

An Exposition of Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest position and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name; ¹⁰so that before the name Jesus now possesses “every knee should bow”—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—¹¹ “and every tongue confess” that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11)

Our Lord's Exaltation is the Reward for His Obedience (vs. 9)

1. Our Lord's exaltation is the direct result of His self-humiliation and complete obedience to His heavenly Father:

... he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death by the cross. ⁹Therefore, God exalted him to the highest position ... (vs. 8-9)

- this exaltation bestowed upon Christ is due to God's faithfulness to His own character and promise to reward the righteous and bestow honor upon those who are obedient to Him

If there is a righteous man who does what is just and right ... ⁹who follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws; that man is righteous, he will surely live, declares the Lord Jehovah. (Ezek. 18:5,9)

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was not possible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵David said about him: I saw the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷because you will not abandon me to Hades, nor will you let your Holy One see corruption. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence. (Acts 2:22-28); at Pentecost the Apostle Peter declares to the people that God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him in fulfillment of God's promise to bestow honor upon His faithful servant

2. Our Lord's exaltation is in direct proportion to His previous humiliation
 - a. the Greek term (υπερψωω) means to “super exalt,” to lift up to the ultimate height of exaltation
 - b. even as the Lord Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the utmost degree of humiliation—*“he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being made*

in the likeness of men. Being found as a man in appearance, ⁸he humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death, even death on the cross” (Phil. 2:8)—so now He is exalted to the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:3) and all things are placed in subjection under His feet (Ephesians 1:20-22)

... after he had made purification of sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb. 1:3)

... by His power, God the Father worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above every rule and authority and power and dominion and every title that can be given, not only in this [present] age but also in the coming age. ²²And he put all things in subjection under his feet. (Eph. 1:20-22)

3. Our Lord’s exaltation is the exaltation bestowed upon the Servant of the Lord

- His exaltation is the fulfillment of God’s promise to His Servant recorded in Isaiah 52:13-15

See, my servant will be successful; he will become high and lifted up, he will be greatly exalted. ¹⁴Just as many were appalled at you—he was so disfigured that his appearance was unlike any other man, his form was unlike the sons of men—¹⁵so shall he cause many nations to be shocked. Kings shall cover their mouths at [the sight of] him; for what was not reported to them they themselves will see, and what was not explained to them they will understand. (Isa. 52:13-15); at the end of the age, our Lord Jesus will shock many nations when He appears in His glory with the angels of His heavenly Father

4. Our Lord’s exaltation is bestowed upon Him in His incarnate state, in His state as the Son of God become flesh

- a. as the eternal Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, the supreme position of exaltation belonged to Him by right
 - he was existing in the form of God and was on an equality with God (Phil. 2:6)
 - in His prayer just prior to going to the cross, the Lord Jesus prays, *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world was created.” (Jn. 17:5)*
- b. it is important to understand that Philippians 2:9-11 is speaking about the Son of God **in His incarnate state** as Jesus of Nazareth, and is speaking about the exaltation God the Father bestowed upon Him in that state

Our Lord's Exaltation Consists in His Receiving the Pre-eminent Name (vs. 9-11)

God highly exalted Jesus Christ by bestowing upon Him the name that is above every name.

What does this passage teach us about this name? It is a definite, specific name (it is *"the name;"*) a name known to the people of God. It is the name *"that is above every name;"* i.e., the name of supreme honor and supreme authority. The possession of this name causes universal homage and worship; it is precisely because this name has been bestowed upon Him that every knee shall bow before Him.

The name is **not** the name of "Jesus." The phrase, *"at the name of Jesus,"* has led some people to wrongly assume that "Jesus" is the name of honor being referred to in this passage. But such is not the case. "Jesus" is the name the eternal Son of God already possessed as the result of His incarnation; "Jesus" is actually the name He assumed in His humiliation. As we learn from the Gospel of Matthew, *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name 'Jesus,' because he will save his people from their sins"* (Matt. 1:21.) When verse 10 speaks about *"the name of Jesus,"* it does not mean, "the name which **is** Jesus;" rather, it means, "the name that **belongs to** Jesus," "the name that has been bestowed upon Jesus."

What is the Name that has been bestowed upon the Son of God in His incarnate state as Jesus of Nazareth in reward for His total obedience to God the Father? Upon Jesus is bestowed the Name before which *"every knee should bow."* In Isaiah 45:23, the Lord Jehovah declares, *"unto me every knee shall bow."* The name bestowed upon Jesus is none other than the name of LORD, (the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament JEHOVAH)—note Acts 2:36, *"Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

Our Lord's Exaltation Brings Glory to God the Father (vs. 11)

The result of Christ's exaltation, the result of the divine, pre-eminent name being bestowed upon Him in His incarnate state, the result of every knee bowing before Him and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is LORD, the result of all this brings glory to God the Father.

The exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ brings glory to God the Father because the exaltation of Christ is nothing less than the vindication of God's character. By the exaltation of Christ God proves Himself to be absolutely truthful. As mentioned previously, the exaltation of Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise to His faithful servant (Acts 2:22-28;) note, also, Isaiah 53:10-12,

Yet it was Jehovah's will to crush him, he caused him to suffer. Even though you have made his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring; his days shall continue, and Jehovah's purpose shall be accomplished by his hand. ¹¹He will see [the fruit] of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore, I will give him a portion with the great, and he will divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors—he bore the sins of many and interceded for the transgressors. (Isa. 53:10-12)

Furthermore, the exaltation of Christ is also the fulfillment of God's promise to the truly righteous man (see notes above on Ezekiel 18:5,9 and Acts 2:22-28.)

Finally, by the exaltation of Christ God proves Himself to be absolutely loving. He demonstrates that He does not withhold any good thing from the one who submits to Him and faithfully serves Him. He graciously bestows His very own Name upon His faithful servant. To bestow His own divine Name upon someone means to receive that person into His fellowship and allow that person to share in His sovereign rule. That divine, pre-eminent Name bestowed upon Jesus Christ means that Christ, in the capacity as the Savior of God's people, together with all who are united to Him by faith, are received into the divine fellowship of God and are made to share in the sovereign rule of God, note Revelation 3:21, where the Lord Jesus declares, *"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."*