



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Is there anything God cannot do?"

I have looked at this question a number of times and on each occasion I have laid it aside thinking, "what can I say about a question like that; it is patently obvious what the answer must be". On reflection, however, I have come to the conclusion that this question is not as 'open and shut' as it first appears to be, and consequently I now believe that we can learn something useful from a consideration of it. First of all, however, I must tell you why I thought the answer *must* be perfectly plain.

The Omnipotence of God

I believe that we all understand that the question of the existence of God is never raised in the Bible; it is simply taken for granted. This being so, His Omnipotence is something that we cannot ignore, because it is so unmistakably testified to. He, God, *is* the Omnipotent; the Almighty; the Supreme Being. The following scriptures should convince us that whatever God sets His hand to do, he *can do*.

In Job 42 we read, "Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that thou cans't do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee" (v 1,2). In Psalm 115 the Psalmist says, "But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (v 3). On one occasion, Jesus said to His disciples, "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Again, in the Garden, Jesus prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36). The angel testified to Mary regarding the conception of her cousin Elizabeth, and said, "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

So you see, dear reader, that on the face of it there doesn't seem to be *anything* that God cannot do if He wishes to do it. But if we contemplate His *nature* then I believe that there *are* some things that God cannot do, simply because He *is* God.

God cannot tolerate Sin.

It is in the nature of God to abhor sin. Speaking about the contravention of instructions which He had given, and pin-pointing the wickedness of dishonest dealings, Moses told the people, "For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God". The Psalmist says, "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee" (Ps. 5:4). Again, in Psalm 11:5, "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth". Zechariah said to God's people relative to the restoration of Jerusalem, "And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false hope: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord" (Zech. 8:17). On one occasion, in a reply to the Pharisees, Jesus said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). What a striking indictment of self-righteous man. That sin is hateful to the nature of God there can be no doubt.

God cannot tolerate sin because He knows the disastrous consequences of it for His creation. When sin entered the Garden of Eden it was God who made the announcement of physical death because His creation had succumbed to it, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). The universality of Adam's action is made clear by Paul in his Roman letter, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

We must understand, of course, that another kind of death is implied, that is *spiritual* death. In Genesis 2:17 we read, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die". Now we know that Adam did not die on that specific day, so what is meant is separation from God, which is spiritual death, i.e. cut off from the Life-Source. This condition has passed upon all men in that all have sinned (See Rom. 3:23). The important point which this raises cannot be over-estimated. Everyone should realise that there will be no possibility of God changing His mind regarding sin. He abhors it, and it is an abomination to Him, therefore, everyone who dies asinner will be eternally separated from God. That is why all must seek Christ, the Saviour, and become obedient unto Him so that they might experience the regeneration of the spiritual life in Him.

God cannot tolerate Injustice

The supreme justice and righteousness of God is unquestionable. The prophet Amos records that he saw the Lord standing on a wall made by a plumbline. And the Lord said unto him, "Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more" (Amos 7:7,8). The Lord God's judgments are straight and undeviating when it comes to dealing with people. Paul argues in his Roman letter that a just God *had* to deal with sin; He could not let it go unnoticed and unpunished, so He let the innocent One suffer for the guilty. The righteousness of God demanded that *His own Son* should die for *our* sins, the just for the unjust. Why did He do this? Well, let Paul explain, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26. But read the whole of chapter 3).

We are dealing with a God who has always dealt justly with His creation. He has revealed what He means, and He always means what He says. His plumbline

for us today is in His revealed standard of righteousness; listen to Paul again, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:21-23). Contrary to what many people may believe, God cannot tolerate injustice.

God cannot Lie

I have quoted at some length from Romans 3 and I would like to do so again. Paul there says, "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Rom. 3:3,4). What a comfort it is to know that you can listen to Someone who will not lie to you. God is true to *everything* which He says. He cannot lie.

Furthermore, it is of inestimable value for us to know that this applies to each Person of the Godhead. We know that Paul said of Jesus, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Coll. 2:9), so if God cannot lie, then Christ cannot lie, and we know that Jesus said, "I am the Way, *the Truth*, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me". John the Baptist testified to both Christ and God. Speaking about Jesus he said, "What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John 3:32,33).

Concerning the third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, Jesus said of Him, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *All* of these cannot lie. The world desperately needs truth, salvation, and eternal life. Jesus summed this up when He prayed to His Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Take heart brother, sister, friend. The fact that God cannot lie means that we have a true Saviour, and a Counsellor who will lead and guide into all truth through the word of God.

God cannot Deny Himself

Having established the fact that the Godhead is in agreement on all things, we look at the words of Paul to Timothy. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he will also deny us. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:12,13). What I am saying is that even though these words were spoken about Jesus, they apply to the Godhead.

Faithful unto death. Jesus is not like those who are rebuked by Paul to Timothy, "Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5). Jesus could no more deny His mission, and His fidelity to His Father, than He could deny Himself to the soldiers who came to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. This fact is of supreme importance to us because it means that so long as *we* remain faithful He will *never* deny us.

Those of us who are Christians should never try to bring God, or any Person of the Godhead, down to the level of man. God, because He cannot tolerate sin or injustice, and because He cannot lie or deny Himself, has made the initial movement toward us; it is *we* who need to be reconciled to Him, and not *He* to us.

He has provided the Way in Christ. He calls upon *us* to walk that Way. His very nature ensures that if we do, He will never let us down, nor will He ever leave us or forsake us. Personally, I am glad that there are *some* things that God cannot do; aren't you.

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