ISSN: (Online) 2072-8050, (Print) 0259-9422

- Page 1 of 7

# Theological examination of the name of Jesus from a hermeneutical approach



#### Author: Anna Cho<sup>1</sup>

#### Affiliation:

<sup>1</sup>Department of Systemic Theology and Ecclesiology, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Corresponding author:** Anna Cho, advocateanna@naver.com

#### Dates:

Received: 16 May 2024 Accepted: 30 Aug. 2024 Published: 26 Sept. 2024

### How to cite this article:

Cho, A., 2024, 'Theological examination of the name of Jesus from a hermeneutical approach', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 80(1), a9917. https://doi. org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9917

#### Copyright:

© 2024. The Authors. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

#### **Read online:**



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online. This article examines the name of 'Jesus' theologically through the hermeneutic methodology of the speech act theory. We can say that to believe in Jesus is to believe in the name of Jesus. However, even though the name of Jesus represents Jesus, theological research following the name of Jesus has not been actively conducted. If Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour, there must be a theological and hermeneutical discussion about what theological implications are in the name of Jesus, which implies all of this and how this name of Jesus affects our lives. Therefore, this article judges that theological consideration of the name of Jesus is necessary and tries to examine the name of Jesus through the hermeneutical methodology of the speech act theory.

**Contribution:** The performative nature of the name of Jesus signifies the presence of Jesus. By having faith in the name of Jesus, believers put the saving meaning of his name into action, and the power of Jesus becomes a reality in their lives.

**Keywords:** the performative nature of the name of Jesus; power; salvation; performative; speech act theory.

# Introduction

# The performative name of Jesus

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? The meaning of the name Jesus<sup>1</sup> is 'the one who will save his people from their sins', 'Immanuel' and 'Jehovah is salvation'. If so, we could say that believing in Jesus (God) is believing in the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus implies why we should believe in Jesus, what Jesus has done for us and who Jesus is. However, this name of Jesus has dynamism and movement, so when we call and proclaim the name of Jesus, Jesus is present within us (Mt 18:20). The name of Jesus forgives sins (Jn 1 2:12, Ac 10:43), saves (Jl 2:32, Ac 2:21, Rm 10:13), and healing and signs when the name of Jesus is proclaimed, miracles happen (Ac 4:30, Jn 14:14). The confession of our faith in Jesus becomes the reality of faith, exerts influence on believers' lives and subverts and transforms believers' lives.

Jesus existed 2000 years ago, but he is not on this earth now with a physical body. However, Christians who believe in Jesus will confess that 'Jesus exists'. Christians believe in Jesus who is invisible and intangible. Believing in Jesus includes all the beliefs and actions of calling, believing in, and seeking the name of Jesus in everyday life. The theological community has devoted a lot of research to theologically establishing, explaining, and demonstrating the existence of Jesus and the mysteries and experiences of faith. Ironically, however, theological research on the name of Jesus has not been very active, even though the name of Jesus represents Jesus. Studies on Jesus (Strauss 2010:39). If Jesus, whom Christians believe and confess as the 'Lord', is the essence of God, the Son of God, the Saviour and the Messiah, there must be a theological and hermeneutical discussion on what theological implications are of the name of Jesus, which contains all of these, and how this name of Jesus influences their lives. There must be a theological and hermeneutical discussion about whether it impacts life. Thus, this article was designed according to the necessity of theological consideration of the name of Jesus.

A name distinguishes an object or a person and reveals its characteristics. In other words, the name expresses existence and essence (Leslie & Lawrence 2013:270). In the ancient Near East, a name was regarded as a part of a person's personality and as proof of its substance and existence

1.The name of Jesus, the performative name of Jesus and the power of the name of Jesus have different theological meanings and implications, but this article reveals that they are used as synonyms because of the performative language. This article examines the theological implications of the name of Jesus in terms of the performativity of language. Here, the name of Jesus represents Jesus, his ministry and presence, and the power and accomplishment of the word.

(Ringgren & Botterweck 2006:134). Namely, a name reveals a person's identity, being, essence and nature. Also, in the Bible, the appearances and revelations of God often appear in the name of God, and the name implies the essence and nature of God (Schmidt 1986:13). Thus, if we consider the name of Jesus, we will be able to explore the identity, existence, essence and nature of Jesus, and see what influence Jesus exerts in the lives of believers today and how he is present. To this end, this article proposes a theological examination of the name of Jesus through the hermeneutical methodology of the speech act theory (SAT).

Language action theory explores the use of language and its effects and consequences. The SAT argues that language is an action, a reality relating the performative language. Performative language means that language's propositional contents and intentions are performed as they are and become a reality (Searle 1969:2). The problem, however, is that not all languages practice language performativity. For the act of speaking to become a reality, the performativity of language must have some appropriate condition, which depends on the speaker's identity, personality, sincerity and responsibility. Stated differently, the performance of language is governed by the speaker. Conversely, the performative language is carried out regardless of the speaker, even in the speaker's absence. The performative language is the power of language itself, which influences people and society by exerting its influence, creating a new world and transforming our lives. The speech act theory, which studies the performative language, is used as a hermeneutic methodology in various social fields and studies because of the use and effect of language. Thus, if the name of Jesus is theologically considered through the hermeneutic methodology of the SAT, the following three hermeneutic contributions of the theology of the name of Jesus are expected.

Firstly, the theological implications of the name of Jesus can be explained. The doctrinal knowledge (theory) of the name of Jesus and the experience of faith (empirical faith) are not separated and can be explained simultaneously. Secondly, the power and influence of the name of Jesus can be interpreted and explained theologically and linguistically. Thirdly, it can explain how the result of the performative nature of the name of Jesus transforms the lives of believers and enables them to live a life of faith. Therefore, this article intends to theologically examine the name of Jesus through the hermeneutical methodology of the SAT.

# Speech act theory as a hermeneutic methodology

The greatest social contribution of SAT is that it is used as a hermeneutical methodology in various academic fields. The reason why SAT is used as a hermeneutical methodology is to reveal the intention and meaning of the propositional content and meaning of language. It analyses and explores what effects and results are elicited when language is uttered. Austin (1975), the founder of the SAT, and his disciple Searle (1969:16–17) believe that speaking means acting and argue that this is the performative language. The performativity of language is the concept that language is not simply a means of conveying meaning or content but performs an action. In other words, language does not just explain or express states, situations or concepts, but also exerts influence in the real world. Stated differently, language creates reality (Searle 1995:54–55).<sup>2</sup>

Before SAT, the linguistic hermeneutic approach viewed the meaning and interpretation of language as understanding, explaining and expressing the content of language. Thus, interpreting language meant examining in detail what the propositional content of the language was and what kind of structure, logic and grammatical system it had. Speech act theory points out that previous linguistic hermeneutic approaches focused only on the structure, form and logical analysis of language, failing to grasp the actual meaning of language. Previous linguistic research distinguished between langue (signs, propositional content of language) and parol (actual use of language: meaning), separating what language says (propositional statements) and the actual meaning of language (meaning: empirical statements) (Austin 1975:97-100). However, SAT does not distinguish between langue and parol of language but considers them to be the same because of the performative language. Here, language simultaneously includes the propositional content of language and its actual meaning (action), the process through which that meaning is achieved, the achievement of meaning (result) and the meaning to be achieved (future action). The performativity of language is divided into locutionary act (propositional content), illocutionary act (speaker and/or text intention, meaning = action) and perlocutionary act (listener and/or reactions of reader). They do not operate separately but are a communication act that occurs simultaneously when language is uttered or within a text, between a speaker and a listener, or between an author and a reader, and constitutes the meaning of language (Austin 1975:98-108).

Speech act theory does not view locutionary acts or perlocutionary acts as meaning but argues that illocutionary acts become the subject of creating meaning (Searle 1971:39). Searle believed that locutionary acts and illocutionary acts cannot be separated from each other and occur simultaneously. This means that all types of propositional expressions have illocutionary force, and meaning is derived from this illocutionary force. Thus, Searle (1969:31) argues that illocutionary acts are the actual meaning (interpretation) of language and locutionary acts possess the illocutionary force (F), and these two acts are combined and formalised as F(p). This refers to the performance of illocutionary acts by the speaker/text and indicates that language creates actions and reality. Stated differently, F(p) is the meaning of language, and the propositional

<sup>2.</sup>Austin (1975:6–10) emphasised the performative language and argued that the performative language is governed by social, cultural, institutional and psychological factors that occur in the process of using language. Of course, there are times when the speaker's intention is not carried out because the listener does not respond. This corresponds to a situation where the listener does not properly understand the speaker's intention or lacks the ability, responsibility or obligation to carry out the speaker's words.

statement *p* creates meaning and action of meaning (empirical statement) through illocutionary force. To summarise, it can be expressed as follows: propositional statement (*p*) and its action (F) = F(p) = illocutionary action = meaning (speaker/text's intention, interpretation) (Searle 1971:39). Therefore, in the hermeneutic approach of SAT, the propositional content of language and the meaning of language are not distinguished from each other, and both propositional and empirical statements are possible as language-events that occur simultaneously. Thus, by applying the hermeneutic method of SAT to the biblical text, it is possible to simultaneously explain the content of Jesus' name spoken in the Bible, theological and doctrinal statements, and the event (reality) of faith experience without separating them.

# The identity of the name of Jesus: Existence, essence and nature

Each object has a name, and when called or referred to, the object's existence is revealed. In this respect, there is no existence without a name. Conversely, without language, there is no existence. According to Gerard van der Leeuw (1933:129–130), a name is not a mere designation, but an essentiality expressed in words (language). The name indicates the existence of the object and the identity, essence and nature of the object.

The name of Jesus reveals the identity, existence, essence and nature of Jesus. The name Jesus, which means Messiah, Saviour and Immanuel, clearly shows who Jesus is, what kind of being he is, and what his essence and nature are. Jesus is the Son of God, the person of God, the only Saviour who can save us from sin and the only name that will save us (Ac 4:12). The name Jesus represents Jesus. The name of Jesus (God) is the revelation itself (Miskotte 1976:38). Bietenhard (1954:271) argued that the name of Jesus reveals both Jesus and God, God's self, which is revealed to humans through calling God the Father. This is the view of the name from the revelatory aspect. Jesus (God) reveals himself and God through God's name and indicates the existence of God (Barrett 1990:489). In the same vein, Link (1995:416-438) says that God is present in God's name, making it possible for humans to experience God through his name. He presents Matthew 21:9, 'Hosanna, Son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', as the basis for the correlation between the name of Jesus and the name of God. According to him, Jesus brings the name of God, and the name of God is present with and in Jesus. Lord is the name of God that connects and unites God and Jesus simultaneously. This theological implication appears prominently in the Bible and the Gospel of John. In the Gospel of John, Jesus manifests the name of God (Jn 17:6), God gives the Son, Jesus, the name of God (Jn 17:11), and the one who comes in the name of God (Jn 12:13), the name of God to do the work of God (Jn 10:25) (Ruck-Schröder 1999:211). Namely, the name of God represents Jesus, and in the name of Jesus, his identity, existence, essence and nature are revealed. Jesus, who is God and the Son of God, the name reveals the unity of God and Jesus, as well as the existence, essence and nature of God.

Jesus spoke-acted according to the meaning and intention of the name. He proclaimed and proved that he was the Son of God, the Messiah and the Judge by his verbal acts. Stated differently, the words of Jesus carry out the meaning and content of the words as they are and perform speech acts that become acts. This is the result of language performance, which is closely related to the speaker's identity.3 For example, Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet! Be Still', and the sea became calm (Mk 4:39). However, when someone says to the stormy sea, 'Quiet! Be Still', it does not calm the sea. Also, if the judge says, 'I convict you', the criminal will be punished, but when someone says, 'I convict you', the language is not carried out. Like this, even if it is the same language, depending on 'who is speaking', the language may or may not be performed. Namely, the performativity of language is actually affected by the speaker's identity and who the speaker is.

The SAT, which studies how language becomes an action or reality, is based on the performative language. This is formulated as F(p) in the SAT, and the propositional content p of language and its performance F are combined and expressed as F(p) (Searle 1968:148). To briefly express, the words of Matthew 21:9 can be expressed as 'Jesus is Lord (*p*) sing praises (F)'. The propositional content (*p*) of the language 'Jesus is Lord' reveals the ontological identity of Jesus. This tells us that Jesus is God, the Saviour, the Messiah and the Judge. The propositional content (*p*) of 'Jesus is Lord' is (1) who Jesus is (Jesus' name), (2) what Jesus is (the essence and nature of Jesus) and (3) what Jesus did and will do, that is, it clearly shows identity and existence according to the name of Jesus. Also, what Jesus has to do with believers, and why believers should believe in and praise him is implied. Let us look at the detailed discussion in the section 'Calling the name of Jesus: Calling, summons and meetings'.

# Calling the name of Jesus: Calling, summons and meetings

We looked at the identity of the name of Jesus earlier. So, what does the name of Jesus have to do with believers and what influence does it have in believers' lives? The Bible emphasises and affirms that the name of Jesus is related to human salvation: 'Salvation is found in no one else, for it is said that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Ac 4:12)', 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Ac 2:21, Rm 10:13)'. 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Jl 2:32)'.

The name of Jesus accomplishes human salvation. Because life on this earth is a journey to salvation, it exerts a significant influence on believers' lives. If the argument is correct, the name of Jesus should influence believers when uttered. Conversely, the power of the name of Jesus appears when you call on the name of Jesus. In other words, to believe in Jesus is to believe in the name of Jesus. And the name of Jesus

<sup>3.</sup>Simply put, the performative power of language means that the meaning and intention of language are carried out as actions.

brings believers to salvation. As this article has seen before, the name Jesus (God) is a revelatory act of God. As Reynolds (2020:56) argues, God's giving of God's name is a revelatory act towards God's people, and God uses God's name as the medium of God's revelation. When God's people call on God's name, God is present to them. The name of God plays the role of a medium that allows God and God's people to meet, fellowship and unite. Stated differently, the name of Jesus represents God, Jesus, and simultaneously makes believers meet Jesus (God).

Jesus, calling on the name of God, is also talking to God and praying. 'When you call to me and come to me and pray, I will hear you; you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' (Jr 29:12-13). The Hebrew word translated as 'to pray' is the verb 'kara' [אָרָק] which originally means to call. This has the meaning of calling, summoning, declaring and reading. When believers call on Jesus and God, it means that God is summoned and present (Patterson 2004:82). In the linguistic aspect, the performative language is summoned and present in the present when an object is called. For example, let us say A and B are having a conversation in a cafe. When A and B mention C (name, title), who are not currently together during a conversation, C is summoned when the name is called despite not being with A and B and is at the place of A and B's conversation. C's body is not physically present in the conversation between A and B, but when C is called, C is summoned and C is present between A and B. At this time, C's name becomes a conversation medium between A and B. In addition, when A and B call C, A and B can perceive or feel the influence of C on them, such as happiness, love, warmth, brightness, displeasure, darkness, cynicism, anger, etc.). C's name (title) affects their cognition, state, emotions, etc. Namely, when C is called by name, C is summoned and presented to A and B, and A and B meet C as images of C. Just as someone thinks of dogs when someone says 'puppy' (perceptions, thoughts, feelings about dogs). Let us call this the 'calling event'.<sup>4</sup> The calling event here refers to a kind of language event summoned when C is called and affects A and B or their conversation, even though C does not exist in the conversation between A and B. The calling event can be summarised as follows: During the conversation between A and B, if the absent C is called, C is summoned and present at that place.

Thus, the calling event in which we call the name of Jesus is an event of faith in which human beings meet God, the Creator God, experience his presence and transform our lives through Jesus. Calling on the name of Jesus is an event of faith that summons and meets the real Jesus, although believers cannot physically be together. Because the name of Jesus means saviour, believers' lives are saved when they meet Jesus. Believers' lives are transformed through Jesus. 'Unless you are saved by Jesus, there is no other name given under heaven by which you must be saved (Ac 4:12)'. 'For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (Mt 18:20)'.

When believers call on the name of Jesus, Jesus is present. Then how is the existence of Jesus revealed? The existence of Jesus is revealed in the 'relationship' with believers who confess and believe in Jesus as my Lord! Christ. The relationship here refers to a personal relationship, which is characteristic of the performance of Jesus' speech act (biblical language). In general, the performance of everyday language is influenced by social laws, institutions and norms.5 For example, if a judge convicts a criminal, the criminal is punished. The words of the judge do not become affected because of a personal relationship with the criminal, but language is carried out by the system that maintains and dominates society. However, Jesus' speech act is performed because of his personal relationship with the believer. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and my household will be saved (Ac 16:31)'. There is something to pay attention to here, mutual voluntary actions accompany personal relationships. To briefly abbreviate the words of 1 John 2:1–15, it can be expressed as 'our sins are forgiven (*p*) because of the name of Jesus, so love one another (F)'.<sup>6</sup> This shows that Jesus is the Son of God and the main body of God, Saviour and Messiah, and reveals the identity, existence, essence and nature of Jesus. Stated differently, the name of Jesus is Jesus and proves what Jesus has done for human beings. Jesus performed a voluntary act of love, willingly sacrificing his life to save humans from sin. And because believers know who Jesus is and have experienced the love of Jesus for them, they believe in Jesus as our Lord! Christ and obey his commands and live a life of voluntary love. In other words, the personal relationship between Jesus and the believer makes them do voluntary actions for each other. Because of the love of Jesus, the believer lives a life of practising that love and achieves a transformation in believers' lives. What makes all this possible is the utterance of the name of Jesus; when the name of Jesus is called, Jesus, who is physically absent on this earth is summoned, and believers meet Jesus and live as Christians.

# Performativity in the name of Jesus: The presence of Jesus

When the name Jesus is called, the meaning and intent of the name are fulfilled and become real. According to the SAT, language's content, meaning and intention become real and act through the performative language. Because this article examines the theological implications of the event of faith that occurs when the name of Jesus is called, we focus on the calling event. Of course, the performative language can be performed just by reading the text, even if the language is not uttered. However, the fact that Jesus' speech act is performed in a personal relationship implies that it involves speech acts between Jesus and believers, such as communication. When a Christian who believes and confesses to be Christ calls out the name of Jesus and seeks it, the calling event becomes a

.....

<sup>4.</sup>The calling event is a term coined by the author.

<sup>5.</sup>Of course, there is also the performance of language in personal relationships. However, these discussions are beyond our current discussion, so we will not go into them.

<sup>6.</sup>This academic view is in line with the claims of Thiselton (2006:86), a prominent theologian in biblical interpretation, and his claims and theories are borrowed and applied in this article. Thiselton interpreted the Bible using speech act theory as a methodology. For more information, see his book.

reality, and Jesus is present there. Jesus is present where believers are gathered in the name of Jesus. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I among them (Mt 18:20)'. Conversely, for the presence of Jesus, believers must call on the name of Jesus. When they call on the name of Jesus, they meet Jesus, and the performatives of the name of Jesus are performed in them. Believers' lives are saved (transformed) in the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus brings Jesus and us together, and when we call on Jesus, Jesus is with us.

'You will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he is the one who will save his people from their sins (Mt 1:21)'. The name Jesus, which means saviour, is performative in the language itself, so when uttered (or written), it carries out the content, meaning and intention of language. Most everyday language has performative language, but religious (biblical) and divine language have more powerful performativity than everyday language. The reason is because it is related to the identity (existence) of the owner of the name. Depending on who the owner of the name is, the influence of the Bible and religious language (the performance of language) is different because Jesus is the main body of God, the son of God and the saviour. For language to be performed in everyday life, some felicity condition must be met. According to Searle, the performative language must meet the following appropriate conditions: firstly, the propositional content condition; secondly, the preliminary condition; thirdly, the sincerity condition and fourthly, the essential condition (Searle 1969:65-71). To put it simply, the propositional content condition indicates the intention of the language, the preparatory condition is that the intention of the language is beneficial to others, the sincerity condition is that the owner and speaker of the language faithfully perform it, and the essential condition is the language owner refers to the responsibilities and obligations. Stated differently, the most crucial thing in the performative language is that the intention of the owner of the language (speaker) must be good, it must be for others and it must be carried out by his or her sincerity and character. In this aspect, the performative name of Jesus exercises its performative power in relation to the identity of Jesus, who Jesus is, what he has done and what he will do.

Considering that the performativity of the name Jesus is related to the identity of Jesus, the fact that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the Messiah and the Saviour will impact the performativity of the name Jesus. In other words, the name Jesus is also associated with God. Wilhelm Heitmüller (1903:154-155) claims that God's name is God's other self. Bietenhard (1954:255) also argues that the name of God (Yahweh) corresponds to God's personal providence and activities in the same context. Summarising their arguments, the name of God plays the role of revelation to reveal God. Also, in that the name of Jesus is associated with God, the name of Jesus reveals God (Grether 1934:183). That is, the name of Jesus carries the revelation of God. In this respect, Ruck-Schroder (1999:205) says that Jesus is the one who carries the name of God. Jesus came to this earth in the name of the Lord as the one who received God's revelation and performed God's work with all God's authority and power

(Mt 11:27). In other words, Jesus' speech act (performance of his name) is an action in God's name, and as God's revelation to save mankind, he has faithfully fulfilled God's will according to the meaning and intention of his name.

Then, how can we explain that the performative name of Jesus represents the presence of Jesus in terms of the SAT? The meaning of the name Jesus is 'Jesus is the Savior' (Mt 1:21). The Bible testifies that those who call on the name of Jesus and the Lord will be saved (Rm 10:13). The name of Jesus has performativity of language, which can be expressed as F(p) in the theory of verbal action, 'Jesus is the savior (p), and those who call on his name will be saved (F)'. What should be noted here is that the performative nature of the language of Jesus' name concludes a promise between Jesus and believers who believe in and call on Jesus. Namely, the performative nature of the name of Jesus itself concludes a promise between Jesus and the believer, so that when the believer calls on Jesus, Jesus saves him. Stated differently, when the believer calls on the name of Jesus, Jesus is present to the believer and saves the believer. This shows that the performative name of Jesus carries out self-involving activities and commitments. Self-involving activity and commitments are terms devised by Evans who proposed a methodology of biblical language and interpretation based on the SAT. According to Evans (1963:158), the biblical language represents the performative act of God, Jesus, which means that the meaning and intention of the biblical language is to conclude a promise in the relationship between believers to perform the self-involving activities of God, Jesus. The words that Jesus is the saviour (the content and meaning of the language) mean that Jesus performs selfinvolving activities to save God's people. When a saint believes in Jesus and calls on him (a promise with Jesus), the self-involving commitments become effective. Summarising this in terms of SAT, it can be expressed as 'Jesus is the savior (*p*), and when Jesus is called, he saves his people (F)'. Thus, the performativity of the name Jesus denotes the presence of Jesus.

# The power of the name of Jesus: E = F(p)

If the performative name of Jesus represents the presence of Jesus, then the name of Jesus must become power and real within believers. An event of faith in which the performance of the name of Jesus becomes the power of the name of Jesus must occur in the believer. When believers call on the name of Jesus, they must experience the power of the name of Jesus in their lives. If our discussion above is valid, the performative name of Jesus must be carried out in the lives of believers. This indicates that the name of Jesus, the content and meaning (p) of the name of Jesus are carried out (F), creating a faith event in which the power of the name of Jesus becomes real among believers. Then, how can we explain how the performative name of Jesus becomes real in the life of a believer from the point of view of SAT?

Let us look at Romans 10:13 as an example, which reveals the performative nature of the name of Jesus. Romans 10:13 can be expressed as 'Jesus is the Savior (*p*), and whoever calls on his name will be saved (F)'. If we express this as a speech act, F(p), where the meaning (*p*) represents the name of Jesus and the power (F) to act upon it, it can be stated as follows: 'Jesus is my savior! I am a Christian F(p)'. Recognition of Jesus or the name of Jesus, the meaning of the name (p) and action (F) are performed when believers trust, confess and call the name of Jesus, making the calling event (verbal event) a reality. Believers create a faith event in which we experience and meet Jesus. This means that when we personally meet Jesus as our saviour, confess and believe in him, and call on his name, we experience the salvation of Jesus. This refers to what accompanies the decision and action to live as a Christian. It is not to recognise the meaning of the name Jesus, 'Jesus is the Savior', as simple knowledge or fact, but to honestly know and believe who Jesus is, what he has done, and what he will do in the future, and live like Jesus and as a Christian. However, what should be noted here is that this calling event, F(p), is made possible through mutual cooperation and participation between Jesus and the believer. When we confess, 'Jesus is my savior! I am a Christian, F(p)', as we have seen before, Jesus performs an act of self-involving activity and self-involving commitments. The power of the name of Jesus is carried out. Believers are saved in the name of Jesus. Also, when a believer believes in and calls on the name of Jesus, we know who we are and what kind of life we should live, so we live in this world as Jesus said. The event of calling, 'Jesus is my savior! I am a Christian F(p)' becomes a reality in the life of a believer because of mutual cooperation and participation between Jesus and the believer. The meaning of the name of Jesus transcends simple letters and becomes the power of salvation in the life of a believer. Thus, the name of Jesus becomes a power that works and transforms our lives.

This calling event makes the name of Jesus powerful in the life of a believer. In other words, it means creating an event of faith to experience Jesus and achieving a change in life in the name of Jesus. This means that the meaning and intention of the name Jesus are realised for the believer. It says that the power of the name of Jesus becomes real. Thus, if the power of the name of Jesus is truly performed when believers call on the name of Jesus, this will also explain the power of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit. As we have seen before, the name of Jesus is Jesus himself, God (the Holy Spirit) and the Word, and when we believe in and call on Jesus, the power of the name of Jesus is performed. If Jesus is the Saviour, God and the Word, the name of Jesus and the Word must appear as the ability to experience Jesus in the life of a believer. The power of the name of Jesus means that the name of Jesus has energy, and having energy means it becomes real. If so, how can we explain how the name of Jesus becomes a power in the life of a believer through the SAT?

To begin with the conclusion, the power of the name of Jesus can be explained by the formula of the language act theory of E = F(p).<sup>7</sup> In the SAT, the performative language is <sup>7</sup>. This content has been reorganised with reference to the content of the author's previously published article. Please refer to the following article, Anna Cho (2020).

formulated as F(p). However, I propose formulating the performative language as E=F(p). This is because energy (E) is accompanied when language exerts its performance. Energy is the ability to do work; without energy, there is no action. Stated differently, saying, doing something or changing a situation, state or phenomenon cannot function without energy. Thus, the energy of language is action. Energy is power and reality.

To guide our discussion, we need to look at the principles of classical mechanics. Often, examples of scientific principles provide good insight into understanding the invisible mysteries or principles of faith. The world we live in can be divided into the material and the immaterial world, and both have their own energy and mass. All worlds and objects that exist in the world have the power to attract each other. Even the vases on the table, which appear to be stationary, have a force of attraction between them. However, the magnitude of this force is so tiny that it seems stationary to our eyes, and we live without feeling the strength of the gravitational force, but the gravitational force is working. We call this the general principle of relativity  $E = mc^2$  (M: mass of an object, C: speed of light). The theory of relativity is the principle that the mass of an object and the speed of light meet to create enormous energy. At this time, energy is proportional to the mass possessed by matter. In fact, mass and energy are equivalent and interchangeable, which means that mass can be converted into energy. In addition, this energy suggests that pure energy, such as words, waves and light that cannot be weighed on a scale, can also be converted into mass particles.

When the name of Jesus is invoked, the name (language) is carried out with energy to create the power, the reality, of the name of Jesus in the believer's life. A believer's life is transformed in the name of Jesus. In other words, if you properly recognise Jesus and the meaning of the name of Jesus (*p*), believe in Jesus as your saviour and live as a faithful Christian (act, F), the power and energy of the name of Jesus will indeed appear in your life as a believer. The power of the name of Jesus will become real and manifest in the life of a believer. This article aligns with the performance of language emphasised by the SAT. The name of Jesus is Jesus, and the words of Jesus are the words of God. The word has power and energy, so it is fulfilled when the word of God (Jesus) is proclaimed, and God's will is accomplished through them by making the people of God respond to and participate in the word of God. The name of Jesus is not a mere letter or title, so the energy of language works and becomes reality in believers who believe and call Jesus their saviour. Thus, when believers confess 'Jesus is my savior! I am a Christian F(p)', the energy (E) of the name of Jesus becomes powerful and real in their lives. This can be formulated as the power (reality) of the name of Jesus = E = F(p).

As we have seen before, the power of the name of Jesus is an energetic reality. The fact that the name of Jesus has energy means that the name has performative and kinetic power, allowing believers to experience the power of the name of Jesus in their lives. When a believer believes in, confesses and calls on the name of Jesus, the name of Jesus is realised in the believer's life. The name of Jesus is more than a mere title; it is a reality with energy, E = F(p). Thus, to fully experience the power of the name of Jesus in believers' lives, we must increase the total amount of F(p). Stated differently, when we properly know who Jesus is, believe in the meaning of the name Jesus (p) and act like Christians (F), believers can experience more of the power of the name Jesus in their lives. Because E = F(p), as the total mass of F(p)increases, the corresponding E energy also increases. If the value of E increases as the total amount of F(p) increases, the name of Jesus will become the power in our lives to save us and accomplish God's will through us. Just as the disciples testified of the gospel in the name of Jesus, healed the sick and set the demon-possessed free (Ac 4:7; 16:18). These things are possible because Jesus is present in the name of Jesus, and when believers call on and seek the name of Jesus, the name becomes power and recreates and transforms believers' lives. In the life of a believer, the name of Jesus is power and reality.

# Conclusion

So far, we have studied the name of Jesus theologically through the hermeneutical methodology of the SAT. The meaning of the name Jesus is the one who will save his people from their sins. Then, we can say that to believe in Jesus is to believe in the name of Jesus. If Jesus, whom we believe and confess as 'Lord', is the person of God, the Son of God, the Saviour and the Messiah, what theological implications are there in the name of Jesus, which implies all these things, and how does this name of Jesus come to us? There must be a theological and hermeneutical discussion about whether it impacts life. Thus, this article concludes that a theological examination of the name of Jesus is necessary. It utilises the hermeneutic methodology of the SAT to analyse and explore the significance of Jesus' name.

# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Jonannes LEE Myung-Bhum, Kang Eung-Seob, Cho Namshin of Yemyung Graduate University for providing motivation and inspiration to study the theology of the name of Jesus.

### **Competing interests**

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

# Author's contributions

A.C. declares that they are the sole author of this research article.

# **Ethical considerations**

This article does not contain any studies involving human participants performed by any of the authors.

### **Funding information**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

#### Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The authors is responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

# References

Austin, J.L., 1975, *How to do things with words*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge. Cho, A., 2020, 'The reality of the Word of God between cognition and acts and Speech

- Act Theory', Theology and Society 34(3), 39–63.
- Barrett, C., 1990, Das Evangelium nach Johannes, KEK Sonderband 4, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen. 242–283.
- Bietenhard, H., 1954, 'ὄνομά', in G. Kittel & G. Friedrich (eds.), Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, pp. 242–283, W. Kohkbanner Verlag, Stuttgart.
- Evans, D., 1963, The logic of self-involvement, SCM, London.
- Grether, O., 1934, Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament, Alfred Töpelmann, Giessen.
- Heitmüller, W., 1903, Im Namen Jesu, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.
- Leeuw, G., 1993, Phänomenologie der Religion, J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen.
- Link, C., 1995, 'Die Spur des Namens. Zur Bedeutung und Funktion des biblischen Gottesnamens', Evangelische Theologie 55(5), 416–438. https://doi.org/ 10.14315/evth-1995-0503
- Leslie, J. & Robert Lawrence, K., 2013, The mystery of existence: Why is there anything at all?, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.
- Miskotte, H.K., 1976, Biblisches ABC: wider das unbliblische Bibellesen, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen- Vluyn.
- Patterson, D., 2004, Hebrew language and Jewish thought, Taylor & Francis, New York, NY.
- Reynolds, E.B., 2020, John among the Apocalypses Jewish Apocalyptic tradition and the 'Apocalyptic' Gospel, Oxford University, Oxford.
- Ringgren, H. & Botterweck, G., 2006, Theological dictionary of the Old Testament, Eerdmands, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Ruck-Schröder, A., 1999, Der Name Gottes und der Name Jesu: Eine neutestamentliche Studie, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen – Vluyn.
- Searle, J.R., 1968, 'Austin on locutionary and illocutionary Acts', The Philosophical Review 77(4), 405–424. https://doi.org/10.2307/2183008
- Searle, J.R., 1969, Speech Acts: An essay in the philosophy of language, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Searle, J.R., 1971, The philosophy of language, Oxford University Press, London.
- Searle, J.R., 1995, The construction of social reality, Penguin Books, London.
- Schmidt, H.W., 1986, *The faith of the Old Testament*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. Strauss, D.F., 2010, *The life of Jesus, critically examined*, SCM Press, London.
- Thiselton, A.C., 2006, Thiselton on Hermeneutics: Collected works with New Essays, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.