

The Humiliation And Exaltation Of Christ

Philippians 2:1-11

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Lesson Aim: To understand Jesus is the ultimate example of humility in scripture. To examine what some consider an ancient Christian hymn in verses 6-11 describing the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ. To understand that Jesus is “one Person” revealed in “two natures”, fully God and fully Man.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind consider others better than yourself. In other words, be humble! (vv. 1-4)

1. Why is the Council of Nicea 325 A.D. so important to Christian History? Who are Constantine, Arius and Athanasius? What important role did they play at this council? Who did the council end up siding with? What modern cult were the teachings of Arius similar to? Do you believe Jesus is created, or creator? (**See Col. 1:5**)
2. What does Paul mean when he asks the Philippians to fulfill his joy by having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind (**vv. 1-2**)? How should this teaching apply to the church today. Does having one mind mean that everyone has to agree on every single topic? Explain your answer.
3. What are some ways that **verse 3** contradicts society as we know it today? What does it mean to do something out of “selfish ambition”? What is the exact opposite of selfish ambition? What does it mean to do something “in lowliness of mind”? How does this concept relate to the ministry of Jesus Christ? (**See Matt. 20:27-28**)
4. Today we hear a lot from advertisers about “taking care of number one” (meaning ourselves). How should Christians live their lives according to **verse 4**? Why? What is the danger of thinking of ourselves first? What kind of an impact do you think would be made on the world if Christians really did live out **verse 4** in their everyday lives?

Part II: Jesus Christ, the ultimate example of humiliation and exaltation. (vv. 5-11)

1. Do the statements in **verses 5 and 6** solidify in your mind the deity of Jesus Christ (the idea that He is God in the flesh), or take away from it? Explain your answer. What is meant by the statement Christ “*did not consider it robbery to be equal with God*” (**vs. 6**)?

2. The NIV (New International Version) translates **Philippians 2:6**: “*Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped...*”. Does this translation enlighten your understanding of the passage in any way? How? (**See John 1:1-3,14; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-5**)

3. What radical change did Christ make voluntarily according to **verse 7**? Does the statement that Jesus came “*in the likeness of men*” (**vs. 7**) imply that Jesus wasn’t really human in nature, but was simply “*found in appearance as a man*” (**vs. 8**), perhaps a spirit? Why or why not? Why did the Greeks have such a hard time with the concept of a physical resurrection?

4. Do you believe Jesus was fully Man? Explain your answer. (**See Mark 4:37-38; 14:16-18; Luke 2:5-6; 24:43; John 11:35**) If Jesus was fully Man, was He the perfect Man? Why or why not? (**See 2 Cor. 5:21**) What did Christ empty Himself of in His humanity? His deity? His glory? (**See John 17:1-5**)

5. What was the ultimate humiliation of Christ according to **verse 8**? (**See Matt. 27:22-40; Gal. 3:13**) Why was crucifixion such a humiliating and painful death? (**See Psa. 22**) Was it necessary for Christ die on a cross and not some other way? Why or why not? How was the death of Christ different from any other? (**Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:3,4; 1 Pet. 2:21-24**)

6. What was the result of Christ’s obedience according to **verse 9**? Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why is the ascension of almost equal significance? (**See Acts 1:9-11; Heb. 1:3**) What is the name referred to in **verse 9**? (**See Acts 4:12**) What is the significance of the title Lord (*Gk - Kyrios*)?

7. What similarities do you see when comparing **verse 11** and **Isa. 45:22-24**? What dissimilarities? At the name of Jesus, every knee “will” bow and every tongue “will” confess that Jesus is Lord, some voluntarily, some by force at the final judgment (**vs. 10-11**). (**See Psa. 2:1-12**) What happens to those who receive Christ as Savior now? What happens if they are forced to confess Christ at the final judgment? Have you received Christ as your Savior? If not, why not do so right now?

8. Spend a few moments and bask in the richness of the two historic creeds on page 4.

KEY HISTORICAL CREEDS RELATING TO JESUS CHRIST

(Creeds are historical statements of faith!)

The Nicene Creed 381 A.D.

We [I] believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; [God of God], Light of Light. Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; and suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And [I believe] in one holy catholic and apostolic Church; We [I] acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we [I] look for the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the world to come.

The Chalcedonian Creed – 451 A.D.

The defining statement historically for orthodox Christology (the study of Jesus Christ):

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.