

Excerpts from the Systematic Theology Text

The Names of God

Aquinas⁹ says the names for God signify the divine substance but fall short of representing Him completely. In denoting this way of generating names, he makes the useful distinction that to call God good doesn't mean that He is the cause of goodness or that God is not evil. It means that whatever good we attribute to creatures pre-exists in God and in a higher way. In other words, God is not good because He causes goodness, but He causes goodness because He is good.

The popular name Jehovah is derived by using vowels in a grammatically unorthodox way, assigning to the consonants of *Yahweh* the vowels of the name Adonai (my Lord) when *Jehovah* appears alone or that of *Elohim* (God) when it appears with *Adonai*. Thus some say Jehovah isn't a true name for God, but God is sovereign, and He has allowed use of the name in churches for centuries. *Jehovah* combines the name *Yahweh*, unapproachable almighty God, with the name Adonai, (my Lord). The new name extends the old, reflecting what Christ did for His church in making almighty God approachable and personal as our Father [Mt.6:9, 23:9]). Regarding the name *Elohim*, this speaks of the plurality of God's person and of Christ's equality with *Yahweh* in the Trinity that makes Him the lawful one to make God personal to mankind.

Hodge² lists some primary names for God as they attest to his nature, and these are as below. Although the name "Jehovah" is derived by using vowels in an unorthodox way, the name is widely accepted today

1. Jehovah, or Jah in abbreviation: Self-existence and immutability are likely meant, according to Hodge. Jews refused to pronounce this name, considering it too holy and using the word Adonai in its place.
2. El: Might or power of God.
3. Elohim: Commands fear and reverence: It has a plural sense and can also apply to men of power or angels.
4. Adonai: Indicates possession and sovereign dominion.
5. Saddai: Almighty.
6. Elyon: Most High.
7. Tzebaoth: Of hosts, as Jehovah of hosts.

In Exodus 6:1-3 God says...*I Am the LORD (JEHOVAH): And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them.* This passage indicates the name *JEHOVAH* or *JAWEH*, was either fully unknown or unknown in a certain sense to the patriarchs of Israel. Scholars today have not shed much light on this matter since they aren't too sure of the meaning of the name. But we find this name clearly connected with the name *I AM THAT I AM*, or *I AM*, since this latter one appears in Exodus 3:14 and is made equivalent to the name *JEHOVAH (LORD)* in the parallel structure of verse 3:15. Through this connection, we can begin to understand the meaning of *Jehovah*.

The terminology *I AM THAT I AM* is the same as *I AM* in order *THAT I AM*, or *I AM* because *I AM*, or I AM for I AM. This terminology declares Jehovah to be the self-

existent uncaused ultimate cause of all things and thus the one who needs no outside justification for what He does. That Abram understood God as one who doesn't need to justify what He does is seen in his unquestioned obedience to God's command to leave his ancestral roots and travel to a place later to be revealed, all without giving any explanation. As Exodus 6:3 says, Abraham understood God as the almighty sovereign, or El Shaddai. Thus El Shaddai, or almighty God, is an aspect of the name *I AM THAT I AM* or *I AM* and therefore is an aspect of the equivalent name *JEHOVAH*.

Exodus 3:14 reveals another aspect of Jehovah, or *I AM THAT I AM*, through authorization of its use by Moses in his interaction with the children of Israel over their deliverance from Egypt. This verse says, *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* As we consider this matter, we will see that the name Jehovah, in its original consonantal form, is a comprehensive one. It was known very early to include the aspect of almighty God, or El Shaddai, but now in the deliverance from Egypt it will be seen to include another aspect of His dealings with men. A formerly unrevealed aspect of God's manner of dealing with man was His intervention in the life of mankind according to His love and mercy. Abram knew God from the standpoint of His sovereignty and knew that obedience was absolutely necessary, but he didn't know God as personally interested in man's welfare, as we see from his repeated worry about not having a natural son as an heir in old age. Indeed, Jehovah could not have seemed at all loving and personally interested when He told Abram, now called Abraham, late in life, to sacrifice his only son Isaac on the mount of Moriah (the sacrifice was never actually required), but Abraham never questioned God's right to command obedience, even in something so personally and totally horrifying.

Abraham clearly understood God as almighty sovereign, and he likely knew of the name Jehovah, or *I AM THAT I AM*, as signifying the almighty sovereign. If the name Jehovah itself had been previously unknown, why would God use the equivalent name in letting Israel know who it was that would deliver them from Egypt? Thus when God said to Moses (in Exo.6:3) in reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...*by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them*, as scholars suggest, this doesn't likely indicate a lack of Abraham's knowledge of the name itself. Rather, it indicates a lack of knowledge of the complete manner by which God dealt with man under that name. That is, by everything the name Jehovah stands for, He was not previously known. If people don't know all that God's name stands for, then He isn't actually known (not just heard of) by or through that name.

Centuries later in Moses time, Jehovah is about to reveal His personal care for His people held captive in Egypt by delivering them. Thus the name Jehovah as signifying the deliverer from trouble is being emphasized in Exodus 6:3 as He reveals this aspect of His name. And, in view of the personal care intrinsic to the name Jehovah, it is not surprising to see that our Lord Jesus, the living expression of God's love and care, is so commonly associated with the name Jehovah in the New Testament by His repeated reference to Himself as *I AM*.

There is still another aspect to the name Jehovah, or *I AM THAT I AM*, one that declares the eternity of God by referring to an eternal present tense. God never says of Himself "I was that I might be" or "I will be that I might be." That eternal present tense is part of what Christ meant when, in showing skeptical Sadducees the truth of the

resurrection and eternal life of God's people, He noted that God had said, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.* (Mt.22:32). Use of the eternal present tense seems to be for the purpose of reminding God's people that they must not grow impatient waiting many centuries for the fulfillment of His promises, for with God, all things are present tense, and *a thousand years is as one day* (2 Pet.3:8). With God, nothing is part of a forgotten past, and the fulfillment in the distant future is just around the corner. In the sense of an eternal present tense, "Jehovah" relates to another name denoting God's eternity, "El Olam."

Thus one can say the names El Shaddai and El Olam are aspects of the comprehensive name Jehovah. But there seems to have been no other previous name that denoted the aspect of God's personal care, so the knowledge of this aspect was not made known until the time came for the exodus of Israel from Egypt. We see at least three aspects of the comprehensive name Jehovah, and there may be others also.

Some modern scholars and their modern versions render *I AM THAT I AM* as, *I AM* who *I AM*, replacing an impersonal "what" they derive from the Hebrew text with a personal "who." This interpretation loses the essential meaning of the phrase and also introduces a sense of irreverence. This is about like saying, "I am who I am and what of it," or "I am what I am and what of it," as if to suggest a capricious whimsical nature of God that is most inappropriate. The evidence of confusion in the thinking of modern textual/translation scholars seems to extend to every aspect of scripture, even to the knowledge of the attributes of God.

The name Jehovah itself is used to form compound names that are further indicative of God's nature. This seems to be a way of describing God as one who, though universally comprehensive in all He does, is willing to focus on a specific need of man, further emphasizing the aspect of God as deliverer and provider concerning man. Thus Jehovah-Jireh, or "the Lord provides" (Gen.22:14), would be indicative of the great all-encompassing God as He who condescends to the specific task of providing for man's needs. And compound names may become increasingly specific to further denote how much God is concerned about smaller needs, as with Jehovah-Shalom, or "the Lord our peace" (Jud.6:24). This name would be indicative of the all-encompassing God who condescends to deal with the more specific task of providing man's need for peace

Other compound names for God are formed using the name "El," and these names seem to be those emphasizing His attributes apart from any consideration of His involvement with man. "El" means power or might, and a compound name like "El Shaddai" suggests that this power is all-encompassing, being indicative of almighty God, or God with power unlimited. And "El Olam" would be indicative of the God whose might is timeless, extending from eternity past to eternity future. And the plural name "Elohim" for God, would be indicative of the power of almighty God manifested through a plurality of triune persons. And "el" as a suffix for names like Gabriel and Israel suggests God's power manifested through, or on behalf of, a nation or an individual.

It is important to know, as Morris ¹⁰ points out that, with Christ's First Advent, the name "Father" came into prominence in addressing God in prayer. Old Testament prophets never addressed God by this name, but in Jeremiah 3:19, God says concerning His name that in the millennial era Israel will address Him as Father. Moses, a forerunner of Christ,

seems to further this prophecy in Deuteronomy 32:6 as he tells Israel that God as their Father has made, established and guided them. In the Millennium Christ will completely fulfill this prophecy of Moses, but He began the fulfillment at His First Advent, being the first to use this name in a normative fashion, especially in His recorded prayers. And He taught the church to do likewise in the model prayer for His disciples that begins with the words, *Our Father which art in heaven...* (Mt.6:9).

The Decrees of God

The decrees of God can be thought of as the purposes of God stemming from His holy nature and His omniscient wisdom that determine the sum total of all that exists and operates in the make-up of the universe. Nothing exists or functions except as He has determined it will, and the decrees are eternal so that there can be no alteration or change according to human developments. And God is not obligated to do anything that man supposes necessary but does all things in the complete freedom of His own counsel, and not from whim or caprice, but from wisdom.

Thus salvation by Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection was ordained before the world began since God foreknew the fall of man. That is just what the scripture teaches, as in Revelation 13:8 that speaks of Christ as the, *lamb slain from the foundation of the world* and in Ephesians 1:4 which speaks of our salvation happening because we were, *chosen in him before the foundation of the world*.

Hodge¹¹ summarizes the decrees of God, saying God actually has just one eternal and comprehensive decree that is seen by mankind as several due to our limited faculties. This one decree is denoted in the phrase, "Called according to His eternal purposes" and is His eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions and relations, and determining their certain future development. The decrees are efficacious in respect of events which God has determined to bring about through necessary causes or His own immediate agency. They are permissive in respect of those events which He has determined to allow dependent agents to bring about.

The highest purpose of God's decrees is to promote His glory, and all creation is to serve this purpose. He decrees salvation, happiness and holiness for His people to serve this supreme goal. Ephesians 1:6 tells us God predestinated people to salvation, and thus to the happiness and holiness of salvation, *To the praise of the glory of his grace*.

We conclude that God permitted sin and subsequently overruled it in providing salvation for the good of man and the glory of God. He also provided rewards for those who would desire His salvation and punishment for those who would reject it. The punishment He provided applies also to the devil and his fallen angels who rebelled against Him and chose to be the agents introducing sin into the world and causing the propagation of sinful activities to all corners of the world. God ordained minor punishments and rewards for the present life and major ones for the Judgment Day.

The decrees from the beginning of creation included ordination of the family as a central aspect of human life, and after the great flood included human government to assist in the control of human activities. From the beginning, seasons were ordained for times of

planting, harvest and rest of the land, and animals were ordained to serve various needs of man. The heavenly bodies were ordained to provide light in the day and night and to mark daily time and the seasons.

After the fall and great-flood judgment, God ordained the nation of Israel as His people representing Him in the world, beginning in its progenitor Abraham. Israel failed in its mission to serve God, and the church was later ordained to declare God's way and will to the world. The failure of Israel was foreknown, as was the rise of the church by Christ. Also ordained is a future final triumph of God in which God by Christ will overthrow all the activities of the devil and his fallen angels and all those of mankind who seek to serve the devil. The overthrow will result in a world ruled by Christ for a thousand years and a subsequent eternal state in which the Godhead rules the world for eternity.

The Trinity

God is a unity, as scripture clearly testifies in Deuteronomy 6:4 which says, *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord*. Indeed, there is no possibility of division or non-unity in one with attributes like immutability, omnipotence, omniscience and absolute truth and righteousness.

And yet God is also represented in scripture as a Trinity or a tri-distinction of being. The Trinity is seen as manifestation of individual distinctions of God in Matthew 3:13-17 where Jesus is baptized, after which the Spirit from heaven descends on Him in the form of a dove, while the Father in heaven audibly praises Him. God fills the universe, interacting with it by His omnipresence, and manifestations of Himself as His embodied Word or His Spirit would be ways that His omnipresence interacts with men.

Theologians have long wondered about the nature of the Trinity and have tried to understand it in reasonably concrete terms but have only concluded that it is a mystery. Calvin,¹² who disdained philosophy concerning God, provided a good description of the Trinity. He said, "There is but one God but that Jesus Christ our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit our Sanctifier is each no less this one God than God the Father to whom we owe our being; while yet these three are distinct personal objects of our love and adoration. Our intelligence is not able to conceive the Father without at the same time comprehending the Son in whom His living image is repeated, and the Spirit, in whom His power and virtue are manifested."

In defining the Trinity, the most accepted view is that this is a tri-personality of three eternal distinctions of one eternal essence in perfect unity. This writer suggests the Trinity is best understood in terms like this but that scripture allows the matter to be defined more specifically. Scripture says man was created in God's image, so we might expect the triune nature of God to find expression in the nature of man, though obviously infinite differences in essence will exist. God is triune, and so is the human personage, the latter being comprised of body, soul and spirit. Thus perhaps we may think of the divine Trinity in correlation with the way we think of the triune nature of man created in God's image. That is to say, perhaps the divine Trinity has aspects of personage that correspond to man's soul, spirit and body.

From this viewpoint we might see the Father as the soul or mind of the Trinity with the distinction of rule or control, and this would correspond to a controlling soul or mind in man. The Holy Spirit as a distinction of the source and power of life would correspond with our spirit as the source of our emotion, conscience and energy that makes us “full of life.” Of course, Christ as God in the flesh with the distinction of translating the intellect and life of God into physical being would correspond to our body as the manifestation of intellect and life in a physical being.

Now in the human personage, the soul, spirit and body aspects of our being can be manifested somewhat separately in our behavior. At times the body dominates through appetites, as when we are very hungry, and the spirit dominates when we are very emotional, and the soul dominates when we are deep in thought. This is a kind of separation by distinction of the triune aspects of our person, which is in accord with Hebrews 4:12 which says that God’s written Word divides our soul from our spirit figuratively in the sense of behavior control. Perhaps God can manifest such a thing in Himself literally, revealing sovereign individual distinctions of His one sovereign essence in perfect union.

Concerning Christ and the body, John 1 tells us God’s Word became flesh to bring salvation to mankind, and perhaps this means that the very speech of God is identified with Christ in the flesh. His speech is the source of all physical things in His utterances of *Let there be*, from the firmament of Genesis 1:6 to all succeeding things. Perhaps we may think of God’s Word or speech as personified by the holy humanity of the Savior. Certainly the speech of God is as eternal and uncreated as He is, and scripture speaks of God’s Word as if it were personified when it speaks of the “Word of God coming to John the Baptist” or another prophet. This whole concept is furthered by the thought that, just like His spoken or written Word, God’s Living Word in the flesh perfectly represents the Father as the living example of all He stands for (In Jn.14:9 Jesus said, *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*). And it certainly is true that God’s Word will always be in complete accord with God’s ruling mind and yet might be separated for the distinct task of representing God physically to men for maximal understanding of what God is like. Thus Jesus might be thought of as the personified speech of God in action in holy human form, presenting all the attributes of God.

Concerning God’s Spirit, He will always be in complete accord with the ruling mind of the Trinity and might be separated for a specific task like the fiery tongues manifestation at Pentecost. Scripture speaks of God’s Spirit individually descending upon Christ in a form like a dove at the baptism in Jordan and as personally being a new part of a believer in Christ, so we see a distinction according to role. And scripture speaks of God’s Spirit as part of the personage of Christ, calling Him both the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God (Rom.8:9), so the Spirit can be a part of Christ’s person or a separate personage. This is scriptural evidence of the concept of a separation (distinction) of God’s essence into divine sovereign persons working His will individually in total unity.

Thus it seems plausible to think of the Trinity in correspondence with, and as the source of, our own triune being. This is implied in Genesis 1:20 where God says, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*, the three-fold nature of God and man being implied even in the use of a personal pronoun three times. Of course the capabilities of God’s triune nature infinitely exceed ours. The concept of a divine Trinity seems to be for the purpose of emphasis on the ability for separation of God’s one essence into sovereign

distinctions, while maintaining complete unity. The separation is always one of distinction and never involves power, distance or time since God is always omnipotent, omnipresent and eternal. And it never involves independence since one essence and purpose of one God always apply.

Traits in man specifically define the manner in which he is in the image of God according to the behavior he exhibits. Human beings have natural tendencies to exhibit creativity modeled after their own nature, and it would be entirely reasonable to expect that we acquired this habit because our Creator made us after His own image with the traits of His own personage. And as a self-conscious being, man has some feelings and desires he relates to himself and some he does not, and he also has self-determination and makes choices based on motives and goals. And He reveals intellect in solving problems and probing the unknown, and he exhibits emotions in accord with his pleasure or displeasure over various matters. Scripture represents God in terms of somewhat similar characteristics, so it is reasonable to conclude that our Creator God, who is the source of life, has personage traits that are the source of our own, including traits such as intellect, love, anger, benevolence and mercy. Of course, being infinitely superior to us, He would possess an infinite capacity for personal traits, including those we admire but find ourselves in short supply of, like intellect, wisdom, truth, justice, holiness and power. It is beyond our capability to surmise how these traits relate to and apply among the individual personages of the Trinity, but whatever such relationship there may be might very well be the chief factor governing how our human attributes are related to our soul, spirit and body.

One likely work of the Trinity is to manifest a distinction of God's essence by which His own nature, rather than an angelic one, would accomplish certain tasks among men. He would work among men as the Son or the Spirit so that the glory of His presence would be veiled by flesh or by invisibility of the Spirit to avoid destroying man. The unveiled glory of God would indeed destroy sinful man, and when Christ returns to judge the world at the Second Advent, it will be that glory of God, along with the Word of God, that destroys the antichrist, the man of sin. This is seen in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that says, *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth (the Word), and shall destroy with the brightness (glory) of his coming.*

God as a Trinity is to be distinguished from unbiblical three-fold aspects of God postulated in the past. Tri-theism suggests three distinct gods being one only in the sense of having one mind or purpose, as with people united in a common political, social or economic cause. Sabellianism postulates one God distinguished in three different functions as with people having more than one role in life, as a man who is a husband, father and son or a lawyer, volunteer worker and political activist.

Christology (Doctrine of Christ): God the Son

Christ the power of God in creation and scripture

God's Son, the living Word, seems to be in an integral union with the Father the way a man's word or speech is an integral part of him. This suggests that the way Christ is subject to the Father is the way a man's speech is subject to him through integral union. This explains how Jesus could say (Jn.10:30), *I and my Father are one* (integral union),

yet also say (Jn.14:28), *my Father is greater than I* (the source of all the authority Christ exercises). By integral union that precludes all possibility of differences in essence, Christ is fully God and sovereign as an individual representing the Father. Yet, though He is one with the Father in perfect union, Christ is separate by distinction, as a man's words are in perfect union with his bodily being, yet distinct from the material body. This accords with Scripture that reveals in the physical person of Jesus attributes of God like omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and eternity. Conzelmann¹³ notes scripture reveals Christ as God's *Word*, the *Logos*, in His essence in John 1:1 and as *the power of God and the wisdom of God* in 1 Corinthians 1:24. Christ is presented as infinite God, the living spoken Word of God and the wisdom and power of God by His Word. Such attributes are those of the Father, distinctive within His person, yet inseparably joined to Him in integral union.

All attributes of God are manifest in Christ, including creation power. In chapter 1 of John, Christ is the Creator, it being said of Him there that, *All things were made by him*. This accords with other passages that identify Christ as the agent by whom the Father created all things, such as Ephesians 3:9 which says, *God, who created all things by Jesus Christ*. Now it's evident that Christ is not named in the Genesis account of creation, while the Father and the Spirit are named there. But this is only because the person of Christ is veiled throughout the era of the Old Testament as part of God's plan to openly reveal Him only in the New Testament era. John 1 and other scriptures tell us Christ is in the Genesis account, and to find Him there, we must look for one veiled in symbolism. Since He is the living representation of God's Word, we might infer that when God spoke the world into existence, this is a way of saying He created by His Son, the living Word of power and wisdom. Further, since Christ identified Himself as the light of the world in John 8:12, we might infer that the light that appeared in Genesis 1:3 before the creation of anything, including the sun, was a supernatural manifestation of Christ who provided the light in which creation took place. This brilliant light would have been the divine glory of the eternal Christ. This light is being referenced when Christ in Revelation 22:16 speaks of Himself as *the bright and morning star*, the morning referring to the dawn, or morning, of creation. Christ's glory as this first light is what 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 teaches when it ties the first light of creation to the salvation glory of God by Christ. This passage says...*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness (Gen.1:3), hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. Thus when the Father said in Genesis 1:3, *Let there be light*, He was presenting the *Logos*, His eternal Son, as Creator, and every subsequent, *Let there be*, from Genesis 1:6 on, was His command unto His Son to create all things. When Genesis 1:4 says, *And God saw the light, that it was good*, this indicates God's pleasure with the holy light of His Son on the creation. Every subsequent utterance by God as to how good the elements of creation were reflects His pleasure in the goodness of anything created in the light of His divine Son. Indeed, as seen later in the section on the works of God, the light of Christ's glory likely provided part of the essence of the created material world.

And the Spirit of God, also referred to as the Spirit of Christ, would be the means of applying Christ's power to creation (the moving of the Spirit in Genesis 1 manifests power). The identity of the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ is seen in Romans 8:9 which says, *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.

Thus scripture presents creation as a cooperative act. The Father provided the ultimate will and intellect as the power of creation. The Son was the mediator of the Father's will and intellect that the power might be applied by Him. And the Spirit was the literal power * of the mediator. This three-fold work of creation is seen in a Genesis 1:26 where the Father says, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*

The eternal preincarnate Christ appears more clearly in symbolic form early in the Old Testament in Genesis 3. Here the *seed of the woman* speaks of Him who is not of man's birth, but of Virgin Birth, and is the one destined to bruise the head of the serpent symbolizing the devil. And we find Christ in literal form in Genesis 18 as *the Lord* who appears personally to certify Sarah's motherhood coming in old age and to tell Abraham of the coming destruction of Sodom. And in Joshua 5:13-15, He appears literally as *captain of the host* before whom Joshua bows before deciding Israel's actions in battle. And, though modern scholars deny it, He is present in literal form in Genesis 14:18-20 as Melchizedek who appears to Abram as priest of the most high God and king of Salem. This latter is indicated by Hebrews 7:3 that describes Him as one with no human descent, being eternal of days and eternal as a priest like unto the Son of God. He is also present symbolically and spiritually with Moses and the wilderness wanderers as the rock that followed Israel and gave them water (1 Cor.10:4). He is present in the book of Ruth in symbolic form in the person of Boaz who fulfills the role of kinsman redeemer in adopting by marriage the Gentile Ruth (the role Christ fills for His people by adoption of Gentiles in the Bride of Christ). He's present symbolically as the personification of God's wisdom from the beginning in Proverbs 8:22. There are so many symbolic or literal references to Christ in the Old Testament, in addition to literal ones in the New, that inclusion of some kind of reference to Christ may be a criterion for inclusion of any book in the canon of scripture

Now scholars say the book of Esther doesn't contain any reference to God and shouldn't be in the canon, but that is an error on the part of scholars. Christ is present symbolically in Esther 5:1-2 in the person of king Ahasuerus. The king, because of pleasure with his bride Esther, holds out the sceptre to her as she seeks admission to the normally-forbidden throne room in her desire for protection of God's people Israel from Haman, the agent of Satan. The church, the bride of Christ, is extended the sceptre of His authority because of His pleasure with her as she seeks admission to the kingdom throne room forbidden to the world but open to her through prayer in her desire for protection from Satan. The church is admitted because Christ opened the way to the throne of God for His people when the veil of the forbidden Holy of Holies was rent at the Crucifixion.

* In the New Testament, modern versions often limit the Greek *exousia* to mean authority, thinking of power as *dunamis* (force), which accords with common meanings of the two words. But the result is too narrow a definition of *exousia* in some contexts. *Exousia* can denote power or authority or both, but power proves authority, and "power" is the more inclusive word demanded by context at times. Power sometimes means authority, but often it has the two connotations of meaning. Jesus had the power of God and so had authority from the Father, as seen by His many miracles, so He exercised authority by His power. His power and authority are from the Father and so can be said to be given by the Father. Thus in John 17:2, Christ says of Himself (in the 3rd person), as the KJV has it, *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* It takes the power of the Cross to cleanse people of sin, and it takes the authority of God to confer forgiveness in salvation, and Christ has been given the power that includes the authority. But the NIV and NASV render the word *authority* and thus omit the crucial sense of power.