

## PHILIPPIANS 2, PAUL'S HYMN WHERE JESUS IS EXALTED

Paul wrote in his epistle to the Philippians chapter 2 that believers must do nothing out of selfish ambition but each one must humbly think of everybody else as better than him or her. He declared that each one must look to the interests of others and not their own see verse 2:4 in the Jerusalem Bible. It is not translated properly in the treacherous New International Version. He then declared that rather than thinking of oneself first and not others first we must have the attitude of Christ Jesus.

He goes on to say that though Christ Jesus was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped or taken. He emptied himself taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he was obedient unto death on a cross and God raised him high and gave him the name that is above all names. Now at the name of Jesus everything that exists should confess that he is Lord and bow. This exaltation of Jesus would happen to the glory of God the Father. " And every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This is supposed to say that Jesus was God. Then why does Paul say he was in the form of God and not simply say he was God? The Old Testament mentions gods which really means men who were in the form of God but who were not actually God. Paul says Jesus did not hold on to his equality with God and this is a thing to be grasped. He means it is understandable. Jesus refused to be put on a pedestal. It is not a mystery of how a man who is God can refuse to hold on to his equality with God. Its understandable. Jesus refused to be worshipped as God. Worship of Jesus is an insult to him.

God commanded in the Old and New Testaments that he is to be loved with all our hearts and powers. He demands to be worshipped. Jesus could not be an example of sacrificing himself for others and putting them first if he was God. God simply cannot put others first for he has to put himself first too for he is goodness itself.

Paul says Jesus emptied himself to take the form of a servant or slave. If you give away all your wealth, and become a servant you could be said to be taking the form of a servant. If you live as a slave but have fabulous wealth that you simply don't use then how could you be said to be taking the form of a servant? You would be playacting. You may pretend to be an accountant and be an impersonator of the accountant but you are not an accountant. Jesus then to be a real servant would need to stop being God, need to stop being in control of the universe. This is impossible and Paul recognised that it would be impossible so if Jesus really emptied himself he was not God.

The believers say that Paul said that though Jesus was in the form of God, he didn't cling to equality with God but became a slave. How then was Jesus equal to God if he was not God? Jesus was in the likeness of God like a mirror reflecting and taking in the glory of God. He didn't cling to equality with God. In other words, rather than wanting to be God or equal to God or like God he chose to be a slave. None of this indicates that Jesus was God or entitled to seek equality with God, it only says that he didn't seek it.

God raised Jesus high and gave him the name which is above all names. Name means authority. Christians say this name is Lord or Kyrios. God is called Lord and Kyrios in the New Testament. Is Jesus God? But if Jesus was God, even if he emptied himself of power, he was still God. He couldn't get the authority as God back for he had never lost it. To say Kyrios here means Jesus is God is really to voice the absurd idea that Jesus only became God at his resurrection. The best solution is that to say that Jesus became Lord God at his resurrection only makes sense if we keep focused on how the hymn is about names. Its only a name. Jesus was not literally Lord God.

Jesus refused worship so he accepts Lord not as title of worship but just as an honorific title. He accepts the title only to please the Father. So it is not a case of him being recognised as Lord but declared Lord.

Now it is entirely possible that the man only became known as Jesus at his resurrection. That was when he got his name. Jesus means God saves. So saviour then would be the name above all names. This by the way would prove that the notion that Jesus was only known when he rose from the dead is valid.

Whatever name or authority Jesus got, he got it according to Paul only for the sake of God's glory. So ultimately the name or authority he got though it is the highest is not as high as God's. If Jesus only became Jesus then the gospels are packs of lies for having Jesus spoken of as Jesus and saviour before his resurrection.

Even if Philippians did say that Jesus was God we would be entitled to not take it seriously when Jesus behaved in such a way as to imply that you should think of others and not yourself. If you are not worth thinking about how could others be worth thinking about? See the hypocrisy? See the contradiction?

