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### MAXIMAL DIVINE POWER

Almost all people understand God to be that being who is supremely powerful. That is, in some sense God can do anything. The scriptures assert that “with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26) and “nothing is too hard for God” (Jer. 32:17). Augustine stated: “God is called omnipotent on account of his doing what he wills; not on account of his suffering what he wills not; for if that should befall him, he would by no means be omnipotent.”<sup>1</sup> Augustine seems to have believed that God can do anything that he wills. Nevertheless, even Augustine admitted that God is unable to die or be deceived, and “it is precisely because he is omnipotent that for him some things are impossible.”<sup>2</sup> Anselm of Canterbury agreed that, although “nothing has power over” God, still there are some things that even God cannot do, including that God is not able to be corrupted or to tell a lie or to make what is true be false—for example, to make what has already happened not to have happened.<sup>3</sup> The tenth century Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, with an eye to precluding Christian assumptions especially that God might become incarnated, wrote, “It is impossible that God should produce a being like himself, or annihilate, corporify, or change himself. The power of God is not assumed to extend to any of these impossibilities.”<sup>4</sup>