

1 **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**
2 **First Assembly of God, Fort Myers**
3 **February 17, 2021**
4 **Dr. Joe Mulvihill**

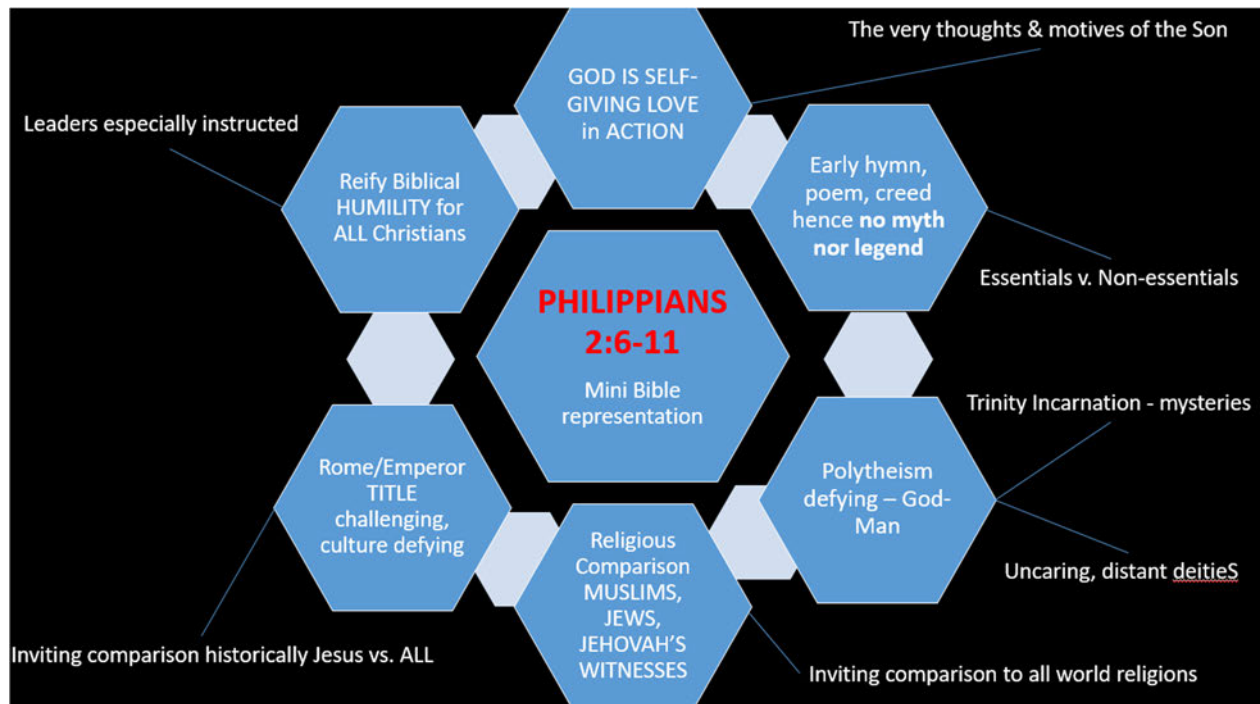
5 This is how you should think among yourselves - with the mind that you have because
6 you belong to the Messiah, Jesus:
7 Who, though in God's form, did not
8 Regard his equality with God
9 As something he ought to exploit.
10 Instead, he emptied himself,
11 And received the form of a slave,
12 Being born in the likeness of humans.
13 And then, having human appearance,
14 He humbled himself, and became
15 Obedient even to death,
16 Yes, even the death of the cross.
17 And so God has greatly exalted him,
18 And to him in his favour has given
19 The name which is over all names:
20 That now at the name of Jesus
21 Every knee under heaven shall bow
22 On earth, too, and under the earth;
23 And every tongue shall confess
24 That Jesus, Messiah, is Lord,
25 To the glory of God, the father.
26
27

28 Three BASICS of the passage – if nothing else:
29

30 **Jesus was God – Jesus was human – Jesus was a servant**

31
32 **GOD LOWERED HIMSELF FOR YOU AND YOU AND ME – FULL STOP.**

33
34 STRANDS from this passage this is an early hymn/poem, hence no myth or legend
35 development (in opposition to our secular schools presentation of Jesus), polytheism
36 defying (care of the ONE TRUE GOD, come to earth as a peasant teacher, dying, rising,
37 emperor-title challenging, culture-defying, inviting comparison historically Jesus vs all.
38 And comparison with major religions: MUSLIMS, JEWS, JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, mini-
39 Bible representation here in the Philippian letter, a call for all Christians, a crucial criteria
40 for leaders, defying Rome's "we rule & exert our power over others like the gods do!" – NO
41 at the heart of the true God is self-giving LOVE – a love that would go to extremes to offer
42 this to us!)



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EARLY (very close to the event described) – hence no legend accumulation here (contra-university Jesus) – this hymn/poem is likely as early as two decades after the crucifixion/resurrection – it is structured like the Bible itself with this section being the center of the whole letter.

JESUS THE TRUE KING OF KINGS - THE TRUE “AUGUSTUS”

Paul was CHAINED likely to an elite guard - JESUS IS LORD AND KING CAESAR IS NOT – proclaiming this in a Roman Colony peopled with the best and most dignified of Roman public servants (enamored with the glory of Rome) and under the PRAETORIAN GUARD???

Hypothetical witnessing by Paul to a Praetorian or retired loyalist to ROME based right out of our passage...

“Were any of your Caesars prophesied and predicted hundreds of years before they were born? Did the people closest to your Caesars claim moral perfection? Have you interacted with the dead Caesars like I did the true King of Kings on the Damascus road? Did you witness any miracles performed by your Caesars? Have you done any miracles to others to glorify your divine emperor? Have any one of your brothers in the guard freely given their life up off the battlefield to honor their emperor? Have any of your Caesars been able to prove to you that they have conquered death and risen again?”

1 You and I TODAY have the advantage of 2000-year hindsight when we speak of Jesus...

- 2 • **The Bible's central, culminating character – JESUS – is the single most**
- 3 **influential figure in all of human history – BY ANY METRIC – this is a whole**
- 4 **series but just a summary**
- 5 • Jesus stands unmatched in comparison to rivals
- 6 • The Jesus information recorded in the NT is some of the best attested data from the
- 7 ancient world
- 8 • The resurrection of Jesus in 33 A.D. is the best-evidenced miracle claim ever made
- 9 • The Bible's central figure, JESUS, has an UNMATCHED IMPACT
- 10 • **More ART** has been inspired by Christ than any other
- 11 • **More MUSIC** (and especially excellent music) has been written about Jesus than
- 12 anyone else
- 13 • **More BOOKS** have been authored concerning Jesus than anyone else
- 14 • **More BUILDINGS** have been erected in honor of Jesus than any other person in
- 15 human history

16
17 “For Christians, Jesus is the **hinge on which the door of history swings**, the point
18 at which eternity intersects with time, the Savior who redeems time by drawing all
19 things to himself. As the second millennium draws to a close, nearly a third of the
20 world's population claims to be his followers. By **ANY secular standard** Jesus is **the**
21 **most dominant figure** of Western culture. Like the millennium itself, much of what
22 we now think of as Western ideas, inventions and values finds its source or
23 inspiration in the religion that worships God in his name. What has Jesus influenced
24 in the West? Art and science, the self and society, politics and economics, marriage
25 and the family, right and wrong, body and soul. **ALL** have been touched and radically
26 transformed by Christian influences.” --NEWSWEEK March 29, 1999 pg. 54

27 28 **ROMAN DEIFICATION – APOTHEOSIS – An Analysis of the Emperor Cult** 29 **in Rome Theios Aner = “(Divine) God-Man”**

30
31 As Pontifex Maximus (high priest), the emperors were supposed to serve as mediators
32 between mortal humanity below and immortal divinity above. It was believed that in the
33 advent of the emperor, recognized as “son of god” and “savior,” the good news or gospel
34 for the world began. **Importantly, the opening line of the gospel of Mark, possibly the**
35 **first gospel written, daringly challenges the emperors' role: “The beginning of the**
36 **gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”**

37
38 As daring as this statement is, it would have been appreciated by many. By mid 60s AD,
39 when Mark's gospel likely began its public circulation, the Roman imperial doctrine of the
40 “divine Caesar” (Emperor cult) was ALREADY beginning to look extremely dubious.

1 Following the deaths of these so-called “sons of god,” the Roman Senate was supposed to
2 vote for deification. **But one emperor after another failed miserably in this role as**
3 **“god.”** Postmortem deification of the Caesars had in some circles become a joke to the
4 people, the army and even the emperors themselves. Indeed, not long after the death of
5 Emperor Claudius, Seneca penned a satire mocking the whole process that he entitled the
6 “Pumpkinification of Claudius.”

7
8 The growing cynicism is not hard to understand.

9
10 **Julius Caesar (100–44 BC), the founder of the Julio-Claudian line, was power-hungry,**
11 **arrogant, and completely amoral, yet he was a remarkable military/political leader**
12 (made some surprisingly adept and positive decisions for his people). After a brief reign
13 as dictator (48–44 BC) and only one month after being awarded absolute power, Caesar
14 was brutally murdered by his colleagues, many of whom had been at one time close
15 friends - a “god” on earth?

16
17 After thirteen years of uneasy power-sharing and then open civil war, Caesar’s great-
18 nephew Octavian (63 BC–AD 14) emerged as the new emperor, hailed as “Augustus.”

19
20 **Caesar Augustus (Octavian) proved to be the greatest of the first twelve emperors of**
21 **Rome after the civil war. He actually persuaded the Senate to deify his predecessor**
22 **Julius.** After a lengthy and mostly successful reign, Augustus was himself deified shortly
23 after his death. But, the great Augustus was hardly a physical specimen. He was small and
24 suffered a variety of health problems. Although publicly moral and devoted to his (third)
25 wife Livia, Augustus was known to be a womanizer and spent time away from Rome so
26 that he might more openly spend time with his mistress.

27
28 Tiberius (42 BC–AD 37), son of Livia, succeeded Augustus. Compared to his stepfather, the
29 middle-aged emperor was uninspiring. He resented the fact that his mother was more
30 popular than himself. To hide his pedophilia from Rome, he relocated to the island of Capri.
31 A capable administrator and remarkably successful at enriching Rome’s treasury, Tiberius
32 was nevertheless despised. Those closest to him could hardly wait for the old man to die.
33 In fact, they didn’t. On his deathbed the emperor gasped and stopped breathing. All
34 assumed he had died. Then his eyes popped open and breathing resumed. Shocked, Gaius
35 Caligula, his successor, and others piled pillows and blankets atop the gasping Tiberius
36 and smothered him. No one clamored for his deification.

37
38 Caligula (AD 12–41) proved to be so wicked and insane that he made Tiberius look like a
39 saint. After a promising start, the young emperor began to behave in monstrous ways,
40 assassinating rivals and imagined plotters and - almost beyond belief - raping the wives of
41 guests at royal banquets.

42
43 Caligula’s mockery of the commander of his bodyguard proved his undoing.

1 One evening in January, while returning from the theater to the palace, Caligula was
2 attacked by his own protectors, with the commander himself striking the first blow. The
3 emperor was hacked to pieces and his body was buried in haste and without ceremony.
4 **Needless to say, none called for his deification.**

5
6 Well-educated and overlooked Claudius (10 BC–AD 54) was hailed as the new emperor.
7 His rule was fair, if not competent, and he was much better liked than his two
8 predecessors. By Roman standards, his physical appearance and quirks were
9 embarrassing. He limped because of a club foot. His nose ran and often drool dripped from
10 his chin. He stuttered. He could not give a speech unless the text was before him. His wife,
11 Agrippina, and stepson, Nero, wickedly murdered Claudius by putting poison in his dinner
12 (“Food of the gods,” Nero quipped).

13
14 Agrippina may have gotten what she wanted, but in time she did not want what she got.
15 By murdering her husband, she turned loose Nero (AD 37–68) on the world. As a teenager
16 he listened to his advisors, but in his twenties he stopped listening. His acts became as
17 monstrous as those of Caligula. He wanted to build a larger palace and coincidentally, in
18 64, a fire burned out the very properties he hoped to acquire. Only, the fire burned about
19 half of Rome as well! To quell the rumor that he started the fire, Nero fastened blame on
20 members of a new sect called “Christianity” and had Christians tortured and murdered in
21 shocking ways. Neither Rome, nor Nero was prepared for the Jewish revolt that broke out
22 in Jerusalem in 66. The emperor brought out of forced retirement (Vespasian) and sent
23 him and the legions to Judea. But even with a war underway, Nero’s support from his
24 subjects continued to plunge, until finally, in 68, the Senate condemned him as an enemy
25 of state. **Fearing arrest, torture, and murder, Nero committed suicide. No one**
26 **suggested that the maniac be deified.**

27
28 What followed next almost brought the empire to its knees.

29
30 Galba (3 BC–AD 69) seized power only to be murdered several months later.

31
32 Otho (AD 32–69), who had backed Galba, seized power, but after three months he saw the
33 writing on the wall and committed suicide like Nero.

34
35 Vitellius (AD 15–69) saw his chance and seized power, but after a brief reign he too was
36 murdered. The imperial doctrine of **the divine emperor, the savior of the world, the**
37 **beginning of the good news, was beginning to sound silly.** Needless to say, none of
38 these men were deified.

39
40 Finally, after one failed would-be emperor after another, the successful but modest general
41 Vespasian (AD 9–79) was proclaimed emperor. He turned over command of the Roman
42 legions in Judea to his son Titus, who successfully ended the war with the storming of
43 Jerusalem and the fiery destruction of the city’s famous temple. Father and son returned

1 to Rome in late 70, and in 71 celebrated a grand triumph, which included parading trophies
2 seized from the Jewish temple. After a relatively uneventful and not particularly glamorous
3 rule, Vespasian took sick and died. It is rumored that **as death approached, the**
4 **emperor** - always fond of a good joke - **jested**: “Dear me, I think I am becoming a god!”
5

6 With the support of his son and successor Titus and because of his modesty and general
7 likability, the Senate voted for Vespasian’s deification. He was only the second emperor to
8 be deified since Augustus and Claudius, and the latter’s rites had been suspended by Nero.
9 (It had fallen to Vespasian to revive them.)
10

11 **Vespasian** was succeeded by his sons **Titus** (AD 39–81) and then **Domitian** (AD 51–96).
12 The rule of neither was especially successful. This was so in the case of Titus because of
13 his untimely death after a reign of only two years. In his brother’s honor, Domitian not only
14 persuaded the Senate to deify Titus post-mortem, he also built a magnificent arch in the
15 Roman Forum, which stands to this day. Easily offended, Domitian overreacted to criticism
16 and exacted severe retribution for perceived slights. In the end, the Roman elite had had
17 enough. The emperor was murdered after a rule of fifteen years. He was not deified
18 post-mortem.
19

20 Rome’s Mortal “gods”
21

22 These emperors did not relieve the people of their fears. They brought Romans no
23 assurance of peace with the gods. As “gods,” the emperors proved frail and mortal. **Of the**
24 **twelve emperors, six were assassinated, two committed suicide, several of them**
25 **were likely involved in murder, while only five managed to be elevated to the status**
26 **of gods** (and only on-and off again in the case of Claudius). **This record hardly inspired**
27 **confidence in either the “god” emperor or their subjects.** (excerpts from *Unimaginable* by
28 Dr. Jeremiah Johnston)
29

30 JESUS V. ALL OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS:

31
32 JESUS IS REMARKABLY UNIQUE especially among world religion figures – **Dr. Gary**
33 **Habermas**, the world expert on the resurrection, has written about the ways Jesus is
34 unique:

- 35 1. Jesus claimed to be Deity – (Krishna exception in Bhagavad Gita but not Mono Deity
36 conception)
- 37 2. Jesus himself is the path to salvation (relationship and then obedience)
- 38 3. Jesus performed miracles recorded in the earliest and best sources (3-5 decades &
39 extra biblical)
- 40 4. Jesus’ death as a means of salvation
- 41 5. A place for real pain and suffering (Jesus and all after him)
- 42 6. Jesus bodily resurrection from the grave
43

1 *This early poem, hymn was a DIRECT CHALLENGE to BOTH ROMAN LOYALIST PAGANS
2 who took part in Emperor worship AND JUDAIZERS – JEWS trying to undermine the new
3 Christian movement – Paul’s old colleagues as Saul!*

4
5 **Christ could never have actually surrendered any of His attributes, for then He**
6 **would have ceased to be God. But He could (and did) voluntarily choose not to use**
7 **some of them on some occasions during His time on the earth in order to live among**
8 **human beings and their limitations** (for example, see Matthew 24:36).

9
10 During His three-year ministry, Jesus did in fact use the divine attributes of *omniscience*,
11 knowing everything (John 2:24; 16:30); *omnipresence*, being everywhere (John 1:48); and
12 *omnipotence*, being all-powerful (John 11). Therefore, whatever limitations Christ may
13 have suffered when He “made himself nothing” (Philippians 2:7), He did not subtract a
14 single divine attribute or in any sense make Himself less than God. Jesus merely chose not
15 to use them on some occasions. HE DID NOT LOSE, BUT VEILED HIS GLORY!

16
17 Evangelism ALERT:

18 **Unitarianism** = one Being and one Consciousness – so Jesus or “God the Son” is to be
19 understood as a *separate* created being for the Unitarian!

20
21 ***JEWS, MUSLIMS, JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES are ALL UNITARIAN***
22 NOTICE...

23
24 **Everything the Christian needs to challenge the lowered Islamic/Qur’anic view of Jesus**
25 **is found in Philippians 2:6-11:**

26
27 *6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,*
28 **Muslim & Jew: No, Jesus was not divine - GOD never shares his power or glory**
29 *7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human*
30 *likeness. 8(A) And being found in as a man*

31 **Muslim & Jew: No, God cannot become incarnate / become a human**
32 *8(B) he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

33 **Muslim: No, Jesus never really died on a cross for sins**

34 *9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every*
35 *name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under*
36 *the earth,*

37 **Muslim & Jew: No, it is not the name of Jesus that all will bow, it is the name of the**
38 **final prophet, Muhammad**

39 *11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

40 **Muslim: No, there is no Trinity – this is the most offensive thing one can claim**
41 **about God!**

42
43 Our modern culture tries to join other religions in making this critique



IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, JESUS SHARED THE (H.A.N.D.S. acronym):

HONORS of God the Father

ACTIONS of God the Father

NAMES of God the Father

DEEDS of God the Father

SEAT of God the Father

(From: *Putting Jesus in His Place*
by Rob Bowman, Ed Komoszewski)

CHRISTIANITY is Trinitarian

Trinitarianism – the idea that within God’s BEING there are three distinct centers of consciousness three persons (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) and these can interact with one another (like communicating).

Trinitarianism depends crucially on the DISTINCTION between BEING and PERSON.

Obvious contradiction to claim three Beings = one Being or three Persons = one Person

BEING = Something’s nature or essence WHAT IT IS – things that exist have BEING (tree, rock, my hound Sadie, ALL OF US = human BEINGS)

BUT rocks, trees and dogs have no PERSON/ ARE NOT PERSONAL

PERSON has to do with WHO one is

WHAT YOU ARE IS DISTINCT FROM WHO YOU ARE

Our PERSON are the unique features about our kind (i.e. HUMAN BEINGS have a will, emotions, intellect & express these in varying degrees)

TREES and DOGS are not PERSONS (bumper stickers aside)

1 ROCK = one what no WHO
2 Dr. Joe = one WHAT and one WHO
3 God = one WHAT and three WHOS

4

5 Jesus did not pray to divinity or BEING or GOD-nature but to a PERSON “The Father” as the
6 Incarnate Son who still had the what/the nature/the essence of Godhood, divinity (meme
7 response – see YOUTUBE search: “Tim Barnett Red Pen Logic – Trinity”).

8

9 The data also shows us a man who claimed to be God in many ways in all four Gospels:

- 10 1. He called himself “the son of God” many times in an all four Gospels.
- 11 2. He changed people's names, Simon to Peter in (John 1:42), something Jews believed
12 only God could do. God designed us and our destiny and knows our true identity, the
13 Jews, like most ancient peoples, believe that a name was bound up with one's destiny
14 and true identity.
- 15 3. He claimed to be sinless (i.e, John 8:46).
- 16 4. He forgave all sins (Mark 2:5-12, Luke 24:45-47). No one can do this but God, I have
17 a right to forgive you for your sins against me but not for your sins against others.
- 18 5. He performed many miracles. He raised the dead (John 11), and even rose from the
19 dead himself.
- 20 6. He accepted the title “my Lord and my God” and accepted worship. (John 20:28)
- 21 7. He uttered the Divine name “I Am” in His own name. (John 8:58)
- 22 8. He promised to send the Holy Spirit when He departed. John 14:25-26, 16:7-15)
- 23 9. He claimed to give eternal life. (John 3:16, John 5:39-40)
- 24 10. He claimed the authority to reinterpret the Mosaic law.
25 (Matt 5:21-48, 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12)
- 26 11. He foretold the future. (Matt. 24, Luke 24:1-7, John 6:64)
- 27 12. He called himself “your Lord and Teacher.” (John 13:14)
- 28 13. He said He will come at the end of time to judge the entire world. (Matt. 25:31-33)
- 29 14. He said we will be judged by how we have treated Him. (Matthew 25:31-46)

30

31 The Buddhist will say that our self-centeredness and our wickedness is a huge problem
32 and in this they are correct *although how they frame wickedness evil are incoherent* the
33 main thrust is we get rid of this by striving to rid ourselves of desires and unplugging our
34 yearnings and wants through meditative practices/retraining our mind to deny logic,
35 morality, distinction and desire.

36

37 Hinduism says that our fundamental problem is ignorance about the way reality truly is,
38 however, karma means to pay and you will pay for your ignorance-based wickedness as
39 justice is served through reincarnation. Hinduism also suggests that through
40 mind-denying meditation one can achieve and enlighten their status to improve their
41 afterlife chances.

42

1 Islam also places your effort of getting God at the center as paramount. It lays down
2 precept after precept for attempting to please Allah and thereby perhaps getting into a
3 questionable, though desirable, heaven scenario.

4
5 Here we see Emil Brunner's summary "they all share the optimism of self-salvation."

6
7 **Not Buddha, Mohammad nor Krishna would have ever, and never did, say "I am the**
8 **name by which you must be saved," they simply offers philosophical advice about**
9 **how you could save yourself.**

10
11 The Christian is the only one who can say:

12
13 not the labor of my hands,
14 can fulfill thy laws commands,
15 could my zeal no respite know,
16 could my tears forever flow,
17 all for sin could not atone,
18 thou must save and thou alone

19
20 At the end of the day, it is not Jesus versus Muhammad or Buddha or Krishna or Caesar...
21 **but Jesus Christ versus you as your own savior!**

22
23 The Way of Christ offers a meaning suffering & loss cannot take away, a satisfaction not
24 based on circumstances, a freedom that doesn't destroy love (it is not the absence of
25 constraints but the liberating ones), an identity that doesn't crush you or exclude others
26 (not an achieved identity but a received one), a hope that is not mere empty optimism -
27 unparalleled resources for the things we all want in Jesus Christ.

28
29 CONCLUSION: As you look at the incarnate son of God dying on the cross the most powerful
30 thought you should think is: **this is the true meaning of who God is. He is the God of**
31 **self-giving love. God the Father, who will not share his glory with anyone else has**
32 **shared it - with Jesus.** Jesus, therefore, must somehow be identified as one who from all
33 eternity was 'equal with God.'

34
35 **This is a God who is known most clearly when he abandons his rights for the sake of**
36 **the world.**