

Christ Exaltation

Philippians 2:9-11

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Let's back up to Philippians 2:5, the text is verses 5-11, and we'll get a running start on our text. Paul says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God," that's a reference to Christ Jesus, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation," that's the kenosis, He emptied Himself, "and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As I said, we're looking together at one of the greatest passages in all the Word of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. Just a little footnote with that thought is that Christ is the central theme of the Bible. The Bible is all about Jesus, and when we go through the Bible, no matter where we're at—Old Testament or New Testament, gospels, epistles, Revelation, whatever it might be—we should always look for Jesus. To understand your Bible, always look for Jesus. He is that "scarlet thread" that runs through in His redemptive plan. Jesus is the central theme of the Bible. Anyone who preaches the Bible should thus be preaching Jesus Christ. If you listen to a preacher and they never talk about Jesus, then maybe he's not really preaching the Scriptures. No Scripture more beautifully portrays the depth of Christ's humiliation, His deity, His sacrifice, and His service.

I want to point this out. In verse 5, we have the theme of the section, Christ's mind of humiliation, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Verse 5 is Christ the illustration of the humble mind. Just a quick reminder, the mind of Christ speaks of His attitude or outlook. The same attitude that Jesus had, an outlook on life that He had, in His humanity, we should all take as well. In verses 6-8, we see His humiliation, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation." In verse 6, we have His sovereignty. I'm just outlining what we covered last week to lead into our text. We have the mind of Christ, verse 5, illustration; and then the humiliation of Christ, He was the sovereign God, "...thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Now, when it says He's in the "form of God," the Greek word "form" is *morphe*. As I pointed out last Wednesday night, that word means essence. It doesn't mean outward shape, it means what He is in essence, so this is a declaration of His deity.

In verse 7, we see His humanity, a servant, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," this is His incarnation or His humanity. We have, verse 6, His deity; verse 7, His humanity, He's the servant; and in verse 8, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,

even the death of the cross,” we have His crucifixion. We go from eternity past, now we’re going to go to eternity future, so Jesus left Heaven, laid aside His glory, His majesty, not His deity, took on full humanity, went to the cross and suffered and died for our sins. Then, “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Again, in verses 5-8 you have His humiliation, it’s the mind of the Son of God; in verses 9-11, we now have His exaltation. If you wanted to divide it into two...and I know I’m throwing out all these different titles and you’re probably going, “What in the world is he talking about?” The first section is Christ humbled Himself, He came from Heaven; the second section tonight is God the Father exalted Him, and the overarching principle of this message is that by humiliation comes exaltation. If we humble ourselves under God’s hand, then God will exalt us; so verses 5-8, humiliation, and verses 9-11, exaltation. Keep in mind that the context of this passage in Paul’s letter to the Philippians was not to teach doctrine but to teach doctrine to make a practical point—he’s calling us to unity and harmony through humility. The way for us to get along with others and have unity is for us to be humble, so he tells us the doctrine of Christ to illustrate that we should be humble minded and walk together in unity. Jesus is our example.

We break down this text, I want you to note four truths about Christ’s exaltation. Very rarely do you hear a message on the exaltation of Christ. Some of you are familiar with that and what it means, but we’re going to break it down from this text, Christ exalted. We talk a lot about His humiliation—He came from Heaven to earth—but now we’re going to see His exaltation—God the Father exalts Him highly.

First, if you’re taking notes (and they’ll appear on the screen as well), what is the source of Christ’s exaltation? Notice it in verse 9, “Wherefore,” so in light of verses 5-8, because “...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross...God also hath highly exalted him,” stop right there. Who exalted God the Son? The answer: God the Father. In light of that, again, just a footnote, we have the doctrine of the Trinity. Some people deny that there are three Persons in the Godhead, but the Bible teaches there is one God. Christianity is monotheistic, but that one God has three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It’s triune in nature. The Bible doesn’t use the word “trinity,” but it teaches the concept of one God, three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. I don’t know how you’d interpret this verse if you didn’t understand that Jesus is God, verse 6, but in verse 9, “God...highly exalted him,” so it’s a reference to God the Father who highly exalted God the Son.

I don’t know what it is, but lately I’ve been encountering people that deny the Trinity of Jesus Christ. Let me make it clear, the Trinity is an essential doctrine of Christianity. You can be saved and maybe not believe in the Trinity, but your belief is not Christian doctrine or Christian truth so you’re saved in spite of that not because of that. If you deny the Trinity, then you are actually classified as non-Christian. Anybody that denies the Trinity is not holding to Christian

doctrine or Christian theology.

The first Person of the Godhead, God the Father, is the source or the One that highly exalted Him. It's the Father's response or reward to the Son's humble submission. Because, "...he humbled himself," God the Father said, "Thus, I will exalt Him and set Him on high." What was the Father's reward for the Son? Exaltation. I want you to look at verse 9. The word "exalted" is only used here in the New Testament and only of Christ. The only place you find this specific word...and notice it, it's not just "exalted" but "highly exalted." It could say, "He exalted Him," but it says, "He highly exalted Him." It means to lift above or to lift beyond.

The word "highly" is the Greek word *hyperypsoo*, we get our word super from it, so God super exalted Him. This act of God fulfilled the prophecy of the suffering servant, Isaiah 52:13, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." It also fulfills the Scripture where in the Old Testament God said unto Him, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Jesus came from Heaven down to earth, went to the cross, suffered and died, was buried, and then, "God also hath highly exalted him."

What exactly is the exaltation and what took place? It involved three steps, and I want you to write these down if you're taking notes. Here are the three simple steps of God exalting the Son. First, it started with His resurrection. Jesus was resurrected from the dead. In Ephesians 1:19-20, Paul said that he wanted us to know, "...the exceeding greatness of his power," His dynamis, "to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Paul says, "I want you to know God's power. It's the same power that rose Christ from the dead when He rose Him from the dead." Again, another note on the Trinity, the Bible teaches that God the Father rose God the Son from the dead. The Bible also teaches that Jesus rose Himself from the dead, and the Bible also teaches that the Holy Spirit rose Him from the dead. You say, "Which One was it?" All three. One God, three Persons, all of them involved in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The first phase or stage of His exaltation was His resurrection. In Romans 1:4, Paul said, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." That "resurrection" there was the thing that set Him off and distinguished Him as being the Son of God. After the death of Jesus Christ, it's interesting that no sinful hands touched Him, men had done their worst, but the Savior had been exalted in the resurrection, so He rose again from the dead. We could do a whole study on the resurrection, but suffice it to say, that's the first part of His exaltation.

The second step, write it down, is His ascension. We have the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension. After Jesus rose from the dead, for forty days He had a period of these post-resurrection appearances—for forty days He appeared and disappeared. The Bible says, "To whom also he shewed himself alive...by many infallible proofs," and at the end of that forty days Christ actually ascended to Heaven.

I just ripped them off for you, but if you're taking notes, the ascension is mentioned in Luke 24:51-53, Mark 16:19-20, Acts 1:8-9 which is the classic reference to the ascension of Jesus Christ. After His resurrection, in John 20, Jesus said to Mary, "Stop clinging to Me," why? "...for I am not yet ascended to my Father." In Acts 1, we see the place was the Mount of Olives. If you've ever been to Israel, on the eastern side of Mount Zion where the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque where the temple once stood, there's the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives. Jesus actually ascended from the Mount Olivet back right up into Heaven.

The procedure was pretty cool because He was actually physically there in His resurrected, glorified body, and I know this is going to sound kind of basic, "Yeah, Pastor John, we know the Bible," but He was standing there talking to them and guess what happened? He started just lifting off planet earth and going right back into Heaven. Some people say, "Are you serious?" I'm serious. If He came into the world through the womb of a virgin, lived a sinless life, spoke like never a man spake, healed the blind and raised the dead, cleansed the leper, gave sight to the blind, did all these miracles, how's He going to exit? How's He going to leave this world? He had to have a spectacular departure, so He physically, literally, bodily just went ascending right back up into Heaven. The Bible says that the disciples watched Him, they saw Him, and it says that a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now, of all the stories in the Bible, this is one of them I would have just loved to have been hanging out on Mount Olivet and watch Jesus go, ZSHOOP! right back up into Heaven.

Believe it or not, that simple truth has a lot of implications because the angel showed up and said, "Why are you looking into Heaven?" and my thought is, Dude! (talking to the angel) If you saw what we just saw, you'd be looking up, too! They probably didn't look down for a couple of days, "Where is He?" And the angel said, "The same Jesus," listen to their words, "which you just saw go back to Heaven," which means there is a place called Heaven, He's not just floating around in the clouds somewhere out there, "that same Jesus that went back to Heaven, shall come the same way." Praise the Lord! Amen? The Bible says, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Christ is coming back visibly, bodily, gloriously, powerfully, and every eye will see Him. Jesus Christ is coming back. All the future aspects of Christ's work and ministry flows out of His resurrection and His ascension, and then we have just one more point in a moment, His exaltation. It means there is a Heaven, He finished His work on the cross, our salvation has been complete, He's coming back again, and He's going to take us to Heaven to be with Him forever and ever. That's a glorious, glorious truth!

Here's the third step, coronation or exaltation. Some actually use the term "exaltation" to cover all three, so I use the word "coronation," but it's all referring to the exaltation, when He's brought up to Heaven. In Hebrews 1:3, after He had provided purification for the sins, He "...sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Remember when Stephen was being stoned, Acts 7, and looked up into Heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father. It's the only place in the Bible where Jesus was standing. Now, it doesn't say in the Bible, it's just a hypothesis, but I think it's a pretty good one, that He was standing to welcome home Stephen, the first martyr. He was welcoming home the first Christian martyr. He actually said, "I see

Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father,” and then prayed for those who were persecuting and killing him saying, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,” and his face was shiny like an angel. How marvelous!

Jesus literally ascended back into Heaven. Write down Romans 14:9. It says, “For to this end Christ both died, and rose...that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” Write down Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” It’s the exaltation of the Son of God. He was resurrected, He ascended, and He was seated. This sitting at the right hand of God the Father... by the way, only God can sit next to God. When you get to Heaven, you don’t say, “Scoot over, Jesus, there’s another one. I’m going to sit next to You.” How about James and John’s mother came to Jesus and said, “I just wondered. When my two boys get to Heaven,” a mother’s ambition for her sons, “can they sit, one at Your right hand and one on Your left?” No big deal, can they just sit on the throne next to You? The only one who can sit next to God is God. There’s a marvelous truth that Jesus Christ was exalted, and He’s the exalted Man in Heaven.

Listen carefully. Jesus received even more in His exaltation than He had surrendered in His incarnation. Jesus received more in His exaltation than He gave up and left in His humiliation. I’ve been asked this question sometimes, but not very often, “Does Jesus still have His resurrection body in Heaven?” The answer, yes. He’s the prototype of our resurrection. I don’t care if you’re cremated or if you just deteriorate, or whatever happens to your body, but if you’re buried, one day your body, my body, our bodies will be resurrected just like Jesus’ body. And, if we get raptured, we’re going to go right off planet earth right up into Heaven just like Jesus did. Jesus actually is our prototype—His resurrection, His ascension—and we’re going to be caught up to Heaven to be with Him for all eternity. What a marvelous truth that truly is!

The exaltation, the seated at the right hand...the right hand of God. God doesn’t have any hands, but it’s a figure of speech that describes the place of honor, authority, and power. It means that it marked the end of His period of humiliation and the beginning of His exaltation and His reign in Heaven.

Remember when John saw Jesus in Revelation 1? That was post-ascension exaltation. Just make a note and write that down. Read it again. Do you want to know what Jesus looks like right now? His hair is white as wool. His eyes are a flame of fire. He had the sword, as He comes back, coming out of His mouth like the Word of God, His feet like polished brass, His voice like the sound of many waters. It’s not the same humble Jesus that was crucified on a cross, it’s an exalted, glorified Jesus in Heaven. He’s now the head of the body, the church, and He is to have preeminence in the church. There’s no pope, bishop, priest, pastor or elders, who are the head of the church. Christ, and Christ alone, is the head of the church. He’s the exalted One. Paul said in Colossians, “...that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

What did He do in Acts 2? He sent the Holy Spirit. The fact the Holy Spirit came in His fullness in Acts 2 is an indication that He made it back safely to heaven. When they stood on Mount Olivet and watched Jesus go back to Heaven, how did they know He got there? Maybe He ran

out of steam somewhere and crashed into the Bahamas, you know. Because He promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and He showed up on the day of Pentecost, it was an indication of a couple things: that the Father had accepted His work on the cross and that Jesus had made it safely back to Heaven and was exalted by the right hand of the Father, and He sent the Holy Spirit and the church was born. Christ became the head, so He sits as sovereign over the church and over all creation. And, He became our great High Priest, Hebrews 2 and 4, and He's preparing a place for us, John 14.

What is Jesus doing in Heaven right now, playing checkers or Tiddlywinks? He's building a palace for us over there. Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled," neither let it be afraid, "ye believe in God, believe also in me," and remember His words? "In my Father's house," that's Heaven, "are many mansions," King James, "if it were not so, I would have told you," and then He said these words, "I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." If you trust Him to save you, you can also trust Him to come get you. Amen? No matter how dark this world gets—and it is so dark right now, getting darker every day, so wicked and so perverted and so demonically energized—we're children of God walking in a very dark world, but this world is not our home. Amen? Jesus is preparing a place for us, and we're going to be "...caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," Paul says, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The fact that He's in Heaven preparing a place, He will come again.

It also means that He's exalted in Heaven. He will raise the dead, He will judge the wicked and reward the righteous, He will come again in the Second Coming, Revelation 19, and it's Christ's vindication that Jesus Christ came, was who He said He was, He was resurrected, He ascended, and He's exalted at the right hand of God the Father. He is the divine human Redeemer. Do you know that forever Jesus is going to be the God Man in Heaven? I believe that when we get to Heaven we'll see His scars, and it will remind us of the redemption He paid for us. We'll take our crowns and throw them at His feet, and we'll worship Him. What a glorious truth that is indeed!

Here's the second main point, and we'll move faster. What is the name of Christ's exaltation, verse 9. It says, "...and given him a name which is above every name," but doesn't really tell us what the name is quite yet. He's exalted and given a name. When the Bible uses the word "name," it's referring to His nature, character, who He is, and His authority. Jesus is given all power and all authority. Jesus is given the name by God.

The word "above" in verse 9 is the same Greek word used as highly exalted. It's a name that denotes exalted supremacy. Some feel that the name God gave Him was the name Jesus or Yeshua or Joshua, God saves; but I think a better view is that He does not reveal the name until verse 11, which is Lord, kyrios, that's the name which is above every name. He's Jehovah or Yahweh. No other name than Yahweh has the right to be called the name above every name. The movement of verse 9 to 11 does not stop at the phrase, "given him a name," but it flows straight through to the universal confession that Jesus Christ is kyrios, He is Lord. There's

going to be this confession by every tongue, "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

By the way, that statement by Paul, "that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," is from the book of Isaiah 45:23 where the prophet said, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." God is speaking through the prophet Isaiah, "...every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," Isaiah 45:23, "...that Jesus Christ is Lord."

I want you to note the response to Christ's exaltation in verses 10-11, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." The word "things," in verse 10, appears three times in my King James Bible, is italicized, so it should be omitted from the text. He said, "...every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth." The word "things" is added to kind of make the text flow in the English language, but he's talking about the categories of those who will bow their knee and confess Him as Lord. This will be a universal confession in scope. Look at it, "...in heaven," all the heavenly angels and redeemed men who have died. When we get to Heaven, it's going to be a day of rejoicing. When we get to Heaven, we're all going to worship Him, we're going to bow our knees, we're going to praise Him, exalt Him, and glorify Him. We might as well start right now and get ready for Heaven.

Secondly, "...in earth," verse 10. This is saved and even unsaved. This doesn't mean that they are saved, it means that they will acknowledge who Jesus is, but it won't mean their salvation. It will mean their judgment or condemnation.

There's a third category that puzzles some people, "...under the earth." Even fallen angels and unsaved men will confess Jesus Christ is Lord. Now, that's kind of hard to imagine. When people go to hell, they're going to know who Jesus is. They're going to know that they rejected their only hope of salvation. In Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, even in hell there'll be a confession. This won't mean salvation. Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere in the Bible does it even give the slightest hint that when you die and go to hell that you can ever finally make it to Heaven. There's no such thing as Purgatory. It's not in the Bible.

I listened to a priest the other day online trying to convince people there's Purgatory. He didn't quote one Scripture, and obviously he was undermining the finished work of Jesus Christ because he said, "You go to Purgatory because we're not ready to go to Heaven. We're not good enough to go to Heaven." Well, how do we get good enough? The righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith, for heaven's sake. That's why Jesus died on the cross, to save sinners, to give us His righteousness. We'll never be good enough to go to Heaven. "Well, I just gotta go to Purgatory and I'll get purged of my sin, and then I'll be ready. I'll really be able to enjoy Heaven because I'm fit for it." Why did Jesus die on the cross then? Why didn't we all just go through Purgatory to get to Heaven? Jesus said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It wasn't. He had to die on the cross. There's no hint or indication that anyone under the earth or in hell will ever get saved or be able to come out of that state.

In Luke 16, when the rich man said, "...send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue," he was told, "You cannot come to us, and we cannot go to you. Your destiny is fixed." This is why you need to be right with God because you never know when you could die. Do you know that you can actually die in your sleep at night and you're either going to go to Heaven or hell? So, before you go to bed tonight, get on your knees and say, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Make sure you're right with God because you never know.

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth;" and secondly, "that every tongue should confess." Paul doesn't say, "When," their tongues will confess, but we do know the content of the confession. This is what they confess, verse 11, "...that Jesus Christ is Lord," this is *kyrios*, Lord Jesus Christ. This does not imply universal salvation, it actually implies subjugation for those who aren't saved. It's not reconciliation or salvation. Even here and now on earth there are those who say they believe in Jesus, call Him, "Lord, Lord," but Jesus said, "I never knew you: depart from me," they didn't have a relationship with Him.

You can confess Him now and be saved. We all know Romans 10:9-10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." There's coming a day when every tongue shall confess. Every tongue will confess the deity and the humanity and the redemptive office of the Savior.

I love what James Boice said. He said, "The confession of Jesus as Lord brings glory to God. This is not true of any honor given to humans. If you glorify human beings, you dishonor God. The only way to honor God is to glorify and honor His Son, Jesus Christ." It's Jesus who will be recognized as the Lord. He will be Lord of all. Now, that is equivalent to declaring His deity, that He is Jehovah, or Yahweh, of the Old Testament.

Last, but not least, verse 11, the last half, the purpose, Christ's exaltation, "...to the glory of God the Father." Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, why? to the glory of God the Father. Do you know that everything God does is for His glory and that from salvation, from beginning to end, is for the glory of God. When we get to Heaven, there will be no boasting. No one is going to be saying, "Look what I did to get here. I'm awesome, aren't I!" "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Who wants to spend eternity in Heaven listening to everybody brag about what they did to get there? I love John Newton's, Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see. Everything is for the glory of God, Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14, that we might be, "To the praise of the glory of his grace," "That we should be to the praise of his glory," "...unto the praise of his glory." I feel that somehow, some way, when we get to Heaven, we're going to be understanding things that we never comprehended on earth because "...now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face,"

and we're going to understand, we're going to see, we're going to have glory, we're going to worship. It's going to be overflowing joy! We're going to have new bodies to be able to handle it! It's beyond our comprehension how marvelous, but all glory, all praise, all honor be unto Him.

In closing, remember Paul was teaching the doctrine of Christ to give us an illustration of self-humility, self-sacrifice, of servanthood. Jesus didn't hang on to Heaven, He gave it to come to earth, to die on the cross for you and me. Let us have the same attitude. Let us humbly serve others for the glory of God. Let's pray.