

Philippians 2:5-11

JESUS— The NAME above all Names

This portion of Philippians constitutes the epistle's single most significant block of material—and the most difficult to interpret. These verses picture the descent of our Lord Jesus Christ—God coming to the earth He created, willingly dying upon the cross—and the Father exalting Him to the highest place, before whom *every knee will bow... every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11, NASB)*.

How would you describe the attitude of Christ (v. 5)? Humility, obedience, submission.

Attitude in the Greek is associated with the mind—mental state, intentional state of attention, habit of the mind—not just thinking about something or daydreaming.

Why is it important for us to have this same attitude as Christ's? Just as Jesus came to do the work the Father set out for Him, we too should be focused on discerning the work the Father has for us. (Ephesians 2:10) We need Christ's same attitude to do so.

What does "being in very nature God" mean (v. 6)? The Greek word translated as "existed" (NASB) or "being" (NIV) is present tense, indicating the Lord's continual and uninterrupted existence as fully God.

The Son of God's preincarnate state of existing in the form of God is clearly viewed here. The Greek word translated as "form" (NASB) or "nature" (NIV, Gr. *morphe*) means the same outward appearance and inward nature of God. Jesus is eternal God. His existence did not begin in the manger at Bethlehem.

What does it mean that He "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (v. 6b, NASB)? Jesus did not esteem His equality with God as a thing to be held on to, clutched forever. He willingly released His grip on equality with God to slide down the rope of humiliation.

Possessing the essence of Godhead, Jesus had full right to all the worship and lordship as did His Father. Yet what was Jesus' attitude toward His rights? When He became a man, Jesus gave them all up, as if He had none.

Can you think of any personal rights that we have as Christians? See John 1:12

In what ways did Jesus change when He came into the world? Jesus Christ did not give up or lay aside His full deity when He became a man. He *added* a human nature to His divine person.

NOTE: In heaven and on earth Jesus was 100% God. He did not—could not—become "less God" because of His incarnation. Jesus is often referred to as the God-Man— His deity with the addition of a human nature. This is why Colossians 2:9 says, *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form*. The doctrine of Christ's divinity and humanity in one is known as the Hypostatic Union.

How is Jesus' human nature different from ours? He did not possess a sin nature. **Where did we get our sin nature?** From Adam (Genesis 5:3). Jesus was the Son of God—not a son of Adam.

Who else was created without a sin nature? Adam (and Eve) was created without sin nature, yet He sinned.

Application: Was Jesus incapable of sinning?

When it says Jesus "made himself nothing" or "emptied himself" (v. 7), He relinquished...?

- His heavenly glory. Jesus separated himself from the honor, glory and appearance in His existence as God to clothe himself with the rags of human nature.

- The freedom of the independent exercise of His divine attributes and rights: *Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was (John 17:5).*

What does it mean to be made in the likeness of men (v. 7b)? “Likeness” in the Greek is *homoiomati*, emphasizing identity with humanity, rather than “exactness” of humanity, as the Greek word *eikon* would express.

What was Jesus’ ultimate humiliation (v. 8)? The Cross. The loving Father/Son relationship that had existed for all eternity was severed as Christ became sin. With repulsion the Father saw all sin ever committed—and turned His back on the One bearing it. Crucifixion—the death of a criminal, never of a Roman citizen—was the most degrading execution possible. To the Jews, a crucified person was clearly accursed by God (Deuteronomy 21:23 and Galatians 3:13).

What was Jesus’ motivation in being thoroughly humiliated? To honor and glorify the Father—out of His love for the Father—and us.

What did Jesus chose to do in obedience to His Father’s will (v. 6-8)? Go to the Cross. **What did His Father do in response (v. 9-11)?** Exalted Him to the highest place – the right hand of the Throne of God.

What is the name that is above every name? Yahweh. God’s name was so holy, it was considered unpronounceable. When reading Scripture Jews substituted *Adonai* (Hebrew for “Lord”) for the name.

How did God highly exalt Jesus?

- Restored Him with the glory He had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5).
- Bestowed upon Him the name above all names—a title of dignity above all men, angels and creatures.
- Subjected the entirety of creation to Him: inhabitants of heaven and earth, the living and the dead, *so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow* (Philippians 2:10, NASB).
- Gave Him all authority

While on earth, Jesus had no great title distinguishing Him. He was often despised – called “a friend of sinners” or “blasphemer.” Because Jesus did not live on this earth to make His name great, God supremely exalted Him and His name in the world to come.

What will be the result of Christ’s superior name (v. 10)? *Every knee will bow to Christ one day, no matter where or who they are or what they believe. Bowing the knee to another symbolizes submission to authority and is an act of worship. Because Christ was willing to make others more important than Himself while on earth, God made Him eternally more important than anyone else.*

What will all people blaspheming the name of Christ do one day (v. 11)? Confess Him as Lord – by faith or force. All of which will result in further glory to God.

Note: It is to the glory of God the Father to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. It is the Father’s will *that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent Him (John 5:23).*

Application: God honors obedience, humility and submission. Just look at the way He honored His Son.

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