

Assembly of Eloah

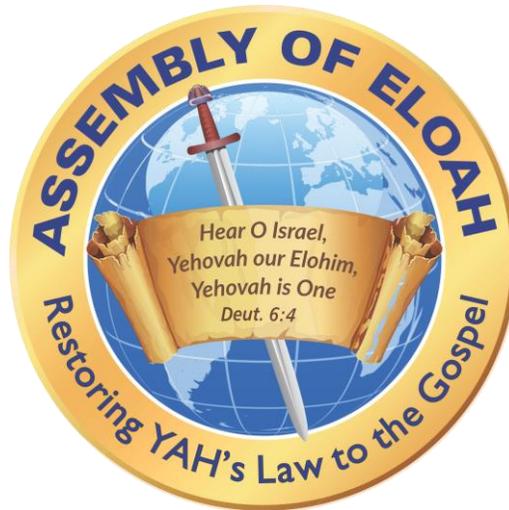
This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent -- Jesus Christ. Jn. 17:3

Y^ehovah, The Almighty

(François Sylvain)

Edition 1

The omnipotence of God means reverence, recompense and refuge for his covenant people.



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The Context of Exodus 5—6

Exodus 6:1-8 Then Yehovah said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country." ²God also said to Moses, "I am Yehovah. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Yehovah I did not make myself fully known to them. ⁴I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. ⁵Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am Yehovah, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am Yehovah your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. ⁸And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am Yehovah.

Today, I would like to help you know in your heart that: *The omnipotence of God means reverence, recompense, and refuge, for his covenant people.*

I pray that this message will

- deepen your sense of *reverence* for God,
- increase your confidence that all the enemies of righteousness will be justly *recompensed* by God (vengeance belongs to God not to us!),
- and encourage you to rest in the *refuge* of God's protecting power in times of distress.

Let's begin by looking at the context of Exodus chapters 5 and 6.

Moses and Aaron accepted God's command to go down to Egypt and to tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go. But Pharaoh responds in 5:2, "Who is Yehovah, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know Yehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go."

Instead of letting the Israelites go, Pharaoh made their bondage more severe. He forced them to make as many bricks as before, but gave them no straw. They had to find their own.

So the foremen of the Israelite work crews came to Moses and Aaron and accused them of putting a sword in Pharaoh's hand to kill them (5:21). Moses in turn cries out to God in 5:22, "O Yehovah, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."

In Exodus 6:1, God responds, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, yea, with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

There is a lesson for us here that we should note in passing. Often, when God is about to bring a glad experience into your life, He let's it be preceded by a very discouraging setback. The burden of bondage in Egypt became heaviest just

before the great day of liberation. There are good reasons why God does things this way, but that could be the subject of another message. I just wanted you to see this in passing so that, if you are discouraged, you will hold on to God until he stretches out his "strong hand."

Why God Reminds Moses of God's Names

Now in Exodus 6:2-8, God gives Moses the assurance he needs that God has the ability and intention to deliver his people from the hands of Pharaoh.

First He reminds Moses of his name revealed back in Exodus 3:14. He then repeats three times, in verse 2: I am Y^ehovah! in verse 6: I am Y^ehovah! and again in verse 8: I am Y^ehovah! In other words, remember that I AM WHO I AM (*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* [I am/will be what I am/will be]). I have not ceased to be God because little Pharaoh is huffing and puffing about your command. I AM WHO I AM. I do not change. You *will* be delivered.

Then, in verse 3, God reminds Moses of another name. He says, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as GOD ALMIGHTY, but by my name Y^ehovah, I did not make myself known to them." Why did God say this to Moses? How does this encourage Moses that God's promised deliverance is really in the offing?

It seems that God's point was something like this: "The name Y^ehovah is a greater name than the name GOD ALMIGHTY. I

did not reveal the full meaning of my name Y^ehovah to Abraham. Only recently have I made known to you the meaning of my name Y^ehovah. This is a special privilege that your forefathers never had.

But look at what name I did reveal myself to them—GOD ALMIGHTY! With a name like that before them, they should have been filled with confidence in me. How much more, then, should you, since you've been given the fuller revelation of my character in the name Y^ehovah!" If Israel learned the first-grade lesson that their God is GOD ALMIGHTY, then surely now, after the second-grade lesson that God is I AM WHO I AM, they will be all the more courageous.

Then in verse 4, God reminds Moses that what he did for Abraham and his offsprings as GOD ALMIGHTY was establish his covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan. In other words, God says, "If as GOD ALMIGHTY I made a solemn agreement with your fathers to give them the promised land, then how much more, now that you know me as Yehovah, can you have confidence that I will deliver this people and fulfill my covenant promise to bring them into the land of Canaan!" Together the names GOD ALMIGHTY and Y^ehovah —I AM WHO I AM—should give Moses all the assurance he needs to press on with the mission God has given him in Egypt.

But today I want us to focus our attention on the name GOD ALMIGHTY. What does it mean? The Hebrew behind the English GOD ALMIGHTY is "El Shaddai." However, there is a great deal

of disagreement among scholars as to what this word *Shaddai* means.

My own opinion is that the translation ALMIGHTY captures the essence of the word. Job 37:23 leads me this way, "The ALMIGHTY—we cannot find him; he is great in *power*." There may be other aspects of the meaning of *El Shaddai*, but the idea of power seems central.

Three Things God's Omnipotence Implies About God

The name ALMIGHTY implies that God has all the might He needs to do anything He wants to do. This view of God is confirmed over and over again in Scripture. We call it the omnipotence of God.

Omnipotent and almighty mean virtually the same thing. In particular, there are *three things that God's omnipotence implies about Himself*.

1. First, the omnipotence of God implies that He cannot be stopped from doing what He purposes to do.

Daniel 4:35: "The Most High does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; *and none can stay his hand*."

If God purposes with all his heart to do a thing, it simply cannot be stopped by any power in the universe.

2. Second, the omnipotence of God implies that He does whatever He pleases.

Psalm 115:3: "Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases."

In Isaiah 46:9–10 God says, "I am God and there is none like me . . . saying 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'." GOD ALMIGHTY is not like us. He can do whatever He pleases. Ultimately, the only thing that determines what God will accomplish and what He won't is His own will. This is what it means to be almighty or omnipotent.

3. Third, the omnipotence of God implies that his power is superior to all other powers. During the Summer Olympics of 1984, one of the camera maneuvers taught us something about the greatness of God. The opening and closing ceremonies were thrilling to most of the people who saw them. The sheer magnitude of the crowds and fireworks and music were a once-in-a-lifetime experience of bigness and grandeur.

Those who watched it on television could feel some of the thrill when the camera was high enough to take in the whole great sweep of the coliseum. But then something strange happened. The camera continued to recede into the sky where it was perched in the helicopter, and the coliseum became smaller and smaller until it was just a blurry dot on the ground.

However, compared to God's power and splendor, all that is a blurry dot on the ground.

God puts on a minor display of his strength and splendor every morning as

He brings the sun up over the horizon—865,000 miles thick, 1.3 million times heavier than the earth, blazing on its cool edges at one million degrees Centigrade! Every morning has its opening ceremonies to thrill us with the power and the glory of God and fill us with hope that one day we will enter a land where all the wonders that have inspired us on this little earth will be like blurry dots in comparison with the magnificence of God's eternal closing ceremonies.

And every night, God puts out a little puppet show of his majesty in the sky, with Perseus and Andromeda and Hercules and Orion and Leo the Lion and Draco the Dragon sporting about in the local galaxy 100,000 light years across.

"Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge." And what they teach so forcefully is that God is infinite in power. Nothing that has ever awed you can compare to Him. He is GOD ALMIGHTY! Nothing can stay his hand. He does whatever He pleases. He is the Potter and the universe is his clay.

That's what God's omnipotence implies *about himself*.

The Name God Almighty Means Three Things for Us

Now I want to focus on what the name GOD ALMIGHTY means *for us*. I summed it up at the beginning like this: *The omnipotence of God means reverence, recompense, and refuge for his covenant*

people. So now let's take these promises one at a time.

1. Reverence

First, the omnipotence of God means *reverence*. In Job 40:2 Yehovah said to Job, "Shall a faultfinder contend with the ALMIGHTY?"

The fact that God is almighty means that we may not contend with him. He may perplex us and we may question him in lowliness for understanding, but not for indictment. We may not accuse our Maker. When we try, we set ourselves or some court of appeals above God, and that is a horrendous sin against the deity of God.

Romans 9:20–21 "Shall what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me thus?' Has the potter no right over the clay to do with it as he pleases?"

But reverence is a foreign emotion to fallen human beings. Most people do not have any experience of reverence. Wherever God is considered a pal or a sidekick or a grandfather or the religious drug of the uneducated, he cannot be revered. There are many affections you can feel for a little God, but reverence is not one of them.

Isaiah 8:13: "Yehovah of hosts . . . let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."

Reverence is the combination of admiration and fear, awe and dread, wonder and terror. It's an emotion that we were made to experience. And in its absence, we create motion pictures and take vacations which do their best to provide a substitute. We long to be awe-

struck. We long for some friendly terror and some joyful dread. And the only way we will ever experience it is to know Y^ehovah as GOD ALMIGHTY, the omnipotent.

2. Recompense

Second, the omnipotence of God means *recompense*—a recompense of wrath upon those who do not believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:8). John describes a scene in the book of Revelation of a white horse with a rider who is called Faithful and True. His eyes are like a flame of fire, he is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God. The armies of heaven are in his train. "From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the ALMIGHTY" (Revelation 19:15).

If God is almighty, one thing is for sure—no one who resists him can succeed. The arrogant and the unbelieving may seem for a while to prosper. But, as Psalm 73 says, there comes a speedy end.

Psalm 73:18-19 "Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.
¹⁹How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!"

It is utter folly and madness to disobey the Almighty. He cannot be tricked, thwarted, or defeated. And he has appointed a day when his Son will tread the wine press of the fury of his wrath, because he is GOD ALMIGHTY.

3. Refuge

Third, the omnipotence of God means *refuge*. The opposite of *recompense* for those who have refused the terms of God's treaty is *refuge* for those who have accepted.

Psalm 91:1-2: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the ALMIGHTY, will say to Y^ehovah, 'My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust'."

It means that if you take your place under the shadow of the ALMIGHTY, you are protected by omnipotence. There is infinite and unending security in the almightiness of God.

God did not exercise his omnipotence to deliver Jesus from the cross. He may not exercise it to deliver you and me from tribulation. If we have faith and courage, we might find ourselves saying with the apostle Paul,

Romans 8:36-39: "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God—the almighty God!—that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:36-39: As the Scriptures say, "For you we are in danger of death all the time. People think we are worth no more than sheep to be killed."³⁷ But in all these troubles we have complete victory through God, who has shown his love for us.³⁸⁻³⁹ Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not death, life, angels, or ruling spirits. I am sure that nothing now, nothing in the

future, no powers, nothing above us or nothing below us—nothing in the whole created world—will ever be able to separate us from the love God (Almighty) has shown us in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ERV)

Joy, Freedom, Power, and Obedience

The omnipotence of God means eternal, unshakable refuge in the everlasting glory of God, no matter what happens on this earth. And that confidence is the power of radical obedience to the call of God. Is there anything more freeing, more thrilling, or more strengthening than the truth that GOD ALMIGHTY is your refuge—all day every day in all the ordinary and extraordinary experiences of life! Nothing but what He ordains for your good befalls you. And afterward, He will receive you to glory!

If we believed this, if we really let this truth of God's omnipotence get hold of us, what a difference it would make in our personal lives! How humble and powerful we would become for the saving purposes of God! Paul speaks of "the immeasurable greatness of God's power in us who believe."

The omnipotence of God means refuge for the people of God. And when you really believe that your refuge is the omnipotence of GOD ALMIGHTY, there is a joy and a freedom and a power that spills over in a life of total obedience to Jesus Christ.

The omnipotence of God means reverence, recompense, and refuge for his covenant people. When you accept

the terms of his covenant of grace: turn from sin and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the omnipotence of GOD ALMIGHTY will be the reverence of your soul, the recompense of your enemies, and the refuge of your life—forever.

Amen, Y^ehovah