

## THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

Philippians 2:9-11

**Intro:** As we approach another Christmas season, the people of the world in all of the nations are compelled to give some thought, even though it may be very fleeting, to the birth of Jesus Christ. Our own government has sought to silence Christians from speaking of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, but that is an event which neither men nor nations can possibly assign to obscurity. It even seems to me that this year more people are saying, “Merry Christmas,” and more of the Christmas carols are being heard over radio and TV. And all of this is more than 2,000 years after that central event of all history took place. God Himself has kept that event alive even with people who give little thought to God or the Bible at any other time during the year.

The birth, the life, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ are grossly misinterpreted to the minds of many people in the world. It was announced to Joseph that the Child Who would be born to Mary would in a special way be born to die! We see this from the words which were spoken by the angel of the Lord to Joseph while he was considering, what we would call, breaking his engagement with her because he had learned that she was expecting a child before they were married. As hard as it was for him to accept, he could only come to one conclusion: she had been unfaithful to him before they were married. But being a righteous man, and not wanting to humiliate her publicly by divorcing her, he intended to break the engagement secretly. But then we read these words in Matthew 1:20 and 21, words spoken by the angel of the Lord, which changed Joseph’s mind completely. This is what Matthew wrote about what the angel said to Joseph:

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

The angel told Joseph what the Child’s name would be, but also implied in his message to Joseph that this Child was specifically *born to die!*

But then Matthew, in writing this account, went on to explain from the OT that this would be a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 7:14. I will read to you what is in Matthew 1:22-25:

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,  
23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.  
24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:  
25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Now I have read this passage in the Gospel of Matthew in which we have the quotation from Isaiah's prophecy in which it had been predicted that Mary's child, who would be a son, had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, thus meaning that He would be God, that he was coming to be a Savior from sin, and that His name would be JESUS!

Actually even before the Lord God put Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden because they had sinned by disobeying Him, He said this which is recorded for us in Genesis 3:15:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Now those who read the Bible know that genealogies are recorded usually from the man's family. But here the Lord spoke of the woman's seed, which we know now meant that JESUS would be virgin-born.

Now the teaching of Scripture is that there are Three Members of the Godhead: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. It was God, the Son, Who was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit. And so the baby JESUS was both God and Man.

Now before the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, probably the same angel (although he is simply called the angel) appeared to Mary that she was "highly favored . . . among women," and then Luke went on to tell us what the angel said to Mary in these words:

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS (Luke 1:30-31).

Moving on down three verses, we read:

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I

know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:34-35).

We glory in this truth because, if we are saved from the penalty of our sins, we know that it is because the Holy Spirit has opened our hearts to understand that “Christ Jesus,” as the Apostle Paul called him in Philippians 2:5, was God’s Son, Who became a Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, without ceasing to be God’s Son. God named His Son JESUS because He came to earth to save us from our sins. We rejoice in that. We praise God for teaching us why He sent His Son into the world as a Man. He came to die for us because there was no other way for us to be forgiven. And we are eternally happy that we know this, and happy that God has given us the faith to trust in Christ for our salvation.

But Philippians 2:6-8 teaches us that the whole time that our Lord spent on earth, from His birth as a human baby to His death on a criminals cross was all a most humiliating experience for Him. Many would look upon Him as just a Man. We can probably say that most would ridicule any thought that He was the Son of God. The Jewish leaders hated Him because they were jealous of the relationship He had with the Jewish people. He was a threat to their power over the Jewish people, and so they were not satisfied until they were able to get Pilate to deliver Him to death by crucifixion as they would kill the worst of criminals.

Why did the Lord Jesus Christ submit to such terrible treatment at the hands of men? Philippians 2:8 says that He was being obedient. Obedient to whom? Obedient to whom? Obedient to His heavenly Father. But why would the Father ask His Son to do such a thing? John 3:16 gives us that answer. And so does Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth His love for us . . .”

But there was also another reason. Not only did God love us, but Christ Himself loved us. In Ephesians 5:2 we are told that those of us who are Christians that is those of us who are trusting Christ as our Savior, are to “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and have given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor.”

I hope we all understand this. Christ did not die for us because we

deserved it. He died for us because the Father loved us, and because He loved us. There was no other way that anybody could possibly be saved.

As I mentioned last week, verses 6, 7, and 8 tell us what Christ did, especially what He did for God; verses 9, 10, and 11 tell us what God did for Christ. (Read verses 9, 10, and 11.)

Verses 6 through 11 read something like a doctrinal statement, don't they? They probably were. These were truths which found full acceptance among believers in Paul's day. And the word "wherefore" at the beginning of verse 9 definitely relates the exaltation of Christ to His humiliation. Verses 6 through 8 are history; verses 9 through 11 are yet to be fulfilled.

What has the Father done for His Son because of how His Son humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross? There probably is no worse death to die than to die by crucifixion.

First, God has highly exalted Him. This tells us that in heaven, after the Lord was raised from the dead, and had ascended back to the Father in heaven, His status in heaven and before the angels of heaven, was as high, and even higher than it had been before He went to earth to become a Man, and to die primarily in obedience to the Father's will. I don't know how our Lord could have greater glory as God's Son than He had had from all eternity, but that is what seems to be the meaning that He was "highly exalted" by the Father.

Second, God exalted His Son by giving Him a Name. Bible teachers have had different ideas as to what that Name is, but I am satisfied that we are told the Name here in the text. It is the Name that He was given at His birth on earth. Now we are told that He has been given that Name in heaven. It is the Name, JESUS.

Now what does this tell us? It tells us, for one thing, that our Lord's humanity is eternal. Do you remember what happened when the Lord ascended to heaven and it is said that "a cloud received Him out of their sight"? Let me answer my own question by reading to you Acts 1:10-11:

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into

heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Did you notice the words, “this same Jesus”? Our heavenly Father honored His Son, exalted His Son, by making Him the first human being to enter heaven *glorified!* We are going to have bodies like He has, but He was the first One to have it.

JESUS is the Name that belongs uniquely to our Lord. I feel sure that none of you would name a child of yours, Jesus. This was His Name as a Man, as a human being. His full name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Professing Christians, pastors, and the like, who do not believe in the Deity of our Lord, like to speak of Him only as Jesus. But that is because of their ignorance of that Name, and why it was given to our Lord. It identifies Him as the Savior, the only Savior. It is like Joshua in Hebrew. The angel who appeared to Mary and later to Joseph, made it very clear that our Lord’s Name as a Man on earth was Jesus. Paul here in Philippians indicated that Jesus is still His Name in heaven.

But the final aspect of the glory given to our Lord Jesus Christ is to be seen in the words in verses 10 and 11. (Read.)

Isaiah 53 tells us prophetically about the reception that the Lord would receive, and did receive, when He came the first time. These two verses (10 and 11 in Phil. 2) speak of a time when there will be universal worship, submission to, and exaltation throughout God’s creation as predicted in Isaiah 45:23. These are the ideas in every knee bowing. The Lord will be honored as the God-Man, the Person that He will be throughout eternity. It seems that the best idea behind the words “in heaven,” “in earth,” and “under the earth,” is that this is a way of expressing what will be universal. And that seems to be justified by the expression, “every tongue” in verse 11. The Lord Jesus Christ will be honored by what people do, bowing the knee, and by what they say, “that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

Christ came into this world to glorify the Father by His obedience even unto death. The whole purpose of redemption is the glory of God the Father. God was glorified by the obedience of our Lord on earth even to death, and such a death on the Cross. And God ultimately will be glorified when every knee bows to Jesus Christ, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We do not know when this will be – probably in the new heaven and the new earth when God's purposes are finally consummated. But whatever the time schedule may be, we know that it is coming. How different it will be even from what it is now.

**Concl:** When Spurgeon spoke on this text as a young man, he saw in it great encouragement for the people of God who can justly anticipate what God's purpose for His Son, Jesus, is. We can be sure that this will not be the result of the ministry of the Church, nor of Israel, but of the sovereign power of God Who will glorify Himself in the glorification of His Son.

Two verses from our Lord's prayer in John 17 show how the Lord anticipated the return of His own glory, as He faced the Cross, knowing what the outcome would be. I am referring to John 17:4-5:

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Next week, the Lord willing, I want us to go back to the first of these seven verses, having seen what the mind of Christ was toward God the Father, to see what it will mean to have the mind of Christ in us. Spend some time this week re-reading and meditating on Philippians 2:5-11.