

**The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.**

## **Highly Exalted** **Philippians 2:9-11**

**Intro:** Paul has been exhorting the Philippian believers to live in Christian unity. He has told them that they should be like minded, of one accord, of one mind. Now, to accomplish this properly, they must set aside selfish ambition and conceit and put the needs and interests of others before their own. Then, to drive his point home, Paul uses the example of the attitude of humility displayed by Jesus Christ as He willingly took on the form of a slave.

Paul explains that before this, in eternity past, Jesus Christ was equal in all points to God; that He was, in fact, divine. He not only possessed the same character and immutable attributes that belong only to God (including His glory) but He also possessed the indisputable right to retain all these things as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity. Yet, He refused to selfishly hold on to what was rightfully His so that He could provide salvation for all of mankind. In order to do this, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had to humble Himself, become in all points exactly like His own creation (us) and then subjugate Himself even further, to endure the suffering and humiliation of the death of a rebellious slave.

The crucifixion constituted the bottom rung of the ladder Jesus descended from the Throne of God. But, even though the cross was the worst pain and humiliation He had to suffer, it wasn't the only humiliation He faced in His life. In His incarnation, Jesus took on the form of a man and not that of a more glorious creature like an angel. He was born in an obscure location within an occupied and oppressed nation. He was born in poverty among a despised people. He was born as a child instead of appearing as a man. He humbled Himself further by submitting to the obedience that was appropriate for a child in a Jewish household. Parents, its bad enough having teenagers who think they know everything. Imagine having one that actually does know everything but submits to your authority anyway!

Jesus' humility is seen in His learning and practicing the humble trade of a carpenter; by waiting until He was 30 to begin His public ministry; by the disciples He chose, the people He rubbed shoulders with, audience He

appealed to, the way He taught. He humbled Himself in the temptations He allowed and endured; in the weakness, hunger, thirst and weariness He endured; in His total obedience to His Father and total submission to the Holy Spirit. Humility is seen in His choosing and submitting to the cross; the agony of that death; the shame, mocking and public humiliation associated with crucifixion. His humility was seen in His enduring the spiritual agony of His sacrifice on the cross.

Could Jesus have accomplished our salvation and paid for the sins of the world without this great humiliation? Could He have just added a 33 year old humanity to His deity? Could He just have appeared before men with only His transfigured glory and taught them what they needed to hear from Him? Could He have suffered for sin in some hidden place on earth, far from the prying eyes and mocking lips of men; on the dark side of the moon or something comparable? I don't know if any of that was even possible; all I know is: just as He refused to do anything to alleviate the suffering of the cross; so to, it would seem, He refused to do anything to offset the extent of His humiliation. Jesus willingly humbled Himself for the surpassing greatness of our salvation and His work on our behalf.

All of the humiliation, degradation and suffering of Jesus was actually a great display of the power! Keep in mind that because of Paul's past experience with the Philippians (casting out demon, miraculously freed from prison), they were tempted to think of God's power as being expressed only in exaltation and deliverance and not in terms of glorifying God through humble service and endurance. Here, Paul is reminding them that his own current place of humble circumstances (in a Roman prison) could still show forth the glory and power of God, just as Jesus did in His humility. But, of course, for Jesus and all who choose to follow in His footsteps, humility is not the end (9-11).

**9** – From the lowest rung to the highest possible position, Paul now moves back up again towards his climax – the exaltation of Christ. This exaltation is symbolized in Jesus being given a name that is above every name. What is that name? Well, it's really no big secret; the name He is given is Lord. Now, that might not seem like a big deal to us today, seeing He has been called the Lord Jesus Christ for over 2000 years now. Some may even argue that "Lord" is a title, not a name but, you would be wrong on both counts. When used in referring to Jesus, Lord actually is one of His names and it is a very

big deal because Lord is the equivalent of God's own name – Jehovah!

Some scholars say that this supreme name given by God is “Jesus” but that's incorrect for several reasons. 1) No name other than Yahweh [Jehovah] has a right to be called ‘the name above every name.’ 2) Paul doesn't stop at saying God has ‘given Him the name . . . ,’ but goes on to the universal confession that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord,’ which implies that the significant thing is the addition of ‘Lord’ to the names already known. 3) **v10** is a fairly direct quote of **Isa 45:23**, where Yahweh [Jehovah], having just declared Himself to be the only God and the only Savior, vows that He will be the object of universal worship and adoration. It's this divine honor that's now being bestowed on Jesus.

The full impact of the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord will be seen only when we realize that the name of Lord is above not only all human names but also all of the unique names that have already been given to Jesus. The glory of this title must be measured against His other names.

Think of some of the names Jesus already had. There's Messiah, the anointed one. This means He is the promised deliverer through whom blessing comes to Israel and the gentile nations. In Him God meets all our longings and brings to completion all the undulating currents of history. Jesus is also the Son of man. Many think this refers only to His humanity, but it means more than that. It refers especially to His coming again in glory. Originally it comes from **Dan 7:13-14**. How glorious that Jesus should be called the Son of man!

He's also called the Son of God. This name points to His divinity. It's the title Satan used to address Him with in **Mt 4:3,6**; it was the Father's own designation of Him on several occasions (**Mt 3:17; 17:5**); and it's shown as the high point of the disciples' verbal confession of Him in **Mt 16:16**. Jesus is God's Messiah, God's Son and the Son of man. He's our prophet, priest, and king, the Alpha and the Omega, the door, the Beloved, and many other names. But the title “Lord” is above them all because it's at the name of Jesus Christ as Lord that every knee shall bow.

The name Lord is the name that's above every name because it directly identifies Jesus Christ with God. This is clearly seen in both the Greek and Hebrew usage of the word. The Greek word for Lord is *kyrios* and it was used as a divine title. Later, in the Roman Empire, it was used as a test

phrase to gauge a citizen's loyalty. It was Kyrios Kaiser, which meant "Caesar is Lord." Christians who refused to say it were later singled out and executed. When a Christian insisted that Jesus is Lord he meant that Jesus, not Caesar, is divine.

The same meaning is present when the word occurs in Hebrew, only more so. The Hebrew word is Adonai. It's a title like our "sir," but became extraordinarily significant in Hebrew because it was used to replace the personal name of God, Jehovah. No Jew ever said the word "Jehovah," even when reading the Bible; they always said, Adonai. Because of this, it's easy to see how Adonai became almost synonymous with Jehovah, the personal name of God. So, when early Christians made their confession (Jesus Christ is Lord) they were actually confessing that Jesus of Nazareth is the God of Israel, Jehovah, the only true God.

There's something else about this word Adonai. It contains a personal ending. It doesn't just mean Lord or God; it actually means my Lord or my God. It's the word Mary used of Jesus in the garden on Resurrection morning. It's the confession Thomas made 1 week later. Mary said, my Lord. Thomas said, "my Lord and my God." Both times the words were personal. This means it's not enough to just acknowledge mentally that Jesus Christ is God. The devils do that and tremble ([Jam 2:19](#)). Jesus must be your God. He must be your Lord. If you are to know God, you must first receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior.

Is Jesus your Jehovah, your God? It's not always easy for someone to make that confession but it is essential. All that you will ever know about God on this earth you will learn as you look to Jesus.

Lord is also above every name because it shows that Jesus Christ is sovereign: He rules as God rules. He controls even the smallest things of life. One day He will even subdue all of His enemies forever. Face it, the Christian life is not an escape from the world's troubles and problems or from temptations or suffering. Christians still experience all these things, but they have victory in them. Plus, they have peace within, knowing that all these things are in the hands of the One who loves them and who does all things well.

The Bible teaches that the God who controls all things is not an impersonal

deity but a God who loves us and who orders the events of our lives to lead us into His perfect and desirable will. It's not meaningless or tragic when difficulties enter your life or when there are temptations. God knows about it and has even permitted it to come so order that He might accomplish something in you that will be for your good. When these things appear in your life, you must learn to turn to Him and seek His way. As you do, you can be certain that He's making you more and more into the person He desires you be, the person He saved you to be!

There's one other great truth hidden in the title Lord. It also means that Jesus is coming again. **Heb 2:8** speaks concerning Jesus' exaltation - that God has put all things in subjection under His feet. This is a wonderful thought but the writer adds, "But now we do not yet see all things put under Him." Jesus is Lord. Jesus is sovereign. But if He is to be Lord completely, He must return to conquer evil and to establish His righteous will forever.

Do you look for the Lord's return? The early Christians looked for his coming, and it gave them strength even in their darkest times, even in martyrdom. They had a prayer that expressed this hope. It's preserved for us in the Aramaic language at the end of **1 Cor**. It's the word maranatha. It's actually composed of 2 Aramaic words that means "Our Lord, come!" The phrase is a prayer of Christian longing. John includes it in that sense in the next to the last verse of the Bible. Is it your heart's desire to see Him; to know Him, to see the world brought to perfection and to judgment in His own time, according to His will? It should be. It's always been the great hope and consolation of all Christianity.

**10-11** – Here we have is a shift of perspective. Everything up to this point has already happened. Jesus was in the form of God; He laid aside His glory to take the form of a man. He died for our salvation and rose again; ascended into heaven and was given the name which is above every name. Jesus Christ is Lord. All this has happened and God's given us evidence that these things are so. Still, many refuse to admit what God has clearly demonstrated. Many refuse to acknowledge the facts, preferring their own fantasies to God's truth. Why do they do this? It makes them more comfortable in their sin. But, according to **10-11**, one day all human arrogance will end. Every mouth will be stopped (**Rom 3:19**) and everyone will admit that truth is truth, even though they may hate God for it.

These verses are really a prophecy. They're the NT equivalent of an OT prophecy found in **Ps 110:1**: The LORD said to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool. This verse is quoted in the NT directly or indirectly at least 27 times. It teaches that the One called David's Lord, the Messiah, will one day reign over all things and all His enemies will be defeated. Our text is the NT equivalent of this prophecy. Yet, like most of the revelations given in the NT, it reveals things that are not evident in the OT. 1<sup>st</sup>, the acknowledgment of Christ's rule will take the form of the verbalized confession. 2<sup>nd</sup>, this confession will be made by all orders of intelligent beings. 3<sup>rd</sup>, it will result in giving glory to the Father.

1) The acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord will take the form of a verbalized confession Jesus Christ is Lord. Again, Lord is a name for God (Adonai). When applied to Jesus, it's an acknowledgment that He is God. But it also means He is the sovereign God. Lord carries overtones of rule. Jesus is the One who does what is right and who has the power to carry out His decisions.

All this is true. Yet the use of the confession in these verses has a slightly different tone simply because it is set in the future when Jesus will have already established His rule. Today, our confession of "Jesus Christ is Lord" is an expectation; an acknowledgment of what is only partially or potentially true. But the day is coming when this confession will stand as a glorious acknowledgment of what has finally taken place. Jesus is Lord and there are no more rivals to His throne.

2) This confession will be made by every order of intelligent being. The confession will be made by angels (**Rev 4-5**) Here, myriads of angels join with the saints in voicing praise to God. Human praise is feeble at best. It's glorious to know that when the redeemed stand before the Father, our feeble voices will be swelled by the voices of millions of angels who've seen the drama of salvation unfold over the ages and sing out of their great experience with it.

This confession will also be made by those on the earth: people. Revelation seems to imply that this will be an innumerable company of people: those who believe in Christ during the church age; the 144,000 Jewish converts who believe during the great tribulation and millions of gentile converts who believe because of the witness of the Jewish believers. We might look

around and think this is a bit of a stretch. Sometimes it seems that there are few who believe in Jesus. But the Bible says the numbers on that day will be vast. How can this be? Remember that, at best, we only see a small circle of believers around us, but God has other circles greater than ours in other places. In every one, Christians are bearing witness to what they've learned of Jesus and are praising Him for it and because of it. These will one day join with us and the angels to sing a great hymn of praise in heaven.

There will also be a confession of the lordship of Jesus by those who are under the earth. This refers to demons and those who rejected the gospel and are confined to Hades. The confession wrung from their lips will be a forced acknowledgment of Jesus. Understand, these entities will not be thankfully or graciously confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ with gladness but they will confess it; they will acknowledge it and agree to it! They will be forced to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is who He says He is—God incarnate, the Savior of the world.

How are you going to make that confession? Every one of us will make it some day. You'll either make it willingly as you acknowledge Him as your Savior and Lord, or you'll be forced to acknowledge it with bitterness just before you are banished from God's presence forever. Won't you accept him now, if you have not already done so?

3) The confession will result in bringing glory to God the Father. This is not true of any honor given to humans. To glorify humanity is to dishonor God. You do this when you exalt your own merit as a means of salvation; if you exalt humans as mediators between yourself and God, like saints who can win God's favor for you, or exalt human wisdom as the answer to all the world's problems, or place your hopes for the future in science, psychiatry or world government. If you exalt the ability of mankind in any of those ways, you dishonor the God who declares all our works as tainted by sin and we'll never solve our own problems or those of others except by turning to Jesus and depending upon His power to accomplish this. The only way to honor God is to give honor to Jesus Christ.

Think of the terms that give glory to Jesus. Think of His names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He's the Messiah, the Lord, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega, the Ancient of Days, King of kings and Lord of lords,

God with us, God our Savior, the only wise God our Savior, the Lord who is, who was, who is to come, the Almighty.

He is the Door of the sheep, the Chief Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, a Lamb without spot or blemish, a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

He is the Logos, the Light of the World, the Light of Life, the Tree of Life, the Word of Life, the Bread that came down from heaven, the Resurrection, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is Immanuel, God with us; He is the Rock, the Bridegroom, the Wisdom of God, our Redeemer. He is the Beloved; He is the head over all things, which is the church. He is the one who is altogether lovely, the one in whom the Father is well pleased.

Is Jesus Christ these things to you? He can be. He deserves to be. If he is these things to you, then in your own heart you praise Him and in giving Him glory you give glory to our heavenly Father.

What have you done with Jesus? How have you received Him? He laid aside His rights and glory and humbled Himself in order to bring salvation to mankind. How have you responded to His offer? With humility and acceptance or with arrogance and self confidence? To reject God's truth is to dishonor God but to accept God's truth is to be born again, to become a new person in and because of Jesus Christ. Will you acknowledge Him today? Of course, you will do so eventually, either with gladness or by bitter compulsion. The choice is yours. 😊