AN EXEGESIS OF PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

by Christian Strauss

1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 

(Philippians 2:1-11 - NASB)

2:1 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort provided by love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any affection or mercy, 2:2 complete my joy and be of the same mind, by having the same love, being united in spirit, and having one purpose. 2:3 Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself. 2:4 Each of you should be concerned not only about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well. 2:5 You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, 2:6 who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, 2:7 but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. 2:8 He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross! 2:9 As a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth— 2:11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. 

(Philippians 2:1-11 - NET)

1 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.
I. Overview of Passage

The first step in this overview will be to identify variants in the text. Four different translations will be used in this process to identify key differences or issues in the translations.

There are quite a bit of minor variants between these texts that I will not touch on, this paper will try to concentrate on some of the important variants only.

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<th>NASB</th>
<th>NET</th>
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<td>vs. 5&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,</td>
<td>You should have the same attitude toward one another</td>
<td>Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,</td>
<td>Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,</td>
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<td>that Christ Jesus had,</td>
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<td>vs. 6&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,</td>
<td>did not regard equality with God as something to be</td>
<td>did not consider equality with God as something to be</td>
<td>did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>grasped,</td>
<td>be used for His own advantage.</td>
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<td>vs. 7&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being</td>
<td>but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave,</td>
<td>Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a</td>
<td>but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form</td>
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<td>being made in the likeness of men.</td>
<td>by looking like other men, and by sharing in human</td>
<td>slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He</td>
<td>of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.</td>
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<td>nature.</td>
<td>had come as a man in His external form,</td>
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<td>vs. 11&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to</td>
<td>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to</td>
<td>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is</td>
<td>and that every tongue should confess that Jesus</td>
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<td>the glory of God the Father.</td>
<td>the glory of God the Father.</td>
<td>Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</td>
<td>Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</td>
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<sup>3</sup> The NASB & the HCSB comes across as a commanding word ‘Have/Make’ while the NET & KNJV shows a more passive word translation of ‘You should/Let this.’ Also the word ‘attitude’ is used in all of these translations except the NKJV which translates it ‘mind.’

<sup>4</sup> The HCSB translation uses the words ‘as something to be used for His own advantage’ and the NKJV uses the words ‘did not consider it robbery to be equal with God’ both are quite different then the NASB and NET translations.

<sup>5</sup> NASB, NET and HCSB use the words “emptied Himself” while the NKJV uses the words “no reputation.” Where the wording may imply the same meaning to some, the NKJV wording is actually more in line with an interpretation rather than a translation of this word and is not lessening the act of what was done. Also in vs. 7 the NET & HCSB uses the word “by taking on the form of a slave” or “by assuming the form of a slave” as opposed to the NASB & NKJV which just transitions straight into “taking the form of a bondservant.” Using the word “by” shows us how it was done but neglecting the word “by” it just indicates this action as being made.

<sup>6</sup> Here the word “should” is added to the HCSB & NKJV as opposed to the “will confess” of the NASB and “every tongue confess” of the NET. The implications are very different, “should” confess is a suggestion while “will” or “every” shows a necessary action.
Passage summary

Philippians derives its name from the Greek city where the church it was addressed to was located. Philippi was the first town in Macedonia where Paul established a church. In Philippians 2:1-11 one will read two main sections. The first section (vv. 1-4) is to be united by humility. The second section (vv. 5–11) is to remember the example of Christ. This entire passage states what Paul called the believers at Philippi to do, which is to share in the attitude of Christ who emptied Himself in humility. This appeal is to regard others more highly than their own selves (vv. 3-4). Paul illustrates the kind of humility he is exhorting to the Philippians by using the example of the condescension of Christ (v. 7). At the end of this passage Paul departs from the humility of Christ straight into the glory in His new highly exalted position as Lord over all creation to which all will bow.

My understanding of the theological impact of this passage thus far

There is a theological aspect of v. 7 that tells us that Jesus “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.” Some could read into the text and come to the conclusion that this means a emptying of His deity or an exchange of deity for humanity. This is a serious implication into the text and is incorrect. If read properly one can see that this passage only shows us that Christ is taking on a human nature with all of its limitations, except with no sin. The impact of the different renderings is that of Christ being fully God and fully man. If one sees it as Christ emptying Himself of deity then He is no longer fully God but only fully man.
My doctrinal presuppositions

My first presupposition is that the scriptures are God’s Word and inerrant in every way; therefore, I also have the presupposition of Christ being fully God and fully man. I get this from the clear teachings of scripture that show us that God and Son are one, which we can see in Jesus’ own words in John 10:30, “I and the Father are one.” It is also revealed through the Jews’ reaction to His words “… you, a mere man, claim to be God” (John 10:33). I have also read and believe in the apostle John’s writing. Of the concept of Jesus’ deity he wrote: “the Word was God” and “the Word became flesh” (John 1:1, 14). These verses clearly indicate that Jesus is God in the flesh which stays in my mind as I read other passages. With these presuppositions I have to come to the conclusion that Christ was not only Man but completely and fully God; therefore, He never emptied Himself of His deity but only set them aside to do the will of the Father.

II. Background/Context Summary

Genre

Philippians is an epistle, an example of the letter-writing genre, one can see this simply by reading the greeting, salutation, etc. More specifically this is one of Paul’s prison epistles, which was written while Paul was in Rome. It was at Philippi, where the apostle visited on his second missionary journey as described in Acts 16:12, that Lydia, the Philippian jailer and his family were converted to Christ. A few years later, the church was well established, as one can read by looking at how they are addressed as “bishops (elders) and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). This epistle is primarily a practical letter as Philippians contains little historical material (there are no OT quotes), apart from the significant treatment of Paul’s spiritual autobiography (3:4–7).
There is, also, little direct theological instruction, with again one significant exception. This exception is the passage describing Christ’s humiliation and exaltation (2:5–11).

**Authorship/Date**

Philippians 1:1 identifies the author of the Book of Philippians as the apostle Paul, possibly with the help of Timothy. If one does any digging into church history it can be found that it is the unanimous testimony of the early church that it was the Apostle Paul who wrote Philippians. Nothing in the letter would have motivated a forger to write it. One would be hard pressed to read or hear of any serious questions about the Pauline authorship of this epistle. Paul claimed to have written it (Phil. 1:1), and the references to his acquaintances, events in his life, and his way of thinking all point to him as the writer. As far as the date of the writing, the question of when Philippians was written can be better seen by looking at where it was written. There does seem to be difficulty connected with Philippians in determining where it was written. I know the traditional view is that Philippians, along with the other Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon), was written during Paul’s first imprisonment at Rome (A.D. 60–62). The most natural understanding one can have of the references to the “praetorian guard” (1:13) and the “saints … of Caesar’s household” (4:22) is that Paul wrote from Rome, where the emperor lived. Paul’s belief that his case would soon be decided (2:23, 24) points to Philippians being written toward the close of the apostle’s two-year Roman imprisonment (A.D. 61).

Paul wrote the books of Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians during this two-year imprisonment in Rome. Paul was transferred by ship under guard to Rome. While traveling there his ship was wrecked in a storm off the island of Malta (Acts 27:1-44). Paul finally arrived in Rome around A.D. 59 to 60. There he was held under house arrest and guard
for the next two years. His Roman imprisonment, or captivity, has been dated as A.D. 59-61, and even as late as A.D. 61-63. Paul’s voyage to Rome can be read in the book of Acts 27:1-28:31. Paul wrote his letters to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians and Philippians while under this house arrest in Rome. These letters were written around A.D. 60 to 61. Because Paul was under house arrest and imprisoned at the time, his letters have been called his imprisonment or captivity letters.

**Purpose of Writing/Significance**

There are several purposes of this epistle. The first is to acknowledge a gift of money from the church at Philippi, brought to the apostle by Epaphroditus, one of its members (Philippians 4:10-18). It is clear the Philippians were a very practical group and news that Paul was arrested and on his way to Rome, or already there for trial, would motivate them at once to aid him. If he had needed their help before—when he was free and able to keep busy at his ministry—how much more he must need it now that he was in prison? Ancient prisoners needed money, especially prisoners awaiting trial, for they must have counsel. So they raised a fund and sent one of their members, a man named Epaphroditus, to wait on Paul, attend to his various wants, and stay with him until his matters were settled. Acts says that Paul lived in Rome for two full years in rented lodgings of his own (28:30), and it is very likely that the rent was paid by the Philippians.

Second, he wanted the Philippians to know why he decided to return Epaphroditus to them, so they would not think his service to Paul had been unsatisfactory (2:25, 26). Third, he wanted to inform them about his circumstances at Rome (1:12–26). Fourth, he wrote to exhort
them to unity. Finally, he wrote to warn them against false teachers (3:1–4:1). It is the fourth reason on which this paper will concentrate.

These issues are significant because, as one can see, this epistle is one of Paul’s most personal letters and as such it has several personal applications to believers. There are a few things one should note for proper interpretation of this passage that will help the reader’s comprehension:

1. What was happening to the author during the writing? This was written during his imprisonment in Rome, during times of persecution.
2. One must also consider the geography as well as the customs, the current events, and even the politics of the time when a passage was written.
3. One must examine the passage in relation to its immediate context (the verses surrounding it), its wider context (the book it’s found in), and its complete context (the Bible as a whole).
4. To whom was the author writing? This is a letter to a group of Christians who were especially close to the heart of Paul (2 Corinthians 8:1-6), and little is said about doctrinal error as compared to other epistles.

III. Outline/Structural Summary

Outline

1. Paul's account of his present circumstances (1:1-7)
   a) Here the letter begins by identifying the sender and the recipient with a basic greeting.

   One notable variation here is that Paul includes Timothy’s name because Timothy was important in Paul’s ministry of the gospel in and around Philippi and a trusted brother
and witness in Christ. Timothy was a missionary of both Jewish and Gentile descent; prepared by Paul to carry on his ministry in Philippi (1:1–2).

b) Paul wrote to the Philippians about the joy and strength found in Christ and to defend the Gospel (1:2-7).

2. Paul's appeal to have the mind of Christ (1:7-27)

a) To mature in the faith (vs. 9-11)

b) To minister for the faith (vs. 12-20)

c) To magnify Christ (vs. 21-24 cf. v. 20)

d) To minister for Christ (vs. 25-26)

e) The privilege of salvation (vs. 27)

3. The Challenge of the Philippians Circumstances (1:27-4:9)

a) Standing United (1:27-2:18)

i. Standing united against opposition from Outside (1:27-30)

ii. Standing united against division from within (2:1-4)

iii. Standing united by following Christ’s example (2:5-11)

iv. Working out salvation by standing united (2:12-18)

b) Two examples of Christian unity (2:19-30)

i. Timothy (2:19-24)

ii. Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

c) Warning against theological error (3:1-4:1)

i. A continuation in the letter’s argument (3:1)

ii. A warning against Judaizers (3:2-11)

iii. A warning against perfectionists (3:12-4:1)
d) Paul's appeal to have the peace of Christ (4:2-9)
   i. A plea for unity for two co-workers (4:2-3)
   ii. A brief set of admonitions (4:4-9)

4. Conclusion (4:10-23)
   a) An expression of gratitude (4:10-20)
   b) Closing Greetings and Benediction (4:21-23)

Structural keys/developments

If we break the outline down we can see that there are four developments in this epistle that are focused on: (1) Paul's account of his present circumstances; (2) Paul's appeal to have the mind of Christ; (3) Paul's appeal to have the knowledge of Christ and (4) Paul's appeal to have the peace of Christ. The portrait of Jesus Christ as a humble servant serves as the core of Paul’s teaching in this letter (2:5–11). Paul wrote that he poured out his life as an offering for the sake of Christ, leading Paul to find great joy and contentment in Christ’s service. His letter to the Philippians showed them that by centering their lives on Christ, they, too, might live in true joy.

Importance of the structure in interpretation

As one can see from the outline and the structure, Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis, as he did with Galatians or Colossians. Instead, he wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. Paul takes them directly to Jesus in this letter, teaching them that a community of believers living in harmony with one another comes only through mutual humility modeled after the Savior. Paul wrote that he humbled and gave his life as a bond servant for the sake of Christ, leading Paul to find great joy and contentment in
Christ’s service. One can see that the immediate context this passage of study (2:1-11) is the exhortation to unity in 1:27-30. In this section Paul urges the Philippians to live as ‘citizens’ worthy of the gospel by standing firm in one Spirit against the opposition.

IV. Grammatical Summary

References and quotations

While there are no direct references to the Hebrew Scriptures in this letter, there does seem to be some indirect references that pop up here and there. The first is in verse 1:11 the phrase “fruit of righteousness” is used, which can be seen in Proverbs 11:30 and also in Amos 6:12. The verse it seems to relate to the most can be found in James 3:18. One can also see that in verse 1:19 the phrase “this will turn out for my deliverance” may be an echo of Job 13:16. There also seems to be an indirect reference in 1:20 where Paul uses the phrase “not be put to shame” which can be seen in many other passages in scripture. Other than these few, there are no other references or quotations from previous scripture in this book.

Going back one can see the importance of these references setting the theme of the rest of the book. For instance in verse 1:11 where, if read in accordance with James 3:18, the reader can see how it speaks of the salvation transformation that comes through Jesus Christ and His ongoing work of power through His Spirit in us. Then at the end of verse 1:11 we see Paul’s ultimate goal: God’s glorification. If we look briefly at verse 1:19 the phrase “this will turn out for my deliverance” is most likely a reference to his eventual release from prison. With this reference the reader gets a feeling for what Paul is going through in his current circumstance. Whatever Paul’s precise meaning, he was certain he would be freed from his temporary distress. In verse 1:20 one can feel Paul’s zeal for Christ’s promise and the confidence that excites him.

When it comes to the passage of study (Philippians 2:1-11) starting in verse 6-11 is the classic Christological passage in the NT, dealing with the Incarnation. The NET has some great notes on this which states:

“This passage has been typeset as poetry because many scholars regard this passage as poetic or hymnic. These terms are used broadly to refer to the genre of writing, not to the content. There are two broad criteria for determining if a passage is poetic or hymnic: “(a) stylistic: a certain rhythmical lilt when the passages are read aloud, the presence of parallelismus membrorum (i.e., an arrangement into couplets), the semblance of some metre, and the presence of rhetorical devices such as alliteration, chiasmus, and antithesis; and (b) linguistic: an unusual vocabulary, particularly the presence of theological terms, which is different from the surrounding context” (P. T. O’Brien, Philippians [NIGTC], 188–89). Classifying a passage as hymnic or poetic is important because understanding this genre can provide keys to interpretation. However, not all scholars agree that the above criteria are present in this passage, so the decision to typeset it as poetry should be viewed as a tentative decision about its genre.”

V. Lexical Summary

In this summary there are a few key words in this passage that one should look at more in depth. The first being in verse 5 where it reads: “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus”

In this verse the NASB & the HCSB uses the commanding word ‘Have/Make’ while the NET & NKJV shows a more passive word translation of ‘You should/Let this.’ Also the word ‘attitude’ is used in all of these translations except the NKJV which translates it ‘mind.’ So the words we will first dive into here will be “Have this attitude.”

φρονέω; to have understanding, to think; to exercise the mind, that is, entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by implication to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intensively to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience): - set the affection on,
(be) care (-ful), (be like-, + be of one, + be of the same, + let this) mind (-ed, regard, savor, think.  

τοῦτο; Neuter, singular, nomitive; that thing: - here [-unto], it, partly, self [-same], so, that (intent), the same, there [-fore, -unto], this, thus, where [-fore].

Now that we can see the true meaning behind these words one can look at the surrounding context in which one can see the same wording being used in v. 2 “by being of the same mind” and “intent on one purpose” the reader can come to the conclusion that the different rendering in v. 5 can be used and the meaning still remain both as a command to fellow believers in Christ and as an expectation for believers in Christ.

Moving on to the next word of study for this passage is in verse 6. The word “existed” here is not the usual Greek word for “was” or “being.” Instead, Paul chose another term that stresses the essence of a person’s nature, his continuous state or condition. In many instances this word is translated as “is.” The ESV translates this word as “was” which can take away from its true meaning.

ὑπάρχω huparchō; to begin, to be ready or at hand, to be:—been(2), being(9), belonging(1), exist(1), existed(1), gone(1), live(1), owned(1), possess(1), possessions(11), private means(1), property(1).

The next word of focus—the word “form”—is also in verse six. Here we can see again how Paul could have chosen one of two Greek words for “form” but chose the one that specifically denotes the essential, unchanging character of something: what it is in and of itself. When one thinks of the word “form” (morph) one normally thinks of the word ‘morph,’ as in

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‘he morphed like a shape-shifter.’ This is the idea of an outward forming that change into something else. In the Greek, the word “morphē” is not the outward forming but it is ‘the very essence or the very nature of’ which never actually changes.\(^\text{11}\) The Greek word for the outward change that we think of (like a shape-shifter) would have been the Greek word “schema.”

\(\text{μορφή morphē; a prim. Word; form, shape (through the idea of adjustment of parts); shape; figuratively nature: - form.}\)

One of the words used in verse six is something one should briefly touch on as well and can bring some clarity to this passage.

“who, although He existed in the form of God, ”

This is referring to the divinity and pre-existence of Christ. The word “existed” or “being” (huparchōn) has a clear meaning in the Greek language that indicates Jesus did not come into existence but that he was already in existence before his incarnation. It is the idea of being in one’s natural state of being. The participle hyparchon is in the present tense and states Christ's continuing condition.\(^\text{12}\) Paul specifically used this word to convey to the reader the idea of Christ’s pre-existence.

This next word of study is a very important word to understand here in this passage. The word is found in verse seven; “emptied” which from this Greek word comes the theological word “kenosis”; i.e., the doctrine of Christ’s self-emptying in His incarnation. "Kenosis" is derived from the Greek word "kenoo" which means "to empty." The NASB, NET and HCSB use the words “emptied Himself” while the NKJV uses the words “no reputation.” Where the wording


\(^{12}\) *Expositor’s Bible Commentary,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), Phil 2:6.
may imply the same meaning to some, the NKJV wording is actually more in line with an interpretation rather than translation of the word and is not lessening the act of what was done.

κενόω kenoō; from 2756; to empty:—emptied(1), made empty(1), made void(2), make empty(1). To make empty, that is, (figuratively) to abase, neutralize, falsify: - make (of none effect, of no reputation, void), be in vain.13

VI. Biblical Context Summary

Paul’s letter to the Philippian church is one of pursuing Christ likeness. The book is about Christ in our life, Christ in our mind, Christ as our goal, Christ as our strength, and joy through suffering. It was written during Paul’s imprisonment in Rome, about thirty years after Christ’s ascension and about ten years after Paul first preached at Philippi. As mentioned in the outline, there seems to be four developments this book focuses on: (1) Paul's account of his present circumstances; (2) Paul's appeal to have the mind of Christ; (3) Paul's appeal to have the knowledge of Christ and (4) Paul's appeal to have the peace of Christ.

Immediate context

Our passage in its entirety is Philippians 2:1-11. If one was to look at the immediate context of both before and after this passage the reader can get a better understanding of what is being said. Paul begins this passage with the word “therefore.” The general rule is if the word “therefore” is used it is a continuation of a previous thought and it is sometimes necessary to go back several passages to find the beginning of the thought. In other words, find out what therefore is there for. In order to do this one need only to look to Philippians 1:27-30.

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”

In these verses it’s clear the “therefore” is referring to the encouragement they had already experienced through Christ. In reality, these “if there is” phrases Paul uses in the beginning of Philippians 2:1 can be better understood with ‘since there is.’ ‘Since there is consolation of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, and since there is affection and compassion’

Now in the next verses there is used another ‘therefore’(so then) at the beginning of verse 12 that continues this same thought of allowing God to work in them and to maintain the same encouragement in Christ by continually working to bring God’s will to fulfillment or competition that Paul mentions in verse 1.

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.”

15 My own interpretive decision
So here we see the immediate context of 2:1-11 is the exhortation to unity in 1:27-30. One can see the οὖν (oun) ‘therefore, then, accordingly’ in 2:1 which clearly connects chapter two with chapter one. In this section, Paul urges the Philippians to live as ‘citizens’ worthy of the gospel by standing firm in one Spirit against the opposition. Paul continues this theme into chapter two where he continues to exhort the Philippians to humility. The section which follows (2:12-18) is also connected to this text by the use of οὖν (oun) “therefore, then, accordingly” in verse twelve. Verses 12-18 are part of the larger encouraging section of 1:27-2:18. In this section, again, the Philippian believers are being exhorted to unity and mutual consideration.

**Contribution to the overall theme of Philippians**

The overall theme of this letter is pursuing Christ likeness. This passage is without a doubt engulfed with the overall idea of being like Christ. One can see this clearly in how Paul focuses in on standing united against division from within (2:1-4) and standing united by following Christ’s example (2:5-11). Unity with fellow brethren in Christ is the message of our passage of study, and pursuing Christ-likeness is the way we accomplish this, more specifically in this passage: Christ-like humility. Unity is absolutely essential because the church is the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27), and the body of Christ cannot be in disunity or disharmony with itself. If disunity occurs, it essentially ceases to be the body of Christ and becomes a disjointed group of individuals. Jesus’ plan for His church is people unified in the faith. How better to be in harmony with our fellow believers than to humble ourselves and serve as Christ did for us?
VII. Theological Context Summary

Of all Paul’s epistles there is none that have a less obvious and systematically laid-out organization and theme than Philippians, which makes coming up with multiple theological principles hard to do for this book of study. Philippians is a composite collection of autobiography, exhortation, encouragement, general news and information, and so on. It does not move definitively from doctrine to practice as so many of his other letters. It is more occasional, and develops themes somewhat more randomly, as specific occasions give rise to doctrinal and practical observations. That being said, even though little direct theological instruction is given there are some theological principles in this passage. There does seem to be a doxological character, but as previously stated it is not this paper’s intention to show this passage as a hymn but as more of a poetic prose. Even with it being treated as a poetic prose there is still a doxological theme and can be thought of as such to a point. So then it doesn’t really matter in verses 6-11 whether or not it is a hymn or poetic prose. In general among Christian traditions a doxology is typically an expression of praise sung as a hymn to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Some use the word doxology to simply express the idea of showing or giving glory to God. If doxology is simply the expression of praise and giving glory to God then this passage without any doubt shows a doxological character as a secondary theological principle, especially at the end of this passage where Paul departs from the humility of Christ straight into the glory in His new highly exalted position as Lord over all creation to which all will bow. The primary theological principle of this passage is Christology.
Christology

When reading through Philippians 2:1-11 the theological principle that comes to mind more than any other is Christology. Christology is the study of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Paul uses phrases such as in verse two, “being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose,” exhorting them to iron out their differences. Paul takes it a step further as he attacks the root of the problem -- personal selfishness. He then proceeds to give the greatest example of selflessness and humility that is found in all of history, the life of Jesus Christ. Paul explores the depths of Christ, revealing his divinity, his pre-existence, his equality with God the Father, his incarnation, his humanity, his death, his ultimate triumph over evil and his exaltation. It seems impossible that one could encompass so much in so short a passage, but Paul captured the essence of all those things as he writes to the church at Philippi. The church at Philippi is experiencing disunity among its members and Paul is writing directly to that subject. This great Christological passage is borne out of the practical exhortation found in verse five, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” The remainder of the passage is a guided tour of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. Paul shows us in this passage that in Christ full humanity, He shows everything about God’s character that can be conveyed in human terms.

After describing the fact of the Incarnation and the humanity of Christ, Paul turns to the consideration of the depths of his humiliation. The concluding phrase in 2:7, “being made in the likeness of men,” states what Christ actually was; the opening phrase of 2:8, “Being found in appearance as a man,” looks at Him from the standpoint of how He appeared in the estimation of mankind. If you look back at the lexical study section of this paper you will remember the word “form” (morphe) and how it is different from the Greek word for the outward change that
we think of (like a shape-shifter) which would have been the Greek word “schema.” Here in verse eight we see the word appearance, which is the word “schema”; this is the external condition expressed in the outward guise, speech and look of a mere man. To look upon Jesus was to simply see the appearance of a man. Just that. Nothing more and nothing less. He was born and raised just as any other Jewish boy and went through the same rituals to manhood as others. As a result of this, His own hometown rejected Him and the Jewish leaders would not accept his messianic claims. Paul reminds the reader of the humanity of Jesus in this one phrase as he endured and had the full experience of life as other men would.

As humbling as it was to condescend into the form of man, Jesus took another step lower and became obedient to death, not just any death but the most shameful, cruel and despicable form of death a man could face, death on a cross. From heaven to earth, from glory to shame, from Master to servant, from life to death, Jesus humbled Himself. Jesus was not obedient to death, but was obedient and submissive to the will of his Father accepting death as a part of salvation’s plan. If Christology is the study of the Person and work of Jesus Christ, than this this passage gives one a great understanding of Christology. If one combines Christology with doxology then one can give glory to God by seeing His own demonstration of humility in His character and applying that to ourselves in order to be unified in the Church through Him and giving God all glory.

VIII. Correlation Summary

*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*

This commentary is lacking in contextual summaries but makes up for it by including a lot of lexical explanations. The opening passage of this commentary reads: “Continued Exhortation:
To Unity: To Humility after Christ’s Example, Whose Glory Followed His Humiliation: To Earnestness in Seeking Perfection, that They May Be His Joy in the Day of Christ: His Joyful Readiness to Be Offered Now by Death, so as to Promote Their Faith. His Intention to Send Timothy: His Sending Epaphroditus Meantime.

This introduction seems to lack much depth on giving any thematic evaluations of the passage. It fails to really bring out the tremendous Christological theme in these verses. Throughout this commentary its focus on this passage is that of unity and not necessarily Christology or doxology. There are some references to how the older manuscripts render some of the verses but it is in places that make little difference and seems needless in some parts. I thought the note on verse 7 was fairly good and may include some information that was left out previously.

“Made himself of no reputation, and ... and—rather as the Greek, “emptied Himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.” The two latter clauses (there being no conjunctions, “and ... and,” in the Greek) expresses in what Christ’s “emptying of Himself” consists, namely, in “taking the form of a servant” (see on Heb 10:5; compare Ex 21:5, 6, and Ps 40:6, proving that it was at the time when He assumed a body, He took “the form of a servant”), and in order to explain how He took “the form of a servant,” there is added, by “being made in the likeness of men.” His subjection to the law (Lu 2:21; Ga 4:4) and to His parents (Lu 2:51), His low state as a carpenter, and carpenter’s reputed son (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3), His betrayal for the price of a bond-servant (Ex 21:32), and slave-like death to relieve us from the slavery of sin and death, finally and chiefly, His servant-like dependence as man on God, while His divinity was not outwardly manifested (Is 49:3, 7), are all marks of His “form as a servant.” This proves: (1) He was in the form of a servant as soon as He was made man. (2) He was “in the form of God” before He was “in the form of a servant.” (3) He did as really subsist in the divine nature, as in the form of a servant, or in the nature of man. For He was as much “in the form of God” as “in the form of a servant”; and was so in the form of God as “to be on an equality with God”; He therefore could have been none other than God; for God saith, “To whom will ye liken Me and make Me equal?” (Is 46:5). [Bishop Pearson]. His emptying Himself presupposes His previous plenitude of Godhead (Jn 1:14; Col 1:19; 2:9). He remained full of this; yet He bore Himself as if He were empty.”

Matthew Henry’s commentary

Matthew Henry’s commentary is focused on biblical spirituality and was alert to the need to glorify God in the whole of life. Overall his commentary is quite good in most areas, including

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18 ibid
his notes on this passage of study. The problem many critics have with Matthew Henry is the belief that he holds to replacement theology. I do not believe there is sufficient evidence to say he was a replacement theologian. Where I do see issues with his hermeneutic style is a failure to make a distinction between Israel and the Church (ekklesia). Henry follows what one would call ‘covenant theology,’ which means he sees a continuing covenant community which he calls the "church". Therefore, you have his expression the "Jewish Church" by which he means Israel. As one reads his commentary on other passages the reader can see how he spiritualizes everything regarding the kingdom, and says that the promises of a kingdom are being fulfilled in the church. It's not that the church has replaced Israel, but that in his mind they are one and the same thing. Of course if one was to be honest calling Israel a “church” is one of the ways to make it sound legitimate, by definition, this is replacing national Israel. The belief that the church has become Israel is not one that, I believe, can be proven exegetically. But none of these issues arise in his commentary of this passage of study. Matthew Henry sticks to a literal hermeneutic throughout most of his notes. At the beginning of his notes on Philippians 2 he states:

“*The apostle proceeds in this chapter where he left off in the last, with further exhortations to Christian duties. He presses them largely to like-mindedness and lowly-mindedness, in conformity to the example of the Lord Jesus, the great pattern of humility and love.*”\(^{19}\)

Here Henry sees the same pattern as I have stated; that of *humility and love*. Henry also echoes a similar idea of exalting His whole person.

“*The human nature as well as the divine: for he is spoken of as being in the form of God as well as in the fashion of man. As it respects the divine nature, it could only be the recognizing of his rights, or the display and appearance of the glory he had with the Father before the world was (Jn. 17:5), not any new acquisition of glory; and so the Father himself is said to be exalted. But the proper exaltation was of his human nature, which alone seems to be capable of it, though in conjunction with the divine.*” \(^{20}\)

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\(^{20}\) ibid
Matthew Henry’s primary focus in his commentary notes is that of the doxological character. His notes are chock-full of pleasant aphorisms in which he seems to delight and uses to penetrate the hearts of the hearers and readers. As stated before in the theological context summary, while I do see a tremendous amount of doxological character in this passage along with the rest of scripture I do see it as primarily focused on the Person and work of Jesus Christ in order that we may find joy in humility and being of the same mind in Christ.

*Holman Concise Bible Commentary*

In this commentary one can read a very quick and concise overview of the passage of study that seems to stick very closely to what the passage says and doesn’t deviate anywhere.

The intro to this commentary reads:

“This very significant section of the letter. Paul urged the church members to dismiss their pride and to live and serve together in unity. Anything less falls short of the gospel’s standards. True unity will be realized by authentic meekness and selflessness, ultimately exemplified in the earthly life of Jesus. The attitude the church should exhibit was the one Jesus maintained. Jesus’ self-emptying served as the basis for the apostle’s exhortation. Philippians 2:5–11, possibly a quotation from an early hymn in praise of Christ, taught that Jesus’ self-emptying led to His exaltation by the Father. Jesus existed in the very nature of God and made Himself nothing, not giving up His deity but His heavenly glory and privileges. He lived a life of humble obedience and humbled Himself even to the point of dying for sinners on the cross. He was then gloriously exalted in His resurrection and ascension. Paul’s exhortation to unity involved Christians’ working out their salvation with fear and trembling. This action brings about a spiritual community void of complaining and friction. They are encouraged to live as lights in the world, thus holding out the word of life to others and providing joy for the apostle on the day of Christ.”

The first thing I noticed in this commentary is that it does not go very deep into any theological meanings, only a very quick *Cliff’s Notes* style that seems to be familiar with most other concise commentaries. Notice in the third sentence where again we see a Christological theme “exemplified in the earthly life of Jesus.” In this commentary one also sees the common idea of verses 6-11 being a hymn, “possibly a quotation from an early hymn in praise of Christ”

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but with no explanations. The reader can see their view on the kenosis theory by reading the statement “Jesus existed in the very nature of God and made Himself nothing, not giving up His deity but His heavenly glory and privileges.” This was extremely important to mention as well.

**Bible Knowledge Commentary (Walvoord and Zuck)**

Walvoord and Zuck state in the preface that they have the hermeneutic method of a grammatical-historical approach and from the pretribulational, premillennial perspective. This hermeneutic method is the same to which I hold. I see right away a common theological context summary that I share in this commentary on this passage which reads:

> “Christ is the supreme example of humility and selfless concern for others (vv. 5-8). These verses, along with verses 9-11, constitute a grand statement on Christology.”

All through the commentary on this passage Walvoord and Zuck echo the same points that I have previously mentioned on things like the Greek word ‘morphe’ and how it is a crucial term to understand. Also on things as the Greek word of ‘schema’ and its meaning of an outer appearance which may be temporary. I am pleasantly impressed with this commentary as it matches almost perfectly with my own. I am very tempted to just quote this entire commentary, but for the sake of redundancy I will refrain. One might be surprised to see that Walvoord and Zuck do not mention the view of starting in verse six where many scholars regard the beginning of a hymn ending in verse 11. There is virtually no mention of this being related to a hymn anywhere in this commentary. It is possible that Walvoord and Zuck are in agreement with my own view in that it is not necessarily a hymn at all; of course this is only speculation. At the end of this great commentary Walvoord and Zuck also move the focus from Christology to doxology, rightfully so in verses 9-11.

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“God the father is the subject in these verses, whereas in verses 6-8 God the Son was the subject. Christ’s obedience was followed by the father’s exaltation of Him to the place of highest honor. God exalted and honored the One men despised and rejected."

Here it is clearly seen that Walvoord and Zuck see the exaltation of Christ which includes his resurrection, ascension, and glorification at the Father’s right hand. The phrase highly exalted in the Greek is the word *hyperypsosen* which literally means "super-eminentely exalted." At the end of this commentary it is stated that “The exalted universal bowing in the future in acknowledgement of His lordship is all to the glory of God the father.” Here again we see how the doxological character in this passage is revealed


Constable also holds to a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic all throughout his notes and consistently so for the most part. Thomas Constable also makes clear that he sees one of the greatest Christological passages in the New Testament here in this passage.

“*In expounding on the importance of unity and steadfastness as essential for partnership in the work of the gospel, Paul dealt first with the importance of walking in unity. Several writers have suggested that unity is the major theme in Philippians. I do not believe unity is a comprehensive enough theme in the book for it to be the main theme, though it is certainly an important sub-theme. Paul explained the basis for unity and illustrated this basis with the example of Christ. He then clarified the believers’ responsibility and further illustrated with his own example and that of two of his fellow workers.*"

This we are in complete agreement that unity is not a comprehensive enough theme in the book for it to be the main theme. One can read another great section of his notes for verses 5-11:

“This verse begins a section of exalted prose that continues through verse 11. Many commentators, however, took this section as an early Christian hymn, but Fee’s rebuttal of this view is convincing. The parallels in thought and action between these verses, which describe Jesus’ humility, and John 13:3-17, which records Jesus washing His disciples’ feet, are striking. The Son of God’s preincarnate state is quite clearly in view here (cf. 2 Cor.8:9). He existed in the form of God. The word translated "form" (NASB) or "nature" (NIV, Gr. morphe) refers to outward appearance that accurately reveals the inward nature. It does not mean outward appearance that changes as a result of time and circumstances (Gr. schema, v. 7).”

24 ibid
26 Gordon D. Fee, "Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?" Bulletin for Biblical Research
One can see how Constable clearly focuses on the Christological and doxological side of this passage as well. The reader can also see how Constable touches on the issue of the hymn view in verses 6-11, in which he cites Gordon D. Fee’s rebuttal as being convincing. I would highly recommend the reading of this rebuttal, it is indeed convincing. Furthermore, Constable gives a very good critical explanation for the Greek word ‘morphe’ and of ‘schema.’ In his notes one should take notice of his mention of the parallels in thought and action between these verses, which describe Jesus' humility, and John 13:3-17, which records Jesus washing His disciples’ feet. This is something I did not really touch on much before and I think it is a very enjoyable parallel to mention.

**Questionable Commentary (Various theologians)**

There are some very questionable commentaries out there that have heretical views on this passage. There is a particular view called the ‘Doctrine of Kenosis’ and it pertains to "Kenosis" which is derived from the Greek word "kenoo" which means "to empty." It is used in Phil. 2:7. This theory states that Jesus gave up some of His divine attributes while He was a man here on earth. These attributes were omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. They would say that Christ did this voluntarily so that He could function as a man in order to fulfill the work of redemption. It is believed by most that this view was first introduced in the late 1800s in Germany with a man named Gottfried Thomasius (1802-75), a Lutheran theologian in his literary work called ‘Christi Person Und Werk.’ Thomasius argued that the pre-existent Word emptied (Gk., kenoo, Phil. 2:5-11) himself of all attributes deemed incompatible with our manhood and
exchanged the form of God for the form of a servant.\textsuperscript{28} If enough research is done on this one can see that the concept of kenosis was not new in Christian theology. Others had earlier affirmed a kenosis by which Christ temporarily emptied himself of the use of divine attributes, suspending their employment during the time of his humiliation.

There also later theologians that held to this view, such as; Wolfgang Friedrich Gess (1819-1891), Isaac August Dorner (1809-84).\textsuperscript{29} Although it is rare to see anyone in the evangelical community hold to this theory it is important to mention because of it’s a very dangerous doctrine, if it were true then it would mean that Jesus was not fully divine. If Jesus was not fully divine, then His atoning work would not be sufficient to atone for the sins of the world. Any creditable consistent biblically sound theologian knows without any doubt that the correct doctrine is the ‘Hypostatic Union’ which is that Jesus is both fully God and fully man as one can clearly see in Col. 2:9 along with multiple others verses throughout scripture. Christ did not give up any divine attributes while as a man on earth.

Overall the five primary commentaries discussed here reaffirm my previous statements. I am also quite surprised in the lack of poor doctrine in this area that I assumed would be more pervasive.

\textbf{IX. Analysis & Impact}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, \textsuperscript{2} make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. \textsuperscript{3} Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; \textsuperscript{4} do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. \textsuperscript{5} Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, \textsuperscript{6} who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, \textsuperscript{7} but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. \textsuperscript{8} Being found
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{28} Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 38 (1894), p. 102–104.

in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even
death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name
which is above every name. 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in
heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is
Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1-11 - NASB)

Paul begins this passage with the word “therefore.” The general rule, as I stated earlier, is if the word ‘therefore’ is used it is a continuation of a previous thought and it is sometimes necessary to go back several passages to find the beginning of the thought. In this particular instance one only needs to go as far back as Philippians 1:27-30 to find the answer. After reading Philippians 1:27-30, it’s clear the “therefore” in verse 2:1 is referring to the encouragement they had already experienced through Christ. Immediately preceding this ‘therefore’ is where Paul relates to the encouragement they had experienced by stating “if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort provided by love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any affection or mercy.” The phrases Paul uses here (if there is) can be better understood with one’s own interpretive decision by reading it as ‘since there is.’ This could be read ‘Since there is consolation of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, and since there is affection and compassion.’ All four of these ‘if there’ clauses found in verse one introduce the command found in verse two.

Verse two, which reads “make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining
the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” Here one sees that Paul’s joy is linked to
the mission of unity for believers in the church. Paul shows the reader how to accomplish this,
“by being of same mind,” which in Greek means ‘think the same way.’ Then Paul instructs to maintain the same love for one another. Paul also throws out one of his coined terms by saying “united in spirit,” this term literally means ‘one-souled’ and is meant to describe the believers as brought together in harmony, having the same aspiration, devotion, and eagerness. This verse

ends with what can be considered the primary purpose of all churches, which is being intent on one purpose—to glorify God.

Verse three reads “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.” This is a continuation on how one can be united in spirit. Paul introduces an appeal to humility as the means to promote unity. Dr. Constable has some notes here in this passage that are good to consider:

“Paul was not advocating an unrealistic view of life. He was not saying we should view everyone as better than ourselves in every way. His point was that we should view others as worthy of more consideration than we give ourselves (cf. 1:15; Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 5:5-6).”

Verse four reads “do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” Here is where so many of us have problems with the application as this command is more difficult to do than one might think. In reality our nature fights against these things that Paul is exhorting them (and us) to do. This can only be done with the help of God’s spirit in us that is given through Christ. This verse contains no new command; it is simply a clarifying of the command of verse three.

In verse five Paul offers an illustration of the kind of humility to which he is exhorting. “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” This verse is merely pointing them to the voluntary descent into humility and telling them to embrace the same attitude in themselves, which can be done with God’s leading and His example which is given in this passage.

In verse six, Paul shows us that Jesus eternally has been God, “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.” As discussed in the lexical section of this paper, Christ existed in the form of God. The translated word "form" (Gr. morphe) refers to an outward appearance that accurately reveals the inward nature. It does not

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31 Dr. Constable’s Notes on Philippians 2013 Edition
mean an outward appearance that change as a result of time and circumstances (Gr. schema, v. 7). As stated in the correlation summary on the paper, Constable gives a very good critical explanation for the Greek word ‘morphe’ and of ‘schema.’

“This verse begins a section of exalted prose that continues through verse 11. Many commentators, however, took this section as an early Christian hymn, but Fee’s rebuttal of this view is convincing. The parallels in thought and action between these verses, which describe Jesus’ humility, and John 13:3-17, which records Jesus washing His disciples’ feet, are striking. The Son of God’s preincarnate state is quite clearly in view here (cf. 2 Cor.8:9). He existed in the form of God. The word translated “form” (NASB) or “nature” (NIV, Gr. morphe) refers to outward appearance that accurately reveals the inward nature. It does not mean outward appearance that changes as a result of time and circumstances (Gr. schema, v. 7).”

He did not regard his equality with God to be “grasped” (harpagmos). The fact that the word only appears in this passage in the entire New Testament makes its translation extremely difficult (BDAG, 133 and Kittel, Vol. I, 473). This word is best translated as “grasped.” It means the act of seizing or the thing seized. Though Christ had all the rights of deity—which He was worthy of and could never be taken from Him—His attitude was not to grasp onto those things or His position but to be willing to give them up for a time and a purpose.

Moving forward into verse seven, “but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.” Here one runs into the “kenosis theory” that was covered multiple times in this paper. This verse is telling us that Jesus set aside His rights and privileges as God in order to humble Himself as a servant taking on all the attributes of humanity, becoming fully man and remaining fully God. Christ’s “emptying” of Himself is simply His acceptance of human flesh with all of its limitations without ceasing to be God. Verse eight continues this description of Christ’s humility by stating, “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

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32 Gordon D. Fee, "Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?" Bulletin for Biblical Research
This is where we see how Christ not only humbled Himself from King to servant but does so to the point of death.

Verses 9-11 are where Paul shows how all of this is to the glory of God. “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Christ’s voluntary humiliation described in verses 6-8 is the basis for His high exaltation in verses 9-11. Here is where it all unfolds and every tongue will one day confess openly that Jesus Christ is Lord and all the glory will go to the Father.

**Conclusion**

Paul’s great desire is the same as any genuine believer -- to see his followers walk in unity. This means to have unity we need humility that regards another as more important than you (v. 3). Our Lord (through Paul) urges us to follow the example of Jesus who although held an invaluable position at the right hand of the Father, was willing to lay aside that position in order to become man and die on the cross to purchase our salvation. This passage shows us that Christ, who did not need to humble Himself, did humble Himself, and as a result was exalted; likewise the Philippian believers should humble themselves so that they too might be exalted. If you or anyone needs help in achieving the humility that is given here as an example in this passage one only needs to look further into this epistle Philippians 4:11–13, this is a verse is about contentment. It’s not about your dreams coming true or your goals being met. Rather it’s about being joyful, satisfied, and steadfast even when life is hard and your circumstances seem impossible.
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