

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD IN THE VIEWS OF STRONG AND PANNEBERG COMPARED TO A BIBLICAL ANALISYS

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RESUMO

A discussão a respeito da onipresença de Deus iniciou-se no primeiro século da era cristã com escritos dos Pais da Igreja e posteriormente foram expandidos durante Idade Média. Os desenvolvimentos do pensamento filosófico também ocorreram simultaneamente, e por vezes entrelaçados aos conceitos da onipresença divina. Considerando o domínio da filosofia nos tempos modernos, eu podero se de fato os ensinamentos adquiridos da onipresença de Deus não têm sido interpretados com a intenção de acomodar os desenvolvimentos filosóficos. No presente material, um exame cuidadoso foi preparado a cerca das elaborações de Pannenberg e Strong com respeito a onipresença divina, e depois, uma comparação dos seus argumentos com as perspectivas adquiridas de um estudo bíblico mais profundo sobre a onipresença de Deus.

ABSTRACT

The discussion about the omnipresence of God that started with the Patristic writings at the first century AD was expanded through the Middle Ages and later in modern times. The development of philosophical thought also occurred simultaneously and sometimes intertwined with the biblical thought of divine omnipresence. Considering the philosophical dominance of modern times, I have pondered if whether the

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biblical teachings of omnipresence are not being interpreted in order to accommodate philosophical developments. In this material, a careful examination is prepared about the elaborations of Pannenberg and Strong concerning the omnipresence of God and then, a comparison of their arguments against the perspectives gained from a deep biblical examination of the omnipresence of God.

INTRODUCTION

Discussions about the omnipresence of God and other attributes of God among Christian thinkers can be traced back as far as the first century AD. In chapter 28 of the First Epistle of Clement, the author exhorts the believers to avoid transgression because God sees and hears all things.¹ Later in the fourth century, during the Latin Christianity, Tertullian affirmed that the omnipresence of the Son was dependent upon the existence of the Trinity²; however, it was only at the beginning of the fifth century that Augustine advanced the concept of the omnipresence of God, moving to a more detailed and sophisticated view than that of Tertullian and the earlier fathers.³

¹ The *Epistles of Clement* are believed to have been written by the same Clement referred to by Paul in Philippians 4:3. Their contents suggest that they were possibly written in 68 or 97 AD. In chapter 28, entitled "God Sees All Things: Therefore Let Us Avoid Transgression," it is declared: "Since then all things are seen and heard [by God], let us fear Him, and forsake those wicked works which proceed from evil desires; so that, through His mercy, we may be protected from the judgments to come. For whither can any of us flee from His mighty hand? Or what world will receive any of those who run away from Him?" Philip Schaff, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols., Electronic Edition (Garland, TX: Galaxie Software, 2000). For more, see Joseph Barber Lightfoot, J. R. Harmer, and Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989).

² In Schaff, vol. 3, part second, chap. 7., Tertullian writes in *Against Praxeans* 23, "We know, however, that God is in the bottomless depths, and exists everywhere; but then it is by power and authority. We are also sure that the Son, being indivisible from Him, is everywhere with Him. Nevertheless, in the Economy or Dispensation itself, the Father willed that the Son should be regarded as on earth, and Himself in heaven; whither the Son also Himself looked up, and prayed, and made supplication of the Father."

³ In chapter 30 of *City of God*, Augustine explored the relationship of Creator and creation. He argues that "[all] these things the one true God makes and does, but as *the same* God—that is, as He who is wholly everywhere, included in no

The differences between Augustine's and Tertullian's theological approaches to the attributes of God are more visible in their form than in their content. While considering the contextual criteria, Alfeyev argued that Augustine was deeply influenced by Tertullian's writings.⁴ Although there was proximity in content, the difference established by Augustine's writings on omnipresence was the reasoning he applied to the subject.⁵ As a result, the larger impact of Augustine's, and later Aquinas's and Luther's, writings related to the omnipresence of God leads to the working assumption that philosophical thinking gradually became a structuring tool for biblical studies.⁶

The word "omnipresence" in itself has been a source of much debate. It is a compound form of two Latin words: the prefix "omnis" and the noun "praesentia." The prefix "omni" can be translated as "all" and is also used in words like omnidirectional, omnicompetent, and omnirange without losing or varying the meaning. The noun "praesentia" can be best translated as "presence," "being," or "occupancy," among other meanings. There is a consensus among theologians that the "omnipresence of God" means that God is everywhere present. This phrase has also taken on a pantheistic

space, bound by no chains, mutable in no part of His being, filling heaven and earth with omnipresent power, not with a needy nature." Augustine reasoned that extraordinary aspects of the creation reveal aspects of an infinite and uncontainable God Philip Schaff, *The Nicene Fathers*, Electronic Edition (Garland, TX: Galaxie Software, 2000), vol. 2.

⁴ Alfeyev stated that "[in the contextual writings] existed a direct connection between Augustine and Tertullian: although Augustine had not known Tertullian personally, he read his work and was deeply influenced by his theological system" Hegumen Hilarion Alfeyev, "The Patristic Heritage and Modernity," *The Ecumenical Review*, no. Jan-April (2002): 11-23.

⁵ Sarot & Brink proposed that "only in Augustine do we find, for the first time, elaborate explications of God's omnipresence" Gijsbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot, *Understanding the Attributes of God*, Contributions to Philosophical Theology, (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 82. See also Robert H. Ayers, *Language, Logic, and Reason in the Church Fathers: A Study of Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas* (Hildesheim, NY: Olms, 1979), 7-81. and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970).

⁶ Frank Thilly and Ledger Wood, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Holt, 1951), 160.

translation, meaning that God is *in* everything;⁷ however, this understanding has been heavily rebuked among Christians.⁸

After the Patristic writings, an expanded discussion about the omnipresence of God continued through the Middle Ages and later in modern times with the simultaneous development of philosophical and theological thought. As an example, A. H. Strong furthered some of Augustine's ideas that the omnipresence of God is closely related to His creation.⁹ Strong suggested that God's omnipresence is a necessary interaction between creator and creation that occurs in a very personal way.¹⁰

In contrast to Strong's proposition, Pannenberg presented God's omnipresence as a consequence of His infinite power. Moreover, the omnipresence becomes associated with His eternity, which makes His relationship to His creation less personal.¹¹ Because Strong and Pannenberg used common Biblical texts to reach dissimilar conclusions, it becomes valid to ponder whether philosophical developments have displaced the significance of biblical text while explaining theological concepts. Is it possible that a deeper biblical analysis of God's

⁷ For more on pantheistic views, see C. Amryc, *Pantheism, the Light and Hope of Modern Reason* ([n.p.], 1898), Mary Baker Eddy, *Christian Science Versus Pantheism* (Boston,: A. V. Stewart, 1917), Paul Harrison, *Elements of Pantheism* (Boston, Mass.: Element, 1999), John Hunt, *Pantheism and Christianity* (London,: W. Isbister, 1884).

⁸ Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1989).

⁹ Augustine considered it "vanity" for those whom God made to try to escape Him, because he is present in their hearts. "Forsooth, they know not that Thou art everywhere whom no place encompasseth, and that Thou alone art near even to those that remove far from Thee? Let them, then, be converted and seek Thee; because not as they have forsaken their Creator hast Thou forsaken Thy creature. Let them be converted and seek Thee; and behold, Thou art there in their hearts." Schaff, *The Nicene Fathers*.

¹⁰ See Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1907), 243-303.

¹¹ The characteristics of time, power, and space that Pannenberg associated with the omnipresence of God provided a better perspective of who God is in His infinitude. In this aspect, Strong brought omnipresence closer to humankind when he associated God's attributes with His creation in their finite condition. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 337-448.

omnipresence will present views similar to Pannenberg and Strong's conclusions?

The purpose of this paper is to examine the elaborations of Pannenberg and Strong concerning the omnipresence of God and then to compare their arguments with a deeper biblical examination.

Philosophical and biblical teachings are not necessarily in agreement with each other in their origin and development;¹² furthermore, historical studies show the increasing influence of philosophical thinking in theological studies.¹³ In the face of these premises, it becomes necessary to consider whether the biblical teachings are not being interpreted in order to accommodate philosophical teachings.

In order to make the study practicable, this paper will investigate the omnipresence of God only from the perspectives of the considered conservative and liberal theologians. I will analyze Strong's opinions on omnipresence as a sample view representing several other theologians who uphold a high view of Scripture, like Orton Wiley, Staley Grenz, Thomas Finger, and others. Similarly, Pannenberg's writings will be taken as representative of the views shared by Schleiermacher, Otto, and Brunner and those who emphasize reason in their theological work. For the purpose of biblical analysis, I will use different versions within the biblical canon.

In chapter 1, I will provide a brief historical description of God's omnipresence and how its understanding has unfolded in the evangelical community until now. I will consider the perspectives of Pannenberg and Strong on the issue of omnipresence and the differences and similarities between the two, beginning with Pannenberg because his model has historical continuity with the classical Christian doctrine of the infinite presence of God. To bring the discussion to the biblical level, in chapter 2 I will investigate the biblical exposition on the omnipresence of God using the passages common to Strong's and Pannenberg's arguments. In chapter 3, I will compare the findings from chapters 1 and 2 to see how Pannenberg and Strong converge or

¹² Thilly and Wood, 11-51, 145-158.

¹³ Nicholas Horvath, *Essentials of Philosophy: Hellenes to Heidegger* (Woodbury, N.Y.: Barron's Educational Series, 1974), 37-126.

diverge from the biblical text. Finally, in chapter 4, I will present a summary of the findings of this paper.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON OMNIPRESENCE

The omnipresence of God has been discussed since the early days of the church. Around 150 AD, Justin Martyr, in his apology to Rusticus, stated that Christians assemble where they can because “the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful.”¹⁴ However, after this brief statement about God's omnipresence, Justin did not pursue the subject further.

More than 200 years later, Augustine expressed his understanding of God by stating, “He [is an] omnipotent God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one and three, one in nature, three in persons, the only invisible, immeasurable, and incomprehensible the only uncircumscribed, immutable, incorporeal, immortal, omnipresent but hidden, everywhere complete and boundless.”¹⁵ When Augustine wrote more specifically about the omnipresence of God, he put forward the premise that nothing could exist without God; since he was assured of his own existence, Augustine became convinced that God was also present in him:

Is there anything in me, O Lord my God, that can contain Thee? Do indeed the very heaven and the earth, which Thou hast made, and in which Thou hast made me, contain Thee? Or, as nothing could exist without Thee, doth whatever exists contain Thee? Why, then, do I ask Thee to come into me, since I indeed exist, and could not exist if Thou wert not in me? Because I am not yet in hell, though Thou art even there; for if I go down into hell Thou art there. I could not therefore exist, could not exist at all, O my God, unless Thou wert in me. ¹⁶

¹⁴ The literal answer can be found in the chapter “The Examination of Justin by the Praefect” in Schaff, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. For more, see *The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs*.

¹⁵ Martin Chemnitz and Jacob Preus, *Loci Theologici* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989), Vol. I, 58.

¹⁶ Augustine, *The Confessions* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 2001), 1-2., translated by Philip Burton.

For Augustine, the existence of God's creation makes His omnipresence undeniable. Augustine's views gave thrust to the classical Christian doctrine of the infinite presence of God, which can be better perceived in the views of Pannenberg than in those of Strong.¹⁷

PANNENBERG'S VIEWS ON OMNIPRESENCE

Augustine could not deny God's majestic presence in the universe or even in hell. Pannenberg makes a similar acknowledgment at the beginning of his discussion on the attributes of God. He recognized the greatness of God and men's limitations to perceive His majesty. Pannenberg also found Augustine to be the conciliator of Platonism and Christian beliefs; he relied on Romans 1:20 as substantiation that "God has made known to them his eternal power and deity."¹⁸

As introduction to the subject, Pannenberg states that "any attempt to talk about God must begin with such recognition because the lofty mystery that is called God is always close to the speaker and to all creatures. God is prior to all our concepts; it encloses and sustains all being, so that it is always the supreme condition of all reflection upon it and of all the resultant conceptualization."¹⁹ Thus, from his opening statements about the attributes of God, it is clear that Pannenberg immediately recognizes the omnipresence and the omnipotence of God.²⁰

Furthering his arguments, Pannenberg claims that the anthropomorphic arguments of Hume and Kant implied boundaries

¹⁷ Although Augustine's views were widely embraced and later became predominant among the church fathers, there were other perspectives like the one presented by Boethius (ca. 480-524) that saw God's omnipresence primarily as His omniscience instead of His infinity Markus Enders, "Allgegenwart Und Unendlichkeit Gottes in Der Lateinischen Patristik Sowie Im Philosophischen Und Theologischen Denken Des Frühen Mittelalters," *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 3, no. 36 (1998).

¹⁸ Pannenberg, 403.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 337-338.

²⁰ Chapter 6 of Pannenberg's book opens with the subtitle "The Majesty of God and the Task of Rational Discussion of Talk about God," suggesting the difficulty of initiating study in the face of the inconceivable majesty of God *Ibid.*, 337.

to God's qualities and consequently a perspective of a finite God.²¹ The major problem with this idea comes with Feuerbach's allegations that the essence of God is real only in its attributes, without which it is an empty idea.²² To avoid this issue, Pannenberg calls for a distinction between God's essence and God's causal relation to the world; however, the qualities that he ascribes to God (like omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence) still rest on the relation of His creatures to Him. Thus, they still allow anthropomorphic bias.²³

This anthropomorphic problem exposed by Pannenberg demanded a characterization and a more meaningful definition of God's qualities. In order to accommodate this issue, Pannenberg reasons as follows:

When we say that God is kind, merciful, faithful, righteous, and patient, the word "God" is the subject of the descriptions. It is of God in distinction from all others that we say these things. But what does it mean to say all these things of "God"? The answer lies in terms that

²¹ While refuting Hume's perspective of inseparable anthropomorphism from theism, Kant argued that Hume's views were dangerous but that perhaps anthropomorphism was still necessary. Kant said, "Such a cognition is one of analogy, and does not signify (as is commonly understood) an imperfect similarity of two things, but a perfect similarity of relations between two quite dissimilar things. By means of this analogy, however, there remains a concept of the Supreme Being sufficiently determined for us, though we have left out everything that could determine it absolutely or in itself; for we determine it as regards the world and as regards ourselves, and more do we not require. The attacks which Hume makes upon those who would determine this concept absolutely, by taking the materials for so doing from themselves and the world, do not affect us; and he cannot object to us, that we have nothing left if we give up the objective anthropomorphism of the concept of the Supreme Being." Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Chicago: The Open Court, 1912), 129.. For more, see also David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 2d ed. (New York: Social Sciences Publishers, 1948).

²² Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York,: Harper, 1957), 18.: "The negation of the subject is held to be irreligion, nay, atheism, though not so the negation of the predicates. But that which has no predicates or qualities has no effect upon me...no existence for me. To deny all the qualities of a being is equivalent to denying the being himself" (cited in Pannenberg, 339.).

²³ Pannenberg, 339-340.: "It is implied, however, in many biblical descriptions of God, and especially clearly in the attributes of eternity, omnipotence, and omnipresence that are ascribed to him." His conclusions point to Chemnitz and Preus, II 171.

explain the word “God” as such, e.g., terms like infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, eternal, and omnipotent. These descriptions are presupposed in order that we may understand the revelation of God in his action as the revelation of *God*. Of the God who is described thus we then say that he is gracious, merciful, patient, and of great kindness.²⁴

It can be understood from the text above that omnipresence, among other qualities, is a basic presupposition of God that should help us understand and identify the revelation of God. To better understand the nature of these qualities of God, two classifications have been suggested by Cremer and Schleiermacher. Cremer suggests that the qualities of God could be broken into two main categories: the qualities that are disclosed in revelation, like holiness, righteousness, mercy, goodness, and wisdom, and the qualities that are presupposed and contained in the very concept of God, such as omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, and eternity.²⁵ The classification offered by Schleiermacher separates the qualities of God according to their different relations of the divine causality to the creation, reconciliation, and consummation of humanity and the world.²⁶

Facing both views, Pannenberg discarded Schleiermacher's classification, arguing that it broke an important rule. He believed that the attributes “must be those of the divine being in *all* its relations to the world in view of the fact that they are the attributes of the one divine essence.”²⁷ Thus, it is safe to say that Pannenberg adopted Cremer's classification, seeing omnipresence as an attribute that is presupposed and contained in the very concept of God.

It is very likely that Cremer's classification influenced Pannenberg to attach omnipresence directly to the eternity of God. Pannenberg states that omnipresence can be viewed as the concrete

²⁴ Pannenberg, 392.

²⁵ Herman Cremer, *Die Christliche Lehre Von Den Eigenschaften Gottes* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1897), 34-77.

²⁶ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), Vol.1,50.3.

²⁷ Pannenberg, 392-392.

manifestation of God's infinity from the standpoints of time, power, and space.²⁸ By doing so, Pannenberg is seeking to make omnipresence free from the finite, or further in opposition to it. However, time and space are considered to be an infinite progress of a finite series:²⁹ an infinite integration of limited portions. In his conclusion, "the omnipresence of God is integrant in the description of God's reality in contrast from all that is limited and transitory."³⁰

Finally, Pannenberg's early assertions that God's omnipresence in time is related to His infinity lead to the conclusion that God is present in all "temporal positions," past, present, and future; therefore, everything is present to Him in His timeless infinity.³¹ In support of this conclusion, Pannenberg uses Jeremiah 23:24 to affirm that "whereas God's eternity means that all things are always present *to him*, the stress in his omnipresence is that he is present *to all things at the place of their existence*."³² With this conclusion, Pannenberg rejects the views of some Protestant dogmatists, like Strong, who suggest that God's omnipresence relates to His creation.

²⁸ In this inference, Pannenberg also associates holiness with the infinity of God: "The confession of God's holiness is also closely related to the thought of his infinity, so closely, indeed, that the thought of infinity as God's infinity needs the statement of his holiness for its elucidation, while eternity, omnipotence, and omnipresence may be viewed as concrete manifestations of his infinity from the standpoints of time, power, and space" Ibid., 397.

²⁹ Pannenberg asserts Hegel's proposition that the infinite can only exist if compared to something different. "From this fact Hegel derives his famous thesis that the Infinite is truly infinite only when it is not thought of merely as the opposite of the finite, for otherwise it would be seen as something in relation to something else and therefore as itself finite" Ibid.

³⁰ Pannenberg applied the idea of the holy from Otto in *The Idea of the Holy* as well as from N. Söderblom in *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens* Ibid., 397-398. See footnote 127.

³¹ Pannenberg argued against the simplistic view of Nelson Pike in *God and Timelessness* where infinity is simply the opposed to time everywhere. He leaned more toward the totally timeless eternity of Augustine and Schleiermacher, where all things created are present to Him at one same time. However, to further explain the temporality, Pannenberg resorted to what he called a "different present to the Eternal God." This idea leads into a deeper discussion of the reality of God that Pannenberg solved with the doctrine of the Trinity Ibid., 397,405.

³² Ibid., 410.

According to Pannenberg, God's presence is related to time and space.³³

STRONG'S VIEWS ON OMNIPRESENCE

Strong's views of the attributes of God came from assigning uniform and permanent effects to uniform and permanent causes. For example, holy acts indicate a source in the principle of holiness; thus, Strong says that we are led naturally from the works to the attributes, and from the attributes to the essence of God.³⁴ In other words, "attributes of God are those distinguishing characteristics of the divine nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitute the basis and ground for his various manifestations to his creatures."³⁵

Like Pannenberg, Strong classifies the attributes of God into two main categories.³⁶ He categorizes the attributes as absolute or immanent (for attributes related to the inner being of God) and relative or transitive (for attributes associated with the outward revelation of God's being). To further expand the relative or transitive attributes, Strong subcategorizes them into three distinct groups: those related to time and space, those related to creation, and those related to moral beings.³⁷

However, Strong and Pannenberg divide the attributes in significantly different ways. Strong places infinity and eternity in the subcategory of attributes related to time and space, and omnipresence placed with the attributes related to creation.³⁸ Pannenberg places God's infinitude, eternity, and omnipresence together in the group of qualities contained in the very concept of God.³⁹

When Strong talks about the omnipresence of God, he is referring to God in the totality of His essence, without diffusion or expansion, multiplication or division, that penetrates and fills the universe

³³ The summary chart of Strong's classification of the absolute or immanent attributes on page 248 gives a solid glimpse of his categorization Strong, 248-249.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 243.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁶ Pannenberg preferred Cremer's classification with two main categories as opposed to Schleiermacher's proposition of three different categories.

³⁷ Strong, 248.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

in all its parts.⁴⁰ He compares this to the idea of the presence of the soul in every part of the body. Mind is the point of contact with reality (the outer world), but is not confined to the brain; the soul is omnipresent in the brain and by analogy in the entire body. Similarly, like the entire mind that is present in all parts of the body, God is omnipresent in His universe.⁴¹

POINTS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN PANNENBERG AND STRONG

We should note that Pannenberg uses Jeremiah 23:24 to support his conclusions that God is present in the place of existence of His creation. Protestant dogmatists like Strong use the same biblical text to affirm their view that God is present in His creation.⁴²

At first glance, Pannenberg seems to suggest that God is present everywhere with His creation (a God with), while Strong is suggesting that God is present in everything He created (a God in) and therefore more intimately connected than in Pannenberg's proposition.

The opposition between Pannenberg and Strong becomes more evident in their views of how God's essence and power relate to His omnipresence. Pannenberg states that God is present to his creatures by his eternal power and deity,⁴³ and makes clear that in this case "no distinction can be made between the essence and the power of God."⁴⁴ In opposition, Strong clearly states, "God's omnipresence is not potential but essential."⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Strong's definition of omnipresence raises an issue in regards to worship. If Strong is assumed to be correct, the place of worship makes no difference to the essence of God, since it fills the earth in all its parts. This is the same argument presented by Justin Martyr.

⁴¹ Strong, 280.

⁴² Although everything was ultimately created by God, Pannenberg gives relevance to "the place." This nuance brings out aspects of the proximity between Creator and creation that are relevant to their development.

⁴³ Pannenberg, 411.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 410.

⁴⁵ Strong, 280.

Therefore, in dealing with omnipresence, Pannenberg makes no clear distinction between the power of God and the essence of God; however, one of Strong's main arguments rests upon the distinction between the power of God and the essence of God. Compared to Strong's, Pannenberg's views seem more inclined toward a deistic perspective.

SUMMARY

After comparing Pannenberg and Strong's views of omnipresence, it can be concluded that although they used similar biblical texts in their discourse, they arrived at different conclusions: Pannenberg affirms that omnipresence happens at the place of existence without distinction between the essence and the power of God, while Strong makes a clear distinction between the power and the essence of God.

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION OF OMNIPRESENCE

EXPOSITION OF JEREMIAH 23:23-24

I will now set aside the concepts of the omnipresence of God presented by Pannenberg and Strong to explore the Bible. To keep this research in context, I will look deeper into the common texts used by both Pannenberg and Strong in their explications.

One text they use is the story in Jeremiah 23:23-24. Pannenberg and Strong are not the only ones to use this text to explain omnipresence; in fact, this is the passage most widely cited as a reference to the subject.⁴⁶ Jeremiah 23:23-24 says: "Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."

⁴⁶ William Evans in *The Great Doctrine of the Bible* uses Jeremiah 23:23-24 as a biblical "statement of the fact" William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, Enl. ed., Electronic Ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974).; the *Nelson Topical Bible Index* places the same text as first in its relevance. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nelson Topical Bible Index, Electronic Ed. (Nashville: T. N. Publishers, 1995); and the same is true for the works of Walter A. Elwell, among many others.

To place this text into a proper perspective, the questions God is asking through Jeremiah are rhetorical questions that carry the same force as a statement or strong affirmation. Though the text has been translated as a question, it is in fact a statement.⁴⁷ The context shows that the text has more force when phrased as a question that has the answer implied in itself. In these statements, God (Yahweh) is revealing that He is aware of what the false prophets have done in His name, and revealing more of Himself. God declares that He is close to the situation and frustrates their perception that He is distant and uninformed.

The Hebrew word that is used to express God's nearness in Jeremiah 23:23 is **בִּקְרוֹב**. This word is a combination of the particle preposition **בִּן** and the adjective masculine absolute **קְרוֹב** (qarowb). It appears only twice in the entire Old Testament, in Jeremiah 23:23 and Deuteronomy 32:17; however, in Deuteronomy it does not express the same meaning of nearness in space, but rather a subjective nearness in time.⁴⁸

The preposition **בִּן** in this case is not followed by a verb, for this reason the combination makes the preposition an indication of the position of what will follow. Therefore, the word that comes after **בִּן** should give more details about a position in space (in front of, behind, above, on the side, etc.).⁴⁹

The adjective **קְרוֹב**, which means *near*, should add more detail about a place described; however, in this particular combination of preposition and adjective it necessarily implies a circumscribed space

⁴⁷ The verb is presented as "Qal," which has three close applications: a) Utterance, declaration (of the prophet); b) Utterance, declaration, revelation (of the prophet in ecstatic state); and c) Utterance, declaration (elsewhere always preceding drive name). At least two commentaries make clear that the driving force of the passage is the declaration of the prophet: Woodside Bible Fellowship, "Enhanced Strong's Lexicon" (Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2001); W. E.; Unger Vine, Merrill F.; White, William, "Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words," (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996).

⁴⁸ The King James Version translates this as "came newly," NIV uses "recently appeared," and NKJ uses only "new."

⁴⁹ K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, *Bhs Hebrew Morphology and Lemma Database Wtm* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1991), 898,577,541,585.

in its structure and usage.⁵⁰

The word קרוב without the preposition appears at least 32 times in the Old Testament, and sometimes is associated with a clear position in space—for example, in Genesis 45:10: “And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be *near* unto me.” In this scenario, one can perhaps measure the physical distance that the adjective expresses. However, קרוב is usually not associated with space or physical nearness, but rather with a subjective event or phenomenon expressed or caused by God, as in Joel 3:14: “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is *near* in the valley of decision.” Isaiah 51:5 is another good example: “My righteousness is *near*; my salvation is gone forth.”

A closer look at the particular combination of the word מוקרב, used in the text to express nearness, reveals that this portion of the biblical text describes a characteristic of God that has location but cannot be circumscribed,⁵¹ and that it is associated with a phenomenon rather than a common event.⁵²

Exodus 29:10 is an example of the variations of the word used to express nearness in the context of a common event. The text says: “You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull.” The Hebrew word used to describe the location is ויהקרבת, which is a variation of מוקרב. Job 33:21-22 is a good example of an uncontained

⁵⁰ Kelley, in his *Biblical Hebrew*, points that “the preposition מן ‘from, out of,’ requires further explanation. The rules for writing it are different from the other independent preposition” Page H. Kelley, *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992). *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* states that generally מן as a preposition implies special separation Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Electronic Ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000).

⁵¹ All the examples of the preposition מן presented in the *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* are associated with space without implying confinement; in fact, the word generally implies separation, even when a verb does not follow: “מן also, without a verb of similar significance, sometimes expresses the idea of separation” Brown, Driver, and Briggs.

⁵² The uniqueness of the word, combined with the fact that the Bible uses a different variation when describing an event intelligible to man, leads to the conclusion that the text is referring to a phenomenon rather than a common incident.

phenomenon that uses the notion of nearness: “His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death.” The Hebrew word used to express nearness here is **וּתְקַרְבַּ**, which is also a variation of **מִקְרַב**. However, in this case, it is expressing nearness in a different context.

Continuing the analysis, the biblical text uses the Hebrew word **מִרְחֹק** with the same structure of a particle preposition combined with an adjective to express a far distance. **מִרְחֹק** appears at least 13 other times in the Old Testament, and all of its appearances are spatially oriented. For example, in Exodus 20:21, “And the people stood *afar off*, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.” It is clear in this case that the distance between Moses and the people was spatial and verifiable.

A comparison of Genesis 37:18 with Jeremiah 23:23 offers a clear illustration of the case in point, since both talk about the concepts of far and near,⁵³ dealing with Joseph and God respectively. The text in Genesis says, “And when they saw him *afar off*, even before he came *near* unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.” The reference to Joseph being *afar off* uses the same Hebrew word found in Jeremiah 23:23 and therefore carries the same meaning of spatial distance; however, the notion of nearness is different. The word in Joseph’s case is not an adjective but rather a verb, which means that Joseph was not near to his brothers but rather *became* near them.

It is clear that when the Bible is referring to an event in space that is commonly related to the idea of “nearness,” it uses the combination of a particle preposition and a verb, or in some cases only the verb.⁵⁴ The idea of being “afar off” can refer either to God or to man, while both uses imply the notion of a geographic space.⁵⁵

⁵³ In Jeremiah, the concepts of near and far are represented by the words **מִקְרַב** (particle prep. + adjective) and **מִרְחֹק** (particle prep. + adjective), while Genesis uses **יִקְרַב** (verb) and **מִרְחֹק** (particle prep. + adjective).

⁵⁴ In Numbers 3:6, “Bring the tribe of Levi near,” **הִקְרַב** (verb) is translated as “near,” but the context of the verbal usage implies the idea of “becoming near.”

⁵⁵ In Genesis 22:4, “Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off,” **מִרְחֹק** (particle prep. + adjective) is used to describe a situation of far special distance for God as well as for men.

In contrast to both cases described previously, the nearness of God is singular in its structure and meaning, as demonstrated earlier.

In summary, from the text “*Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?*” I conclude that God is near, but is not contained⁵⁶ or specifically located in one single place, because He is also present at the same time in far places; His nearness is associated with a phenomenon completely distinguished from a spatial event. As the example shows, God “is near,” while men can only “become near.”

Verse 24 gives further details about this “multipresence”⁵⁷ of God, declaring that there is no geographical location where He is not: “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD.” Thus, the inference to the absolute knowledge of God is also present in the context of the “multipresence.”

Up to this point, we have seen what I call “multipresence” because I am considering locations where God can be present at once; however, a further reading of the text implies a meaning beyond “multipresence”- “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.” In these statements,⁵⁸ God presses three distinct ideas: first, He is omnipresent; second, His creation does not escape Him; and third, He is not only in, but even above His creation. In other words, He is near anything anywhere.

COMPLEMENTING THE IDEA

Another text used by both Pannenberg and Strong is 1 Kings 8:27. At first glance, the text does not relate directly to the omnipresence of God, but rather to the infinity of God concerning His presence. The text says, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!” This poses the question of how God, who is above creation, can come into a small handmade place. The answer comes

⁵⁶ He is not specifically located in that place and not limited to anywhere else.

⁵⁷ At this point, I will call it “multipresence” because “omnipresence” has not been characterized yet.

⁵⁸ Here again, the structure has the force of a statement rather than a question. It is a rhetorical question.

from God himself in Isaiah 66:1: “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest?” Here again we apply the principle that God is uncontained; however, in this case God is stating that it is not possible for a God like Him to inhabit a manmade home. The text suggests that God can be circumscribed by space, but this is denied by the next verse: “For all those things My hand has made, And all those *things* exist.” In summary, God declares that despite his majestic and creative power, He is willing to come closer to mankind—even to a circumscribed space—to meet with men who realize their brokenness and want to reconcile with Him.

At this point, we have exhausted the common biblical texts cited by both Pannenberg and Strong in their expositions on the omnipresence of God.

SUMMARY

Thus far, we have verified that Jeremiah 23:23-24 is at the center of the arguments over omnipresence. This text uses a unique composition of words to express God’s capacity for nearness—a combination of a particle preposition with an adjective masculine absolute, implying a subjective phenomenon that cannot be contained by space. To further characterize God’s presence, in 1 Kings 8:27 and Isaiah 66:1 we discover that God cannot be contained either in His own creation or in manmade buildings. However, God is willing to make Himself available in “special presence” to those who want to reconcile with Him—in a specific place (but not contained), with a specific purpose toward mankind.

From our study of Jeremiah 23:23-24, we find that God is near anything at any place. Then, in 1 Kings 8:27-29, God demonstrates that although He is everywhere present, uncontained, and unlimited, He also chooses specific places for interaction with those who seek Him.

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES AND BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

THE MANY VOICES IN PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY

The classification of the divine attributes is the subject of considerable difference of opinion among theologians. There is no general agreement on what are considered divine attributes; while some theologians identify them as self-existence, immensity, simplicity, and eternity, other theologians disagree.⁵⁹ Strong categorizes the attributes as absolute or immanent and relative or transitive, while Pannenberg understands them as either disclosed in revelation⁶⁰ or presupposed and contained in the very concept of God.

Besides Pannenberg and Strong's categorizations, many other types of distinctions have been made, such as communicable and incommunicable, natural and moral, positive and negative, absolute and relative, and active and passive, among others.⁶¹

From so many different categorizations, we can only expect many different conclusions to be drawn about omnipresence. Although it is not in the scope of this paper to verify the views of other theologians on the omnipresence of God, it became obvious during the research that there is a debate over whether the omnipresence of God is related to His essence or to His infinity (time and place). Parallel to Strong and Pannenberg's divergence, we find Samuel Clarke affirming that God is omnipresent by His essence while Richard Watson and Shedd support the concept of omnipresence in time and place.⁶²

⁵⁹ Shedd is very upfront in his assessment: "The number and classification of the Divine attributes is attended with some difficulty" William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1888), 336.

⁶⁰ "As [the attributes] are summed up in Exod. 34:6 (cf. Ps. 103:8; 145:8) and in the NT witness, the attributes of God's essence as they are disclosed in his revelatory action may be understood through and through as the attributes of his love" Pannenberg, 433.

⁶¹ In his *Dogmatic Theology*, Shedd presented a page-long classification that he recognized to be incomplete Shedd, 336-339.

⁶² Olin Alfred Curtis, *The Christian Faith, Personally Given in a System of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1956), 477., see also Samuel Clarke and Ezio Vailati, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God and Other Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Richard Watson and others, *The Evidences of Christianity* (Philadelphia: J. Kay, 1831); William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 10th ed. (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1892).

I discovered a significant body of material consistent with Pannenberg's views. For example, Gerhart said, "The All stands in Him, in the infinitude of His fullness,"⁶³ William Clarke said, "God is able to put forth His entire power of action anywhere,"⁶⁴ Mullins said, "He is present in all his power at every point of space and every moment of time,"⁶⁵ and Weaver said, "By his infinity is meant more specially his immensity and omnipresence,"⁶⁶ among many others. I found comparatively less material to support Strong's view, but one example is that Bancroft said, "God's omnipresence is not potential but essential."⁶⁷ The much greater number of arguments supporting Pannenberg's interpretation could be an indication that his is the correct analysis of the biblical text.

THE VOICE IN THE BIBLE

The context of Jeremiah 23:23-24, the Biblical passage used by Pannenberg and Strong, deals with false prophets who were announcing messages and claiming to be sent by God. Although Pannenberg and Strong use this text to support omnipresence, the biblical text extends beyond their claims. The central issue demonstrated in the passage is not God being present in the situation, but rather God making sure the people realized that He knew what was happening. This main idea opens and closes the argument of Jeremiah 23:22-25. As God says in Jeremiah 23:24, "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name"; thus the opening and closing idea implies that in the verses between, God tells us how He knows what He knows.

It becomes clear in the text that God knows the actions of the false prophets because His presence is not confined to Jerusalem; He is also present in Judah, Babylon, and Egypt, and throughout the earth. God defined Himself as having the power of "multipresence" and stated

⁶³ Emanuel V. Gerhart, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1891), 489, emphasis is his.

⁶⁴ William Newton Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, 6th ed. (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1916), 79.

⁶⁵ Edgar Young Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia: Roger Williams Press, 1917), 225.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Weaver, *Christian Doctrine, a Comprehensive Treatise on Systematic and Practical Theology* (Dayton: United Brethren 1889), 68.

⁶⁷ Emery H. Bancroft, *Christian Theology, Systematic and Biblical* (Bible School Park, NY: Echoes Publishing, 1949), 30.

that He is capable of being everywhere present; therefore His creation does not escape Him.

Tertullian gives a good exemplification of the idea of “multipresence” in *The Soul’s Testimony*. He suggests that just as God is everywhere, demons are also everywhere, and so are death and the invocation of divine judgment. Tertullian places on the same level things that are different in nature: for example, the invocation of divine judgment is not everywhere in the objective sense, but it occurs wherever there is the proclamation of God’s word. Likewise, death is not everywhere, but wherever there is (was) life. These places are particular references in space where God is also present at the same level—here, there, and far there as well. Thus, multipresence is the capacity of God to be present at once in all these places where death and the invocation of His judgment are.⁶⁸

Another remarkable element in the biblical text is the manifestation of power. When Jeremiah starts speaking about God’s fury in verse 23:19, he mentions the “storm of the LORD,” which is named several times before in the same book. The other accounts describe it as an outburst of lightning, thunders, and God’s judgment. Therefore, the text also testifies about the power of God.⁶⁹

THE BIBLE AND OTHER VOICES

Strong is partially in line with the arguments above when he ties omniscience to omnipresence and argues that the omniscience of God can be viewed from his omnipresence.⁷⁰ Strong is also aligned with

⁶⁸ “God is everywhere, and the goodness of God is everywhere; demons are everywhere, and the cursing of them is everywhere; the invocation of divine judgment is everywhere, death is everywhere, and the sense of death is everywhere, and all the world over is found the witness of the soul” Schaff, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, part first, item 8, chap 6.

⁶⁹ “Thunder and lightning were considered to regularly accompany the presence of a deity in the ancient Near East, often in a battle setting. From the Sumerian Exaltation of Inanna, to the Hittite myths about the storm god, to the Akkadian and Ugaritic mythologies, the gods are viewed as thundering in judgment against their enemies” John H. Walton, Victor Harold Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The Iyp Bible Background Commentary : Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

⁷⁰ “The omniscience of God may be argued from his omnipresence, as well as from his truth or self-knowledge, in which the plan of creation has its eternal ground, and from prophecy, which expresses God’s omniscience” Strong, 283.

the biblical analysis when he groups omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence together in the same category. However, a problem arises when Strong associates these three attributes with God's creation. Further, Strong affirms that God's omnipresence is grounded in His essence, and this idea is very problematic.

The main problem with Strong's assessment of omnipresence is that he leaves room for panentheistic foundations. When we think of the essence of God present in all his creation, we tend to conclude that God's essence encompasses everything in a mode of extension and fills all interspaces.. Hence, Strong's arguments would have the absolute spirit of God dwelling in all, which makes the "special presence" of God impossible or at least meaningless and is inconsistent with a personal pure spiritual being.⁷¹

Adding to the argument above, in chapter 2 of this study I demonstrated that all three forms of presence implied in Jeremiah 23:23-24 have a relationship to space. The notions of "multipresence," omnipresence, and "special presence" derived from the biblical analysis of chapter 2 do not agree with Strong's classification. Strong identifies omnipresence as related to creation, which reinforces his opinions about the essence of God as opposed to the power of God. However, this study has shown that omnipresence is indeed related to space.

Pannenberg takes a different approach and integrates concepts where Strong divides them. Pannenberg argues that "God comprehends all things with his presence but is not comprehended by any. His immensity and his omnipresence are seeing in conjunction. He grants them independent existence in their own places in space, and yet he is also present to them."⁷² This assessment comes closer to the context of Jeremiah 23:23-24, which also presented the aspects of the power of God in relation to space. Although the aspect of time cannot be directly associated with the biblical text, it can be indirectly implied. The power of God referred to by Pannenberg is also better presented in the biblical context.

⁷¹ John Miley, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1892), 218.

⁷² This reinforces the idea of "God with" proposed by Pannenberg, in contrast to the idea of "God in" suggested by Strong. Pannenberg, 411.

Pannenberg's views also align with what I called the "multipresence" of God. The biblical analysis in chapter 2 allowed the interpretation of God's presence in more than one location at the same time. Pannenberg calls this phenomenon "simultaneous presence."⁷³

Although Pannenberg's assessments are very close to the findings of this research, two aspects of his interpretation of the biblical omnipresence require caution. First, he borrows the concept of "eternal power and deity"⁷⁴ from Augustine, leaning on the Augustinian idea that the revealed characteristics of God are expressions of His eternal power and deity.⁷⁵ Although this idea has the biblical support of Romans 1:20, Augustine used it to compare the Platonic school with Christianity. The second aspect comes as a consequence of the first. Because the Augustinian idea implies the concepts of "eternity" and "deity," Pannenberg justifies historicity (God's action in time) in the face of God's eternity and defines deity as a supernatural power that has the capability of impressing upon creation and making itself known.⁷⁶ As Pannenberg furthers his definitions of "the essence of deity as Spirit," he pushes to clarify "the relation of all three persons to the life of the Spirit which unites them by means of their relations,"⁷⁷ which has

⁷³ Pannenberg says that "[God's] presence, unlike that of a body, does not exclude the simultaneous presence of other things in the same place" *Ibid.*, 412.

⁷⁴ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 2d ed. (Washington: Catholic Education, 1956), translated by Most, William G.

⁷⁵ Pannenberg recognized Augustine's achievement of reasoning upon the eternity of God: "Thus Augustine thought that among the philosophical schools none was so close to Christianity as the Platonic school, especially as regards the statement of Paul in Rom. 1:20 that God has made known to them his eternal power and deity (Civ. Dei 8.5-6)" Pannenberg, 403,411. In this view, Pannenberg is directly opposing Strong, who affirms that God's power is not part of the equation but purely the essence of God: "God's omnipresence is not potential but essential" Strong, 280.

⁷⁶ While talking about the will, Pannenberg recognizes the existence of a "religious experience of the will of a known or unknown deity that impresses itself upon us" Pannenberg, 381.

⁷⁷ In fact, Pannenberg considered an understanding of deity to be necessary in order to elaborate better on the Trinity: "The definition of the essence of deity as Spirit, and the clarification of the relation of all three persons to the life of the Spirit which unites them by means of their relations, now permit us, however, to understand the trinitarian persons" *Ibid.*, 385.

implications for the omnipresence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although the exploration of these problems is beyond the scope of this paper, the only solution Pannenberg found was bringing the Trinity to the subject.⁷⁸

SUMMARY

There is a lack of consensus among theologians on how to classify the attributes of God and what is considered an attribute. Sampling these different voices and revisiting the biblical texts they refer to, I found that the biblical context of the passage used by Strong and Pannenberg on the omnipresence of God presents three aspects of God: power, awareness, and presence. On the one hand, we have Strong relating omnipresence to creation, which reveals some panentheistic principles,⁷⁹ opposing this research that indicates omnipresence is related to God's power and space. On the other hand, we have Pannenberg's arguments, which are more in line with this research; however, he also presents problematic ideas that go too far beyond the biblical text.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the *Epistles of Clement*, the concept of omnipresence has been greatly expanded, and the development of philosophical thinking has been one of the main contributors to this expanded understanding.

⁷⁸ Pannenberg's association of the omnipresence of God with His infinity makes it necessary to seek evidence of this God of love in the reality of the world in the process of its history. The task Pannenberg places upon himself is to close the gap between the worldly reality and the religious proclamation of God. To accommodate this issue, Pannenberg shifts his concept of God's unity away from pantheism and toward the Trinity. "It is the question whether we can think of statements about God's love in conjunction with his infinity, holiness, eternity, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Stated thus, it is the question of the unity of God in the multiplicity of his attributes, and especially of the relation of the divine love to the attributes which in § 6 we saw to be concrete forms of the concept of the Infinite" Ibid., 441-448.

⁷⁹ Some of Strong's perspectives are influenced by other philosophical trends like mechanicism. In one instance, he affirms that "the uniformity of nature and the reign of law are nothing but the steady will of the omnipresent God. Gravitation is God's omnipresence in space, as evolution is God's omnipresence in time" Strong, 282.

Augustine, who saw many similarities between the Platonic school and Christianity, elaborated on the concept of omnipresence, and more recent theologians have different perspectives on the subject even though they frequently use the same biblical texts. For example, Pannenberg affirms that omnipresence happens at the place of existence, while Strong explains it as related to the essence of God.

Examination of the biblical passages cited by Strong and Pannenberg revealed a unique composition of words in Jeremiah 23:23-24 expressing God's nearness. The combination of a particle with an adjective implied a subjective phenomenon, related but not contained by His created space. This "multipresence" of God was further expanded by 1 Kings 8:27 and Isaiah 66:1, which revealed that God cannot be contained, but that He makes Himself available in "special presenc" to those who want to reconcile with Him.

By comparing information from the Bible to the arguments of Strong and Pannenberg, this research has shown that the biblical passages present revelations about God's power, awareness, and presence. Strong completely misses the aspect of space in God's presence and connects it to His essence, which brought his ideas close to panentheistic principles. Pannenberg's arguments are more aligned with the biblical text; but he goes beyond what the text can bear and gets into problematic ideas far beyond the purpose of this paper.

Finally, this paper has shown that a deeper biblical analysis of omnipresence produces arguments that differ significantly from the views of Strong and do not go as far as Pannenberg's conclusions. The indications are that philosophy has brought its own meaning to biblical interpretation, one that reflects more of itself than it does the biblical passages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Although this research was limited in its scope, further investigation could be done on Strong's perspective of omnipresence, comparing his views with the panentheistic perspective. Pannenberg's ideas also need further investigation to clarify whether the Trinity satisfies the problems he created by defining infinity in the omnipresence of God.