

Introduction:

Things God cannot do:

- Evil (Jer 9.24, Jas 1.13)
- Tempt to evil (Jas 1.13)
- Deny Himself (2 Tim 2.13)
- Lie (Num 23.19, 1 Sa 15.29, Titus 1.2, Heb 6.18)
- Fail to do His own word (Isa 55.1)

Omnipotence doesn't mean, "God can do anything." It really means, God can do anything consistent with his holy character. God's character prevents Him from doing some things and requires Him to do other things.

Since God's power is limited only by His character, he is always trustworthy: he will always do what he says he will do. God is reliable.

Three Impossible Passages:

Genesis 18, Jeremiah 32, Luke 1

In each passage we will find the rhetorical question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (or variations)

Gn 18.14 "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Anything = "any word" — can be translated generically, "anything," but "if you simply poke around in the passage a little, you discover that the 'thing' in view is something that was said." [152]

Too hard (too difficult, NAU) = "too wonderful" — usual meaning of the Hebrew word (syn. marvelous, miraculous, impossible, unusual)

Sarah will have a son (Gen 18.14)

"Her faith was not merely in God's omnipotence (that he *could* do this); her faith was in God's faithfulness to His words (that he *would* do this because He *promised* to)." [154]

Jeremiah, buy a field (Jer 32)

God's power brought Judah back to the land, it is true, but the point is, What God says is *reliable*.

God does the impossible in keeping with His own promises.

Mary, you will bear a son (Lk 1.37)

The story of Abraham and Sarah is at least *improbable*.

The story of Mary and Jesus is *impossible*.

³⁷ "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Literally: For not shall be impossible with God every word; or "For no word from God shall be impossible"

The word here is *rema* (not *logos*) — any individual word or saying (secondary meaning: "thing")

Elizabeth blesses Mary for believing God's word.

It is "not that God can do anything because He is omnipotent, but that God can be counted on to do anything He says because He is reliable." [158, n. 15]

Drawing Conclusions

God's word is reliable *as history*.

"Did God really create everything out of nothing by His word? Well, did He say He did?" [159]

- What about the Flood?
- Exodus and the plagues?
- Parting of the Red Sea?

God's word is reliable *as prophecy*.

- Will Jesus come again?
- Will He raise the saints?
- Will He reign on the earth?

God's word is reliable *as a present personal guide*.

- Do we mean God will do a miracle for you like he did for Sarah or Mary and others in the Bible?

Did God ever say he would do that for you personally?

- Do we mean that God will supply all your financial needs? (As he promised the Philippians in Phil 4.19: "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.")

Did God ever say he would do that for you personally?

But in a world of chaos, what can you count on?

Mt 11.28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

Phil 4.6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Ps 62.8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

You can count on God to forgive when you confess your sins (1 Jn 1.9)

You can count on God to chasten you if you turn away from him (Heb 12.6)

You can count on God to preserve your soul and take you to heaven if you trust in him (Eph 1.13-14)

Finally, a comparison:

Zacharias: Lk 1.18-20 — Zacharias bore the sign of doubt for nine months.

Mary: Lk 1.38 — Complete acceptance of God's word.