

Title, Position, Name, Essence: *First concepts in understanding the GodHead*

Many people are struck with the many clear references in the New Testament to the Father as "God", and Jesus as "Lord". A cursory examination of the New Testament will show that, in general, when the Bible uses the word "God", it almost always refers to the Father. Does this mean that Jesus is not God? No it does not mean that. Let's examine Title, Position, Name, and Essence to explain this.

Title: A title is "a descriptive or distinctive appellation, especially one belonging to a person by right of rank, office, or attainment." [*Random House College Dictionary*]. A title, therefore, is a descriptive term that relates to one's position. For instance, my title is "Doctor" because of my attainment of an MD degree and subsequent Board Certification. This title refers to my position in the workforce. At home my title ceases to be "Doctor" since my attainment of an MD doesn't affect my family relationships. George W. Bush attained the title of "President" by gaining a political position and office in America.

Position: One's position is his "standing", "placement", and "situation". A position is very often equivalent to the title, since the title is merely a name given to describe a person's position. For example, many people call their boss, "Boss". Since a man's standing, placement and situation in the workforce is that of "boss", he is often ascribed the title, "Boss". Thus the line of distinction between position and title is often blurred. But the "boss" may also be given the title, "Big Guy", or any other number of titles to describe his position. *So we see that a title is merely a term used to describe one's position.* One person may have more than one position in life, depending upon the circumstances. The man who is boss at home may not be boss at work [and vice versa!]. In fact, almost everybody finds that they have a different position for nearly every personal interaction. In one interaction you are equals, another you are a servant, and in another you are boss. **There can only be two positions in all of creation which would not experience this constant change: The person who was the boss over everyone, and the person who was the servant of everyone.**

Name: A name in our culture is most often unrelated to his/her position or title. My name is "Tom", which describes neither my title, nor my position. "Tom" is merely a name given to me by my parents. In Jewish culture, especially before Christ came, names did indeed have a meaning, most often a meaning that pointed to God. An example is Joel which means "Jehovah is God". And at times, a name would be given which described some characteristic of the person. For example, Esau means "hairy". Some people are given a title later in life that so much describes them that many people refer to him/her by their title *as if* it were their name. For example, my high school swim coach was called "Coach" so much that few people knew his given name. His name effectively became "coach". But he still had a name [it was Richard] nonetheless.

Essence: A person's essence is much harder to describe. "Essence" goes far deeper in describing who a person IS. "The essence of a person is his/her's very nature. My name is "Tom", my titles are "Doctor", "Daddy", "Sir", "Mister", and my position changes depending upon the situation. But none of these comes even close to describing who I am!!!! All of these terms fall far short of getting at the root of who I am. Ultimately who I am cannot be defined by my attainments [title], actions and situations [position], or name. I believe that **I am ultimately defined and described by where I came from. And is further defined by what my purpose is and where I am going.** These are the factors that really expose who I am. When these three questions are answered, and my "essence" is defined, then you will really know who I am. Then the titles, positions, and name that I currently have may even begin to seem irrelevant in comparison to the "essence", unless they also describe "the essence".

Now let's look at these words with respect to the Father and the Son, Jesus.

Title and Position:

God the Father is that person who is boss over everyone. God the Father has never submitted Himself to the will of another and therefore He can aptly be given the *title* of "God" and "Father" in reference to any person [including Jesus Christ] because He occupies the *position* of "God" and "Father" with respect to everyone.

Jesus has submitted Himself to the will of the Father. It is important to strongly emphasize here that submission does NOT mean inferiority. A wife should submit herself to her husband, but this in no way makes her inferior to the husband. Likewise, Jesus has submitted Himself to the Father, without becoming inferior to Him. They remain co-equal.

As touching His humanity, this submissive position to the Father gives Jesus the title of "Son".

As touching His Deity, Jesus is co-equal to the Father.

With respect to all of creation, Jesus is not submitted [in fact, He created everything!--see John 1:3, Colossians 1:16], therefore Jesus has the title of "Lord" because of his lordship over all creation.

Jesus will, from time to time, also be given the title "God" with respect to His creation because of His superior position He occupies to all of creation.

Name:

As we said before, many times a name is unrelated to who a person is, or his/her position. This is common in our culture. My name is Tom. The name "Tom" was chosen because it was my biological father's name. The meaning and significance of the name "Tom" ends there. But God's names always relate to some attribute, characteristic, position, or function that He fulfills.

Jesus means "Savior" and thus the name Jesus describes what He does. Yahweh means "He is" which comes from "I AM" and relates to the fact that God is everything to us, He is also self-sufficient, and fills the universe with His glory, presence, and power. Jesus has many names ascribed to Him in both the Old and New Testaments. All these names describe something about Him.

God the Father is usually called "Father" by Jesus, and is called either "God" or "Father" by the writers of the New Testament. We also see that the Father shares a name with Jesus [very likely is "I AM"] by reading Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17:11. In this respect we can see that the New Testament gives many more names for Jesus than for God the Father. This may be to illustrate that Jesus is the Way to anything we may desire or need in life and that no one goes to the Father except through Jesus. He fulfills every role, satisfies every need, and destroys every enemy so that He can be Savior and that He may receive glory and be worshipped by all.

Essence:

"Essence" defines the very nature of a person. As we described above, our essence goes beyond our title and position in describing ourselves. Our essence *may* be described by our title or position, but often it is not. In essence I am an image bearer of God. My purpose is to bring glory to Jesus. My title/position and name does not describe that, but it could if I changed my name!!

God the Father: The Father is uncreated, and by definition this gives Him the very essence of what we call "God"

Jesus is also uncreated. John 1:3 says that "without Him, nothing was made that has been made." Since it is impossible to create yourself, then Jesus must be uncreated. If He were created by the Father, then there would be one creature in all of creation that Jesus didn't create...Himself! Thus John 1:3 would not be true. So if Jesus is uncreated, then He shares the same essence as the Father that we define as "*God*". The New Testament desires to make this point so clear that it gives us much more evidence of Jesus' divinity than this powerful verse we just read. [See "Proving the Deity of Christ from the Scriptures"](#)

Examples of the Father having the title of “God” and Jesus having the title of “Lord”

Ephesians 1:2; “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

I Corinthians 8:6; “...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.”

John 17:3; “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”

Examples of the Father’s superiority to Jesus with respect to His humanity:

John 14:28; "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

Matthew 27:46; “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi,[27:46 Some manuscripts Eli, Eli] lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"[Psalm 22:1]

John 20:17; “Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

But with respect to His essence and Deity, Jesus is equal to the Father:

John 5:18; “For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”

Jesus became inferior to the Father in regards to His humanity on the day that He became flesh [the Incarnation]

Psalm 2:7; “I will proclaim the decree of the LORD : He said to me, "You are my Son, today I have become your Father.”

Athanasian Creed

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith;
2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.
8. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.
9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.
10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.
11. And yet they are not three eternals but one eternal.
12. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensible, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.
13. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty.
14. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.
15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God;
16. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord;
18. And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord.
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say; There are three Gods or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten.

23. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
25. And in this Trinity none is afore or after another; none is greater or less than another.
26. But the whole three persons are coeternal, and coequal.
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.
29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.
31. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of substance of His mother, born in the world.
32. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
33. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.
34. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.
35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God.
36. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.
37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;
38. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead;
39. He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God, Almighty;
40. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
42. and shall give account of their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.
44. This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.