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## Day 1

**Learn:** Prayerfully read Philippians 2.5-11. We learned last week that Christ is the eternal Son of God, who shares the divine essence and equality with God the Father, though he is distinct from God the Father. We learned that Christ did not insist on his rights and powers as the Son of God, rather humbly condescending to become one of us, born as the human baby Jesus. As a person, he was pure in character, and therefore he was an obedient slave to God the Father. And though he was born as the rightful king of Israel and thus, under God's covenants, was the most powerful and important person in the world, he again gave up his rights and powers to humbly obey God the Father's will, by fulfilling the prophecies about the Messiah-savior [Christ], who would sacrifice himself on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Paul and Timothy wrote that *believers should have this same mindset as Christ!* We should be willing to sacrifice and suffer for the gospel mission, be humble enough to sacrifice to bless each other and build unity in the church, obey God like slaves, and be characterized by humility instead of selfish ambition and vanity. Christ is our example, revealing the character of God and what perfect humanity looks like.

2.9 begins with "therefore," telling us that 2.9-11 is the result of 2.5-8. We will come back to that later in the week. In 2.9, the Greek verb ὑπερυψώω [hoo-peh-roo-PSAH-oh] means God "super-exalted" Christ, God the Father lifted Christ from the lowest depths to the highest heights, from a humiliating death on the cross to be the resurrected conqueror and king. The verb χαρίζομαι [khah-RIH-dzah-my] means God "freely gave" Jesus the name above every name. This is not only something *due* to Christ [as "therefore" suggests], it also is something *freely given* by God the Father. The name of Jesus is now above all others. When we think of the savior, it is Jesus; when we are asked who heads the church, who is lord of our lives, who will return as king and judge, we say Jesus. At the end, when Jesus returns to judge everyone who has ever lived, *everyone* will bow in reverence to him.

**Reflect:** When you think of Jesus, what first comes to mind [write down five things]? Do you tend to think of him as the gracious savior, the loving advocate in Heaven, the gentle friend we have in God, or the humble and sacrificial servant who died for us? What about the most important person ever, the most powerful being in the universe, the one who owns you and is your king, lord, and judge? Jesus is the name above all others, and in the end, we all will bow to him, because we finally will fully realize who he really is, his splendor and power will awe us. Pray to Jesus, submit to obey his leading in your life, express your reverence and sense of dependence on him.

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## Day 2

**Learn:** Prayerfully read Philippians 2.5-11. The text says this exaltation that results in everyone bowing to Jesus and acknowledging him as Lord will bring glory to God. How can that be? All through the Old Testament, God warns that he is the only God, and all worship belongs to him. Why would God allow people to worship Christ, let alone cause it and desire it? Because Christ also is God, isn't he? As we learned last week, before coming as baby Jesus, Christ already existed eternally as the divine Son of God, sharing equality and the divine essence with God the Father. So to glorify or exalt Christ takes nothing away from God. Read Isaiah 45.18-25. God says he is the Savior, he is the only God, and everyone will bow to him and swear allegiance to him. Paul refers to this passage in Philippians 2.10-11, but there he says everyone will show this reverence to Jesus.

**Reflect:** Do you tend to pray to God the Father, to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit? Do you think it is more correct to pray to one of them than the others? Jesus reveals God to us in a way we can better understand; so would it be wrong to feel more comfortable praying to him than to God the Father? If God the Father intends for everyone to show worship to the Son of God in the end, would it be wrong to worship both of them now? When you think of Jesus, do you think of him as God, not just as the human savior? Be sure to pray again today, to express your allegiance to Jesus; confess your faith in him as the Son of God and as the Christ-savior.

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## Day 3

**Learn:** In the Isaiah 45 passage you read yesterday, God refers to himself by the name he gave himself earlier in history, "Yahweh." In our English Bibles, whenever this name appears, it is translated as "LORD" all in capitals. Since Paul is referring to this Isaiah passage in Philippians 2.9-11, it is worthwhile to ask if he is saying more there than

that everyone will confess Jesus as lord of all; perhaps he is saying that everyone will confess Jesus is LORD, that is, that Jesus is Yahweh, that Jesus is the Son of God, truly the one God always known as Yahweh. The way the Greek is written in 2.11 does suggest “lord” is either *qualitative* or *definite*: in other words, that Paul is saying we will confess Jesus is *lord-like* or that Jesus is “*the Lord*” = Yahweh. Which would you think he meant? Paul’s point is not just that Jesus is our master [Lord], but that everyone will confess that Jesus is Yahweh-God [LORD], that he is the divine Son of God equal with God the Father, just as Paul said in the beginning of this paragraph, in 2.5. Everyone acknowledging that Jesus the Christ is the divine Son of God [Yahweh] will bring glory to God the Father [Yahweh].

**Reflect:** I like to show you things in Greek or Hebrew that help us understand the passage, but you can see this in English too. Read Philippians 2.5-11 again. Notice Paul’s point at the beginning? *That Jesus is God*. Now look at his point at the end; what is he saying? Hebrew writers liked to tie a passage together by saying the same thing at the start and at the end, creating “bookends” in a sense. Think about what it means to you that Jesus is really God, not just man. Why is that important?

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#### **Day 4**

**Learn:** Prayerfully read Philippians 2.9-11 again. 2.9 begins with “therefore,” “for this reason,” or “as a result” [depending on your translation], tying all this to 2.5-8. It seems as though Christ has earned God’s exaltation by being perfectly humble and obedient, and by willingly sacrificing to die on the cross. In one sense this is true. Jesus was the perfect person, pure, sinless, without corruption. He deserves to be exalted above the rest of us. But there is more to who Jesus is and what he accomplished, and both of those have to do with his exaltation. We have already seen that God the Father would exalt Jesus to the point of our worship only because Jesus is the divine Son of God in the flesh. It is because he is the divine Son of God and Messiah-savior, as well as because of his perfect humility, obedience, and willingness to sacrifice for the gospel mission, that God the Father exalts him to the fullest. Not just anyone could step into this role, right? If Christ were not the Son of God, he could not have lived a perfect life, he could not have demonstrated humility by condescending to be human, he could not have accomplished anything with his sacrifice on the cross. Only Christ, the Son of God, was destined to be God’s anointed savior, king, judge, and high priest. God the Father exalts Christ in part because he was destined to be exalted, based on who he was before creation; but also because Christ lives that out, fulfilling his mission. Christ did not humble himself to get a reward, but as the pure and divine Son of God he knew who he was and what he had to do, to justify the result. Also, since Jesus’ humble life and death masked his true identity, God the Father exalts him to reveal it.

**Reflect:** As the perfect person, Jesus is our example to follow. His humility led to his exaltation. Read what Jesus taught in Matthew 23.11-12. Humble sacrificial service leads to our exaltation. This is the model Christ has for us. We cannot be exalted as highly as Jesus because we could not have so far to humble ourselves, nor can we do it as thoroughly since we struggle with sin; but to be exalted in Christ’s kingdom, for eternity, we need to be humbly obedient and humbly sacrificing now. Read James 4.10; 1 Peter 5.6, 10. Does Christ inspire you to be more humble and selfless? How could you better live that out?

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#### **Day 5**

**Learn:** Paul says that in the end all will confess Jesus as the LORD, as Yahweh, but that does not imply that all will accept the gospel and be saved. All will bow the knee in submission, but some will confess as they are condemned and must obey the punishment. In 1.27-2.4, Paul commanded we live worthy of the gospel, defending the faith and integrity of the gospel, being willing to suffer and sacrifice for God and the gospel mission he gave the church, putting aside our selfish ambitions and vanity to be humble servants for each other. In this passage, he shows us that Christ modelled all that for us to follow, and thus revealed this as the character of God we are to reflect. Christ sacrificed and suffered so we could have spiritual life, eternal life; we should rejoice in whatever part he gives us to help others have the same and to serve in his name.

**Reflect:** Everyone who lives will die, and everyone who dies will go to Heaven or Hell. When Jesus comes back to judge, he will resurrect all the dead and judge them for eternity: to be forever with him in bliss or to be forever apart from him in torment. Our purpose in life is to help people find and follow Jesus Christ, so that everyone hears the truth and receives the offer of grace. With what unchurched people could you build relationships? Pray to start doing so and for wisdom about helping each person to see Christ in you.