

Basic Theology Series: God Is Omnipresent

Big Idea: God is everywhere present with all of His creation at all times, yet He is not contained by creation and is personally near to His people.

Key Scriptures

Psalm 139:7–12

Jeremiah 23:23–24

1 Kings 8:27

1 Kings 20:28

Matthew 28:18–20

Opening Question

“What was your loneliest moment?”

We all know what it feels like to be separated from people. Mom and Dad cannot be everywhere. Friends cannot be everywhere. Even the strongest person can only be in one place at one time. But God is not like us. God is not limited by a body, a building, a city, a country, or even the universe. Today we are learning that God is omnipresent.

1. What Does Omnipresent Mean?

The word omnipresent comes from two ideas:

Omni means “all.”

Present means “there.”

So when we say God is omnipresent, we mean: God is everywhere present. God is not spread out like peanut butter over the universe. He is not partly here and partly there. God is fully God everywhere. He is not divided into pieces. He is not stronger in one place and weaker in another. (*infiniteness*)

God is also not the same thing as creation (*Holiness*). This is important. Some people believe that everything is God or that God is inside everything in a way that makes creation divine. That is not biblical Christianity. The Bible teaches that God created all things, rules over all things, and is present with all things, but He is not the same thing as all things.

God is present everywhere, but He is greater and separate than everything.

Commutable or Non-Commutable?

Read Jeremiah 23:23–24: *“Am I a God at hand,’ declares the LORD, ‘and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ declares the LORD.”*

God is not only nearby. God is not only far away. God fills heaven and earth. There is no secret corner of the universe where God is absent.

Definition for Kids: “God is everywhere, all the time.”

And because God is everywhere, we can never go somewhere where God is not.

Family Discussion: "What is one place where it is comforting to know that God is with you?"

2. God Is Not Limited by Space

Read 1 Kings 8:27: *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you..."*

Solomon said this when the temple was being dedicated. The temple was a very important place. It was the place where God chose to especially reveal His presence among His people. But Solomon knew something very important: The temple could not contain God.

God was truly present with His people at the temple, but God was not trapped in the temple. He was not like an idol that had to sit in one place. He was not like a king who only ruled from one throne room. Heaven itself cannot contain Him.

This also helps us understand prayer. When you pray at church, God hears you. When you pray at home, God hears you. When a missionary prays on the other side of the world, God hears him. God does not have to travel to get there. He is already there.

3. Why This Was So Significant to Ancient Israel

This doctrine would have been especially powerful for ancient Israel because many people in the ancient Near East believed gods were tied to certain places, lands, cities, temples, or territories. People often thought of gods as local or regional. One nation had its god. Another city had its god. A mountain might belong to one god. A river might belong to another. If you left a god's territory, you might be outside of that god's power or protection.

But the God of Israel revealed Himself as totally different. The Lord was not merely Israel's local tribal god. He was not limited to Canaan. He was not trapped in Jerusalem. He was not contained inside the temple. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. That means: The Lord is God in Israel, God in Egypt, God in Babylon, God in the wilderness, God on the sea, and God over all nations.

This would have taught Israel something very different from the nations around them. The Lord is not a territorial idol. He is the living God. He rules over every place because He made every place.

Read 1 Kings 20:28 *The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Arameans think the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD.'"*

In this context the Arameans thought that if they could lure the Israelites into the plains or valleys God would not be able to protect them. They mistakenly thought that the God of Israel was only in the mountains. They learned a theology lesson about the Omnipresence of God the hard way!

For Israel, this meant they could never say, “God is only with us when we are in the land,” or “God cannot see us here,” or “God has no authority over that nation.” The Lord is always present and always reigning.

Whole Group Question “Name some times in the Bible when it would be comforting for an Israelite to know that God was still present even outside the land of Israel?”

4. Psalm 139: God Is Personally Near

Read Psalm 139:7–12.

David asks: “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?” The answer is: nowhere. David says that if he goes up to heaven, God is there. If he goes down to Sheol, God is there. If he travels across the sea, God is there. If he hides in darkness, God is there. This teaches us two things at the same time.

First, God’s presence brings comfort.

David says: “Even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.” God’s presence is not just a fact to memorize. It is a comfort to believe. God is with His people. He leads them. He holds them. He does not abandon them. For believers, this is especially precious because Jesus promised: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”—Matthew 28:20

Jesus did not promise that life would always be easy. He promised that He would always be with us.

Second, God’s presence brings conviction.

David also says there is nowhere he can flee from God’s presence. That means we cannot hide our sin from God. We may be able to hide something from our parents, our spouse, our pastor, or our friends, but we cannot hide from the Lord. This should not make believers run away from God. It should make us run to God. The God who sees us completely is also the God who saves sinners completely through Jesus Christ.

God’s omnipresence reminds us:

There is no place where I am alone, and there is no place where I am unseen.

5. Worship: God is greater than any place.

We should be thankful for church buildings, worship services, and gathered worship. But God is not only present at church. He is Lord over the home, the workplace, the school, the hospital, the mission field, and the whole earth. So when we leave this room, we are not leaving God behind. So we can worship Him anywhere!

Family Discussion: If God is everywhere, why do we come to church to worship?

Closing Illustration

Imagine a small child walking through a dark house at night. If the child thinks he is alone, every shadow feels scary. But if his father takes his hand and says, "I am right here," the darkness does not disappear, but the child is no longer alone. God's omnipresence does not mean life will never be hard. It means God's people never face life without Him. The God who is everywhere is not far away from His children. Through Christ, and the Holy Spirit, He is near.