

The Humiliation of Christ.

Philippians 2: 5-11

Philippians 2:3–11 (NKJV)

³ *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every

tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Introduction

One of the most amazing passages of all the Bible is Philippians 2. It is profound, it is deep, it is mysterious, yet it is simple, clear, and precise.

Some believe that the section from verses 5-11 was a hymn in the early church. Some believe that Paul wrote the hymn.

This section of scripture captures the condescension of Christ, his humiliation like no other section of Scripture.

There are others that speak of it.

John 1:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Galatians 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

1 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

Hebrews 2:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Romans 8:3 (NKJV)

³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

The passage we are considering is highly theological and doctrinal, but that is not the primary point of the passage. The point is ethical.

Paul uses the descent of Christ from Heaven to Earth as a illustration of Humility.

So it is Ethical in nature and intent.

We learn Humility from the greatest examples so Humility in all of the Bible.

Lesson

I. His Previous Exaltation

II. His Planned Humiliation

III. His Permanent Elevation

I. His Previous Exaltation

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God,

Τουτο γαρ φρονεισθω εν υμιν ο και εν Χριστω Ιησου ος εν **μορφη** Θεου υπαρχων ουχ αρπαγμαν ηγησατο το ειναι ισα Θεω

⁶ who being in the **form** of God,

ος εν **μορφη** Θεου υπαρχων

morphē – properly, form (outward expression) that embodies essential (inner) substance so that the form is in complete harmony with the inner essence.

Μορφη [*Morphē*] means the essential attributes as shown in the form. In his preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God and so appeared to those in heaven who saw him. Here is a clear statement by Paul of the deity of Christ.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*](#) (Php 2:6). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Vincent has an excellent note on the word. In discussing it, he has among other things, the following to say:

“We must here dismiss from our minds the idea of shape. The word is used in its philosophical sense to denote that expression of being which carries in itself the distinctive nature and character of the being to whom it pertains, and is thus permanently identified with that nature and character ... As applied to God, the word is intended to describe that mode in which the essential being of God expresses itself. We have no word which can convey this meaning, nor is it possible for us to formulate the reality

Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 62). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

This expression is not assumed from the outside, but proceeds directly from within.

[*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 62). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁶ who **being** in the form of God,

ος εν μορφη Θεου **υπαρχων**

Present, Active, Participle NOT AORIST

huparchó: to begin, to be ready or at hand, to be

Original Word: ὑπάρχω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: huparchó

Phonetic Spelling: (hoop-ar'-kho)

Definition: to begin, to be ready or at hand, to be

Usage: I begin, am, exist, am in possession.

Luke 11:13 (NKJV)

¹³ **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"**

Luke 16:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.

Luke 19:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have

taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

Acts 4:36–37 (NKJV)

³⁶ And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷ **having** land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet.

Acts 5:4 (NKJV)

⁴ While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, **was it** not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

Jesus existed from all eternity as God and had the full expression of His Deity with glory

John 17:5 (NKJV)

⁵ **And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**

1 Timothy 6:13–16 (NKJV)

¹³ I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Isaiah 57:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy place,
 With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit,
 To revive the spirit of the humble,
 And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Revelation 1:12–16 (NKJV)

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest

with a golden band. ¹⁴ His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength.

Daniel 7:9–10 (NKJV)

- ⁹ “I watched till thrones were put in place,
 And the Ancient of Days was seated;
 His garment *was* white as snow,
 And the hair of His head *was* like pure wool.
 His throne *was* a fiery flame,
 Its wheels a burning fire;
¹⁰ A fiery stream issued
 And came forth from before Him.
 A thousand thousands ministered to Him;
 Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before
 Him.

The court was seated,
 And the books were opened.

Why labor this point. The reason is simple, If you have to human a view of God and His Glory you will not see the power of His Humilitation.

He left not the 1st Heaven where the birds are

He left not the 2nd Heaven where the planets and stars are.

He left the 3rd Heaven where the Glory of an infinite eternal and All wise and Holy God exist.

He did not leave your back porch and step down.
He left the Glory of Eternal Heaven.

Where millions on angels served and praise His name for who He is.

The All sufficient God would leave heaven to become dependent

The infinite God would leave heaven and become finite.

The All Powerful God would leave heaven to become weak

The All knowing God would leave heaven and learn knowledge

The Holy one would leave heaven in all it purity to become sin.

The Light of the World would be surrounded by darkness

The Bread of Life would be be hungry

The Resurrection and the Life would die

I. His Previous Exaltation

II. His Planned Humiliation

⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

1. His Departure

2. His Deprivation

3. His Death

1. His Departure

⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

ουχ αρπαγμον ηγησατο το ειναι
ισα Θεω

did not consider

ηγησατο **Aorist Middle I**

hēgéomai ("what goes before, in front") refers to coming first in priority such as: **"the leading thought" in one's mind, i.e. to esteem** (regard highly); or a **leading authority**, providing leadership in a local church (see Heb 13:7,17,24).

[**2233** /hēgéomai ("an official who leads") carries important responsibility and hence **"casts a heavy vote" (influence)** – and hence deserve cooperation by those who are led (Heb 13:7; passive, "to esteem/reckon heavily" the person or influence who is leading).]

did not consider it robbery to be
equal with God,
 ουχ αρπαγμαον ηγησατο το ειναι
ισα Θεω

ίσος – equality; having the same (similar) level or value; equivalent, equal in substance or quality (J. Thayer).

[2470 (ίσος) is the root of the English terms, "isometric" and "isosceles" – referring to equivalencies.]

Paul is not talking about nature here. Jesus was always equal with God in that sense. He never ceased to be God.

John 1:1 (NKJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 5:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 10:31–33 (NKJV)

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”

³³ The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

This has to do with the manifestation of God.

In an “isosceles” triangle there are two sides of equal lengthequal lines. But if we make it no longer isosceles, that does not mean they cease to be lines, but there manifesting is different. one is shorter than the other but both are lines

did not consider it **robbery** to be equal with God,
 ουχ **αρπαγμον** ηγησατο το εινα
 ισα Θεω

1 occurrence in noun form

harpagmos: the act of seizing or the thing seized

Original Word: ἄρπαγμός, οὔ, ὁ

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: harpagmos

Phonetic Spelling: (har-pag-mos')

Definition: the act of seizing or the thing seized

Usage: spoil, an object of eager desire, a prize.

Cognate: 725 harpagmós – to seize, especially by an open display of force. [See 726](#) (harpazō).

verb form 14 occurrences

726 **harpázō** – properly, seize by force; snatch up, suddenly and decisively – like someone seizing bounty (spoil, a prize); to take by an open display of force (i.e. not covertly or secretly).

John 10:12 (NKJV)

*12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf **catches** the sheep and scatters them.*

John 10:28–29 (NKJV)

*28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone **snatch** them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to **snatch** *them* out of My Father's hand.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NKJV)

*17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught** up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

That is to say Paul means a prize to be held on to

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Php 2:6). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Translation: Who has always been and at present continues to subsist in that mode of being in which He gives outward expression of His essential nature, that of Deity, and who did not after weighing the facts, consider it a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards, to be equal with Deity (in the expression of the divine essence);

Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 65). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

First aorist active indicative of κενωω [*kenoō*], old verb from κενος [*kenos*], empty. Of what did Christ empty himself? Not of his divine nature. That was impossible. He continued to be the Son of God. There has arisen a great controversy on this word, a Κενοσις [*Kenosis*] doctrine. Undoubtedly Christ gave up his environment of glory. He took upon himself limitations of place (space) and of knowledge and of power, though still on earth retaining more of these than any mere man.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*](#) (Php 2:6). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

1. His Departure

2. His Deprivation

⁷ **but** made Himself of **no reputation**, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

αλλ εαυτον **εκενωσεν** μορφην δουλου λαβων εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων γενομενος

ΕΚΕΝΩΣΕΝ

no reputation, kenóō – properly, to empty out, render void; (passive) be emptied – hence, without recognition, perceived as valueless (Phil 2:7).

First aorist active indicative of κενωω [*kenoō*], old verb from κενος [*kenos*], empty. Of what did Christ empty himself? Not of his divine nature. That was impossible. He continued to be the Son of God. There has arisen a great controversy on this word, a Κενοσις [*Kenosis*] doctrine. Undoubtedly Christ gave up his environment of glory. He took upon

himself limitations of place (space) and of knowledge and of power, though still on earth retaining more of these than any mere man.

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We now consider the words, “made himself of no reputation.” Instead of asserting His rights to the expression of the essence of Deity, our Lord waived His rights to that expression, being willing to relinquish them if necessary. He did not consider the exercise of that expression such a treasure that it would keep Him from setting that expression aside, and making Himself of no reputation. The words “made himself of no reputation” are the translation of two Greek words which literally translated mean, “emptied Himself.”

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[English Standard Version](#)

but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

[New American Standard Bible](#)

but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

[Aramaic Bible in Plain English](#)

But he stripped himself and took the form of a Servant and was in the form of the children of men, and was found in fashion as a man.

to understand what is meant by the the phrase,
emptied himself, grammatically you have to understand the next statement.

7 but made Himself of no reputation, **taking** the **form** of a _____
_____ bondservant, *and* **coming** in the likeness of men.

The word “and” is not in the Greek text, but was supplied by the translators. The word “took” is an aorist participle. A rule of Greek grammar says that the action of an aorist participle precedes the action of the leading verb. The leading verb here is “emptied.” That means that the act of taking preceded the act of emptying. That in turn means that the act of taking upon Himself the form of a servant preceded and was the cause of the

emptying. The translation so far could read, “emptied Himself, having taken the form of a bonds slave.”

Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 66). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

μορφήν δούλου λαβών

Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:44–46 (NKJV)

44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Luke 22:27 (NKJV)

27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

Romans 15:8 (NKJV)

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,

John 6:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 5:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 4:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”

Philippians 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and **became obedient** to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

We now consider the words, “made himself of no reputation.” Instead of asserting His rights to the expression of the essence of Deity, our Lord waived His rights to that expression, being willing to relinquish them if necessary. He did not consider the exercise of that expression such a treasure that it would keep Him from setting that expression aside, and making Himself of no reputation. The words “made himself of no reputation” are the translation of two Greek words which literally translated mean, “emptied Himself.”

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μορφήν δούλου λαβών εν ομοιωματι
ανθρωπων γενομενος

γενομενος Aorist Passive Part
becoming, born, made by the
Father

3667 **homoíōma** (a neuter noun derived from homos, "the same") – properly, the **same as**; likeness, similitude (resemblance).

3667 /homoíōma ("**likeness**, particular similarity") is a comparison used to increase understanding. 3667 /homoíōma ("resemblance") does not require one element of a comparison to be derived from the other; indeed, it can be wholly separate from it. Rather, 3667 (homoíōma) **refers to a basic analogy (resemblance), not an exact copy.**

Romans 8:3 (NKJV)

³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

1. His Departure

2. His Deprivation

3. His Death

⁸ And being found in **appearance** as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient **to** *the point of death*, even the death of the cross.

appearance

schéma: figure, shape

Original Word: σχῆμα, ατος, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: schéma

Phonetic Spelling: (skhay'-mah)

Definition: figure, shape

Usage: fashion, habit, form, appearance.

4976 sxma – properly, **exterior shape** (form); (figuratively) the outer "shape" (manner, appearance).

4976/**sxēma ("outward, visible form")** is used of Jesus' earthly body (Phil 2:7,8). Christ incarnated into a genuine physical body, which was not an "exact match with typical humanity" because His body was never touched or tainted by sin (even original sin).

and became obedient **to** *the point of death*, even the death of the cross.

mechri or mechris: as far as, until

Original Word: μέχρι

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: mechri or mechris

Phonetic Spelling: (mekh'-ree)

Definition: as far as, until

Usage: as far as, until, even to.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled** Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross.

The word “humbled” means “to make or bring low.” The word was used in a secular document when describing the Nile River at its low stage, in the sentence “It (the Nile) runs low.” What a description of the Son of God. But this self-humbling does not refer to the self-emptying of verse seven. That was a self-humbling in His character as God the Son. Here the self-humbling is the act of our Lord as the Son of Man.

Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 70). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

He became obedient unto death. But this does not mean that He became obedient to death. He was always the Master of death. He died as no other individual ever died or ever will die. He died of His own volition. He dismissed His human spirit. The word “unto” is the translation of a Greek word which means “up to the point of.” Our Lord was obedient to

the Father up to the point of dying. He said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9).

There is no definite article before the word “cross” in the Greek text. There should be none in the translation. That which the apostle wishes to bring out by the absence of the article is the character of His death. It was the death of **a cross, its nature, one of ignominy and degradation.** It was the kind of death **meted out to criminals**, and only to those who were not citizens of the Roman Empire.

Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 70). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

It was a humiliating shameful way to die. He was beaten, spat on, cursed at, slapped, stripped of all his clothes and nailed there naked to die an excruciating death via suffocation, pain and agony. All dignity and privacy are removed. On public display as a criminal for all to see and scoff at.

"Crucifixion was a method of torture—not just putting to death. It was a particularly cruel and unusual form of disposing of people," says Jeremy Ward, head of the physiology department at King's College London.

Crucifixion sometimes began with a scourging or flogging of the victim's back. The Romans used a whip called a flagrum, which consisted of small pieces of bone and metal attached to a number of leather strands. The number of blows given to Jesus is not recorded; however, the number of blows in Jewish law was 39 (one less than the 40 called for in the Torah, to prevent a counting error). During the scourging, the skin was ripped from the back, exposing a bloody mass of tissue and bone. Extreme blood loss occurred, often causing death, or at least unconsciousness. In addition to the flogging, Jesus faced severe beating and torment by the Roman soldiers, including the plucking of His beard and the piercing of His scalp with a crown of thorns.

After the flogging, the victim was often forced to carry his own crossbar, or patibulum, to the execution site. The patibulum could easily weigh 100 pounds. In the case of Jesus, the record shows that He may have carried His patibulum the distance of over two football fields. In a weak and tormented state, it's no wonder the record establishes that Jesus needed a great deal of assistance. Once the victim arrived at the execution site, the patibulum was put on the ground and the

victim was forced to lie upon it. Spikes about 7 inches long and $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter were driven into the wrists. The spikes would hit the area of the median nerve, causing shocks of pain up the arms to the shoulders and neck. Already standing at the crucifixion site would be the 7-foot-tall post, called a stipes. In the center of the stipes was a crude seat to “support” for the victim. The patibulum was then lifted on to the stipes, and the victim’s body was awkwardly turned on the seat so that the feet could be nailed to the stipes. At this point, there was tremendous strain put on the wrists, arms and shoulders, resulting in a dislocation of the shoulder and elbow joints. The position of the nailed body held the victim’s rib cage in a fixed position, which made it extremely difficult to exhale, and impossible to take a full breath. Having suffered from the scourging, the beatings and the walk with the patibulum, Jesus was described as extremely weak and dehydrated. He was probably losing significant amounts of blood. As time passed, the loss of blood and lack of oxygen would cause severe cramps, spasmodic contractions and probably unconsciousness.

Ultimately, the mechanism of death in crucifixion was suffocation. To breathe, the victim was forced

to push up on his feet to allow for inflation of the lungs. As the body weakened and pain in the feet and legs became unbearable, the victim was forced to trade breathing for pain and exhaustion.

Eventually, the victim would succumb in this way, becoming utterly exhausted or lapsing into unconsciousness so that he could no longer lift his body off the stipes and inflate his lungs. Due to the shallow breathing, the victim's lungs would begin to collapse in areas, probably causing hypoxia. Due to the loss of blood from the scourging, the victim probably formed a respiratory acidosis, resulting in an increased strain on the heart, which beats faster to compensate. Fluid would also build up in the lungs. Under the stress of hypoxia and acidosis, the heart would eventually fail. There are several different theories on the actual cause of death for Jesus. One theory is that there was a filling of the pericardium with fluid, which put a fatal strain on the ability of His heart to pump blood. Another theory states that Jesus died of cardiac rupture. Another theory is that Jesus' death was "multifactorial and related primarily to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion asphyxia and perhaps acute heart failure."

Regardless of the actual medical cause of final death, the historical record is very clear -- Jesus

suffered numerous hours of horrible and sustained torture on the cross of Calvary.

I. His Previous Exaltation

II. His Planned Humiliation

III. His Permanent Elevation

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.