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CONFORMITY TO CHRIST: AN EXEGETICAL
AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S
PERSPECTIVE ON HUMILIATION AND
EXALTATION IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

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To Papa and Mama,
with deep love and appreciation

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Ancient Christian Texts
<i>Aeth.</i>	<i>Aethiopica</i>
<i>Alex. fort.</i>	<i>De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
APF	Apostolic Fathers (Greek) Version
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologeticus</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BSR	Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose
<i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmina</i>
<i>Cat. Maj.</i>	<i>Cato Major</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCSS	Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
<i>EDG</i>	<i>Etymological Dictionary of Greek</i>

<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>Exh. cast.</i>	<i>De exhortatione castitatis</i>
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
GE	Greek-English Dictionary. Montanari, Franco. <i>The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek</i> . Edited by Madeleine Goh and Chad Schroeder. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015.
HDC	High Definition Commentary
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
<i>Ign. Trall.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Trallians</i>
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTC</i>	<i>Journal for Theology and the Church</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>The Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
LXX	Septuagint
LXT	LXX Septuaginta (Old Greek Jewish Scriptures). Edited by Alfred Rahlfs. Stuttgart, Germany: Württembergische Bibelanstalt / Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (German Bible Society), 1935.
MCNT	Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament

MNTC	The Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NA ²⁸	Nestle-Aland. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . Edited by Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger. 28 th rev. ed. Stuttgart, Germany, 2012.
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
<i>NIDNTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testament Supplement
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTGPAI	Novum Testamentum graece perpetua annotatione illustratum
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>De oratione</i>
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>Pol. Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
Pss Sol	Psalms of Solomon
<i>Saec.</i>	<i>Carmen saeculare</i>
Sir	Sirach
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromateis</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
THNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
THNTC	The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary

<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TLCP	Travaux de L'Institut Catholique de Paris
TLNT	Theological Lexicon of the New Testament
UBS ⁵	United Bible Societies. <i>Greek New Testament</i> . Edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger. 5th rev. ed. Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014.
UCL	Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis
<i>Ux.</i>	<i>Ad uxorem</i>
<i>VE</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZNWKAK	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

PREFACE

Dissertation writing is a journey of the heart and mind. There are times it feels like I'm writing a "*desert-tation*" and at other times it is like a "*dessert-tation*." I realize I can *choose* to make it a trek of drudgery and dryness—boring, meaningless, perfunctory—and make it seem like a *desert* experience. I can also *decide* to make it a pilgrimage of growth and gratitude—learning, growing, exploring—and make it as sweet as a *dessert*. I always remind myself to embrace the latter, even though many a times it may seem like I'm wandering through a long, dark tunnel and could not see the light at the end. Humanly speaking, it is much easier to consider it just another requirement to fulfill, another task to get done, another project to finish. As I look back over these past few years of my Ph.D. studies, I know deep in my heart that there is more to it than just a degree or a title.

I thank God that after I have served him in full-time ministry for two decades, he gave me this rare opportunity to study again. I treasure every chance to learn and let God prepare me to be at my best to be ready at his disposal. As I write *my* dissertation, I slowly understand that I am *his* dissertation. He is writing precious life lessons in my heart everyday as I journey with him. As I pour my heart into the study of Philippians, I learn to *think* and *evaluate* from God's perspective to be more *conformed* to Christ—indeed, the title of my dissertation should not simply be a title on paper, but also engraved in my heart and mind!

My family is a blessing to me, especially Papa (who is already in heaven) and Mama, who not only brought me to faith at a young age, but even encouraged and supported my ministry. My ninety-three-year old mom is my best prayer partner. I am also deeply indebted to my brothers, sisters, and other members of the

family who extended their support spiritually, emotionally and financially. They are taking very good care of my mom when I am so far away from home, which afforded me the peace of mind to stay focused on my studies.

I am deeply grateful for my supervisor, Dr. Mark A. Seifrid. He is not only my academic adviser, but also a mentor and spiritual father. Being one of the few female doctoral students at Southern Seminary, I appreciate him for believing in me and affirming me as a member of the *distinct* minority on campus. When he was on sabbatical in Germany, he made it a point to respond to my e-mails in the shortest time possible and took the time to read my dissertation prospectus and provide insightful feedback, prepared and checked a segment of my Comprehensive Exams, and wrote numerous letters of endorsements for scholarship applications and proposals for academic presentations. It was heartbreaking for me when he decided to move to Concordia Seminary, but he never abandoned me as an “academic orphan” even after he moved to Missouri. I have the assurance that he has my back not just for my academic pursuits; he is equally interested in my personal, spiritual, and ministerial concerns. I am also thankful for my dissertation committee members—Dr. Robert L. Plummer and Dr. Brian J. Vickers—and all the New Testament faculty at Southern for imparting their knowledge and modeling love for the Word of God.

This journey would have been lonely if not for friends around the world who continue to cheer me up and intercede for me. I am also blessed with wonderful church families in the Philippines, Taiwan, and here in Louisville. I also love working at the campus store; it is a delight to be part of the Fifth and Broadway team. Indeed, I am blessed and am ready to be a blessing!

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Louisville, Kentucky
May 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Philippians is among the best loved of the apostle's epistles. Some of the favorite Bible verses for many generations of Christians are drawn from this letter.¹ There are also several passages in the letter that have been extensively examined and interpreted by New Testament scholars. Among them are the two passages that will be the focal texts of this dissertation, namely, Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the research on Philippians 2:5-11 focus on issues related to its origin and authorship (whether it is a hymn used in early Christian worship or an original composition by Paul), interpretation (whether kerygmatic or ethical interpretation is best suited), structure (whether it consists of six three-line stanzas² or twelve irregular lines that form a chiasm³ or some other arrangements), and other major exegetical and theological issues. Most of the studies on Philippians 3:7-11 frequently investigate the theme of union with Christ ("in Christ") and explain some key terms such as knowledge of Christ, power of his resurrection, fellowship in his

¹Some of the well-known verses in Philippians are 1:6, 21; 2:5-11; 3:7-11; 4:4, 6-8, 13, 19.

²Silva cites this structure proposed by Lohmeyer as "attractive in its simplicity and exegetically useful." Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 93.

³See Robert H. Gundry, "Style and Substance in 'the Myth of God Incarnate' according to Philippians 2:6-11," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, ed. Porter Stanley, Paul Joyce, and David E. Orton, BIS 8 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1994), 280-82.

sufferings, and righteousness.⁴

Despite the overflow of secondary literature and intense scrutiny of these two passages, there is very little in-depth study on their relationship.⁵ William Kurz explains that this apparent neglect is because of critical methods which treat these two chapters as fragments from different letters and because Philippians 2:6-11, in particular, is treated as an isolated hymn.⁶ Hence, many fail to notice the parallelism.⁷

Most scholars usually do not mention or discuss these two passages together. And for those who do mention it, it usually takes the form of a slight hint. There are some scholars who suggest that Paul is echoing Philippians 2:5-11 when he penned the profoundly personal yet highly Christological words in Philippians 3:7-11. The parallelism stems from two sources, namely, verbal association and thematic connection. First, Moisés Silva mentions four obvious verbal correspondences: ἡγέομαι (2:6; 3:7-8), μορφή (2:7) with συμμορφίζω (3:10), εὕρισκω (2:7; 3:9), and κύριος (2:11; 3:8).⁸ Unfortunately, he did not go beyond alluding to these links to examine more closely the relationship. In the introductory chapter of his Philippians commentary, Silva interjects that the astonishing frequency of φρονέω

⁴See Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); Veronica Koperski, *The Knowledge of Christ Jesus My Lord: The High Christology of Philippians 3:7-11* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996); L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*, JSNTSup 78 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1993).

⁵Kurz intimates that “few have given much attention to a very significant pattern in chs. 2 and 3 which proposes for imitation Christ’s and Paul’s parallel examples of their own prerogatives.” William S. Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation of Paul and of Christ in Philippians 2 and 3,” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 103.

⁶Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation,” 103.

⁷Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation,” 103. Kurz advocates a strong parallelism between the second and third chapters of Philippians. He also believes that both passages should be interpreted as kenotic examples of Christ and Paul for believers to emulate (103, 105).

⁸Silva, *Philippians*, 155. Kurz also identifies ἡγέομαι in 3:7-8 as a significant link to 2:6. Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation,” 105.

in the letter points to its significance and also hints that it is associated with other related terms like ἡγέομαι (2:3, 6; 3:8), σκοπέω (2:4; 3:17), and λογίζομαι (3:13; 4:8).⁹ He laments that this distinct feature has often been hinted by commentators but has not been developed except for the monograph of Josef Heriban.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Silva himself fails to elaborate on how φρονέω is specifically related to ἡγέομαι in Philippians 3:7-8 and explain its impact on how Paul reckons his assets and liabilities.

Second, in terms of thematic connection, Michael Brynes insinuates that Paul's decision to relinquish all his Jewish privileges to know Christ and conform to the pattern of his death resonates with the self-emptying act of Christ.¹¹ Like Jesus, who did not consider (aorist ἡγήσατο 2:6) his equality with God as something to be grasped or exploited, Paul has considered (perfect ἡγήμαι 3:7) whatever things (ἅτινα) were his gain as loss because of Christ. Like Jesus, who emptied himself, Paul considers (present ἡγοῦμαι 3:8) everything (πάντα) as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus. Like Jesus, who takes the form (μορφὴν 2:7) of a slave, Paul is being conformed (present passive participle συμμορφιζόμενος 3:10) to his death. Paul wants to share in the sufferings of Jesus who humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross. He also wants to know the power of the resurrection and somehow attain the resurrection of the dead. He also

⁹Silva, *Philippians*, 21. The verb φρονέω occurs 10 times in 7 verses in Phil: 1:7; 2:2 [twice], 5; 3:15 [twice], 19; 4:2, 10 [twice]. The other 16 occurrences appear 13 times in other Pauline letters (Rom 8:5; 11:20; 12:3 [twice], 16 [twice]; 14:6 [twice]; 15:5; 1 Cor 13:11; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10; Col 3:2) and only 3 in non-Pauline literature (Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33; Acts 28:22). Fee notes that it occurs at "critical moments." Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 89n79. Fowl observes that the verb appears "often at crucial places." Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 28. Paulsen comments, "Paul uses this word with striking frequency and usually expresses it with single-minded commitment to something and the conditions for such commitment." Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. "φρονέω *phroneō*," by Henning Paulsen.

¹⁰See Jozef Heriban, *Retto φρονεῖν e κένωσις: Studio esegetico su Fil 2, 1-5. 6-11*, BSR 51 (Rome: Liberia Ateneo Salesiano, 1983).

¹¹Michael Brynes, *Conformation to the Death of Christ and the Hope of Resurrection: An Exegetico-Theological Study of 2 Corinthians 4,7-15 and Philippians 3,7-11* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2003), 13.

acknowledges Christ Jesus, the one whom every tongue should confess is Lord (2:11), as “Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:8). One other important thematic connection that is rarely noticed is Paul asserts he wants to know Christ (infinitive γινῶναι in 3:10) and extols the surpassing value of knowing Christ (genitive noun γνώσεως in 3:8). Both knowledge terms are intricately related to the mind of Christ in the Christ-hymn. Koperski makes this well-suited connection:

An important function of the *knowledge of Christ* terminology is the subjective perception which is able to recognize that the crucified Christ is now the exalted Lord of glory, and further, on the basis of that act of discernment, to trust that this Christ is savior of those who acknowledge him as Lord. This ability to perceive correctly despite outward appearances, which has come to Paul with the knowledge of Christ, is something which Christ had already (cf. 2:6), when, being in the form of God, he did not hesitate to voluntarily empty himself and take the form of a slave.¹²

History of Interpretation

I will survey the history of interpretation under two sub-sections. The first sub-section will focus on research related to Philippians 2:5-11. The second sub-section will present the scholarship on Philippians 3:7-11 and feature writings that discuss the relationship between these two passages.

Works on Philippians 2:5-11

The research on Philippians 2:5-11 is very extensive. From the Reformation onwards ethical interpretation is the dominant explanation, but a significant shift came about through Lohmeyer, Käsemann, and Morgan with the so-called kerygmatic interpretation.¹³ Kerygmatic interpretation treats the passage as a

¹²Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 290–91 (emphasis original). What Koperski calls “perception” is what I refer to as “perspective.”

¹³Peter-Ben Smit pinpoints Lohmeyer’s Kyrios Jesus as “the fountainhead of most interpretations rejecting an ‘ethical interpretation’ of Phil. 2.5-11, replacing it with what may be termed a ‘kerygmatic’ interpretation . . . even if it was Käsemann’s study of 1950 that was particularly vehement in its rejection of any such interpretation.” Peter-Ben Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ: A Study of the Epistle to the Philippians*, LNTS 476 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 8.

dogmatic presentation of Christology regarding Christ's pre-existence, incarnation, and exaltation with special emphasis on soteriology. Ethical interpretation refers to the view that the passage is intended as a paradigmatic example of Christ's humility and obedience for the church in Philippi that struggles with disunity and rivalry. I will discuss four major works that represent these two main lines of interpretation.

There are innumerable works that contribute to the understanding of Philippians 2:5-11, but two of them stand out as "monumental landmarks" in the history of interpretation of this passage—Lohmeyer's monograph *Kyrios Jesus* first published in 1928 and Käsemann's "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5-11" in 1950.¹⁴ Moreover, Ralph Martin's *Carmen Christi* in 1967 (published with a new title *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* in 1997) is considered a classic work on the hymn, while N. T. Wright's essay on ἀπαγγέλιος in 1986 (published as a chapter with revision in his book *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*) provides fresh new insights based on Hoover's groundbreaking philological studies.¹⁵

¹⁴Ralph P. Martin, "Carmen Christi Revisited," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 1. See Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2, 5-11, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1927-28, 4. Abhandlung*, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1961); Ernst Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5-11," *ZTK* 47, no. 3 (1950): 313-60; Ernst Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5-11," in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 51-95; Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 45-88. Cullman remarks that Lohmeyer's work must be taken as the starting point for any subsequent study of the passage. Oscar Cullmann, *Vorträge und Aufsätze, 1925-1962*, ed. Karlfried Fröhlich (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1966), 665. Morgan affirms this evaluation: "The most important contribution to the interpretation of the Christ-hymn in Philippians was and remains Ernst Lohmeyer's short monograph *Kyrios Jesus* (1927/8)." Robert Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology: Ernst Käsemann's Interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 45.

¹⁵Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, SNTSMS 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997); Nicholas Thomas Wright, "ἀπαγγέλιος and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5-11," *JTS* 37, no. 2 (October 1986): 321-52; Nicholas Thomas Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991); Roy W. Hoover, "Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution," *HTR* 64, no. 1 (January 1971): 95-119.

Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus* (1928). Lohmeyer's epic work in 1928 unleashes a new wave of interpretation that challenges the traditional (ethical) interpretation of the Christ hymn. Lohmeyer's contributions are his form-critical analysis of the hymn as a pre-Pauline psalm with two strophes, his suggestions regarding its role in the eucharistic worship of the church in Jerusalem and how it played a part in the development of Christology, and history of religions interpretive approach.¹⁶ He introduces the idea that the twin motifs of the Isaianic suffering servant (Isa 53) and the son of man (Dan 7) are merged in the hymn with the use of the expressions *μορφὴν δούλου* and *εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος* in Philippians 2:7 in a way that characterizes later "heterodox" Judaism.¹⁷

Lohmeyer's interpretation is typically considered kerygmatic, but he does not completely do away with the ethical interpretation. He differs, however, from the ethical idealism that only views Christ as an ethical example.¹⁸ Rather, he argues that Christ in his humiliation is a revelation of God and asserts "the objectivity of a divine-human or cosmic event."¹⁹ He recognizes God's saving activity presented as a myth in the hymn, but maintains Christ serves as the model and leader for Christians in this cosmic event.²⁰ He preserves the doctrine of Christ's divinity

¹⁶Colin Brown, "Ernst Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 6; Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 51. The two strophes are divided by *διὸ καὶ* in 2:9. Each strophe has three stanzas and each stanza has three lines. Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 5–6, 89. For Lohmeyer, "this Christ-hymn is truly the *locus classicus* of primitive christology, for it brings together the most diverse lines of primitive Christian theology and piety and the fundamental problems of faith in a clear, unified picture of 'classic greatness.'" Brown, "Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," 20 (emphasis original). See Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 89.

¹⁷Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 51. Lohmeyer intimates that Jewish apocalyptic finds its roots in Iranian myth. He suggests that Philippians 2 does not refer to Christ's ministry on earth, but it is the myth of the preexistent one's incarnation and exaltation (51).

¹⁸Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 53.

¹⁹Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 53.

²⁰Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 85.

without restricting it to the two-natures Christology of the Chalcedonian dogma.²¹

Ernst Käsemann, “Kritische Analyse von Phil 2:5-11” (1950). Käsemann’s original article in German is first published in 1950 and translated into English by Alice F. Carse in 1968.²² Five main features of Käsemann’s interpretation are (1) his adamant rejection of the passage as an ethical example; (2) his insistence on the hellenistic milieu in contrast to a Palestinian source; (3) the main thrust of the hymn is soteriology; (4) the meaning of obedience is in one’s willingness to serve even in the face of humiliation;²³ and (5) his emphasis on Christ as cosmic ruler and man’s subjection to the powers.²⁴

In the first part of his article he offers critical evaluation of the interpretation and contribution of a few major scholars on their analyses of Philippians 2:5-11. He considers Ernst Lohmeyer’s commentary on Philippians and his monograph *Kyrios Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2, 5-11* as among the best works on the passage. Some key points in Lohmeyer’s argument are his thesis that the passage is a Christological hymn belonging to the oldest Palestinian tradition that existed before Paul, his creative insight into the portrait of Christ as mythical with martyrdom motif, his perspective that the images are derived from the Servant of God and Son of Man in the OT, and his view that the hymn’s *Sitz im Leben* is its eucharistic liturgy.²⁵

It is interesting to note that even Käsemann himself acknowledges “the

²¹Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 53–54.

²²Käsemann, “Kritische Analyse,” 313–60; Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 45–88.

²³Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 83.

²⁴Käsemann elucidates, “The ‘form of the servant’ designates the being of man in his subjection to the powers” and thus 2:7a and 2:7b are parallel. Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 67.

²⁵Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 46.

pericope had been almost universally understood since the time of the Reformation from the perspective that humility and self-denial are presented in the example of Christ as the correct ethical attitude for the Christian.”²⁶ Although Lohmeyer embraces the prevailing tradition of the example of Christ, he transcends its “naïve ethical idealism” and argues for a “worldwide revelation-event.”²⁷ Nevertheless, Lohmeyer still ends up with ethical idealism when he seeks to soften soteriology into cosmology and metaphysics by emphasizing that Christ’s example should be imitated.²⁸

At the opposite end is Karl Barth who excludes ethical idealism (*contra* Lohmeyer) entirely and adopts the interpretation of Philippians 2:5 by Hofmann and Kögel that ἐν Χριστῷ refers to the realm of Christ and should not be construed as a paradigmatic example.²⁹ For Barth, the term μορφή pertains to an appearance or perceptibility by which the divine form can be set-aside without nullifying Christ’s equality with God, resulting in Christ becoming perceptible *only* at the resurrection.³⁰ Käsemann thinks this is unwarranted since the text neither deals with perceptibility nor with the resurrection.³¹

The third edition of Martin Dibelius’s commentary on Philippians reveals some influences of Lohmeyer.³² In the second edition the verses on μορφή θεοῦ and μορφή δούλου are considered of Pauline authorship with “christological modification

²⁶Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 46.

²⁷Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 49.

²⁸Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 85.

²⁹Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 51.

³⁰Karl Barth, *Erklärung des Philipperbriefes* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1928), 53-62.

³¹Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 52.

³²Martin Dibelius, *An Die Thessalonicher I, II, An Die Philipper*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1937).

of a *descensus* myth” that reflects his ethical emphasis on Christ’s humility and willing obedience.³³ In the third edition Dibelius accepts that a hymn exists but Pauline composition is still probable, and that 2:9-11 lacks any paraenetic remark, which makes it difficult to refer to ethical example as the theme for the entire passage. Nonetheless, he refocuses on ethical idealism by pointing to the paradox of the salvation-event as seen in Christ’s life through the “re-evaluation of current values,” that is, Christ’s lordship is achieved through humility.³⁴

Wilhelm Michaelis in *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper* rejects Lohmeyer’s proposal that the text refers to OT images of the Servant of God and Son of Man and its connection with the theme of martyrdom.³⁵ Like Lohmeyer, he asserts that the text does not deal directly with the work of salvation accomplished by Christ. Michaelis believes that the text has only one central thought, i.e., Christ’s obedience towards the Father’s will.³⁶ He supports his thesis by pointing to the possibility that the pre-existent one was tempted and his equality with God is understood as *res rapienda*.³⁷ He defines *μορφή* as an “essential, individual character” instead of external appearance or nature.³⁸ Michaelis’s concern is that Christ’s identity remains the same regardless of the stage in his career.³⁹

In the second part of his article Käsemann provides his own interpretation regarding key concepts in the passage. Robert Morgan succinctly describes

³³Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 52 (emphasis original).

³⁴Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 55.

³⁵Wilhelm Michaelis, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper*, THNT 11 (Leipzig, Germany: Deichert, 1935), 34.

³⁶Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 56.

³⁷Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 56.

³⁸Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 56.

³⁹Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 56.

Käsemann's thesis which also serves as the theological motivation behind this essay: "The Christ-hymn of Phil. 2:6-11 is not to be understood in ethical terms as providing an example of humility for Christians to imitate, but rather in kerygmatic terms as a drama of salvation. The dialectical theology's repudiation of liberal Protestantism's ethical idealism stands as godfather to this interpretation."⁴⁰

Regarding the second stanza of the hymn, Käsemann quickly points out that the *διό* introduces a new subject. The hymn shifts to the exaltation of Christ instead of the usual Pauline Christological theme of resurrection.⁴¹ Käsemann believes that this slight difference portrays Christ as the cosmic ruler (*pantocrator*), which is also the crux of this passage.⁴² The name *kyrios* that is granted to the exalted one serves as a "plus" so he is now revealed and rules openly to a certain extent.⁴³ He intimates, "The divine act at the enthronement of Christ shows that the action of him who was obedient on earth affects the whole world and is a salvation-event; it shows that this obedience was more than an ethical deed on the part of an individual, it was revelation."⁴⁴ He reiterates that the last three verses of the passage reveal Christ as the cosmic ruler and that the power over the entire cosmos is effectively transferred to him.⁴⁵

The third section of the article presents a "unified" view of the hymn as a whole. Käsemann states that Philippians 2:5 unpacks Paul's primary purpose in adapting the hymn. The classic ethical interpretation would supply *ἦν* or *ἐφρονήθη* as

⁴⁰Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 43.

⁴¹Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 76.

⁴²Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 76, 81.

⁴³Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 76.

⁴⁴Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 77.

⁴⁵Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 80.

the missing verb in the second part of the verse and consider ἐν Χριστῷ as paradigmatic.⁴⁶ Käsemann contends that the ethical motif is not justified if ἐν Χριστῷ is understood as the typical Pauline formula “in Christ.”⁴⁷ He explains that Paul’s usual pattern of exhortation is to present the indicative which is then followed by the imperative. In this case Christ is not presented as an ethical example in the hymn but that the technical formula ἐν Χριστῷ refers to “salvation-event” that carries with it a soteriological meaning.⁴⁸ Hence, the entire hymn serves as the basis for Christian conduct, i.e., the imperative flowing directly from the indicative, specifically Christ’s work of salvation.⁴⁹ In conclusion, Käsemann declares that the hymn is a confession in the sense that the church proclaims him as the *cosmocrator* and “calls the Christian community again into the realm where it must stand, act and suffer, i.e., into the realm ‘in Christ,’ into ταπεινοφροσύνη and into obedience, into the freedom of the saved.”⁵⁰

Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (1967). Ralph Martin’s work on Philippians 2:5-11 is considered a classic on the treatment of the hymn of Christ. The first part of the book provides extensive background on hymns in early Christian worship. Philippians 2:6-11 is classified as a christological hymn in the

⁴⁶Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 83.

⁴⁷Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 84. Käsemann elucidates, “. . . vs. 5 introduces the hymn, and that the Philippians are admonished to conduct themselves toward one another as is fitting *within the realm of Christ*” (84; emphasis added).

⁴⁸Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 84.

⁴⁹Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 84. Käsemann emphasizes that even the second part of the hymn is a “necessary basis for the parenthesis,” not just an “excursus” (84).

⁵⁰Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 87. Käsemann argues, “No ethical model is posited. . . . Rather, we have here the witness that the world belongs to the obedient one, and that he became lord that we might become obedient. However, we do not become obedient through an example, but through the word which witnesses to the fact that we belong to him” (87).

NT.⁵¹ This *carmen Christi* is analyzed according to its literary form and authorship. Before presenting the main lines of interpretation in the twentieth-century, Martin revisits the three dominant views of nineteenth-century scholarship: (1) The dogmatic view situates the self-emptying of Christ and his refusal to take advantage of his equality with God, not to his preexistence, but to the time of his incarnation particularly when he was tempted in the wilderness;⁵² (2) The kenotic theory states that Christ through his incarnation emptied himself of His divine qualities of omniscience and omnipotence so that only his humanity is revealed and manifested in his incarnate state;⁵³ and (3) The ethical example interpretation, which persists even to this day is gaining wider support among scholars, considers the passage “a piece of popular theology” rather than a Christological argument.⁵⁴ It is an exhortation to imitate the example of Christ’s humility to achieve unity in the Philippian church.⁵⁵ Of these three views, the “kenotic theory” has largely disappeared due to later emphasis on grammatico-historical exegesis.⁵⁶ A closer look at *kenosis* in the context of the entire hymn would dictate against establishing a kenotic theory on the basis of a single verse.⁵⁷

Martin summarizes five major hypotheses in twentieth-century scholarship. The first comes from Ernst Lohmeyer who identifies a heterodox Judaism

⁵¹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 19.

⁵²Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 63.

⁵³Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 66–67.

⁵⁴Archibald T. Robertson, *Paul’s Joy in Christ: Studies in Philippians*, ed. W. C. Strickland, rev. ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 1959), 69.

⁵⁵Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 69.

⁵⁶Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 67.

⁵⁷Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 67. See Käsemann, “Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2. 5-11,” 70; John Stewart Lawton, *Conflict in Christology: A Study of British and American Christology, from 1889-1914* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 132.

background wherein the hymn is traced back to the Servant of Yahweh in the OT and also an Iranian myth of the Primal Man, a heavenly redeemer who descended to save mankind and ascended back to heaven.⁵⁸ The second hypothesis points to a Hellenistic background of the hymn advanced by Martin Dibelius and articulated in full by Ernst Käsemann. The latter believes that the hymn is devoid of any ethical teaching and sees no connection with the OT but places it in the context of “cosmic drama of redemption and in the form of the *Urmensch* gnostic myth.”⁵⁹ He insists that the hymn is predominantly soteriological in nature and it outlines Christ’s preexistence, incarnation, and exaltation in the unfolding of the events in salvation instead of a christological declaration about the nature or person of Christ.⁶⁰ The third hypothesis focuses on OT background, either from the Isaianic Servant poems or the accounts of Adam or Lucifer who both want to seize what rightly belongs to God because they want to be like God.⁶¹ The remaining three hypotheses are less common and more mystical, namely, specific Hellenistic examples in Greek history and mythology like the “Divine Hero” Christology of A. A. T. Ehrhardt and W. L. Knox wherein Jesus is compared with Alexander the Great or Herakles;⁶² historical allusions suggested by K. Bornhäuser in which Paul was thinking of emperor

⁵⁸Lohmeyer also assumes the eucharistic setting for this hymn which was not supported by most scholars. Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 94–95.

⁵⁹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 76.

⁶⁰Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 76. Käsemann grounds his argument on the “technical meaning of ‘in Christ.’” He intimates that the hymn is “a solemn reminder that they are ‘in Christ’ and as such brought into the sphere of redemptive history, i.e. into the Church by the One who was obedient and wrought salvation by placing them in a new world.” He concludes that the hymn sets forth the “indicative of divine action” wherein God brings his people into “the realm of God’s rule” and the imperative is the call to “live out the meaning of that membership of Christ’s Church.” Käsemann, “Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2. 5-11,” 94; Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 85–86.

⁶¹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 78.

⁶²See A. A. T. Ehrhardt, “Jesus Christ and Alexander the Great,” *JTS* 46 (1945): 45–51; Wilfred Lawrence Knox, “The ‘Divine Hero’ Christology in the New Testament,” *HTR* 41, no. 4 (October 1948): 229–49.

Caligula who grabbed hold of divine honours;⁶³ and baptismal setting for the hymn is postulated by Jacob Jervell who brings together both the soteriological and ethical aspects by associating them in baptism where worship and early Christian experience blend together.⁶⁴

In light of the recent interpretation Martin delves into a detailed analysis of the hymn phrase-by-phrase in the second part of his book. In a span of seven chapters he discusses several key themes of the hymn: (1) the pre-existent being (v. 6a); (2) his choice (v. 6b, c); (3) his incarnation (v. 7a, b); (4) his abasement (v. 7c, 8); (5) his exaltation (v. 9); (6) the universal homage (vv. 10, 11a); (7) the Christological confession (v. 11b, c).⁶⁵ Aside from his own exegesis he also interacts with various scholars and evaluates their interpretation.

The last part of the book is a brief discussion of the hymn's *Sitz im Leben* in the first century. The presupposition is that the passage is “an independent, hymnic composition in praise of the cosmic dominion of the *Kyrios*, Jesus Christ.”⁶⁶ Before suggesting an alternative proposal, Martin presents the objections to an ethical interpretation. The syntax of verse 5 makes it difficult to support KJV's translation “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” rather it should be rendered thus: “Act as befits those who are in Christ Jesus.”⁶⁷ Paul also never uses Jesus' earthly life as an “*exemplum ad imitandum*.”⁶⁸ He argues that imitation is not

⁶³Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 80. See Karl Bernhard Bornhäuser, *Jesus imperator mundi (Phil. 3:17-21 u. 2:5-12): Vortrag vor den theologischen Fachschaften von Groningen, Kampen, Amsterdam (städt. Universität), Utrecht und Leiden* (Gütersloh, Germany: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1938).

⁶⁴Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 82.

⁶⁵Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 99–283.

⁶⁶Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 287.

⁶⁷Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 288.

⁶⁸Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 288.

the predominant motif in Paul's ethics, rather it is death and resurrection, i.e., "death to sin in baptism and a sharing of His risen life in the Spirit."⁶⁹ The last three verses of the hymn would become irrelevant or even harmful to ethical exhortation if the hymn is simply a paradigmatic example for believers to imitate.⁷⁰

Martin pulls together the various threads of his exegesis and provides an interpretation which highlights the theme of Christ's lordship as evidenced in the beginning and end of the hymn: δ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (v. 5) and κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (v. 11). Paul's ἐν Χριστῷ is a reminder that since the believers are incorporated into Christ, they are "called to live a life which has His redeeming acts as its foundation."⁷¹ In the final verse of the hymn, the confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" is sung by the church, by echoing the universal homage of the cosmic powers. Although the Lord's victory is an *already* reality which is *not yet* fully consummated as the principalities and powers continue to attack the church, nevertheless "the Church shows that, even now and here on earth, there is a present Reign of Christ; and that she is called to live (and suffer) under the lordship of Him who is the Head of the Church."⁷² In line with the foregoing interpretation Martin suggests that baptism is the specific context for the hymn. He points out that it is generally known that Jesus is confessed as Lord during baptism.⁷³

Larry Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11" (1984).

Hurtado's essay is included in a festschrift dedicated to Francis Wright Beare who

⁶⁹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 288.

⁷⁰Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 288–89.

⁷¹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 290. Käsemann argues that "Das Heilsgeschehen ist unteilbar und begründet insgesamt oder gar nicht den Christenstand." Käsemann, "Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2. 5-11," 91.

⁷²Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 291.

⁷³Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 292.

wrote an influential commentary on Philippians.⁷⁴ Like Beare, he acknowledges the significant contributions of Lohmeyer and Käsemann to the study of Philippians 2:5-11. Martin provides an excellent history of interpretation, so the main arguments of these scholars will not be repeated here.⁷⁵ I will highlight Hurtado's sharp criticisms of Käsemann's views. Two main contributions of Käsemann is his theory that Gnostic-mythic background is behind the hymn and it portrays a "soteriological drama."⁷⁶ Hurtado clearly states that despite all the historical and philological concerns that Käsemann dealt with, the latter's primary concern is theological in nature. Käsemann vehemently opposes any suggestion of Christ as an example in Philippians 2:5-11 because he considered such as "ethical idealism," which is tantamount to the Old Liberalism for him.⁷⁷ He also complains that by minimizing the work of Christ simply to an example of good behavior, its soteriological nature is neglected and the message of salvation is reduced to an ethical entreaty.⁷⁸ Hurtado points out that this theological bias against the moralizing temperament of liberal theology has influenced Käsemann's interpretation of the passage. Furthermore, Hurtado rejects Käsemann's position that the Gnostic background of the passage should serve as the appropriate context of interpretation. More recent consensus, however, is moving towards tracing the roots to Judaism in the Hellenistic period.⁷⁹ In line with this, Hurtado reveals that several Jewish materials, such as the Wisdom

⁷⁴See Francis Wright Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969); Larry W. Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11," in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 113-26.

⁷⁵See a summary in Martin's work in previous segment, pp. 12-14 of this dissertation.

⁷⁶Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 114.

⁷⁷Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 115.

⁷⁸Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 115.

⁷⁹Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 117.

of Solomon, some pseudepigraphical literature, and Qumran scrolls, have rich paraenetic flavor.⁸⁰

Even more serious is Hurtado's evaluation that Käsemann's exegetical method is utterly mistaken when the latter isolates the hymn from its context.⁸¹ While also acknowledging the importance and necessity of historico-critical reconstruction of Graeco-Roman background in the exegetical process, Hurtado cautions that this should not be done at the expense of disregarding the immediate context of the passage with its clear paraenetic intention in the letter.⁸²

Hurtado maximizes the use of the *context* and the *text* in presenting his own exegesis and rebuttal for objections against the ethical interpretation. He did not challenge the view of the pre-existent Christ in Philippians 2:6-7 but responded to the criticism that it is a formidable task, if not impossible, for believers who are simply human to emulate the actions of the divine Christ. He insists that even if "no direct duplication" of the action of the pre-existent Christ is possible, "it is not impossible that such an action might be described so as to make it exemplary for human behavior, the differences notwithstanding."⁸³ More importantly, he argues that the action of the pre-existent Christ is intimately tied to the action of the historical Jesus who took the form of *δοῦλος*.⁸⁴ The term *δοῦλος* is usually employed by Paul to refer to service to God which renders Käsemann's suggestion that Christ submitted himself to "hostile cosmic powers" unwarranted.⁸⁵ Hurtado also refutes

⁸⁰Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 118.

⁸¹Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 119. He is basing this critique of Käsemann's implicit exegetical flaw upon what Martin describes as an explicit principle: "It is of the utmost importance to isolate the meaning of the terms in the hymn from the use which is made of them by Paul in the verses which precede and follow" (Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 215).

⁸²Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 119.

⁸³Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 121.

⁸⁴Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 121.

⁸⁵Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 67.

Martin's contention that Philippians 2:9-11 is not adequately accounted for in the ethical interpretation model. Hurtado explicates that the last three verses of the passage proves that Jesus' obedience in Philippians 2:6-8 receives vindication and approval by God in the highest terms.⁸⁶ Jesus' exaltation does not neutralize the impact of his exemplary actions in the earlier verses but serves to function as a paradigmatic example for all believers.⁸⁷ On the contrary, his divine vindication demonstrates his authority and proves that the pattern of his service and obedience is "the Lordly example to the readers who acclaim him now."⁸⁸

Works on Philippians 3:7-11

Numerous books and commentaries elucidate Paul's enigmatic and very personal autobiography in Philippians 3:7-11. I am citing six scholars who either explicate the passage or made some critical comments on its relationship to Philippians 2:5-11.

Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (1988). Silva's commentary on Philippians has sown the seeds for this dissertation topic.⁸⁹ He is the one who mentioned both the significance of *φρονέω* in the letter to the Philippians and the echoing of Philippians 3:7-11 back to 2:5-11. For Silva, sanctification is the major theme in Philippians 1:27-2:30 and the call to spiritual growth is closely related to maintaining the "right attitude, singleness of purpose, and mental concentration."⁹⁰ He remarks that Paul

⁸⁶Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 125.

⁸⁷Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 125.

⁸⁸Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 126.

⁸⁹Silva's commentary on Philippians was first published as *Philippians*, WEC (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988). It was later republished with slight revisions in the BECNT series with its first edition in 1992. The citations in this dissertation are drawn from the 2nd ed. Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

⁹⁰Silva, *Philippians*, 21.

highlights the importance of the mind and mental concentration with the use of φρονέω and related terms such as ἡγέομαι, σκοπέω, λογίζομαι and the presence of knowledge terms (ἐπίγνωσις and αἴσθησις in 1:9; δοκιμάζω in 1:10; γνῶσις in 3:8; and γινώσκω in 3:10).⁹¹ Regarding the connection between the two passages, he believes that the “privilege-death-exaltation” pattern suggests a relationship and also cites some verbal association.⁹²

Unfortunately, Silva has not developed these two ideas more fully and only made some cursory comments. I am taking these two valuable insights but will study them in more specific contexts, i.e., the significance of φρονέω in relation to other verbs of cognition in these two passages, instead of its relevance to the entire letter as Silva suggested. I will also probe into the relation of φρονέω with Paul’s conformity to Christ in Philippians 3:7-11, which Silva has not talked about. I will also interact with Silva’s view that the so-called *carmen Christi* primarily serves as a pattern for the believers to conform, and not as a doctrine on Christ’s nature.⁹³

Gerald Hawthorne, “The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians” (1996). Hawthorne’s essay focuses on the patterns of discipleship in Philippians.⁹⁴ He begins by explaining the word “disciple” (μαθητής), which was derived from the verb “learn” (μανθάνω), and how it involves a close relationship and interaction between a teacher and those who follow him.⁹⁵ He observes that the word “disciple”

⁹¹Silva, *Philippians*, 21, 163.

⁹²Silva, *Philippians*, 155. Refer to the section on “Statement of the Problem,” pp. 2-3 of this dissertation, for discussion of verbal association.

⁹³Silva, *Philippians*, 21.

⁹⁴Gerald F. Hawthorne, “The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 163–79.

⁹⁵Hawthorne, “Imitation of Christ,” 163.

only appears in the Gospels and Acts.⁹⁶ Paul never used the term to describe his own relationship with the Lord nor did he urge believers to become disciples or describe them as such.⁹⁷ Instead, he portrays himself as one who imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1) and also urges the believers to do the same.⁹⁸ It is striking that Hawthorne believes that imitation of Christ is a suitable replacement for discipleship terms in the post-resurrection period.⁹⁹

Hawthorne presents Christ as the *supreme* model for imitation in Philippians 2:5-11. He anticipates some objections to the *imitatio Christi* interpretation of the passage as represented by the views of Michaelis, Käsemann and Martin.¹⁰⁰ One of the reasons why the imitation motif is rejected is because scholars believe it is humanly impossible to emulate Christ and reach such an elevated state.¹⁰¹ He defends his view by appealing to Hurtado and Morna Hooker who both emphasize that the divine Christ is one and the same person with Jesus who is as human as we are.¹⁰² He postulates that the washing of disciples' feet might be the source of the hymn as can be seen in several parallels between Philippians 2:6-11 and John 13:3-17.¹⁰³ It is noteworthy that after washing his disciples' feet, Jesus exclaims: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do

⁹⁶Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 165.

⁹⁷Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 166.

⁹⁸Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 166.

⁹⁹Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 165-66.

¹⁰⁰Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 167.

¹⁰¹Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 168.

¹⁰²Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 168. See Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 113-26; Morna D. Hooker, "Philippians 2:6-11," in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Gräßer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 151-64.

¹⁰³Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 170-71.

just as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15 ESV).

Hawthorne asserts that Paul is also using Timothy, Epaphroditus and his own life as illustrations of *imitatio Christi*.¹⁰⁴ He believes that Christ is the supreme model and Paul is *illustrating* by his own autobiographical sketch in Phil 3:4-11 and the biographical sections of Timothy (2:19-24) and Epaphroditus (2:25-30) that “it is *possible* to pattern one’s life according to the model of Christ’s life.”¹⁰⁵

Significant to my thesis is his argument that Philippians 3:4-11 is remarkable for its content and parallel structure to the *carmen Christi*, which is often neglected.¹⁰⁶ The points of correspondence are summarized in the table below.¹⁰⁷

Table 1. Correspondence between Philippians 2:6-11 and 3:4-11

Phil 2:6-11	Phil 3:4-11
Preexistent Christ’s equality with God	Paul’s extraordinary privileges and accomplishments
Christ’s voluntary self-emptying and self-humiliation	Paul considered these things (privileges and achievements) as loss and continue to consider them all as loss
Christ’s exaltation	Paul received Christ and life in Christ, most especially the “supreme pattern for behavior and the hope of resurrection”

Although the radical shift from the supreme model (Christ) to lesser examples (Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul himself) may seem odd, Hawthorne

¹⁰⁴This is a slight variation of the opinion of other scholars who consider all four of them—Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul—as examples for the Philippians to follow.

¹⁰⁵Hawthorne, “Imitation of Christ,” 175 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁶Hawthorne, “Imitation of Christ,” 173.

¹⁰⁷Hawthorne, “Imitation of Christ,” 173–74.

justifies this by explaining that Paul was exhorting the Philippians to join in imitating him and others who also serve as examples (3:17), not because they are excellent in themselves but because they pattern their lives after Christ; in short, he is urging them to “imitate Christ by imitating Christ’s imitators.”¹⁰⁸

Veronica Koperski, *The Knowledge of Christ Jesus My Lord* (1996).

Koperski’s work is primarily focused on Philippians 3:7-11 and examines specifically the knowledge of Christ. She contends that Philippians 3:7-11 has a high Christology which might be as powerful as that in Philippians 2:5-11 or even more powerful and forthright.¹⁰⁹ She even argues that Philippians 3:7-11, 20-21 should serve as the lens to interpret Phil 2:5-11.¹¹⁰ The author points out that the pre-existence ascribed to Christ in the hymn is based on allusions to the pre-existence of Wisdom. This is reinforced in Philippians 3, wherein Christ is valued above everything else just as Wisdom is esteemed as a priceless jewel in Job 28 and Wisdom 7.¹¹¹ Koperski asserts that Philippians 3 confirms the Christology in Philippians 2 that “the hymn portrays Christ as the one who possessed equality with God, and yet who chose to exercise that equality not by getting but by giving.”¹¹² Despite the assertion of high Christology in both Philippians 2 and 3, she considers both passages as examples placed before the Philippians.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸Hawthorne, “Imitation of Christ,” 176–77.

¹⁰⁹Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 323–24. Koperski intimates, “If Paul had to some degree been thinking of the Christ in the hymn of Phil 2 as the righteous one of the book of Wisdom, in 3:7-11 he portrays Christ as one even greater than the personified Wisdom of Wis 7:8-10, just as in the hymn of Phil 2 Christ is depicted as being more perfect than the suffering righteous one of the Book of Wisdom” (321).

¹¹⁰Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 324.

¹¹¹Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 324.

¹¹²Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 325.

¹¹³Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 132.

In the first chapter of the book, Koperski presents the history of interpretation on the “knowledge of Christ.” This phrase which appears twice in Philippians 3:7-11 as a substantive phrase within a motivating construction (διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου) and infinitive construction (τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν) is less common than the *knowledge of God* in Paul and the entire NT.¹¹⁴ The only other occurrence in NT is in 2 Peter 3:18 which might serve as a commentary on Paul’s expression within the NT itself. The author cites Ambrosiaster as the first to suggest that Colossians 2:3 may offer an even earlier interpretation of the knowledge of Christ than 2 Peter 3:18.¹¹⁵ It is noteworthy that Chrysostom emphasizes that Paul has not declared the former things as loss, but that Paul has *counted* them as loss.¹¹⁶ In the twentieth century there are three main lines of thought regarding the source of the expression “knowledge of Christ” in Paul. Dibelius and other proponents suggest that the knowledge terminology in Philippians 3 is derived from Hellenistic mysticism or gnosticism while Lohmeyer, who rejects a mystical interpretation, proposes that the terminology is an expression of martyrdom.¹¹⁷ D. Deden and Dom Jacques Dupont point to Paul’s Jewish heritage as the source.¹¹⁸ Koperski concludes that it is not possible to prove whether gnostic

¹¹⁴Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 5, 156, 159, 288.

¹¹⁵Koperski cites Col 2:2 as the reference, whereas Ambrosiaster refers to Col 2:3. Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 6. See Ambrosiaster, *Ambrosiastri qui dicitur Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas*, CSEL 81, pt. 3 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1969), 154. See also Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Galatians-Philemon*, trans. Gerald L. Bray, ACT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 75.

¹¹⁶John Chrysostom, “Homily 12,” in *John Chrysostom: Homilies on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, trans. Pauline Allen (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 235.

¹¹⁷Dibelius, *Thessalonicher und Philipper*, 59; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an die Philemon*, 8th ed., MeyerKommentar 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), 133.

¹¹⁸D. Deden, “Le ‘mystère’ Paulinien,” *ETL* 13 (1936): 405–10; Dom Jacques Dupont, *Gnosis: La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, UCL 2, vol. 40 (Leuven, Belgium: E. Nauwelaerts, 1949), 34–36.

influence affected Paul's terminology or not.¹¹⁹ It is more probable that his Jewish heritage may have played a greater role.¹²⁰

Aside from laying down the historical and literary contexts of the letter, Koperski's fundamental method is the exegesis of Philippians 3:7-11 with specific focus on syntax and semantics, including a discussion of the textual variants within the passage.¹²¹ In the final chapter of the book, the author brings together the various ideas from her study to focus on her main theme—the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. This is the knowledge of Christ Jesus as *Lord* which is a title that the pre-Christian Paul would have only ascribed to God but is now attributed to Jesus Christ in very personal and intimate terms (*my Lord*).¹²² The matchless preeminence of this knowledge is articulated by the articular neuter participle τὸ ὑπερέχον and is a continuing driving force for him to regard everything else as loss and dung.¹²³ The syntax points to a past experience of that knowledge which continues to motivate Paul in the present and the need for a growth process as Paul desires to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death.¹²⁴

Brian Dodd, “The Story of Christ and the Imitation of Paul in Phil 2-3”

(1998). In his brief essay in the book *Where Christology Began: Essays on*

¹¹⁹Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 65.

¹²⁰Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 65.

¹²¹Koperski's discussion of the historical and literary contexts includes the consideration of the integrity of the letter, the delimitation of the text, the narrative world of Philippians (the world shared by the author and the authorial readers), the relationship between Paul and the Philippians, argumentation and structure in Philippians. Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 67–134. See chs. 3–5 for her exegetical discussion (134–285).

¹²²Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 288.

¹²³Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 288–89.

¹²⁴Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 289n5.

Philippians 2, Brian Dodd categorically denies any relationship between *Philippians 2* and *3*.¹²⁵ He supports his view on two points. First, he denies that Paul is presenting any pattern of imitation in *Philippians 3* nor is he echoing *Philippians 2:5-11*.¹²⁶ Rather his purpose in *Philippians 3* is to prevent the *Philippians* from succumbing to Judaizing efforts.¹²⁷ He also rejects any linguistic association or narrative resemblance between the two passages.¹²⁸ He proposes that *1 Corinthians 11:1* should be used as the central passage to interpret Christ's story and Paul's example in *Philippians 2* and *3*.¹²⁹ Instead of the NIV rendering of *1 Corinthians 11:1* as "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" he considers NRSV translation of the verse a better one: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." His own paraphrase of the verse is: "Imitate my example that I have portrayed in *1 Corinthians*, because I am possessed by my master, Christ."¹³⁰ Since he considers *1 Corinthians 11:1* as the *crux interpretum*, he believes it should inform the way we interpret *Philippians 3:7-11*.¹³¹ Therefore, Dodd rejects the notion that Paul is portraying himself "as one who has humbled himself as they should so they can become like Christ."¹³²

¹²⁵Brian J. Dodd, "The Story of Christ and the Imitation of Paul in *Philippians 2-3*," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 154.

¹²⁶Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 154.

¹²⁷Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 154.

¹²⁸Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 155–57.

¹²⁹Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 157.

¹³⁰Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 157.

¹³¹Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 157.

¹³²Dodd, "Story of Christ and Imitation of Paul," 158–59.

Michael Byrnes, *Conformation to the Death of Christ and the Hope of Resurrection* (2003). Byrnes examines two important Pauline passages (2 Cor 4:7-15 and Phil 3:7-11) to explore the theme of Jesus' death and resurrection and how a Christian can participate in them not as a past event (Rom 6:1-14), but as a daily experience in the life of a believer. He follows an exegetico-theological method wherein he investigates each passage in the context of its own letter (including issues such as the historical setting, the letter's integrity and composition, the pericope's function within the letter, and some textual issues), provides a close reading of the passage by careful exegesis and discussion of syntactic and semantic issues, and presents some theological reflections.¹³³ He intimates that his original contribution is the extensive study and comparison of these two passages. He deals with the 2 Corinthians pericope in Part One and the Philippians passage in Part Two. He presents his summary and conclusion in Part Three. For purposes of this dissertation I will focus primarily on analyses that are pertinent to the Philippian passage.

Byrnes begins the second part of his book with a discussion of the context of Philippians 3:7-11 which include information about the city of Philippi and its first century citizens, the relationship of Paul and the Philippian church, the place and date of the letter, the occasion of the letter, and the opponents in Philippians 3. He also deals with the integrity of Philippians by briefly presenting the debate on whether Philippians is one integral letter or whether it is composed of several fragments. David Garland declares an impasse on this issue in his 1985 article "The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Factors."¹³⁴ Thereafter, most of the succeeding attempts were geared towards literary and structural methods,

¹³³Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 8-9.

¹³⁴David E. Garland, "The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Factors," *NovT* 27, no. 2 (1985): 143.

namely, (1) textlinguistics or discourse analysis, (2) comparative epistolography, (3) rhetorical analysis.

Byrnes confirms that there are two main sections in the letter (1:12-2:30 and 3:1-4:9) through the use of discourse analysis, which manifest clear thematic and verbal connections between them, which in turn points to the integrity of the letter. By employing epistolography to compare Philippians to Hellenistic parallels, Byrnes concludes that the former bears the *form* of a family letter but also contains marks of a friendship letter in terms of its *content*. Through the application of rhetorical analysis, it is established that Philippians belongs to the deliberative genre and aims to *persuade*.¹³⁵

Byrnes makes three observations about the general argument of Philippians 3. First, Philippians 3 reveals a possible threat from the Judaizers as the occasion for writing this chapter. The apostle wants to remind the Philippian believers of their new individual and corporate identity in Christ.¹³⁶ Second, Philippians 3 exhibits a strong “dynamic of comparison and contrast” in its argument, which also aims at describing a new identity for the believers.¹³⁷ Paul intimates that as Christians the Philippian believers have a righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ and should live a life under the lordship of Christ, share in his sufferings, and manifest the pattern of dying and rising.¹³⁸ The use of example and exhortation to imitate should be taken into consideration. Paul uses such a pattern in Philippians 2:5-11 when he sets forth the example of Christ to encourage the believers to be of the same mind. In Philippians 3 he puts forth his own example and

¹³⁵Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 161 (emphasis added).

¹³⁶Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 170.

¹³⁷Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 171.

¹³⁸Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 171–72.

others who live in the same way (3:17) and urges them to think the same way (3:15). Byrnes suggests that “Paul seems to be interested not only in persuasion but also in the inculcation of a Christian way of thinking.”¹³⁹

In Byrnes’s close reading of Philippians 3:7-11, he examines the passage verse-by-verse and phrase-by-phrase. He pays close attention to both semantic and syntactical issues. At times, he also expounds on key words. Four things stand out in his analysis. First, Byrnes observes the careful thought process that Paul is going through as he evaluates, chooses, and decides. Paul’s use of the verb ἡγέομαι in Philippians 3:7-8, along with φρονέω and λογίζομαι, which belong to the same semantic field, reveals that Paul is interested in “cultivating the intellectual and evaluative faculties of his addressees.”¹⁴⁰ Byrnes observes that the verb is used in the perfect tense in Philippians 3:7 which means that the “evaluative judgment made in the past” is still taking effect in the present.¹⁴¹ This critical paradigm shift takes place because of Jesus Christ (διὰ τὸν Χριστόν) “whose impact as the risen Messiah affected not only the direction of Paul’s life but also his whole way of thinking.”¹⁴² When this verb reappears in Philippians 3:8, it takes the present tense form, which shows that Paul’s past decision is still prevailing at the moment when the apostle is writing the letter.

Second, Paul emphasizes his utmost desire is to know Christ, which includes knowing the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead and is now the transforming power at work in the believer.¹⁴³ Byrnes suggests that Paul is alluding

¹³⁹Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 172.

¹⁴⁰Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 179.

¹⁴¹Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 179.

¹⁴²Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 181.

¹⁴³Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 235.

to the Holy Spirit as the agent of this transformation.¹⁴⁴ Paul not only wants to know the exaltation of Christ's resurrection, but he also wants to take part in the humiliation of his sufferings. He wants to know all of Christ. The apostle assesses and forsakes all things in order to know Christ and conform to the pattern of his death.¹⁴⁵

Third, the participial phrase *συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ* in Philippians 3:10 could be either middle or passive. Although Byrnes agrees that it could be taken as a divine passive whereby God takes the initiative to bring about the result in the apostle's life, he prefers the middle voice with a reflexive sense because it better suits the flow of thought. He intimates, "being conformed to Christ's death, then, involves both a reorientation of one's choices as well as the embrace of the consequences of the new way of living produced by a life of faith that eschews all other advantage in the light of the knowledge of Christ."¹⁴⁶

Fourth, Byrnes calls attention to the analogy between Philippians 3:7-11 and 2:6-11. He mentions three connections, namely, (1) the use of both *ἡγέομαι* (2:6; 3:7-8) and *εὐρίσκω* (3:9; 2:7) in both pericopes; (2) the dynamic of Christ's kenosis in 2:7 is expressed by Paul's giving up of his past privileges in 3:7-9; and (3) the use of same verb *φρονέω* in 3:15 as in the 2:5 which means that "both the example of Jesus and that of Paul are offered as patterns of both thought and choice."¹⁴⁷ Byrnes summarizes,

In Phil 2 the apostle offers the example of Jesus as a model of humility and selflessness for the Philippians in the context of an exhortation to unity. The climax of the example centers around Christ's death which led, in turn, to his exaltation. In Phil 3 the apostle offers the example of his own evaluation and

¹⁴⁴Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 235.

¹⁴⁵Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 235.

¹⁴⁶Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 229.

¹⁴⁷Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 229.

rejection of a confidence based upon Jewish identity markers and practice of the law, so that the Philippians might make a similar choice. Furthermore, he interprets this dynamic of evaluation and renunciation as a way of conforming himself to the pattern of Christ's death so as to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Conformity to the death of Christ involves both incorporating into one's own life the attitudes and choices of Jesus and also the willingness to accept the consequences of those choices. That is to say, it means both patterning oneself after Christ and participating in the same sufferings as his.¹⁴⁸

Byrnes's theological reflection on Philippians 3:7-11 focuses on Paul's Christology, primarily on Christ's preeminence and lordship. This realization leads Paul to declare that knowing Christ is supreme over everything else and guides his choices and decisions.¹⁴⁹ The process of conformation to Christ's death is innervated by "his on-going experience of the power of the risen Christ in his life and the eschatological hope of personal resurrection from the dead."¹⁵⁰ Byrnes also explores the title "Lord" and concludes that it points to the transcendence of Jesus and his equality with God while at the same time it highlights the willingness of Jesus to subordinate himself to God and assume the role of the mediator.¹⁵¹ He also suggests that the reference to the "power of his resurrection" alludes to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵²

In view of the context of Philippians 3 regarding the Judaizers, Byrnes also discusses first-century Judaism and weighs in on the debate regarding E. P. Sanders and the New Perspective on Paul. He believes that Paul "evaluates and renounces the old marks of his identity (circumcision, practice of the law, and any advantage derived from created things) in favor of a new identity marked by conformity to

¹⁴⁸Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 230.

¹⁴⁹Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 237.

¹⁵⁰Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 237.

¹⁵¹Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 243.

¹⁵²Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 243.

Christ and, in particular, to the pattern of his death.”¹⁵³ He also examines the topic of conversion. Conformation to Christ serves not only as a mark of Christian identity, but can also be an indicator of true conversion.¹⁵⁴

Byrnes’s work serves as an important foundation for this dissertation. Although there is a certain degree of overlap with what I endeavor to accomplish, there is a vast difference between them. Byrnes’s main focus is to study and compare 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 and Philippians 3:7-11, whereas I seek to analyze the correspondence between Philippians 2 and 3. He examines the theme of conformity to Christ with emphasis on the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection, whereas my main concern is on Paul’s perspective on humiliation and exaltation. I will also deal with how Paul integrated both theology and ethics in Philippians 2 and 3, which is not within the scope of Byrnes’s study.

Peter-Ben Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ* (2013). In his book *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, Smit embarks on a study of the nature and function of examples (*exempla*) in the letter to the Philippians based on first-century rhetoric. First, he deals with the problem by examining the use of analogies and examples in Greco-Roman rhetoric and employs them as a way of analyzing how Paul’s examples serve a rhetorical function.¹⁵⁵ Second, he exegetes five key passages in Philippians (1:27-30; 2:1-18; 2:19-31; 3:2-21, and 4:2-3) and determines if Paul uses examples, their nature, their relation to each other, and their connection with Paul’s primary concerns in the letter.¹⁵⁶ He cautions that the issue regarding Paul’s use of Christ, himself, and others in the letter as examples for the Philippian church is still debated

¹⁵³Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 250.

¹⁵⁴Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 257.

¹⁵⁵Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 1.

¹⁵⁶Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 1.

with no consensus.¹⁵⁷ This kind of study also focuses on Paul's ecclesiology as the *exempla* reveals the relationships and the authority structures in the community. It also shows that Paul's main concern is not just to provide moral exhortation but also "an attempt to steer an entire community in a particular direction."¹⁵⁸

Smit presents a survey of research on the use and discussion about examples or paradigms (*παράδειγμα*) in Philippians. He identifies three main loci of this research: Christ's exemplary character in Philippians 2, Paul's paradigmatic example, particularly in Philippians 3, and other related studies. He also analyzes the use of analogies, e.g., *exemplum* or *παράδειγμα* in first-century rhetoric. He assumes that Paul is familiar with these rhetorical conventions, and though he might not be full-fledged rhetorician, he employs them to persuade his readers who are also accustomed to them. Smit argues that a "letter should be analyzed in terms of epistolary conventions as far as their macrostructure is concerned, while allowing for rhetorical elements at levels below this, as well as for some functional overlap between epistolary elements and rhetorical tools."¹⁵⁹ He notes that *exempla* is usually connected with deliberative rhetoric which aims at persuading or dissuading an audience, although it could also be used in the two other types of rhetoric, namely, judicial and epideictic.¹⁶⁰

In chapter 2, Smit discusses Philippians as a Hellenistic letter and its epistolary genre. He proposes that Philippians be classified as *letter* in terms of its

¹⁵⁷Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 1. Smit states that "from the start, . . . the question of imitation is a theological powder keg. To a substantial extent, this is due to late medieval and early modern debates about grace and free will and their confessional development since the Protestant and Catholic Reformations of the sixteenth century and their multi-faceted history of reception." (1n1).

¹⁵⁸Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 4.

¹⁵⁹Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 32–33.

¹⁶⁰Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 33, 33n171.

genre, *exhortation* in terms of its function, and *personal* in terms of style.¹⁶¹

Smit focuses on the models of identity in the third chapter by first discussing the Christ-Paradigm in Philippians 1:27-2:18. Specifically he examines the *enkomion* in Philippians 2:5-11 which extols the excellencies of Christ. He states that the use of a form of φρονέω or εἶναι as the missing verb in the second part of Philippians 2:5 may result in two different exegetical interpretation, which essentially speaks about the same thing, i.e., the lordship of Christ over the Philippian church and Christ's exemplary function.¹⁶² Hence, he believes that choosing one over the other is a false dichotomy.¹⁶³

He also deliberates on the paradigm of "Paul in Christ" in Philippians 3:1-4:1. He suggests that Paul's self-praise or *periautologia* is justified and necessary in Philippians 3 because of the threat to his teaching and authority that ultimately affects the salvation of the Philippians. He identifies Philippians 3:7 as a major transition from Paul's self-praise to a forsaking of all he possesses and values in order to gain Christ and know him who surpasses everything else.¹⁶⁴ He calls this "Paul's kenotic Christian identity," which could serve as a paradigmatic example for the Philippians.¹⁶⁵ He observes that there are two interpretive methods and cautions against presenting them as antithetical: (1) Paul's example urges his readers to imitate him by obeying his preaching; (2) Philippians 3:17 pertains to imitating his attitude (φρονεῖτε, Phil 3:15) and lifestyle.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 52 (emphasis added).

¹⁶²Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 89.

¹⁶³Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 90.

¹⁶⁴Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 127.

¹⁶⁵Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 126.

¹⁶⁶Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 138.

In conclusion, Smit clearly identifies Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:2-21 as two large *exempla* in the letter. He elucidates that Paul's main point in using the paradigms is "to communicate a coherent pattern of behavior, or a consistently patterned attitude in a situation of duress, . . ." and "to communicate a particular identity 'in Christ.'"¹⁶⁷ He further concludes that this "identity in Christ" is expressed in an embodied form by the example of Christ and Paul's example as patterned after Christ.¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, Paul's main purpose in using the exempla in Philippians is an ecclesiological concern to shape the Christian community into a way of life consistent with their identity in Christ.¹⁶⁹

Thesis

The thesis of this dissertation is threefold. First, Paul is presenting a parallel in Philippians 3:7-11 from his own life by echoing back to what he has just described about Christ's life and career in Philippians 2:5-11, as evidenced by the verbal links and thematic correspondence between the two passages. Second, being conformed to Christ is foremost in Paul's mind as he contemplates on Christ's humiliation and exaltation, readjusts his own perspective, and realigns his priorities. He underscores the importance of changing one's mindset and perspective, instead of simply altering one's behavior, mimicking an action, or imitating an example by using the word *φρονέω* and related terms like *ἡγέομαι*. I argue that before Paul reached the climax of being conformed to Christ's death (3:10), it begins first with his reevaluation of his perspective on humiliation and exaltation. Third, it is common to pit the two main streams of interpretation (kerygmatic and ethical) on

¹⁶⁷Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 160–61.

¹⁶⁸Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 162.

¹⁶⁹Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 164.

these two Philippian passages against each other. I argue that this is a false dichotomy since a doctrinal exposition does not cancel out its ethical implications (*contra* Ernst Lohmeyer and Ernst Käsemann), and Pauline ethics is often grounded in theological foundations (*contra* Larry Hurtado and Peter O’Brien). Paul integrated both theology and ethics in the letter. I want to move the discussion forward by exploring the connection between these passages and focus our attention on the theme of conformity to Christ. What Paul is emphasizing is not simply mimicking Christ’s example, but to be conformed to Christ in the way he makes choices and decisions. It is also not simply describing lofty Christology and hoping it will translate into behavior, but it is more practical, that is, one is to be conformed to Christ in his thinking and attitudes that will directly affect behavior.

The key to this self-emptying way of life is in adopting the mindset and attitude of Christ. The imperative φρονεῖτε is the main verb in Philippians 2:5, which is followed by relative clauses. The verb φρονέω has a wide semantic range. The primary meaning of φρονέω is to think or have an opinion.¹⁷⁰ It also implies reflection, careful consideration, and thoughtful planning.¹⁷¹ φρονέω involves not only the mind, but also the will and emotions, and its meaning can be expanded to include the sense of “taking sides” (cf. Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33).¹⁷²

Although Paul did not use φρονέω in the second passage, he employs the verb ἡγέομαι which corresponds to the verb in Philippians 2:6 and belongs to the same semantic domain as φρονέω.¹⁷³ The word ἡγέομαι means to think, count, regard

¹⁷⁰BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω.”

¹⁷¹Balz and Schneider, s.v. “φρονέω”; Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “φρονέω; φροντίζω; σκοπέω; μελετάω”; BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω”; Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*, JSNTSup 136 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 306.

¹⁷²“φρονέω,” *NIDNTTE*, 4:620.

¹⁷³Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “φρονέω; κρίνω; λογίζομαι; ἡγέομαι; ἔχω.”

and involves careful evaluation and judgment.¹⁷⁴ Paul intentionally chooses this word to express the conscious process of assessment he went through.¹⁷⁵ It was not a subjective decision based on erratic moods or impulsive choice; rather it is an objective and cautious assessment after carefully weighing all available options. We should not think that the things he mentioned in Phil 3:5-6 are unattractive and unimportant to him so it was easy for him to count them as loss. On the contrary, they are things he held dear and worked hard for. He exclaims, “I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” (Gal 1:14 NIV). Paul also does not demean his Jewish heritage, nor are they considered evil in themselves. The primary focus here is Paul’s perspective towards these things (“I have come to consider”), and *not* a negative evaluation of his race, culture, and legacy.¹⁷⁶ With the perfect tense (ἤγημαι) in tandem with ἄτινα (3:7), he is expressing an action in the past with ongoing effects in the present. He intensifies this decision by using the present tense (ἡγέομαι) and escalating it to encompass everything (πάντα) in Philippians 3:8.

Since both φρονέω and ἡγέομαι are more comprehensive than simply “to think,” I prefer to use “perspective.” The word “perspective” is defined as “a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view” in the

¹⁷⁴BDAG, s.v. “ἡγέομαι.”

¹⁷⁵Runge explains this principle of “choice implies meaning” in his book. Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 5–7.

¹⁷⁶Fee notes, “The perfect in verse 7 implies that ‘on this side of things this is my considered view of them.’ Given the inclusion even of his birth and Jewishness, a simple affirmation, ‘what things were gain are now loss,’ would have been both imprecise and misleading.” Fee correctly points out, “while he cannot renounce—nor does he wish to—what was given to him by birth (circumcision, heritage and the like), he does renounce them as grounds for boasting.” Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 142–43. Bruce concurs, “He does not deny that it was a great privilege to have been born a Jew and have access to the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1, 2); he does deny that one can rely on such a privilege as a basis of divine approval.” Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *Philippians*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 112.

New Oxford American Dictionary.¹⁷⁷ Additionally, it is the “true understanding of the relative importance of things; a sense of proportion.”¹⁷⁸ To be conformed to Christ involves a Christocentric perspective on humiliation and exaltation. Being conformed to Christ is living a life that is characterized by humility, obedience, self-sacrifice, self-emptying, and other-orientedness. It is because Paul has adopted this kind of perspective in evaluating things in his life and reordering his priorities that he has come to know Jesus in a personal way—the one whom God has highly exalted is now called “Christ Jesus my Lord” (3:8)—so the entire trajectory of his life and career made a radical turn. It is because he has the mind of Christ that he is able to look at things differently, weigh gains and losses perceptively, and pursue Christ relentlessly.

Method

I will mainly use exegetico-theological method to show that conformity to Christ is the central thought in these two passages. I will adapt the methods of Byrnes and Koperski in dealing with these two passages that have been extensively researched in their individual contexts as separate pericopes but have not been adequately analyzed together.¹⁷⁹ In order to ensure that I exegete each passage in its proper historical and literary contexts, I will handle one passage at a time. Specifically, this will involve examining each passage in its immediate and broader contexts, in-depth word study of some key terms, and engaging in a careful grammatico-syntactical analysis. I will then offer some theological insights gleaned

¹⁷⁷Elizabeth J. Jewell and Frank Abate, eds., *New Oxford American Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), s.v. “perspective.”

¹⁷⁸Jewell and Abate, *New Oxford American Dictionary*, s.v. “perspective.”

¹⁷⁹Byrnes employs the exegetico-theological method in his study of 2 Cor 4:7-15 and Phil 3:7-11. Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 8. Koperski devotes 3 full chapters to the exegesis of Phil 3:7-11 by focusing on the syntax in ch. 3 of her book, the semantics of Phil 3:9 in ch. 4, and the semantics of Phil 3:10-11 in ch. 5. Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 135–238.

from the exegesis of each passage. After completing this for each passage, I will analyze their relationship side by side and draw my conclusion.

CHAPTER 2
HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION
IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the most important yet one of the most difficult passages to interpret in Philippians. It is also “one of the most exalted, most beloved, and most discussed and debated passages in the Pauline corpus.”¹ Most of the research centers around critical issues, e.g., the literary form, structure, and authorship.² Although these issues are significant and have been adequately investigated, I will briefly discuss them but will not dwell on them at length in this dissertation.³ The main focus of this chapter is on the importance of the often neglected *φρονέω* as the missing link in the interpretation of the Christ-hymn and a detailed exegesis of the passage. This chapter is divided into four sections, namely, literary background, contextual analysis, semantic analysis, and syntactical analysis.

Literary Background

Philippians 2:6-11 exhibits a style markedly different from the rest of the

¹Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 192. Lohmeyer asserts, “Dieser Abschnitt gehört zu den schwierigsten Abschnitten der paulinischen Briefe” (This is one of the most difficult sections of the Pauline letters). Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an die Philemon*, 8th ed., MeyerKommentar 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), 90.

²Silva correctly points out that the issue of authorship is very important, “because the historical reconstruction of the earliest Christian period provides one of the contexts against which the NT must be interpreted.” Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 92.

³Hawthorne and Martin comment on various hypotheses on the source of the hymn: “These proposals only serve to send one off in pursuit of a question impossible to answer.” Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., WBC 43 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 104.

letter.⁴ It is introduced by verse 5 which serves as a transition from the exhortation in Philippians 2:1-4 into this pericope that is poetic in form and highly Christological in content. The literary form, structure, and authorship of these verses will be discussed in this section.

Form and Structure

There are numerous proposals regarding the literary form and structure of Philippians 2:6-11. Its form is variously classified as a Christological hymn, psalm, poem, confession, or exalted prose.⁵ Ralph Martin states that the special literary quality of the passage was not observed nor categorized until Johannes Weiss notices “the poetic, stately and rhythmical genre” of the passage right before the turn of the twentieth century.⁶ Martin traces the use of the Latin term *carmen* to Pliny’s letter to emperor Trajan, which was written when he was governor of Pontus and Bithynia in Asia Minor in AD 111-12, asking for the latter’s advice on how to enforce an edict that prohibits the profession of Christianity.⁷ An excerpt from that letter mentions about Christian practices related to worship: “quod essent soliti statio die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem” (“They were in the

⁴Hansen notices that ethical exhortation is the predominant form in passages before and after Phil 2:5-11, abounding with imperatives and full of pastoral guidance. But Phil 2:6-11 clearly departs from this usual prose. G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 122. Hawthorne warns against labeling it as “hymn” mechanically, but also recognizes its special characteristics: “To be sure, one cannot deny the rhetorical structure of Phil. 2:5-11, its stylistic balance and parallelism, its rhythmic cadences, its use of chiasm, antithesis and alliteration, its unusual vocabulary, its important theological terms--all of which makes this section different from the context in which it appears.” Gerald F. Hawthorne, “In the Form of God and Equal with God (Philippians 2:6),” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 105n2.

⁵See Samuel Vollenweider, “Hymnus, Enkomion oder Psalm? Schattengefächte in der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft,” *NTS* 56, no. 2 (April 2010): 208–31.

⁶Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 24. See Johannes Weiss, *Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 28-29; Johannes Weiss, “review of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, by Marvin Vincent,” *ThLZ* 24, no. 9 (1899): 263.

⁷Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 1.

habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god” *Ep.* 10.96).⁸ There are four possible meanings for the word *carmen* in Pliny’s text, namely, an OT psalm, a baptismal confession, a *supplicatio* whereby the invocation may be either a hymn or solemn prose, and an allusion to a hymn to Christ.⁹ Martin concludes that “*carmen* means a hymn addressed to Christ” in all likelihood.¹⁰ He cites three evidence in support of his conclusion. First, Tertullian, being the earliest one to comment on the text, uses the verb *canere* when he transcribed part of the text as “*ad canendum Christo ut deo*” to refer to a “hymnic composition” (*Apol.* 2.6).¹¹ What he meant by *canere* is further confirmed when he uses the same verb or the cognate noun *carmen* and refers to Christian psalms (*Apol.* 39.18; *Or.* 27; *Ux* 2.8; *Exh. cast* 10).¹² Second, the usage of Latin authors of the phrase “*carmen . . . dicere*” is a reliable source in understanding the exact nuance of the phrase. Horace is considered the primary authority and he uses the phrase which means “to sing a song to the gods” (*Saec.* 8; *Carm.* 4.12.9-10).¹³ Third, early church writers attest that a *carmen* is often offered as part of the regular practice of Christians in giving homage to Christ as God through “chanting to their Lord” or singing “psalms or songs” (*Ux.* 2.8; *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.6; *Strom.* 7.7.49).¹⁴

⁸Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, trans. William Melmoth, rev. W. M. L. Hutchinson, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1915), 2:402-3. Martin exclaims that those words from Pliny might virtually be “the sole extant witness to Christian worship” in the fifty years between Ignatius (his epistles were written c. AD 108 when he was on his way to martyrdom) and Justin’s *Apology* in c. AD 150-3 (Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 2).

⁹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 3–9.

¹⁰Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 7.

¹¹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 7–8.

¹²Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 8.

¹³Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 8.

¹⁴Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 8–9.

Further inquiry into the sub-apostolic writings—in particular, the *Didache* and Ignatius’s epistles—also presents some allusions to the use of hymns in Christian worship.¹⁵ These clues from second century writings serve as the impetus to search for Christian *carmina* within the NT itself.¹⁶ There are at least four types of NT hymns identified and one of them is classified as “distinctly Christian forms” which can be further subdivided into sacramental, meditative, confessional, and Christological.¹⁷ The last group—“Christological hymns”—are usually arranged in verses and stanzas with some sort of rhythm or even rhyme in form, and contains Christological themes in content.¹⁸ Philippians 2:6-11 falls under this category, i.e., a Christ-hymn or a *carmen Christi*. Lohmeyer calls it “*ein carmen Christi in strengem Sinne vorliegt*” (a *carmen Christi* in the strict sense).¹⁹

Robert Gundry believes that Philippians 2:6-11 “represents an example of Paul’s own exalted prose” as evidenced by its concentric structure, chiasmus and parallelism, so the term “hymn” should no longer be used for it.²⁰ Stephen Fowl

¹⁵Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 9–13.

¹⁶Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 13.

¹⁷Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 19.

¹⁸Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 19–20. Martin comments, “The material which falls under the caption of possible Christ-hymns is rich and full. This is exactly what may be expected. For when Christians think and write about their Lord, their thoughts would naturally tend to be expressed in lyrical and worshipful terms. . . . Religious speech tends to be poetic in form; and meditation upon the person and place of Jesus Christ in the Church’s life and in the experience of the believer is not expressed in a cold, calculating way, but becomes rhapsodic and ornate.” Ralph P. Martin, “Aspects of Worship in the New Testament Church,” *VE* 2 (1963): 21.

¹⁹Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2, 5-11, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1927-28, 4. Abhandlung*, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1961), 7.

²⁰Robert H. Gundry, “Style and Substance in ‘the Myth of God Incarnate’ according to Philippians 2:6-11,” in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, ed. Porter Stanley, Paul Joyce, and David E. Orton, BIS 8 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1994), 288. Fee also argues that the passage is an “exalted prose” composed by Paul. See Gordon D. Fee, “Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?” *BBR* 2 (January 1992): 29–46. Silva considers it “foolhardy to deny the strong poetic qualities” of Phil 2:6-11. He further says that “the label ‘elevated prose’ does not do justice to the rhythm, parallelisms, lexical links, and other features” in the passage. Silva, *Philippians*, 93.

contends that the three NT passages which are typically considered Christological hymns (Phil 2:6-11, Col 1:15-20, and 1 Tim 3:16b) are not strictly hymns in the sense of the Greek ὕμνος or Hermann Gunkel's form-critical classification.²¹ Nevertheless, he still uses the term "hymn" in referring to these passages and consider them as hymns "in the *very general sense* of poetic accounts" of a divine being.²² Specifically, he considers Philippians 2:6-11 as a "distinct unit within the epistle both because of its shift in focus from the Philippians to Christ and because of its particular formal and stylistic characteristics, which could reasonably be called poetic."²³

Some scholars classify the passage as a confession which enshrines and expands on the most basic confession in the Scriptures—"Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9).²⁴ This confession might have been used as a memory device in catechism for new converts or it may be sung or recited at the Lord's Supper to proclaim Christ's life, death, and resurrection.²⁵

There are at least four proposals for the hymn structure with various adaptations based on them.²⁶ Weiss divides the hymn into two strophes of four lines

²¹Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus*, JSNTSup 36 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 31–37. Fowl observes that the term ὕμνος is used by Hellenistic rhetoricians as a "type of encomium" offered to praise the gods. But the same term is also used of human beings and places (31). He also explains that Gunkel identified some hymns as one of the seven main types in the Hebrew Psalter which has been extended by other scholars to apply to other passages beyond the psalms. Based on Gunkel's definition, "a hymn is an expression of praise directed by an individual or a group towards God" (34-37). Fowl thinks that even though the so-called Christ-hymns pertain to God, they are not praises *directed* to God (32, 36).

²²Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 45 (emphasis added).

²³Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 24.

²⁴Colin Brown, "Ernst Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 24.

²⁵Brown, "Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," 23–24.

²⁶For a detailed survey of the different proposals, see Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 24–35.

each with διὸ καί (v. 9) dividing the hymn into two parts corresponding to Christ's humiliation and exaltation, respectively.²⁷ Lohmeyer's analysis of the hymn as consisting of six strophes with three lines each led him to reject the phrase θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ as part of the original hymn.²⁸ Joachim Jeremias organizes the hymn into three strophes with four lines in each which correspondence to Christ's three states of existence, namely, preexistence, incarnation, and exaltation.²⁹ He deletes three lines from the hymn to highlight the parallelism in the hymn and achieve a perfect symmetry.³⁰ Martin proposes an arrangement of six pairs of couplets that can be chanted antiphonally with some rhetorical features like chiasm, *homoeoteleuton*, *anaphora*, and *homoeoptoton*.³¹

In sum, I am using the term Christ-hymn or *carmen Christi* in a general sense in this study as explained by Fowl. Although there is no consensus as to its precise form, there is enough agreement among scholars that it possesses poetic characteristics and Christological content.³² Similarly, the specific structure is disputable, but it is generally agreed that the humiliation-exaltation motif is clearly

²⁷Weiss, *Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik*, 28–29; Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 24.

²⁸See Lohmeyer's ordering of the hymn into strophes and lines in Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 5–6. Martin observes that most scholars after Lohmeyer were mostly modifying his original proposal while others accept his analysis of the hymn's structure. See the list of scholars who support Lohmeyer's six-strophe scheme in Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 30n1. Hansen acknowledges that it might not be possible to discover the "exact, original structure," but he still chooses to adopt Lohmeyer's arrangement for two reasons: (1) Lohmeyer's scheme highlights the role of the verbs in shaping the hymn's "narrative structure" and (2) Lohmeyer's analysis sticks to hymn's "logical sequence." Hansen, *Philippians*, 127.

²⁹Joachim Jeremias, "Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen," in *Studia Paulina in honorem Johannis de Zwaan septuagenarii*, ed. J. N. Sevenster and W. C. van Unnik (Haarlem, Netherlands: Erven F. Bohn, 1953), 152–54.

³⁰Jeremias deletes three lines which he believes are not in the original hymn: (1) θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (v. 7), (2) ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων (v. 10), and (3) εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός (v. 11). Jeremias, "Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen," 152–54.

³¹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 36–38.

³²Hansen concludes, "Because the line between 'exalted prose' and a 'hymn' is so fine and the poetic nature of this passage is so widely appreciated, we are justified to call this passage a hymn even if we cannot provide a precise definition of a hymn or know its exact, original structure." Hansen, *Philippians*, 126.

present in the text. Hence, I will analyze the passage under these two sub-headings—Christ’s humiliation (2:6-8) and exaltation (2:9-11).³³

Authorship

Paul’s authorship of the letter is never in question, but the issue of his authorship of the Christ-hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 is widely debated. Martin confidently declares that “the verdict which sees the hymn as a separate composition, inserted into the epistolary prose of Paul’s writing, commands an almost universal assent in these days.”³⁴ Three arguments are given for considering the hymn a pre-Pauline (therefore, non-Pauline) composition, namely, theological, linguistic, and structural considerations.³⁵ Some scholars suggest a few alternatives as the possible source of the hymn. One is the Gnostic redeemer myth suggested by Käsemann.³⁶ Another is the Pauline community proposed by Jerome Murphy-O’Connor.³⁷ Joseph Fitzmyer suggests an Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christian as a possible candidate for the authorship of the hymn.³⁸ Martin endorses Stephen from the Book of Acts as the

³³So Fee, “Hymn or Exalted Prose,” 39.

³⁴Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 43.

³⁵See O’Brien for detailed discussion on these three reasons and his counter-arguments. Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 198–202. I cited O’Brien’s *Epistle to the Philippians* (NIGTC) before I became aware of the findings of Eerdmans and Zondervan regarding plagiarism issues in some of his commentaries, particularly *The Letter to the Hebrews* in the PNTC series. Eerdmans stated that *Epistle to the Philippians* and *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC) are “less pervasively flawed but still untenable.” In view of these findings, I tried my best to trace back to his original sources whenever possible, eliminated the ones that are dubious, and retained some that are not as flawed. See statement from Eerdmans in <http://www.eerdmans.com/Pages/Item/59043/Commentary-Statement.aspx> and statement from Zondervan in <http://zondervanacademic.com/blog/statement-from-zondervan-academic>. Hansen provides five arguments with counter-arguments on the issue of Pauline authorship. Hansen, *Philippians*, 127–30. Cf. Brown gives five arguments against Pauline authorship of the hymn. Brown, “Lohmeyer’s *Kyrios Jesus*,” 9–10.

³⁶Ernst Käsemann, “A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5-11,” trans. Alice F. Carse, *JTC* 5 (1968): 63–65.

³⁷Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 226.

³⁸Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Aramaic Background of Philippians 2:6-11,” *CBQ* 50, no. 3 (July 1988): 470–83.

likely composer of the hymn.³⁹

There have been some efforts in recent years to reintroduce Paul as the author.⁴⁰ The issue of authorship is not settled conclusively. The arguments and counter-arguments for Pauline authorship are “finely balanced.”⁴¹ Since the hymn is an integral part of the letter, it is more critical to understand how Paul uses the hymn in the context of the letter and his reasons for doing so. The fact that there has been no evidence of the hymn’s isolated existence prior to Paul’s appropriating it for the letter, then any proposal for its authorship should remain hypothetical.⁴²

Hansen’s conclusion about authorship of the hymn is justified:

All theories about the authorship of this hymn are highly speculative. Fortunately, its interpretation does not depend on any theory regarding authorship. Since Paul sets forth this hymn in his letter, he puts his stamp of approval on every word and incorporates all its points into his theology and his ethics. Whether or not he was the original author of the hymn, he in effect become its author by using it for his purposes. By quoting this hymn, he confirms all that it says. In fact, he *conforms* to all that it says.⁴³

Contextual Analysis

Advocates of the kerygmatic interpretation believe that the hymn can be

³⁹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 304.

⁴⁰Fee makes an important argument regarding Paul’s choice of words: “Throughout the exposition that follows I will assume what one may rightly assume about any piece of writing such as this, that the word used are the ‘choice’ of the author of the text we now have. Since Paul dictated these words, and did so in the form of prose sentences . . . , we may assume that he chose to use these very words, even if they had existed in prior form. After all, we have all kinds of evidence that Paul ‘cites’ text (the LXX in particular) in such a way as to make them his own!” Fee cites other scholars who consider Pauline authorship as highly plausible, e.g., Hooker, Strimple, Wright and others. Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 193n3. For arguments in support of Pauline authorship, see Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 37–40.

⁴¹Hansen, *Philippians*, 130.

⁴²Fee is even more critical in his comments: “If it had prior form of some kind, and this can be neither proved nor disproved . . . in its present form it has been so thoroughly taken over by Paul as to render discussions of its prior existence as to its form, authorship, and background *needless or meaningless*.” Fee, “Hymn or Exalted Prose,” 43 (emphasis added).

⁴³Hansen, *Philippians*, 132–33 (emphasis added). I agree with Hansen’s statement that Paul *conforms* to what is said about Christ in the hymn as can be seen in his personal narrative in 3:7-11 which I will discuss more fully in Ch. 4.

isolated from its context and analyzed as an independent unit.⁴⁴ This type of micro-level analysis is necessary for form and source criticism. It is inadequate, however, if the aim is to understand its message and how it functions in the letter. One of the biggest methodological problems with Käsemann is his position that the pre-Pauline hymn must only be considered in its original context as a Gnostic redeemer myth, which results in the neglect of the surrounding verses. As Silva rightly comments, “Much of the present exegetical confusion, in fact, may be blamed on the tendency to overemphasize the pre-Pauline setting of our passage, and thus to wrest it from the only context in which it has come down to us.”⁴⁵

The hymn did not exist in a vacuum and it was not randomly inserted by Paul in this section of his letter. Whether Paul is the one who composed the hymn or he quoted it from another source, he placed the hymn at the specific section in the letter where it best serves his purpose. We are not analyzing the hymn as it is originally sung or recited in worship or baptism, but in the context of Paul’s message to the church in Philippi. It is thus inappropriate to disregard its literary context in an exegetical and theological study as this present dissertation.

Immediate Context

The Christ-hymn is immediately preceded by four verses which are clearly paraenetic in nature as indicated by the second person imperative *πληρώσατε*. These verses are expressed in a single grammatical sentence in Greek and the imperative verb forms the main clause.⁴⁶ Paul appeals to their common ground as fellow

⁴⁴Martin argues that Phil 2:5-11 is “*detachable* from the epistolary context of the Pauline letter of which it forms a part.” He proves this by appealing to what he calls the “contextual evidence,” i.e., Phil 1:27-2:18 is a “closely-knit” passage with a hortatory emphasis and 2:5-11 cuts through this stream of thought. Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 42–43 (emphasis added).

⁴⁵Silva, *Philippians*, 93.

⁴⁶Silva, *Philippians*, 86.

believers in Christ (v. 1), then exhorts them to be united by being of the same mind (v. 2), being humble (v. 3), and looking after the interests of others (v. 4). His exhortation to cultivate this kind of mindset that inspires and maintains unity naturally leads him to think of Christ whose humble and other-oriented mindset is what they need to achieve harmony. The semantic links between Philippians 2:1-4 and the Christ-hymn are noticeable: ἐν Χριστῷ (2:1; 2:5), φρονέω (2:2; 2:5), ἡγέομαι (2:3; 2:6), κενοδοξία (2:3; cf. κενόω in 2:7 and δόξα in 2:11), and ταπεινοφροσύνη (2:3; cf. ταπεινῶ in 2:8).⁴⁷

Broader Context

It is regrettable that the chapter division in our modern versions forces a break in the flow of thought.⁴⁸ Paul's admonition "to live a life worthy of the gospel" in Philippians 1:27 carries through to Philippians 2:18. He urges them to stand firm and strive together as one in the face of opposition from the outside (1:27). He also appeals to them to stand together to overcome challenges from the inside that threatens their disunity (2:2-4). Silva explains the continuity of thought as follows:

If the opposition being experienced by the Philippians call for steadfastness, if steadfastness is impossible without spiritual unity, and if unity can come about only from an attitude of humility in the heart of believers. And what better way to reinforce this thought than by reminding the Philippians of the attitude and conduct of him to whom they are united in faith?⁴⁹

The ὥστε in Philippians 2:12 directly flows out of the Christ-hymn. The injunction to "do everything without grumbling or arguing" (2:14) picks up the theme of unity and the mind of Christ.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Joseph H. Hellerman, *Philippians*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 91.

⁴⁸Hellerman, *Philippians*, 91.

⁴⁹Silva, *Philippians*, 92.

⁵⁰Davorin Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church*, NovTSup 79 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995), 68.

Semantic Analysis

This section will focus on four significant terms in the passage that will lay the groundwork for the syntactical analysis in the next section. These terms are φρονέω, μορφή, ἀρπαγμός, and κενόω.

φρονέω

The verb φρονέω is the only main verb in Philippians 2:5. It belongs to the word group that is derived from the feminine noun φρήν.⁵¹ The noun refers to the diaphragm in the anatomical sense (usually in plural form φρένες), and refers figuratively to the heart or soul as the seat of emotions and passions, mind or intellect as seat of mental faculties or “thoughtful planning,” and will or purpose.⁵² φρονέω, a common verb in Homer, has a wide semantic range and retains most of the root meanings of φρήν, but the physical sense is lost over time.⁵³ The primary meaning of φρονέω is to think or reflect.⁵⁴ It carries with it an element of commitment with intentionality.⁵⁵ The verb also refers to cultivating an attitude that

⁵¹“φρονέω, φρόνημα, φρόνησις, φρόνιμος, φρονίμως, φροντίζω, φρήν, ἀφροσύνη, ἄφρων, ὁμόφρων, παραφρονέω, παραφρονία, ὑπερφρονέω,” in *NIDNTTE*, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4:616.

⁵²GE, s.v. “φρήν, φρενός, ἦ”; Georg Bertram, “φρήν, ἄφρων, ἀφροσύνη, φρονέω, φρόνημα, φρόνησις, φρόνιμος,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 9:221; Robert Beekes, *EDG*, Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), s.v. “φρήν, ενός”; LSJ, s.v. “φρήν, ἦ”; Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “φρήν, φρενός f; φρόνησις, εως f; φρόνημα, τος n.”

⁵³Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:221.

⁵⁴LSJ, s.v. “φρονέω.” This basic meaning comprises at least six overlapping ideas: (1) “think, form/hold an opinion, judge (1 Cor 13:11; Acts 28:22; Rom 12:3a); (2) “think or feel in a certain way about someone.” (Phil 1:7); (3) “think of someone in the sense be concerned about him” (Phil 4:10a); (4) “think the same thing, i.e., be in agreement, live in harmony” (Phil 2:2a; 4:2; 2 Cor 13:11; Rom 12:16; 15:5); (5) “think nothing different” or “not take a different view” (Gal 5:10) or “think of or regard something differently” (Phil 3:15); (6) “be proud” (Rom 11:20 φρονέω with ὑψηλά). BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω.”

⁵⁵GE, s.v. “φρονέω.” BDAG includes the meaning “to give careful consideration to something.” BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω.” Paulsen intimates that Paul uses this word to express “single-minded commitment to something.” Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “φρονέω *phroneō*,” by Henning Paulsen. It includes three related meanings: (1) “set one’s mind on,” “to let one’s mind dwell on,” “be intent on,” “to keep thinking about,” or “to fix one’s attention on” whether on things above (Col 3:2) or on earthly things (Phil

involves careful thinking and planning.⁵⁶ φρονέω involves not only the mind, but also the will and emotions, and also affects one’s attitude.⁵⁷ Käsemann is on-target when he says that it “denotes the direction not merely of thought but of total existence, which on the Semitic view is always oriented consciously or unconsciously to a goal.”⁵⁸

Other cognates are the nouns φρόνησις and φρόνημα, adjective φρόνιμος, and adverb φρόνιμως. The nouns φρόνησις and φρόνημα are both post-Homeric with the former pertaining to insight, understanding, reason, cleverness, and practical intelligence and the latter to one’s frame of mind, disposition, and temperament (which could be either positive or negative), but the difference between the two nouns is not significant.⁵⁹ The adjective φρόνιμος describes someone who is wise, sensible, prudent, and insightful while the adverb φρόνιμως describes an action done wisely, prudently, or shrewdly.⁶⁰

3:19); (2) “espouse someone’s cause” or “to take someone’s side” (Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33; Rom 8:5); (3) to honor, respect, observe, or recognize the importance of something (Rom 14:6; Rom 12:3b). BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω”; Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “φρονέω; φροντίζω; σκοπέω; μελετάω.”

⁵⁶Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*, JSNTSup 136 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 306; BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω”; Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “φρονέω”; Georg Bertram, “φρήν, ἄφρων, ἀφροσύνη, φρονέω, φρόνημα, φρόνησις, φρόνιμος,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 9:221.

⁵⁷“φρονέω,” *NIDNTTE* 4:620. φρονέω can also mean to “feel by experience” or “know full well.” LSJ, s.v. “φρονέω.”

⁵⁸Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 219.

⁵⁹“φρονέω,” *NIDNTTE* 4:616-17; Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “φρόνησις, εως, ἡ *phronēsis*,” by Reinhard Kratz; Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:221. Both nouns can mean “way of thinking.” Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “φρόνημα, ατος, τό *phronēma*,” by Reinhard Kratz; Balz and Schneider, *EDNT*, s.v. “φρόνησις.”

⁶⁰Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “φρόνιμος, 2 *phronimos*,” by Reinhard Kratz; Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “φρόνιμως *phronimōs*,” by Reinhard Kratz.

Synonyms of φρονέω. Paul has several Greek words to choose from and he could have used any the following verbs that also mean “think.” The verb νοέω, which means to think or consider something carefully, may be considered a close synonym of φρονέω. But unlike φρονέω, it does not have the dynamic sense that involves the will, emotions, and attitude (Mark 13:14; 2 Tim 2:7).⁶¹ Another synonym is λογίζομαι which means to think of something more logically and systematically.⁶² Another possible option is the verb ἡγέομαι which usually involves a mental process of regarding or considering something.⁶³ Two more verbs that emphasize the intellectual process of thinking thoroughly or reasoning carefully are διαλογίζομαι and ἀναλογίζομαι.⁶⁴ The verbs οἶμαι, νομίζω, δοκέω, and ὑπολαμβάνω belong to the same semantic domain and may be rendered as “to think,” but with a degree of uncertainty.⁶⁵

Paul could have chosen any of these synonymous terms, but there are two aspects of the lexical meaning of φρονέω that are lacking in them. Only φρονέω encompasses the mind, emotions, and attitude and thus it is more comprehensive in its scope. Only φρονέω expresses focus, intention, and commitment. We may then say that Paul has chosen this word carefully to articulate the seriousness of the issue of unity and the intensity of effort that is required to ensure that harmony is achieved.⁶⁶

⁶¹Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “νοέω.”

⁶²Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “λογίζομαι; λογισμός, οὐ m.”

⁶³BDAG, s.v. “ἡγέομαι.”

⁶⁴Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “διαλογίζομαι; διαλογισμός, οὐ m; ἀναλογίζομαι”; BDAG, s.v. “ἀναλογίζομαι.”

⁶⁵Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “οἶμαι; νομίζω; δοκέω; ὑπολαμβάνω.”

⁶⁶Runge explains this principle of “choice implies meaning” in his book. Steven Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 5–7.

φρονέω in the NT. φρονέω is a distinctively Pauline term which only appears thrice in non-Pauline passages out of the 26 occurrences in the NT. It appears most frequently in Pauline passages and only three times in other NT passages. Even the cognate terms in the word group are also rare (φρόνησις only twice in Luke 1:17 and Eph 1:8; φρόνημα only four times which all occurs in Romans 8; φρόνιμως only once in Luke 16:8). Only the adjective (φρόνιμος 14 times) is more frequent.

Paul's use of φρονέω in Philippians is remarkable in both frequency and significance. In terms of frequency it occurs ten times in the epistle out of the twenty-six times it is used in the NT.⁶⁷ In terms of significance it appears in key passages which suggests that Paul has carefully and deliberately chosen the word to unpack the main thrust of this letter.⁶⁸ The verb is an important and distinct Pauline term related to the central theme of Philippians.⁶⁹

Despite its importance in the letter, φρονέω is not given enough attention.⁷⁰ It is often overshadowed by the discussion on the nature, source, and interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11, eclipsed by well-loved verses and favorite themes of joy, unity,

⁶⁷Silva highlights this distinct feature in his commentary on Philippians: "Paul's concern with this matter is reflected in the striking frequency of the verb φρονέω (phroneō, lit. 'think') in Philippians." Silva, *Philippians*, 21.

⁶⁸O'Brien, *Philippians*, 66. Fee notes that it occurs at "critical moments." Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 89n79. Fowl observes that the verb appear "often at crucial places." Stephen Fowl, *Philippians*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 28.

⁶⁹Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 26; Fowl, *Philippians*, 28.

⁷⁰Silva observes that "this peculiarity has often been mentioned by commentators but seldom developed" and a thorough treatment only appears in the important monograph of Jozef Heriban. Silva, *Philippians*, 21. See Jozef Heriban, *Retto φρονεῖν e κένωσις: Studio esegetico su Fil 2, 1-5. 6-11*, BSR 51 (Rome: Liberia Ateneo Salesiano, 1983). Heriban in his review of O'Brien's commentary laments that the latter has not allotted more space and attention to this important term. Jozef Heriban, "review of The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, by Peter T. O'Brien," *Biblica* 75, no. 1 (April 1994): 124. Most of the commentators will mention about their observance of a high frequency of φρονέω in their introduction and briefly comment that this term is important to the letter, but fails to elucidate why it is important and how it affects our understanding of Paul's message in the letter. Some commentators will simply introduce the various meanings of the word only once in the commentary (either in 1:7 when it occurs for the first time, or when it occurs in a Christologically significant passage like 2:1-11) and fail to mention it thereafter.

and humility, and surpassed by debates on the provenance and literary integrity of the letter and the identity of Paul's opponents in Philippians 3.⁷¹

If φρονέω is not given due attention in the Greek text, then it is even more difficult for English readers to see its importance in the letter. The translation of the term into English presents many challenges. The biggest problem related to translation is that φρονέω has a vast semantic range, which cannot be fully captured by any single English word. Silva rightly observes that it is so easy for English readers to miss it because it necessitates more than one rendering in different contexts.⁷² Hawthorne and Martin state that it is not an easy word to translate because it consists not only of attitude and feeling, but also thoughts and opinion about someone or something.⁷³ φρονέω has a wide range of meaning, but its collocation with other words affects its meaning. For instance, φρονέω ὑπέρ or ἐπί connotes warm feelings and deep concern (Phil 1:7; 4:10).⁷⁴ A survey of the major English translations of the ten occurrences in Philippians will reveal that *none of them* rendered the verb *consistently* by its primary meaning (i.e., to think) throughout the letter.

μορφή

The feminine noun μορφή is rare in the Greek NT (only in Mark 16:12; Phil

⁷¹Some of the well-known memory verses in Philippians include 1:6, 21; 2:5-11; 3:8-10, 12-13; 4:4, 6-8, 13, 19.

⁷²Silva, *Philippians*, 21.

⁷³Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 26. "The verb and its noun form φρόνησις/phronesis," Fowl remarks, "are quite common in Greek, particularly in discussion of moral life." He concurs that it is "very difficult to translate neatly into English." Fowl, *Philippians*, 28. Godet also agrees that it is challenging to translate the term "because it includes at once *thinking* and *willing*." Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 302 (emphasis original).

⁷⁴Bertram, "φρήν," *TDNT* 9:233. Another example is φρονέω with μέγα which means to "think lofty thoughts" or to "think presumptuously." Gary Alan Chamberlain, "The Greek of the Septuagint: A Supplemental Lexicon" (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 179.

2:6, 7) and the LXX (Judg 8:18; Job 4:16; Isa 44:13; Dan 3:19; Tob 1:13; Wis 18:1). Its basic meaning is “form” which denotes an external appearance or something that the senses may perceive.⁷⁵ The term, however, does not pertain to the outward appearance only, but also refers to something more tangible.⁷⁶ Whatever meaning is attached to *μορφή* in *μορφή θεοῦ* (2:6) should also be applicable to the parallel phrase *μορφή δούλου* (2:7) which is set as a contrast.

There are at least five meanings attached to this crucial term. First, J. B. Lightfoot’s proposes that *μορφή*, though it is not synonymous with *φύσις* or *οὐσία*, denotes fundamental characteristics, not just an external manifestation, since having the form suggests that one also takes part in the *οὐσία*.⁷⁷ Based on classical usage of this technical term in Aristotelian metaphysics, *μορφή* refers to “essential attributes” which are inherent, in contrast to *σχῆμα* which is external and in a state of flux.⁷⁸ He concludes that *μορφή θεοῦ* may be rendered “the true divine nature” of God, the *μορφή δούλου* “the true human nature” and *σχῆματι ὡς ἄνθρωπος* (2:7) “the externals of the human nature.”⁷⁹ This is the sense that NIV has taken in rendering the phrase as “in very nature God.”⁸⁰ Though some scholars support this view, there is scarce evidence to prove that Paul uses *μορφή* in a philosophical sense.⁸¹

The second view is to interpret the form of God as the glory (*δόξα*) of

⁷⁵BDAG, s.v. “*μορφή*”; Johannes Behm, “*μορφή, μορφώω, μόρφωσις, μεταμορφώω*,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:742.

⁷⁶O’Brien, *Philippians*, 207.

⁷⁷Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians*, 4th ed. (1878; repr., London: Macmillan, 1908), 110, 127–33.

⁷⁸Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 110, 127.

⁷⁹Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 133.

⁸⁰Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 205.

⁸¹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 207.

God.⁸² The rationale for this view is that no one has seen God in the OT. If we take *μορφή* to mean external appearance, then it would mean that Christ, who existed in the external appearance of God, later took on the external appearance of a slave.⁸³ The way a slave looks is easily recognizable in first-century Philippian society, but it is impossible to perceive the form of the invisible God, except for anthropomorphisms in figurative expressions.⁸⁴ The Israelites are seriously forbidden to create any image or visual representation of the form of God (Exod 20:4). How then do we understand the phrase “in the form of God”? Based on several OT passages the glory of God refers to “the outward appearance of the presence and majesty of God.”⁸⁵ To say then that Christ existed in the form of God means that he was “clothed in the garments of divine majesty and splendor.”⁸⁶ This seems to harmonize perfectly with expressions of Christ’s glory in the NT, like in John 17:5 when Christ exclaims “Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” Christ is also described as “the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature” in Hebrews 1:3. A major argument against this view is that *μορφή* and *δόξα* are not synonymous to each other and this sense cannot be applied to the parallel phrase in Philippians 2:7 to mean “glory of a slave.”⁸⁷ A good counter-argument to this is the hymn pays homage to “Christ’s eternal *δόξα* not because *μορφή* equals *δόξα* but because the *μορφή* θεοῦ is *δόξα*.”⁸⁸

⁸²Daniel J. Fabricatore, *Form of God, Form of a Servant: An Examination of the Greek Noun μορφή in Philippians 2:6-7* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 135–75.

⁸³Hansen, *Philippians*, 135.

⁸⁴Hansen, *Philippians*, 135.

⁸⁵Hansen, *Philippians*, 136. These passages include Exod 16:10; 24:16; 33:18; 40:34; Lev 9:6, 23; 1 Kgs 8:11; Ps 24:1; Isa 6:3; 60:1-2; Ezek 1:28; 43:2; 44:4.

⁸⁶O’Brien, *Philippians*, 208.

⁸⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 205; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 208.

⁸⁸Robert B. Strimple, “Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Studies: Some Exegetical Conclusions,” *WTJ* 41, no. 2 (1979): 261. Hansen clarifies that the “the word *form* means outward

The third way of reading the passage is to interpret *μορφή* as an allusion to Adam Christology. James Dunn is among its ardent advocates who takes *μορφή* as interchangeable with *εἰκών* (“image”) and interprets the passage as an “implicit contrast” between Adam and Christ.⁸⁹ He depicts Christ as the last Adam who reverses Adam’s sin by refusing to cling on to his status, poured out his life in service, and chose death as the path to exaltation.⁹⁰ Although this is an interesting analogy, it is simply based on *conceptual* association, without any *linguistic* link to the Genesis account.⁹¹ The biggest drawback with this reading is his noncommittal view of Christ’s preexistence in the hymn, particularly in verse 6.⁹²

The fourth view is to understand *μορφή* as “mode of being” (*Daseinsweise*) or “a way of being under particular circumstances.”⁹³ Käsemann considers the hymn as originating from the Gnostic myth of the heavenly Man and takes the *μορφή* as a

appearance in both cases. But *the form of God* is glory; *the form of a slave* is humiliation.” *Philippians*, 137n130 (emphasis original).

⁸⁹James D. G. Dunn, “Christ, Adam, and Preexistence,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 76; James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 119.

⁹⁰Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 119; Dunn, “Christ, Adam, and Preexistence,” 79. He adds, “Confronted with the same choice, he rejected Adam’s sin but nevertheless freely followed Adam’s course as fallen man to the bitter end of death; wherefore God bestowed on him the status not simply that Adam lost, but the status which Adam was intended to come to, God’s final prototype, the last Adam” (*Christology in the Making*, 119).

⁹¹It is important to note that *μορφή* and *εἰκών* are not entirely synonymous. The former signifies “visible appearance” and the latter is less specific. Brown, “Lohmeyer’s *Kyrios Jesus*,” 27. See Dave Steenburg, “The Case Against the Synonymy of *Morphē* and *Eikōn*,” *JSNT* 11, no. 34 (October 1988): 77–86.

⁹²Dunn insists that the Adam/Christ parallel does not hinge on any specific time frame, whether pre-existence or pre-history. “The Philippians hymn,” he intimates, “does not intend to affirm that Jesus was as historical or as prehistorical as Adam.” Dunn, “Christ, Adam, and Preexistence,” 119–20.

⁹³Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence, Wisdom, and the Son of Man: A Study of the Idea of Pre-Existence in the New Testament*, SNTSMS 21 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 161. Käsemann indicates that support for this translation is available from parallel texts in hellenistic religious dualism and also the use of *ἐν μορφῇ*. He contends that it is not reasonable to look for the meaning of *μορφή* in classical literature. Instead the terms *μορφή θεοῦ* and *ἰσόθεος φύσις* should be considered parallel or even synonymous and thus, the “divine form” and “equality with God” should be coordinated as attested by hellenistic religious literature. Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 62.

“mode of being in a specific direction” and not as an “individual entity as a formed whole.”⁹⁴ In this view the distinction between essence and appearance is disregarded so that Christ did not simply exist in the form of God, but also in the divine mode of being; in the same way he also exists not only in the form of a servant but also the mode of being of a servant.⁹⁵ Although this interpretation is appropriate for the context and can be equally applied to the parallel phrases *μορφὴ θεοῦ* (2:6) and *μορφὴ δούλου* (2:7), its proposed Hellenistic background with specific Gnostic origin is highly suspect and severely rejected.⁹⁶ Dieter Georgi argues that the Christ-hymn is vastly different from the Gnostic myth in that there is no mention of incarnation, exaltation, or universal reign in the latter.⁹⁷

The fifth view comes from Eduard Schweizer who equates *μορφὴ* with status or condition, therefore pointing to the original position that Christ had in relation to God.⁹⁸ Objection to this view arises from a lack of support from Greek literature on this meaning.⁹⁹ Martin believes, however, that Tobit 1:13 proves that this interpretation is justified: “καὶ ἔδωκεν ὁ ὑψιστος χάριν καὶ μορφὴν ἐνώπιον Ἐνεμεσσαρου καὶ ἡμην αὐτοῦ ἀγοραστής” (LXT); “The Most High gave me favor and *good standing* with Shalmaneser, and I used to buy everything he needed” (NRSV;

⁹⁴Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 60, 63.

⁹⁵O’Brien, *Philippians*, 209.

⁹⁶Silva thinks that Käsemann’s gnostic myth of the heavenly man did not take into consideration its vast difference with Phil 2, but also cautions against disregarding his point that the “*morphē theou* and *isotheos physis* are parallel and even become synonymous” in the Hellenistic religious literature. Silva, *Philippians*, 100.

⁹⁷Dieter Georgi, “Der vorpaulinische Hymnus Phil 2,6-11,” in *Zeit und Geschichte: Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1964), 263–66.

⁹⁸Eduard Schweizer, *Erniedrigung und Erhöhung bei Jesus und seinen Nachfolgern*, ATANT 28 (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1962), 95–96.

⁹⁹Jean-François Collange, *L’Épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1973), 88.

emphasis added).¹⁰⁰

ἄρπαγμός

The noun ἄρπαγμός is derived from ἀρπάζω which means to snatch, steal, seize, or plunder violently.¹⁰¹ It can be taken in either an active or passive sense, and can also have a concrete or abstract meaning.¹⁰² If taken in an active and abstract sense, then it refers to “the act of snatching or robbery” which is also known as *raptus*.¹⁰³ If taken in a passive and usually concrete sense, then it refers to “that which is seized” as “ein Gewinn,” “prize” or “gain” (*sensu bono*) or “das Geraubte,” “die Beute,” or “booty” (*sensu malo*).¹⁰⁴

There are the five major interpretations of ἄρπαγμός with a corresponding Latin label for each. First, *raptus* denotes ἄρπαγμός as an abstract noun with an active meaning, i.e., “the act of snatching,” which is Moule’s position.¹⁰⁵ Thus the clause οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ may be rendered as “he did not regard equality with God as *consisting in* snatching.”¹⁰⁶ Lightfoot explains that nouns

¹⁰⁰Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), xx.

¹⁰¹BDAG, s.v. “ἀρπάζω.”

¹⁰²Silva elaborates that “an active meaning (“the act of snatching, robbery”) is the usage found in the few attested occurrences of the word outside the NT and Christian writers; a passive meaning (“the thing possessed or to be snatched”) is attested only in the form ἄρπαγμα.” Silva, *Philippians*, 102n21.

¹⁰³Nicholas Thomas Wright, “ἄρπαγμός and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5-11,” *JTS* 37, no. 2 (October 1986): 324.

¹⁰⁴Werner Foerster, “ἀρπάζω, ἄρπαγμός,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:472; Silva, *Philippians*, 102; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 212.

¹⁰⁵Charles Francis Digby Moule, “Further Reflexions on Philippians 2:5-11,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 266, 271. The term *raptus* can have both active (*rapina*) and passive senses. Nicholas Thomas Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 76n82.

¹⁰⁶Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 266 (emphasis original).

ending in -μός primarily signifies the *process*; hence, ἀρπαγμός refers to “an act of plundering.”¹⁰⁷ ἀρπαγμός means “the activity of ἀρπάζειν” in secular passages.¹⁰⁸ Martin objects to taking ἀρπαγμός in this active sense and begs the question as to what is the object of this action or activity: “What was it that our Lord refused to plunder?”¹⁰⁹ Moule thinks that this question misses the point because the abstract noun requires no object and simply means “taking” as opposed to “giving.”¹¹⁰ Moule’s main theological point is this: “Instead of imagining that equality with God meant *getting*, Jesus, on the contrary, *gave*—gave until he was “empty.”¹¹¹ John Ross stresses that this should not be taken as though Paul is saying that Jesus is robbing God, but that “he was telling them that the Messiah, Christ Jesus, did not think that to be on an equality with God spelt rapacity, plundering, self-aggrandizement.”¹¹²

Second, *res rapta* denotes ἀρπαγμός with the passive sense as the thing obtained by snatching that which is *already* in Christ’s possession, but which he is unwilling to give up. Lightfoot and Moule attribute this position to the influence of the Latin Fathers who understand ἀρπαγμός in an abstract sense wherein “grasping” means “robbery,” “usurpation,” or “an act of aggression.”¹¹³ Thus the clause οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ refers to Christ’s *assertion* that he did not consider

¹⁰⁷Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 111. He adds, however, that substantives in -μός are often used for a concrete matter which is comparable to “seizure” or “capture” in English (111).

¹⁰⁸Foerster, “ἀρπάζω,” *TDNT* 1:473.

¹⁰⁹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 135. Foerster also objects to the active sense stating that “the lack of an object makes this impossible; instead of ἀρπαγμός one would expect a verb which does not require an object, such as κυριεύειν.” Foerster, “ἀρπάζω,” *TDNT* 1:474.

¹¹⁰Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 272. See also Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 89.

¹¹¹Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 272 (emphasis original).

¹¹²John Ross, “ἀρπαγμός (Philippians ii 6),” *JTS* 10 (1909): 573.

¹¹³Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 133–34; Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 271n1. Lightfoot cites Tertullian, Ambrose, and Augustine among the Latin Fathers. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 134. Wright clarifies that this active sense of the Latin Fathers should be properly called *res rapta*. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 64.

equality with God as something obtained by snatching, but rather as an inherent right and natural possession, with emphasis on his *majesty*.¹¹⁴ This expression is a *development* of idea from the previous phrase $\delta\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu \mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta\acute{\iota} \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon \acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\omega\nu$: “He existed in the form of God *and so* did not think it usurpation to be equal with God.”¹¹⁵ Its implication for the next verse is that the force of the *ἀλλά* is taken as equivalent to *ἀλλ’ ὅμως* and Christ’s condescension only occurs in Philippians 2:7: “even though he knew that equality with God was his by right, he nevertheless emptied himself” as a voluntary act.¹¹⁶ Wright notes that part of the confusion is that the Latin tag *res rapta* in itself has become an academic jargon in current debate and often used to label what should be properly tagged as *res retinenda*.¹¹⁷ It is often used to describe the view that Christ possessed equality with God *before* his incarnation, without appropriate reference to the proper sense of *ἀρπαγμός* as “the thing” (*res*) having been snatched.¹¹⁸ Wright further observes that the *res rapta* view of the Latin Fathers (though strictly has a passive sense) is theologically identical to the active sense of *raptus* in its conclusion regarding Christ’s divine equality with God.¹¹⁹

Third, *res retinenda* denotes *ἀρπαγμός* with the passive sense as a prize that Christ *already* possessed but continues to cling to or retain.¹²⁰ Lightfoot prefers this position which he attributes to the Greek Fathers.¹²¹ When the synonym and

¹¹⁴Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 133; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 73.

¹¹⁵Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 136 (emphasis original).

¹¹⁶Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 134; Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 322.

¹¹⁷Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 323.

¹¹⁸Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 323.

¹¹⁹Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 324.

¹²⁰Martin calls it *res rapta*, which Moule and Wright corrected as *res retinenda*. Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 138; Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 324; Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 267.

¹²¹Lightfoot cites Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, Theodore, Theodoret, Isidore of Pelusium, Cyril of Alexandria, Hilary, and Jerome among the Greek Fathers. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 135–36.

more common form ἄρπαγμα is used with verbs like ἡγεῖσθαι, ποιεῖσθαι, and νομίζειν, it functions like ἔρμαιον and εὖρημα to refer to “a highly-prized possession” or “an unexpected gain.”¹²² The double accusative structure of ἄρπαγμα ἡγεῖσθαι matches a typical Hellenistic idiom which could mean “to clutch greedily” or “prize highly.”¹²³ Thus, the phrase οὐχ ἄρπαγμα ἡγήσατο refers to Christ’s *surrender* or *giving up* of rights and privileges, with emphasis on his *humility*.¹²⁴ It can be paraphrased as “yet *did not regard it as a prize*, a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards.”¹²⁵ This expression involves a *contrast* to the previous phrase ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων: “He existed in the form of God *but nevertheless* did not eagerly assert His equality with God.”¹²⁶ The implication for the next verse is that the ἀλλά in Philippians 2:7a corresponds to the οὐχ in Philippians 2:6b (*not* this, *but* that), so that οὐχ ἄρπαγμα ἡγήσατο consists of Christ’s condescension in a negative sense, and ἀλλ’ ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν is its positive counterpart: “*though* He preexisted in the form of God, *yet* He did not look upon equality with God as a prize which must not slip from His grasp, *but* He emptied Himself, divested Himself, taking upon Him the form of a slave.”¹²⁷ Wright cautions that this view can easily transfer into a kenotic understanding of Philippians 2:6-7 if τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ is extended to mean divinity in that “the pre-existent, divine Christ abandoned that divinity in becoming man” and which he would later receive back in his exaltation.¹²⁸

Fourth, *res rapienda* refers to ἄρπαγμός with the passive sense as the thing

¹²²Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 111.

¹²³Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 111.

¹²⁴Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 133.

¹²⁵Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 111 (emphasis original).

¹²⁶Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 136 (emphasis original).

¹²⁷Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 134, 111.

¹²⁸Wright, “ἄρπαγμός,” 330.

not yet possessed and is to be snatched, i.e., Christ was tempted to seize equality with God, which he did not yet have, but also refused to grasp.¹²⁹ This view is a later development that came after Lightfoot's time. It is often suggested in line with the Adam Christology.¹³⁰ The inference from this view is that verse 6 is *not* referring to Christ's preexistence, but to his incarnation.¹³¹ Dunn asserts that Christ, unlike Adam, chooses not to grasp for equality with God, but willingly accepted the consequence of the fallenness of Adam's race.¹³²

Fifth, a combination of *res rapta* and *res rapienda* wherein the μορφή θεοῦ is *res rapta* which the preexistent Christ possessed but gave up to become a man and servant, and the authority to exercise cosmic dominion as Lord is *res rapienda* which he does not yet possess and has yet to be fully exercised.¹³³ He refused to grasp that authority but instead chose to be enthroned as the cosmocrator by going down the path of self-humiliation and obedience unto death.¹³⁴ This mediating position is proposed by Martin. Wright rightly points out that it is problematic to make μορφή θεοῦ the *res rapta*, rather than τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ which is the grammatical object of οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγγήσατο.¹³⁵

ἀρπαγμός is a hapax legomenon in the NT, absent from the LXX and appears occasionally in the extra-biblical Greek writings of the patristic fathers who

¹²⁹Moule, "Further Reflexions," 267; Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 141; Wright, "ἀρπαγμός," 324; Silva, *Philippians*, 102.

¹³⁰See the fourth view on the meaning of μορφή above. Dunn's view that "the form of God" does not refer to Christ's preexistence leads him to adopt the *res rapienda* position for ἀρπαγμός.

¹³¹Silva, *Philippians*, 102.

¹³²Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 120–21.

¹³³Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 152. Wright states that Martin's view is that "Christ was always in the form of God, but that he did not yet possess equality with God." Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 67.

¹³⁴Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 153.

¹³⁵Wright, "ἀρπαγμός," 327.

are either quoting or alluding to Philippians 2:6.¹³⁶ Due to its paucity, Hoover uses its synonym *ἄρπαγμα* to understand the meaning and usage of *ἄρπαγμός*.¹³⁷ He cites evidence that *ἄρπαγμα* has both active and passive senses. It carries an active meaning (connotes an act of seizure) in the LXX (Ps 62:10; Isa 61:8; Sir 16:13; Pss Sol 2:28) and in Plutarch (*Cat. Maj.* 13.343).¹³⁸ It also conveys a passive import (connotes something seized) in the LXX (Lev 6:4; Job 29:17; Isa 42:22; Ezek 19:3, 6; 22:25, 27; 33:15; Mal 1:13) and in Plutarch (*Alex. fort.* 8.330).¹³⁹ The most definitive proof comes from Eusebius of Caesarea: “Not only are *ἄρπαγμα* and *ἄρπαγμός* used synonymously . . . , but they are used synonymously by the same author in reference to the same object—death—and in expressions whose form precisely parallels that of the *ἄρπαγμός* remark in Philippians 2:6.”¹⁴⁰ Based on the use of *ἄρπαγμός* in Eusebius’s *Commentarius in Lucam* 6, Hoover argues that it cannot be taken to mean that

Peter considered death by crucifixion to be a robbery, or something seized or to be seized by a violent self-assertion, or a treasure to be held fast; nor can *ἄρπαγμός* be understood here as a synonym of *ἔρμαιον*, *εὕρημα*, and *εὐτύχημα*—i.e., that crucifixion was regarded as an unanticipated windfall, or a surprise bit of good luck. . . . What he wants to say, rather, is that because of the hope of salvation crucifixion was not a horror to be shunned, but an advantage to be seized.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶Wright, “*ἄρπαγμός*,” 321; Hawthorne, “Form of God and Equal with God,” 109n50.

¹³⁷Hoover explains how *ἄρπαγμα* can function as the synonym of *ἄρπαγμός*: “To claim that *ἄρπαγμα* and *ἄρπαγμός* were used synonymously in the Hellenistic period is to assert nothing new, of course. That is implied in the writings of a number of the Greek Fathers who treat the *ἄρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 as if it read *ἄρπαγμα*, as Foerster’s inquiry shows. It has been widely recognized in recent interpretation, furthermore, that the characteristic distinctions in Classical Greek between nouns terminating in *-μός* and *-μα* are not observed in the usage of many such nouns in the Hellenistic period.” Roy W. Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution,” *HTR* 64, no. 1 (January 1971): 107. Martin states, “This equivalence of *ἄρπαγμός* and *ἄρπαγμα* has been widely accepted since Lightfoot’s day. The effect of this identification is to introduce a term which is held to be truly synonymous, i.e. *ἄρπαγμα*, into the arena of the discussion. This latter term is much commoner than its postulated equivalent, occurring seventeen times in the LXX.” Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 136–37.

¹³⁸Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 107.

¹³⁹Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 107–8.

¹⁴⁰Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 108.

¹⁴¹Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 109.

Similarly, ἄρπαγμα is used to mean that “death seemed an advantage to be seized” (*Hist. eccl.* 8.12.2) for Christians who were persecuted, and would not have implied “robbery or of violent self-assertion” or “unanticipated windfall.”¹⁴²

Hoover offers a significant philological solution to the enigmatic ἄρπαγμός. First, he argues that ἄρπαγμα has a distinct meaning (*contra* Werner Jaeger) from ἔρμαιον and εὕρημα when it occurs as a predicate accusative with verbs like ἡγεῖσθαι, ποιεῖσθαι, and τίθεσθαι and the phrase taken together carries a metaphorical and idiomatic sense similar to its verb form in the idiom ἀρπάζειν τὸν καιρόν.¹⁴³ However, it does not signify any idea of good luck.¹⁴⁴ Second, when ἄρπαγμός and ἄρπαγμα function as predicate accusatives, they imply a different sense and thus *cannot* be translated as “booty.”¹⁴⁵ Third, he asserts that proofs of ἄρπαγμα being used in both active and passive senses confirm that both ἄρπαγμα and ἄρπαγμός were used synonymously in the Hellenistic period and thus the use of ἄρπαγμα in a double accusative construction can serve as the groundwork for understanding the meaning of ἄρπαγμός in Philippians 2:6.¹⁴⁶ Based on these three philological findings, Hoover proposes this translation: “he did not regard being equal with God as something to take advantage of, or, more idiomatically, as something to use for his own advantage.”¹⁴⁷ The goal of this advantage-taking is not equality with God, but

¹⁴²Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 109.

¹⁴³Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 117; Werner Wilh. Jaeger, “Eine stilgeschichtliche Studie zum Philipperbrief,” *Hermes* 50, no. 4 (October 1915): 537–53.

¹⁴⁴Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 117. Hoover explains that ἄρπαγμά τι ποιεῖσθαι is related to the meanings conveyed by ἔρμαιον, εὕρημα, and εὐτύχημα τι ποιεῖσθαι, not because the nouns are synonyms, but because a stroke of luck is “something is to seize upon.” There is no connotation of fortuitousness in the term ἄρπαγμα, whereas that notion is inherent in the terms ἔρμαιον, εὕρημα, and εὐτύχημα. Obviously, a person can regard something other than a stroke of luck as something to seize upon (106).

¹⁴⁵Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 117.

¹⁴⁶Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 117–18.

¹⁴⁷Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 118. Hoover’s conclusion is widely accepted by most scholars, including Silva (*Philippians*, 104), Heriban (*Retto φρονεῖν ἐ κένωσις*, 262–65), and Wright

instead “it begins from it.”¹⁴⁸

Samuel Vollenweider opposes Hoover’s proposal to treat the expression as an idiom. First, he points out that the idiom (*ἄρπαγμα* + verb + double accusative) is only found in *Aethiopica*, which is the love romance novel of Heliodorus of Emesa and a non-Christian literature of the late fourth-century.¹⁴⁹ Second, he reveals that the idiom is used to refer to favorable opportunities that can be seized for sex and crime by the narrator of *Aethiopica* and Vollenweider doubts that such vulgar connotation could have found its way into the exalted Christ-hymn.¹⁵⁰ He insists that *ἄρπαγμός* in Philippians 2:6 should be understood in a negative way as “booty.”¹⁵¹ He points to biblical, Jewish and Hellenistic traditions as the key to understanding this expression.¹⁵² Christ is presented as an antitype to the earthly kings and rulers who “rob” their position and usurp equality with God.¹⁵³

The clear advantage of Vollenweider’s position is his reference to the OT passages in the LXX. The conceptual links to earthly kings and rulers are worthy of consideration. However, he fails to account for Hoover’s corrective on Jaeger’s view. Hoover disagrees with Jaeger that the *ἄρπαγμα* expressions in Heliodorus (*Aeth.* 7.20, 8.7) should be taken to refer to a “stroke of luck or windfall.”¹⁵⁴ In fact, like Vollenweider, Hoover also takes *ἄρπαγμα* to mean “booty” in some instances (e.g.,

(“*ἄρπαγμός*,” 344-52) among others.

¹⁴⁸Wright, “*ἄρπαγμός*,” 339.

¹⁴⁹Samuel Vollenweider, “Der ‘Raub’ der Gottgleichheit: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Vorschlag zu Phil 2.6(-11),” *NTS* 45, no. 3 (July 1999): 416.

¹⁵⁰Vollenweider, “Der ‘Raub,’” 416.

¹⁵¹Vollenweider, “Der ‘Raub,’” 425-26.

¹⁵²Vollenweider, “Der ‘Raub,’” 419-25.

¹⁵³Vollenweider, “Der ‘Raub,’” 431.

¹⁵⁴Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 105, 109.

Ant. 11.5.6 and *Aeth.* 4.6-7). Hoover contends, however, that if ἄρπαγμα occurs as a predicate accusative with certain verbs like ἡγεῖσθαι, ποιεῖσθαι, and τίθεσθαι, it carries with it “a metaphorical and idiomatic sense” different from the sense it conveys when used otherwise.¹⁵⁵ Hoover also did not depend on Heliodorus’s *Aethiopica* alone, but cites Christian sources like Eusebius. Moreover, Vollenweider fails to consider the syntactical relationship of ἄρπαγμός with the rest of the verse, i.e., he did not state clearly whether equality with God is something that Christ *already* possessed or a booty that he refused to rob.

I consider Hoover’s view more convincing and relevant to understanding the use of ἄρπαγμός in the Christ-hymn. His persuasive argument effectively debunks all the major categories put forth so far. ἄρπαγμός cannot be a *res rapienda* since it pertains to something already possessed nor can it be a *res retinenda* since ἄρπαγμός or the idiomatic phrase do not carry the sense of retaining something.¹⁵⁶ The idiom also precludes *res rapta* since it does not refer to the act of grasping something.¹⁵⁷ Hoover contends that the main issue is “not whether or not one possesses something, but whether or not one *chooses* to exploit something.”¹⁵⁸ Wright accurately sums up this main point: “It refers to *the attitude one will take towards something which one already has and holds and will continue to have and hold*, specifically, to the question of whether that attitude will or will not consist in taking advantage of this possessed object.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 117.

¹⁵⁶Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 118. Hoover adds, “Neither in this idiomatic phrase nor in any other usage does ἄρπαγμα, ἄρπαγμός, or ἀρπάζειν, or any of their compounds or cognates mean to retain something. That idea, it appears, has always been commended by theological interest rather than by philological evidence” (119).

¹⁵⁷Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 118–19.

¹⁵⁸Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 118 (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁹Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 78 (emphasis original).

κενόω

The verb κενόω can be taken in a literal or figurative sense. If taken literally, it means “to empty or make empty” and metaphorically it means to void or render of no effect.¹⁶⁰ It can also mean “to pour out” in the sense of laying down one’s life for others (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16) or that Christ became poor to enrich others (2 Cor 8:9).¹⁶¹ Taken figuratively ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν refers to Christ making himself weak and defenseless by undergoing humiliation through incarnation and crucifixion willingly.¹⁶² The phrase may be rendered as “he made himself nothing” (NIV) which epitomizes “the whole descent of Christ from highest glory to lowest depths.”¹⁶³

Syntactical Analysis

The syntactical analysis will be divided into three subsections, namely, Christ’s mindset (2:5), his humiliation (2:6-8), and his exaltation (2:9-11). Since verse 5 is crucial to the interpretation of the passage, a detailed analysis will be presented below, which will be followed by the rest of the hymn.

Christ’s Mindset (2:5)

The mindset of Christ is introduced in verse 5 and the ellipsis creates some interpretive challenges. The verb for the second part of the verse is missing and needs to be supplied either based on the verb in the first part or from the context.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰BDAG, s.v. “κενόω”; LSJ, s.v. “κενόω.”

¹⁶¹Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 117. Brown suggests a helpful analogy: ἐκένωσεν “evokes the image of a vessel that retains its form after the contents have been poured out.” Brown, “Lohmeyer’s *Kyrios Jesus*,” 12.

¹⁶²Morna D. Hooker, “Philippians 2:6-11,” in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Gräßer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 152.

¹⁶³Silva, *Philippians*, 105.

¹⁶⁴Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 199.

Whatever verb is supplied sets the tone for the hymn that follows and its interpretation.

2:5 Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν δὲ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Τοῦτο is fronted for emphasis and refers to what Paul previously exhorted in Philippians 2:1-4, *not* looking forward to the hymn in 2:6-11.¹⁶⁵ It is pointing backward to the attitude Paul just mentioned in the previous four verses, especially using the same verb φρονέω as 2:2 (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε and τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες).¹⁶⁶

The main verb is the imperative φρονεῖτε and how this verb is understood is crucial to the interpretation of the verse and the hymn that follows. Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε is variously translated as “this think” or “have this mindset.” I agree with Fee that the force of the imperative should be clearly carried out by focusing on the action, instead of the noun that is implied in the verb.¹⁶⁷ He cautions that to emphasize the implied noun (i.e., mindset or frame of mind) by translating the first two words as “have this mindset” or “have this frame of mind” is misleading because this hypothetical noun will be assumed as the antecedent of the relative pronoun ὃ that comes after.¹⁶⁸ Grammatically τοῦτο is the object of the main verb φρονεῖτε and the antecedent of the relative pronoun ὃ.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 107; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 204. Lohmeyer insists that the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο is always retrospective in Paul and can only point forward if it is followed by a substantive, an infinitive or a ὅτι or ἵνα clause. Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 12; BDF, §290. Fee agrees that this is Paul’s characteristic style in the letter (see 1:7, 25; 3:7, 15; 4:8, 9), except for 1:19. He also explains that whenever τοῦτο is pointing forward, it will be followed by a noun clause that explains what the pronoun is referring to. In 2:5 the context shows that the pronoun is not introducing a new idea but continues the flow of thought from previous verses. Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 199n25.

¹⁶⁶Hellerman, *Philippians*, 107. Contra Losie who does not see a connection between this verse and Paul’s exhortation to unity and humility in 2:1-4. Lynn Allan Losie, “Note on the Interpretation of Phil 2:5,” *ExpT* 90, no. 2 (November 1978): 53.

¹⁶⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 199n26.

¹⁶⁸Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 199n26.

¹⁶⁹Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 199n26.

The first part of the verse ends with ἐν ὑμῖν which could be translated as “in you” (individually) or “among yourselves” (relationally). If the former, then the plural ὑμῖν refers to individual members in the congregation in a distributive sense, i.e., *within* you or in *each* of you.¹⁷⁰ If the latter, then the plural ὑμῖν refers to a collective sense, i.e., *among* you in relation to each other.¹⁷¹ As mentioned above, the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο refers back to the attitudes that Paul is exhorting the Philippian believers to think of in Philippians 2:1-4, then the relational emphasis is more appropriate when we consider Paul’s stress on how they relate to one other.¹⁷² The prepositional phrase is also more commonly used in Pauline paraenesis to articulate what he wants the believing community to put into practice.¹⁷³ Needless to say, the corporate appeal implies an individual response.¹⁷⁴ It is more common to use ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, instead of ἐν ὑμῖν, when describing someone who is thinking to or within himself.¹⁷⁵

The relative clause that begins with δὲ καί has the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο as its antecedent, which in turn is referring to the attitudes of humility and being like-minded in Philippians 2:2-4.¹⁷⁶ Hence, it makes more sense to take καί as the adverb “also” (δὲ καί is parallel to τοῦτο), instead of as an intensive “even” or “indeed.”¹⁷⁷

Now we come to the verb that needs to be supplied in the second part of

¹⁷⁰Hellerman, *Philippians*, 108.

¹⁷¹Silva, *Philippians*, 95; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 205; Hellerman, *Philippians*, 108.

¹⁷²Hellerman, *Philippians*, 108.

¹⁷³Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 200.

¹⁷⁴Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 200.

¹⁷⁵Silva, *Philippians*, 96.

¹⁷⁶Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 200.

¹⁷⁷O’Brien, *Philippians*, 204.

the verse. According to traditional interpretation, which is also called the ethical interpretation, the verb ἦν is usually supplied in the relative clause in combination with the “*within you*” (individual sense) in the first part of the verse.¹⁷⁸ This view interprets Christ as the ethical pattern that Christians should imitate, with the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ understood in an individual sense, i.e., Christ’s inward attitude of humility and self-sacrifice.¹⁷⁹ Thus the verse is translated as: “Think this within you which also *was* in Christ Jesus.”¹⁸⁰

The rival interpretation, which is known as the kerygmatic view, advocated by Käsemann and others, supplies the verb φρονεῖτε in the relative clause and takes the ἐν ὑμῖν in a relational sense.¹⁸¹ Käsemann understands the verse as an introduction to the hymn and that “the Philippians are admonished to conduct themselves toward one another as is fitting *within the realm of Christ*.”¹⁸² The prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is taken as the typical formula of ἐν Χριστῷ which is common in Paul’s letters, referring to our union with Christ.¹⁸³ Käseman explains as follows:

It corresponds to the typical Pauline scheme of parenesis, which, for example, in Rom. 6:2ff., deduces the imperative from the indicative, and thus Christian conduct from the act of salvation. Such an observation is significant. If it proves to be correct, then it means without doubt that at least Paul did not understand the hymn as though Christ were held up to the community as an ethical

¹⁷⁸Silva, *Philippians*, 95.

¹⁷⁹Silva, *Philippians*, 95; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 204.

¹⁸⁰Morgan points out that Lohmeyer’s analysis of this ellipsis is close to that of the traditional (ethical) view by supplying “was” and translating the verse as “Have this mind in you which *was* also in Christ Jesus,” which makes it possible for the two ἐν prepositional phrases to be in parallel and have the same meaning. Robert Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology: Ernst Käsemann’s Interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 56 (emphasis original).

¹⁸¹Silva, *Philippians*, 95.

¹⁸²Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 84 (emphasis added).

¹⁸³Silva, *Philippians*, 95.

example. The technical formula “in Christ,” whatever else might be said about it, unquestionably points to the salvation-event: it has soteriological character, just as, according to Paul, one comes to be “in Christ” only through the sacrament.¹⁸⁴

Thus the verse is translated as “Think this among you that which you also think in your union with Christ.”¹⁸⁵ This rendering underscores the parallelism in both clauses by using the same verb φρονέω and same reference to our union with Christ as a corporate body.¹⁸⁶ Proponents of this interpretation believe that the hymn is intended as a kerygmatic proclamation of the Christ event and *not* as ethical example to be imitated.¹⁸⁷ “By placing the proclamation of Christ in the hymn after moral exhortation,” Hansen elucidates, “Paul is pointing to the power of transformation. Christian behavior is motivated and empowered by salvation in Christ, not by the example of Christ.”¹⁸⁸

A slight variation of this is C. F. Moule’s expansion of the verse: τοῦτο τὸ φρόνημα φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ which he renders thus: “Adopt towards one another, in your mutual relations, the same attitude which was found in Christ Jesus.”¹⁸⁹ It is intended as a corrective to the inferior reading φρονείσθω (present passive imperative) adopted by the Authorized Version and rendered as “Let this mind be in you” (KJV).¹⁹⁰ Moule takes ἐν ὑμῖν as a reference to interpersonal

¹⁸⁴Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 84.

¹⁸⁵Martin renders the verse thus: “Think this way among yourselves which you think in Christ Jesus, i.e. as members of His Church.” Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 71. Karl Barth follows J. C. K. von Hofman and J. Kögel in giving the typical Pauline “in Christ” formula its characteristic sense of being in the realm of Christ by adding “which you have” or “must have.” It is at this critical point that Käsemann sides with Barth against Lohmeyer which leads to a kerygmatic interpretation while at the same time focusing on mutual relationships in the community of believers. Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 56.

¹⁸⁶Hansen, *Philippians*, 120.

¹⁸⁷Hansen, *Philippians*, 120.

¹⁸⁸Hansen, *Philippians*, 120.

¹⁸⁹Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 265.

¹⁹⁰Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 265. This variant is found in the Majority text, but not in other textual traditions. It’s also not accepted by almost all textual experts. Silva, *Philippians*, 113.

relationships among believers in contrast to the Authorized Version, which takes the prepositional phrase to mean “within each of you” or “in your hearts.”¹⁹¹ However, he adopts the second part of the Authorized Version “which was also in Christ Jesus” because he considers it a false assumption that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ should always refer to Pauline formula of incorporation in Christ.¹⁹² The other false assumption Moule is unmasking is that unless both prepositional phrases (ἐν ὑμῖν and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) are taken to mean the same thing, then believers could be suspected of maintaining two separate attitudes—one regarding their relationship with each other and another pertaining to their being union with Christ.¹⁹³ He perceives the two relationships as “one and inseparable” and that “the contrast is not between two spheres of existence but between an already given condition, on the one hand, and the implementing of it, on the other.”¹⁹⁴ He cites Philippians 4:2 as a close parallel to prove his point—Paul is urging Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony with *each other* “as being in the Lord” (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ), and *not* “as they are harmonious in the Lord.”¹⁹⁵

Summary. Moule’s proposal has both difficulties and merits. On one hand, his expansion borders on conjectural emendation which is unwarranted in this case. Since τοῦτο harks back to the mindset Paul is admonishing in Philippians 2:1-4, it is not necessary to add τὸ φρόνημα in the first half of the verse. Moreover, his rendering

¹⁹¹Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 265. Moule believes that this meaning is improbable because it implies a tautology “as though it were possible to think or adopt an attitude anywhere else but within oneself!” (265).

¹⁹²Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 265.

¹⁹³Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 265–66.

¹⁹⁴Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 266.

¹⁹⁵Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 266. Hansen concurs, “The similarity of 2:5 and 4:2 is striking. The same verb to think is followed by the same reference to union with Christ. Paul is urging these two women to change their attitudes toward one another to reflect the reality of their union with the Lord. The reality of their union in the Lord should transform the way they think of one another.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 120–21 (emphasis original).

of the second half of the verse also produces a similar effect (“which was found in Christ Jesus”), even though he refuses to supply ἧν in the relative clause. On the other hand, his interpretation is syntactically and exegetically defensible. It also offers a way out of the interpretive gridlock, i.e., tension between kerygmatic and ethical interpretation.

Thus, I adopt his interpretation without resorting to the expansion he recommends in the first part of the verse. I propose ἧν to be supplied in the second part and render the verse as “Think this *among you* which *was* also in Christ Jesus.”¹⁹⁶ By rendering ἐν ὑμῖν as “among you” in a relational sense (“towards one another”), the syntactical connection of the verse with Philippians 2:1-4 is sustained. I agree that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ does not always have to be taken as the typical Pauline formula of union with Christ. Although Paul’s “in Christ” expressions are common in his other letters, it does not make sense here contextually. If Philippians 2:5 is a transition to the following hymn, as previously noted, then the relative pronoun in the following verse should correspond to the “in Christ” expression here *if* it is indeed referring to our union with Christ as a corporate body. But the relative pronoun in Philippians 2:6 is ὅς with Christ Jesus as the antecedent and further describes his mindset of humility and self-sacrifice. I also agree with Moule that the two prepositional phrases (ἐν ὑμῖν and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) do not have to mean the same thing to maintain the parallelism within the verse. In sum, Paul is admonishing the believers to think the same mindset towards one another which was in Christ Jesus. This interpretation prepares us to see how the kerygmatic and ethical interpretation can be combined together without having to set one against the other. Both theology and ethics are laid out here in such a way that dogma and praxis are

¹⁹⁶The same interpretive decision lies behind the rendering of NIV (2011): “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” Cf. NIV (1984): “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”

given equal emphasis.

Christ's Humiliation (2:6-8)

Christ's mindset, introduced in verse 5, is further explained in the next three verses as the mindset of Christ as God (v. 6) and as a man (vv. 7-8).¹⁹⁷ These verses spell out the humiliation of Christ in two main clauses, joined by *και*, with a similar threefold structure: (1) each clause is introduced by a participial phrase that describes how Christ existed as God (*ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων*) and as man (*σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος*); (2) followed by the main clause specifying what Christ did (*ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* and *ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν*); and (3) followed by a modal participle that modifies the key verb and reveals how the action was carried out (*μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*, which is further clarified by another participial phrase *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος*, and *γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου*, which is clarified by the noun phrase *θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ*).¹⁹⁸ Christ, who is equal with God, manifested his humility by becoming a man, but more than that, he also took the form of a servant and experienced the most humiliating death and endured the most excruciating pain. By employing a remarkable “not . . . but” contrast (cf. vv. 2-4 for similar contrast), Paul presents two ways of thinking or mindset, one that is selfish, and the alternative is selfless.¹⁹⁹

2:6 *ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγάγατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ.* In Philippians 2:6 the relative pronoun *ὃς* refers to *Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* in the previous verse. This confirms that taking the prepositional phrase *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* in the previous verse as Christ's inward disposition is correct. It is noteworthy that some of the

¹⁹⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 195.

¹⁹⁸Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 195–96.

¹⁹⁹Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 202.

significant Christological hymns in the NT that are confessional in nature begin with this same pronoun.²⁰⁰ If as the kerygmatic interpreters advocated that the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in Philippians 2:5 refers to our *union* with Christ, then this verse should describe that relationship. On the contrary, this verse mentions nothing about that relationship but rather speaks of Christ and his mindset.²⁰¹

The prepositional phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ is placed immediately after the relative pronoun for emphasis. It is an important statement about the nature of Christ, that Christ is “*in* the form of God,” (*not* he is “the form of God”) with the force of the preposition implying that it is a sphere in which Christ exists or a vestment he puts on (comparable to Luke 7:25 where the verb ὑπάρχω is used with the preposition ἐν).²⁰² Fabricatore, Hansen, and O’Brien are some of the scholars who support the view that μορφῇ θεοῦ is best explained as the glory of God as portrayed in the OT and intertestamental literature.²⁰³

The participle ὑπάρχων is in nominative masculine singular form which means “to exist” or “to be in a state or circumstance” and is referring to Christ Jesus in Philippians 2:5.²⁰⁴ The temporal aspect of this participle is open to various interpretations. Lightfoot suggests that it points to the original state of Christ in

²⁰⁰Silva, *Philippians*, 113; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 206. Cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3.

²⁰¹Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 202.

²⁰²Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 110; Hansen, *Philippians*, 134–35; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 206.

²⁰³Fabricatore, *Form of God, Form of a Servant*, 214; Hansen, *Philippians*, 137; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 210. O’Brien explicates that “the expression does not refer simply to external appearance but pictures the preexistent Christ as clothed in the garments of divine majesty and splendor. He was in the form of God, sharing God’s glory. ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ thus corresponds with Jn. 17:5 (‘the glory I had with you before the world began’) and reminds one of Heb 1:3 (‘the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being’)” (O’Brien, *Philippians*, 211).

²⁰⁴BDAG, s.v. “ὑπάρχω.”

contrast to his subsequent state, i.e., his prior existence before his incarnation.²⁰⁵ Moulton cautions against the timeless use of the present participle, especially since *ὑπάρχω* has become weakened in its sense in the Hellenistic period.²⁰⁶ The issue of Christ's preexistence, then, cannot be settled by lexical or grammatical argument, but must be established by other means.

Hansen makes an insightful remark that the participle *ὑπάρχων* in and of itself does not imply preexistence.²⁰⁷ Rather it is how *ὑπάρχων* relates temporally to the verbs in Philippians 2:7. Christ, who is *existing* in the form of God, *emptied* himself by *taking* the form of a slave, *becoming* in the likeness of human beings. This means that Jesus existed in the form of God (preexistence) *before* he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and became in the likeness of humans (incarnation).²⁰⁸ Fee believes that “this language expresses *as presupposition* what the rest of the sentence assumes” regarding Christ's preexistence, which is precisely why Paul chooses the participle instead of a finite verb “because of Christ's always ‘being’ so.”²⁰⁹

There are three possible ways to interpret this participle: (1) Concessive participle: “Although he existed in the form of God”; (2) Causal participle: “Because he existed in the form of God”; and (3) Temporal participle: “Existing in the form of

²⁰⁵Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Philippians*, 110.

²⁰⁶James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed., vol. 1, *Prolegomena* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006), 127; BDF, §414(1); Archibald T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1923), 1121. See also Luke 7:25; 16:23; Acts 5:4.

²⁰⁷Hansen, *Philippians*, 134.

²⁰⁸Hansen, *Philippians*, 134. Fee explains that the participle *ὑπάρχων* contrasts with the two aorist participles in a temporal sense. He was *already* in the form of God before taking the form of a slave. It is also set in contrast to the final participle (being born in the likeness of men) “which only makes sense if ‘being in the morphé of God’ presupposes prior existence as God.” Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 203.

²⁰⁹Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 202–3 (emphasis original).

God.” Wallace is correct in stating that the grammatical issue on whether to interpret the participle as concessive or causal and the lexical meaning of the adjacent accusative noun *ἀρπαγμὸν* affects one another and should be considered together:

If *ὑπάρχων* is causal, *ἀρπαγμὸν* means *robbery* (“who, *because* he existed in God’s form, did not consider equality with God as robbery”); if *ὑπάρχων* is concessive, then *ἀρπαγμὸν* means *a thing to be grasped* (“who, *although* he existed in God’s form, did not consider equality with God as a thing to be grasped”). As attractive as the first alternative might be theologically, it is not satisfactory. Ultimately, this verse cannot be interpreted in isolation, but must be seen in light of the positive statement in v 7—“but he emptied himself” (the participle *ὑπάρχων* equally depends on both *ἡγήσατο* and *ἐκένωσεν*). Only the concessive idea for the participle and *a thing to be grasped* translation for *ἀρπαγμὸν* fit well with v 7.²¹⁰

N. T. Wright’s article on this enigmatic term provides an overview and evaluation of nearly twenty different approaches in analyzing *ἀρπαγμός* which are grouped under ten categories.²¹¹ His view takes the best points from Moule’s theological argument and Hoover’s philological conclusions and developed it further by making necessary adjustments. He also adopts Hoover’s assumption that Christ’s equality with God is already possessed.²¹² Christ cannot choose to take advantage of something that he does not possess.²¹³ He further argues that the articular infinitive *τὸ εἶναι* refers to an aforementioned item, so that *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ* is an anaphoric and exegetical reference to *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων* and can be rendered as “this divine equality.”²¹⁴ Käsemann also takes *μορφῇ θεοῦ* and *ισόθεος φύσις* as parallel or even

²¹⁰Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 634–35.

²¹¹See Wright’s article “*ἀρπαγμός*” (particularly the summary chart on pp. 342–43).

²¹²Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 344.

²¹³Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 344.

²¹⁴BDF, §398; Wright, “*ἀρπαγμός*,” 344. Brown disagrees with Hoover and Wright and relates the *ἀρπαγμός* to the temptation story, i.e., it is referring to Jesus’ incarnation, instead of his pretemporal existence. He states that “the interpretation of *ἀρπαγμός* as not ‘taking advantage of’ is fully consistent with treating Phil. 2:6 in terms of the narrated history of Jesus’ life and activity.” Brown, “Lohmeyer’s *Kyrios Jesus*,” 29. Wallace doubts that the article is used anaphorically, but rather it is used “to indicate the object in an object-complement construction.” Wallace, *Greek*

synonymous, or at least that the “divine form” and “equality with God” are coordinated terms.²¹⁵ The idiomatic phrase οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγάσασατο signifies that contrary to what is usually expected Christ refused to take advantage of this divine equality which was his from the beginning.²¹⁶ The main difference between this view proposed by Wright and the classic *res retinenda* position is that neither ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων nor τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ is relinquished, but instead it is reinterpreted as a surprising contrast to oriental despots who would typically regard their esteemed position as something to take advantage of.²¹⁷ Wright concurs with Moule that divine equality means “giving” instead of “getting,” as expressed in Jesus’ self-giving love vividly portrayed in Philippians 2:7-8.²¹⁸ For Wright, the true soteriology behind the hymn is that “the pre-existent son regarded equality with God not as excusing him from the task of (redemptive) suffering and death, but actually as uniquely qualifying him for that vocation.”²¹⁹ His interpretation is reflected in his rendering of Philippians 2:6-7a: “who, being in the form of God, did not regard this divine equality as something to be used for his own advantage, but rather emptied himself.”²²⁰ Wright endorses the views of Hoover and Moule, *mutatis mutandis*, and concludes:

The thrust of the passage in itself is that the one who, before becoming human, possessed divine equality did not regard that status as something to take

Grammar, 635n, 602, 182.

²¹⁵Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 62.

²¹⁶Wright, “ἄρπαγμός,” 345.

²¹⁷Wright, “ἄρπαγμός,” 345.

²¹⁸Wright, “ἄρπαγμός,” 345.

²¹⁹Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 83–84. Hansen exclaims that “the obedience of the Son in his death on the cross revealed the true nature of God.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 145.

²²⁰Wright, “ἄρπαγμός,” 345 (ellipsis original). Wright agrees with Moule that the ὑπάρχων should be taken in a causative (not concessive) sense: precisely because he was in the form of God. *Ibid.*, 345n87.

advantage of, but instead interpreted it as a vocation to obedient humiliation and death; and that God the Father acknowledged this interpretation as the true one by exalting him to share his own divine glory.²²¹

Wallace disagrees with Wright that the article in τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ is used anaphorically. He argues that it is used to mark the direct object in a double accusative object-complement construction.²²² In this case the infinitive εἶναι is the object and the noun ἀρπαγμόν is the complement.²²³ Since the link between the “form of God” and “equality with God” is not clearly established, Wallace considers them as different realities and interprets ἀρπαγμόν as “something to be grasped for.”²²⁴ He suggests that the infinitive phrase points to “hierarchy, not ontology.”²²⁵ He concludes,

Although Christ was truly God (μορφῇ θεοῦ), two things resulted: (1) he did not attempt to “outrank” the Father, as it were (cf. John 14:28 for a similar thought: “The Father is greater than I am”); (2) instead, he submitted himself to the Father’s will, even to the point of death on a cross. It was thus not Christ’s deity that compelled his incarnation and passion, but his obedience.²²⁶

If we take the initial participial phrase as presupposing Christ’s preexistence and equality with God, then it makes more sense to take it as a causal participle (*because* he existed in the form of God and *always* has equality with God).²²⁷ Although Wright rightly supports Hoover’s view that the main point is not the possession of divine equality which is presupposed or the act of grasping, but rather it is the *attitude* of Christ that is the focal point, i.e., whether he will take

²²¹Wright, “ἀρπαγμός,” 351.

²²²Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 635n, 602, 182.

²²³Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 602.

²²⁴Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 635.

²²⁵Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 635n.

²²⁶Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 635n.

²²⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 208. Cf. Gorman contends that both concessive and causative interpretations are justified based on surface and deep structures of the text, respectively. See Michael J. Gorman, “‘Although/Because He Was in the Form of God’: The Theological Significance of Paul’s Master Story (Phil 2:6-11),” *JTI* 1, no. 2 (September 2007): 147–69.

advantage of it or not.²²⁸ Unfortunately, both of them did not pursue further the connection of ἡγέομαι with φρονέω (2:5) which is one of our major emphases in this dissertation. It is precisely because of Christ's mindset that he did not take advantage of his equality with God, but instead he humbled himself and poured out his life as described in the succeeding verses.

2:7 ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος. The intense contrast is introduced by the adversative ἀλλά in Philippians 2:7.²²⁹ Christ did *not* consider equality with God as something to take advantage of, *but* he emptied himself.²³⁰ It is followed by an equally emphatic ἑαυτὸν that clearly shows that Christ willingly and voluntarily emptied himself.²³¹ As discussed in the previous section, the ἐκένωσεν should be taken in a metaphorical sense here, i.e., Christ poured out his life in the incarnation.²³²

The relationship between the main verb ἐκένωσεν and the two participial phrases has been variously explained. It is best to take the two aorist participles λαβών and γενόμενος which are contemporaneous with the aorist finite verb ἐκένωσεν

²²⁸Hoover argues persuasively that “in every instance which I have examined this idiomatic expression refers to something already present and at one’s disposal. The question in such instances is not whether or not one possesses something, but whether or not one *chooses* to exploit something.” Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma,” 118 (emphasis added). Wright agrees with Hoover that “the idiom refers . . . not to the act of acquiring something (whether before the time envisaged, i.e. *res rapta*, or after, i.e. *res rapienda*, nor to the act of clinging on to it in a grasping way. It refers to the *attitude* one will take towards something which is in one’s possession and grasp already, and which will remain there.” Wright, “ἄρπαγμός,” 339 (emphasis added).

²²⁹Fee intimates that Christ’s equality with God is most profoundly expressed by his emptying of himself. Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 208.

²³⁰Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 196. Silva describes Fee’s “not . . . but” contrast as “Christ’s voluntary act negatively stated . . . and positively stated.” Silva, *Philippians*, 102–8.

²³¹Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1962), 63.

²³²See the previous section on semantic analysis of κενόω in p. 66 of this dissertation.

as modal participles defining the way Christ emptied himself.²³³ The first participial phrase explains that Christ poured himself out by taking the form of a slave. The *μορφή* here means the same as *μορφή* in Philippians 2:6. Fee considers Paul's choice of *μορφή* to describe the transition from "being God" to "becoming human" a metaphor.²³⁴

Christ did not simply take the outward appearance of a slave, but he adopted the nature and characteristics of one.²³⁵ There are at least six different lines of interpretation on what it means for Christ to take on the form of a slave. First, the classic kenotic view takes the participial phrase to mean that Christ relinquished the "relative" divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, but maintained the "essential attributes" of love, holiness and righteousness.²³⁶ In short, Christ emptied himself of divinity, specifically he emptied himself of the form of God and his equality with him and stripped himself of divine attributes, glory, and power.²³⁷ This view fails to convince based on semantic (*κενόω* is here used in a metaphorical sense, rather than a literal sense which would require an object, i.e., he divests himself of something), syntactical (*λαβών* occurs at the same time with

²³³O'Brien, *Philippians*, 217. Silva agrees that the first three participles portray simultaneous action. Silva, *Philippians*, 105. Fee also considers the two participial phrases as modal and explanatory, i.e., they describe the manner or circumstances in which Christ emptied himself. Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 211n82. Nagata considers the participial phrases as exegetical and both *λαβών* and *γενόμενος* are coincident with *ἐκένωσεν*. Takeshi Nagata, "Philippians 2:5-11: A Case Study in the Contextual Shaping of Early Christology" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1981), 238.

²³⁴Fee explains the metaphor involved: "*Morphē* was precisely the right word for this dual stage, to characterize both the reality (his being God) and the metaphor (for taking on the role of a slave), since it denotes 'form' or 'shape' not in terms of the external features by which something is recognized, but of those characteristics and qualities that are essential to it." Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 204. Hansen states that "taking the form of a slave specifies the form of his incarnation. His incarnation was not in the form of a lord or in the form of an emperor to be served by others, but in the form of a slave." Hansen, *Philippians*, 151.

²³⁵O'Brien, *Philippians*, 218.

²³⁶Collange, *L'épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens*, 92.

²³⁷Hansen, *Philippians*, 146.

ἐκένωσεν temporally), and grammatical grounds (the strong contrast denoted in ἀλλά sets ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ far apart from ἐκένωσεν that it could not possibly function as its object).²³⁸ Otherwise Paul would have penned the statement as ἐαυτὸν κενώσας . . . ἔλαβεν, if that was what he wanted to convey.²³⁹ Takeshi Nagata points out that the emphasis is “not on what he emptied,” but rather that “it is entirely Christ’s own self-contained act.”²⁴⁰

Second, Käsemann sets the hymn in a mythical setting with the forces of evil and cosmic powers exercising control.²⁴¹ For him, Christ’s incarnation is his *kenosis* wherein he willingly surrendered his heavenly existence to experience the restrictions and limitations of being human (ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος).²⁴² By taking the form of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών), Christ accepted man’s plight of being in bondage to the spirits of the universe and destroys them through his death.²⁴³ His humiliation consists of being enslaved by the powers as he voluntarily subjugated himself to these forces which were reigning over the fate of people in the first-century Graeco-Roman context.²⁴⁴ Although Paul discusses the reality of spiritual

²³⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 218. Fee explains that the verb functioning as a metaphor does not require a genitive qualifier, i.e., Christ emptied himself of something. “Christ did not empty himself of anything; he simply “emptied himself.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 210. Vincent rightly emphasizes that ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν is a “strong and graphic expression of the completeness of his self-renunciation. It includes all the details of humiliation which follow, and is defined by these.” He warns that “further definition belongs to speculative theology.” Marvin Richardson Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, ICC 46 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 59. Hansen concurs that the verb does not require an object because it is already supplied by the pronoun ἐαυτὸν. Hansen, *Philippians*, 147. “The Philippian text does not say that Christ gave up anything. Rather it says that he added to himself that which he did not have before— ‘the form of a slave,’ ‘the likeness of human beings.’” Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 121.

²³⁹Wilhelm Michaelis, *Versöhnung des Alls: die frohe Botschaft von der Gnade Gottes* (Bern, Switzerland: Verlag Siloah, 1950), 37.

²⁴⁰Nagata, “Philippians 2:5-11,” 238. He explains that the verse does not inform us of what Christ emptied himself and only makes clear that “both the subject and the object of ἐκένωσεν is Christ himself” (238).

²⁴¹Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 67.

²⁴²Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 74.

²⁴³Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 74.

²⁴⁴Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 74-75.

darkness and demonic powers in Ephesians 6:10-20, it does not seem to be a major concern in this letter to the Philippians. This view also falls short on semantic (δοῦλος is not equivalent to ἄνθρωπος), syntactical (as previously mentioned the aorist participles λαβών and γενόμενος are both concomitant with ἐκένωσεν and should not be taken to refer to Christ's incarnation), and contextual considerations (the text does not mention anything related to the demonic powers).²⁴⁵

Third, the δοῦλος is interpreted in light of the Isaianic Servant of the Lord. By taking the form of a slave (μορφήν δούλου λαβών), Christ is fulfilling the role of the Servant of the Lord and ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν is taken to mean "he poured out his life to death" in Isaiah 53:12 (παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἢ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ).²⁴⁶ For Joachim Jeremias, ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν does not refer to the incarnation (*contra* Käsemann) but to Christ's death on the cross.²⁴⁷ This view is deemed inadequate due to challenges to its interpretation that have not been adequately responded to, i.e., linguistic validity, questions regarding the hymn's structure, chronological sequence in relation to Isaiah 53, and the appropriateness in using μορφή δούλου to refer to the Servant of the Lord.²⁴⁸

Fourth, Schweizer suggests that the δοῦλος in Philippians 2:7 refers to the righteous sufferer referred to in Jewish martyrology during the Maccabean era.²⁴⁹ He disagrees with Jeremias that Jesus fulfills the role of the Isaianic Servant, but rather he is the "righteous one *par excellence*" who endures humiliation and suffering for

²⁴⁵O'Brien, *Philippians*, 219; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 212. Collange rightly points out that δοῦλος is more specific than the broader concept of humanity and is used to make the disparity between Christ's preexistence and incarnation more evident. Collange, *L'épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens*, 93.

²⁴⁶Hansen, *Philippians*, 149; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 220.

²⁴⁷Joachim Jeremias, "Zu Phil ii 7: ἑαυτὸν ἑκένωσεν," *NovT* 6, nos. 2-3 (July 1963): 182-88; Hansen, *Philippians*, 149-50.

²⁴⁸Hansen, *Philippians*, 150; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 220.

²⁴⁹Schweizer, *Erniedrigung und Erhöhung*, 36, 55.

his obedience and loyalty to God.²⁵⁰ Obedience is characteristic of Jewish piety in postbiblical Judaism with the expectation of vindication from God.²⁵¹ This view is severely criticized because *μορφὴ δούλου* pertains to the the pre-existent Christ becoming a man by taking the form of a servant, whereas his obedience as mentioned in verse 8 takes place in his incarnate state.²⁵²

Fifth, the incarnation view derives its answer from the two modal participles that come after *ἐκένωσεν*, i.e., Christ emptied himself by becoming incarnate—by taking the form of a slave and being made in human likeness.²⁵³ The term *μορφὴ* here means the same as the *μορφὴ* in the phrase “the form of God” in verse 6, i.e., the external appearance shows the nature of God and man on the inside.²⁵⁴ But there is one major difference—the form of God is his glory, but the form of a slave is directly antithetical to this, i.e., a slave is without glory or honor. Although Christ did not exchange the form of God with the form of a slave, he experienced the humiliation and helplessness of a slave while existing in the form of God.²⁵⁵ Moule uses the reality of slavery in contemporary Graeco-Roman society as the backdrop for *δοῦλος* in this verse. Slaves belong to the lowest rank in social order and they are completely deprived of all rights and dignity. Jesus as *δοῦλος* “so completely stripped himself of all rights and securities as to be comparable to a slave, constitutes a poignant description of his absolute and extreme self-emptying.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 192 (emphasis original).

²⁵¹Schweizer, *Erniedrigung und Erhöhung*, 38–39.

²⁵²Günther Bornkamm, *Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959), 181–82.

²⁵³Hansen, *Philippians*, 148.

²⁵⁴Hansen, *Philippians*, 148.

²⁵⁵Hansen, *Philippians*, 148.

²⁵⁶Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 268. Bruce supports this position. Frederick Fyvie Bruce, “St Paul in Macedonia, 3: The Philippian Correspondence,” *BJRL* 63, no. 2 (1981): 270.

Sixth, Hurtado argues that Christ became a slave to God and sets the pattern for Christian life and service as the “Lordly Example.”²⁵⁷ Although the verse did not clearly indicate that Christ is a slave *to* God, but Pauline usage of δούλος and its cognate terms usually relates to the life and service of a believer rather than to evil powers (*contra* Käsemann).²⁵⁸ The immediate context of Philippians 2:6-7 clearly points to service *to* or *for* God.²⁵⁹ The service rendered in Philippians 2:7-8 must have been rendered to God since God is the primary actor in Philippians 2:9-11 who responded by exalting Christ for his obedience.²⁶⁰

In applying his understanding of verse 6 to this verse, Wright elucidates that ἐκένωσεν does not mean that Christ lost his divine attributes but rather made himself powerless.²⁶¹ He argues that “the real humiliation of the incarnation and the cross is that one who was himself God, and who never during the whole process stopped being God, could embrace such a vocation.”²⁶² Fee concurs that this verse, like the previous one, is still about the character of God as it is unveiled in the mindset and actions of his Son.²⁶³ Here again we want to stress that it is not only what Jesus did that is crucial and relevant, but how he choose and decide are equally important.

²⁵⁷Larry W. Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11,” in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 113–26.

²⁵⁸Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example,” 122.

²⁵⁹Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example,” 122–23.

²⁶⁰Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example,” 123.

²⁶¹Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 84. *Contra* Gorman who insists that “the phrase ‘emptied himself’ in 2:7 should not be read as a reference to the divestiture of something (whether divinity itself or some divine attribute), or even as self-limitation regarding the use of divine attributes, but ‘figuratively,’ as a robust metaphor for total self-abandonment and self-giving, further explained by the attendant participial phrases ‘taking on the form of a slave’ and ‘being born [found] in human likeness.’” Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 21.

²⁶²Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 84.

²⁶³Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 211.

The second participial phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος is also modal and further explains how Christ emptied himself and signals a progression of thought.²⁶⁴ It also serves to end this present statement and prepare for the next in verse 8.²⁶⁵ It is noteworthy that the aorist participle γενόμενος which can be rendered as “being born” is an *active* verb, and together with the preposition ἐν connotes “becoming,” i.e., Christ comes into a state or position, and is in clear contrast to the present participle ὑπάρχων in the previous verse which is a *stative* verb—“Christ *always existed* (ὑπάρχων) ‘in the form of God’ . . . but he *came into existence* (γενόμενος) ‘in the likeness of human beings.’”²⁶⁶

The noun ὁμοίωμα connotes two related ideas. It can mean either similarity or complete identity.²⁶⁷ In Romans 8:3 where human sinfulness is a crucial issue, ὁμοίωμα reveals Christ’s incarnation and his similarity with humankind, but also stresses his basic difference with sinful humanity. However, the problem of sin is not an issue here, so ὁμοίωμα refers to Christ’s complete identification with human beings and his full participation in our human experience.²⁶⁸ Others see *both* similarity and dissimilarity come into play. Johannes Schneider insists that Christ’s rendering of *perfect obedience* in Philippians 2 makes him distinct from other

²⁶⁴Silva, *Philippians*, 106; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 213. Cf. Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum*, SNTSMS 132 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 130. Gorman considers Hellerman’s description of the “downward mobility” as a “cursus pudorum” in contrast to Rome’s *cursus honorum* as theologically significant: “The preexistent Christ’s self-emptying, self-lowering incarnation/enslavement finds a parallel action in the human Jesus’ self-humbling, self-lowering obedience to the point of death by crucifixion. The fundamental character of the actions taken by the ‘form of God’ and the ‘form of a slave,’ by the preexistent one and the incarnate one, is the same: downward movement.” Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 17. The term ἀνθρώπων is gender inclusive here so human or human beings is a better translation than “men” which may be gender exclusive at times. Hansen, *Philippians*, 153.

²⁶⁵Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 213.

²⁶⁶Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 120 (emphasis original); BDAG, s.v. “γίνομαι.” See Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 202–3.

²⁶⁷O’Brien, *Philippians*, 224–25.

²⁶⁸Nagata, “Philippians 2:5-11,” 252.

human beings that “even as a man He remained at the core of His being, what He had been before.”²⁶⁹ The dissimilarity lies in his *being equal with God*.²⁷⁰ The term *ὁμοίωμα* allows for ambiguity of expression so that he can be fully identified with human beings, but still remain intact in his divinity, i.e., “he was God living out a truly human life, all of which is safeguarded by this expression.”²⁷¹ In referring back to verse 6, Wright specifies that both “in the form of God” and “equality with God” identify Jesus in his preexistent state “as one who is indeed, and fully, *capax humanitatis*, but at the same time different from all other human beings in his nature and origin.”²⁷²

The first and second participial phrases together paint a profound picture of the reality of Christ’s incarnation. The phrase *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών* is positioned first for *rhetorical* purpose—to heighten the contrast between *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* in verse 6 and *μορφὴν δούλου* in the present verse and specify the nature of his incarnation.²⁷³ The second phrase *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος* indicates the *historical* fact that Christ was born in the likeness of human beings.²⁷⁴ Gorman explains this two-step descent thus: “The first step ‘down’ is his voluntary incarnation (self-emptying), the

²⁶⁹Johannes Schneider, “ὁμοίωμα,” in *TDNT*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 5:197. Morgan observes that on one hand “the form of a servant” is intended to stress the reality of Christ’s humanity, rather than disprove it. On the other hand, he was a real man who acted differently from others and *ὁμοιώματι* allows for this difference. Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 61.

²⁷⁰Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 213.

²⁷¹Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 213. If *μορφή* is the “mode of being,” then *σχῆμα* refers to “mode of appearance,” and *ὁμοίωμα* can be rendered as “analogous essence.” Käsemann emphasizes that the statements in the text were not intended to provide a christological definition of essence or expound on Christ’s identity in different stages of development, but rather they show the sequence and continuity of the event, i.e., God became man. Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 69–70.

²⁷²Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 82.

²⁷³Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 213.

²⁷⁴Hansen, *Philippians*, 154. Fee states that the second phrase points to the factual aspect of the incarnation: “Christ came ‘in the form of a slave,’ that is, by his that ‘coming to be in the likeness of human beings.’” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 213.

second his voluntary humiliation (self-humbling) and obedience that led to death on the cross.”²⁷⁵

The *καί* in the next phrase joins the two main verbs *ἐκένωσεν* and *ἐταπείνωσεν* together, rather than the two participles *γενόμενος* and *εὐρεθείς*.²⁷⁶ This conjunction also marks a transition by summing up foregoing ideas and prepares for the next phrase.²⁷⁷ Hence, the participial phrase *σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος* is dependent upon the second finite verb *ἐταπείνωσεν* in verse 8 and not directly connected with the two previous participial phrases.²⁷⁸ In classical Greek *σχῆμα* refers to an external form that can be perceived by the senses.²⁷⁹ In verse 7 this dative of instrument with the aorist passive participle *εὐρεθείς* refers to the mode of appearance in which Jesus was recognized as a man.²⁸⁰ It is thus a *reiteration* of thought expressed in the previous two participles on how Christ emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and being born in the likeness of men and a *progression* of thought with *ἐταπείνωσεν* describing how he humbled himself.²⁸¹

2:8 ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

Christ reaches the peak of humiliation in this verse when he humbled himself by

²⁷⁵Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 21.

²⁷⁶Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 214–15n3; Hansen, *Philippians*, 154; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 226. Cf. Martin who takes 7b, 7c, and 8a together. Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 197–99.

²⁷⁷Silva, *Philippians*, 106; Hansen, *Philippians*, 154.

²⁷⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 226.

²⁷⁹Johannes Schneider, “σχῆμα, μετασχηματίζω,” in *TDNT*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:954.

²⁸⁰Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 69; Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 208; Nagata, “Philippians 2:5-11,” 249n167.

²⁸¹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 226. Fee adds, “At the same time, as with the opening participle in v. 6, it serves to specify the ‘mode of existence’ for Christ’s action in this clause. ‘In the form of God’ he emptied himself, now ‘in the appearance of a human being’ he humbled himself.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 215.

becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.²⁸² Like the previous main verb ἐκένωσεν, the finite verb ἐταπείνωσεν is also juxtaposed with an emphatic reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν which shows that Christ humbled himself in a free and voluntary manner.²⁸³ Despite echoes with Isaiah 53:8 in the LXX (ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει), the use of the reflexive pronoun in Philippians 2:8 distinguishes Christ’s self-humbling as unique from the obedience of Isaianic Suffering Servant.²⁸⁴ It is also natural to see that this verb ἐταπείνωσεν echoes the noun ταπεινοφροσύνη in Philippians 2:3.²⁸⁵

Like the γενόμενος in the previous verse, this aorist participial phrase γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου is also modal and simultaneous with its main verb ἐταπείνωσεν, describing the way that Christ humbled himself, i.e., he humbled himself by becoming obedient even to the point of death.²⁸⁶ The adjective ὑπήκοος means obedient without an explicit object, but it can be inferred from the context that Christ’s obedience is to God.²⁸⁷ Karl Barth, who holds an anti-ethical position, objects to this inference and argues that the object of Christ’s obedience is not an issue, but “rather in the fact *that* he obeys, in the attitude of submission and

²⁸²Käsemann warns against forming an ethical interpretation based on ἐταπείνωσεν and γενόμενος ὑπήκοος as references to Christ’s humility. He insists that both ἐκένωσεν and ἐταπείνωσεν point to the objective fact of his humiliation and the paradox of the one who is highest becoming the lowest, instead of focusing on Jesus’ attitude or ascribing a virtue to him. He asserts that it is more appropriate to consider a soteriological interpretation with an eschatological emphasis that deals with the cosmic aspect of salvation. Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 71–72.

²⁸³Barth, *Philippians*, 64. For a discussion on humility as a New Testament ethic in relation to power and service, see Reinhard Feldmeier, *Power, Service, Humility: A New Testament Ethic*, trans. Brian McNeil (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014).

²⁸⁴Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, SNTSMS 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 212.

²⁸⁵Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 216.

²⁸⁶O’Brien, *Philippians*, 228; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 216.

²⁸⁷Wilhelm Michaelis, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper*, THNT 11 (Leipzig, Germany: Deichert, 1935), 39.

dependence he adopts.”²⁸⁸ The description of Christ as ὑπήκοος serves as a verbal link to ὑπηκούσατε in verse 12 in the context of paraenesis.

The prepositional phrase μέχρι θανάτου is connected with the participial phrase γενόμενος ὑπήκοος to emphasize the *extent of Christ’s obedience* to the point of death (instead of being connected with the main verb to express that Christ humbled himself to the point of death).²⁸⁹ Christ’s humiliation reaches its culmination in the words θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. It clearly states that Christ experienced the most humiliating kind of death and endured utterly excruciating pain as he reaches the uttermost depth of humiliation.²⁹⁰ Some scholars like Lohmeyer and those who follow his lead argue that the phrase θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ is not part of the original hymn because it disrupts the poetic rhythm of the hymn, but has been appended by Paul in line with his emphasis on the cross in his other writings.²⁹¹ Otfried Hofius argues that the phrase is fundamental to the rhythm and the message of the hymn, i.e., the hymn highlights the humiliation of Christ which reaches its climax with his death on the cross and also functions as a coda to the first stanza in a similar way that εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς in Philippians 2:11 works for the second stanza.²⁹² Martin Hengel surveys the use of crucifixion as a tool for political and military punishment in the Graeco-Roman setting.²⁹³ The inclusion of these words

²⁸⁸Barth, *Philippians*, 65.

²⁸⁹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 229.

²⁹⁰O’Brien, *Philippians*, 230. Silva explains that “death by crucifixion was considered by the Romans the most degrading penalty” and that Philippian criminals who are sentenced to death would undergo decapitation as the capital punishment which is far more honorable than crucifixion. Silva, *Philippians*, 107.

²⁹¹Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 45.

²⁹²Otfried Hofius, *Der Christushymnus Philipper 2, 6-11: Untersuchungen zu Gestalt und Aussage eines urchristlichen Psalms*, WUNT 17 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1976), 3–17.

²⁹³Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 33–63. In summary, Hengel says, “Crucifixion satisfied the primitive lust for revenge and the sadistic cruelty of individual rulers and of the masses. It was usually associated with other forms of torture, including at least flogging. At

as anadiplosis links to the historical event: for Paul the cross was “the real, cruel instrument of execution . . . the instrument of the bloody execution of Jesus.”²⁹⁴ This final phrase points to the extreme abasement that Christ suffered as a result of his obedience.²⁹⁵ As is always the case with Paul, the term σταυρός and its cognates articulate the saving significance of Christ’s death.²⁹⁶ In fact Fee calls this the “very heart of Pauline theology” that Christ, the one who is equal with God, has fully revealed that “God is love and that his love expresses itself in self-sacrifice—cruel, humiliating death on a cross—for the sake of those he loves.”²⁹⁷

Summary. Christ’s humility and sacrifice is portrayed in stages as he treads the downward path of humiliation. If we take the initial participial phrase as presupposing Christ’s preexistence and equality with God, then it makes more sense to take it as a causal participle (*because* he existed in the form of God and *always* has equality with God).²⁹⁸ Precisely because Christ always existed in the form of God, he did not regard his equality with God as something to take advantage of, unlike the oriental despots who demanded to be served. Instead he poured himself out to serve

relatively small expense and to great public effect the criminal could be tortured to death for days in an unspeakable way” (87).

²⁹⁴Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 89.

²⁹⁵Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 221.

²⁹⁶See the three important monographs that investigate the linguistic understanding and historical practice of crucifixion in the ancient world with special focus on Jesus’ trial and crucifixion. John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, WUNT 327 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); David W. Chapman and Eckhard J. Schnabel, *The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus: Texts and Commentary*, WUNT 344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Gunnar Samuelsson, *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background and Significance of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*, WUNT 2 310 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

²⁹⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 217.

²⁹⁸Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 208. Cf. Gorman contends that both concessive and causative interpretations are justified based on surface and deep structures of the text, respectively. See Gorman, “Although/Because He Was in the Form of God,” 147–69. “The subject of ἐκένωσεν is not the incarnate but the pre-existent Lord.” Albrecht Oepke, “κενόω,” in *TDNT*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, vol. 3: Θ-K (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 662.

as a slave. Whether or not this hymn reflects the Johannine tradition of Jesus assuming the role of a slave by washing his disciples' feet (John 13) cannot be proven conclusively.²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, it *illustrates* the meaning of this line in the hymn.³⁰⁰

In his incarnate state, Christ humbled himself by becoming obedient even to the point of dying on the cross. This is the peak of humiliation wherein Christ who existed in the highest state as the preexistent one, who not only willingly humbled himself by taking the form of a slave, but he even endured the most excruciating pain and suffered the most humiliating form of death.

Christ's Exaltation (2:9-11)

The second part of the hymn is introduced by *διὸ καί* and reveals significant shifts in themes and emphasis. Whereas the first part focuses on Christ, God the Father is the key player and subject of the main verbs in the second part.³⁰¹ Whereas humiliation is the primary motif in the first section, exaltation is the key theme in the second section. Despite the distinction between the two parts, the emphatic inferential conjunction *διό* with the conjunction *καί* provide a clear link with the previous verses, mark an inference based on what was stated in those verses, and signal the transition from the theme of Christ's humiliation to an exaltation motif.³⁰²

²⁹⁹Hawthorne suggests that the Johannine narrative of Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13) had shaped the hymn. Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC 43 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 87. In the revised edition of the commentary, Martin observes that there are significant differences between Johannine theology and the Christ-hymn that renders Hawthorne's proposal indefensible. Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 103.

³⁰⁰Hansen, *Philippians*, 151 (emphasis added).

³⁰¹Brown, "Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," 7, 14; Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 219; Hansen, *Philippians*, 124; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 232.

³⁰²Brown, "Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," 30; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 233.

2:9 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομάτων. The double conjunction, διὸ καί, functions as a transition from the first part of the hymn that focuses on humiliation to the second part that focuses on exaltation.³⁰³ The best way to render διὸ καί (literally, “therefore also”) is “that is why.”³⁰⁴ The inference is that because Christ humbled himself, God exalted him as a sign of vindication and approval.³⁰⁵ It is the “libre grâce de Dieu” as evidenced in the parallel statement in the same verse, i.e., both the ὑπερύψωσεν and ἐχαρίσατο are acts of God’s grace.³⁰⁶ There is a discussion among scholars as to what specific actions of Jesus did God respond to. Hofius believes that God exalted Jesus because, and only because, of his death on the cross.³⁰⁷ Although his death on the cross is the climax of his sacrifice, it is not the only cause of the Father’s response. Semantically speaking the verbs describing the Father’s action (ὑπερύψωσεν and ἐχαρίσατο) are directly linked to the verbs showing his Son’s actions (ἐκένωσεν and ἐταπείνωσεν). Hence the Father is responding to the entire course of his son’s self-humiliation, and not only to his death on the cross.³⁰⁸

The finite verb ὑπερύψωσεν is preceded by αὐτόν in an emphatic position, which is expected in a reciprocal statement.³⁰⁹ The compound verb ὑπερύψωσεν is an

³⁰³Hansen, *Philippians*, 159.

³⁰⁴O’Brien, *Philippians*, 233. The first καί implies a sense of reciprocity and is best rendered “also” here. BDF, §442(12), 451(5); BDAG, s.v. “καί.”

³⁰⁵O’Brien, *Philippians*, 233. Fee insists that it is not to be considered a reward for what Christ has done or a victory over the powers (*contra* Lohmeyer, Käsemann, Beare, Martin). Rather it is a divine vindication for Christ’s emptying and humbling himself. Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 220.

³⁰⁶Collange, *L’épître de saint Paul aux Philippiens*, 95; Hansen, *Philippians*, 160.

³⁰⁷Hofius, *Der Christushymnus*, 64.

³⁰⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 233–34; Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Philippians*, 113; Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 231.

³⁰⁹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 233.

NT hapax legomenon. If the prefix ὑπερ- is given a comparative sense, then it will result in an interpretation that does not fit the context, i.e., Christ is exalted to a position higher than his status as the preexistent One.³¹⁰ It is more appropriate to give the prefix an elative force which conveys that Christ is exalted to the highest possible degree or to a supreme position over the whole universe, instead of a comparison to his preexistent state.³¹¹

Unlike the first part of the hymn wherein Christ's humiliation is presented in stages of descent, his exaltation in this second part is encapsulated in a single verb ὑπερύψωσεν to portray his being lifted up from the lowest to the highest station.³¹² It is further explained by the second verb ἐχαρίσατο to describe the unprecedented honor he receives.³¹³ The aorists ὑπερύψωσεν and ἐχαρίσατο occur simultaneously so they are not separate stages, but rather the second one serves an epexegetical function (διὸ καὶ . . . καὶ . . .).³¹⁴ Both the resurrection and ascension are presupposed and skipped over to give full attention to Christ's exaltation.³¹⁵

This second verb ἐχαρίσατο, which means to give freely or graciously, clearly manifests that God's actions are willingly and voluntarily given by the Father, just as the Son also willingly and voluntarily emptied and humbled himself, without

³¹⁰O'Brien, *Philippians*, 236; Silva, *Philippians*, 115.

³¹¹Paul uses ὑπερ- compounds to give the sense of magnifying someone or something, or imply excess. Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 221. See James Hope Moulton and Wilbert Francis Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 2, Accidence and Word-Formation (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), 326.

³¹²O'Brien, *Philippians*, 236.

³¹³O'Brien, *Philippians*, 237.

³¹⁴Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 220–21; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 237.

³¹⁵Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 220; Brown, "Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," 14; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 237. Brown is on target when he says: ". . . the divine exaltation celebrated in the fourth stanza must have been linked to the conviction that Jesus was in some sense alive. Otherwise the passage would be at best a celebration of a slain martyr who had been mistakenly crucified as a blasphemous seducer. At worst it would be the mistaken celebration of one who was rightly condemned." Brown, "Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," 24.

expecting anything in return. The Father has given him the name above every name which has been variously postulated as Jesus, Jesus Christ, Son, God, or Lord.³¹⁶ This name is above every name (τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα) and there are four reasons for interpreting it as referring to κύριος which is the most sacred and personal name of God used in the LXX to render the Hebrew name יהוה: (1) Jesus is identified as κύριος in the ἵνα clause in verses 10-11 which is dependent upon the main clause in verse 9; (2) As a Jew, Paul would definitely regard *Yahweh* as a supreme name; (3) if my understanding of Philippians 2:6 is correct, then the giving of God's personal name to the one who always existed in the form of God and is equal to him is a natural outcome; (4) κύριος creates a symmetry in the hymn: the one who is θεός (2:6), becomes δοῦλος (2:7), then exalted as κύριος (2:11).³¹⁷ Since God declared in Isaiah 42:8 that "I am the LORD (κύριος), that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, . . ." (NASB), then it means that this name is so special that he would not give his name to another, except to the one who is his equal.³¹⁸

2:10 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντων γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων. The last two verses of the hymn conclude with universal adulation and acknowledgement of his lordship. The ἵνα clause states the purpose of God in exalting his Son and giving him his own sacred name "Lord" *in order that* "every knee shall bow" and "every tongue shall confess."³¹⁹ These expressions are echoes of Isaiah 45:23 in the LXX with the future indicative (κάμψει and ἐξομολογήσεται) changed to aorist subjunctive (κάμψη and ἐξομολογήσεται), because in a sense

³¹⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 237.

³¹⁷O'Brien, *Philippians*, 238; George Howard, "Phil 2:6-11 and the Human Christ," *CBQ* 40, no. 3 (1978): 385.

³¹⁸O'Brien, *Philippians*, 238.

³¹⁹O'Brien, *Philippians*, 238.

Christ's enthronement has already taken place.³²⁰ Sometimes *ἵνα* is also used to indicate an intended, probable, or even actual result.³²¹ If the *ἵνα* refers to both purpose and result, then the kneeling and confession has “actually occurred on earth and is already taking place in heaven.”³²² But if we consider the universal aspect of the homage that includes *every* knee and *every* tongue, then it is an eschatological hope which is now in an *already-not yet* stage of fulfillment—it is now the “beginning of the end time” but the ultimate fulfillment will only happen at the end of times.³²³

Several English translations (e.g., NASB, RSV, NIV, ESV, KJV) render the prepositional phrase *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ* as “at the name of Jesus” which would imply a form of invocation with the instrumental use of the preposition *ἐν*, i.e., worship to the Father is *through* or *by* the name of Jesus.³²⁴ It is clear from Philippians 2:10-11 that homage is directed to Jesus and to the glory of God. It also seems that *every* knee that bows down to Jesus is not invoking his name as in a technical formula of invocation or prayer.³²⁵ Rather, this cosmic obeisance is rendered *in honor* of the name of Jesus.³²⁶ Vincent intimates,

He who believes on the name of the Lord believes on the Lord himself. Hence, to bow the knee in the name of Jesus is to pay adoration in that sphere of authority, grace and glory for which the name stands; as being consciously within the kingdom of which he is Lord, as recognizing the rightfulness of the title “Jesus,” “Savior,” “Lord,” and as loyally accepting the obligations which those titles imply.³²⁷

³²⁰Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 64.

³²¹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 239.

³²²O’Brien, *Philippians*, 239.

³²³Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 64; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 239.

³²⁴O’Brien, *Philippians*, 239.

³²⁵O’Brien, *Philippians*, 239.

³²⁶O’Brien, *Philippians*, 240.

³²⁷Vincent, *Philippians and Philemon*, 62.

The noun Ἰησοῦ in the prepositional phrase can be either a dative or a genitive (since both have the same form). If it is a dative, then it would be translated as “in the name, Jesus” but as explained above, the name bestowed upon Jesus is the divine name *Yahweh*, so it is best to regard the noun as a possessive genitive, i.e., “in the name *which belongs* to Jesus.”³²⁸

The cosmic aspect of the homage involves all those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων). This comprehensive expression demonstrates that the preceding πᾶν γόνυ includes *all* in the universe without exception. The three genitive adjectives (ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων) are all plural in form and dependent on the preceding γόνυ, and joined together by καὶ; hence, “every knee of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.”³²⁹ These adjectives can also be either masculine or neuter. If taken as neuter, these nouns refer to animate and inanimate creatures in the entire universe to give an “overall notion of universality of homage to God.”³³⁰ The personification of the entire creation bowing down in adoration echoes Psalm 148 and Romans 8:19, 22. People in the past conceived of the universe as consisting of three parts and used all three phrases to represent its entirety, without delving into the distinct character of each part.³³¹ If taken as masculine, these plural adjectives depict intelligent beings who worship and acknowledge Christ’s lordship (v. 11). In a parallel expression,

³²⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 240.

³²⁹BDAG, s.vv. “ἐπουράνιος,” “ἐπίγειος,” “καταχθόνιος.”

³³⁰Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning, and Development of the Pauline Phrase Hai Archai Kai Hai Exousiai*, SNTSMS 42 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 86–89. Silva clarifies: “We would be misguided to attempt an identification of three specific groups. Paul’s purpose is clearly to stress the universality of Christ’s lordship. Lightfoot is therefore right in denying that the reference is limited to intelligent beings. A lack of literal knees and tongues does not prevent the heavens from proclaiming God’s glory (Ps. 19:1-6; cf. Ps. 148), and Paul himself was capable of a bold personification of inanimate nature (Rom. 8:19-22).” Silva, *Philippians*, 116.

³³¹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 244.

Ignatius comments that those beings in heaven and on earth and under the earth have *seen* Christ’s death and crucifixion: ἀληθῶς ἐσταυρώθη καὶ ἀπέθανεν βλέπόντων τῶν ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ ὑποχθονίων (Ign. *Trall.* 9:1 APF). There are two different views on how to interpret these rational creatures: (1) angels in heaven, human beings on earth, and demons under the earth or the deceased in Sheol; (2) powerful angels or spirits who rule over different regions of the universe—celestial, terrestrial, and subterrestrial.³³² It is best to adopt the first view since the πᾶν γόνυ in verse 10 is not limited to angels and spirits.³³³

2:11 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς. The second part of the ἵνα clause proclaims that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, with κύριος fronted for emphasis in the ὅτι clause. The principal verb ἐξομολογήσεται comes from ἐξομολογέω which means to acknowledge or declare openly, and extended in LXX to mean praise, confess, or give thanks.³³⁴ Hofius supports the LXX meaning and applies it to verses 10-11 to imply joyful acknowledgement of Christ’s lordship, even as an expression of faith, confession, and total worship.³³⁵ Considering that this acknowledgement will come from *every* tongue, including those who have rejected his salvation and refused to repent and give glory to God (cf. Rev. 16:9-11), it is then an open but involuntary

³³²Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 224–25; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 244.

³³³O’Brien, *Philippians*, 245. Cf. Käsemann interprets the ἐπιγείων as cosmic powers, not human beings, because he understands the confession not as a personal profession of faith, but a public proclamation occurring within the context of an “enthronement ceremony.” For him, the crux of the matter is the “transfer of the power over the entire cosmos to Christ.” Käsemann, “Critical Analysis.”

³³⁴BDAG, s.v. “ἐξομολογέω.”

³³⁵Hofius, *Der Christushymnus*, 37–40.

acknowledgement of Christ's power and authority which they cannot deny and have to surrender to, but it is devoid of joyful attitude.³³⁶

The twofold ἵνα clause in verses 10-11 comes from the LXX text in Isaiah 45:23 where יהוה (Yahweh, Lord) is identified as the One speaking in Isaiah 45:21 and declaring here ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ καὶ ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τῷ θεῷ. It is significant to note that the homage and obeisance which God reserved for himself alone are now to be rendered to Christ.³³⁷ The sole allegiance and loyalty rendered to Jesus Christ as Lord is an appropriate reminder to the Philippians who might have been tempted to acknowledge Caesar as lord to avoid persecution.³³⁸

The name κύριος carries with it triple significance: supreme sovereignty, divine identity, and ultimate destiny.³³⁹ First, Jesus Christ as κύριος means that he has *supreme sovereignty* over all creation. The hymn not only borrows from Isaiah 45:23 but elaborates it by declaring that every knee will bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, thus showing that the sovereignty of Jesus over all creation is absolute, comprehensive, and all-encompassing.³⁴⁰ As Bauckham remarks, “For Jewish monotheism sovereignty over all things was definitive of *who God is*. It could not be seen as delegated to a being other than God.”³⁴¹ By conferring the name κύριος, God gave Jesus supreme sovereignty and authority over all creation so that every knee shall bow to him in worship.

³³⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 250.

³³⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 222; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 241; Hansen, *Philippians*, 163.

³³⁸Some scholars read anti-imperial language behind Paul's use of κύριος here. See Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 140–41.

³³⁹Hansen, *Philippians*, 166.

³⁴⁰Richard J. Bauckham, “The Worship of Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 130; Hansen, *Philippians*, 166.

³⁴¹Bauckham, “Worship of Jesus,” 130 (emphasis original).

Second, the name κύριος signifies that he has *divine identity*. The name κύριος is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name 'ādōn which is a substitute for God's personal divine YHWH to avoid taking the name of God in vain.³⁴² Since God graciously gives his personal name to Jesus, the latter is uniquely identified with him who is the one and only God of Jewish monotheism.³⁴³

Third, the name Lord points to his *ultimate destiny* as the one who will receive universal homage. God has *already* exalted Christ and given him the name that is above every name, but he has *not yet* received the universal obeisance and acknowledgment as Lord as declared in verses 10-11.³⁴⁴ This *already but not yet* tension often seen in Paul's letters is again at play here. Although the church does bow to him and acknowledge him as Lord, it will only be at the end time when *every* knee will bow and *every* tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. "When the church worships Jesus by bowing before him and proclaiming that he is Lord," Hansen remarks, "she embodies the vision of the future submission of all creation to the Lord Jesus."³⁴⁵ This eschatological vision anticipates its ultimate fulfillment in the future.

If Christ's lordship is the climax of the hymn, then the glory of God is its ultimate goal. The final prepositional phrase εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός is more closely related to κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός than to the immediate preceding verb ἐξομολογήσεται or to the ἵνα clause in verse 10.³⁴⁶ It is not the homage or confession that brings glory

³⁴²Hansen, *Philippians*, 167.

³⁴³Hansen states, "Jesus was given the name that belonged to God alone. By bearing the name Lord, Jesus was not identified as one of many lords in the pantheon of Hellenistic gods and lords nor as merely a political rival of Lord Caesar." Hansen, *Philippians*, 167.

³⁴⁴Hansen, *Philippians*, 167.

³⁴⁵Hansen, *Philippians*, 168.

³⁴⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 250.

to God, but the lordship of Christ.³⁴⁷ Christ's lordship in no way competes with God's sovereignty, rather it manifests his sublime glory.³⁴⁸ This also confirms that Christ's humiliation is not only voluntary but also primarily aimed at bringing glory to God, and not motivated by a desire to earn a reward or merit.

Summary. The exaltation of Christ is incomparable and unsurpassed. God exalted him to the highest position and graciously granted him his own sacred name *κύριος* as a sign of vindication and approval of Christ's emptying and humbling of himself. The name *κύριος* carries with its triple significance—supreme sovereignty, divine identity and ultimate destiny—has transformed Jewish monotheism into Christological monotheism. His universal homage (“every knee shall bow”) and cosmic acclamation (“every tongue shall confess”) reflects the *already-not yet* aspect of this eschatological reality.

Conclusion

The exegetical analysis of the Christ-hymn is the focus of this chapter. I surveyed its literary background with a discussion on the form, structure, and authorship of the hymn. I am using the term “hymn” in a general sense that recognizes the poetic features and Christological content of Philippians 2:5-11. There is yet no decisive verdict regarding authorship. Whether it is composed by Paul or not, it is still valid to refer to him as the author of the hymn since he has adapted it for the purposes of his letter. The hymn occurs within the context of paraenesis in Philippians 1:27-2:18 with an exhortation to unity and steadfastness of faith.

I examined four key terms in the section on semantic analysis, namely,

³⁴⁷See Wilhelm Thüsing, *Per Christum in Deum: Studien zum Verhältnis von Christozentrik und Theozentrik in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen* (Münster, Germany: Aschendorff, 1965), 46–60.

³⁴⁸Silva, *Philippians*, 116; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 251; Hansen, *Philippians*, 169.

φρονέω, μορφή, ἀρπαγμός, and κενόω. All these words are theologically loaded terms that have been the subject of scholarly debates. The hymn is divided into two main sections with humiliation as the motif of the first half and exaltation in the second. It is introduced by an imperative form of φρονέω that directs our attention to the mind of Christ. His humiliation reveals a mindset that is obedient to God and oriented towards others. His exaltation is freely granted by God as an affirmation of his choices and actions. The climax of the hymn proclaims the lordship of Christ with the glory of God as its ultimate goal. This also reveals that the mindset of Christ in his willingness to undergo humiliation is not for personal gain or reward, but is motivated by a desire to bring glory to his Father.

CHAPTER 3
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON
PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Countless commentaries and monographs are written on Philippians 2:5-11 since the time Lohmeyer published his monograph in 1928, but there is still no consensus on how to interpret this significant passage. Due to the extensive range of themes and issues that this hymn intersects with, I will not be able to discuss all of them in this limited space. I will instead focus on three key issues related to the main concern of this dissertation, namely, Christocentric ethics, conformity to Christ, and humiliation-exaltation motif.

Christocentric Ethics

As stated in my thesis, I believe that the best way to interpret the passage is to *integrate* both kerygmatic and ethical interpretation. It is not helpful to pit one against the other and miss a key point when one argument is emphasized at the expense of the other. Unfortunately, a great part of the ongoing debate is beset by false dichotomies and inundated with biases.¹ We should be careful not to make a “superficial antithesis between Heilsgeschichte and ethics.”² Morna Hooker exclaims, “It is only the dogma that the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith belong in

¹For warning against false dichotomy, see Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 97; G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 121. Smit in his reaction to Käsemann’s distinction between soteriology and ethics, states that “there is no clear reason why eschatology and soteriology should not be closely related to ethics.” Peter-Ben Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ: A Study of the Epistle to the Philippians*, LNTS 476 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 9.

²Robert B. Strimple, “Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Studies: Some Exegetical Conclusions,” *WTJ* 41, no. 2 (1979): 255.

separate compartments that leads to the belief that the appeal to Christian character appropriate to those who are in Christ is not linked to the pattern as seen in Jesus himself.”³ Paul’s theology always springs forth in ethical implications, and his ethical injunctions are always grounded in firm theology. Hawthorne and Martin underscore this important point:

Hence, although this hymn (1) is unquestionably a Christological gem unparalleled in the NT, (2) may be considered soteriological, or better, kerygmatic, in character (yet with parenetic enforcement brought out in 2:12 as a call to obedience; there is no dichotomy between the two, . . . , and (3) may have been originally composed for christological or soteriological reasons, Paul’s motive in using it here is not theological but ethical. Yet this disjunction may be granted to be chimerical since Paul’s ethics are always *theological* ethics; i.e., the call is to act because God in Christ has acted in the first place. . . . Paul’s objective is not to give instruction in doctrine but to reinforce instruction (parenesis) in Christian living. And he does this by appealing to the *event* of Christ.⁴

A more comprehensive understanding of the passage will emerge if we base our theological understanding on sound exegesis and avoid any preconceived way of defining the hymn. For lack of a better term, I will use “Christocentric ethics” to refer to Pauline ethics that is firmly grounded on a strong Christology. This does not mean that ethics is more central nor is it less important than Christology. I could have used “ethical Christology” interchangeably, but the second label might create unnecessary confusion.

Kerygmatic Interpretation

Käsemann argues vehemently for kerygmatic interpretation of the Christ hymn. It is commendable that he identified the key doctrines of Christology, soteriology, and eschatology in the hymn, but it is also exactly because of this strong

³Morna D. Hooker, “Philippians 2:6-11,” in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Gräßer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 154.

⁴Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., WBC 43 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 106 (emphasis original).

insistence on a dogmatic view that he is adamant that every ounce of ethical underpinning in the hymn should be eliminated. He seems to be on a mission. Morgan describes him as trying “to prepare the ground for his own theological seeds by blasting away the weeds of ‘ethical idealism.’”⁵

It is helpful to note that his essay is basically a NT theology, rather than a strict exegesis of the Philippian text.⁶ Moreover, it is crucial to know his theological background that serves as the backdrop of his essay. The dual background of dialectical theology (German theological resistance against the liberal theology of Wrede) and the tradition of radical historical criticism (represented by Wrede)—particularly, history of religions approach—in the tradition pioneered by his teacher Bultmann shapes this essay and much of Käsemann’s academic publication.⁷ In addition, his interest in NT mythological language is influenced by the controversy over Bultmann’s demythologizing program and the turbulent Nazi dictatorship in Germany.⁸ Given all these factors that made an impact on Käsemann, he made it his primary aim to eradicate all the vestiges of ethical idealism in the interpretation of the Christ hymn.⁹

The nineteenth-century idealist theology understands the divinity of Christ in relation to his perfect humanity and describes God in anthropomorphic terms.¹⁰

⁵Robert Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology: Ernst Käsemann’s Interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 59. Hurtado criticizes Kasemann’s interpretation as an “overreaction against particular examples of ‘ethical idealism’ and pietism.” Larry W. Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11,” in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 126.

⁶Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 44.

⁷Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 44–45.

⁸Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 46.

⁹Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 53.

¹⁰Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 55.

Käsemann is determined to veer away from this tendency and avoid interpreting the obedience of Jesus as merely a moral attitude in the context of human relationships.¹¹ He assimilates Barth's position and later calls it "primacy of christology" and resists Bultmann's anthropological emphasis in his existential theology.¹² Although Käsemann did not endorse the Chalcedonian doctrine of two natures as Barth did, he maintains the Christocentric core of the dogma (*vere Deus, vere homo*) which is expressed in terms of nature and substance in patristic theology.¹³ His solution to the divinity of Christ is to acknowledge incarnation as a myth, which is in agreement with Bultmann, but he explains it in terms of theology of the cross.¹⁴ His interpretation gives appropriate stress to its quality as a christological hymn and to the "christological character of the eschatological message of salvation."¹⁵

No one is completely free from any bias nor is anyone totally unaffected by the theological climate around him. Lohmyer and Käsemann are both products of their times.¹⁶ With this in mind, we should be mindful not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater," but rather strive to peel off the layers of "theological baggage" and discover the "theological gems" that these scholars are contributing. We don't have to accept everything that Lohmeyer and Käsemann say, nor do we need to reject everything they proposed. If we remove all the extraneous factors that

¹¹Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 55.

¹²Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 56.

¹³Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 56.

¹⁴Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 56.

¹⁵Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 67.

¹⁶When pointing out that there are times when a variety of reading may seem appropriate, especially when it comes to theological interpretation, Morgan observes that it is "because theology is more conditioned by its time and place than most interpretive disciplines." Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 47.

conditioned them within a particular time and space, e.g., their fight against liberal theology or ethical idealism, their inclination towards Gnostic or Semitic sources, their support or criticism of Bultmann's demythologizing program and existentialist approach, we will still be able to find valuable insights that are valid across different times and settings.¹⁷ We should thus strive to unearth these "theological treasures" under the rubble of theological debates and controversies. I will discuss three main theological themes: Christology, soteriology, and lordship.

Christology. Most scholars will agree that Christ is the primary focus of the passage, either as the subject of the actions in Philippians 2:6-8, or as the recipient of God's response in Philippians 2:9-11.¹⁸ Some would even acknowledge the high Christology within the text that serves as the seed for the beginning and development of Christological discussions on the two natures of Christ in church councils.¹⁹ Any discussion of this hymn is remiss if its Christology is not given due attention.²⁰ Whether one chooses to expound the passage through kerygmatic or

¹⁷Morgan is right in issuing this thoughtful caution regarding Käsemann's position: "Recognition that every theological interpretation of scripture is constructed for a particular place and time should make us hesitate before ruling his proposals out of court from the vantage point of a supposedly superior knowledge." Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 46. Käsemann himself admits that "it is obvious that the viewpoint of the exegete invariably determines the individual results and the total understanding of the text." Ernst Käsemann, "A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5-11," ed. Robert W. Funk, trans. Alice F. Carse, *JTC* 5 (1968): 45.

¹⁸Brown notes, "We do not have a continuous subject. The one who did not seek to be like God is the subject of the first strophe, and God who exalts him is the subject of the second. Nevertheless, the one who sacrificed himself figures in every stanza in a progression that links the first with the last. He who was the visible expression of God, and did not exploit his status so as to be like God, is universally acclaimed as 'Lord' to the glory of God the Father." Colin Brown, "Ernst Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 23. See also Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 230; Wilhelm Michaelis, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper*, THNT 11 (Leipzig, Germany: Deichert, 1935), 41.

¹⁹Morgan notes: "This passage has central importance for the church's christology and deserves a weighty interpretation that takes it seriously as a whole." Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 58.

²⁰This passage is considered "perhaps the most rich in christological content in the NT." Oscar Cullmann, "Ernst Lohmeyer (1890-1946)," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze, 1925-1962*, ed. Karlfried Fröhlich (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1966), 665.

ethical interpretation, the center of the discussion will be on Christ, the only difference is how his actions and the purpose of these actions are perceived and interpreted.

Based on Roy Hoover's philological argument, Christ is *already* equal with God when he existed in the form of God before becoming a man. His preexistence is an important aspect of the Christology in this passage and serves as the interpretive framework to understand the rest of the hymn. If Christ were not equal with God before he became a man, then whatever he did by humbling himself and dying on the cross are simply heroic and sacrificial acts of a selfless human being. If he were simply a man, then his "becoming" a man does not even need to be mentioned. But it is *precisely because* he existed in the form of God and was equal with God that his decision not to take advantage of it is a significant departure from what is commonly exhibited by those who possess power. It is also *precisely because* he existed in the form of God and was equal with God that his willingness to pour himself out and take the form of a slave that his incarnation has a profound meaning. It is also *precisely because* he existed in the form of God and was equal with God that his humility and sacrifice can have *both* redemptive (kerymatic interpretation) *and* paradigmatic (ethical interpretation) effects. It is also significant to note that his divinity was not lost or replaced when he *voluntarily* surrendered himself in obedience to God. It is because of his ultimate obedience that God exalted him to the highest place and gave him his own sacred name and identity, which he has avowed that he will not give to any other being (Isa 42:8). In doing so, God is essentially declaring Jesus and himself are one, and yet both are distinct.²¹

²¹Wright states, "But if Jesus is not one-for-one identical with the Father, and if Paul is still a monotheist, then the assertions of 2.9-11 must mean that Jesus--or, more accurately, the one who became Jesus--must have been from all eternity 'equal with God' in the sense of being himself fully divine." Nicholas Thomas Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 94 (emphasis original).

The hymn declares the unity and equality of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ without providing any explanation for this mystery.²² By doing so, it upholds Jewish monotheism that the Lord God is one (Deut 6:4) with a significant shift, i.e., there is still one God but now it is God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.²³ It effectively transforms Jewish monotheism into a “Christological monotheism” and makes it a “christological version of Deutero-Isaianic eschatological monotheism.”²⁴

Soteriology. Another key emphasis of kerygmatic interpretation is the drama of salvation portrayed in the hymn. Käsemann insists that the message of the hymn is not about Christ’s relationship to God, humility, or obedience, nor is it an ethical model, rather it is a celebration of God’s saving act.²⁵ Christology is deemed to be subject to soteriology, since the focus is not on Christ’s status in different states, not on who he *was* but on what he *did*, and his divine glory is mentioned to lay stress on the miracle of salvation.²⁶ This emphasis on soteriology signals a shift from Johannine Christology wherein the focus is on preexistence and incarnation to Markan Christology which focuses on the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²⁷ Käsemann reinforces his view of the hymn’s soteriological nature with the Gnostic savior myth as its background.²⁸ The myth focuses on theology of glory

²²Hansen, *Philippians*, 168.

²³Hansen, *Philippians*, 168.

²⁴Richard J. Bauckham, “The Worship of Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11,” in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 133; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 130; Hansen, *Philippians*, 168.

²⁵Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 65.

²⁶Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 60.

²⁷Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 72.

²⁸Käsemann, “Critical Analysis,” 63–64, 73.

wherein human exaltation comes through the arrival of the savior at the end of the world.²⁹ In contrast the Christian message centers on the theology of the cross which portrays humiliation to the point of death borne out of willing obedience, not just about a savior becoming human.³⁰

He also considers the “in Christ” in Philippians 2:5 a typical Pauline formula with soteriological character, i.e., it portrays a salvation event, more specifically salvation from enslavement to the powers, and not a pattern of moral example for believers.³¹ He also traces back Paul’s “in Christ” to Hellenistic myth and mysteries which provides a way for articulating the eschatological message of salvation for the whole world that can only be found in Christ in the here and now.³²

I agree with Käsemann to a certain extent. Soteriology is a key point in the hymn but Christology should not be subsumed under it. It is *precisely because of* who Christ *was* that what he *did* carries with it great soteriological significance. We also understand Markan Christology better when it is read in tandem with Johannine Christology. I disagree, however, that the Hellenistic myth should be credited as the hymn’s source. The theory has been generally rejected by most scholars. I also disagree that salvation in the Christ hymn consists of redemption from being enslaved to the powers. Although the presence and power of the spiritual forces are clearly discussed in other Pauline epistles like Ephesians, and their reality needs to be acknowledged, but the hymn itself makes no mention of them.

Lordship. The second part of the hymn on the exaltation of Jesus Christ has been used to prove that kerygmatic interpretation is more appropriate because

²⁹Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 66.

³⁰Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 66.

³¹Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 65.

³²Morgan, “Incarnation, Myth, and Theology,” 66.

Christ's lordship could be fully integrated into the progression of the hymn's narrative. In contrast the exaltation could, at best, be considered an excursus in an ethical interpretation. It is argued that the glory and homage that Christ received at the exaltation could not be attained nor aspired for.

This kind of reasoning misses a vital point. Christ's lordship is present and eschatological, as well as personal, ecclesiological, and cosmic. Although the universal homage with *every* knee bowing and *every* tongue confessing will only take place in the last days, but that homage is now a *present* reality among God's people who worship him individually and corporately. The believer who confesses with his mouth that "Jesus is Lord" (a shorter version of the confession in Phil 2:11) and believes in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9) is already acknowledging the lordship of Jesus Christ on a personal level, as well as on a corporate level as he joins the community of faith.³³

Christ's Lordship is an *already-not yet* reality for the Christian. His universal acclaim and sovereignty has not yet been fully realized on a universal scale, but as far as Christ followers are concerned, he is not just their Savior, but also their Lord. This means that his lordship should be acknowledged and upheld over every aspect of a believer's life, including his thoughts, attitudes, behavior, and decision-making. This also means that a believer who genuinely submits to the lordship of Christ in his life will also live his daily life in a humble and selfless way in conformity to Christ.

As much as *δοῦλος* (Phil 2:7) can be traced back to the Roman context of slavery, so does the *κύριος* language used in the imperial cult serve as a powerful backdrop. Believers might have been tempted to avoid persecutions by bowing the

³³Lohmeyer argues that believers and the church are not mentioned in the hymn, but Morgan is correct in saying that "it is the Christian community that pronounces and hears this hymn." Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 66.

knee to Caesar and to conform to the wider Roman society that engages in emperor worship. It is a potent reminder to them that Jesus Christ is the Lord who is far more exalted than Caesar and it is only him who deserves worship and homage. It is also a reassuring comfort to those who were already undergoing pressure and persecution for their faith that Jesus is the only Sovereign Lord and he has the absolute power and ultimate authority over all.

Ethical Interpretation

Lohmeyer's proposal that the hymn is a pre-Pauline composition based on its balanced rhythmic arrangement and use of non-Pauline language is widely accepted. This premise is central to the kerygmatic interpretation "because it allows and even encourages exegetes to interpret the hymn on its own terms without regard to its context in Philippians, or to Paul's intentions in quoting it."³⁴ I agree that the isolation of the hymn from its context may be justified for form-critical analysis which is more concerned with the original meaning of the hymn or historical analysis that aims to trace back the role of this hymn in the onset and development of early Christian thought and liturgy.³⁵ However, if our focus is on exegetical and theological analysis, as does this dissertation, then Lohmeyer's proposition is problematic—not only is it inappropriate, but it is even a grave mistake to disregard its context.³⁶ Paul intended the hymn to be read, understood, and applied with all the other parts of the letter. It is thus improper to extract the hymn from the letter and completely disregard its context and the main thrust of the letter. It is indeed

³⁴Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 50.

³⁵Morgan explains why this is appropriate for historical reconstruction: "The question 'How Christology began' may be answered on different levels, but the historical task depends on distinguishing between different layers within early Christian tradition." Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," 50–51.

³⁶So Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 259.

more appropriate to situate the hymn in its current setting in Philippians 2 and examine how Paul is using it in relation to the rest of the letter.³⁷

A close look at the passage makes it clear that the hymn occurs within the context of paraenesis. The opening verses of Philippians 2 is a paraenetical section on mutual relations of the Philippian believers: the presence of second person plural imperative and subjunctive verbs (πληρώσατε, φρονήτε in v. 2) and reciprocal pronoun (ἀλλήλους in v. 3). The passage that comes after the hymn is also paraenetic in nature: the presence of second person plural imperative in Philippians 2:12, 14 (κατεργάζεσθε, ποιείτε). In light of this, it is appropriate to say that Philippians 2:5-11 carries with it paraenetic overtones. On one hand, I agree with critics of ethical interpretation that reducing Christ to a mere example is oversimplified, yet it cannot be completely done away with. Critics believe that it is impossible to imitate the incarnation, death and exaltation of Christ which are all unique and unprecedented miraculous events. On the other hand, I regard the argument for this criticism simplistic. Following Christ's example does not mean that we have to duplicate all his deeds and actions *exactly*. Given his unique status as the preexistent one, it is impossible for us to *become* incarnate like him since we have always existed as humans, let alone be crucified on the cross and secure redemption for all of humanity and be exalted to the highest position and receive universal adoration. Nevertheless, our inability to copy the exact humiliation-exaltation pattern should not hinder us to learn from him (Matt 11:29) and follow him (Matt 4:19). The hymn's emphasis and Paul's exhortation in the surrounding verses are not to mimic specific actions of Christ, but rather to be conformed to his mindset which is

³⁷So Charles Francis Digby Moule, "Further Reflexions on Philippians 2:5-11," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 269; Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 113-26; Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 8-9.

characterized by humility and selflessness. As Fee rightly reminds that “the indicative must precede the imperative, or all is lost; but it does not eliminate the imperative, or all is likewise lost,” so we must be careful in walking the theological tightrope to strike a healthy balance between dogma and ethics.³⁸ Moule sees the entire passage as Paul’s entreaty to follow Christ’s example but stresses that “to take this view is in no way to incur the charge of reducing the gospel to the humanistic level of imitating a fine example.”³⁹ Paul points out repeatedly that what is needed is the gift of a new nature, which will bring forth the transformation, instead of depending on human effort to bring about any change.⁴⁰

Another reason for intense rejection of the ethical interpretation is because the second part of the hymn (vv. 9-11) has no direct relation to the exhortation to humility, not to mention the impossibility of imitating the exaltation of Christ.⁴¹ It calls into question whether these verses can be fully explained in the ethical interpretation or they simply function as an appendix to this hortatory passage. As we have noted in the exegetical analysis, the *διὸ καί* (2:9) reveals that the exaltation came about as a result of the selfless acts of Christ in the first part of the hymn (vv. 6-8) and signifies God’s vindication and approval of his obedience and submission. This shows that verses 9-11 are not simply a postscript, but is an integral and coherent part of the narrative that describes the appraisal of Christ’s obedience in the utmost degree, i.e., Christ’s humility and obedience do not only serve as examples, but also bears an authoritative significance.⁴²

³⁸Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 227.

³⁹Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 269.

⁴⁰Moule, “Further Reflexions,” 269–70.

⁴¹Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians Ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, SNTSMS 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 85.

⁴²Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example,” 125.

In sum, Christocentric ethics is the mode of interpretation that maintains the balance between theology and ethics. The key to solving the false dichotomy is to focus on Christ as the unifying factor of both theology and ethics.

Conformity to Christ

It is more helpful to speak of *conformity* to Christ, instead of issuing a call for an *imitation* of Christ's example.⁴³ For Paul, Christian ethics is far more than mere *imitation* of Christ's example, it is rather a *conformity* to the true essence of life in Christ.⁴⁴ Mark Seifrid captures this overarching theme of the letter succinctly: "Paul's purpose throughout is to set forth believing life as *conformation* to Christ in both humiliation and exaltation."⁴⁵ We are not called to imitate specific actions in the hymn, but rather to cultivate the mindset of Christ which will then affect our choices, decisions, attitudes, behavior, and relationships.⁴⁶ In this section we will explore two *topoi*—the mind of Christ and conformity in contrast to imitation.

The Mind of Christ

As seen in our exegetical analysis, the main verb in the passage is the imperative $\phi\rho\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\epsilon$ in Philippians 2:5 in which Paul urges the believers to think towards each other the same way Christ does. Christ's way of thinking is clearly demonstrated by his humility and selfless service in the historical events of

⁴³O'Brien, *Philippians*, 252, 262. Gorman also thinks that *conformatio Christi* is a better term. Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 23. Smit labels imitation as a "theological powder keg" due in part to the discussion on grace and free will in late medieval and early modern periods and their confessional development from the sixteenth century reformations in the Protestant and Catholic church and their reception history. Smit, *Paradigms of Being in Christ*, 1n.

⁴⁴Hooker, "Philippians 2:6-11," 154.

⁴⁵Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 88–89 (emphasis added).

⁴⁶Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 229.

incarnation and crucifixion in Philippians 2:6-8.⁴⁷ Paul appeals to the believers to adopt this mindset to rally them to aim for unity by regarding (ἡγούμενοι) others better than oneself in the spirit of humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) in the same way that Christ did not regard (ἡγήσατο) his equality with God as something to take advantage of, but instead he humbled himself (ἐταπείνωσεν).⁴⁸ It should also be emphasized that Christ has done so *willingly*—he emptied and humbled *himself* (2:7, 8). The reflexive pronoun ἐαυτόν signifies the voluntary nature and deliberateness of the decision made, not out of compulsion, but motivated by love and selflessness.⁴⁹ This needs to be stressed because when we simply *imitate* Christ or follow his example, we may do so to fulfill certain expectations or obligations. But when we have the mind of Christ, we actively engage in looking at things and evaluating them through his perspective.

The lack of attention on φρονεῖτε in Philippians 2:5 is the missing link in understanding and interpreting the hymn which led scholars to postulate the false dichotomy that it's *either* kerygmatic *or* ethical interpretation. In order to better understand its significance in the letter, I will examine how Paul employs the term ten times in seven verses in the epistle (1:7; 2:2 [twice], 5; 3:15 [twice], 19; 4:2, 10 [twice]) to exhort the believers to strive for unity.

United as one: Harmony for unity (2:2; 4:2). The best place to begin is with the two verses (2:2; 4:2) that exhort the Philippian believers “to think the same thing.” With the imperative πληρώσατε in Philippians 2:2 Paul *seems* to be concerned with his own feelings, i.e., “make my joy complete.” However, his primary concern is

⁴⁷Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 231.

⁴⁸Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 231.

⁴⁹Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 199.

that the Philippian believers aim for unity and his own joy is simply a by-product.⁵⁰ Here Paul is explaining what will make his joy complete by the use of the exegetical *ἵνα* with four short clauses: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες.⁵¹ There are two forms of φρονέω in Philippians 2:2. The first one (φρονῆτε) is a present active subjunctive preceded by τὸ αὐτό wherein αὐτό functions as an adjective in the attributive position. This kind of expression (τὸ αὐτό plus a form of φρονέω) is common in Paul (Rom 12:16; 15:5; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:2) whereby he emphasizes like-mindedness, agreement, and harmony.⁵² The second form of φρονέω, which is a present active participle (φρονοῦντες) with τὸ ἐν before it, intensifies the same idea. It is almost identical to the first clause but even more emphatic with the use of ἐν and “implies being intent on one purpose” or “having a life directed toward a single aim.”⁵³ The two clauses in between reinforces the call to unity by urging them to have the same love (τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες), and to be of one soul (σύμψυχοι) focusing on “one heart and soul” with a sense of “unity in feeling as well as in thought and action.”⁵⁴ These four clauses echo the same core idea repeatedly.⁵⁵ “Unity of mind,” Silva argues persuasively, “is therefore Paul’s

⁵⁰Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 85.

⁵¹O’Brien also takes it as an “exegetic limitation of the verb πληρώσατέ and indicate the method by which the action denoted by the verb is achieved.” O’Brien, *Philippians*, 177. *Contra* Moule who regards it as direct object or content *ἵνα* clause. Francis Digby Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 145. Also, *contra* Silva who indicates that “the *ἵνα* here does not indicate purpose but probably introduces the content of an implied exhortation (supply παρακαλῶ, I beseech).” Silva, *Philippians*, 91. Turner considers it a substitute for an imperative and this is also NRSV’s rendering of the clause—“be of the same mind.” Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3, Syntax (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), 94–95.

⁵²Davorin Peterlin, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church*, NovTSup 79 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995), 59.

⁵³Silva, *Philippians*, 86; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 86; Peterlin, *Philippians in the Light of Disunity*, 59; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 179.

⁵⁴Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “σύμψυχος, 2 *sympsychos*,” by Winfried Elliger (emphasis original).

⁵⁵Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 87. Bruce thinks that the repetition of φρονέω gives it a “sense of having a settled opinion or attitude, having one’s mind set in a particular way.”

pervasive concern in this exhortation.”⁵⁶ This kind of unity should not be conceived as mere mental assent to avoid conflicts and maintain a superficial level of oneness.⁵⁷

Most of the English Bibles translate τὸ αὐτό φρονῆτε as “like-minded” (NKJV and NIV) and “be/being of the same mind” (ESV, NASB, NRSV). Both expressions capture the sense of the first φρονέω clause appropriately.⁵⁸ For the second φρονέω clause, three of the five versions examined render τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες as “of one mind” (ESV, NKJV, NRSV) to maintain the concordance with the “like-minded” or “the same mind” in the first clause. NIV and NASB translate the clause as “one purpose” which may help bring out the force of singleness of purpose and unified goal, but loses its verbal connection with the first φρονέω within the same verse.

In Philippians 4:2 a similar construction occurs although τὸ αὐτό is here coupled with the infinitive φρονεῖν. Paul is urging Euodia and Syntyche to have the same φρονέω in the Lord. As in Philippians 2:2 it is also important to note that Paul did not simply want the two women to agree with each other mechanically to get rid of any tension in the church. Rather, they must be intentional in their effort to live in harmony ἐν κυρίῳ. They are to agree because of their common bond in the Lord by

Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *Philippians*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 66.

⁵⁶Silva, *Philippians*, 86.

⁵⁷“This expression cannot mean that Paul here pleads for uniformity of thought or that he insists on everyone holding in common a particular opinion—a demand that by its very nature would contribute to dissension. . . . Rather, by his choice of the verb φρονεῖν, ‘to think,’ he is asking for a total inward attitude of mind or disposition of will that strives after that one thing (τὸ αὐτό, ‘the same [thing]’; τὸ ἓν, ‘the one [thing]’) that is greater than any human truth—‘mine, yours, his’ (Barth), a unity of spirit and sentiment in which powerful tensions are held together by an overmastering loyalty to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.” Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 86. O’Brien concurs that Paul’s instruction is “not intended to squash independent thinking by Christians or to prevent them from having different opinions on secondary matters, but to exhort them to be at one in their mental attitude and thus in the basic aim, direction, and orientation of their behaviour.” O’Brien, *Philippians*, 67. So Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *EDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), s.v. “φρονέω *phroneō*,” by Henning Paulsen.

⁵⁸Silva, *Philippians*, 91.

cultivating a right attitude with one another and by living in harmony.⁵⁹

Most of the major versions translate τὸ αὐτό φρονεῖν as “to agree” (ESV, RSV, NIV) and only NASB renders as “to live in harmony.” Although both renderings adequately draw out the intended meaning of τὸ αὐτό φρονεῖν, but they simultaneously conceal its link with Philippians 2:2.⁶⁰ It is interesting that RSV switched from “agree” to “of the same mind” in NRSV. The intent might be to maintain the obvious link not only in terms of grammatical construction, but also of thematic connection.

Christ-like attitude: Humility for unity (2:5). The only possible way for believers to live in harmony with each other *in* the Lord is to have the mindset of Christ—humility and selfless attitude.⁶¹ Jesus Christ is the supreme example of the kind of attitude that Paul wants them to emulate. This short verse poses substantial difficulties for interpretation, which stems from the ellipsis in the second clause (“which also in Christ Jesus”).⁶² There are two main lines of interpretation—the *ethical* and the *kerygmatic* interpretations—depending on the verb supplied in the second clause.⁶³

⁵⁹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 478.

⁶⁰Silva, *Philippians*, 198.

⁶¹It has been variously translated as “mindset.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 192.

⁶²Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 113. For detailed discussion, see the section on “Syntactical Analysis” of Phil 2:5 in the previous chapter.

⁶³Demetrius K. Williams, *Enemies of the Cross of Christ: The Terminology of the Cross and Conflict in Philippians*, JSNTSup 223 (New York: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 127. Thielman provides a brief description of the two kinds of interpretations: “Did Paul intend for the reader to supply the same verb in this clause that appeared in the first clause (‘Have this attitude among yourselves which you also have in Christ Jesus’)? This is the view of those who adopt the ‘kerygmatic’ interpretation, according to which the Philippians should have the attitude among themselves that is required of those who are ‘in Christ’—that is, those who have believed the gospel that the following hymn summarizes. But it is equally possible that Paul intended his readers to supply the verb ‘was’ in this clause (‘Have this attitude among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus’). Those who believe that the ‘ethical’ interpretation of the passage is correct tend to adopt this understanding of the sentence. Paul would then be admonishing the Philippians to follow Christ’s example of humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice.” Thielman, *Philippians*, 113. Aside from the kerygmatic or dogmatic view and ethical example interpretation, Martin also includes the kenotic theory in his book. Martin,

The present active imperative φρονεῖτε is a direct charge to let the kind of thinking that controlled Christ to rule over them.⁶⁴ The thinking involved in the φρονέω here does not only consist of intellectual or mental processes but it reflects an attitude characterized by thinking carefully, feeling perceptively, and acting thoughtfully as exemplified in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.⁶⁵ O' Brien is right in identifying this verse as the "*crux interpretum*" with φρονέω as the key verb and accepts that there is a connection with the previous exhortation on unity and humility.⁶⁶ Moreover, the first word of the verse (τοῦτο "this") points back to Philippians 2:2 and not forward to the following hymn.⁶⁷ The present tense of the verb reminds us that this kind of φρονέω is not a one-time commitment but should be constant, continuous, and ongoing.

The rendering of φρονέω in Philippians 2:5 is divided into two groups: those that translate it as "mind" (ESV, NKJV, NRSV) and those that translate it as "attitude" (NASB, NIV). It is noteworthy that NIV switched from "attitude" to "attitude of mind" in TNIV, perhaps recognizing that "attitude" or "mind" alone cannot fully reflect the φρονέω used here.

Mutual concern: Community in unity (1:7; 4:10). Paul himself models the kind of φρονέω that will foster an atmosphere of care and concern that will aid in promoting unity. The first time that φρονέω is used in the letter is in Philippians 1:7 and it refers to the way Paul thinks or feels about the Philippian believers. What Paul

Hymn of Christ, 63–95; See also Silva, *Philippians*, 95–98.

⁶⁴BDAG, s.v. "φρονέω."

⁶⁵BDAG, s.v. "φρονέω"; Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 28.

⁶⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 204.

⁶⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 200; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 204.

is expressing here by the use of φρονέω is not simply thinking of them in the sense of remembering them or going through some mental recollection about them. Nor is he simply emotionally attached and experiencing warm feelings toward them. His concern for them involves deep thoughts with rich emotions—“I have you in my heart,” (1:7b NIV) “God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus (1:8 NIV).” It is also combined with an intense desire for them to grow and mature as reflected in his prayer for them (1:9-11). It is not an impulsive, flimsy, and shallow kind of affection but one that is consistently seeking their good. It is only when we develop this kind of concern will we be able to maintain unity despite of our differences. Except for NKJV and NRSV which translate φρονέω as “to think,” all the other versions use “to feel.” Although both renderings correctly reflect an aspect of φρονέω, neither of them can fully express what Paul is communicating. The Greek φρονέω encompasses both thinking and feeling, which cannot be adequately represented by either “think” or “feel” alone.

In a similar sense, Paul is encouraging the Philippians by commending them for showing such attitude.⁶⁸ The context and collocation of ὑπέρ and φρονέω in Philippians 4:10 determine that the two forms of φρονέω are best understood as “concern.” Paul is here expressing his thanks and appreciation for their concern as evidenced by the gift they sent him through Epaphroditus. The φρονέω in tandem with ὑπέρ means more than thinking of someone, but it involves an intense concern for someone.⁶⁹ Aside from their deep concern expressed by the gift they sent, they have been concerned all the time but did not have the opportunity to express it. For the double φρονέω in Philippians 4:10 there are four translations that correctly use

⁶⁸Silva, *Philippians*, 21.

⁶⁹Harald Riesenfeld, “ὑπέρ,” in *TDNT*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 8:508.

“concern . . . concerned” (ESV, NASB, NRSV, NIV) and only one that renders it with a similarly appropriate “care . . . care” (NKJV). Not only have these versions sufficiently reflected the sense of φρονέω here, but they have preserved the connection between the two φρονέω within the same verse.

Setting the mind: Focus on unity (3:19). All the occurrences of φρονέω surveyed in the preceding paragraphs carry a positive nuance. But in Philippians 3:19 it is clearly applied in a negative sense. The object of the present active participle φρονοῦντες is τὰ ἐπίγεια, which has a “definite negative ethical aspect as descriptive of the sphere of sin and therefore corresponding to Paul’s negative use of σάρξ.”⁷⁰ The present and earthly τὰ ἐπίγεια stands in sharp contrast to the heavenly and eschatological citizenship in heaven (τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς) in Philippians 3:20.⁷¹ It also occurs within the context of the verse that gives concrete descriptions of the enemies of the cross, that is, those “whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame” (NASB). The use of the crucial term φρονέω here depicts not only mental outlook but also goals and inclinations— they let their mind dwell on what is earthly, they set their minds and fix their thoughts on earthly things with an earthly trajectory.⁷² Jesus’ rebuke to Peter has similar overtones in both Matthew 16:23 and Mark 8:33: ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. When we consider that the rebuke is addressed to Satan, it reveals the antithesis even more—between a φρονέω that is aligned with God and a φρονέω that

⁷⁰Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology*, SNTSMS 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 96; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 457.

⁷¹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 457.

⁷²BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω”; Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “φρονέω; φροντίζω; σκοπέω; μελετάω”; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 457–58.

is in opposition to him.⁷³ As a corollary to this, Paul is urging them to set their minds on things above (cf. Col 3:2). A person whose mind is focused on God and his kingdom will be willing and prepared to live a life that engenders unity. Although unity is a Spirit-given gift, Paul exhorts the Ephesian believers to be diligent and make every effort to maintain and preserve it (Eph 4:3). Believers must be intentional about maintaining unity and not expect it to happen spontaneously. It is only in this verse that all the five major translations agree on the same rendering with very slight variation: “mind is set on” or “minds set on” or “minds are set on” (NIV, ESV, NRSV), “set their mind on” or “set their minds on” (NKJV, NASB).

Christ-centered thinking: Basis of unity (3:15). At first glance, Philippians 3:15 appears to be the most neutral of all the passages. The two occurrences of φρονέω refer to what one thinks or the way one views certain things. The first one is a hortatory subjunctive (φρονῶμεν “let us think this way” or “let us have this attitude”) wherein Paul writes tactfully and identifies himself with the mature believers, instead of issuing a command with an imperative.⁷⁴ O’Brien considers the τοῦτο (“this”) as pointing back to earlier verses where Paul sets an example by forgetting what lies behind and pressing on towards what lies ahead (3:13-14).⁷⁵ Silva is more convincing by linking the τοῦτο φρονῶμεν here to the τοῦτο φρονεῖτε in

⁷³“Hence, this expression cannot mean that Paul here pleads for drab uniformity of thought or that he insists on everyone holding in common a particular opinion—a demand that by its very nature would contribute to dissension. Rather by his choice of the verb φρονεῖν he is asking for a total inward attitude of mind or disposition of will, that strives after that one thing (τὸ αὐτὸ, τὸ ἓν) which is greater than any human truth—“mine, yours, his” (Barth), a unity of spirit and sentiment in which powerful tensions are held together by an overmastering loyalty to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.” Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC 43 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 67–68. O’Brien concurs that Paul’s instruction is “not intended to squash independent thinking by Christians or to prevent them from having different opinions on secondary matters, but to exhort them to be at one in their mental attitude and thus in the basic aim, direction, and orientation of their behaviour.” O’Brien, *Philippians*, 67. See also Balz and Schneider, *EDNT*, s.v. “φρονέω.”

⁷⁴O’Brien, *Philippians*, 437.

⁷⁵O’Brien, *Philippians*, 437.

Philippians 2:5: “Paul is not precisely asking for agreement with his statements in the preceding verses . . . but rather reiterating the grand theme of the epistle—an appeal to humility for the sake of the congregation’s unity.”⁷⁶ Proper thinking (3:15) that is Christ-centered (2:5) is directly at odds with the fleshly thinking of the enemies of the cross whose minds are set on earthly things (3:19).⁷⁷ This correlates well with the second occurrence of φρονέω wherein to think differently (ἐτέρως φρονεῖτε) is tantamount to adopting a wrong attitude.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is appropriate to say that there is “no such thing as neutral thinking,” and we see that “Paul lays special emphasis on the quality of Christian thinking.”⁷⁹ Only ESV uses “think” for both φρονέω in 3:15 while NASB has rendered both as “attitude” and RSV has “minded” for both. Both NKJV and NRSV have “mind . . . think” and NIV has “view . . . think.”

Aside from Philippians, φρονέω is used nine times in Romans (8:5, 11:20, 12:3 [twice], 12:16 [twice], 14:6 [twice], 15:5) and four times in other Pauline epistles (1 Cor 13:11; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10; Col 3:2). Interestingly, φρόνημα always occurs in tandem with φρονέω in the rare four times of its occurrence in the NT (Rom 8:6 [twice], 7, 27).⁸⁰ The φρονέω in Romans 8:5 carries the sense of focus and intent. Those who are according to the flesh focus on the things of the flesh, whereas those who are according to the Spirit, focus on the things of the Spirit (cf. “set their minds” in NIV, NRSV, NASB, and ESV). The verb is coupled with the adjective

⁷⁶Silva, *Philippians*, 179.

⁷⁷Silva, *Philippians*, 21.

⁷⁸Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *Philippians*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 126.

⁷⁹Jürgen Goetzmann, “Mind, φρόνησις,” in *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 2:617; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 668.

⁸⁰Georg Bertram, “φρήν, ἄφρων, ἀφροσύνη, φρονέω, φρόνημα, φρόνησις, φρόνιμος,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 9:232.

ὕψηλός and negated by μή in Romans 11:20, whereby the apostle is admonishing the Roman believers not to be conceited or arrogant (literally “to think high”) in light of Israel’s judgment because of unbelief. In Romans 12:3 the infinitive form φρονεῖν is used twice and juxtaposed with the compounded infinitives ὑπερφρονεῖν and σωφρονεῖν. Similarly, it is a warning against thinking too highly of oneself and a call to regard oneself with sober judgment. The participial form of the verb is used twice in Romans 12:16, but yielding a slightly different meaning due to their collocation. In the first part of the verse τὸ αὐτὸ φρονοῦντες gives emphasis to unity or literally “to think the same thing” (cf. “be of the same mind” in NASB; “live in harmony” in NRSV, NIV, and ESV). The second part of the verse μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες is similar to Romans 11:20 with the article and the plural form of the adjective and negated by μή, which also warns against pride.⁸¹ The infinitive form is used with τὸ αὐτό in Romans 15:5 and 2 Corinthians 13:11 to exhort the believers toward concord and harmony (as in Rom 12:16a).⁸² In 1 Corinthians 13:11 the imperfect ἐφρόνουσιν may be classified as stative customary imperfect as rendered by NASB: “I used to . . . think,” and connotes the basic meaning of “think.”⁸³ Paul uses the future tense of the verb in Galatians 5:10 to speak of his certainty that the Galatian Christians will not adopt other views contrary to the gospel message that he has proclaimed to them.⁸⁴ The apostle commands the Colossian believers to set their minds (imperative φρονεῖτε) on things above, and not on earthly things (Col 3:2).⁸⁵

⁸¹Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:233.

⁸²Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:233.

⁸³Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 548.

⁸⁴Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:233.

⁸⁵Bertram explains that Paul’s imperative implies that obedience is not optional, “for the basis here is the uniting of the believer in baptism with the Christ event and its eschatological reference.” Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:232.

φρονέω is used in three non-Pauline passages in the NT. The verb is used in the usual sense in Acts 28:22 when the Jewish leaders in Rome asked Paul for his view or opinion.⁸⁶ In Matthew 16:23 and Mark 8:33, Peter is severely reprimanded by Jesus for setting his mind on human concerns, rather than the things of God.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that a wide array of meanings is attached to φρονέω. These meanings are vastly different from the concept of thinking in English, which is simply an intellectual activity or mental process. The Greek verb refers “neither to ‘thinking’ in general, nor ‘reasoning’ as such, nor is it used for a specific act or thought,” Fee clarifies, “rather, it has to do with having or developing a certain ‘mindset’ including attitudes and dispositions.”⁸⁷ It usually occurs within a theological context such as when Jesus confronts Peter that he does not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.⁸⁸ There is no middle ground, either one sets his mind on the things of God or on the things against God. The harsh rebuke to Peter that was aimed at Satan highlights this point sharply.⁸⁹ Thinking does not occur in a vacuum and it can never be neutral.⁹⁰ In Romans 8:5, it is clear that thinking can either be swayed by the desires of the flesh or it can be guided by the Spirit.⁹¹ In Colossians 3:2 Paul exhorts believers to set their mind on things above, rather than on earthly things (also Phil 3:19). These contrasts—godly

⁸⁶Balz and Schneider, *EDNT*, s.v. “φρονέω”; Bertram, “φρήν,” *TDNT* 9:232.

⁸⁷Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 89. Fowl states that “the English phrase ‘practical reasoning’ is often used in scholarly literature, especially in reference to ancient moral philosophy” to translate φρονεῖν and φρόνησις. At times “prudence” might be used based on Latin prudentia, as how Aquinas renders φρόνησις in Aristotle. Fowl, *Philippians*, 28.

⁸⁸“φρονέω, φρόνημα, φρόνησις, φρόνιμος, φρονίμως, φροντίζω, φρήν, ἀφροσύνη, ἄφρων, ὁμόφρων, παραφρονέω, παραφρονία, ὑπερφρονέω,” in *NIDNTTE*, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4:619.

⁸⁹Balz and Schneider, *EDNT*, s.v. “φρονέω.”

⁹⁰“φρονέω,” *NIDNTTE* 4:619.

⁹¹“φρονέω,” *NIDNTTE* 4:619.

and human, fleshly and spiritual, heavenly and earthly—reveal that the meaning of the word can be expanded to connote making choices and even of taking sides.⁹² Thus it is proper to say that we should be intentional in directing the course of our thoughts and allow the Spirit to shape how we view and evaluate things. Cultivating a right mindset is foundational to living a life that honors God and edifies the church.

Hence, it is a challenge to translate φρονέω in a more holistic way as Paul intended his readers to understand—not the slavish kind of thinking that focuses only on the intellectual, dogmatic, rational, or theoretical, but he wants them to adopt the right attitude of mind with renewed thinking and genuine concern as seen in Christ (Phil 2:5-11). Paul knows that the Philippian problem of disunity cannot be resolved by dictating to the believers a certain kind of behavior. Rather he is persuading them to have the right φρονέω that will directly affect how they act and behave towards each other and resolve their problem. He also warns them that the wrong kind of φρονέω that is focused on earthly things will make them enemies of the cross (3:18-19).

Christ’s frame of mind may also refer to the expression “mind of Christ” (νοῦν Χριστοῦ) as it is used explicitly in 1 Corinthians 2:16.⁹³ What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? Within the context of 1 Corinthians 2, we see that the mind of Christ is closely related to wisdom and sound judgment possessed by the person with the Spirit (2:12-13, 15). Although the Christ-hymn is silent about the Spirit’s role in transforming our inward thoughts, he is referenced in both 1 Corinthians 2 and Romans 8.

⁹²BDAG, s.v. “φρονέω”; “φρονέω,” *NIDNTTE* 4:620.

⁹³Keener, *Mind of the Spirit*, 229–30n97.

Conformity or Imitation

In his book *Christ as Example*, Soon-Gu Kwon proposes *imitatio Christi* as the central theme of the NT which also functions as the moral motive in biblical and Christian ethics.⁹⁴ He examines the interpretation of Edvin Larsson and Hans Dieter Betz on important passages related to the imitation of Christ.⁹⁵ The designation “Christian” connotes following (*Nachfolge*) and imitation (*Nachahmung*) of Jesus Christ as the model and pattern for Christian life.⁹⁶ The term *Nachfolge* is narrower and refers to the spatial and physical aspects of accompanying a person which describes more appropriately the mode of life of Jesus’ disciples during his earthly life.⁹⁷ The term *Nachahmung* involves more intentionality and the psychological inclination to become like the object of one’s *Nachfolge*.⁹⁸ Interestingly, Paul does not instruct the believers to “follow” Christ.⁹⁹ He also does not use the term “disciple” or “discipleship” in his letters.¹⁰⁰ Instead, he portrays himself as one who imitates Christ (cf. 1 Cor 11:1) and also urges the believers to do the same.¹⁰¹ It is striking

⁹⁴Soon-Gu Kwon, *Christ as Example: The Imitatio Christi Motive in Biblical and Ethical Ethics* (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 1998), 53–54. Kwon proposes the imitation of Christ as an alternative to four other central themes suggested by other scholars, namely, love commandment from an agapeic perspective, the person and work of Jesus Christ from an evangelical perspective, history of salvation from a trinitarian perspective, and liberation from a political perspective (50-53).

⁹⁵Kwon’s reason for choosing Larsson and Betz is because of their exegetical surveys of the imitation of Christ in the NT and the remarkable contrast in their theological perspectives with each other, though both are Lutheran theologians. Larsson is a Swedish NT scholar whose doctoral dissertation “Christus als Vorbild” was presented to the faculty of Uppsala University in 1962. His interest is on the Jewish faith and the connection between the Christian church to the Jewish synagogue. Betz is a German NT scholar whose *Habilitationsschrift* is entitled “Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament” which was presented to the evangelical theological faculty of the University of Mainz in 1967. His interest is on Greek culture and considers the Graeco-Roman context as the background of Christianity. Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 56.

⁹⁶Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 60.

⁹⁷Edvin Larsson, *Christus als Vorbild: Eine Untersuchung zu den paulinischen Tauf- und Eikontexten* (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962), 17; Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 61.

⁹⁸Larsson, *Christus als Vorbild*, 17; Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 61.

⁹⁹Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 61.

¹⁰⁰Gerald F. Hawthorne, “The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 166.

that imitation of Christ is regarded as a suitable substitute for discipleship in the post-resurrection period.¹⁰² This consists of imitating the person and work of Christ which serves as the standard for ethical thinking and way of life for Christians.¹⁰³ However, the person of Christ which focuses on character or virtue ethics, is given priority over his work which focuses on his deeds and actions as reflected in teleological and deontological ethics.¹⁰⁴ In this regard, the Gospel stories of the Jesus of history are preferred over doctrines in Christology and trinity in order to help us understand God's revelation in him.¹⁰⁵ Despite the difference of expression in the Gospel and Paul, "following Jesus" and *imitatio Christi* are essentially parallel concepts.¹⁰⁶

Larsson surveys ten Pauline texts on the *imitatio Christi* motif with the first four (Rom 6:1-11; Col 2:11-3:4; Gal 2:19-20; Eph 2:4-7) as they relate to Paul's theology of baptism and the last six (Col 3:10-17, 1:15; Eph 4:24; Phil 2:5-11; 2 Cor 3:18, 4:4; Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 15:44-49) in connection with Christ's ontological relation to God as his image (*eikon*) or likeness, being in his form and equal to him.¹⁰⁷ In the specific text we are interested in (Phil 2:5-11), Larsson understands

¹⁰¹Hans Dieter Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967), 2–3; Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 166. Eastman interprets the Christ-hymn as a drama on the "stage of human history" wherein Christ plays the role of Adam *after* the fall as a "stand-in for the human race in all its desperate bondage and contingency." She further argues that Christ has thus "reordered the mimetic structure of that stage and thereby rescripted the social interactions that take place in the *πολίτευμα* over which he rules." Her essay is focused on the educative impact of Christ's mimetic intervention in the human drama." Susan Eastman, "Imitating Christ Imitating Us," in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 429–30.

¹⁰²Hawthorne, "Imitation of Christ," 165–66.

¹⁰³Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 62.

¹⁰⁴Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 62n21. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, trans. Edwin H. Robertson (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 61–62.

¹⁰⁵Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung*, 1; Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 62.

¹⁰⁶Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 64.

¹⁰⁷Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 66.

Christ's humility as an example for the church which is lacking in unity and states that the hymn, though it does not have a paraenetic appeal in itself, is enclosed in a hortatory context.¹⁰⁸ Betz examines three Pauline texts (1 Thess 1:6, 2:14; Phil 3:17; 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1) in relation to *mimesis* in Hellenistic culture and religion in the Graeco-Roman context.¹⁰⁹

Kwon highlights the contrast between Larsson and Betz in terms of their theological stance. Larsson tends to interpret the biblical texts related to *imitatio Christi* in a doctrinal and theological perspective, i.e., in terms of baptism theology and considers it as a dogmatic issue.¹¹⁰ Kwon concludes that "his exegesis does not contribute to an ethical reflection on the imitation of Christ."¹¹¹ This conclusion is interesting because Larsson is the only one who examined Philippians 2:5-11 (the passage is not included in Betz's list of texts).¹¹² Betz interprets the *imitatio Christi* in light of a specific culture—Greek culture. Kwon finds this exegetical method helpful for the presentation of three of his seven interpretive options based on contextual theology, namely, contextual, feminist, and narrative.¹¹³ Larsson takes into account Paul's Jewish background and how the relationship between the Jewish rabbi and his student aids us in our understanding of Pauline *imitatio Christi*.¹¹⁴ Betz disagrees with Larsson regarding Paul's familiarity with the gospel tradition and

¹⁰⁸See Larsson, *Christus als Vorbild*, 243–64.

¹⁰⁹See Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung*, 48–136.

¹¹⁰Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 81.

¹¹¹Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 81.

¹¹²Kwon explains Larsson's view in relation to his Lutheran background: "He stands in the Lutheran tradition where the doctrine of the righteousness by faith or the forgiveness of the sinners (*justificatio impii*) is so fundamental that the Lutherans are negative to the idea of the imitation of Christ . . . associated with the doctrine of righteousness by works and the Roman Catholic tradition." Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 81.

¹¹³Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 81.

¹¹⁴Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 82.

thinks that the *Nachfolge* in the Gospels is characteristic of the rabbi-student, but Paul's *Nachahmung* or *imitatio Christi* is anchored in the *mimesis* of Hellenistic thought.¹¹⁵

Kwon states that scholars have not arrived at a consensus on how *imitatio Christi* should be interpreted in Christian ethics.¹¹⁶ He presents the interpretations of six theologians on the theme of imitation of Christ and concludes with his own proposal as an alternative. These seven interpretations are as follows: (1) monastic interpretation, (2) ascetic interpretation, (3) political interpretation, (4) contextual interpretation, (5) feminist interpretation, (6) narrative interpretation, and (7) relational interpretation.¹¹⁷ The first three interpretations show ethical universalism, the second set of three interpretations reflects contextual theology, and the last one claims to have both universal and contextual application.¹¹⁸ The different views presented provide helpful insights in understanding the concept and application of imitating Christ as example, but some of them are beyond the scope of this dissertation. I will briefly review the first two interpretations which are relevant to this research.

Thomas à Kempis (Thomas Hemerken) is a representative of the monastic interpretation and his book *De Imitatione Christi*, which was originally written for the novices in the Monastery of Mount St. Agnes, is focused on imitating Christ as a model through meditations on his life and teaching.¹¹⁹ He asserts: “Qui autem vult plene et sapide verba Christi intelligere: oportet ut totam vitam suam illi studeat

¹¹⁵Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung*, 3.

¹¹⁶Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 85.

¹¹⁷See Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 85–211.

¹¹⁸Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 16–17.

¹¹⁹Thomas a Kempis and Carolus Hirsche, *Thomae Kempensis De imitatione Christi libri quatuor: textum ex autographo* (Berlin: Libraria Lüderitziana Carolus Habel, 1874).

conformare.”¹²⁰ Monasticism is the most common mode of imitation in Christian tradition wherein individuals, usually monks and nuns, strive for perfection by living alone or in a secluded community that is separated from the cares and temptations of the outside world.¹²¹ The goal is to imitate as closely as possible the earthly life of Christ by withdrawing from the world, depriving oneself of even simple pleasures in pursuit of Christlikeness, and holding virtue ethics in high regard.¹²² Thomas extols the cardinal virtue of humility which is the foundation of other monastic virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience.¹²³ He also declares that “hic nemo potest stare: nisi ex toto corde se voluerit propter Deum humiliare.”¹²⁴

The positive influences of the monastic model of imitation include its emphasis on nurturing the inner life and virtue ethics, especially the attitude of humility. However, there are three major problems with this. First, not every Christian is called to be a monk or nun and to abandon families to live in a monastery, and this would give rise to a special class of spiritual elites.¹²⁵ Second, living in a monastery and sheltered from the lures and lusts of the world is not an assurance that a person could become more Christlike in his character.¹²⁶ Third, the monastic lifestyle is only a *partial* imitation of Christ as it focuses on the inner life of Christ through practices of prayer and contemplation, but neglects to imitate

¹²⁰Thomas a Kempis and Hirsche, *De imitatione Christi*, 3. “Whoever desires to understand and take delight in the words of Christ must strive to conform his whole life to Him.” Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin Classics, 1952), 27.

¹²¹Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 85.

¹²²Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 86.

¹²³Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 86–87.

¹²⁴Thomas a Kempis and Hirsche, *De imitatione Christi*, 41. “No one can remain here, unless he is ready to humble himself with all his heart for love of God.” Thomas a Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, 45.

¹²⁵Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 96.

¹²⁶Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 97.

Christ's commitment to serve and not be served (Mark 10:45).¹²⁷

The ascetic interpretation is very similar to the monastic view with Søren Kierkegaard of the Lutheran tradition representing this perspective. The major difference between these two interpretations of imitation of Christ is that the ascetic practices of vigils, fasting, self-discipline, austerity, self-denial, and abstinence are not observed within the confines of a monastery and are aimed at service to others.¹²⁸ Kierkegaard wisely asserts that a believer's goal is not to become Christ or to replicate his life exactly because there is an eternal and fundamental distinction between Christ and the believer, rather the goal is to become like him as a follower and strive to imitate his earthly life which serves as a paradigm.¹²⁹ The best expression of *imitatio Christi* for Kierkegaard is the love and service of neighbor which requires humility and the willingness to suffer with Christ, just as Christ has suffered humiliation.¹³⁰

The ascetic view overcomes the biggest shortcoming of the monastic interpretation, i.e., Christian ascetics strive for spiritual perfection without abandoning the world, just as Jesus spent time alone in prayer but also walked among people to teach and heal them.¹³¹ Nevertheless, it also suffers from the same weakness as the monastic view in the sense that not every Christian could live up to the ascetic ideal and thus limits the application of *imitatio Christi* to a select group of believers.¹³²

¹²⁷Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 97.

¹²⁸Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 100–101.

¹²⁹Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 83; David R. Law, *Kierkegaard as Negative Theologian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 189.

¹³⁰Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 302.

¹³¹Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 112.

¹³²Kwon, *Christ as Example*, 113.

In contrast *conformatio Christi* is far broader than the narrow and limited concept of *imitatio Christi* and more comprehensive than virtue ethics. I argue that the former is both active and passive, which is a paradox in itself. It is active in the sense that Paul calls for the believers to seek actively to think (present *active* imperative φρονεῖτε) in conformity to mind of Christ. We also see Christ *willingly* and *voluntarily* lay down his life and pour himself out. There is only one Christ and no one can do exactly as he did. His work of redemption and salvation is unique and extraordinary which only he can accomplish *at his own initiative*. We *cannot* imitate his incarnation, crucifixion, or exaltation, but we can cultivate his mindset of readiness and willingness to suffer humiliation in service to others. It is passive in the sense that Paul did not actively seek out suffering for himself, unlike the martyrs, nor did he exhort the Philippians to do so. Humiliation and suffering essentially come to us without requiring us to avidly pursue them. This spells out our essential distinction with Christ as Kierkegaard noted. Jesus' obedience and exaltation are unique in nature so the obedience in Philippians 2:6-8 cannot be simply replicated.¹³³ Therefore, it is proper to say that the passage is not urging strict *imitatio*, but rather *conformitas*, whereby believers not just imitate Christ's action, but conform to his pattern of thinking, acting, and serving.¹³⁴ In speaking of his own conformity to Christ in Philippians 3:10, Paul intimates that he wants to "know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, *being conformed* (present *passive* participle συμμορφιζόμενος) to his death."¹³⁵ I will elaborate on this theme in

¹³³Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 125.

¹³⁴Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 34; Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example," 125. Fee sums up the heart of the message in Phil 2:5-11: "The Philippians--and ourselves--are not called upon simply to 'imitate God' by what we do, but to have this very mind, the mind of Christ, developed in us, so that we too bear God's image in our attitudes and relationships within the Christian community--and beyond." Gordon D. Fee, "Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?" *BBR* 2 (January 1992): 45.

¹³⁵See the next chapter for an exegetico-theological analysis of Phil 3:7-11.

the next chapter.

Humiliation-Exaltation Motif

The twin motif of humiliation and exaltation is clearly evident in the two parts of the christological hymn. This motif is also common in OT wisdom literature (Prov 15:33; 22:4), Jesus' teachings (Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14), and the general epistles (Jas 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6). Whereas humility is considered a weakness in the Graeco-Roman world and is something to be avoided at all cost, Christ embraces it and transforms it into an empowering virtue and unwavering strength. Christ vividly portrays the complete reversal of values in God's kingdom when he willingly subjected himself to the most devastating experience of humiliation and entrusted himself to God who eventually exalted and raised him to the highest honors. This is in utter contradiction to how the world works, with people in power abusing their authority to lord over others, and exalting themselves as more superior to others. It would be inconceivable for rulers and emperors to be subjected to humiliation, let alone to expect them to do so willingly, and much less to die for the sake of others.

Jesus demonstrates the kingdom principle of humility through humble service as a slave. He makes it plain that the one who wants to be great must be a *διάκονος*, and the one who wants to be first must be a *δοῦλος*, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:25-28). The only way possible to counter the norm is through cultivating the mind of Christ as discussed in the previous section.

Reflecting on humiliation also helps us to come to grips with the reality of suffering, even for Christians. The theme of suffering in the letter is commonly overshadowed by the focus on the theme of joy. Christians need to be reminded that they may have to undergo suffering and experience joy amid trials and humiliation. We are neither urged to invite suffering nor to deny their presence. Suffering has a

sanctifying way of transforming how we view ourselves and the world around us. It pushes us to come to terms with the reality that we cannot control everything and it has an equalizing effect on all people, regardless of perceived personal, social, economic advantages. Equally true, however, is that a Christ-centered perspective does affect how we perceive and deal with suffering.

The history of interpretation on the theme of suffering in Philippians reveals that there are two goals of martyrdom in the earliest martyrological texts, namely, to achieve perfection of the martyr and bear witness to other Christians and the world.¹³⁶ Suffering through imitation of Christ that ends in death brings about union with him who suffered and was crucified on our behalf.¹³⁷ There is a slight change in the understanding of union with Christ in the Gnostic texts, i.e., perfection is achieved when one suffers by remaining in the flesh which amounts to martyrdom for a Gnostic who would rather be freed from the flesh.¹³⁸ This understanding of both the early fathers and the Gnostics is tied to the historical reality of martyrdom.¹³⁹ When Christianity became the state religion and the church begins to experience peace and less persecution, martyrdom from imperial stadia becomes a remote event in history. In the post-Nicene and medieval periods and into the text-critical period, suffering becomes more spiritualized and generic for all believers.¹⁴⁰ Although the martyrological perspective of suffering leading to perfection is still the basis for interpretation of this theme in Philippians, suffering is now situated in the arena of everyday life of all believers as they combat the evils of

¹³⁶See L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*, JSNTSup 78 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 18–20.

¹³⁷Bloomquist, *Suffering in Philippians*, 33.

¹³⁸Bloomquist, *Suffering in Philippians*, 20, 33.

¹³⁹Bloomquist, *Suffering in Philippians*, 34.

¹⁴⁰Bloomquist, *Suffering in Philippians*, 26–34.

the world and mortify the flesh with the anticipation of attaining spiritual perfection that culminates in resurrection.¹⁴¹ For Paul, resurrection is understood not simply as an eschatological hope, but its already-not yet reality provides him with the present experience of resurrection power to share in Christ's suffering (Phil 1:29; 3:10), endure suffering, and choose service over martyrdom in the midst of suffering.¹⁴²

For Käsemann, the hymn only carries the message of salvation, not humility and obedience.¹⁴³ This is exactly where Käsemann misses the point! The soteriological message is even more poignant because the preexistent one who came to save was equal with God, yet he was willing to humble himself and be obedient, even to the point of death!

We should give importance to both humiliation and exaltation in our understanding of Christology and ethics. Focusing only on Christ's humiliation without a proper emphasis on his exaltation will result in a Christology that is fixated with Christ's death and suffering that lacks the power of the resurrection and the glory of his exaltation. On the other hand, a Christology that revels only in his glory without due contemplation of his sufferings and humiliation robs us of the reality of his humanity and his identification with our pain and sorrows. Similarly, Christian ethics that only features suffering and humiliation might lead to an openness and readiness to suffer for Christ, even an active seeking to become a martyr for the sake of the gospel, but devoid of the power to overcome and triumph under the lordship of Christ. An overemphasis on glory and reward will result in a prosperity gospel that views suffering as unwanted or even unbiblical. This is partly the reason why many Christians are living defeated Christian lives because they only

¹⁴¹Bloomquist, *Suffering in Philippians*, 34.

¹⁴²Bloomquist, *Suffering in Philippians*, 32.

¹⁴³Käsemann, "Critical Analysis," 65.

acknowledge Jesus as their Savior who died for their sins, but they almost forget that he rose from the dead and is reigning as Lord.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed three important theological insights gleaned from the exegetical analysis of Philippians 2:5-11 in the previous chapter. First, I recommend Christocentric ethics as the mode of interpretation for the Christ-hymn. This mode of interpretation integrates both the kerygmatic and ethical interpretations. I contend that it is unnecessary and even harmful to drive a wedge between theology and ethics in understanding the Christ-hymn.

Second, I propose that the theme of conformity to Christ is a useful interpretive grid to understand, explain, and apply the hymn. I examined the verb *φρονέω* in detail by investigating all its occurrences in Paul's letter to the Philippians and even relevant verses in other NT passages. The in-depth study of this key term reveals that it usually occurs within a theological context and connotes intentionality and resolute determination to carry out one's decision and commitment. It becomes clear that Christ carried out his mission with this kind of mindset. Thus, *conformatio Christi* is preferred over *imitatio Christi* because the former is more extensive and far-reaching.

Third, the humiliation-exaltation motif in the Christ-hymn provides a fresh perspective on suffering and glory. Humanly speaking, humiliation and suffering are to be avoided at all cost and yet Christ willingly embraced and transformed them into avenues for service. Conversely, human rulers and leaders seek after glory and exaltation, yet Christ willingly submits himself into God's hands and let God to be the one to exalt him.

In the next chapter, I will turn to Paul's narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 and examine how he appropriates the narrative of Christ into his own story.

CHAPTER 4

CONFORMITY TO CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11

A close reading of Philippians 2:5-11 in the previous two chapters brings a deeper understanding of the Christ-hymn. Our exegetical and theological analysis of that passage leads us to the conclusion that *both kerygmatic and ethical aspects* are present in the hymn and an interpretation that incorporates both is the most helpful. In this present chapter, we will examine a parallel passage in Philippians 3:7-11 whereby Paul describes his own perspective on humiliation and exaltation, as he narrates these experiences in his own life and ministry. We will highlight the important theme of “conformity to Christ” in this pericope as the grid to understand not only this passage, but also to interpret the Christ-hymn. This chapter will be divided into five sections, namely, literary integrity, context of Philippians 3:7-11, correspondence between Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11, exegetical analysis, and theological reflections.

Literary Integrity of Philippians

Before we consider the context of Philippians 3:7-11 and its correspondence with Philippians 2:5-11, the issue of literary integrity needs to be revisited to justify our appeal to the former as a literary context for understanding and interpreting the latter, especially since Philippians 3 is the pivotal point of the controversy.¹ Conversely, the parallel themes in both passages could disprove the

¹Michael Byrnes, *Conformation to the Death of Christ and the Hope of Resurrection: An Exegetico-Theological Study of 2 Corinthians 4,7-15 and Philippians 3,7-11* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2003), 148.

supposed interpolation.²

The sudden shift in tone in Philippians 3:2 has led many scholars to postulate that Philippians 3:2-4:1 is a fragment from another letter.³ Moreover, it gave rise to the multiple letter hypothesis wherein Philippians is said to be composed of two or even three separate letters that were later redacted and combined into the single canonical letter we now have. If this partition hypothesis is correct, then our appeal to the parallel passage in Philippians 3:7-11 to understand the Christ-hymn may weaken. However, if we can satisfactorily establish the integrity of the letter, then it helps us in understanding the passage and its function in the entire letter, especially in relation to the Christ-hymn.⁴

History of Compilation Hypothesis

Until the early twentieth century, the literary unity of Philippians was generally upheld and doubted less frequently.⁵ Alfred Plummer states confidently that “there is no reasonable doubt that all four chapters were written as parts of one and the same letter, and in the order in which we have them.”⁶ Soon after, however, an increasing number of scholars supported the multiple-letter hypothesis, and those

²Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 151.

³David E. Garland, “The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Factors,” *NovT* 27, no. 2 (1985): 144; Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*, JSNTSup 136 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 131–32.

⁴I agree with Koperski, who in turn supports the traditional exegetes and advocates of literary approaches, that “a given syntactic element needs to be interpreted not only in the immediate context of the sentence but also with regard to its place in the text as a whole, a prime consideration is the determination of whether the canonical epistle can be regarded as a well-structured unit, and if not, precisely what should be included as the wider ‘text’ of Phil 3:7-11.” Veronica Koperski, *The Knowledge of Christ Jesus My Lord: The High Christology of Philippians 3:7-11* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), 69.

⁵Veronica Koperski, “The Early History of the Dissection of Philippians,” *JTS*, n.s., 44, no. 2 (October 1993): 603.

⁶Alfred Plummer, *A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Robert Scott Roxburghe House, 1919), xii.

who support the unity of the letter are decreasing in number.⁷ David Garland, when he wrote his article “The Composition and Unity of Philippians” in 1985, declares a “stalemate in the argumentation” due to lack of consensus.⁸

Stephanus Le Moyne, a seventeenth-century professor of theology at Leiden University, has often been mistakenly cited by twentieth-century scholars as the one who originally propounded the dissection of Philippians into multiple components based on what he wrote in the second volume of his *Varia Sacra*.⁹ David Cook in his 1981 article exposes “the development and retelling of the legend of Stephanus Le Moyne” by writers who want to appear scholarly by citing another author without verifying what has been said is true, which resulted in an “inadequately researched work.”¹⁰

Actually Le Moyne seems to be explaining why Polycarp mentions ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς in Pol. *Phil.* 3:2 by citing precedents of ancient works being published in parts and wrong conceived as independent works.¹¹ He adduces that the same thing might have happened to Paul’s letter to the Philippians, which was originally one

⁷Garland lists the scholars who dissect the letter into two or three separate letters, including those who suggest that Philippians “contains a fragment of a letter written to other unknown readers.” Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 141–42n3. He also enumerates those who support the literary unity of Philippians (142–43n5).

⁸Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 143. He explains his conclusion: “None of the arguments against the integrity of the letter, however, is considered insurmountable by advocates of its unity; the counter arguments are just as plausible, if sometimes just as conjectural” (143).

⁹Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 143n6; Koperski, “Early History of the Dissection of Philippians,” 599. See Stephani Le Moyne, *Notae et Observationes, Varia Sacra II* (Leiden, Netherlands: Daniel à Gaesbeeck, 1685), 332–43. Often p. 343 of *Varia Sacra II* is cited as the source. However, copies are rare and a second edition was published posthumously in 1694. David Cook, “Stephanus Le Moyne and the Dissection of Philippians,” *JTS*, n.s., 32, no. 1 (April 1981): 140–42. See the 2nd ed. with the author identified as Étienne Le Moine. Étienne Le Moine, *Varia sacra ceu sylloge variorum: opusculorum græcorum ad rem ecclesiasticam spectantium*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, Netherlands: Cornelium Boutesteyn, 1694).

¹⁰Cook, “Stephanus Le Moyne and the Dissection of Philippians,” 139, 142. Some of the writers he mentioned are W. Schmithals (cites Carl Clemen as authority), R. Jewett, B. D. Rahtjen, and J. F. Collange (cites Maurice Goguel as authority). Cook also mentions that other scholars cite Holtzmann as authority (139–40).

¹¹Koperski, “Early History of the Dissection of Philippians,” 600.

letter but was later divided into two.¹² Other suggestions for Polycarp's use of the plural are Latin influence and his reference to both Thessalonian and Philippian letters together since both are located in Macedonia.¹³ Cook argues that Le Moyne not only did not articulate the possibility of more than one Pauline epistle to the Philippians, but he was actually against it:

To anyone reading this text, it is clear that the suggestion that Philippians is a composite work, and the sense of the 'sudden shift' at iii. i are not to be found in him. He should never have been introduced into the modern discussion as a forerunner of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics (leave alone as the poser of the problem), and he has maintained his place (as a footnote) in that discussion, only through a lack of integrity in scholarship.¹⁴

If Le Moyne is not the forefather of the compilation hypothesis, then who is the first one to put forth such position? Koperski traces it all the way back to Joannes Henricus Heinrich whose work in 1803 may be the earliest available confirmation of this hypothesis.¹⁵ Heinrich believes that Philippians 3:2-4:20 was a separate letter written to the leaders, while the rest of the letter was written to the church at large.¹⁶

¹²Koperski, "Early History of the Dissection of Philippians," 600.

¹³Moyne, *Varia Sacra*, 332. See Koperski, "Early History of the Dissection of Philippians," 600.

¹⁴Cook, "Stephanus Le Moyne and the Dissection of Philippians," 142. Cook surveys the section in Le Moyne's work (pp. 332-43) wherein he discusses the ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς in Pol. *Phil.* 3:2, in particular Le Moyne's conclusion on the matter: "Sic potest intelligi locus Polycarpi qui Epistolas Pauli ad Philippenses memorat, non quod plures Epistolas ad Philippenses scripserit Apostolus, sed quod Epistola ad Philippenses in duas posset dividi, & revera divideretur & duae essent ad Philippenses Epistolae, sicut duae erant Epistolae ad Corinthios, & duae ad Thessalonicenses, qui cum Philippensibus totius Graeciae Ecclesias florentissimas constituebant. Saltem hoc mallem, quam cum Salmerone asserere, per Epistolas Pauli ad Philippenses de quibus Polycarpus, intelligendas Epistolam ad Philippenses & Epistolas ad Thessalonicenses, qui cum essent in Macedonia sicut Philippenses, Epistolae ad Thessalonicenses scriptae, jure censi possunt scriptae ad ipsos Philippenses. Utatur quisque arbitrio suo. Sed magis aridet prior conjectura." Moyne, *Varia Sacra*, 343. Reed's insightful conclusion is worth noting: "When put in the larger context of Le Moyne's discussion of Polycarp's *Phil.* 3.2, it is clear that Le Moyne viewed the canonical Philippians as an original single whole penned by Paul; however, he concludes that Polycarp may have known of multiple letters to the Philippians which had been separated out from this originally single letter. Thus, Le Moyne does posit a case in which there may have been multiple letters to the Philippians, but his view is the reverse of modern multiple-letter theories, namely, an originally single letter was divided into multiple works." Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 126.

¹⁵Koperski, "Early History of the Dissection of Philippians," 602.

¹⁶Johannes Benjamin Koppe and Johannes Henricus Heinrichs, *Epistolas Paulli ad Philippenses et Colossenses*, NTGPAI 7, pt. 2 (Göttingen: Henricus Dieterich, 1826), 38, 87.

Arguments for Literary Fragmentation

There are three arguments against the unity of the letter.¹⁷ The first and key argument is related to the beginning of Philippians 3. There is such an abrupt shift in Philippians 3:2 from the congenial tone and expressions of concern in the first two chapters, and also the exhortation to “rejoice in the Lord” in Philippians 3:1.¹⁸ Additionally, τὸ λοιπὸν is taken to mean “finally” and the phrase χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ is regarded as a farewell formula that signals the end of the letter.¹⁹ The identity and nature of the opponents who are called “dogs” in Philippians 3:2 present a puzzle since no such harsh language was used in previous chapters.²⁰

The second problem is with Paul’s note of thanks in Philippians 4:10-20 which is questioned for its apparent delay. Some scholars think it is inconceivable that Paul will wait until he closes the letter before thanking the Philippians for their gift.²¹ Others argue that it’s unlikely that Paul did not thank them immediately after receiving the gift and have waited for a significant amount of time to pass whereupon Epaphroditus has recovered from sickness and ready to return to Philippi.²²

Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians in the second century is sometimes used as an external evidence to support the multiple-letter hypothesis. Scholars infer that Polycarp’s reference to ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς (Pol. *Phil.* 3:2) shows that he is aware of

¹⁷Garland asserts that though there are numerous studies on the hypothesis, most of the arguments are merely restated without offering new arguments or evidence. Subsequent works are devoted to the issue of “where to dissect Philippians into its original components and on conjectures that reconstruct the occasions and purposes of the originally independent letters.” Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 143.

¹⁸Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 144.

¹⁹Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 144.

²⁰Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 145.

²¹Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 12.

²²Francis Wright Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 4.

more than one letter from Paul to the Philippians.²³

Arguments for Literary Integrity

In response to the first argument for fragmentation, i.e., shift in tone, several points have been proposed as counter-arguments: (1) The harsh tone is only transitory and not sustained all throughout Philippians 3; (2) τὸ λοιπὸν serves as a transitional particle; (3) The phrase χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ in Philippians 3:1, which may be taken as a farewell formula in other instances, is best rendered as “rejoice in the Lord” in this verse; and (4) shift in tone is usual in personal and friendly letters like Philippians.²⁴ From the perspective of rhetorical analysis, “the tonal shift in Philippians 3:2 was not at all foreign to the rhetoric of Paul’s day, but rather was conventional” and in fact “designed to regain audience attention and receptivity.”²⁵

Regarding the note of thanks in Philippians 4:10-20, Paul may have his reasons for placing it at the end. His primary purposes in writing are theological and ethical, so his formal expression of gratitude comes *after* dealing with these crucial issues.²⁶ His self-consciousness and discomfort about discussing financial matters may be another reason for putting it off until the end.²⁷ I think the most convincing reason is to understand the relationship of rhetoric and orality: “These are *intentionally* the last words left ringing in the Philippians’ ears as the letter concludes—words of gratitude, theology and doxology that simply soar.”²⁸

²³Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 147.

²⁴Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 134–35.

²⁵Duane F Watson, “A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question,” *NovT* 30, no. 1 (January 1988): 86–87.

²⁶Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 153.

²⁷Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 153.

²⁸Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 20 (emphasis added). Fee explains that “the Greco-Roman world was primarily an oral (and thus aural) culture (only about 15 percent of the population could read and write. . . . All of Paul’s letters, and Philippians in particular, were first of all oral--*dictated* to be *read aloud* in the community. Much of

A very strong rebuttal to the argument for multiple fragments is that there is not a single manuscript that exists in a form different from the canonical letter. “The textual attestation for Philippians,” Silva insists, “is rich and early.”²⁹ Moreover, the epistle is included in all the canons of scripture of the second century, including the Marcionite canon, Muratorian fragment, also in Old Latin and Peshito Syriac versions.³⁰

Another important support for literary unity is the presence of lexical and thematic parallels throughout the letter.³¹ It is noteworthy that *φρονέω*, the main verb in our thesis, occurs ten times in all the four chapters of the letter which chains them together into a unity.³² The common themes of humility, self-sacrifice, obedience, humiliation and exaltation are also interspersed throughout the epistle.³³ Garland contends that Paul employs the literary device of *inclusio* which further proves the unity of the letter.³⁴

Still another significant line of reasoning pertains to the supposed redactor. If indeed there was a redactor who sewed all the various fragments together, then he would have been deliberate to smooth out the abrupt shift in Philippians 3:2 and would have positioned the note of thanks at the beginning of the letter.³⁵ His neglect

Paul’s rhetoric comes into play precisely for this purpose” (20; emphasis original).

²⁹Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, WEC (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 14. Silva adds, “One document, P⁴⁶, brings us to the early third or even late second century, yet neither this nor any other MS., to say nothing of early patristic allusions, gives any indication that the letter ever circulated in a different form from that which we have” (14).

³⁰Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians*, 4th ed. (1878; repr., London: Macmillan, 1908), 76.

³¹See Reed and Garland for a complete list of parallels. Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 140–42; Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 158–59.

³²Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 152.

³³Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 157; Silva, *Philippians*, 13.

³⁴Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 159–62.

³⁵Silva, *Philippians*, 13.

in solving the literary problems, but instead notoriously created them, calls into question his method of redaction, and leads us eventually to the conclusion that there was no redactor in the first place.

Lastly, the lack of consensus regarding the seams and divisions of the fragments weaken the case for the interpolation hypothesis.³⁶ These dissonant voices regarding the reconstruction of the so-called original fragments “should raise doubts about the credibility of the hypothesis.”³⁷

In summary, I say with confidence that the canonical letter of Philippians as we now have in its present form exhibits literary integrity. Thus, both Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11 belong to the same letter, and the understanding of one should inform the other.

Context of Philippians 3:7-11

Philippians 3:7-11 is a compact discourse unit within a larger context (3:1-11).³⁸ Some scholars identify this text as Paul’s autobiographical sketch.³⁹ After his brief exhortation to rejoice in the Lord in verse 1, Paul quickly shifts to warn the Philippian believers of those who put their confidence in the flesh (v. 2) and contrast them with those who boast in Christ Jesus (v. 3).⁴⁰ This contrast led him to speak of

³⁶Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 154–57. See his chart with as many as 14 combinations of different divisions of the letter (155).

³⁷Garland, “Composition and Unity of Philippians,” 155.

³⁸So Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 72–73. Tannehill also considers Phil 3:7-11 as part of a larger unit, but he limits it to 3:2-11: “It is essential to the proper understanding of vss. 10-11 that vss. 2-11 be understood as a unified train of thought.” Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology*, ZNWKAK 32 (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), 114.

³⁹Hans Dieter Betz, *Studies in Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, WUNT 343 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 53–61. Betz classifies 3:4-11 as a detailed autographical sketch with vv. 4-6 dealing with “Paul’s identity as a Pharisaic Jew” and vv. 7-11 focusing on “Paul’s identity as a Christian Jew” (Betz, *Philippians*, 55-61).

⁴⁰Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 114.

his own reasons to boast in the flesh (vv. 4-6). He did exactly what he admonishes the Philippian believers not to do, i.e., they should not put confidence in the flesh. He sets himself up as a foil to drive home his main point that no one is worthy of our boast other than the Lord Jesus Christ and his surpassing value, and nothing is worth placing our confidence in except the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Christ.⁴¹ He then declares boldly that his life is now centered in “Christ Jesus my Lord” and his life passion is to gain him, be found in him, and know him. Ultimately, he wants to be conformed to him in the present and looks forward to resurrection from the dead in the future. The adversative conjunction *ἀλλά* in Philippians 3:7 serves as a clear grammatical marker for the transition to this self-contained unit, although it maintains a continuation in the flow of thought with previous verses.⁴²

Correspondence between Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11

Paul’s narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 serves as a good parallel passage for comparison with Christ’s story in Philippians 2:5-11. The former exhibits a high degree of correspondence with the latter through verbal links and thematic association. First, verbal connection is evident in the use of four terms in both passages: *ἡγέομαι* (2:6; 3:7-8), *μορφή* (2:7; cf. *συμμορφίζομαι* in 3:10), *εὐρίσκω* (2:7; 3:9), and *κύριος* (2:11; 3:8).⁴³ Fee considers the link between “being conformed” and “death” in Philippians 3:10 as “the strongest kind of linguistic ties” between the

⁴¹Steven E. Runge, *Philippians*, HDC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 75. Betz remarks that “by provoking his opponents’ pride he comes out on top, and by that he exposes the whole as absurdity.” Betz, *Studies in Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 55.

⁴²Hawthorne and Martin observe that there is a clear transition at v. 7 regardless of the presence or absence of *ἀλλά* in the original text. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., WBC 43 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 188.

⁴³Silva, *Philippians*, 155. Kurz also identifies *ἡγέομαι* in 3:7-8 as a significant link to 2:6. William S. Kurz, “Kenotic Imitation of Paul and of Christ in Philippians 2 and 3,” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 105.

narratives of Christ and Paul.⁴⁴

Second, thematic correspondence is evidenced by Paul's decision to renounce all his Jewish privileges to know Christ and be conformed to the pattern of his death which serves as an analogy to the self-emptying act of Christ.⁴⁵ Christ did not consider (aorist ἡγήσατο 2:6) his equality with God as something to be taken advantage of, so Paul has considered (perfect ἡγήμαι 3:7) whatever things (ἅτινα 3:7) were gain to him previously as loss hereafter because of Christ. Jesus emptied himself, so Paul also considers (present ἡγοῦμαι 3:8) everything (πάντα) as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus. Being found in appearance as a human being (aorist passive participle εὔρεθείς 2:7), Jesus humbled himself. Similarly, Paul relinquishes everything precious to him so that he will be found in him (aorist passive subjunctive εὔρεθῶ 3:9).⁴⁶ Like Jesus who takes the form (μορφῆν 2:7) of a slave, Paul is being conformed (present passive participle συμμορφιζόμενος

⁴⁴Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 333.

⁴⁵T. Evan Pollard, "Integrity of Philippians," *NTS* 13, no. 1 (October 1966): 62–63; Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 13. Silva affirms that "the sequence of privilege-death-exaltation suggests such a connection." Silva, *Philippians*, 155. So G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 231. Brown considers Paul's giving up of his status and its advantages as an echo of ἀρπαγμός which is only found in Phil 2:6 in the NT. Colin Brown, "Ernst Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 29. DeSilva also points out that "the pattern of Paul's rejection of claims before God parallels Christ's refusal to cling to equality with God: both reach or will reach their eventual exaltation by emptying themselves and by pursuing the goal of obedience to God without seeking to secure any claims on God's reward." David Arthur DeSilva, "No Confidence in the Flesh: The Meaning and Function of Philippians 3:2-21," *TJ*, n.s., 15, no. 1 (1994): 28. Garland indicates that "there are definite parallels between chap. 2 and chap. 3 in the emphasis on humility and self-abasement (2:2, 7; 3:3, 8, 12-15), acceptance of suffering (1:29, 2:17, 3:10), struggle for progress in the Christian life (2:12-14, 3:12-16) and joyful confidence in the congregation (2:2, 4:1)." Garland, "Composition and Unity of Philippians," 157. Seifrid also believes that Phil 3 is closely connected with the rest of the epistle, the Christ-hymn in particular, because of the conformation pattern that Paul elucidates here. He explains this connection between the two passages: "Paul measures loss and gain in terms of Christ alone (1:21; 3:7-8). He wishes to share in the power of Christ's resurrection, and to know the fellowship of his sufferings (2:8-11; 3:10-11). He awaits Christ as the Saviour from heaven who will bring his present humiliation into conformity with his glory (2:7-8, 9-11; 3:20-21)." Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 89.

⁴⁶Hansen, *Philippians*, 231.

3:10) to his death by experiencing the power of his resurrection and sharing in his sufferings. He also acknowledges Christ Jesus, the one whom every tongue should confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord” (κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός in 2:11) as “Christ Jesus my Lord” (Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου 3:8). Like Christ whom God has exalted, Paul looks forward to be raised from the dead.⁴⁷ One other important thematic connection that is rarely noticed is Paul asserts he wants to know Christ (infinitive γινῶναι in 3:10) and extols the surpassing value of knowing Christ (genitive noun γνώσεως in 3:8). Both knowledge terms are intricately related to the mind of Christ in the Christ-hymn.

In sum, Paul’s recalling of his personal experience is the best commentary on Philippians 2:5-11, not only because of its proximity to the hymn, but also because of their common themes and language.⁴⁸ Both pericopes should be analyzed side-by-side to interpret them properly. We will engage in synthesizing and comparing these two passages in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Exegetical Analysis of Philippians 3:7-11

I will analyze Philippians 3:7-11 more closely in this section. I will engage in detailed grammatical and syntactical analysis as I exegete the passage carefully. The exegetical discussion will be carried out under two subheadings: (1) to gain Christ and be found in him and (2) to know Christ and be conformed to him.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Pollard, “Integrity of Philippians,” 63.

⁴⁸Koperski also suggests that Phil 3:7-11, 20-21 should serve as the lens to interpret Phil 2:5-11. Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 324.

⁴⁹Silva labels Phil 3:7-11 as “the essence of Pauline theology” based on what he identifies as key tenets in the passage, namely, justification (righteousness through faith in v. 9), sanctification (participation in Christ’s resurrection and sufferings in v. 10), and glorification (physical resurrection in v. 11). Silva, *Philippians*, 155, 159.

To Gain Christ and Be Found in Him (3:7-9)

The passage opens with a clear indication of the thinking and evaluation process the apostle went through. In a pithy statement in verse 7 Paul uses three key terms or groups of words to inform us of the important elements of his decision. His decision is based on careful consideration (ἡγημαί) of his gains and losses (κέρδη and ζημίαν) and an unequivocal statement that Christ is the reason (διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν). In the next two verses, he further explains that his radical decision to consider everything as loss is because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. He then announces that the new purpose of his life is to gain Christ and be found in him.

3:7 [Ἄλλ'] ἄτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἡγημαί διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν. The passage begins with the adversative relative pronoun (ἄτινα) which refers to all the things mentioned in Philippians 3:4-6 that were bases of Paul's confidence in the flesh before he met Christ.⁵⁰ This is a drastic shift from regarding them as gains (plural κέρδη) to loss (singular ζημίαν).⁵¹ This radical change would not have been possible unless and until Paul had encountered Christ (διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν). He employs accounting terms (κέρδη and ζημίαν) as he goes through this thoughtful evaluation or reconsideration that involves "a change of belief through theological reasoning" (ἡγημαί).⁵² It is not a decision he made at the spur of the moment fueled

⁵⁰Betz regards ἄλλά as an adversative particle that stresses a "radical revaluation" which is certainly referring to Paul's Pharisaic lifestyle, wherein the gains are "downgraded to 'loss.'" Betz, *Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 56-57. The conjunction ἄλλά at the beginning of the verse is absent from some Western and early Alexandrian witnesses, e.g., P⁴⁶, original hand of Sinaiticus, A, G, and others, but its presence in the vast majority of witnesses makes it impossible to come to a definite decision. Hence, both UBS⁵ and NA²⁸ place the conjunction in brackets. Silva, *Philippians*, 167.

⁵¹Hansen notes that the shift from the plural *gains* to the singular *loss* signifies that "Paul has added all of his assets and considered them to be one huge liability." Hansen, *Philippians*, 233.

⁵²Betz, *Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 57. "Using business accounting terms," Hansen elucidates, "Paul clearly states that he had gained profits as a result of his heritage and his strict observance of the law. The plural, *gains*, gives the picture of Paul evaluating and tabulating each of his assets on a net worth balance sheet. His exceptional net worth put him far ahead of his

by impulsive passion, but rather it is made with careful consideration and appropriate weighing of options.⁵³ It is even more significant that Paul uses the perfect tense (ἤγημαι) of the same verb (ἠγάομαι) in Philippians 2:3, 6. Just as Christ did not *regard* his equality with God as something to take advantage of (2:6), and as Paul exhorts the believers to *regard* others as more significant than oneself (2:3), so Paul did not *regard* his advantages and accomplishments as gain.⁵⁴ It should be noted that the point of similarity is not in the things taken into consideration (equality with God, others, accolades), but rather the main emphasis is on the *process of evaluation* which again harks back to φρονέω in 2:5. The perfect tense hammers in the resulting effect of this kind of thinking which was done previously. Paul made this decision in the past and the impact remains true in his life in the present.

Paul is also not ambiguous as to the reason why this decision has been made. He did not do so because he was compelled by other people or motivated by external factors. The primary and only reason is because of Christ. The preposition διά with accusative (τὸν Χριστόν) usually carries a causal sense.⁵⁵ It is rendered as “for the sake of Christ” in some translations (ESV, NASB, RSV, NIV), while NRSV translate it as “because of Christ.”⁵⁶ Although both translations are grammatically

contemporaries.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 233 (emphasis original).

⁵³Hansen explains the radical process of evaluation that Paul went through: “His encounter with Christ did not shut off his mind, but it set him free to think with a whole new depth and clarity about his life from a totally different perspective. His conversion was not an escape from reason but an illumination of reason. Once Christ became the goal of his life, he could finally see and understand the true value of his life in light of Christ.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 233. See also Collange, *L'épître aux Philippiens*, 129; Bonnard, *L'épître aux Philippiens*, 63.

⁵⁴It is interesting that Käsemann connects Phil 2:6 to 3:7 when he observes that “the expression ζημίαν ἠγεῖσθαι would seem to represent a kind of antithetical parallel to ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγεῖσθαι, and likewise refers to a present possession.” Ernst Käsemann, “A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5-11,” ed. Robert W. Funk, trans. Alice F. Carse, *JTC* 5 (1968): 64.

⁵⁵Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 369.

⁵⁶Schreiner also translates the phrase as “for the sake of Christ.” Thomas Schreiner, *New*

correct, yet there is a slightly different nuance. The former highlights what Paul is willing to do on behalf of Christ, with more emphasis on Paul's unwavering commitment to the Lord. The latter focuses more on Christ as the reason for Paul's commitment, with more emphasis on Christ as the ground for Paul's action. I think that both elements are included in Paul's statement, that is, Christ is both the cause and the object of Paul's devotion. His life-changing encounter with Christ subverts everything else in his life, including his priorities, values, and goals. When we see that the focus is on the appraisal process, instead of the things considered, we begin to understand that Paul is not demeaning the value of these things which he enjoyed as privileges and achievements. In fact, he is not rejecting them nor advocating that they should be considered as evil. Rather he is urging the believers not to regard them as the bases of confidence in the flesh.

3:8 ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἡγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην, καὶ ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω. The string of five particles (ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ) is interesting. It signals something significant is forthcoming. μενοῦνγε is considered a "true emphatic conjunction" that could be translated "indeed," or "in fact" while ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε could be rendered "much more" or "more than that" (NASB).⁵⁷ Paul here intensifies his resolve in three ways.⁵⁸ First, he uses the same verb in its present form (ἡγοῦμαι).

Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 312.

⁵⁷Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 673; BDAG, s.v. "μενοῦν"; Turner, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3: Syntax:3:338.

⁵⁸Tannehill explains the interrelation between vv. 7-8 in terms of "dying and rising": "Past and present are held together by the perfect in vs. 7. They are held together in another way in vs. 8 by placing an aorist between the two present forms. This interweaving of past and present is important for understanding Paul's use of dying and rising with Christ. We have found reference in vss. 7-8 to the past, decisive 'loss' of the world of flesh, law, and self of which Paul speaks elsewhere in terms of dying with Christ. At the same time Paul refers to a continuing process of considering this as loss. What Paul has counted as loss, he counts as loss again and again. The fact that Paul sometimes uses a perfect verb in the passages which refer to dying with Christ as a past event shows that even there he has the present significance of this event in mind. . . . The past dying with Christ and the present dying with Christ in suffering are not two unrelated things, but the same thinking taking place on

Second, he is not only considering the things mentioned in Philippians 3:4-6 (ἅτινα) as loss, but everything (πάντα) as loss because of Christ.⁵⁹ There is a progression of thought from *whatever* (ἅτινα) and *these things* (ταῦτα) in verse 7 to *everything* (πάντα) and *all things* (τὰ πάντα) in verse 8.⁶⁰ Third, he does not only consider them as loss, but even as garbage or excrement (σκύβαλα).⁶¹ He is declaring that his resolve to consider all things as loss is not only a past decision, but is an ongoing, day-to-day resolution.⁶² To adopt this kind of perspective is not a once-and-for-all occurrence, but rather it is something that he continually cultivates and practices. He considers them as filth not because they are evil in and of themselves, but he wants to magnify the value of gaining Christ, i.e., in comparison with the supreme excellencies of Christ, everything else diminishes in their value and worth.⁶³

two different levels. Paul does not see a conflict in the fact that what has already decisively taken place must still be continually reaffirmed, for the Christian is still subject to the attacks of the powers of the old world. What has been said here on the basis of vss. 7-8 is important because the relation between vss. 7-8 and dying with Christ is something more than just analogy. This is shown not only by the fact that both refer to the same decisive break with flesh, law, world, and self, but also by the continuation of this passage, for the conformation to Christ's death of which Paul speaks in vs. 10 refers to the same process, working itself out in suffering, of losing everything in order to gain Christ." Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 117.

⁵⁹Silva is correct in warning against taking πάντα in an absolute sense to grasp its impact. The word in this context refers to everything on which Paul would place his confidence in the flesh. Silva, *Philippians*, 156-57.

⁶⁰Hansen, *Philippians*, 234.

⁶¹BDAG, s.v. "σκύβαλον." Lang contends that the term involves the elements of "worthlessness and filth" and Paul's choice of this "vulgar term stresses the force and totality of this renunciation." Friedrich Lang, "σκύβαλον," in *TDNT*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, vol. 7: Σ (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:446-47.

⁶²Silva, *Philippians*, 157. Although the perfect tense carries the effect of a past decision into the present, the present tense shows that Paul did not regret that decision, but continues to uphold and renew that decision. Hansen, *Philippians*, 234n95. Schenk observes the semantic link with 2:3 and other verses where φρονέω appear: "Das hier dreimal verwendete Verb ἡγείσθαι hatte schon 2,3 (s.o.) einen engen semantischen Bezug zu φρονεῖν (2,2,5), das hier 3,15 wieder auftaucht, wie zu σκοπεῖν (2,4), was hier 3,17 wieder aufgenommen wird. Damit ist sowohl der Synonymbezug untereinander bestätigt als auch das damit verbundene semantische Element des urteilenden Bewertens, und ἡγείσθαι meint nicht die bloße Ansicht, wie sich dies auch 2,25 (s.o.) schon verstärkend nahelegte." Wolfgang Schenk, *Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus: Kommentar* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1984), 263. Silva intimates that this connection reveals that Paul has a "deep-seated resolution and frame of mind." Silva, *Philippians*, 157.

⁶³Silva warns that we should be cautious *not* to infer that "Paul regarded Jewishness in itself as revolting." He correctly points out that Rom 3:1-2, 9:1-5 show that he identified himself with his people and "he continued to appreciate the great value of his heritage." He concludes that Paul

Paul becomes deeply personal when he speaks of his desire to know Christ.⁶⁴ It is only here that Paul addresses Jesus Christ as *my Lord*. It is thus an intimate relationship (γνώσις) that Paul desires, not a mere intellectual assent to Christ's identity.⁶⁵ Here, too, we see that the parallelism between Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11 reveals not just similarities between the narratives of Jesus and Paul, but also significant differences between them. Even though he wants to gain Christ and be found in him, he is keenly aware that he will never be able to completely fully identify or imitate him because of Christ's infinite worth and excellence.⁶⁶ By acknowledging Christ as *my Lord*, considering him as worth more than everything else, and trusting him alone for the righteousness that comes from God, Paul is in effect confessing him as God, though he did not express it directly.⁶⁷

The ἵνα clause in verse 8 introduces the twofold purpose (joined together by καί) for counting all things as loss: so that Paul may gain Christ (v. 8) and be found in him (v. 9).⁶⁸ With Christ as the goal, gaining him which also means being found in him, these expressions together refer to "full participation in Christ."⁶⁹

was not demeaning the value of his heritage, but rather it was "the *viewing* of that heritage as a human right or achievement, thus obscuring one's need for full dependence on God's grace." Silva, *Philippians*, 157–58 (emphasis added).

⁶⁴Silva asserts that it is "profoundly theological yet intensely personal (it is the only passage where Paul uses the expression 'my Lord'), these verses ban any attempts to characterize the gospel as *either* doctrine or life." Silva, *Philippians*, 155 (emphasis original).

⁶⁵BDAG, s.v. "γνώσις."

⁶⁶Hansen, *Philippians*, 232.

⁶⁷Hansen, *Philippians*, 232. Koperski remarks that "this confession is so strong that though Paul did not literally use the words 'Christ is God,' his depiction of the utter incomparability of Christ can lead to no other conclusion." Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 323.

⁶⁸"The idea of gaining Christ," Tannehill expounds, "is bound in one clause with that of being 'found in him,' and the two phrases must be interpreted together." Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118. See Silva, *Philippians*, 163; Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 391.

⁶⁹Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118.

3:9 και εὔρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. The conjunction *καὶ* links the aorist subjunctive *εὔρεθῶ* to the *ἵνα* clause in the previous verse. What does he mean when he speaks of “gaining Christ” in the previous verse? Paul elaborates on this here when he expresses his desire to be found in him (passive *εὔρεθῶ*), specifically to be found having a righteousness from God through faith in Christ, instead of a righteousness from the law.⁷⁰ The phrase *εὔρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ* should be understood as a single unit of expression and interpreted as such, with the “in him” understood as an “in Christ” formula, thus referring to participation in Christ.⁷¹ Paul’s use of the same verb *εὐρίσκω* here as in *Philippians 2:7* captures the parallel idea between the self-emptying of Christ to be *found in appearance as a man* and his own desire to be found in Christ.⁷² The passive voice of the verb may be construed as God’s appraisal or human estimation, the following participial phrase that modifies this verb confirms that Paul is referring to the former, i.e. God’s appraisal of Paul that he will be found having (*ἔχων*) a righteousness from God through faith in Christ, rather than his own righteousness from the law.⁷³ Continuing the thought from verse 8 in which Paul declares that he considers all things as *ζημία* and *σκύβαλα*, then Paul is saying that the kind of righteousness he had before encountering Christ, which he characterized as “my own” (*ἐμὴν*) and “from the law” (*τὴν ἐκ νόμου*), is “filthy rags”

⁷⁰Tannehill suggests that “this verse is a further variation on the contrast between ‘flesh’ and ‘Christ,’ expressed in terms which summarize Paul’s doctrine of righteousness from the law stands the righteousness from God given on the basis of faith in Christ. Righteousness from the law is also described as ‘my righteousness (*ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην*),’ the possessive adjective being used to emphasize this point. We see, then, that the old life which Paul has counted as loss on account of Christ is described by a number of different but related terms: flesh, righteousness from law, the ‘whole world,’ and that which is ‘mine.’” Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 115.

⁷¹Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118.

⁷²Hansen, *Philippians*, 237. Fowl states that “Paul subtly shifts from being the subject of his own story to being part of a story in which Christ is now the subject.” Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 154.

⁷³Hansen, *Philippians*, 237. Hansen adds that “as a result of having the righteousness that comes from God, Paul expects to be *found by God in Christ*” (237; emphasis added).

(cf. Isa 64:6) and excrement (σκύβαλα).⁷⁴ He obtained this human righteousness by putting his confidence in the flesh and taking pride in keeping the law which made him blameless (3:6).

The rise of the “new perspective on Paul” challenges this traditional interpretation of Paul’s claim to personal righteousness based on his own good works.⁷⁵ Based on this new perspective, what Paul is rejecting is not his self-achieved personal righteousness, but the *national* righteousness he possesses as an *exclusive* member of the covenant people of Israel which can be maintained by observing the law and the so-called “identity markers.”⁷⁶ A closer look at the passage and its immediate context reveals that Paul is also referring to his personal righteousness obtained by his zeal for the law as a Pharisee, persecution of the church, and diligence in striving to be blameless with regard to the righteousness based on the law (3:4-6).⁷⁷ Paul boasts of having more reasons to put confidence in the flesh (3:4) that exceeds the national righteousness of his adversaries, i.e., his confidence in the flesh is above par, not only because of his covenant badge as a Jew, but also due to his personal accomplishment.⁷⁸ Paul declares unequivocally that this kind of self-

⁷⁴Hansen, *Philippians*, 238.

⁷⁵See Hansen for a summary of the main arguments of the proponents of the new perspective. Hansen, *Philippians*, 238–39. See also Ed Parish Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Nicholas Thomas Wright, *What St. Paul Really Said* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 1997).

⁷⁶Hansen, *Philippians*, 239. The “identity (boundary) markers” refer to circumcision, dietary laws, and Sabbath laws that separate the Jews from other nations and “functioned as badges of covenant membership.” They do not pertain to good deeds in general. James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 108–9.

⁷⁷Seifrid remarks that Paul was aware of his observance of the law as a Pharisee as self-achievement which “sets him apart from other Jews.” Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 27. Dunn concedes that the pre-Christian Paul was “seeking to *outdo* his contemporaries” which goes further than “confidence in ethnic status.” Dunn, *New Perspective on Paul*, 480 (emphasis original).

⁷⁸Hansen, *Philippians*, 239. Kim questions this reinterpretation: “If Paul was not conscious of his personally achieved righteousness but only of the ‘national righteousness’ of Israel in Phil 3:2-20, should he not have referred to it as ‘*our own* righteousness,’ including his Jewish opponents in his claim, insofar as they, by virtue of their being zealous Jews, evidently also participated in the ‘national righteousness?’” Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second*

righteousness is not only inadequate, but he considers it as loss and garbage. It is *only* by having the righteousness that comes from God that paves the way for him to gain Christ, to be found in him, and to know him.⁷⁹ Paul weaves together “judicial acquittal (God’s judicial decision to grant a righteous status),” union with Christ and membership in his body.⁸⁰

This amazing righteousness is made possible διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. The ambiguity of the genitive phrase is the subject of intense debate among scholars. Since it is not the immediate concern of this dissertation, we will only briefly comment on it. The obvious contrast between righteousness from God and one’s own righteousness from the law tips the scale towards the traditional interpretation of “faith in Christ” (objective genitive or anthropological reading), instead of “faithfulness of Christ” (subjective genitive or Christological reading).⁸¹ The contrast is *not* between human righteousness and Christ’s faithfulness. Moreover, the noun “faith” is used twice to unpack the significance of faith in Christ: (1) The first occurrence indicates that the means or agency to receive righteousness from God is *through faith in Christ* (τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ) and (2) The second occurrence specifies that the ground or basis for having the righteousness from God is *on the basis of faith* (τὴν . . . ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει).⁸² The dual reference to faith in Christ to receive

Thoughts on The Origin of Paul’s Gospel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 77 (emphasis original).

⁷⁹Hansen, *Philippians*, 240.

⁸⁰Hansen, *Philippians*, 240.

⁸¹Silva lists four reasons that lend conclusive support to the traditional interpretation: (1) the preposition ἐκ before θεοῦ, (2) the contrast between the two kinds of righteousness, (3) the use of ἔχων to refer to God’s righteousness as something we may “have,” and (4) interest in personal salvation in this passage. Silva, *Philippians*, 160. See arguments for both views in Hansen, *Philippians*, 241n. Regardless of where scholars stand in this *pistis Christou* debate, both sides agree that “Christ’s work is the basis for the gift of righteousness from God and that faith in Christ is the way to receive the saving work of God in Christ.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 241n.

⁸²Hansen, *Philippians*, 242. Hansen suggests that the article in the second instance is anaphoric which points back to its first use (242).

the righteousness from God accentuates its stark difference with the righteousness obtained by keeping the law.

Summary. Paul’s autobiographical narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 is filled with the most profound and yet most personal statement of his faith. The first three verses reveal the careful thinking, radical evaluation, and thoughtful decision-making process he went through. He declares with firm resolve that he has counted the things he previously mentioned (Phil 3:4-6) as loss because of Christ and for his sake. His encounter with Christ has radically revolutionized his life, including his beliefs, priorities, and values. The intensity and firmness of his decision can be seen by the progression of his thought—from “whatever” to “these things” to “all things” to “everything”; from a past resolution to an ongoing daily commitment; from “loss” to “excrement.”

He boldly declares that he wants to gain Christ because of the surpassing value and worth of “Christ Jesus *my* Lord.” This confession is very personal and depicts a warm and intimate relationship he has with him. He also wants to have full participation in him by being found in him, so he can have a righteousness from God through faith in Christ.

To Know Christ and Be Conformed to Him (3:10-11)

Paul not only aspires to gain Christ and be found in him, but also to know him more fully and be conformed to him. In the next two verses, the apostle reveals the need for both human participation and divine empowerment in our conformity to Christ.

3:10 τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ. After declaring the surpassing value of knowing Christ in verse 8, Paul clearly states his desire is to

know Christ by using the genitive articular infinitive (τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν) in verse 10, which serves as a purpose clause that parallels the twofold ἵνα clause in verses 8-9.⁸³ He articulates his Christocentric goals in three different expressions that reveals his single-minded focus and unadulterated passion for Christ: *to gain Christ, be found in him, and know him.*⁸⁴

The aorist active infinitive γινῶναι comes from the verb γινώσκω which means to know or be acquainted with.⁸⁵ Paul's use of the active voice reveals the intent with which he actively seeks to know Christ. He explains that he wants to know *him*, not just *about* him.⁸⁶ He wants to know the person depicted in Philippians 2:5-11, his divinity and humanity (preexistence, incarnation, exaltation), his excellent qualities (humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice), his mindset (how he thinks, feels, chooses, decides, evaluates), his humiliation and exaltation. Paul further elaborates with an exegetical καί that he also wants to know the power of his resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings.

⁸³Silva, *Philippians*, 163; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 400–401. Hansen states that “although the genitive of the articular infinitive expresses purpose, its connection to other elements in the sentence is ambiguous.” He suggests three possible interpretations: “The goal expressed in the articular infinitive *to know him* (τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν) may be parallel to the goals expressed by the ἵνα clause (*to gain Christ and be found in him . . .*), or it may be an exegetical use to explain the meaning of the ἵνα clause . . ., or it may express the ultimate goal after the statement of penultimate purpose in the ἵνα clause . . .” Hansen, *Philippians*, 242n129. Fee supports the view that the ἵνα clause (“that he may gain Christ and be found in him”) provides the penultimate purpose and ground for the ultimate purpose in the articular infinitive clause (“to know him”), which functions as a “simple complementary infinitive of purpose modifying what has immediately preceded.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 327, 327n50. So Dunn who exclaims that to know Christ is “perhaps the chief outcome and goal of his reversal of values.” Dunn, *New Perspective on Paul*, 485.

⁸⁴Tannehill comments, “Each of these phrases expresses the purpose for which Paul renounced all things, and basically they contain the same idea.” Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118. Hansen points out that “by restating his goals in these different ways, Paul keeps the focus completely on Christ and emphasizes that his relationship with Christ totally eclipses everything else in his life.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 242.

⁸⁵Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), s.v. “γινώσκω; οἶδα; γνωρίζω; γνώσις, εως f.”

⁸⁶Witherington defines this kind of knowing as “understanding through experiencing.” Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 205.

The infinitive (τοῦ γινῶναι) governs three accusative objects (αὐτόν, δύναμιν, and κοινωνίαν), but they should not be considered as three separate goals.⁸⁷ The first καί preceding τὴν δύναμιν is epexegetical, which expounds or provides content to what it means to know Christ: “so that I may know him, that is, the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings.”⁸⁸ The last two accusative objects (δύναμιν and κοινωνίαν) are joined by a common article (τὴν) which shows that both the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings are interwoven as complimentary aspects of knowing Christ.⁸⁹ It is worth noting that in the noun phrases that come after the epexegetical καί, the accusative nouns δύναμιν (power) and κοινωνίαν (fellowship) are the grammatical objects of the infinitive (τοῦ γινῶναι), not the genitive nouns ἀναστάσεως (resurrection) and παθημάτων (sufferings) as most interpreters have wrongly emphasized.⁹⁰

The feminine noun δύναμις is generally translated as “power” and refers to

⁸⁷Silva, *Philippians*, 163. Cf. NIV (1984), NASB, and NRSV render the three accusatives as three separate objects.

⁸⁸Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 328 (emphasis original); Silva, *Philippians*, 163; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 119–20. Hawthorne and Martin further explain the epexegetical καί: “It serves to link the words that follow together with αὐτόν, ‘him,’ in such a way as to define and more fully explain what is meant by αὐτόν, ‘him’ . . . It is not that Paul is saying ‘I want to know him and the power of his resurrection,’ as though ‘him’ and ‘power’ were equally worthy objects of his knowing. Rather, he is saying ‘I want to know him in the power of his resurrection’ . . . Paul is not content merely to know Christ as a figure of history (κατὰ σάρκα, ‘according to the flesh’) but he desires to know him personally as the resurrected ever-living Lord of his life (κατὰ πνεῦμα, ‘according to the Spirit’).” Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 197 (emphasis original).

⁸⁹Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 119–20; Hansen, *Philippians*, 243; John Hugh Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, MNTC (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927), 151. Reumann considers the two noun phrases as a “closely structured hendiadys” and intimates that “you cannot have one without the other.” John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 33B (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 522. Silva observes that both articles are absent before κοινωνίαν and παθημάτων (placed in brackets in NA²⁸ and UBS⁵) in P⁴⁶, the original hand of the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and other reliable witnesses. Silva, *Philippians*, 169.

⁹⁰O’Brien, *Philippians*, 402–3, 406. O’Brien points out correctly that “the stress falls upon the two nouns in the accusative case, that is, δύναμιν and κοινωνίαν, not on those in the genitive case.” He observes that most exegetes wrongly emphasize that Paul wants to know Christ’s resurrection and sufferings as though δύναμιν and κοινωνίαν are non-existent (O’Brien, *Philippians*, 407). *Contra* Tannehill who states that Paul desires to participate in the “resurrection and sufferings” of Christ, as if they are the accusative objects of τοῦ γινῶναι. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120.

the ability or capability to perform a certain activity or to go through some experience.⁹¹ The genitive ἀναστάσεως (resurrection) qualifies the specific power Paul is referring to. It may be interpreted as a genitive of source, i.e., the power springing forth from his resurrection, which does not refer to the power that raised Christ from the dead or the power that will raise believers in the last day.⁹² It refers instead to the power that the risen Lord possesses and executes which is constantly active and available to the believer.⁹³ It is equally important to stress that the ultimate source of this all-encompassing and life-giving power is God the Father, with its knowledge arising from faith, and is the “transforming force that vitalizes Christian life and molds the suffering of the Christian to the pattern which is Christ.”⁹⁴ In light of Philippians 2:9-11 wherein God is the primary actor who exalted Christ above all else, this retracing of the source of the power of resurrection to him is indeed appropriate.⁹⁵

The noun κοινωνία is a common Pauline expression in his letters. It is commonly translated “fellowship,” but the Greek term includes a wider range of

⁹¹Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “δύναμις, εως f’; BDAG, s.v. “δύναμις.”

⁹²O’Brien, *Philippians*, 404. Hellerman disagrees that it is a genitive of source, but instead takes it as a descriptive genitive, i.e., “the power that characterized [or ‘was active in’] his resurrection.” His interpretation, however, closely resembles the explanation for the genitive of source: “What is in view is not strictly resurrection power but the more expansive ‘life-giving power of God’ that he manifested in raising Christ, and which now also operates in the life of the believer, . . .” Joseph H. Hellerman, *Philippians*, EGGNT (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 190.

⁹³Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, and to Philemon*, trans. John C. Moore, MCNT (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), 132; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 404. *Contra* Hansen who argues that the knowledge of the power of the resurrection is only available at the eschaton “concurrent with the resurrection from the dead.” The basis of his interpretation is on the assumed parallelism in vv. 10-11. Hansen, *Philippians*, 243.

⁹⁴Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “To Know Him and the Power of His Resurrection (Phil 3.10),” in *Mélanges Bibliques en hommage au R. P. Bêda Rigaux*, ed. Albert Descamps and André de Halleux (Gembloux, Belgium: Duculot, 1970), 420; Reumann, *Philippians*, 523. See Pierre Biard, *La Puissance de Dieu*, TLCP 7 (Paris: Bloud & Gray, 1960), 145–55. Cf. Byrnes suggests that the “power of the resurrection” describes the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 243.

⁹⁵So Hansen, *Philippians*, 244.

meaning signifying a close relationship, such as association, communion, contribution, partnership, participation, and sharing.⁹⁶ In this verse, *κοινωνία* is best taken as partnership, participation, fellowship, or sharing.⁹⁷ These terms will be used interchangeably here. The objective genitive *παθημάτων* specifies the object of Paul's participation, i.e., he wants to share in the sufferings of Christ.⁹⁸ The plural "sufferings" do not refer to Christ's passion on the cross leading to his once-for-all sacrificial death for our redemption, which are usually expressed through words like cross, death, and blood in Pauline letters.⁹⁹ Rather these sufferings refer to various kinds of adversities and afflictions that Christians experience in their union with Christ, both external and internal struggles.¹⁰⁰ Paul speaks of his being in chains for

⁹⁶BDAG, s.v. "κοινωνία"; LSJ, s.v. "κοινωνία."

⁹⁷"This *participation* (*koinōnia*) was not merely an attitude of self-identification with Christ. He was not simply engaged in psychologically reframing his story. Rather, Paul speaks as one who intentionally participated in the narrative of Christ so that his story was a genuine reenactment and purposeful extension of the narrative of Christ." Hansen, *Philippians*, 245.

⁹⁸Seesemann states that "*κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ* wird von den meisten Forschern mit 'Gemeinschaft seiner Leiden' wiedergegeben und *κοινωνία* damit richtig als 'Anteilhaben' und *παθημάτων* als Gen. obj. aufgefaßt." Heinrich Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINONIA im Neuen Testament*, ZNKWKAK 14 (Giessen, Germany: Alfred Töpelmann, 1933), 83. Koperski adds, "This understanding focuses not so much on *what* Paul knows, or experiences (the relationship of fellowship or community), but on the *manner in which* he knows Christ, that is, by experiencing a participation in Christ's sufferings." Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 250 (emphasis original). *Contra* Lohmeyer who renders *κοινωνία* as the German term *Gemeinschaft* in a way that could be considered a subjective genitive (Koperski's interpretation) or genitive of origin (O'Brien's reading): "Wo immer bei Pls. [Paulus] der Begriff 'Gemeinschaft' mit dem Genetiv eines Nomens verbunden ist, das ein religiöses Gut bezeichnet, da gibt dieser Genetiv den Grund und die Norm an, durch welche Gemeinschaft erft möglich und wirklich wird." Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an die Philemon*, 8th ed., MeyerKommentar 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), 138–39. Cf. Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 249; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 405n136.

⁹⁹O'Brien, *Philippians*, 405–7. *Contra* Fee who thinks that Christ's sufferings refer to "those sufferings that culminated in his death." Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 334. Also, *contra* Hawthorne and Martin who think that the apostle is equating the sufferings of Christ with his death based on a crisscross chiasmic structure. Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 198 (see chiasmic diagram on p. 199). Michaelis observes that Paul does not use *παθεῖν* to refer to Jesus' death, so the *παθημάτων* here, especially its plural form, may refer to his other sufferings. He concludes, however, that the chiasmic structure in v. 10 demonstrates that the sufferings of Christ are the same as his death. Wilhelm Michaelis, "πάθημα," in *TDNT*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, vol. 5: Ξ-Πα (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 5:932.

¹⁰⁰Hansen, *Philippians*, 245–46. *Contra* O'Brien who contends that Christ's sufferings refer to the "messianic woes of Jewish apocalyptic thought, the birth pangs of the Messiah, which fall upon God's people." O'Brien, *Philippians*, 405–6.

Christ and for the sake of the gospel, his struggles in the past and at present, and also sufferings of the Philippian believers (1:7, 13, 14, 17, 30). In another letter, he lists specific outward sufferings and inward struggles (2 Cor 11:12-29). Paul does not relish in the sufferings in and of themselves, but he delights in the deeper fellowship and communion with Christ through them. He has adequately expressed his perspective on sufferings when he exclaims that to suffer for Christ is a gift from God: “For he has *graciously granted you the privilege* not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well” (1:29 NRSV; emphasis added).

Hansen asserts, “It is impossible to know the power of his resurrection without participation in his sufferings.”¹⁰¹ It is equally true that one cannot participate in his sufferings unless one experiences the power of the resurrection, because it is only by knowing the latter that one can have the encouragement and tenacity to endure the former.¹⁰² “Without the power inherent in Christ’s resurrection,” Fee elaborates, “present suffering (even for Christ’s sake) is meaningless.”¹⁰³ This may well explain the reason why resurrection is mentioned first before suffering, which is an inversion of the usual sequence of events, but the conjoining of both words with a single article means that the reordering may not be consequential.¹⁰⁴ It is fascinating that Paul combines power of the resurrection and fellowship of sufferings here, just as humiliation and exaltation are weaved together in the Christ hymn. He wants to know Christ so deeply and fully that he embraces

¹⁰¹Hansen, *Philippians*, 243. Fee also asserts that both resurrection and sufferings “go together hand-in-glove.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 331. Käsemann intimates that the cross is “the signature of the one who is risen.” Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 56.

¹⁰²O’Brien, *Philippians*, 404; Hansen, *Philippians*, 243.

¹⁰³Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 330.

¹⁰⁴Michael, *Epistle of Paul to Philippians*, 153. O’Brien explains that “there is no suggestion of a temporal distinction between the two phrases, as though knowing the power of Christ’s resurrection preceded in time the experience of sharing his sufferings,” O’Brien, *Philippians*, 403.

both his victory and pain. This kind of knowledge is not superficial, but intimate, personal, and experiential.¹⁰⁵ Paul here expresses his intense desire to know Christ deeply and fully that it requires the response of his entire being, just as the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus in verse 8 brings about a radical change in his perspective and attitude.¹⁰⁶

What does Paul mean that he wants to be conformed to Christ's death (συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ)? The participial form *συμμορφιζόμενος* only occurs in this verse in the NT, but its cognate noun *μορφή* appears twice in the *carmen Christi* (2:6, 7) which shows "how Paul is *intentionally* identifying his experience with the narrative of Christ."¹⁰⁷ The word comes from the verb *συμμορφίζω* which means to be like something by taking the same form.¹⁰⁸ The present tense signifies that it is a continuous, ongoing process that precludes the possibility of reading it as a baptismal allusion.¹⁰⁹ The medio-passive form *συμμορφιζόμενος* combined with a dative is best taken in its passive sense, i.e., Paul is *being conformed* to Christ's death.¹¹⁰ The cognate adjective *σύμμορφον* in verse 21 depicts Christ as the "who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (NASB). The same adjective is used in Romans 8:29 and speaks of God as the one

¹⁰⁵Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 329; Hansen, *Philippians*, 243.

¹⁰⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 402.

¹⁰⁷Hansen, *Philippians*, 246 (emphasis added). Paul could have chosen another word like *συσχηματίζομαι* (cf. Rom 12:2), but his deliberate use of *συμμορφίζομαι* implies his intention to look back to the Christ hymn. See Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 5–7. Bockmuehl comments, "There is a reasonable likelihood that the apostle may be deliberately raising the issue of the 'form' of Christ's death to indicate that his own former motivation of pride has given way to one of Christ-like humility." Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, ed. Henry Chadwick, 4th ed., Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1997), 216.

¹⁰⁸BDAG, s.v. "συμμορφίζω."

¹⁰⁹Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 267.

¹¹⁰BDAG, s.v. "συμμορφίζω." O'Brien, *Philippians*, 408; Hansen, *Philippians*, 246. *Contra* Hawthorne and Beare who takes this participle in the middle voice with a reflexive idea: "to conform oneself, to make oneself like." Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC 43 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 145; Beare, *Philippians*, 124.

who conforms those whom he has chosen to be conformed to the image of his Son: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (RSV). Philippians 3:10 shows a clear picture of divine empowerment and human participation working hand in hand to bring about our conformity to Christ.¹¹¹ Paul actively seeks to gain Christ and to know him (active forms *κερδήσω* and *γινῶναι*), yet he also willingly submits to God and let him do his work in his life, so that he may be found in Christ and be continually conformed to him (passive forms *εὐρεθῶ* and *συμμορφιζόμενος*).

This participial phrase may be construed as an adverbial participle of means that elaborates on the preceding noun phrase (*κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ*) to explain that the way to know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings is “by becoming like him in his death” (NRSV).¹¹² It may also function as a result participle, i.e., sharing in Christ’s sufferings brings about conformation to his death.¹¹³ The connection between the two phrases can be seen in the chiasmic structure of the four modifiers of the infinitive clause in verses 10-11 whereby resurrection and sufferings corresponds in an ABB’A’ pattern as shown below.¹¹⁴

	<i>so that</i> I may know him
A	both the power of his resurrection
B	and participation in his sufferings
B’	being conformed to his death
A’	if somehow I might attain the resurrection from the dead ¹¹⁵

¹¹¹Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 268–69.

¹¹²Fee considers this a modal participle which modifies the verb by way of the clause that precedes it: “that I may know him, including participation in his sufferings, by being conformed to his death.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 333.

¹¹³Hansen, *Philippians*, 246.

¹¹⁴Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 329.

¹¹⁵Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 329 (emphasis original).

The assumed parallelism fails to account for the syntactical relationships of previous phrases: (1) The two noun phrases are bound together syntactically by a common article, but the chiasmus forces an artificial division that destroys the complimentary aspects of this single unit of thought; (2) The accent in the nominal phrases is on the accusative nouns *δύναμιν* (power) and *κοινωνίαν* (fellowship), not on the genitive nouns *ἀναστάσεως* (resurrection) and *παθημάτων* (sufferings), so the words “sufferings” and “death” cannot be considered parallel ideas as alleged in the chiasmus; (3) Christ’s sufferings do not refer to his sacrificial death on the cross; hence, *παθημάτων αὐτοῦ* does not parallel *τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ*; and (4) *εἶ πως* in verse 11 disrupts the supposed parallelism by introducing a new element, i.e., the resurrection from the dead.¹¹⁶ In light of these syntactical concerns, it is better to take the participial phrase as modifying the entire verse: “It is not in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings as such that Paul is conformed to Christ’s death; rather, it is by participating in those sufferings . . . *and* as strengthened to do so in the power of his resurrection that he is continually being conformed to Christ’s death.”¹¹⁷ Byrnes’s proposal to consider the phrase a result participle that summarizes the outcome of the whole process is also convincing. Byrnes elucidates as follows:

We already have a *ἵνα* clause describing the purpose of Paul's reevaluation and renunciation of all things, and an infinitive clause explanatory of the consequences, namely, the knowledge of Christ in his resurrection and sufferings. The participial phrase seems to be added to clarify the result of the whole process. In other words, Paul, by the evaluation of all things as loss and the subsequent forfeiture of all things for the sake of knowing Christ both in the power of his resurrection and in participation in his sufferings, is being conformed to the pattern of Christ's own death on the cross.¹¹⁸

It is also important to note that the participle *συμμορφιζόμενος* is dependent on the

¹¹⁶O’Brien, *Philippians*, 407.

¹¹⁷O’Brien, *Philippians*, 407 (emphasis original).

¹¹⁸Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 228.

articular infinitive τοῦ γινῶναι and depicts how knowledge is gained.¹¹⁹ Hence, Paul is also continually conformed to Christ, by knowing his mindset and perspective on humiliation and exaltation. It is certainly appropriate to specify that conformation should not be limited to Christ's death only, but it extends to every sphere of the Christian life, which is primarily characterized by Christ's death.¹²⁰

There are four suggested interpretations for the expression "being conformed to his death." The first option is to understand the phrase as referring to Paul's martyrdom as proposed by Lohmeyer. Based on his understanding of κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ as the *Gemeinschaft* created by Christ's sufferings, Lohmeyer infers that Paul's sufferings will eventually lead to his martyrdom, just as the sufferings of Christ led to his death.¹²¹ Although Paul may be anticipating his own death and resurrection in verse 11, but he refers to his conformity to Christ as an ongoing process that spans his entire life as a follower of Christ and his conformation is therefore not confined to physical death at the end of his life.¹²² Moreover, this view limits its application to Christian martyrs only, excluding believers in general as Paul intended.¹²³

The second suggestion is to view conformation as the believer's identification with Christ's sufferings during his incarnation.¹²⁴ This view is closely

¹¹⁹Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 215.

¹²⁰Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 333.

¹²¹Lohmeyer, *Philippus, Kolosser und Philemon*, 139–42. Fee is correct in saying that "the idea that Paul is referring to his actual anticipated death is to read into this phrase what is simply not there." Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 334n66.

¹²²Hansen, *Philippians*, 246.

¹²³Lohmeyer maintains that every Christian can experience the power of Christ's resurrection, but participation in his sufferings is only limited to martyrs. Lohmeyer, *Philippus, Kolosser und Philemon*, 139–42.

¹²⁴Wilhelm Michaelis, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper*, THNT 11 (Leipzig, Germany: Deichert, 1935), 58; Michaelis, "πάθημα," 5:932; Marvin Richardson Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, ICC 46 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 105; Peter Siber, *Mit Christus leben: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Auferstehungshoffnung*,

related to the first one in the sense that these sufferings may ultimately lead to Paul's martyrdom.¹²⁵ The main difference is it focuses more on Paul's sufferings in his ministry (rather than his impending death), which are similar to those Jesus experienced in his ministry while on earth.¹²⁶ The arguments against the first view also apply here. Paul's main concern is not to pursue martyrdom or court sufferings as can be seen in his emphasis on *power* and *fellowship*, not on resurrection and sufferings.¹²⁷ Afflictions, tribulations, and sufferings do come to him and he willingly submits under God's hands as he ordains and orchestrates them, but his focus is not suffering for suffering's sake, rather his passion is to know Christ even more intimately through his participation in them and thus being conformed to him more and more.

The third possibility is to view conformation as a baptismal imagery of dying with Christ: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rom 6:3 ESV).¹²⁸ The problem with this interpretation is that it limits conformation to the beginning of the Christian life when the believer is united with Christ in his death through baptism.¹²⁹ Paul usually expresses this initial experience with a *perfect* passive construction—Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:19)—as a "resultant existence in which he 'is crucified' with Christ."¹³⁰ The *present* participle here, however, signals an ongoing experience of being united with Christ through dying to

ATANT 61 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971), 115.

¹²⁵O'Brien, *Philippians*, 409.

¹²⁶O'Brien, *Philippians*, 409.

¹²⁷O'Brien, *Philippians*, 406.

¹²⁸Silva, *Philippians*, 164–65.

¹²⁹Hansen, *Philippians*, 246.

¹³⁰Beare, *Philippians*, 124.

sin and everything else that is not Christlike.¹³¹

The fourth is to understand conformity to Christ as referring to Paul's obedience in proclaiming the gospel.¹³² According to this view, the link between sufferings and gospel proclamation is that Paul refers to both as *κοινωνία*—"your partnership in the gospel" (1:5) and "participation in his sufferings (3:10)."¹³³ Paul's obedience to preach the gospel brings about his sufferings which in turn are shaping him to be more like Christ, who was obedient unto death (2:8).¹³⁴ These sufferings are not generic in nature, but are specific kinds of sufferings:

. . . those which in particular express participation in *Christ's* sufferings; and the aim, as well as the character, of such suffering is to 'become like him in his death,' which almost certainly means suffering that is in some way on behalf of the gospel, thus for the sake of others, since no other suffering is in conformity to his.¹³⁵

I submit that it's best to interpret "being conformed to his death" as an *ongoing inward transformation* akin to Christ's death.¹³⁶ I have come to this conclusion based on the following points of convergence: (1) This participial phrase modifies not just the immediate preceding noun phrase, but relates to the entire verse, i.e., conformity to Christ is not only in sharing in his sufferings, but also in

¹³¹Beare, *Philippians*, 124. Beare explains the continuity of this union with Christ: "The mystical union with Christ which was *initiated* in baptism is confirmed and *deepened* through the daily quest for a more and more complete identification with him in his dying to the life of this world and in his risen life over which death has no more dominion. Here again the thought of the Apostle is not solely mystical; the hazards and batterings to which he is subjected in his work for Christ are the concrete external means by which he is being conformed to Christ's death" (124; emphasis added).

¹³²Hansen, *Philippians*, 247.

¹³³Hansen, *Philippians*, 247.

¹³⁴Hansen, *Philippians*, 247.

¹³⁵Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 334 (emphasis original).

¹³⁶I am using the term "inward" to indicate that the change is not just physical or external. However, "inward" transformation does not preclude external changes. Cf. Michael who uses the term "inward transformation" but explains it as an analogy to the mystery cults: "In the Mysteries the initiates by the performance of certain rites shared in the experiences of the dying and rising redeemer-god, seeking thus to obtain a transformation of their nature and an assurance of a blessed immortality." Michael, *Epistle of Paul to Philippians*, 152–53.

experiencing the power of the resurrection and in coming to know Christ more fully and deeply;¹³⁷ (2) Paul’s focus in this passage is not so much on the physical events of Christ’s sufferings, death, and resurrection, but more of his desire to know Christ more deeply by experiencing the power and fellowship of sharing in these events;¹³⁸ (3) The present tense of the participle shows this is a continual process of being conformed to Christ in every area of the believer’s life, and not just towards the end of his life when he is facing death;¹³⁹ (4) The passive voice of the participle may be construed as a divine passive whereby God is at work to bring about spiritual transformation and daily renewal to conform his people to his Son;¹⁴⁰ (5) The nature of the conformation does not necessarily have to be exactly like that of Christ’s death, but rather *akin* to his death in terms of his *perspective* on humiliation and exaltation as vividly portrayed in the *carmen Christi*; and (6) Paul’s recounting of his personal experience which is in close parallel to the narrative of Christ in the hymn is not intended as an exclusive apostolic enterprise of martyrdom, but an encouragement for all believers to participate and experience.¹⁴¹

3:11 εἴ πως καταντήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν. Paul uses the aorist subjunctive καταντήσω in verse 11 with the conditional particle εἴ and adverb πως to express his eschatological hope in the future resurrection from the dead. The term

¹³⁷O’Brien, *Philippians*, 407.

¹³⁸O’Brien, *Philippians*, 407.

¹³⁹Hansen, *Philippians*, 246. Fee surmises that “Paul’s concern is first of all with his and the Philippians’ ongoing sufferings as God’s way of bringing them into conformity to Christ in his death, and thus with *the whole of life* as reflecting a cruciform existence.” Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 334n67 (emphasis added).

¹⁴⁰O’Brien, *Philippians*, 410.

¹⁴¹O’Brien, *Philippians*, 411. Hansen suggests a combination of three interpretations may be appropriate: “Paul’s experience of being conformed to Christ’s death may well include his sense of facing his own execution, his awareness that he was baptized into the death of Christ to be freed from sin, and his appreciation that his sufferings for the gospel are shaping his obedience so that he will reflect Christ, who was obedient unto death.” Hansen, *Philippians*, 247.

for resurrection here (ἐξανάστασιν) is similar to the noun he used in the previous verse (ἀναστάσεως), but slightly different with the prepositional prefix attached to it. He also added the prepositional phrase (τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν) with the use of the same preposition ἐκ. Paul may have intended the distinction to reflect the basic difference between the *present* power of resurrection available to believers as they face sufferings and persecution and the *future* resurrection from the dead at the eschaton.¹⁴²

Some controversy centers around Paul's use of εἴ πως which betrays some sense of doubt or uncertainty. Is Paul not sure that he will participate in the resurrection? If so, does this not conflict with his absolute certainty of the future resurrection which he confidently expressed in Philippians 3:21 and 1 Corinthians 15? There are several ways of reading this seeming hesitation of the apostle regarding future resurrection. One is to view it as an expression of Paul's humility who recognizes that salvation is God's gift and one should not presume on his grace and mercy.¹⁴³ Another way is to explain that the hint of doubt is not regarding the certainty of resurrection or the faithfulness of God, but concerning the manner or way—"the element of uncertainty lies with πῶς (= 'somehow, in some way')"—in which Paul will attain the resurrection, whether through martyrdom or some other way.¹⁴⁴ Still another way to understand Paul's expression is to consider the

¹⁴²Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120; Hansen, *Philippians*, 247. Lincoln argues that the τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν in v. 11 "emphasizes in the strongest way that he has final bodily resurrection in view" when compared with the simpler form ἀναστάσεως in v. 10. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology*, SNTSMS 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 92.

¹⁴³Jac J. Müller, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1955), 118; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 200. Silva thinks it is wrong to disregard the element of uncertainty. He points out the need to differentiate "between the firm, unmovable *object* of our hope and our *subjective* apprehension of it." Silva, *Philippians*, 166 (emphasis original).

¹⁴⁴O'Brien, *Philippians*, 413. Cf. Otto who suggests "real doubt and uncertainty in Paul's mind about his maintaining his confession in his impending death and thus attaining to a special resurrection of martyrs." Randall E. Otto, "If Possible I May Attain the Resurrection from the Dead

syntactical relationship of this verse with previous and succeeding verses.

Participation in the future resurrection is contingent upon one's participation in the continuing process of transformation in being conformed to the image of Christ daily (v.10).¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Paul is reminding the Philippians that they need to press on to win the prize (vv. 12-14).¹⁴⁶

Summary. The second half of the passage continues to show how fully and deeply Paul wants to be related to Christ. He wants to know him and embraces both the power of his resurrection and the participation in his sufferings. His fervent desire to know the whole Christ is summed up by the phrase “being conformed to his death.” I interpret this phrase to mean an ongoing inward transformation that impacts every aspect of his life on a daily basis. He then expresses his eschatological hope of participation in the future resurrection from the dead.

Theological Reflections on Philippians 3:7-11

Philippians 3:7-11 covers several *topoi* that can be featured in our theological reflections on the passage, e.g., soteriology, Christology, eschatology, knowledge of Christ Jesus, lordship, union with Christ, power of Christ's resurrection, participation in Christ's sufferings, conformation to Christ's death, humiliation and exaltation motif, and many more. We will focus on three of them that are directly related to our thesis, namely, supreme lordship of Christ, conformity to Christ, power and participation in Christ.

(Philippians 3:11),” *CBQ* 57 (1995): 330.

¹⁴⁵O'Brien, *Philippians*, 413. So Witherington III, *Philippians*, 208.

¹⁴⁶Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 217.

Supreme Lordship of Christ

Philippians 3:7-11 is one of the most personal yet highly Christological passages in Pauline corpus. It is only here that Paul speaks of Christ as “Christ Jesus *my Lord*,” whereas he usually uses one, two, or all three names with different collocation, with or without an article, and sometimes with the pronoun “our.”¹⁴⁷ The existence of a warm relationship between them is undeniable. Christ has totally captivated his heart and mind that he considers it worth renouncing everything else that were once of value to him, if only to gain Christ, be found in him, and know more intimately. The one whom God has exalted to the highest place, given the name that is above every name, before whom every knee should bow and every tongue confess (2:9-11) is now for Paul “*my Lord*.”

This closeness, however, does not make Paul lose sight of the uniqueness and surpassing worth of Jesus Christ. The radical transformation in Paul in terms of his perspective on humiliation and exaltation and his appraisal of assets and liabilities was brought about by his recognition of the supremacy of Jesus as Christ and Lord.¹⁴⁸ For a devout and monotheistic Jew like Paul to address any other person besides God as “Lord” is a clear indication that he has accorded Jesus an equal status with God. The lordship of Jesus Christ motivated him to surrender his rights and privileges and to obey him as the master of his life. As Lord, he has absolute sovereignty and supremacy over Paul and everything in his life. He is at the same time the “Lordly example,” as well as the “exemplary Lord.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷E.g., ὁ κύριος (2 Thess 3:16), τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν (Phlm 1:5), Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν (Rom 4:24), τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Cor 13:13), Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (Rom 1:4), τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Tim 6:14), ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν (Eph 3:11).

¹⁴⁸Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 237.

¹⁴⁹Hurtado uses the term “Lordly example” in his essay. See Larry W. Hurtado, “Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11,” in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare*, ed. Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 113–26. Seifrid appropriately coins the expression “exemplary Lord” to give emphasis to the supreme lordship of Christ. Mark A. Seifrid, written response on my dissertation draft, December 27, 2016.

The high Christology enshrined in Philippians 3:7-11 is the solid foundation on which Paul builds the rest of his theology and ethics. The supreme lordship of Jesus Christ is what allows him to uphold proper *soteriology*, that he cannot attain righteousness from the law and have confidence in the flesh. Rather, it is only through faith in Christ that he can have the righteousness that comes from God. His *eschatology* is also thus affected in knowing that the risen Lord is also the one who gives the eschatological hope of resurrection from the dead.

Conformity to Christ

Conformity to Christ is an inward transformation that involves both divine initiative and human response. The use of divine passives (“be found in him” and “be conformed to his death”) reveals that conformity to Christ is an ongoing process with God working in the daily grind of the believer’s life. It is not a one-time event that happens only at the start of the believer’s faith journey, nor only at the end of his life, but rather it is a continual process that affects *every* aspect of the *entire span* of his Christian life. God is continually working in and through us to bring every part of our life in conformity to the image of his Son—“this transformation is due to the Lord’s power.”¹⁵⁰ This is in line with Paul’s theology of sanctification sprinkled all throughout this and his other letters. Paul is confident that God who began a good work in his children will perfect (ἐπιτελέσει) it (1:6). As human beings, we can never become perfect while we are here on earth. Despite our best efforts, we always fall short of God’s standard of perfection. Despite our best intentions on trying to imitate Christ, we will never be completely like him in his humility, self-sacrifice and obedience as portrayed in Philippians 2:5-11. Even Paul clearly exclaimed that he has not obtained all these (3:12). The apostle asserts that “it is God who works (ὁ

¹⁵⁰Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 106.

ἐνεργῶν) in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (2:13 ESV). Not only are we God’s work (ποίημα), but he has prepared us in advance to be able to do good works (Eph 2:10). God is working and continues to work. He is active and alive in our lives, and we are his workmanship. This element of total dependence on God to do his work in us is the missing piece in the concept of *imitatio* which focuses more on our human efforts to imitate Christ and be like him. This is in a sense the shallow ethical idealism that Käsemann is protesting wherein God and the drama of salvation are missing in the picture. But Paul has a robust soteriology that incorporates both the kerygmatic and ethical aspects of justification, sanctification, and glorification—God’s active work of redemption (“righteousness from God through faith in Christ” 3:9) and regeneration (“We are God’s handiwork, created us in Christ Jesus to do good works” Eph 2:10 NIV) that lays the foundation which enables us to will and to work for his good pleasure (2:12), to share in his sufferings (3:10; Rom 8:17) as we are sustained by the power of the resurrection (3:10), so we may share in his glory (Rom 8:17) and be conformed to his glorious body (3:21). Our ethical response, then, is grounded on dogmatic truths.

Paul’s use of active expressions (“to gain Christ” and “to know him”) shows the complimentary aspect of this process. Paul is not passively waiting for transformation to come upon him, but he earnestly seeks to gain Christ, to know him and the power of his resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings. Paul himself is not complacent but he continues to press on and strain forward toward the goal and win the prize (3:12-14). He does not run aimlessly, but disciplines his body to make sure that he will not be disqualified from the prize (1 Cor 9:27). He also encourages the Philippians to continue to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12). The believer is actively involved in the process of conformation by his participation and response. In this regard *conformatio Christi* involves *imitatio* because the common goal of both is to be more like Christ, but the former is more

comprehensive than the latter as it focuses not only on the end goal, but also on the process and acknowledges that God is working behind the scenes.

Conformity to Christ is a recurring process of renewal and reshaping that affects even the way we think and make decisions. Although Philippians 3:7-11 does not specifically mention the role of the Holy Spirit in the conformation process, the immediate context shows some correlation. In contrasting those who put their confidence in the Lord and those who put their confidence in the flesh, Paul intimates that the former are those who worship by the Spirit of God (οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες Phil 3:3). It implies that the Spirit is instrumental in shaping Paul's mindset, guiding him to view things from a spiritual perspective, and redirecting his goals and purposes in life.¹⁵¹

Paul's conformity to Christ is reflected in how he *regards* his assets and liabilities. He did not say that all things are garbage in and of themselves, but that he *counts* them as such.¹⁵² The verb ἡγέομαι involves “considered reflection,” careful process of evaluation, and weighing of options, and Paul narrates his own story “in a way parallel to how he has describe the Son's heavenly decision-making about all the good things he could have taken advantage of.”¹⁵³ Not only is the same verb (ἡγέομαι) used in both the stories of Christ and Paul, but it is also closely linked to the φρονεῖτε in Philippians 2:5.¹⁵⁴ It is because of this transformation in Paul's

¹⁵¹Byrnes refers to the Spirit as the agent of transformation. Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 235.

¹⁵²Witherington III, *Philippians*, 202.

¹⁵³Witherington III, *Philippians*, 202.

¹⁵⁴See discussion of both verbs (ἡγέομαι and φρονεῖω) as belonging to the same semantic domain in the presentation of my thesis in Chapter 1, pp. 35-36 of this dissertation. Gorman suggests that the process of conformation is also at play in 1 Thess 2:6-7 and 1 Cor 9:12-18 when Paul gave up his apostolic authority and rights: “We see, then, that Paul believes that in his decisions not to use or exploit his apostolic power and rights, he does not renounce his apostleship or divest himself of his apostleship but in fact exercises true apostleship because he thereby acts in ways that are in conformity to Christ. That is to say, as an apostle—an ambassador (2 Cor 5:20) of the self-emptying, crucified Lord—Paul acts kenotically and cruciformly.” Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

thinking and decision-making, so he is able to rejoice and encourage others to rejoice while he is languishing in jail. His Christ-centered and gospel-focused perspective transcends the dire circumstances of his imprisonment so he can confidently declare that “what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel” (1:12 NIV). This transformed perspective also fuels Paul’s desire to know Christ and enables him to embrace both the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of sufferings, which may be a merism that expresses Paul’s aspiration “to know the whole Christ.”¹⁵⁵ Byner elucidates, “Paul wants to know Christ in every aspect of his life, death, and resurrection. He desires knowledge by experience and participation. He desires a relationship that is total and all-encompassing.”¹⁵⁶ He is using his life to point to Christ as “the saving pattern to which we are being conformed.”¹⁵⁷ Fee summarizes Paul’s transformation succinctly:

. . . Christ’s resurrection guaranteed his own, that he could throw himself into the present with a kind of holy abandon, full of rejoicing and thanksgiving; and that not because he enjoyed suffering, but because Christ’s resurrection had given him a unique *perspective* on present suffering . . . as well as an empowering presence whereby the suffering was transformed into intimate fellowship with Christ himself.¹⁵⁸

I think it is more appropriate to apply the term “conformity” to describe the process the apostle delineated in Philippians 3:7-11. It is a better alternative than to use the more common term “imitation” in interpreting this passage. Just like the Christ-hymn, this passage is also the subject of much debate as to how to interpret it accordingly. Some scholars like Koperski considered this passage highly Christological, whereas other scholars like Tannehill view it as a presentation of

2009), 24 (emphasis original).

¹⁵⁵Byner, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 243.

¹⁵⁶Byner, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 243.

¹⁵⁷Mark A. Seifrid, e-mail message to me, March 28, 2016.

¹⁵⁸Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 331 (emphasis added).

Paul's example.¹⁵⁹

Conformatio involves the whole person of the apostle—his mind, heart, and will—in his desire to know the whole person of Christ. The concept of imitation is not entirely wrong, because conformation *does* involve imitation in the process. Paul describes his letter recipients with the noun *μιμηταί* (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6, 2:14) or *συμμιμηταί* (Phil 3:17), which is mostly rendered with an imperatival sense brought about by the imperative of *γίνομαι* (“be imitators” in NASB, NRSV, ESV; “to imitate me” or “follow my/God’s example” in NIV).¹⁶⁰ The infinitive form *μιμεῖσθαι* appears only twice (2 Thess 3:7, 9). It is interesting to note that Paul did not use the imperatival form of *μιμέομαι* to issue a command.¹⁶¹ It is highly possible that Paul uses *συμμορφίζομαι*, instead of *μιμέομαι*, because the verb represents a broader, more comprehensive, more intense, all-encompassing process that depicts exactly what Paul is going through and continues to experience in Philippians 3:7-11, in light of his Christology in Philippians 2:5-11. Moreover, the use of *συμμορφίζομαι* provides the verbal link to the in Philippians 2:6 which parallels the process that Christ went through.

Michael Gorman categorically calls “conformity as cruciformity” in his book *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*.¹⁶² He argues that the

¹⁵⁹Koperski puts forth her view in the subtitle of her book *The High Christology of Philippians 3:7-11*. In her concluding ch., she laments that whereas the Christology in Phil 2 is commonly deliberated in NT Christology, Phil 3:7-11 is rarely mentioned. She remarks that “the christological force of Phil 3:7-11 is just as strong, *if not stronger*, and is expressed more straightforwardly.” Koperski, *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, 323–24 (emphasis added). Tannehill, on the other hand, thinks that Paul is holding himself up as an example. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 114.

¹⁶⁰It is only in 1 Thess 1:6 and 2:14 that the noun is translated as a predicate nominative “you became imitators.”

¹⁶¹So Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 48n60. Gorman adds, “Paul’s being an imitator of Christ is not so much something he does but something that has happened to him. It is the result of being in Christ and of Christ being in him; it is the result of an influence, a power, that operates in and on Paul” (48).

¹⁶²The phrase “conformity as cruciformity” appears as a subheading in ch. 2 of the book. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 31–35.

term cruciformity is preferred over imitation, which can sometimes be understood as dependent on human effort:

The process of “imitation” is therefore better called Christ’s *formation* in believers (Gal. 4:19), and the result, believer’s *conformity* to Christ, especially to his cross (Phil. 3:10). Cruciformity, I therefore suggest, is a term more appropriate for what has often been referred to as the “imitation” of Christ. Cruciformity is an ongoing pattern of living in Christ and of dying with him that produces a Christ-like (cruciform) person.¹⁶³

Although cruciformity captures the meaning of conformity *partially*, it could mislead one to focus only on the cross (*crux*) without the resurrection, dying without the rising, and sufferings without the power. It is clear from our exegesis that Paul’s conformity includes *both* the power of Christ’s resurrection *and* the participation in his sufferings. He wants to know Christ, his mindset, his attitudes, and everything related to Christ. No doubt the cross is central to Paul’s theology and forms the basis of conformity, but conformity is more than that. It is this comprehensive aspect which pervades the whole of life that is highlighted in this passage.

Another problem with Gorman’s proposal is his tendency to conflate different theological threads into one single idea of cruciformity. He claims that “cruciformity is theoformity, or theosis,” portrays God as the “cruciform God,” and insists that “cruciformity is the character of God.”¹⁶⁴ Similarly, he characterizes the third person of the Trinity as “the Spirit of cruciformity.”¹⁶⁵ Notwithstanding our belief in a triune God, yet it is best not to blur the lines of distinctions between and among the three persons of the trinity as evidenced in the Scriptures. Hence, it is most fitting to describe the process that Paul narrated as “conformity to Christ,” instead of “imitation” or “cruciformity.”

¹⁶³Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 48–49 (emphasis original).

¹⁶⁴Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 2; Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 9–18.

¹⁶⁵Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 50–62.

Power and Participation in Christ

The whole spectrum of the Christian life includes joys and sufferings, triumphs and defeat, humiliation and exaltation. It seems natural that we will focus on these events themselves and feel we have no choice but to deal with them as they come. Most people will welcome the positive experiences (joys, triumphs, exaltation) and strain every effort to avoid the negative ones (sufferings, defeat, humiliation). Because of his transformed perspective, Paul *chooses* to embrace *both* the power of Christ's resurrection *and* participation in his sufferings. Instead of focusing only on the events themselves—death (sufferings) and resurrection—his outlook transcends the circumstances and enables him to experience them at a deeper level. They become the avenues for him to know Christ more fully, to experience union with him more deeply, and to be like him more completely. It is this perspective that was radically revolutionized by his encounter with Christ and ongoing conformity to him that now makes Paul perceive humiliation and exaltation in a whole new light. His perspective is so exceptional that he can regard suffering for Christ as a gift of God's grace granted to the believer (1:29). He has now learned that God's power that raised Christ from the dead is real, present, and available to him, not only to help him endure difficulties and bear sufferings for the sake of Christ and the gospel, but even gives him hope and strength to face his own death. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul describes how we are transformed into the image of Christ as we behold his glory—this inner transformation is what Paul refers to as the power of the resurrection.¹⁶⁶ The ongoing aspect of the present participle *συμμορφιζόμενος* in combination with the future resurrection in verse 11 extends the element of participation from present existence into the future.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶Silva, *Philippians*, 164.

¹⁶⁷Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 120–21.

As we explore the variegated expressions in this passage, we see that they all articulate one overarching goal of Paul—union and participation in Christ. Whether it is “because of Christ” (v. 7) which is elaborated as “because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (v. 8), or its amplification by the three purpose clauses—to gain Christ, be found in him, and to know him—all of them explain why Paul renounces everything, so that he can have full participation in Christ.¹⁶⁸ “Thus the context makes clear,” Tannehill concludes, “that this is no theoretical knowledge about Christ, nor simply an existential acknowledgment of Christ as Lord, but involves participation in Christ.”¹⁶⁹

A closely parallel passage in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 sheds light on Paul’s view of power and participation that helps us understand his perspective on humiliation and exaltation. Paul exclaims that this “all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (v. 7 NIV). This is the power that carries him through as he undergoes extreme sufferings (vv. 8-9). Paul speaks of his sharing in the sufferings of Christ as “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus . . . For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake . . . So death (θάνατος) is at work in us . . .” (vv. 10-12 ESV). Byrnes observes that the purpose-result clauses reveal Paul’s perspective regarding power and sufferings: “Within his experience of apostolic suffering (i.e., the result) he receives the hand of God at work to make manifest the true source of power (i.e., the purpose). . . . Paul understands that his suffering is not senseless: it serves God’s purpose of revelation.”¹⁷⁰ Not only did Paul

¹⁶⁸Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118.

¹⁶⁹Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 118.

¹⁷⁰Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 117. Byrnes adds a cautionary note: “. . . we do not mean to suggest, nor do we believe the apostle suggests, that God directly intends human suffering. This is a question of theodicy that Paul does not raise. In 2Cor 4,7-15 the apostle seeks to interpret his own experience, and within that experience he discovers a divine purpose at work. God has entered into the circumstances of the apostle’s life in order to make himself known through Paul’s tribulations. In other words, God’s intention and purpose is revelation. In this case he even makes use of the negative circumstances of apostolic suffering in order to accomplish that

see a greater purpose for his suffering (“so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” v. 10b ESV) that makes the suffering more bearable, but also to experience the power of resurrection sustaining him as he goes through these sufferings.¹⁷¹ The power of the resurrection also serves as the ground for Paul to exhort the Philippians to “rejoice in the Lord” in the midst of suffering.¹⁷²

Conclusion

In this chapter I focused my attention on Philippians 3:7-11 and discussed five related topics, namely, literary integrity, context of Philippians 3:7-11, correspondence between Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11, exegetical analysis, and theological reflections. I support the position that there is only one single letter as we have in its canonical form. Although there is an impasse regarding the literary unity of Philippians, the absence of any manuscript that appears in a form different in content or order from the canonical letter constitutes a strong external evidence for its literary integrity. The semantic and thematic parallels that can be found throughout the entire letter provide substantial internal evidence for literary unity. The discussion on the context of the passage, correspondence between the narratives of Christ and Paul, and exegetical analysis serves as the foundation for the theological reflections on this passage. I highlighted the themes of lordship, conformity to Christ, and power and participation as important insights gleaned from the passage with theological implications for Christians even today.

purpose. In other words, the apostle interprets in this pericope an example of God’s ability to bring good out of all things (Rom 8,28) and to subordinate all created things to serve his plan” (117).

¹⁷¹Byrnes, *Conformation to Death and Resurrection*, 117.

¹⁷²Fee, *Letter to the Philippians*, 330.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Christ-hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 and Paul's narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 have been examined separately in the previous three chapters. In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the key points in each chapter and synthesize the significant theological concepts of both pericopes by analyzing them side by side. I will also suggest further areas of research.

Summary

I presented the main problem in the first chapter that Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11 have not been analyzed together thoroughly. This dissertation attempts to fill the lacuna by analyzing both passages in light of each other. Another problem surfaces in the history of interpretation. A schism exists in current scholarship regarding the interpretation of the Christ-hymn. The two main lines of interpretation, namely, kerygmatic and ethical interpretations, are pitted against each other. Some scholars who attempt to integrate both have rightly pointed out this false dichotomy by appealing to the intertwining of Pauline theology and ethics in his letters. However, there has not been an in-depth study that uses Paul's own narrative in the same letter to shed light on how he understands the Christ-hymn. This dissertation endeavors to fill that gap by examining both narratives separately at first, and then exploring them together side by side, thus allowing one to inform the other.

The main argument of this dissertation is encapsulated in my threefold thesis. First, Paul is presenting a parallel to the Christ-hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 through his own narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 as demonstrated by the verbal and

thematic connections in both passages. Second, Paul is highlighting the theme of conformity to Christ as he contemplates on Christ's humiliation and exaltation. He underscores the importance of cultivating a Christ-centered mindset in this inward transformation by using the verbs φρονέω and ἡγέομαι. Third, I argue that theology and ethics should be integrated holistically by incorporating both kerygmatic and ethical views in our interpretation of these two pericopes. I employed exegetical and theological analysis as the method to investigate both passages in support of this thesis.

A detailed exegetical study of the Christ-hymn is undertaken in the second chapter, including a discussion of its literary background and context. The humiliation-exaltation motif is evident in the general structure of the hymn and these twin motif serves as a guidepost in outlining the chapter. The introductory verse (2:5) to the hymn is given sufficient attention since its proper understanding sets the tone for understanding the hymn and unpacks key aspects crucial to its interpretation. After considering verse 5 in its paraenetic context (2:1-4) and the description of Christ's mind in the subsequent verses (2:6-8), I render the verse thus: "Think this among you which was also in Christ Jesus." The understanding of the verse as referring to the mutual relations of the believers ("among you") and the mindset of Christ ("in Christ Jesus") paves the way for understanding the hymn with both kerygmatic and ethical aspects.

The mind of Christ as introduced in Philippians 2:5 is revealed through the choices Christ makes and the attitude he adopts both as God and man. His humiliation unfolds in stages. First, he refuses to take advantage of his preexistent status (being in the form of God and possessing equality with God) by emptying himself and taking the form of a slave. Next, he further humbled himself in his incarnate state (being found in appearance as a human being) by becoming obedient to death and undergoing the most humiliating and excruciating form of death by

dying on the cross. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest position and gave him the name above all names as a sign of his vindication and approval. In the same way that Christ emptied and humbled himself willingly and voluntarily, so did God grant this unparalleled honor to Christ freely and graciously.

The third chapter highlights three relevant themes that emerged from the theological reflections on the Christ-hymn. First, I propose that “Christocentric ethics” should be adopted as the mode of interpretation for the Christ-hymn, instead of using either kerygmatic or ethical interpretation exclusively. This interpretive grid will allow us to integrate both theology and ethics to fully appreciate the richness of the hymn in terms of its Christology and the undeniable pattern of Christ’s humiliation and exaltation for our conformation.

Second, the use of Christocentric ethics as interpretive grid can be explained in more concrete terms as “conformity to Christ.” This conformation is understood not in terms of imitating specific acts of Christ, but rather in cultivating his mindset that is characterized by humility, selflessness and obedience. I contend that the lack of attention on the verb *φρονέω* in Philippians 2:5 is the missing link in interpreting the hymn. A brief survey of its occurrence in the entire letter provides a comprehensive understanding of its wide range of meaning and features its significance in Philippians, especially in the Christ-hymn. Similarly, *ἡγέομαι*—belonging to the same domantic domain as *φρονέω*—is an important verb that helps us understand Christ’s mindset. By focusing on the mind of Christ, we come to understand that before the preexistent Christ emptied himself, his action is preceded by a deliberate choice *not* to consider his equality with God as something to take advantage of. Before the incarnate Christ humbled himself, he made up his mind to obey God and live for others, so that no one and nothing—not Satan’s temptations nor Peter’s human concern—could deter him from treading the *via dolorosa*.

Third, the humiliation-exaltation motif in the Christ-hymn demonstrates a

complete reversal of values in God's kingdom where the greatest of all (the preexistent one who is equal with God) becomes the lowliest of all (becoming a slave and dying on the cross). Christ did not seek to lift himself up, but entrusted himself in the hands of God to exalt him for the latter's glory.

Paul's narrative in Philippians 3:7-11 is the focus of the fourth chapter. I deal with the issue of the literary integrity of the letter first since the view that Philippians 3 is an interpolation is one of the reasons why most people fail to see it as a parallel narrative to the Christ-hymn. The absence of any manuscript that exists in a form other than the canonical letter we have at hand is a strong evidence for its literary unity. The presence of lexical and thematic links throughout the letter further proves its integrity. Specifically, the verbal and thematic correspondence between Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11 confirms that the apostle is presenting his own narrative as a parallel to the Christ-hymn by echoing back what he has portrayed in Christ's life and ministry in terms of his mindset and perspective on humiliation and exaltation.

Synthesis

As we place the two passages side by side, a clear picture begins to unfold. Paul is not only echoing the Christ-hymn, nor is he merely imitating Christ's actions, but he is conforming his life to the saving pattern of his Lord in all aspects of his life in an ongoing process of transformation that pervades his thinking, decision-making, feeling, attitudes, and behavior. This transformation is so radical that he counts everything as loss because of Christ and for the sake of Christ. This change is so revolutionary that his all-consuming passion is to know him to the degree of wanting to embrace both the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

Looking back at the Christ-hymn through the narrative of Paul, we can say

with confidence that he presents the Christ-hymn not simply to impart the doctrines of Christology and soteriology, or merely to provide a paradigmatic example of Christ's humility. Conformity to Christ is foremost in Paul's mind as he contemplates on Christ's humiliation and exaltation. I conclude that Philippians 3:7-11 is the best commentary on Philippians 2:5-11 and the theme of conformity to Christ serves as an interpretive grid to interpret the Christ-hymn.

Further Areas of Research

The role of the Holy Spirit in the conformation process and the renewing of the believer's mind is not discussed in the passages under study. Nevertheless, there is a slight hint of correlation in Philippians 3:3. This line of reasoning needs to be explored further by establishing connections with other Pauline letters, e.g., Romans 8:5-8 and 1 Corinthians 2:9-16. This proposed topic for further research could be another dissertation worth investing one's time and effort. I believe it will yield fruitful results in understanding the Spirit's role in our conformation to the mind of Christ and our inner transformation as believers living in the realm of the Spirit.

Another area that could have a bearing in our present topic is related to the Graeco-Roman background, such as the concepts of *mimēsis* (imitation) and *paideia* (education or upbringing) in the Hellenistic culture and the use of *paradeigma* (pattern) and *exempla* (example) in first-century rhetoric. These topics may offer some interesting insights into the world of Paul and the Philippian church. I made a few cursory remarks on these topics in this dissertation as related to the concept of imitation in our discussion, but they require more extensive research that goes beyond the scope of this present study.

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ABSTRACT

CONFORMITY TO CHRIST: AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S PERSPECTIVE ON HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

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This dissertation presents a threefold thesis. First, Paul is presenting a parallel in Philippians 3:7-11 from his own life by echoing back to Christ's life and ministry in Philippians 2:5-11. Second, the theme of conformity to Christ is foremost in Paul's mind as he contemplates on Christ's humiliation and exaltation. Third, it is common to pit the two main streams of interpretation (kerygmatic and ethical) for these two Philippian passages against each other. I argue that this is a false dichotomy and it is best to integrate both theology and ethics in interpreting both passages.

Chapter 1 serves as the introduction to the dissertation. It states the problem that the relationship between Philippians 2:5-11 and Philippians 3:7-11 has not been given due attention. It provides an overview of the history of interpretation on the topic. It also presents the threefold thesis and the method of research.

Chapter 2 consists of an exegetical study of Philippians 2:5-11. It also includes a preliminary discussion on the literary background of the hymn and the immediate and broader contexts of the pericope. The semantic analysis involves an in-depth study of four key terms which are crucial in understanding the concept of Christocentric perspective. The syntactical analysis examines the passage in detail with focus on the grammatical and syntactical relationship of words, phrases, and

clauses in each verse.

Chapter 3 presents the theological reflections from the exegetical analysis in chapter 2. The discussion centers on three important themes, namely, Christocentric ethics, conformity to Christ, and humiliation-exaltation motif.

Chapter 4 focuses on an exegetical and theological analysis of Philippians 3:7-11. A brief overview of the issue of the letter's literary integrity, immediate and broader contexts of the passage, and the correspondence between Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:7-11 is first presented. This is followed by an exegetical study of the passage. The theological reflections include three themes, namely, supreme lordship of Christ, conformity to Christ, power and participation in Christ.

Chapter 5 integrates the theological reflections from chapters 4 and 5. It also gives the conclusion of the dissertation with suggestions for further areas of research.

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