

## Appendix A

### The Eight Attributes of God in the Gospel of Luke

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Let us begin by noting the terms Son of God / Son of Man as found in Luke's Gospel. This study is in another handout. Whatever is descriptive of the Father is also, and equally, true of the Son.

One of the "tensions" we have is the relationship between systematic theology and that of biblical theology. Looking at the Eight Attributes of God as catalogued by systematic theology is much easier than looking at such qualities as found in a single book of the Bible. Systematic Theology by cataloguing the attributes cleans up a lot of assumption when attempting to examine those same qualities in a single book of the Bible.

However, systematic theology takes the pieces provided by biblical theology and puts them into a synthesized whole. The beauty of biblical theology is seeing how the text births those ideas. **Biblical theology is organic whereas systematic is synthetic.**

What follows is a look at the eight attributes, as they exist in the soil of Luke's Gospel. They will not be as clean as when found in systematic, but their taste will be fresh and carry life.

#### He is self-existent

When the angel Gabriel speaks of Jesus as coming from the Holy Spirit and existing as "the Son of the Most High," he presupposes the Son's pre-existence. He is not thinking origin or beginning.

- <sup>32</sup>"He will be great and will be called **the Son of the Most High**; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; <sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and **for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.**" (Luke 1:32-35)

#### He is eternal

The life assigned to God is not limited by beginning. It has no starting point. The "death" of Jesus is nothing more or less than a point in the *Story*.

- <sup>33</sup>"In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her." <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, <sup>35</sup> but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; <sup>36</sup> for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord **THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.** <sup>38</sup> Now **He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.**" (Luke 20:33-38)

- <sup>5</sup> and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “**Why do you seek the living One among the dead?**” <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” (Luke 24:5-7)

The quoting and use of Psalm 110 shows how Jesus is over King David. Jesus is over King David because Jesus existed before King David even though Jesus is a descendent of King David.

- <sup>41</sup> Then He said to them, “How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? <sup>42</sup> For David himself says in the book of Psalms, ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, ‘SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, <sup>43</sup> UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.’” <sup>44</sup> Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord,’ and how is He his son?” (Luke 20:41-44)
  - <sup>1</sup> The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.” <sup>2</sup> The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.” <sup>3</sup> Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew. <sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” <sup>5</sup> The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. <sup>6</sup> He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. <sup>7</sup> He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up His head. (Ps. 110:1-7, NAS95)
  - <sup>33</sup> “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, ‘SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, <sup>35</sup> UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.’” <sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:33-36)

## He is unchanging

An aspect of God’s immutability is seen in fulfilling what He promises (Luke 1:45, 54, 55, 67-75).

- (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”) (Luke 2:23)
- as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’” (Luke 3:4)
- <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him, “**It is written**, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.’” . . . <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered him, “**It is written**, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” . . . <sup>10</sup> for **it is written**, ‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,’” (Luke 4:4, 8, 10)
- And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, (Luke 4:17)
- “**This is the one about whom it is written**, ‘BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.’” (Luke 7:27)
- And He said to him, “**What is written in the Law?** How does it read to you?” (Luke 10:26)

- Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and **all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.**” ( Luke 18:31)
- saying to them, “**It is written, ‘AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,’** but you have made it a **ROBBERS’ DEN.**” (Luke 19:46)
- But Jesus looked at them and said, “**What then is this that is written: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone?’**” ( Luke 20:17)
- because these are days of vengeance, **so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.** (Luke 21:22)
- “**For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS’; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment.**” (Luke 22:37)
- Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**” (Luke 24:44)
- and He said to them, “**Thus it is written,** that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,” (Luke 24:46)

What God promises happens because His Word, like Himself, is immutable. It cannot be broken.

### He is perfect

Throughout Luke’s Gospel we read of the religious establishment asking Him questions with the intent of catching Him in a fault. Yet they are incapable of finding any fault in Him.

- <sup>10</sup> After looking around at them all, He said to him, “Stretch out your hand!” And he did so; and his hand was restored. <sup>11</sup> **But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.** (Luke 6:10, 11)
- <sup>53</sup> When He left there, the scribes and **the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,** <sup>54</sup> **plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.** (Luke 11:53, 54)
- So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor. (Luke 20:20)
- <sup>39</sup> Some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, You have spoken well.” <sup>40</sup> **For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.** (Luke 20:39, 40)

Had the opportunity availed itself, they would seize it.

Pilate says there is no reason or crime committed. He is innocent, without guilt.

- Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “**I find no guilt in this man.**” (Luke 23:4)
- and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, **I have found no guilt in this man** regarding the charges which you make against Him. <sup>15</sup> "No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, **nothing deserving death has been done by Him.** (Luke 23:14)

- And he said to them the third time, “Why, **what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death**; therefore I will punish Him and release Him.” (Luke 23:22)
- Now when the centurion saw what had happened; he began praising God, saying, “**Certainly this man was innocent.**” (Luke 23:47)

The centurion uses the word **dikaios**. It means “just” or “righteous.” Jesus is perfect, thus incapable of failure or falling.

### He is omnipotent

Throughout Luke, two words occur to describe God’s power. The first word [**dunamis/dunamai**] speaks of raw power. The word speaks of ability to do what is required. Only God has the kind of power where there is no lack between what He desires and what He does. The second word [**exousia**] speaks of authority or right. Having power is one thing, having the authority or right to exercise the power is another matter altogether. Jesus has both. He has the absolute and undiminished right over creation to do all He desires. Wow. Consider the following.

In the birth narratives of chapters one and two the power of God is readily referenced. God has authority to send angels to do His will (Luke 1:19, 26). He is able to make the barren womb fruitful (Luke 1:7, 18, 24, 36). All who heard of Elizabeth’s pregnancy attributed to God “great mercy toward her” (Luke 1:58).The Lord has power to give thrones and kingdoms (Luke 1:32, 33). Moreover, He has power to destroy thrones and kingdoms (Luke 1:51, 52).He is able to fertilize the Seed of the woman apart from natural means (Luke 1:35). How is such a thing possible, “**Nothing is impossible with God**” (Luke 1:37).

He is able [**dunamis/dunamai**] to bring life from virgin wombs (Luke 1:35).

- And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

God is able to make stones into children of Abraham (Luke 3:8).

- Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, **That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.** (Luke 3:8)

He has power over unclean spirits (Luke 4:36).

- And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, **What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.** (Luke 4:36)

God is able to cleanse those who are full of leprosy (Luke 5:12).

- And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, **Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.** (Luke 5:12)

Only God is able to forgive sin (Luke 5:21).

- And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? **Who can forgive sins, but God alone?** (Luke 5:21)

He has power to heal the sick (Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:46).

- And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and **the power of the Lord was present to heal them.** (Luke 5:17)
- And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went **virtue** out of him, and healed them all. (Luke 6:19)

What is impossible with humanity, is possible with God (Luke 8:43-48).

- And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that **virtue** is gone out of me. (Luke 8:46)

He has power to give power. He is power (Luke 9:1).

- Then he called his twelve disciples together, and **gave them power and authority** over all devils, and to cure diseases. (Luke 9:1)
- Behold, **I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy:** and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:19)

The power of God is set against the impotence of humanity.

- And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and **they could not.** (Luke 9:40)
- <sup>25</sup> And which of you with **taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?** <sup>26</sup> **If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?** (Luke 12:25, 26)
- And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and **could in no wise lift up herself.** (Luke 13:11)

He is able to save the self-righteous (Luke 18:25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But He said, "**The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.**")

The gap between heaven and hell is so vast no individual is able to cross it (Luke 16:26).

- And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: **so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot;** neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. (Luke 16:26)

This is cause to celebrate the power of God. He is mighty to save. Moreover, what God saves is unchanging (Luke 20:36).

- **Neither can they die any more:** for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, **being the children of the resurrection.** (Luke 20:36)

His power clothes Him (Luke 21:27; 22:69). It is inseparable from Him. It accompanies Him.

- And then shall they see **the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.** (Luke 21:27)
- Hereafter shall **the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.** (Luke 22:69)

That which Jesus has will be given to His people (Luke 24:49). It will become apparent that its dispensing happens after His ascension (Acts 1:1ff).

- And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Not only does He have power to do all He wills done, but also He has the authority or right to do it [**exousia**]. It is not just that He has power, but He has the authority or right to exercise the power. This idea occurs in Luke 7:1-10 [v. 8]).

- And they were astonished at his doctrine: **for his word was with power.** (Luke 4:32)
- And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, **What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.** (Luke 4:36)

When Jesus speaks, the object spoken to must obey.

- But **that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins,** (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, **Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.** (Luke 5:24)

Thus, the issue is not one of sheer power, but of authority to act. It is for this reason Jesus speaks of “power to cast into hell” (Luke 12:5).

- But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (Luke 12:5)

That Jesus did great miracles was undeniable. The issue was one of authority (Luke 20:2-8).

- <sup>2</sup> And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? . . . <sup>8</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. (Luke 20:2, 8)

Jesus has both power **and** authority.

Consider also the healing passages found throughout Luke’s Gospel. Jesus has the power AND the authority to heal the effects of sin.

- Now when the sun was setting, **all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.** (Luke 4:40)
- **But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.** (Luke 5:15)
- **And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.** (Luke 6:18)
- for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, **but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.** (Luke 7:7)
- **And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.** (Luke 7:21)
- **And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities,** Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, (Luke 8:2)
- <sup>43</sup> And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, **neither could be healed of any,** . . . <sup>47</sup> When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and **how she had been immediately healed.** (Luke 8:43, 47)
- <sup>1</sup> Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. . . . <sup>6</sup> And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and **healing every where.** (Luke 9:1, 6)
- While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and **healed the boy and gave him back to his father.** (Luke 9:42)
- **And heal the sick that are therein,** and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. (Luke 10:9)
- Now one of them, **when he saw that he had been healed,** turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, (Luke 17:15)
- But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And **He touched his ear and healed him.** (Luke 22:51)

The fact He healed on the Sabbath spoke that He is LORD OF THE SABBATH. Not only does He have the ability to heal, but the right to heal.

- And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether **he would heal on the sabbath day;** that they might find an accusation against him. (Luke 6:7)
- And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, **because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day,** and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. (Luke 13:14)
- <sup>3</sup> And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, **Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?** <sup>4</sup> But they kept silent. And **He took hold of him and healed him,** and sent him away. (Luke 14:3, 4)

The union of the two bespeaks of God. His power AND authority place Him alone.

### He is omniscient

Throughout Luke's Gospel, Jesus knows what people are thinking before they speak and is able to know their thoughts before verbalized.

- <sup>21</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" <sup>22</sup> But **Jesus, aware of their reasonings**, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?" (Luke 5:21, 22)
- <sup>7</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. <sup>8</sup> **But He knew what they were thinking**, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. (Luke 6:7, 8)
- <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "**If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.**" <sup>40</sup> **And Jesus answered him**, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." (Luke 7:39, 40)
- **But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart**, took a child and stood him by His side, (Luke 9:47)
- <sup>16</sup> Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. <sup>17</sup> But **He knew their thoughts** and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls." (Luke 11:16, 17)

### He is omnipresent

Gabriel speaks of "standing in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). God has localized His presence. God is with His people (Luke 1:28).

- The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, **who stands in the presence of God**, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news." (Luke 1:19)
- And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! **The Lord is with you.**" (Luke 1:28)

### He is infinite

When we weigh all that is God, the conclusion we come to is His inscrutability. If the knowable universe is beyond human accessibility, how much more must be the God who creates? The object created is subservient to the one who creates.

The intent of Luke is for us to know whom God is and the power in which He works. Our response, like that of the early church is "to worship Him with great joy and continually praise Him (Luke 24:52, 53).