

THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL AND THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

by
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(Phil 2:5-11) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: {7} But made himself of no reputation, 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."

Introduction

Philippians 2:5-11 has been called the great parabola of Scripture, because this passage of Scripture pictures the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ from the highest position in the universe down to His death on the cross, and then carries the mind of the reader up again to see Him seated once more on the throne of His glory before which every knee shall bow. In these few glorious verses we see the great sweep of Christ's life from eternity past to eternity future, and we are admitted to the breathtaking purposes of God in human salvation.

In its larger context the apostle Paul is talking about a man, Jesus of Nazareth, who had lived less than a generation earlier in Jerusalem. Paul states these tremendous truths about Him, however, in such a way that we know he is neither inventing doctrines, nor arguing for a hotly contested position, but merely presenting what he knew to be the accepted teaching of all the Christian churches. Suppose someone said this about a man who had lived in 2010. It would be preposterous, unbelievable. Yet, Paul writes these things as if everyone knew them to be true beyond question.

These verses bring us near to the bedrock of the early Christian faith and preaching. They teach the divinity of Christ, His pre-existence, His equality with God the Father, His incarnation and true humanity, His voluntary sacrificial death on the cross, the certainty of His triumph over sin and evil, the permanence of His reign, and the absolute demand of submission to his Lordship in salvation. How foolish in the light of these statements are the views of scholars who dismiss the distinct doctrines of Christianity as late developments in the history of a slowly evolving church. Christianity is Christ – this Christ. And these things were believed about Him from the beginning.

Initially, we will take an overview of the passage much like a mountain climber who gazes across the valley at the peak he is going to climb, then we shall begin the step by step ascent through the passage itself.

Overview

His Preeminence

The first view we have of Jesus Christ is in reference to His preincarnate state. Here He is preeminent. Prior to the incarnation Christ existed in the form of God with absolute equality to God the Father. God is spirit and has no material form. However, the Lord Jesus possessed and possesses all of God's attributes. God is omniscient, so is Jesus Christ his Son. God is all-powerful; so is Christ. God is the creator, the truth, the way, the life; so is Jesus. Christ is in His very nature God. Paul echoes the words of John, "the Word was God" (Jn 1:1) and "the one and only God who is in the bosom of the Father; that one hath revealed him" (John 1:18 *μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο*).

It is this great preeminence that gives all value to the citation of Christ's life as the ultimate pattern of humility and self-sacrifice.

His Condensation

Christ, who is infinitely above all human and angelic creatures, voluntarily lowered himself out of obedience to his heavenly Father. Though Paul himself had suffered beatings, shipwrecks, torture and stoning, he did not suffer like Jesus did. Paul was a Roman citizen and exempt from Roman crucifixion. In contrast, there was no depth to which Jesus did not go.

Imagine the scene in heaven on the eve of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. The finite angelic beings could only imagine the form in which Christ would enter human history. Would he appear in a blaze of light bursting into the night of the Palestinian countryside, dazzling all who behold him? Would he appear as a mighty general marching into pagan Rome as Caesar did when he crossed the Rubicon? Would he present himself with the sophistry of the Greek philosophers, putting the wisdom of Plato and Socrates to foolishness by a supernatural display of intellect? What do we see? There is no display of glory, no pomp, no marching of the feet of heavenly legions!

Instead Christ lays his robes aside. He steps down from the heavenly throne and becomes a baby in the arms of a mother in a far eastern colony of the Roman Empire. At this display of divine condensation the angels are amazed, and they burst into such a crescendo of song so that the shepherds hear them on the hills of Bethlehem.

His Glory

The final picture we have is of the Lord Jesus Christ again on the throne of heaven. Four times in his ministry Jesus spoke on the text: (Mat 23:12) "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." He lived that text. His own life is the greatest example of that principle. He did not consider equality with God something to use for his own advantage. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the highest name. One day you and I will see Him and bow before Him either in love and adoration as you fall submissively before the one who loved you and died for you or by compulsion as you are forced to your knees by the angels, moments before you are removed from His presence forever and assigned your place in God's eternal death house. God, the Father, will see to it.

I. The Humiliation of Christ (2:5-8)

Paul knew that the opposition experienced by the Philippians called for steadfastness. However, steadfastness is impossible without spiritual unity, and unity can come about only from an attitude of humility. What better way to reinforce this thought than by reminding the Philippians of the attitude and conduct of Christ to whom they are united in faith. When admonishing the Corinthians to contribute generously for the sake of the poor in Jerusalem, Paul sets before them the example of Christ: (2 Cor 8:9) "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Similarly here Paul appeals to the spirit of servant hood that brought the Lord Jesus Christ to His death.

A. Paul's Exhortation of Humility (5)

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"

(2:5) ΤΟΥΤΟ¹ φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, "Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus,"²

²Lit, "This mindset (i.e., that which I have just described) have among yourselves, which (was) also in Christ Jesus."

Paul refers to the thinking or attitude that is in keeping with Jesus Christ. Christ is the great example of humility. Humble-mindedness is Christ Himself.

B. Christ's Example of Humility (6-8)

The basic thought in vv. 6-8 is that the divine and preexistent Christ did not regard the advantage of his deity as grounds to avoid the Incarnation. Instead, He was willing to regard Himself as nothing by taking on human form. Then he

further lowered himself in servant hood by obeying God the Father to the point of the ignominious death of the cross.

Who is Jesus Christ? Years ago my wife and I toured the major cities of Egypt. One writer tells of his experience in upper Egypt at the city of Luxor where tourists visit the remains of ancient Thebes, once the capital of Egypt. In that city stands the great temple of Luxor erected by Amenophis III. On top of a tall column of this temple is a small house. How did it ever get there? During the last century, before the excavations at Luxor were begun, the area was covered with sand. One local farmer tried to find a solid foundation for his home and scraped about in the sand to find some bedrock on which to build. In time he came upon a smooth surface, and he erected his home there. In the desert where the wind is constantly blowing and where the sand shifts according to the air currents, anything permanent will cause the sand to shift away from it. As the sand drifted away from his cottage the farmer discovered that his house was actually built on a piece of hand carved stone, presumably from an ancient temple. It was only after the excavations had begun that the farmer realized that the stone was a standing column; and after the excavations were completed, he found that his home was nearly eighty feet above ground level.

There is a parallel here to some people's understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people claim that their lives are built on Jesus Christ, but they may know as little about Jesus Christ as that Egyptian farmer knew about the foundation of his home. Many will admit Christ's existence, acknowledge His example, and speak of Him as a great religious teacher. These things are true. Yet by themselves they are as misleading as the Egyptian farmer's belief that he was building his house on bedrock. If you can say no more about Jesus Christ than this, then you have a fatal misunderstanding of His person. To see Him in proper perspective you must push aside the years of human history and catch a glimpse of Him coexisting with God the Father from eternity. He is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb 1:1-3), "the Christ, who is God over all, forever blessed" (Rom 9:5), "the one and only God who is in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18).

1. The Deity of Christ

{6} "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

(2:6) ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμον ἠγήσατο το εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, "Who, although existing in the form of God, He did not regard [His] equality with God as something to use for His own advantage."

This first clause states that in Christ's preincarnate state He existed in the "form of God." The major debate here is over the meaning of μορφή (form). It only occurs one other place in the NT (Mark 16:12). Lightfoot believes that Paul uses μορφή with the sense it had acquired in Greek philosophy, particularly that of Aristotle (p. 110).

Silva, who has done extensive work in the area of semantics, suggests that μορφή is characterized by what he calls "semantic extension." It covers a broad range of meanings and therefore we must depend on the immediate context to discover its specific nuance. Two factors help us. First, as a number of scholars have pointed out, there is a correspondence between μορφή θεοῦ (form of God) and ἴσα θεῷ (equal with God). To be "in the form of God" is to be "equal with God." Silva suggests that to go beyond the equivalence and inquire whether μορφή tells us precisely in what respects Jesus is equal with God (in essence? attributes? attitude? appearance?) is asking too much from one word. Second, μορφή θεοῦ is set in antithetical parallelism with μορφή δούλου (form of a servant) in v. 7, which is further defined by the phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων (in the likeness of men). Just as the Lord Jesus possessed all the qualities or attributes to be a man, he also possessed the necessary qualities or attributes to make him God. Therefore, although Lightfoot was probably wrong in trying to apply the philosophical meaning of "essence" to every occurrence of μορφή, in this verse, that probably comes close to what Paul was saying (cf. "being in very nature God"). Fee says that μορφή was chosen because Paul needed a word that would fit both modes of Jesus' existence and means "that which truly characterizes a given reality" (p. 204). Jesus Christ possessed everything that was essential to being God. Just as Jesus in his incarnation possessed all the attributes of man, so in His eternal glory He possesses all the attributes of God. Paul uses a word that defines the essence of divinity and humanity. Christ possessed inwardly and displayed outwardly the very nature of God himself.

The second word that occurs in v. 6 describing Jesus Christ is *isos* (ἴσα θεῷ) meaning equal. Today we have this word in scientific terms such as *isomer*, *isomorph*, and *isometric*. An isomer is a molecule having a slightly different structure from another molecule but being identical with it in terms of its chemical elements and weight. In our text the word *isos* teaches that Jesus is God's equal.

The major debate in this clause is the meaning of ἀρπαγμός ("robbery")--- a *hapax legomenon*. Instead of the translation, "he did not regard equality with God," Silva suggests that the article τό in το εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ has the force of a possessive pronoun, thus "His equality with God." The

translation given, “something to use for his own advantage” is that of Roy W. Hoover (“The Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution,” *HTR* 64 [January 1971]: 95–119). In an extensive and persuasive discussion, he has demonstrated the mistake of focusing on the word ἀρπαγμός itself rather than on the combination of that word with ἡγέομαι (regard). That is, ἀρπαγμός has an idiomatic sense whose meaning is determined by the whole phrase. Hoover notes: “in every instance which I have examined, this idiomatic expression refers to something already present and at one’s disposal” (p. 118). In other words, one cannot take advantage of something one does not already have. This again points to the equation “being in the form or God” is the equivalent of “being equal with God.” The Lord Jesus Christ did not use His absolute equality with God the Father for his own advantage. Rather, He humbled Himself *via* the Incarnation.

How quickly these phrases cut across the lesser confessions of Christ’s deity. Many will admit that Jesus Christ was divine in the sense that all people have a spark of divinity in them (false). Many will call Him the Son of God in the sense that we are all children of God (false). Paul Tillich, a liberal theologian, spoke of Christ’s “permanent unity with God,” but he did not believe in the absolute deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ. Paul here is speaking under divine inspiration of the eternal and unique Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ, His eternal existence as the Son of God, the second person of the triune Godhead with absolute equality with the Father.

2. The Glory of Christ

The truth of v. 6 is also conveyed by a phrase used elsewhere that points empathically to the divine nature of Christ. The phrase is “the glory of God.”

(John 17:4-5) "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. {5} And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

- Jesus possessed this glory before the Incarnation.
- This glory was God’s glory.
- He temporarily veiled that glory after the Incarnation.

In the early years of the Greek language when Homer and Herodotus were writing, there was a Greek verb *dokeo* from which the Greek noun *doxa* is derived. The verb meant to “appear” or “seem,” and the noun meant “opinion.” Even today this meaning is reflected in our own English language by such words as “orthodox, heterodox, [or] paradox,” meaning “straight opinion, other opinion, [or] contrary opinion.” Eventually the verb developed the conventional use of “good opinion” and the noun form came to mean “praise” or “honor” due to the one of whom a good opinion was held. Kings possessed glory because they earned the praise of their subjects. Psalm 24 speaks of God as the King of glory.

(Psa 24:8) "Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle." (Psa 24:10) "Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."

When a believing Jew surrendered to one true and living God as all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, merciful, faithful, holy, just, righteous, and loving, then he gave God glory. God's glory consists of His intrinsic worth embedded in His character. All that can be known of God is an expression of His glory.

In our own English language we express this same idea by the term “worth,” referring to intrinsic character. The worth of God is God's glory. This is where our word “worth-ship” comes from. The worship of God is ascribing praise, honor, worth, weight, and importance to the glory of God in your public assembly and your private living. The glory of God includes all that God is, does, and says as a reflection of His holy, unchangeable character. When the disciples beheld Jesus' glory at the wedding feast in Cana, they beheld his character as identical to the character of the Father. This why the Lord Jesus Christ could say:

(John 5:23) "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

All men have fallen short of the glory of God both in their “worth-ship” and their character (Rom 3:23). Man is a renegade from his God, seeking his own glory, hostile to God in his thinking, desires, and will. This must be repented of when a man exercises saving faith in the person and crosswork of the Lord Jesus Christ. Today, we hear much smarmy theological God-talk about how man is seeking God after all, that deep in his being he actually likes God, appreciates God, and thanks God for all

his blessings. God says that men actually hate God in the core of their being. Some express their hatred actively and aggressively; others nurture their hatred passively and only express it when someone hands them a gospel tract, an invitation to church, or a personal witness. The Lord Jesus says that either you hate Me or love Me; either you gather with Me or scatter abroad. There is no middle ground between loving God or hating God. The world hates God. Make no mistake about that; and if you truly love God, the world will hate you too. Because all men have fallen short of the glory of God, God commands all men everywhere to repent of their sinful condition and actions.

(Jer 24:7) "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return (*shub* [Hebrew term for "repent"]) unto me with their whole heart."

(Acts 3:19) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;"

(Acts 17:30) "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

(Acts 26:20) "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

(Luke 24:47) "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

(Rev 9:20-21) "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: {21} Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

(Rev 16:9) "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."

Man must realize that he has been a disloyal and rebellious creature who has scorned the highest authority and most rightful law. Man's defiant insubordination and complete apathy toward God's honor and glory demands the sinner's repentance toward God and unreserved trust in His Son.

If you love the Lord Jesus, the idea of Christ's glory should evoke praise in your heart. God desires for you to reflect His glory by increasingly being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

(2 Cor 3:18) "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

As you see God in Scripture, you will be changed into the same likeness by the presence of His Spirit within you until one day the glorified bodies of believers will appear as brilliant jewels, refracting in a million ways the bright radiance of Him who is the Father of lights and of His Son in Whom is no darkness at all.

3. The Humanity of Christ

{7} "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

(2:7) ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος "but He made himself nothing by taking the form of a servant, by being made in the likeness of men and having been found in appearance as a man."

As God, our Lord made Himself nothing (ἐκένωσεν) by taking the form of a slave and by being born like other human beings. He did not exchange the form of God for the form of a slave, but manifested the form of God in the form of a slave. Though the verb κενόω has been taken literally to mean "he emptied himself" and then the question asked, "of what did he empty himself," this meaning is doubtful. Κενόω is used four other times in the NT, and in each case the meaning is metaphorical (Rom 4:14; 1 Cor 1:17; 9:15; 2 Cor 9:3). The translation "he made himself nothing" reflects the well-established figurative meaning of the verb "to nullify, make of no effect." For example, in Rom 4:14 Paul states that if those who are of the Law are heirs, then "faith has been made of no effect." No one thinks of asking, "of what is faith made empty?"

The next two participle phrases are modal, indicating the manner in which Christ made Himself nothing. The clause “taking the form of a servant” is expanded and explained by “being made in the likeness of men.” We should not look for substantive theological differences between δοῦλος (servant) and ἄνθρωπος (man). The first term stresses Christ’s attitude of servant hood, but the latter simply reminds us that He gave expression to that attitude by becoming a man. Silva believes that here in v. 7 μορφή, ὁμοίωμα, and σχῆμα (form, likeness, appearance) are interchanged for stylistic rather than semantic reasons (p. 121; also Fee, p. 215). A transition is marked by the καί (and). Then the final participle phrase (causal/circumstantial), “and being found in appearance as a man,” summarizes the previous thought and introduces or sets the stage for the main verb in v. 8, ἐταπείνωσεν, “he humbled himself.”

Jesus was always God’s Son. As a child he was born, but as a Son he was given (Isa 9:6). At the incarnation he became a child and eventually a man. His divine nature existed in the eternal personality of the Son of God; His sinless human nature dates from the moment of His birth in Bethlehem. Christ had all the characteristics of sinless human nature; He had all the physical attributes of a human body including His blood, and He endured all the common experiences of human beings without sinning inwardly or outwardly. This was the only way God the Son could be the legitimate substitutionary sacrifice for the sin of mankind.

Christ knows your problems, and because of that he can help you in the midst of them. He provides eternal salvation and help for this life as He enables you to triumph over the things that constantly try to force you into the world’s image.

- **Tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

(Heb 4:15) "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The temptation of Christ was external. Never was he drawn away of His own sinful desires. He had no sinful desires

Tempted to put physical needs above spiritual needs.

(Mat 4:3-4) “. . . If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Material objects are not evil. We are tempted, however, to place material objects in place of His work in our lives. Busyness often is the enemy of Christian service.

Tempted to presume upon God

{5} "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, {6} And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. {7} Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Tempted to violate the will of God

{8} "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; {9} And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. {10} Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. {11} Then the devil leaveth him."

- **Suffered as men suffer, yet without sin**

As Christianity grew, the political and religious structures of the Roman world persecuted believers. Peter encourages Christians who were suffering because their stand for Christ and the gospel.

(1 Pet 2:21) "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:"

The Lord became our example that we might imitate his reactions to persecution. Peter, himself, learned the hard way to follow the example of Christ rather than rely simply on his own determination.

4. The Death of Christ

{8} “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

(2·8) ἔταπείνωσεν ἑαυτον γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι¹ θανάτου, θανάτου δε σταυροῦ². “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of¹ death, even death of a cross.”²

¹μέχρι (unto) indicates degree. “Jesus’ obedience took him to the *n*th degree, to death itself” (Fee, p. 216, f. 9).

²The genitive σταυροῦ (cross) could be genitive of means; thus “death by means of a cross.” Also, it could be a genitive of place; thus “death on a cross.” Wallace takes it as a genitive of production; thus “death produced by or brought about by a cross.” He suggests the δέ makes the statement emphatic (“even”), which fits well with a genitive of production (p. 105).

As noted before, the last clause of v. 7, “having been found in appearance as a man,” goes with v. 8. Paul picks up the reality of the Incarnation and spells out how Christ behaved while “in the form of a servant.” Having fully identified Himself with humanity in His incarnation, Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the utmost limit--even to death. Whereas ἐκένωσεν (emptied) in v. 7 spoke of His incarnation, ἔταπείνωσεν (humbled) suggests that Christ went even further and humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

Just as the clause in v. 7, “taking the form of a servant,” is expanded and explained by the next clause, “being made in the likeness of men,” so here in v. 8 the clause “by becoming obedient to the point of death,” is expanded upon by the next phrase, “even death on a cross,” indicating what kind of death Christ suffered. “Even death on a cross” emphasizes the extent and depth of Christ’s humiliation, because death by crucifixion was considered by the Romans to be the most degrading penalty, something the Philippians, as Roman citizens, would never have to endure.

The cross is the central feature of the NT. Forty percent of Matthew, sixty percent of Mark, thirty percent of Luke, and fifty percent of John speak specifically about the Passion Week which led to the cross. The very name *Jesus*, which designates the Son of God in His humanity, is the Greek rendition of the Hebrew expression “Yahweh saves.” The cross was the hour for which Christ came. The OT prefigured Christ’s sufferings:

(Luke 24:25-27) "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: {26} Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? {27} And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

Without the cross the Bible is an enigma and the gospel of salvation is an empty hope. Some have denied the meaning of the cross. Charles Finney, for example, openly denied that Jesus' death was a substitutionary sacrifice for our sin. He believed in the governmental theory of the atonement that Jesus died as a demonstration of God's punishment against sin. However, the Lord Jesus died for the world as the vicarious sin-bearer. He is our example only because he is *first* our Savior and Lord. A man who is drowning in the ocean may wish that he had taken swimming lessons, but first he needs a lifeguard. Christ must be our Lord and Savior, before He can be our example.

- a. The Lord Jesus died to remove sin.

He removed it by bearing its penalty Himself.

(Heb 9:26) "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

(1 Pet 2:24) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

- b. The Lord Jesus died to satisfy divine justice.

The cross was not an accident or simply a miscarriage of human justice. It was an act of God. Isaiah 53:10 says "it pleased the Lord to bruise him"---literally to "crush" Him. Acts 2:23 tells us that the Lord Jesus was delivered up by the determinate counsel of God --- "the having been fixed will of God." In Romans 3:24-26 we are told that God publicly displayed Christ on the cross to declare that God was just. Prior to Calvary God passed over those pre-Calvary sins in forbearance. If God's forgiveness was to be just, there had to be a payment. No payment would make the entire transaction unjust and dishonest.

Anyone can declare a righteous person righteous, but how do you declare a guilty person righteous and be ethical? The only answer is the cross. On the cross the Lord Jesus Christ paid the last farthing of the guilt and debt of sin. Therefore, God can forgive any person through the cross, but cannot forgive anyone apart from the cross.

- c. The Lord Jesus died to demonstrate the Love of God.

(1 John 4:10) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The cross is the greatest demonstration of unconditional love the world has even seen. We hear much about love in our day, but God is not the author of a sinful view of love. God's love is not blind. He sees you and me exactly for what we really are. The holiness of God made the death of Christ necessary, but the love of God made His death voluntary. God is eternally moved to self-giving in seeking the well-being of others. On the cross God reached down and lifted man out of the pit of depravity. God was under no obligation to save man. He would have been perfectly just and holy had he allowed man to suffer the just desserts of his sin. He wasn't obliged in the least to pull man out of the quicksand of sin and Hell. Then why did God do it? Because God "is rich in mercy by reason of his much love" (Eph 2:4).

What has contributed to this decline in properly viewing God's love? Christianity has retreated from the position where God *judicially* hates the sinner and the sin, to loving the sinner and hating the sin, to loving the sinner and condoning the sin.¹ The absence of doctrinal, authoritative preaching on sin and the total depravity of fallen humanity has hastened the moral decline in both western culture and individual Christians.

In 1991 a survey of non-Christians and professing born-again Christians revealed a striking ignorance regarding the biblical understanding of sin. The respondents were asked whether or not they agreed with the following affirmation, "People are basically good." As one would expect, 83% of the non-believers agreed with

¹God's judicial wrath is similar to the "wrath" of the court pronouncing sentence on a condemned criminal. Out of the infinite perfections of God's being, He is able to both love and "hate" the condemned sinner at the same time (John 3:16-17).

that statement. Shockingly, 77% of the “believers” agreed with it -- - people may sin, but perhaps they are not sinners after all (Barna, *What Americans Believe*, pp. 89-91).

A “dysfunctional” view of sin has also revamped preaching and evangelistic strategy. Words like sin, guilt, wickedness, and wrong are being replaced with mistake, estrangement, maladjustment, indiscretion, or imprudence. Sin is no longer against God, but against oneself. Selfishness, rather than the essence of all sin, has become the goal of redemption. Ministers appeal to self-interest in their preaching because they know that is what moves people. Human need, instead of an offended God, beckons the unfulfilled to receive “wholeness” at the foot of the cross. How, one may ask, can anyone actually repent in such an environment? The regression is from “I’m *not* O.K., you’re *not* O.K.” to “I’m O.K., you’re O.K.” to “I’m O.K., I’m O.K.”--- a schizophrenic Pelagianism.² Consequently, sin has not been a popular subject for Christian authors or pastors. A virtual paucity on the subject exists today.

The Scriptures correct these popular misconceptions regarding sin by exposing the extent that human nature has been spoiled and impeded by the effects of sin. Sin is any lack of conformity to the moral law and character of God, either in act, disposition or state (Rom 5:13-14; 7:22; James 4:11-12). Sin is called an act (Romans 7:19), a disposition (Jer 17:9; Ps 51:5; Rom 7:8-10, 17), a conscious or subconscious thought (Matt 5:27-28; 15:19), an affection (Ex 20:17; 1 John 2:15-17), an omission (James 4:17), an involuntary act (Luke 12:48; 2 Pet 3:5) or any combination of these. Sin is any state of being, action, or disposition that is unlike God. Sin entered the universe as a result of the fall of Satan (1 John 3:8), and it entered the human race as a result of the fall of Adam (Rom 5:12).

Personal, individual sin originates from the human heart (Mark 7:21-23; James 1:14) and is rooted in selfishness and self-autonomy (Isa 14:12-14; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Deut 6:4-5). Adam's first sin, the one sin of the one man, comprehended the whole human race. Adam acted as the representative of the race, and his sin was immediately imputed to the entire human race (original sin:

²Pelagianism is a heresy that began in the fourth century of Church history which denied the depravity of the human will.

Rom 5:12-19). Depravity, condemnation, and death resulted. Depravity is total in that it has penetrated and affected the entire race of human beings (Gal 3:22; Rom 3:10; P.a.14:1-3; 1 Ki 8:46) and the whole of man's being (Isa 1:6; Eph 4:17-19). Depravity has affected (1) man's body, resulting in entropy and death (Rom 8:10; Eph 4:19); (2) man's mind in that he refuses to think God's thoughts after Him (Titus 1:15; Rom 8:5-7; 1 Cor 2:14); (3) and man's will as revealed in his rebellion and stubbornness in disobeying the Word of God (John 8:34; Jer 13:23).

All of these result in a depraved and wicked heart (Jer 17:9). Human beings, therefore, have the native capability of committing the most vile sins (Rom 1:18ff; 3:10-18). When an unregenerate man does a "good deed" *via* common grace (Gen 6:3; Rom 2:14-15; Matt 7:11), it is for selfish purposes and not for God's glory (Isa 64:6; Matt 6:5; Prov 21:4). Thus, man has no possible means of salvation or recovery within himself and is utterly incapable of meriting God's favor or contributing to his salvation (Matt 19:25-26; Rom 1:18; Rom 7:18; Eph 2:1, 8; Titus 3:5; Heb 12:2). Concerning anyone who deems himself an exception to the above, Paul says "No, not one!" (Rom 3:10-12).

The necessary doctrinal implications emanating from a biblical view of sin are currently being muzzled by "pure grace theology." Zane Hodges and the Grace Evangelical Society, for example, misrepresent the gospel message in regard to repentance. Hodges is not the only advocate of this position; he is simply the most shameless. Hodges contends that repentance is not needed for one to be saved.³ His understanding of saving faith is void of a change of mind, will, and emotion regarding one's sin, one's self, and the Savior.

Fidelity to a particular text type or translation does not erase infidelity regarding the gospel message. The "school of pure grace" by necessity must reassess the human condition. Somehow, man's will is universally "free" from the effects of sin, and he is seeking God after all, on his own no less! It is hard to imagine a greater distortion of the preserved message of Scripture. Man will never bow his knee to Jesus Christ apart from a work of regenerating grace (John 3:1-16). If people are invited to accept Jesus Christ just to have their needs met, it will be difficult, if not

³Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free!* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), pp. 25-33.

impossible, to expect something more of them later. Need-centered preaching and evangelism are becoming more prominent in Fundamental circles, and especially in churches that *seem* the most successful.

Preaching that ignores repentance of sin in the gospel presentation or the process of sanctification will supplant the gospel of supernatural transformation. The basic constituency of the church will no longer then be regenerate, and the result will be a deterioration of the quality of church life and service to mere externalism or libertinism (e.g., “Christian” rock concerts, night clubs, dances, etc.). The evangelical/Fundamental landscape is strewn with the wreckage of churches and church members who have succumbed to a diluted and inevitably, deleted message. At some point preachers must recognize the need for speaking out against sin and proclaiming the absolute necessity for the miraculous work of *regenerating grace* in every believer in order that they might be free from the penalty and power of sin in this life through the sacrificial death of Christ, and eventually the presence of sin in the life to come.

When you understand the true nature of your sin, you will never forget that the cross is the measure of God’s love for you. From twelve noon until three o’clock, when Christ died, darkness came over the whole land. With the darkness came silence, for no eye could see, and no lips could tell the agony of soul which the spotless Lamb of God endured. The accumulated sins of the whole world and of all history were laid upon Him. Voluntarily he shouldered full payment for them when the woeful cry was wrung from His lips – “My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me!” In that moment God the Father judicially turned his back on His beloved Son, and Christ tasted all the penalty of eternal Hell for us. That is how much God loves you.

II. The Exaltation of Christ (2:9-11)

A. Name Above Every Name (9)

{9} “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:” 2·9) διο και ο θεος αυτον υπερυψωσεν¹ και εχαρισατο αυτω το² ονομα το υπερ παν ονομα, “God exalted him to the highest place and granted to him the name above every name,”

¹“Exalted him to the highest place.” This translation takes the verb ὑπερύψωσεν in a superlative sense. The simple verb ὑψόω means “exalt.” The addition of ὑπέρ could, if the resultant word is looked at etymologically, give the comparative meaning: “God has exalted Him more,” that is, God has now exalted Christ to a higher dignity than He enjoyed in His preincarnate existence. This idea, however, is foreign to the context. The vast majority of the ὑπέρ compounds in the NT are superlatives or elatives (An elative is a special form of the adjective to express a very high degree of quality without the notion of comparison expressed by the comparative or superlative (Cf. the NASB’s “highly exalted.”).

²The Western and later Byzantine traditions (D F G Ψ 075 0150 Byz) omit τό (i.e., “a name which is above every name”). The external evidence is against the omission. The omission could have resulted from an error of hearing, since the τό immediately follows αὐτῷ (Fee, p. 218, n. 1).

Vv. 9–11 constitute one sentence with a main clause composed of two main verbs, ὑπερύψωσεν (highly exalted) and ἐχαρίσατο (given), followed by a compound ἵνα (in order that--purpose) clause, the latter of which concludes with a noun clause. V. 9 is introduced with the inferential conjunction διό (wherefore). The καί (and) goes with the διό, strengthening or enhancing it (Silva, p. 132; Fee, p. 220, n. 10). BAGD suggests that διό joined with καί denotes “that the inference is self-evident” (p. 198; Fee agrees.).

God the Father is now presented as decisively intervening and acting on His Son’s behalf. Jesus’ self-humbling reached the absolute depths in His most shameful death on a cross (v. 8). But now, by way of vindication and approval of Jesus’ self-humbling, the Father has magnificently exalted His Son to the highest station and graciously bestowed on Him the name above all other names, that is, His own name, LORD (Yahweh), along with all that gives substance and meaning to the name. Although Paul does not mention the resurrection or ascension, these two realities are presupposed by what he does say.

In view of the chronological pattern exhibited in this passage, the giving of “the name” must have been subsequent to the cross. This would appear to be sufficient to rule out the identity of the name in view as being “Jesus.” A more likely identification of “the name” is “LORD,” the equivalent many times of the Old Testament “Yahweh,” which is supported by the thought of v. 11 (“and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the

glory of God the Father"). Christ's exaltation is expressly stated as manifesting His Lordship in Acts 2:33-36:

(Acts 2:33-36) "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. {34} For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, {35} Until I make thy foes thy footstool. {36} Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

In His exalted state Jesus now exercises universal Lordship. What is the nature of this exaltation. Kent believes it is a reference to the resurrection, ascension, and glorification. While that is true, it may be that Paul's emphasis here is on the granting of "the name." Silva believes that the second *καί* may be epexegetic: "God exalted him to the highest place, *that is*, granted to him the name above every name."

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 Christ. Think of the names that have already been bestowed upon Jesus Christ. There is the name Messiah, the anointed one through whom the eschatological blessings would come to Israel and the Kingdom of God. In Him God brings to fruition all the currents of history.

He has been called the Son of Man referring to His humanity and His coming again in glory:

(Dan 7:13-14) "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. {14} And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

He has also been called the Son of God which is included as the highpoint of the disciples' confession:(Mat 16:16) "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus is God's Messiah, God's Son, the Son of Man, Prophet, Priest, King, Alpha and Omega, and many other names. But the title "Lord" is above them all. It is at the name of Jesus Christ as Lord that every knee shall bow.

Why is the name "Lord" the name that is above every name? The Greek word for Lord, *Kurios*, was used as a divine title even in Roman culture. When the citizens of Rome said *Kyrios Kaiser* (Caesar is lord) it meant absolute loyalty to Rome and its emperor. Christians were singled out and executed because they would not say this. Christians would not acknowledge Caesar as the divine authority which only belonged to God.

In Hebrew *Adonai* (Lord or Master) was the term used to say the personal name of God, *Yahweh*. A Jew would not say *Yahweh*. Therefore, *Adonai* became synonymous in the OT with *Yahweh*. Consequently, when early Christians made their confession---"Jesus Christ is Lord"---they were actually confessing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord God of Israel, *Yahweh*, the only true and living God. The word, *Adonai*, has a personal ending. It means "my Lord." It is the confession of Thomas made one week after Easter Sunday when he fell in humble belief and confessed with his whole heart "My Lord and my God." Jesus Christ must be your Lord; he must be your God.

The term "Lord" means that Jesus Christ is sovereign. He rules. He works all things according to His purpose and plan:

(Dan 4:35) "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

The doctrine of the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ has sometimes been called fatalism by the enemies of the Gospel, but it is not fatalism at all. A belief in fatalism or fate is found in Islamic religion, where it is referred to as "kismet," which means the *impersonal force* by which the universe is believed by Muslims to operate. They believe fate operates in ways that are totally insensitive to the needs of individuals. This is not the Christian teaching. The Bible teaches that the God who controls all things is not an impersonal deity, but the true God who loves us and who orders the events of our lives to lead us into His perfect and desirable will. It is not meaningless when difficulties enter your life or when there are temptations. God knows about them and has permitted them to come in order that He might accomplish in you that which will be for your salvation good.

God has put everything under the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ: (Heb 2:8)
"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all
in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him"

Have you noticed the names Paul uses to refer to Jesus Christ in 1
Thessalonians 4:13-18?

(1 The 4:13-18) "But I would not have you to be ignorant,
brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not,
even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that
Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus
will God bring with him. {15} For this we say unto you by the
word of the **Lord**, that we which are alive and remain unto the
coming of the **Lord** shall not prevent them which are asleep. {16}
For the **Lord** himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with
the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead
in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain
shall 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**. {18}
Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

In reference to His death, the apostle Paul refers to Christ as Jesus. In
reference to His return, he speaks of Christ as Lord. The early believers
looked for the Lord's return. They prayed in the Aramaic language
maranatha--- "Our Lord come." This is the prayer of every believer.

(1 Cor 12:3) "Wherefore I give you to understand . . . that no man
can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Fundamentalism needs a fresh glimpse of the sovereign Lordship of the one true and
living God. We have lost sight of His majesty, holiness, greatness, and
incomprehensibility. Many people mistakenly envision God as soft, easy-going, and
user-friendly. Unfortunately, some seek an undue familiarity with God, whereby He
becomes servant instead of sovereign. In essence, the roles have been reversed: God
has been temporalized and the creature eternalized.

God is absolutely sovereign. The living God has planned the universe (all that is not
God) down to the last detail. There are no loose ends in God's universe. He not only
designed it, but He made it, and upholds it with all its laws and properties. There is
nothing outside the pervasive word and will of God.

Furthermore, God is all knowing. He has not learned anything from all eternity, nor has He forgotten anything from all eternity. God is infinite in His knowledge. He knows everything, past, present, and future, in one simultaneous act of divine intuition. He confers with no one and no one adds or contributes to His knowledge. I am, therefore, opposed to the heretical idea that God's knowledge is actually expanding based on human contingency. Since God has planned the future, nothing happens by sheer, blind, accidental chance. There is no degree of randomness in God's universe. Not one speck of cosmic dust or maverick molecule is out there floating around on its own.

God is also independent; that is, He is self-sustaining. Nothing external to Himself contributes to His being. There is no lack, void, or vacuum in God that He needed anyone to fill. He is both transcendent and immanent, the uncaused I AM whose very nature is to exist from Himself and for Himself. Therefore, everything God does is for His own glory. The excellencies and majesties of God are the highest standards which compose the absolute perfection of His being and activity.

Consequently, when everything in this world has finally run its course, when human history has been laid into the tomb of time, when the Kingdom of God has supplanted the kingdoms of this world, when all the rebels against God's justice and holiness are finally incarcerated in God's eternal death house, and the last enemy has been put under the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, God will have vindicated Himself to be all in all, the supreme ruler of the universe. We, therefore, should repudiate the idolatry of supplanting the sovereign God with human autonomy. An idol is anything that supplants the Lordship of the one living and true God in the person of Jesus Christ. Since mankind is incurably idolatrous, we must concur that man will not bow to the most high God without an act of regenerating grace. He needs the efficacious power of Almighty God for the salvation of his soul. This is an article of faith that demands unreserved fidelity (Isaiah 40; John 5:22-23; 1 John 5:20).

B. Every Knee Shall Bow

{10} "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" (2.10) ἵνα¹ ἐν² τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων³ καὶ ἐπιγείων³ καὶ αταχθονίων³ "in order that¹ at² the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in heaven³ and on earth³ and under the earth."³

{11} "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

(2.11) και πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται¹ ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός² εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς. “and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

¹ἵνα (in order that, so that) could be either purpose (Silva) or result (O'Brien, Fee).

²BAGD gives the translation, “that when the name of Jesus is mentioned every knee should bow” (p. 572). Fee suggests that ἐν indicates the object of worship.

³Probably possessive genitives (Wallace, p. 125) referring to those whose knees are bent (i.e., “the knees of those in heaven, etc.”).

This passage is the NT equivalent of the OT prophecy found in (Ps 110:1) “A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This verse is quoted directly or indirectly 27 times in the NT. It teaches that the One called David’s Lord, the Messiah, will reign over all things and that all his enemies shall be defeated.

1. The acknowledgement of the Lord Jesus Christ will take the form of a confession, “Jesus is Lord.”

The subjunctive, “should confess,” (ἐξομολογήσεται) read by p⁴⁶ a B Byz^{pt} et al. is considered slightly more preferable to the future indicative, “will confess,” (ἐξομολογήσεται) read by A C D F G Y Byz^{pt} et al. The subjunctive is preferred since it keeps the parallel with the subjunctive, “should bow” (κάμψῃ). Silva denies that there would be any difference in meaning between the two (pp. 130–31). In the middle, ἐξομολογέω means “confess” (BAGD, p. 277).

The words κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός form a subject/predicate nominative construction with the copula (is) missing. Since Jesus Christ is a name, it is the subject. When the predicate nominative precedes the subject it may be qualitative or definite. Here it is probably definite (Wallace, p. 270), thus “Jesus Christ is *the* Lord.”

The purpose (result) of Christ’s exaltation is that all beings might bow in acknowledgment and confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Because v. 10 indicates that it is “at the name of Jesus that every knee should bow,” it might appear that the name given in v. 9 is “Jesus,” instead of Lord, as was argued. One way around this problem has been to take

Ἰησοῦ as a genitive of possession (Kent, O'Brien), thus "at the name which belongs to Jesus" = Lord. However, Silva has pointed out that in phrases such as ὄνομα θεοῦ et. al. (Rom 2:24; 10:13; 1 Tim 6:1; Rev 3:12; 16:9) that the name possessed is never a possessive genitive. In this case it is a genitive of apposition. The solution to this dilemma is probably to be found in recognizing that as a result of God's exaltation, the man Jesus comes to be acclaimed as Lord; and so, at the name of Jesus, who is in fact Lord, every knee shall bow.

2. The confession is to be made by every order of intelligent being.

Most take the genitive plural adjectives in v. 10 as masculine, since it is generally rational beings who would be thought of offering homage and making confession (v. 11). If a specific identification is attempted, it might include angels in heaven, men on earth, and the dead in Sheol. Silva believes that Paul's interest is not in specific groups but in the universality of Christ's Lordship, in other words, we should not try to press an identification of each adjective.

Because of what the name, the *Lord* Jesus Christ, represents, a time is coming when every knee shall bow before Him in recognition of His sovereignty. The statement is built on the wording of Isaiah 45:23. Isaiah 45:18-23 constitutes one of the most powerful OT affirmations of the uniqueness of the God of Israel in the context of his redeeming work.

(Isa 45:18-23) "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens . . . I am the LORD; and there is none else. {19} . . . I declare things that are right. {21} Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. {22} Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. {23} 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."

Obviously for Paul the worship of Jesus Christ as Lord does not compromise Israel's monotheistic faith.

Submission will be expressed by bending the knee and by verbal confession. Paul does not imply by this a universal salvation, but means that every personal being will ultimately confess Christ's Lordship. The lost will bow to His sovereignty at the Great White Throne, even though they are not now yielding to it. This ultimate confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is Paul's indication of the "name" granted Jesus at His exaltation following the cross (v. 9). The name "Lord" with all the dignity and divine prerogatives will eventually be recognized by every creature. Of course, the Son in his nature was always deity, but the exaltation following the cross granted Him the dignity of station commensurate with His nature and far superior to His humble state while on earth.

3. The confession will result in glory to God the Father.

"To the glory of God the Father" is Paul's closing doxology to this remarkable Christology. He has never lost sight of the divine order and of the grand scheme in which the incarnation of Christ must be viewed. Recognition of Christ's Lordship fulfills the purpose of the Father and so brings glory to God.

When you exalt yourself or your merits as a means of salvation, or exalt human beings as mediators between yourself and God, as saints who win God's favor for you, or exalt human wisdom as that which is ultimately able to solve the world's problems or place your hopes for the future in psychiatry, science, and systems of world government, you dishonor God.

Conclusion

Think of the terms by which we are privileged to give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. He is the Messiah, the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, 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, the one and only God who hath made manifest the Father, the one who is God over all forever blessed.

He is our Master, 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 Word, 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, He is the One who is altogether lovely, the One in whom the Father is well pleased.

Is the Lord Jesus Christ these things to you? He deserves to be. If He is these things to you, then give Him honor and praise and glory and reverence and obedience. For when you do, then and only then do you give glory to our heavenly Father.

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