

# A HYMN OF CHRIST—PART 2

## Philippians 2:5–11

primary source: David J. MacLeod, "The Exaltation of Christ: An Exposition of Philippians 2:9–11," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Oct.–Dec. 2001): 437–50

### PARADOX

- the Hymn of Christ is a perfect example of the paradox in Luke 14:11 ("THE WAY UP IS DOWN"):  
"For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

- *humiliation*: the preincarnate Son (1) emptied himself of equality with God (the prerogatives of deity), (2) became a slave, (3) became a man (incarnation), and (4) died on a cross (Phil 2:6–8); *exaltation*: the incarnate Son (1) was raised from the dead (Eph 1:20), (2) ascended to heaven (Heb 4:14), (3) exalted (Phil 2:9–11), and (4) seated at God's right hand (Heb 1:3)
- God has inverted the world's values in the Christian way of life (e.g., self, personal and national security, promotion, wisdom); this inversion often makes a life of faith and obedience unpleasant, abnormal, and difficult

#### STANZA 4: JESUS IS EXALTED BY THE FATHER (VERSE 9)

- verses 9–11 are one sentence in the Greek with two main verbs ("exalted" and "bestowed")
- *turning point in the hymn*: the main actor changes from the preincarnate Son (verses 6–8) to God the Father (verses 9–11)
- *divine intervention (9a)*: when men finished humbling Jesus, God exalted him even more (*huperupsoo* is a comparative verb) than at his anointing (at his baptism he was given authority over all creation as God's Vicegerent, Matt 11:27; 28:18; John 3:35)
- *reward (9b)*: as a reward for the humblest service, God gave Jesus the highest name in the universe (cf. Mark 9:35; 10:42–45)
- in humbling themselves both the preincarnate Son and the incarnate Son regarded others as more important than themselves and put the interests of others first before their own interests (cf. Phil 2:3–5)

#### STANZA 5: JESUS IS ACCLAIMED BY THE UNIVERSE (VERSE 10)

- "that" (*hina*) introduces three reasons why God exalted Jesus and gave him the highest name in the universe: (#1) so all rational creatures will bend the knee in fear, supplication, or worship before the exalted Christ (cf. Isa 45:14; 49:23; 60:14)
- *universal homage*: from angels ("in heaven"), men ("on earth") and demons ("under the earth," cf. Luke 8:31; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)
- *time of homage*: at the Judgment Seat of Christ and in the millennium all men—Christians, Jews, Muslims, Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, idolaters, and athiests—will bow down to the God-Man in fulfillment of prophecy (Isa 45:20–24; cf. Rom 14:11)

#### STANZA 6: JESUS IS EXTOLLED IN HIS KINGDOM (VERSE 11)

- *universal confession*: (#2) so all rational creatures will acknowledge with their tongues that Jesus is Lord (*exomologeō* means "to declare or confess openly or plainly, acknowledge")—compare the confession of Thomas (John 20:28; cf. 1 Cor 12:3)
- believers will acknowledge the lordship of Jesus willingly (like Thomas); some unbelievers will willingly acknowledge his lordship (note the altruistic attitude of the rich man without a sin nature in hell, Luke 16:27–31); demons and Satan may be compelled to acknowledge his lordship (perhaps through promise of lighter or threat of increased punishment for eternity)
- unbelievers will make this confession of lordship while bending the knee before Jesus at the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31–46) and at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11–15; cf. John 5:22–23, 27)
- the climax of this hymn is the confession by every man and angel that Jesus Christ is Lord (*kurios* is in the emphatic position)
- "Jesus is Lord" is a creed of the early church recognizing his earthly life and divine authority (Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9; 2 Cor 4:5)
  - a man has been given the highest of all honors—all the authority of deity (his deity has always been Lord of all)
    - *to glorify God*: (#3) so elect men and angels will praise, honor, and glorify God the Father for all eternity because he exalted a creature (the humanity of Christ) to rule forever over all of his creation (cf. Rev 22:1–5)
- Jesus received delegated or conferred authority; inherent authority and sovereignty belongs only to the Father (1 Cor 15:28)