

AS LORD (“consubstantial with the father,” *JHWE*) Jesus is OMNIPOTENT (all-powerful/almighty)

--“for thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory”

Gn 17:1; Job 42:2; Mk 10:27; Rev 17:14

I. AS CREATOR/FIRST CAUSE/SUBSISTENT BEING, HE IS NECESSARILY OMNIPOTENT

(as no effect can be greater than sum of its causes, so First Cause inevitably all-powerful, almighty)

- A. Denied by Manichaeism (Good & Evil forever contending) & Process Theology
- B. Inescapable inference: power (ability to act effectively) causing all that is must be almighty
 - 1. Naturalistic/mechanistic processes inevitably fatalistic (clock ticking, dominoes falling)
 - 2. Pantheistic/organismic processes inevitably necessarianist (cf. Spinoza)
 - 3. Islam (though theistic) portrays Allah as singularly controlling, occasionalist
 - 4. Christian Theism (declaring a Personal LORD) posits Creator’s omnipotence & personal agency
- C. Important caveats: Omnipotence re *Reality*, not imaginary conjectures
 - 1. Non-God-like acts *per se* impossible—thus He cannot sin, cannot lie, cannot violate logic
 - 2. Jesus “Kenosis” (self-emptying) involved momentary (33 year) self-imposed limits
- D. Significant corollaries: Divine Governance & Predestination need careful definitions, perspectives
- E. Critical concerns: fatalism incubates sociological determinism & “culture of victimhood,” perennial question (eliciting *theodicy*) regarding source & ramifications of evil/suffering/pain

II. BIBLE AFFIRMS GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE: *PANTOKRATOR*

- A. O.T. *El Shaddai*—70 passages call God Almighty; “I am God Almighty” (Gen 17:1); “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You” (Job 42:2). In the *Septuagint*, *Pantokrator* used for both HYWH Sabaoth (“Lord of Hosts”) and for *El Shaddai* (“God Almighty”)
- B. N.T. Gabriel to Elizabeth: “with God (*kyrios*) nothing will be impossible” (Lk 1:37); Jesus: “with God (*theos*) all things are possible” (Mk 10:27); *Pantokrator* used by Paul (2 Cor 6:18), nine times in *Revelation* (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 19:6; 19:15; 22:12)

III. AS LORD, JESUS IS OMNIPOTENT—thus: “thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory”

- A. “Thine is the Kingdom”: “LORD of Lords and KING of Kings” (Rev 17:14)—“all authority in heaven and on earth has been given me” (Mt 28:18); “Christ the King” a central affirmation
 - 1. Prophesied: Annunciation (Lk 1:32-33)—re David’s throne & Jacob’s house, endless kingdom
 - 2. Recognized: the Wise Men (Mt 2:2)—“born king of the Jews”
 - 3. Celebrated: Palm Sunday (Mt 21:5)—“Behold, your king is coming”
 - 4. Demonstrated: Calvary (Jn 1:19)—Pilate’s words, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”
 - 5. Persistent historical/providential question: to what extent is Christ the King involved in politics, providentially orchestrating human history (cf. Augustine’s *City of God*). For US, is America a “city on hill”? Is any democratic (or monarchic) government God-ordained?
- B. “Thine is the Power”: “All power is given unto me” (Mt 28:18): thus *Pantocrator*
 - 1. Over nature: water-to-wine; calming sea; feeding multitudes; as the WORD, Christ spoke into being the cosmos (Jn 1:1-5; Col 1:16); as the WORD Christ continually *sustains* all that is
 - 2. To heal sicknesses (Mk 3:15)
 - 3. To cast out unclean spirits (Mt 10:1), triumph over Satan; fascinating current exorcism accounts
 - 4. To raise the dead (Jn 11:43)—Lazarus; while Jesus was on the Cross “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (Mt 27:52)
 - 5. To forgive sinners (Mk 2:5)—“Son, your sins are forgiven you”—and intercede for us (Mt 26:64)—“sitting on right hand of the Power” (Mt 26:64)
 - 6. To save/regenerate sinners (Jn 1:12)—“his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (II Pet 1:3); “to those who are called . . . the power of God” (I Cor 1:24)
- C. “Thine is the Glory” (cf. C.S. Lewis’s “The Weight of Glory”)
 - 1. Singular *shining-forth* of Divinity—“the King of Glory” (Ps 24:7)
 - 2. Claimed by Jesus (Jn 17:22)—“the glory thou gavest me”
 - 3. Attributed uniquely to Jesus—“Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory (Jas 2:1); “worthy” of (Rev 4:1)

“The King of Kings,” in Jaroslav Pelikan: *Jesus Through the Centuries*

✚ Even before Jesus was born, the Gospels inform us, the angel of the annunciation told his mother: “The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). After his birth came wise men from the East, asking, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matt 2:2). The entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday reminded his followers of the words of the prophet, “Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass” (Matt 21:5). When he died on the cross on the last day of that same week, Pontius Pilate had placed over his head an inscription in three languages: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (John 19:19). The last book of the New Testament, employing a title that had also been claimed by earthly monarchs, hailed him as “Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev 17:14). [p. 46]

✚ . . . the representatives of Caesar asked Polycarp of Smyrna . . . : “What harm is there in saying ‘Caesar is Lord [*Kyrios Kaisar*],’ and offering incense and saving your life?” But he replied, according to *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*: “For eighty-six years I have been the servant [of Jesus Christ], and he never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” A similar story told in *The Martyrdom of Ignatius*, which—if it is authentic—may be even earlier, has Ignatius telling the emperor Trajan to his face, “I have Christ the King of heaven [within me], . . . May I now enjoy his kingdom.” [p. 48]

✚ At the hands of Eusebius, this historical and theological interpretation of Constantine’s victory and kingship as an achievement of Christ the Victor and King through the sign of his cross [*Chi/Rho*] became a full-blown theology of history and an apologia for the idea of a Christian Roman empire. “Thus then the God of all, the Supreme Governor of the whole universe, by his own will appointed Constantine . . . to be prince and sovereign Eusebius reports Constantine’s having narrated to him under oath many years later that on 27 October 312, as he was praying, he “saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross in light of the heavens above the sun, and bearing this inscription, CONQUER BY THIS [*Touto nika*].” [p. 51]

✚ As Eusebius put it at the conclusion of his *History*, the emperors—and not only Constantine—“had God, the universal King, and the Son of God, the Savior of all, as their Guide and Ally . . . against the haters of God [e.g. the Arians].” God the Father as King of the universe had conferred authority on Jesus, to whom, as he said just before his ascension, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given” (Matt. 28.18). That authority was transmitted to the emperor, beginning with Constantine; for Christ the King had elected to exercise his sovereignty over the world through the emperor [p. 54]

✚ The coronation of Charlemagne as emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in the year 800 at Saint Peter’s in Rome became the model of how political sovereignty was believed in the West to have passed: from God to Christ, from Christ to the apostle Peter, from Peter to his successors and the “throne of Peter,” and from them to emperors and kings. [p. 55]