

Philippians

Part 10 – Jesus Christ is Lord

Philippians 2:5-11

As we have already seen, the profound theological statement concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ in Philippians 2:6-11 is employed by Paul to exhort the Philippian believers to greater humility. He recounts the remarkable self-humiliation of the eternal Son in becoming a man and submitting to death on a cross for the sake of sinners. This “Mount Everest” of Christian theology is used in service to Christian humility and the unity of the church.

But Paul does not leave his theological exposition of the person of Christ with statements concerning his self-humiliation. Rather, the apostle takes us from the depths of Jesus’ voluntary miseries to the heights of his glory as the eternal Son. Though Jesus took upon himself the very nature of a servant he nevertheless did not for one moment cease being “very God of very God.” The Son’s humiliation and agonizing death were answered by a resounding vindication of his deity in his resurrection and session.

Our salvation depends upon both the humiliation and glorification of the eternal Son. In his humility he identified with our frail humanity. In this he was qualified as our sympathizing High Priest. As the One who is by very nature God, Jesus was able to present himself as the spotless Lamb with both the innocence to bear our sins and the power to be raised up for our salvation.

Main Idea: Though Jesus humbled himself to the point of death on a cross he never ceased being the Everlasting God.



Vs. 9 – “Therefore” marks a major transition from Christ’s self-humiliation to restoration of his prior status. The word translated “highly exalted” (*hyperhypsoo*) is found repeatedly in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in reference to the lofty exaltation of God. The name “bestowed” upon Jesus is “the Lord” or *Yahweh*, the covenant name of God. This is the exalted name of the Triune God alone.

Vv. 10-11 – The result of the unveiling of Jesus Christ as Lord (*Yahweh*) will be universal vindication. “Every knee” and “every tongue” indicates the comprehensive nature of this vindication. No one will withhold the exalted Christ’s due. Even those who refused to acknowledge or worship him in the present age will confess his Lordship at the end of the age.

1. Jesus Christ is Lord by nature

Vs. 6 – “...though he was in the form of God...”

- As we saw last week, the word translated “form” carries with it the ideas of essence and function. It is simply a way of saying that Jesus *is* God.

2. Jesus Christ is eternally exalted.

Vs. 9 – “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name...”

- This is not to be understood as a new status bestowed upon Jesus. From eternity the Son has enjoyed the eternal exaltation of the Triune God. Upon the successful completion of his redemptive mission Jesus was restored to his rightful place of eternal exaltation.
- The name “bestowed” upon Jesus is “Lord” or *Yahweh* the covenant name of God. That the name is “bestowed” upon Jesus does not mean that the Son is being granted a new identity. Rather, Jesus, is being recognized for who he has been from eternity.

3. Jesus Christ shares the glory of the Godhead.

Vs. 11 – “...to the glory of God the Father.”

- The Son is pleased to glorify the Father just as the Spirit is pleased to glorify the Son. But the Father also glorifies the Son and the Spirit is likewise glorified within the Godhead. This means that there is no hierarchy within the Godhead. There are no superior Persons of the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Spirit are equal in power and glory.

4. Jesus’ Lordship will be universally recognized.

Vv. 10-11 – “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...”

- A day is coming when every person living and dead will give verbal recognition to the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is not a moment of conversion. In other words, upon the Lord’s return the time to repent will be at an end. So some of those who cry out “Jesus is Lord” will do so in loss and terror. But on that day no one will question the status and glory of the Son of God.

Theology in Application:

a) Humility is the prelude to glory.

No one has ever gone so low as Jesus went. Likewise it is not intended that we should ever receive the glory which Jesus receives. However, Paul does call us to emulate the humble attitude of Jesus who esteemed others more highly than himself. That is the pattern for our living in this fallen world.

b) History is moving in the right direction.

Jesus is returning. God has determined a day for this to occur and no man can change it. Until then there will be all manner of trials and testing. But God’s people need not despair. Let us long for his appearing with eager expectation.

c) The church’s gospel mission is urgent.

Our time is limited. Everyone we know will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The only question is whether they will make that confession in joy or terror.