

# Philippians 2:10 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

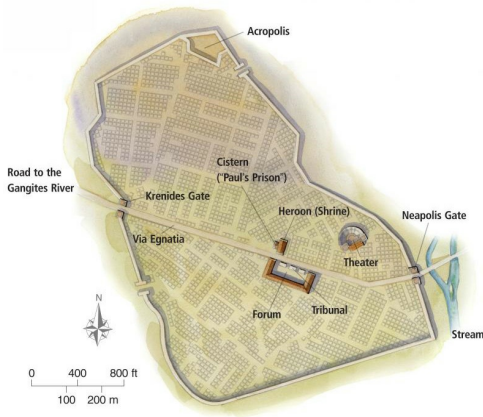
To go directly to that verse

- [Philippians 2:1](#)
- [Philippians 2:2](#)
- [Philippians 2:3](#)
- [Philippians 2:4](#)
- [Philippians 2:5](#)
- [Philippians 2:6](#)
- [Philippians 2:7](#)
- [Philippians 2:8](#)
- [Philippians 2:9](#)
- [Philippians 2:10](#)
- [Philippians 2:11](#)
- [Philippians 2:12](#)
- [Philippians 2:13](#)
- [Philippians 2:14](#)
- [Philippians 2:15](#)
- [Philippians 2:16](#)
- [Philippians 2:17](#)
- [Philippians 2:18](#)
- [Philippians 2:19](#)
- [Philippians 2:20](#)
- [Philippians 2:21](#)
- [Philippians 2:22](#)
- [Philippians 2:23](#)
- [Philippians 2:24](#)
- [Philippians 2:25](#)
- [Philippians 2:26](#)
- [Philippians 2:27](#)
- [Philippians 2:28](#)
- [Philippians 2:29](#)
- [Philippians 2:30](#)

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LIFE IN CHRIST  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Philippians - Charles Swindoll](#) = Chart on right side of page

<b>Account of Paul's Circumstances Php 1:1-30</b>	<b>Have the Mind of Christ Php 2:1-30</b>	<b>Have the Knowledge of Christ Php 3:1-21</b>	<b>Have the Peace of Christ Php 4:1-23</b>
Partakers of Christ	People of Christ	Pursuit of Christ	Power of Christ
Suffering	Submission	Salvation	Sanctification
Experience	Examples	Exhortation	



## Philippi in the Time of Paul

The city plan above shows those features of the city of Philippi that archaeologists have so far identified as dating from the time of Paul. "Paul's Prison" is not believed to be an authentic site, but was a cistern later associated with Christian worship. ([ESV.org](http://ESV.org))

**Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW (3SAAS) of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** hina en to onomati lesou pan gonu kampse (3SAAS) epouranion kai epigeion kai katachthonion

**Amplified:** That in (at) the name of Jesus every knee hould (must) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** in order that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things upon the earth, and things below the earth

**KJV:** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

**Lightfoot:** For to the name and majesty of Jesus all created things in heaven and earth and hell shall pay homage on bended knee;

**Phillips:** so that at the name of Jesus "every knee shall bow", whether in Heaven or earth or under the earth. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** in order that in recognition of THE NAME belonging to Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth, ([Eermans Publishing](#))

**Young's Literal:** that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow -- of heavenlies, and earthlies, and what are under the earth--

**SO THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW: hina en to onomati lesou pan gonu kampsei (3SAAS):**

- Ge 41:43; Isa 45:23-25; Mt 27:29; 28:18; Ro 11:4; 14:10,11; Eph 3:14; Heb 1:6; Rev 4:10; 5:13,14
- [Philippians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Literally the Greek reads not "at the Name" but "in the Name of Jesus"

In a manner of speaking the tongue confesses that to which the knee bows.

In this passage Paul emphasizes the universality of Christ's exaltation and lordship.

Paul is quoting from the Septuagint of Isaiah 45:23 "That to Me every knee will bow (kampsei pan gonu)."

**Keith Krell** - In the Isaiah passage, *Yahweh*, and *Yahweh* alone, is unique and the only One who creates, redeems, and sustains (45:17–18). Thus, the passage is a powerful statement about *Yahweh's* supremacy. It is precisely this supremacy, which is conferred on Jesus in 2:10–11. Note again the process, though. While on earth His name was often despised and He had no great titles. He was called "a friend of sinners," and a

"blasphemer." Because He did not conform to the world of His day, He did not have an important title beside His name, distinguishing Him. Yet because He did not live to make His name great on this earth, God has made His name supremely exalted in the world to come.

**Guzik** - In this, Paul draws on the idea of Isaiah 45:23 : *I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.* Notice that in Isaiah, it is to Yahweh that all knees bow and tongues confess. In Philippians it is to Jesus, showing that Jesus *is* Yahweh.

**Spurgeon on every knee should bow** - Look at Him! Can your imagination picture Him? Behold His transcendent glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up; the pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun; the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed. He in Himself is brighter than the sun, more terrible than armies with banners. In heaven, in earth, in hell, all knees bend before Him, and every tongue confesses that He is God. If not now, yet in the time that is to come this shall be carried out, that every creature of God's making shall acknowledge His Son to be "God over all, blessed forever. Amen" (Rom 9:5). My soul anticipates that blessed day, when this whole earth shall bend its knee before its God willingly! I do believe there is a happy era coming, when there shall not be one knee unbent before my Lord and Master.

The combination of tongues confessing and knees bowing gives evidence that the idea is a complete submission to Jesus, both in word and in action, and one that is required of all.

**So that** ([2443](#)) (**hina**) expresses purpose, specifically the purpose of His having been given the exalted Name "Lord". For that reason (for that purpose) "**every knee will bow**". Ultimately, whether by choice or by force, every creature, human and angelic, will submit to Jesus Christ as the divine and exalted Lord. See importance of pausing to ponder **terms of purpose or result**.

As **MacDonald** phrases it "Those who will not be reconciled in the day of His grace will be subjugated in the day of His judgment. (MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Jesus** Himself foretold of this event some 700 years prior in the book of **Isaiah** (from which Paul quotes in part) declaring "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him shall be put to shame. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel will be justified, and will glory." (Isaiah 45:23, 24, 25)

**Wuest** - That which was graciously bestowed was not "a name," but "the Name." The definite article appears in the Greek text and refers to a particular name. The title, THE NAME, is a very common Hebrew title, denoting office, rank, dignity. The expression, "The Name of God" in the Old Testament, denotes the divine Presence, the divine Majesty, especially as the object of adoration and praise. The context here dwells upon the honor and worship bestowed on Him upon whom this name was conferred. The conferring of this title "The Name," was upon the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man. A Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who as Very God had voluntarily laid aside His expression of the glory of Deity during His incarnation, now has placed upon His shoulders all the majesty, dignity, and glory of Deity itself. It is the God-Man who stooped to the depths of humiliation, who is raised, not as God now, although He was all that, but as Man, to the infinite height of exaltation possessed only by Deity. It is the answer of our Lord's prayer "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). It is the glory of Deity, not now seen shining in infinite splendor as in His pre-incarnate state, but that glory shining in perfect contrast to and with His glorified humanity raised now to a place of equal dignity with Deity. It is the ideal and beautiful combination of the exaltation of Deity and the humility of Deity seen in incarnate Deity. ([Philippians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

**Paul** alludes to this event in **Romans** writing

"But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, **EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.**" (Ro 14:10, 11-note)

**Every** ([3956](#)) (**pas**) means all without exception. Whether in heaven, on earth or in hell! All will bow!

Even those who mockingly bowed on earth will be forced to bow their knees. Matthew describes those who mocked Him writing...

And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and **they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him**, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mt 27:29)

**Comment:** Just imagine what they will think on that that fateful moment in that future day when they are forced to bow to Jesus Christ as the King of kings! Woe! Woe! Woe!

The writer of **Hebrews** records....

And when He again brings the first-born into the world (referring to His Second Coming), He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM." (He 1:6-note)

**Comment:** the authority of the person of Jesus Christ extends to the limits of heaven and earth and under the earth so that all of the angelic hosts will bow to acknowledge the superiority and sovereignty and authority of His name

**John** wrote that in heaven...

the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him (Jesus) Who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created." (Rev 4:10-note, Rev 4:11-note)

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, " To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever. And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev 5:13-note, Rev 5:14-note)

All creation will render such homage, whether animate or inanimate, whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth. Those who do not willingly bow the knee to Him now will one day be compelled to do so. Those who will not be reconciled in the day of His grace will be subjugated in the day of His judgment.

Paul is quoting from Isaiah 45:23

"I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee **will bow (kampto)**, every tongue will swear allegiance.

**Bow** (2578) (**kampto**) means to bend or incline some part of the body, such as the knees, to which it is applied in the New Testament. Bowing the knee is an act of reverence, respect, and submission to the person in whose presence we drop to our knees. Thayer says kampto is "used by Homer of those taking a seat or sitting down to rest (Iliad 7, 118; 19, 72);" Bending one's knee is a picture of submission and worship.

Be careful of falling in the trap of externally bending your knee, but internally failing to "bow your heart," for the former gains men's attention, but only the latter pleases God!

**Friberg** notes that **kampto** is " a Hebrew idiom meaning worship; (1) transitively, with gonu (knee) as the object bend, bow the knee (Ro 11.4); (2) intransitively, with go,nu as the subject bend, bow down (Ro 14.11)" (Analytical Lexicon)

**Gilbrant** on **kampto** - Classical Greek - The use of kamptō is attested in the works of Homer (from the Eighth Century B.C.), Sophocles and Aeschylus (from the Fifth Century B.C.), in papyri, and in Philo. It is often found in conjunction with the word gonu (1113), "knee," with the sense of "bending" the knee in order to sit down or rest. Also, kamptein (the infinitive form) is found alone with the same meaning, "to sit down." However, as in the Septuagint and later in the New Testament, there does not appear to be any religious formula of prayer associated with this act of "bending one's knee." In the Septuagint there are 20 occurrences of kamptō. It is used of the "bowing of one's head" (Isaiah 58:5); of "adversaries bowing" at the feet of David (2 Samuel 22:40); of a captain who "fell on his knees" before Elijah (2 Kings 1:13); and of Jehoram who, being shot with an arrow by Jehu, "sunk down" in his chariot (2 Kings 9:24). Elsewhere in the Septuagint kamptō is related to the act of worship unto the Lord. In 1 Chronicles 29:20 the people "bowed down their heads" and worshiped; in 2 Chronicles 29:29 the king and those present "bowed themselves" and worshiped; and in Isaiah 45:23 the Lord proclaims that "every knee shall bow." Kamptō is used to describe Daniel's posture of prayer when he "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed" (Daniel 6:10). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Kampto** - 4x in 4v - Usage: bow(3), bowed(1).

Romans 11:4-note But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO **HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.**"

Romans 14:11-note For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE **SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.**"

Ephesians 3:14-note For this reason I **bow** my knees before the Father,

Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE **WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

## **Kampto** - 12 verses in the Septuagint -

Jdg. 5:27; Jdg. 7:5; Jdg. 7:6; 2 Sam. 22:40; 2 Ki. 1:13; 2 Ki. 9:24; 1 Chr. 29:20; 2 Chr. 29:29; Job 9:13; Isa. 45:23; Isa. 58:5; Dan. 6:10

1 Chr. 29:20 Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and **bowed** low and did homage to the LORD and to the king.

2 Chronicles 29:29 Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshiped.

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued **kneeling** on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

As **Edwards** note "Again we see the vindication of servanthood. Christ was willing to make others more important than Himself and now God has made Christ eternally more important than anyone else."

It is interesting to note that when a ruling dignitary approaches his subjects, they all rise in respect. One day as a British king entered a room and everyone stood, he said, "Please take your seats, gentlemen. I'm not the Lord, you know." "No, Your Highness," replied one of the group. "If you were, we would have dropped to our knees."

Paul is not referring to a perfunctory genuflection whenever the Name of Jesus is mentioned, but a universal acknowledgment of the majesty and power of Jesus who carried His human name and nature to heaven.

John upon seeing the resurrected, glorified Christ wrote "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev 1:17-18+).

Those to whom the resurrected, glorified Christ appeared fell on their faces, not because Scripture commanded them to, not because they were told that was what they ought to do, but because that is the natural response to such a revelation of the majesty and glory that belong to the Son of God.

**Wuest** - We come now to the expression, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." But it is not at the name "Jesus" that every knee will bow. "Jesus" was the name given our Lord at His humiliation. It is at THE NAME that belongs to Jesus that every knee will bow. Every knee will bow in recognition of all that Jesus is in His exaltation. The word "that" is in the Greek literally "in." It is in The Name that every knee will bow. The Name is the spiritual sphere, the holy element as it were, in which every prayer will be offered and every knee will bow. ([Philippians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

**Pentecost** applies this truth to all believers asking "As Jesus Christ is lifted up and His glory is displayed, why do you sit? Why aren't you on your knees to give honor, glory, dominion, and majesty to the One whom God has chosen to exalt as heir to a position, and to clothe with the glory and majesty of His person, the One before whom every knee must bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of the Father? "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12). ([Ibid](#))

This universal homage to Jesus is described by Paul in Ephesians where he explains the power available to believers today is the same power...

which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church (Eph 1:20, 21-note, Ep 1:22-note)

As someone has well said "The name of "Jesus" is profanity to the sinner but heaven's password to the saint."

## **Spurgeon's Exposition**

Now is he higher than the highest. Now every one must confess his divinity. With shame and terror, his adversaries shall bow before him; with delight and humble adoration, his friends shall own him Lord of all: "that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." See how the greatest glory of Christ is the glory of the Father. He never desired any other glory but that. The highest honor you can ever have, O child of God, is to bring honor to your Father who is in heaven. Do you not think so? I know you do.

Some foolish and superstitious persons make this passage a pretext for bowing their heads at the name of Jesus whenever it is mentioned. Nothing can be more senseless, because the passage means no such thing.

What we are taught here is the great truth that Jesus Christ, though once he stooped to the lowest shame, is now exalted to the very highest glory, and even the devils in hell are compelled to own the might of his power. We are also to learn from this passage that the way to ascend is to descend. He who would be chief must be willing to be the servant of all. The King of kings was the Servant of servants; and if you would be crowned with honor by-and-by, you must be willing to be despised and rejected of men now. The Lord give us this gracious humbleness of mind, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## OF THOSE WHO ARE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH: epouranion kai epigeion kai katachthonion:

- Mt 12:40; Jn 5:28,29; Eph 4:9; Rev 20:13
- [Philippians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### HEAVEN, EARTH AND HADES

The three locations describe three groups:

**In heaven** ([2032](#)) (**epouranios** from **epí** = upon, in + **ouranos** = heaven) = all the good angels and redeemed believers of all ages.

**On earth** ([1919](#)) (**epígeios** from **epí** = upon + **ge** = earth) = would include both unredeemed and redeemed, the latter group described by Paul who wrote "when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed." (2Th 1:10)

**Under the earth** = the fallen angels and unredeemed dead who are awaiting final judgment and eternal punishment.

**Under the earth** ([2709](#)) (**katachthonios** from **kata** = down + **chthon** = ground from a root word signifying that which is deep) describes the subterranean place for departed souls. It was a common in secular Greek describing the underworld where divine beings were thought to be localized. The term is used in classical Greek of the gods and demons in Hades.

**Wuest** adds that "All creation will render such homage, whether animate or inanimate, whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth. ([Philippians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

Indeed **First Chronicles** records this amazing truth...

Let the sea roar, and all it contains. Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD for He is coming to judge the earth. (1Chronicles 16:32, 33)

**Comment:** See also Psalm 148:3-10 where creation is personified as presenting homage to the Messiah.

**Dwight Pentecost** - Here is an amazing revelation that, because of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, even the fallen, unredeemed angels, and unredeemed, sinful men, who are under eternal condemnation, will have to bow before the display of the majesty of the Son of God and acknowledge that the One they despised and rejected is in truth the exalted Son of God. While in their state of separation and condemnation they cannot believe to the salvation of their souls, throughout the unending ages of eternity, even hell itself will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and acknowledge that the despised and rejected One whom they delighted to put to the cross was in truth the absolute Sovereign of the universe. And God will not leave one single created intelligent being who does not admit to the superior worth of Jesus Christ. Things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth will bow the knee in reverence and respect and awe at the majesty of the exalted person of Jesus Christ. ([Ibid](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Suppose you had been out of the country during the recent NBA play-offs between Houston and Orlando. You had not heard that Houston swept it in four games. You had asked me to videotape the series so that you could watch the games after you returned. When you got back, I proposed that we place a \$100 bet on the series. Would you take me up on it? Only if you wanted to give me \$100! Why? Because the outcome is not in any doubt. Betting against a game where the outcome is certain would be utterly foolish. And yet millions of people bet their eternal destiny against an outcome that God has declared absolutely certain. Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and is ascended to the right hand of God the Father where He awaits all of His enemies to be made His footstool (Ps 110:1). God's Word assures us that every knee will bow to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. And yet people go on betting their eternal destiny against this sure word from God, living as their own lords and saviors, as if God's

Word were uncertain or not true.

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**TURNING THE TABLES** - GOD has a way of turning the tables on evil. The French philosopher Voltaire predicted that Christianity would be swept from existence within one hundred years. Yet just fifty years after he died in 1779, the German Bible Society had occupied Voltaire's house and was using his printing press to produce stacks of Bibles. During World War II, Adolf Hitler erected a massive stone structure in Monte Carlo. It was to be a radio station from which to broadcast Nazi propaganda into North Africa. Today, from that very building, Trans World Radio beams the Gospel of Christ's redeeming love all across Europe and into Russia and Africa. Could these ironies of history be just a hint of the last word Christ will have at the end of this age? The apostle Paul wrote of a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

When evil prospers and falsehood seems to triumph over truth, we need not be discouraged. When we are treated unjustly, we need not despair. The ironies of history and Paul's words in Philippians 2:1-11 assure us that the God we serve will have the final word. The righteous will one day be vindicated.—D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**It's All For Him** - All things were created through Him and for Him. —Colossians 1:16 (note) It's a little phrase of just two words at the end of Colossians 1:16—"for Him." Yet that little phrase gives God's own interpretation of history. In those two words He affirms that Jesus is the final and complete explanation of everything.

All that has happened and ever will happen is moving through time toward that climactic hour when every tongue will confess the lordship of Jesus Christ. Every knee, whether in grateful adoration or under compulsion, will then bow to Him (Philippians 2:10, 11).

British historian H.A.L. Fisher apparently did not share that view. He sadly confessed, "Men wiser and more learned than I have discovered in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave . . . nothing but the play of the contingent and the unforeseeable."

What about you? Are you overwhelmed by what seems to be the aimless sequence of events? If so, look once more at Jesus—His life, death, resurrection, and promised return. Your troubled heart will be filled with hope and confidence as you realize that there's meaning and purpose for everything in the world—when you live "for Him." —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

One life to live for Christ my Lord,  
One life to do my part,  
One life in which to give my all  
With fervency of heart. —Brandt

**Christ showed His love by dying for us;  
we show our love by living for Him.**