

Series: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Comparing Exousia and Dunamis, Powers of God the Holy Spirit

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Last time we looked at three Greek words related to the power of God the Holy Spirit. They were: *arche*, *exousia*, and *ischus*. Today I want to look at a more familiar word, *dunamis*, and talk about the difference between *dunamis* and *exousia*.

Exousia, as a reminder, means: being willing to do something without being forced or pressured; it is the liberty of doing as one pleases. It also means with deliberate intent, with purpose. It means physical and mental power as well; liberty of choice; the ability with which one is endued and which one possesses and exercises; the power of authority and of right or privilege; the right to judge. It is freedom, but this freedom or liberty is to be used for the welfare and benefit of others. It can also mean permission to use, as 1 Corinthians 9:12.

Exousia, is the decisive authority of God. It reflects the power and the right to influence and enforce. So there is authority and divine ability to perform a task. Mark 2:9, 10. Jesus healed a man to demonstrate that he had *exousia* on earth to forgive sins. He had the authority and jurisdiction to forgive sins. Authority—jurisdiction—free will—deliberate—with purpose—as a ruler possessing authority.

Exousia can also mean the right to judge on the basis of having the potential to evaluate; the right, freedom of choice, freedom of action, and power to evaluate. 1 Corinthians 8:9.

1 Corinthians 8:9: But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ESV

Now let's consider the Greek word *dunamis*.

DUNAMIS. Strong's 1410, 1411. This Greek word is more familiar to us because of our English word "dynamite." It means the potentiality to exert force in performing some function, as in **Acts 1:8. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end [or uttermost part] of the earth."** ESV

Definition

1. strength power, able, having ability to perform
 - a. inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth
 - b. power for performing miracles
 - c. moral power and excellence of soul
 - d. the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth
 - e. power and resources arising from numbers
 - f. power consisting in or resting upon armies, forces, hosts

- g. for the believer, power to achieve by applying the Lord's inherent abilities, or power through God's ability. This power, this ability is needed in every scene of life to really grow in sanctification and prepare for heaven, or glorification.
<http://biblehub.com/greek/1411.htm>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/dunamis.html>

1. God is the Source of all authority (*exousia*) and power (*dunamis*). God is omnipotent. Jesus was given all the *exousia* authority/power of God, including the authority to forgive sins. (Matthew 28:18; Mark 2:10) Jesus' word came with *exousia*, authority. Likewise, He had *exousia*, authority, to cast out devils. (Luke 4:32-36)

Luke 4:36: And came astonishment upon them all, and they were speaking to one another saying, What word is this, that with authority and power [dunamis] He commands the unclean spirits and they come out?

Here in Luke 4:36 we see *exousia* combined with *dunamis*. Often, the *exousia*, or authoritative action, causes the *dunamis*, or power, to occur as a reaction. Jesus possessed both *exousia* (authority) and *dunamis* (exploding power).

2. Any *exousia* (authority) we or anyone might have is therefore a delegated authority. Romans 13:1; Colossians 1:16; Colossians 2:10. Jesus commissioned and gave His disciples authority (*exousia*) to cast out devils and to heal in Matthew 10:1 and Mark 6:7. So they had *exousia*/authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of diseases. This was authority to call upon the Holy Spirit, for it is the power of the Holy Spirit that does the work.

For example, in Mark 5:30, 31 Jesus noticed that "virtue" left His body when the woman touched the tassel or hem of His garment. The word translated "virtue" there is *dunamis*. The Father had permitted this, since she did not have the authority to call upon Christ's *dunamis* power. In this case it was her faith that had allowed the *exousia* to come and cause the *dunamis* power in Christ to make her whole. The word translated "faith" here means to convince, to assent to evidence or authority, to rely upon due to inward certainty, to believe, to be confident, to obey, to trust, and to yield. Primarily, this word is a verb.

In Exodus Chapter 19 God shows Israel and makes a covenant with them to become their *God of Healing*. How on the **third day they washed their clothes as a symbol of the power of the resurrection that brings regeneration to our life. **Exodus 19:10** And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, **Exo 19:11** And be ready against the third day: for the **third day** the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. **This was a symbol of baptism, also a symbol of regeneration as on this third day the people washed their clothes in the waters. The power or "dunamis" of the Holy Spirit is to be ours as paralleled in the Old Testament with His people. This "washing clean" was to show the power of the resurrection and the covenant that the Lord God made with us, with His people, that through the blood of Jesus and through the power of the resurrection we are as well not held captive or bonded to sickness or rejection or bitterness ...But this was an example to us in the Old Testament for those in the****

New Testament.

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3. We have seen that *exousia* was given to the 70, Luke 10:19, over all the *dunamis*/power of the enemy, and how the apostles were given *exousia*/authority by the Lord for edification of the *eklesia*, the called-out-ones, or church.

4. Satan has a measure of *exousia*/authority. Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:2. He is the prince of the *exousia* of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 1:13. We wrestle against authorities and rulers of darkness, but we are to know that true believers have been delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Through the Cross, the devil's *exousia*/authority is broken. Instead, we are to fear God, who has the *exousia*/authority to cast into Hell. Luke 12:4, 5.

5. Jesus has *dunamis* power. Romans 1:4; Acts 2:22; Luke 19:37; Matthew 13:54; 1 Peter 3:22 - (who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and *exousia* (authorities) and *dunamis* (powers) being made subject unto Him.)

Revelation 4:11 Worthy are You, the Lord and the God of us, to receive glory and honor and power (*dunamis*); for You created all things, and because of the will of You, they existed and were created. <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/revelation/4.htm>

6. The *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit can be seen in Luke 4:13, 14 after Jesus successfully defeated Satan in the wilderness temptations. We see this ability promised in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8.

Hebrews 2:3, 4. The word translated "miracles" here is *dunamis*. This *dunamis* power is a manifest power of God the Holy Spirit. It is given by the Holy Spirit to us for the profit of others. 1 Corinthians 12:10. It is given for the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28. The Holy Spirit gives this *dunamis* power **as He wills**. 1 Corinthians 12:11.

7. The Holy Spirit the source of this power. We cannot perform mighty deeds, miracles, or powerful acts by our own power or holiness. Acts 3:12; Acts 4:7, 10. The source of this power is the Holy Spirit. This power is not given to be used for our own selfish purposes. It is given because of the Name and power of Jesus Christ, according to the level of authority given to any true believer.

8. The holy elect angels have *dunamis* power, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. The angels are coming with Christ. They are mighty, having this power and ability. We are to rest with the understanding that in flaming fire vengeance will be dealt out to the ones not having perceived, not being acquainted with, and not obeying the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We could spend time on our own thinking carefully about certain events involving the relationship between authority and ability, as for example:

John the Baptist in Luke 1:15-17. Ask, by whose authority was power given to John the Baptist and for what purpose?

Philip vs. Simon. Acts 8:4-25. In Acts 8:13, the word translated "miracles" is *dunamis*. Ask, What was Philip preaching? What was different about Philip's preaching from

Simon's? Simon's behavior was different from that of Philip. What happened that revealed who Simon really was? What does this teach us about discerning the true from the false? The true from the counterfeit?

Paul. Read Acts 19:11-20. The word translated "miracles" in verse 11 is *dunamis*. Discuss the relationship between authority (*exousia*) and *dunamis*. What authority did Paul have that caused the reaction of *dunamis* (power) by his hands? What happened when the sons of Sceva tried to cast out an evil spirit? How strong is an actual demonic entity (v. 16)? What resulted from this overall encounter? (v.17-20)

All authority comes from the One, true and Living God. Any authority one might have is a derived authority ordained by God. Romans 14. Jesus after He rose from the dead received all authority in heaven and on earth as the Incarnate Son of God. When God speaks, His confident expectation is that what He says, what He commands will be done. The Word of God does not return unto Him void, empty of power.

The outflow of that authority is the ability. The Living God is able. When we believe the One Promising, or the Promising One, God the Holy Spirit comes granting the ability with grace to obey through faith which works by love. **God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power (*dunamis*), love (*agape*), and a sound mind, or self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7.** God's hope is a confident expectation that what He says will come to pass, to completion. His perfect will **will** be done with perfect love.

A plant withers without water and the proper nutrients. God is the River of Life as we abide in Him and His Words abide in us. We are invited to come to these waters and live. As we do, He gives us strength and ability.

Many today feel hopeless. Some are trapped, ensnared in debilitating ways of life, falling into habitual sins. Many feel helpless and sometimes it's a learned helplessness. But we are not to despair, for when we stop thinking we are victims and all is lost, we repent of our pride and lust, resist the devil, cry out for God to grant the repentance unto life, and humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, things start turning around. The true God helps us in our weakness, He forgives our sins whenever we confess them and align ourselves to His Word and His ways, and is to us God the Faithful God, full of grace, mercy, and truth.

The message of the Gospel is Good News. Heaven, or eternal life, is a free gift. It is not deserved and it cannot be earned. Ephesians 2:8, 9: For by grace are you saved by faith, and that [faith] not of yourself. It is the gift of God, and not of works, lest anyone should boast. Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. NKJV

When Adam knowingly and willingly heeded another wisdom and thereby rejected the wisdom of God in the Garden, as Federal Head of the human race, he plunged humanity into the estate of sin and misery. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, who is perfect, holy, and sovereign, the Creator. No one can save himself or herself because God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being. Man is finite,

and so even if as pure as Ivory soap, 99 44/100% pure, he still falls short of God's standard.

The Living God is loving but also just. Sin must be punished. He will by no means clear the guilty.

At this point it all seems hopeless, but God solved this problem Himself by sending Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

Jesus Christ is the Infinite God-Man, fully God and fully Man, God Incarnate. Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to save. He fulfilled all righteousness. With a radical obedience to the will of God, His obedience was perfect, personal, and perpetual, even to death on the Cross. He paid the penalty for sin, freeing those who believe in Him from the guilt and liability of sin. He bore the sin, bore the curse, and bore the wrath of God, overcoming the wrath deserved for offending a holy God, His nature and ways. Jesus overcame alienation from God through the Blood of the Cross. He paid the debt note of sin in full. As the Lamb of God He offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin in a once-for-all time sacrifice never needing to be repeated. He obtained redemption for those given to Him by His Father, overcoming bondage to sin. He defeated Satan and his kingdom, overcoming the works of darkness in a public spectacle as only God can do or make. By His atoning work, Jesus reconciled His own to the Father.

Jesus Christ did not stay in the grave. He died and was buried, but He rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Almighty. He is coming again. He is the Judge of what is living and what is dead. He sends out the call to come to Him.

A person receives Christ by means of faith and the repentance unto life, turning from sin to trusting in Jesus Christ alone and as the only means by which one might be saved and translated out from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The person then becomes "justified-in-Christ." The person is saved by the working power of God the Holy Spirit who first regenerates the heart such that the person is "born again," "born-out-of-God," and "born anew."

Believe and keep on believing in Christ. Believe Christ and keep on believing Him. Believe what Jesus believes and keep on doing that. There are no magic words. It can be as simple as asking Jesus to save you. Ask Him to forgive your sins and to grant you the faith needed to believe and to grant you repentance unto life. Ask Him to come into your heart; that you want to belong to Him. Ask Him to love you, and thank Him that He will never abandon you, but abides in you forever. And then see how your life will be transformed into the new creation with the old passing away. 2 Corinthians 5:17. Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

PSALM 24

¹**The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein.**

²**For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.**

³**Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place?**

⁴**He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear deceitfully.**

⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from the God of his salvation.
⁶Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face, O God of Jacob. Selah
⁷Lift up your heads, O gates! Be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may enter!
⁸Who is this King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.
⁹Lift up your heads, O gates! Be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may enter!
¹⁰Who is He, this King of Glory? The LORD of Hosts—He is the King of Glory.
Selah. Psalm 24

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