

Exegetical study of philippians 2:1-11

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Exegetical Study of Philippians 2: 1-11 The purpose of this paper is to perform a thorough exegetical analysis of Philippians 2: 1-11. In order to accomplish this purpose, the basic contents of the passage will be surveyed.

In addition, any relevant issues from the background of the letter will be examined. This passage will be interpreted in its context so that its meaning will fit into the overall meaning of the letter. Most importantly, a verse by verse exposition of the text will be given which will trace the author's flow of thought. Finally, a summary of this study's findings will be given along with some points of personal application. Step 1: Biblical Text 1If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (KJV) Step 2:

Historical Background Overview of Passage Philippians 2: 1-11 consists of two main sections. The first section (vv.

1-4), contains a twofold exhortation to unity and humility. In verses 1-2, Paul issues his appeal to unity. This appeal is based upon four parallel lauses describing four shared experiences of the Philippians. In verses 3-4, Paul issues his appeal to humility. This appeal is to regard others more highly than their own selves.

In the second section (vv. 5-11), Paul illustrates the kind of humility to which he is exhorting the Philippians by the example of the condescension of Christ. In verses 5-8 a series of clauses are strung together which detail Christ's humble descent from the throne of God to the death of the cross. Verses 9-11, however, leave the example of the humiliation of Christ to glory in His new highly exalted position as the enthroned Lord over all creation. Verses 6-11 have been recognized as an early Christian hymn dedicated to the person and work of Christ.

Background of Philippians The city of Philippi was formally established in 356 B. C. by Philip II of Macedon. Philippi was established as a Roman colony after a famous battle was fought there involving Mark Antony, Octavian, Brutus and Cassius. Philippi was governed by Roman law with its citizens having all the rights of property ownership and the right to civil lawsuits. Everything about Philippi was modeled after its mother city, Rome.

The church at Philippi was established by the Apostle Paul on his second missionary journey between A. D. 49 and 52. The story of the church's origin is found in Acts 16. The first convert was a woman named Lydia " whose
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heart the Lord opened” (Acts 16: 14). More dramatically, the Philippian jailer and his household were converted after Paul and Silas were thrown into jail after being beaten publicly.

When God miraculously opened the jail doors and released the prisoners’ shackles, the jailer came in ready to take his own life. Paul shouted out that all the prisoners were present and the jailer then asked, “ What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16: 30). To which Paul famously replied, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house” (Acts 16: 31).

Interestingly, Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from another incarcerated situation. There are three basic theories concerning where Paul was imprisoned at this time: Rome, Ephesus, or Caesarea.

The traditional view regards Rome as the location from which Paul wrote to Philippi and this author believes the internal evidence is too strong to overturn this traditional understanding. Step 4: Context Context of Philippians 2: 1-11 Verses preceding: 9For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me. Verses succeeding: 12Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. As in the interpretation of any passage of Scripture, the correct interpretation of Philippians 2: 1-11 rests upon a careful examination of its context. Paul is writing the letter to the Philippians in order to thank them for their gift which they sent by Epaphroditus to him in prison.

Although some scholars have argued that the current Epistle to the Philippians was originally several separate letters, based upon the sharp change of tone in 3: 1, the “ therefore, then, accordingly” in 2: 1 clearly connects chapter two with chapter one. The immediate context of 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”. 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 “ therefore” in verse twelve. Verses 12-18 are part of the larger parenetic section of 1: 27-2: 18.

In this section, again, the Philippian believers are being exhorted to unity and mutual consideration. Step 8: Grammar Study 2: 1 As noted above this paragraph is linked with the previous one by a “ therefore. ” Therefore, Paul is continuing his appeal to unity begun in 1: 27. This verse consists of four clauses, each beginning with “ if any. Each of these four clauses refer to the shared experience of the Philippians and the Apostle.

These common experiences are introduced to promote unity among these Christians. These four “ if” clauses, though, should not be interpreted as a mere possibility, but as an assumption of the truth of the statements. All four of the clauses found in verse one introduce the command found in verse two. 2: 2 In verse two the second half of Paul’s conditional statement is given. It is a command based upon the assumed common experiences of verse one.

The command is to “ fulfill my joy. The means of fulfilling this command is then given in four clauses which emphasize unity by synonymous

expressions. The way in which the Philippians can “ fulfill” Paul’s joy is by having “ the same mind,” “ the same love,” “ one-souled,” and by being “ intent on one purpose”. The command is for unity. 2: 3 In verse three Paul introduces an appeal to humility as the means to promote unity.

“ Unity is impossible if each is out for himself, each is promoting his own cause, each is seeking his own advantage”. Therefore, Paul exhorts the Philippians to do “ nothing according to selfishness nor according to conceit. Instead they are to “ in humility consider each other surpassing yourselves. ” When everyone in the church values everyone else’s needs and desires above his or her own needs and desires, the result will inevitably unity. 2: 4 In verse four Paul clarifies what he means by his command to “ consider each other as surpassing yourselves. ” The participle “ looking out for” is the way in which believers can esteem others as superior to them.

This verse contains no new command, merely a clarifying of the command of verse three. : 5 In verse five Paul offers an illustration of the kind of humility to which he is exhorting the Philippians by pointing them to the condescension of Christ. The mindset of Christ is the “ mindset” which believers are exhorted to emulate. In the following verses Paul either composes or utilizes an already existent hymn to detail the humiliation of Christ. 2: 6 In verse six Paul describes how that although Christ preexisted in the “ form of God,” He did not regard His position as a highly prized possession. Although Christ was pre-existing in the form of God, He did not regard his equality with God to be “ robbery”.

The difficulty of translating this word (the KJV incorrectly translates it as “ robbery”) comes as a result of it only appearing once, in this passage, in the entire New Testament. Instead of “ robbery”, it should be translated “ a highly prized possession”. Christ, therefore, did not regard His equality with God as a “ highly prized possession” to be held onto. Instead, “ He counted humanity His prize, and so laid aside the conditions of His preexistent state, and became man”. 2: 7 In verse seven Paul describes the first of two successive actions of Christ in His humiliation. The first action is explained by the verb “ made himself nothing.

” This literally means “ he emptied himself. ” Some scholars have argued that this term means that Christ emptied Himself of His divine nature. However, “ That was impossible. He continued to be the Son of God”. Instead, “ Christ gave up his environment of glory. .

. . He took upon himself limitations of place (space) and of knowledge and of power”. In fact, the text tells us exactly what Paul means by this. The text goes on to explain that Christ was “ taking the form of a servant” and was even “ becoming in likeness of a man.

Therefore, Christ’s “ emptying” of Himself is simply His assumption of human flesh with all of its limitations without ceasing to be God. 2: 8 In verse eight Paul describes the second of two successive acts of Christ in His humiliation. Here we see His final step downward. He “ humbled himself” to “ death”. But not just any death, even the “ death of a cross”. This implies “ voluntary humiliation”.

This word shows “ how the self-emptying manifests itself”. 2: 9 In verse nine Paul describes the last step in Christ’s round trip journey from glory to glory, His exaltation by the Father. The verse begins with “ therefore” which ties together verses 9-11 with verses 5-8. This simply means that Christ’s voluntary humiliation described in verses 6-8 is the basis for His high exaltation in verses 9-11. The word translated “ exalted” means to “ raise someone to the loftiest height”. Likewise the Father has given the Son “ the name above every name.

” 2: 10 In verse ten Paul explains the purpose of God in giving Christ “ the name above every name. ” This verse is connected to the preceding one by the subordinate conjunction of purpose “ in order that. God’s purpose is first that “ every knee will bow” to the Lord Jesus. This universal authority extends to those “ in heaven and on earth and under the earth. ” This is in the subjunctive mood.

Normally the subjunctive mood refers to potential action. Therefore, Paul is not merely arguing God’s desire that “ every knee should bow” and “ every tongue should confess”, he is declaring the intention that God will most certainly carry out. “ The fulfillment of this divine intention will take place at the parousia”. 2: 11 In verse eleven Paul continues to explain the purpose of God in giving Christ “ the name above every name” (v.).

Not only will “ every knee bow,” but as noted above, “ every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”. This has the idea here of “ frank, open confession” (Philippians 2: 11). It means “ to declare openly in acknowledgment”. Every tongue will one day confess openly that Jesus

Christ is Lord and all the glory will go to the Father. Summary and Application The purpose of this paper has been to perform a thorough exegetical analysis of Philippians 2: 1-11.

These eleven verses consist of two main sections. The first section (vv. 1-4), contains a twofold exhortation to unity and humility. In verses 1-2, Paul issues his appeal to unity. This appeal is based upon four parallel clauses describing four shared experiences of the Philippians. In verses 3-4, Paul issues his appeal to humility.

This appeal is to regard others more highly than their own selves. In the second section (vv. 5-11), Paul illustrates the kind of humility to which he is exhorting the Philippians by the example of the condescension of Christ. In verses 5-8 a series of clauses are strung together which detail Christ's humble descent from the throne of God to the death of the cross. Verses 9-11, however, leave the example of the humiliation of Christ to glory in His new highly exalted position as the enthroned Lord over all creation. The main application of this passage should be obvious at this point.

Since Philippians 2: 1-11 is part of a larger pericope section in which Paul is exhorting the Philippian believers to unity through humility. Paul's great desire is the same as any true man of God's: to see his followers walk in unity. The means to that unity is a humility that regards others as more valuable than oneself. Believers are urged to follow the example of Jesus who although He really held a valuable position, willingly relinquished that position in order to become man and die on the cross to purchase our salvation. Since none of us possess as lofty a position as did the preincarnate

Christ, none of us will ever have to humble ourselves to the extreme which He did. Therefore, we should be all the more willing to humble ourselves in a way that is by far inferior to the humiliation which He experienced and which Paul holds forth as an example to us in this passage.

Step 10: Study of different translations NIV | KJV | ASV | 1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, | 1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, | 1 If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, | 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. | 2 make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; | 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, | 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 3 doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; | 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. | 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

| 4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: | 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ
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Jesus:| 5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:| 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;| 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:| 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,| 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 7But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:| 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;| 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! | 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. | 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,| 9Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:| 9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;| 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,| 10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;| 10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth,| 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. | 11And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

| 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. | Step 13: Word Study Exalted – Throughout the New Testament, exalted means “ to be lifted up high above all else. This word is important because it tells about God being raised up a revered as the most Holy being in the universe, and it also makes some references to men being exalted if they obey God’s statutes. Humbled – To be humbled is used as meaning “ to be lowered and made meek and modest, or put in one’s place. ” The effect this has on the text is that it is mentioned multiple times throughout the scriptures that man must humble himself before God, and among others.

This is how we remain faithful and Godly. Step 18: Central Thought My text, Philippians 2: 1-11, is about humility. It teaches that one should humble himself amongst all others, and especially to humble himself before God. Because God is to be exalted above all things and above men, and we should praise him accordingly and confess that Jesus is Lord to all living beings.