



The Name Above Every Name

Last time, we saw the incredible sacrifice and awe-inspiring humility Christ exhibited by becoming obedient to the Father, even to the point of death on a cross (cf: [Phil 2:5-8](#)). From here, we are given a glimpse into the heavenlies and the events that followed Christ's resurrection and glorification, and those that will occur at the end of this age:

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. [Phil 2:9-11](#)

There is so much to unpack in this sentence that we could spend weeks studying and contemplating the gravity of what Paul presented, but today we'll just summarize a couple important points.

To start, this passage testifies to the separate nature of God the Father and Christ; they are clearly different beings. The text says ***God highly exalted Him***. Who's Him? It would make no sense to say that God the Father highly exalted and bestowed upon Himself ***the name above every name***. Sound biblical hermeneutics require that we understand this as God *the Father* exalted and bestowed this upon Christ *the Son* (cf: [John 1:14](#), [3:16](#), [20:31](#), etc); two distinct persons.

This also affirms that the Father is at the very top in the heavenly hierarchy as He already possessed a universal authority from which He was able to grant. Christ could not simply "take" the name above every name, as it had to be ***bestowed*** or given to Him by the Father. It was ***for this reason also***, Christ's perfect submission and obedience to His Father's will, as demonstrated in verses 5-8 and others such as [John 6:38](#), [15:10](#), and [Matt 26:39](#), that God the Father graciously and freely gave this position to Christ.

I say "position" because the word translated *name* is from the Greek "[onoma](#)," which can mean a personal name, but can also speak of *rank* or *authority*, and in this case that definition seems to fit the context much better. The Father gave the position of ***authority above every authority*** (except His own) to Christ. This aligns perfectly with what we find when Christ is presented as King of the world in [Revelation 17:14](#) and [19:16](#): ***"And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'"***

And ***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***. Again, this



reasserts that Paul's use of onoma is better associated with the complete *authority* granted to Christ by the Father. Every knee will bow not simply at the English name "Jesus", but at Christ's utmost power and dominance when He takes His permanent seat on the throne of David (cf: [Luke 1:32-33](#)). He will indeed be King of kings and Lord of lords!

Another fascinating truth in this passage is that everyone who has existed in creation ***will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord***. Everyone. We know this because Paul says this includes ***those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess***.

Those ***in heaven*** are angels and other spiritual creatures, both in service to God and those who've rebelled. Yeah, that includes Satan too! Those ***on the earth*** are all who are alive at the time of Christ's coming in glory. And those ***under the earth*** are those who've died since the time of Adam, yet to be resurrected. If that weren't enough, Paul says ***every knee*** and ***every tongue***. So no matter who you are or think you are, where you are, when you lived or died, or if you believed or not, you will ***confess that Christ is Lord***. There is no getting out of it.

The Greek for *confess* is [exomologeō](#) and can mean both to *give praise* or simply to *agree with*. I imagine the saved will be the ones giving praise loudly and with exceeding joy, but those who've rejected Christ will be the ones who are indeed agreeing that Christ is Lord while realizing they have fully earned their eternal judgement by despising His offer of salvation.

As is typical for Paul, he closes this incredible passage – which again is just one sentence in Scripture – with what feels like a giant exclamation point. Why did Christ obey to the point of death? Why was Christ given this authority above every authority? Why will every knee bow and every tongue confess? ***To the glory of God the Father***. It's truly that simple and reminds us of our purpose for existing in the first place. Our job, no matter who we are or where we are, is to bring glory to God. Christ, our heavenly example, did this perfectly, and through His power and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can bring God glory, too. We won't do it perfectly like Christ, but we should always be striving to do so in our thoughts, family, social interactions, work, and even hobbies.

Want to know your purpose in life? Seek to use each moment for God's glory. The rest will fall into place as He works His will in our surrendered hearts and lives.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece

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