wouldn't have it if it weren't for me."

. . . though thou hast not known me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the [Eternal], and there is none else.

What is His power like—because that is what we are talking about? The fact that God is all-powerful—He is omnipotent. Verse 7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil." Remember, I mentioned that to you last night. He is responsible for the fact that evil exists in the world. Do you have a hard time with that? If you understand the master Plan for salvation which is pictured by the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days—like the Feast of Tabernacles that we are keeping right now—you have the blessing of being able to reconcile these things. How is it that God can be a loving, merciful, compassionate God if He is responsible for evil in the world? It's maybe the number one biggest question that vexes even the human beings who have a desire to believe in a Creator God but cannot reconcile in their minds how He can be a good God. Okay, I have to get off of that because, again, I am talking about His character. We will cover that in the next couple of days.

I the [Eternal] do all these things [He and no other]. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness [Now He is talking about all of these attributes in the form of righteousness. That's a good thing.]: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the [Eternal] have created it.

He says, "All that I have made—all that I have set in motion for purpose—is good. It is a righteous Plan—a glorious thing for the good of human beings and for a greater purpose that man does not understand."

"I the [Eternal] have created it." Verse 9: "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" He's saying, "Human beings, you may not understand, and, in fact, without my calling, you won't understand what I am doing. You will see things, but you won't be able to put it together and understand it. You will be confused and you will think—even if you acknowledge that I exist—that I am fickle. You will think that I am bad. But," He says, "I'm not. I know what I am doing. I have a Plan, whether you understand it, or not." The world doesn't revolve around you and me. God makes the rules, with or without our permission, because He is omnipotent. He has all power.

I always like to describe it in terms of that old joke: Where does the eight-hundred-pound gorilla sit? Anywhere he wants. And, in essence, that is our God—not being disrespectful to Him, but just to emphasize the fact that He sits anywhere He wants; He does anything He wants, because He makes the rules, *period*. There is no overseer; there is no counselor; there is no board that He answers to; there is no other god that He has to fight and work with, or work around, or take into consideration. He is *everything*. All power is in the hands of that one God, and He can do with it what He will, and He does, without your permission or mine, or Satan's, or anybody else's. That's what omnipotence is all about.

He is the Almighty God. You use the term, but have you ever really thought about what it means? When you call Him "the Almighty," do you really stop to think about what you are attributing to Him, and do you really believe it is true? It is true. And He says, "Woe unto him that strives with His maker." Be very, very careful about arguing with, or taking exception with, or challenging this powerful God in any way. And human beings love to do that. I heard Mr. Raymond Cole repeat the story in sermons over the years about the man he ran across years ago who once said, "Well, if I ever have a chance to talk to God face to face, I have a few things I want to say to Him." Uh-huh [laughs], I wonder how that is going to go?

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth." What are we talking about? A "potsherd"—that means a broken piece of clay, a pot that was formed out of clay, but then was

broken. So now it is just a pile of broken pieces that are useless. And He is saying that this is what you and I are really like—weak flesh-and-blood human beings. Who do we think we are? We are like broken pieces of pottery. He says, "You guys, you all strive with yourselves. If you want to take exception with someone, take exception with yourselves. Don't take exception with me; you are not on a plane to even begin to do it. You are out of your league," is what He is saying.

Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? [Really? What arrogance—what stupidity.] or thy work, He hath no hands?

Men are saying, "God, what were you thinking that day? You must have been having a bad day when you did that, or when you did this. Or, maybe you forgot this." That's the way human beings disrespectfully treat their Maker. Verse 10:

Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou? ["God, what did you think you were doing? Why did you make me *this* way when it would have been better if you had done *that*?"] or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? [Verse 11:] Thus saith the [Eternal], the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

He says, "You go ahead and ask me what I am doing and why I did it. I am not afraid of your questions. I have a reason and a purpose for every single thing that I have done, and every single thing that I have allowed. There *is* an answer for it. Whether you like it, whether you agree with it, or whether you are capable of understanding it, or not, rest assured that there is rhyme and reason to it all." And your understanding, or my understanding, is not the important thing. That's what He is saying. The fact that God *is* all-powerful and that He is executing His purpose and *His* will, *that's* what is preeminent.

Verse 12: "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." He is saying, "Look at what you can see and observe," as we read in Romans 1:20, "the Creation and the complexity of all that exists. You can know and you can

prove it, if you stop and think about it, and consider it. Do you really think it is a scatter-brained kind of ditzy God who is doing this? And if there is something you can't understand, or you think seems to be wrong," He says, "maybe you should stop and think, 'Maybe the problem is me and not God. Maybe I should not pass judgement on the Creator who has done some pretty marvelous things that I ought to be able to see and recognize.'" If there is any doubt about why, don't lay it at the feet of God. Don't make Him the bad guy, or the one who is deficient, or who forgot something. He didn't. He is a God of purpose and He has all power to do what He will.

Romans 13 and verse 1. Romans 13 and beginning in verse 1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." There is a lot in that statement. He made all that exists in this Creation according to principles of order. Now, Satan is the one who hates the order which God created, and so he tries to subvert it in every way he possibly can, to his own doom, and he is trying to take as many human beings with him as he can. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." There is no power, there is no authority that exists that is not in the hands of and controlled and dictated by this God. It's another way of saying "omnipotent"—the all-powerful God. "[T]he powers that be are ordained of God"—all of them, without exception. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power . . ." Whatever power, whatever venue of authority it may be, it's an extension of His power as the omnipotent God—He created and brought it into being and set it into motion, and He is saying, "Woe be to the individual who wants to take exception with that power structure and think that he can subvert it or do an end run around it. It will not work. It will not work."

"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." That's the end result of anybody who disagrees with God or decides, "You know what, God? I just don't think you've got it all together. I really just don't like what you are doing and how you are doing it. I'd like a second opinion." What He is saying is, make no mistake about it, He holds all power and He will perform His will, for good or for evil.

Now, whether or not He is a good God or a bad God, we will get into that. Is He really a perfect, loving God, or is He a Machiavellian manipulator who uses this great power for His own vain will? Does He just kind of toy with human

beings like they are little distractions—to kind of give Himself a chuckle and to see us jump through hoops and manipulate us? We'll consider that in the next couple of days. That's talking about His character. What we are establishing today is that He does have all power. There is no competing power, it is all Him. He does what He wants, the way He wants, and nobody can challenge Him or stop Him.

So, what the Apostle Paul is saying is that if you don't agree, that's your free-will choice, but your end is going to be destruction. Because God is going to do what He is going to do, the way He wants to do it. He makes the rules. He decides who is going to share eternity with Him, according to His whim. He decides, *period*.

So we either get on board with Him and His program, or else, He is going to end us. He brought us into being, and He can end our lives just as easily. And the end result of those who do not want to play the game His way, is just simply that they are going to sleep for eternity. That's the worst that can happen to you or to me as human beings. We are going to go to sleep. We are not going to writhe in pain and agony in hell fire forever and ever as immortal souls. That's also absurd, because He is a loving God. But it's His way or the highway. That's what we are emphasizing right now. There is no other alternative.

Hebrews 12 and verse 25. Hebrews 12, beginning in verse 25, and we will read through verse 29:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: [How serious is it? Life and death. Verse 26:] Whose voice then shook the earth.

Remember Mt. Sinai? We talked about that last night. When He came down in fire on that mountain and He spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel with His own booming voice; He absolutely petrified them. He let His voice be heard. "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." That's part of the prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled. You can find that in the book of Revelation. One element of that is going to be what we call the sixth seal—the upheaval of the sun, the moon and the stars. The astro-bodies are going to be shifted all out of position and, boy,

do you think that's not going to get the attention of human beings? He is not only going to shake the earth with great earthquakes, but He is going to move all of these constellations out of their positions, and also the moon and the sun, just to show us who is in charge, who has the power to do what He wants, when He wants to do it, lest anybody think that He is constrained by some greater law or power, or some controlling board. Uh-uh. He does what He wants, when He wants. That's what omnipotence is all about.

Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made . . .

That is the physical Creation, the temporal world, this earth and all that exists, including you and me in flesh bodies. He made all of this for a temporary period of time. Those are the things that can, and will, be shaken.

"[T]hat those things which cannot be shaken may remain." What are the only things that cannot be shaken? Those things that are Spirit—not flesh, not temporal, but Spirit. The day is coming when God is going to use chaos to shake the physical realm, and ultimately, in a Judgement, if you and I are not changed into Spirit—if we are left in the flesh—there is going to be no habitation left for us, because this whole earth is going to be consumed in a fire, and anything that has not been changed into Spirit will be destroyed.

"[T]hat those things which cannot be shaken may remain. [Verse 28:] Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved . . ."—because by God's volition, the use of His power as an omnipotent God, He says, "This Spirit realm will stay; it is Eternal; it will last; it will never be corrupted or dimmed." The physical realm has come and will go, and the Spirit realm is the only thing that will survive.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

He's saying to His called people: "Please, please, take me seriously. Please understand that I do have all power and ability, and I intend to use it to accomplish *MY Will, MY Way*. Please get on board with my plan. I want you to be there. I

have this glorious gift of an office in my Family government waiting for you if you do. If you decide that you like what I am doing; if you agree with me; if you not only believe in me, but come to love me, you can share it. But make no mistake about it," He says, "if you disagree; if you take exception; if you decide you don't like it, my plan goes on, with or without you." His plan goes on, with or without you or me. We are not important in and of ourselves, but only to the extent that we want what He has designed, and we get on board. That's the choice.

"[L]et us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." He says, "I want you to get on board with me. Oh, I want you to want it, and to desire it." But the warning, verse 29: "For our God is a consuming fire." Our God—the one true God—*is* a consuming fire, and that means that He is going to burn up all that is left, physically, that has not been changed into Spirit. That's according to His will and purpose. It is going to happen because He has decreed it—the God with all power. There is no appellate court; there is no one else you and I can turn to for a reprieve; there is no other being, no other power, that can give us an alternative way to live into the future, except that we do it according to this one God's Way—to His satisfaction. "Our God is a consuming fire." It is His Way or no way.

Alright, that is the attribute of God's omnipotence—all power. There are two others. The second one is that God is omnipresent. God is omnipresent. And what does that mean? It means that He is present everywhere at all times. Now, please don't confuse this with the pagan doctrine of pantheism—which means "god in all things." And this is also very common in Eastern religion. It is the idea that "god is in the flowers, and god is in the trees, and god is in every blade of grass, and every insect, and he is in the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and all that exists has an 'essence' of the divinity of god." Okay, that is pantheism—god in everything. That is not what we are talking about. When we say that God is omnipresent, this God is virtually everywhere simultaneously—He is the ultimate multi-tasker, even better than you women [laughs]. He can be in multiple places at the same time, doing as many different things as He wants, simultaneously. Everywhere.

Now, is the word "omnipresent" used in the Bible? No. But are there texts that demonstrate that power? You bet. Let's turn to Psalm 139. This is my favorite one. Psalm 139 and beginning in verse 7, and we will read through verse 12. The Psalmist says: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" You know, God is a

Spirit. He says, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" How is it possible to try and get away from God? Can you go find a place—a little corner, or some blind spot where He never goes or sees? Is there anyplace like that in the entire universe—where you can kind of escape, even for a moment?

. . . whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [meaning the grave], behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. [Verse 11:] If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ["Maybe I can hide in the dark. God can't see in the dark." Uh-uh.]; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee.

He knows. There is no such thing as a darkness that you can use to cover and hide from God. You and I can't see in the dark, but God can see in the dark. He kind of has the ultimate night vision goggles—He sees everything, everywhere, all the time, because He is everywhere. You cannot go anywhere in His Creation where He is not present. That's what omnipresence means. "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." It makes no difference to God—no difference to this God at all.

Psalm 33 and verse 13. Psalm 33 and beginning in verse 13: "The [Eternal] looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth"—every single human being. I haven't kept up with it—I know it's well past six billion now, and getting closer to seven billion people on the earth. He sees all seven billion simultaneously—and it doesn't mean that He sees them all really quickly, one at a time, and in order. No, it means simultaneously, at any given moment, He is observing and present with six to seven billion people and everything else—every other spot on the earth where anything is going on that He cares about. He is there. Now, can your mind fathom that? Mine can't, but again, omnipresence is an attribute of the Creator God that we worship.

Job 34 and verse 21. Job 34 and reading verse 21: "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth *all his goings*"—everything, without exception, bar none. God never goes on vacation; He never turns His back. He is everywhere, all of the time—attentive. There is nothing you and I can do in secret from Him, and guess what? He's the only one that counts, because He is the Judge. We can do all kinds of things in secret when other human beings aren't around, and yet, we cannot hide from the one that matters the most. We need to consider that.

Luke 12 and verse 6. He's aware, not only of human beings, but even little animals—even little animals. Luke 12 and beginning in verse 6: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered and we are all losing hair all the time—some of you more than others [laughs]—and growing some more. So think about what it would be like to know about every one of them. Even if somebody could take a snapshot at one moment in time and count all of the hairs—even just for the ones in this room—in that given second, that total would change in the next moment. At any given time, He knows the exact count of the hairs on your head, and of all of humanity. I'll expand it to say that even includes all of the fur on every animal in the whole Creation—for those that have fur. He knows it all. He is everywhere—nothing is beyond His reach.

That was a lesson that Adam and Eve had to learn. When they were in the garden of Eden, they didn't think God was omnipresent. And you know the story, you don't have to turn to it, but what happened in Genesis chapter 3 after they sinned and then felt guilty? And when God sought them and called, "Where are you?"—as if God didn't know. He is omnipresent; He knew exactly where they were. He was only communicating with them on a basis they could understand. And Adam justified himself. "Where art thou?" And he said, verse 10, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." "*HID* thyself?" Who are you hiding from? God? What a joke. You can't hide from God; He is everywhere—He chooses to be everywhere. You can't go and find a place where He is not present, *period*. It's one of the power-capabilities—the attributes—of this God who created all that exists. He is omnipresent.

So, He is omnipotent—He has all power. He is omnipresent—He exists everywhere. What's the third attribute? He is omniscient. God is omniscient.

Okay, what does that mean? It means that He has all knowledge, without limit. God has all knowledge, without limit. There is nothing that He doesn't know. He is the ultimate Google [laughs]. Nobody can out-do Him. *All* knowledge. And that blows my mind. It is beyond your capacity or mine to fathom what it means to have all knowledge.

Psalm 139 and verse 1. Psalm 139 and beginning in verse 1: "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O [Eternal], thou hast searched me, and known me." You see, David understood—at least to some extent—the reality of this, and he was inspired to write it. David understood that God knew him. God knows you too, inside and out. He knows what makes you tick. There is not a single thought—not a single thought—that you can withhold from Him. In fact, He knows it before you think it. Cogitate on that. Verse 2:

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways [all of them, bar none]. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

Never think, brethren, that you can hide a thought from God just because you don't utter it. If you think it, He already knows it—whatever crosses your mind, whether expressed or not. This God has all knowledge, including the thoughts, the electrical impulses that generate them, and whatever consciousness of all human beings, let alone the actions and intents of every creature that He made. "Thou knowest it altogether." Verse 5: "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me." Such knowledge is too wonderful for you and me as well. It blows our minds beyond our capacity to conceive.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I [David said] cannot attain unto it.

"I can't even remotely, with my human mind, fathom how it is that you, great God, know everything—everything, without limit. Nothing can be hidden from you." That's what omniscience is all about. That's what omniscience means.

Isaiah 46 and verse 9. Isaiah 46 and beginning in verse 9: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else." He emphasizes that same principle, over and over. Why? It must be because human beings have a hard time getting that.

I am God, and there is none like me, [Then verse 10:] Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

He knows the end from the beginning. He knows what has ever happened in the past, what is going on now, and He already knows, in advance, everything that is going to happen. He knows everything you are ever going to do, He knows everything you are ever going to think, before you ever think it. What do you think of them apples?

Now, there are some people of our former affiliation who don't like that idea, and, in fact, they attempt to refute it. For some reason they have a hangup with this idea of God having all knowledge—even into the future. And so they come up with these stupid concepts like, "God chooses not to know." God chooses not to know. Because they think, as free moral agents, if God knows what choices you and I are going to make, His knowledge would actually mean He is manipulating it. And that He can't have foreknowledge of how the story turns out in your life and my life—all the decisions you and I are going to make—without Him having manipulated it and guided it. And that if He manipulated and guided it, then you and I were not really free moral agents—we were just like robotic automatons doing His will.

I don't know why this is such a hangup for them. But just because God knows, that does not mean He is interfering. You are making your choice and I am making my choice with our free moral agency. It's your choice to make—no one is stopping you. But He already knows what you and I are going to do. He knows whether you are going to be in the Kingdom, or whether you are going to fail and be burned up in the lake of fire. He knows that end. Does that bother you? It doesn't bother me. I know that I am still a free moral agent and I still know it's up to me to do whatever I am going to do with the calling He has given to me. And if I fail, it is not God's fault, it is my fault. My free moral agency is

not impeded nor harmed in any way by the fact that God has all knowledge, period. It doesn't bother me.

Don't we wish sometimes that He would tell us what the future holds? *That* would be interfering. *That* would be interfering. He makes you and me work out our own salvation with the tools that He provided. But make no mistake about it, He knows how the story ends. Revelation chapter 7 shows that He has already decreed that there are going to be 144,000 of Israel—plus an innumerable multitude, ever how many thousands or millions that represents. But the house He is building—which is the Church of God—is going to have a structure of pillars and other features, and every one of those final members who make it are going to be a key part of the building, and it is going to be complete, and it is going to be perfect. There are going to be no missing pieces and there are going to be no extra pieces.

Now, how is He going to make it come out that way unless He uses His advance knowledge of what you and I are going to do, and the choices that we are going to make, that ultimately determines who makes it? He just makes sure He puts enough individuals in the "hopper" so that the end result comes out exactly perfectly and achieves His will and purpose. That's not taking away your free moral agency or mine, but that is using His advance knowledge to accomplish His perfect will. And He will be magnified in that day for having known the end from the beginning. And any of these ministers who are out there trying to tell their congregations that God "chooses not to know"—nah, nah, nah, nah, He covers His eyes, He doesn't see—is denying the omniscience of God. The God that we serve *is* omniscient. He has *ALL* knowledge. Nothing, past, present, or future, is withheld from Him. It is an element of the capability of that Being that you need to understand and to acknowledge.

He is omnipotent—He is all powerful; He is omnipresent—He is everywhere; and He is absolutely omniscient—with all knowledge, bar none. We have now confirmed the powerful attributes of that God. In the next message, we are going to begin to analyze the character attributes of this God that we serve.