

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 12, Christ Hymn (Phil 2:5-11) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 12, Christ Hymn (Phil 2:5-11), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Darko's lecture, Session 12 of his Prison Epistles series, focuses on the "Christ Hymn" found in Philippians 2:5-11. He analyzes verse 5 as a transition, linking the call for unity to the example of Christ's mindset. The lecture explores different interpretations of verse 5, namely the ethical reading (emulation of Christ) and the soteriological reading (thinking as those in Christ). Darko discusses the scholarly debate surrounding the Christ Hymn's origin, questioning the popular theory that it was a pre-existing hymn Paul incorporated. He concludes by emphasizing the theological significance of the passage, particularly concerning Christ's pre-existence, self-emptying (kenosis), and subsequent exaltation, ultimately urging believers to adopt Christ's humble and obedient mindset.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 12 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).**



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3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 12, Christ Hymn (Phil 2:5-11)

Briefing Document: Dr. Daniel K. Darko on Philippians 2:5-11, The Christ Hymn

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. Daniel K. Darko in Session 12 of his lecture series on the Prison Epistles, focusing on Philippians 2:5-11, often referred to as the Christ Hymn. Dr. Darko explores the function of verse 5 as a transition, the ongoing debate surrounding the authorship and origin of the hymn (whether Paul wrote it, adopted a pre-existing hymn, or if it was a later insertion), and delves into the theological significance of key phrases within the passage, particularly concerning the pre-existence, self-emptying (kenosis), and exaltation of Christ. He emphasizes the practical application of Christ's mindset for the Philippian church and contemporary believers.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Philippians 2:5 as a Transitional Verse:

- Dr. Darko highlights that Philippians 2:5 serves as a crucial transition, linking Paul's exhortations for unity and humility in verses 1-4 with the profound theological statements about Christ in verses 6-11.
- "Verse 5 actually serves as a transition linking chapter 2, verses 1 to 4, and chapter 2, verses 6 to 11. To interpret verses 6 to 11, it is important to realize how verse 5 sets the stage for the framework with which we interpret verses 6 to 11."

2. Two Readings of Philippians 2:5 (Ethical vs. Soteriological/Charismatic):

- Dr. Darko outlines two primary ways to interpret verse 5:
- **Ethical Reading:** This view calls for emulation of Christ's life and mindset, seeing verses 6-11 as an example to be followed.
- "The ethical reading actually says that verse 5 sets the framework to think about verses 6 to 11 as an example of Christ that needs to be followed."
- **Soteriological/Charismatic Reading:** This perspective emphasizes having the same mindset as those who are "in Christ," focusing on the shared attitude within the saved community.
- "In other words, verse 5 serves as calling the individuals or the community to think as those in Christ ought to think."

- Dr. Darko notes how different translations (ESV/NIV leaning towards soteriological, NKJV/NRSV leaning towards ethical) reflect these varying interpretations.
- While acknowledging both readings, Dr. Darko leans towards the ethical reading, citing Paul's use of other figures like Timothy, Epaphroditus, and even himself as examples for the Philippians to follow.
- "For that very reason, I tend to lean towards verse 5 being translated in a more literal in the way the Greek stands. Mimesis, let the mindset of Christ be in you also."

3. The Significance of "Mindset" (Phronesis):

- Dr. Darko emphasizes the Greek word for "mindset" (phronesis) and its importance in Philippians.
- Drawing on Wayne Meeks, he explains that this word highlights the cognitive process and mental work involved in Christian living, leading to conduct reflecting that mindset.
- "But it's not just a mindset; you keep things in your mind as though the mind is a trunk that you pack some ideas in and lock up. No furnaces have the connotation of you absorbing or receiving this, processing it intellectually, and making it reflect in your conduct."
- This mindset, as seen in Christ, involves humility, obedience, and not vying for pride and conceit.

4. The Literary Debate Surrounding Philippians 2:6-11 (Authorship and Origin):

- Dr. Darko discusses three main scholarly views on the origin of the Christ Hymn:
- **Pauline Authorship:** Paul wrote this section specifically for Philippians, and its poetic nature is part of his style or a deliberate artistic choice.
- **Pre-existing Christian Hymn:** Paul incorporated a circulating Christian hymn, possibly editing it slightly, to fit his message. Dr. Darko expresses skepticism about this view due to the lack of external manuscript evidence of such a hymn with the specific content of Christ's self-emptying and exaltation, rather than solely praising God.
- **Later Redaction:** A later editor inserted this hymn into Paul's letter without Paul's knowledge. Dr. Darko strongly refutes this view, considering it unlikely given the

early church's practices and the lack of textual evidence for a version of Philippians without this section.

- Dr. Darko emphasizes that despite the poetic nature and unique vocabulary of the passage, there is no concrete evidence to suggest Paul did not write it or that it was a pre-existing hymn. He urges caution regarding claims made by scholars without supporting evidence.
- He notes that the idea of this passage being a hymn only emerged relatively recently in Christian scholarship, with the earliest mention in 1899 and its popularization in the 1920s.
- "Martin said the earliest mention of this passage as a hymn was in 1899."
- "It became popular in the 1920s. Less than 100 years ago."

5. Theological Significance of Key Phrases:

- Dr. Darko highlights several crucial phrases in the hymn that have significant theological implications:
- **"Form of God" (v. 6):** This suggests Christ's participation in the essence and essential attributes of God. Dr. Darko clarifies that Paul is conveying Christ's inherent deity.
- "Let's read this passage assuming that what Paul is conveying here is Christ participates in the essence and essential attributes of who God is. He is not suggesting that Christ is not God."
- Quoting Fee: "He was characterized by what was essential to being God."
- **"Did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (v. 6):** This indicates Christ's humility and willingness to not exploit his divine status for selfish gain.
- **"Emptied himself" (v. 7):** This is the basis of the kenosis doctrine. Dr. Darko discusses the historical development of this doctrine in 19th-century Germany and England, which controversially suggested Christ emptied himself of divine attributes like omnipotence and omniscience.
- "Scholars have called it the kenosis doctrine or the kenosis theory after the Greek word for emptying is kenosis."

- He refutes the idea that Christ emptied himself of his divinity or power, arguing that the "emptying" refers to taking "the form of a servant" (slave), relinquishing his status and privileges.
- Quoting Bruce Wright: "The point is rather that he did not treat his equality with God as an excuse for self-assertion or self-aggrandizement."
- Quoting Fee: "Nonetheless, God's likenesses, contrary to common understanding, did not mean for Christ to be grasping, seizing being... Rather, his equality with God found its truest expression when he emptied himself."
- Quoting Witherington: "He emptied himself of whatever would have prevented him from being truly and fully human. His divine prerogatives and status can be dramatically contrasted with the status and lack of choices and prerogatives of a servant."
- **"Exalted him" (v. 9):** This signifies God's response to Christ's humility and obedience, bestowing upon him the name above every name and ultimate authority. Dr. Darko suggests this is a divine vindication and the pattern for those in Christ.
- "Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name."
- He contrasts this with the power-seeking mindset of figures like Caesar.
- **"Every knee should bow... every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (vv. 10-11):** This emphasizes the universal sovereignty of Christ and the ultimate recognition of his Lordship, to the glory of God the Father.

6. Practical Application for the Church:

- Dr. Darko underscores that the main point of the Christ Hymn in the context of Philippians is illustrative. It provides the ultimate example of the mindset of humility and obedience that the Philippian church should adopt to foster unity and live worthy of the gospel.
- "Here, as I tried to establish earlier on, the point is that the Philippians should develop the mindset, the phronesis... The point is the example of Christ. But it is not meant to be theological or something that we will come and argue about later on."

- He connects Christ's self-sacrifice and servanthood to the need for the Philippians (and contemporary believers) to prioritize the needs of others and practice humility, even in the face of opposition.
- He uses a personal anecdote about returning to his African village to illustrate the practical outworking of Christ's mindset in relating to others.

Conclusion:

Dr. Darko's lecture provides a detailed examination of Philippians 2:5-11, emphasizing its role as a call to adopt the mindset of Christ. He navigates the complex scholarly debates surrounding the hymn's origin, offering a cautious perspective on the idea of a pre-existing hymn. More importantly, he unpacks the profound theological truths embedded in the passage, particularly focusing on the nature of Christ's self-emptying, which he clarifies as the taking on of servanthood rather than a relinquishing of divinity. Ultimately, Dr. Darko stresses the practical and transformative power of emulating Christ's humility and obedience for the unity and witness of the church.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 12, Christ Hymn (Phil 2:5-11)

Philippians 2:5-11: The Christ Hymn - A Study Guide

Key Themes: Humility, Obedience, Exaltation, Christ's Pre-existence, Incarnation, Servanthood, Unity, Mindset, Example.

Quiz:

1. According to Dr. Darko, what is the function of Philippians 2:5 in relation to verses 1-4 and 6-11?
2. Describe the two main ways modern commentators interpret Philippians 2:5. Provide a brief explanation of each.
3. What is "mimesis," and how does Dr. Darko connect it to the interpretation of Philippians 2:5?
4. What are the three main scholarly views discussed regarding the authorship and origin of Philippians 2:6-11? Briefly outline each.
5. What is Dr. Darko's primary argument against the view that Philippians 2:6-11 was a pre-existing Christian hymn incorporated by Paul?
6. According to Dr. Darko, when did the idea of Philippians 2:6-11 as a hymn become a prominent view in biblical scholarship?
7. What contrast does Dr. Darko suggest Paul might be drawing between Christ and figures like Caesar in Philippians 2:6-11?
8. Identify three key terms from Philippians 2:6-8 that Dr. Darko highlights as having significant theological implications.
9. Explain the "kenosis doctrine" as Dr. Darko describes it, including its historical emergence and potential implications.
10. How does Dr. Darko interpret Christ "emptying himself" in Philippians 2:7, and what does he emphasize Christ did *not* empty himself of?

Answer Key:

1. Dr. Darko explains that Philippians 2:5 serves as a transition, linking Paul's call for unity and specific behaviors in verses 1-4 to the description of Christ's mindset

and actions in the Christ hymn (verses 6-11). It sets the stage for the framework through which the hymn should be interpreted.

2. The two main interpretations are the ethical reading and the soteriological/charismatic reading. The ethical reading sees verse 5 as a call for the church to emulate the life and mindset of Jesus, using verses 6-11 as an example. The soteriological/charismatic reading views verse 5 as a call for the community to adopt a mindset consistent with their identity "in Christ Jesus."
3. "Mimesis" refers to the use of a key figure as an example for others to emulate. Dr. Darko connects this to the ethical reading of Philippians 2:5, noting that Paul often presents Christ and even his companions like Timothy and Epaphroditus as models for the Philippian church to follow.
4. The three views are: (1) Paul authored verses 6-11 specifically for this letter or earlier and incorporated it. (2) Paul did not write it but incorporated a pre-existing Christian hymn. (3) Paul wrote Philippians, and a later redactor inserted the hymn.
5. Dr. Darko's primary argument against the pre-existing hymn theory is the lack of any manuscript evidence outside of Pauline writings to support its circulation as a hymn prior to or contemporary with Philippians. He also questions the hymn-like content in terms of praise and worship.
6. According to Ralph Martin, as cited by Dr. Darko, the earliest mention of Philippians 2:6-11 as a hymn was in 1899. It became more popular in the 1920s, making it a relatively recent interpretation in the history of Christian thought.
7. Dr. Darko suggests Paul might be contrasting Christ's path to Lordship through humility, servanthood, and obedience with the way earthly rulers like Caesar sought power through dominance, force, and self-exaltation. Christ's "emptying" is presented as the antithesis of worldly ambition.
8. The three key terms Dr. Darko highlights are "form of God," "something to be grasped/robbed," and "emptied himself." He notes that these terms became central to later theological discussions about Christ's nature and incarnation.
9. The "kenosis doctrine" or theory, which emerged in 19th-century European theology, posits that Christ emptied himself of some or all of his divine attributes (like omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence) while on earth. Dr. Darko notes that this theory has significant implications for the doctrine of the Trinity and the understanding of Christ's divinity.

10. Dr. Darko interprets Christ "emptying himself" not as a relinquishing of his divine nature or power, but as taking "the form of a servant" or "slave," giving up his status and privileges to become fully human. He emphasizes that Christ remained fully divine and fully human during his earthly ministry.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of Philippians 2:5 as a transitional verse in understanding the theological and ethical implications of the "Christ hymn" (Philippians 2:6-11). Discuss how the different interpretations of verse 5 (ethical vs. soteriological/charismatic) impact the reading of the subsequent verses.
2. Evaluate the arguments presented by Dr. Darko regarding the origin and authorship of Philippians 2:6-11. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three views discussed (Pauline authorship, pre-existing hymn, later redactor)? Which view do you find most persuasive and why?
3. Explore the theological significance of the key terms in Philippians 2:6-8 ("form of God," "something to be grasped," "emptied himself," "form of a servant," "human likeness," "human form"). How have these terms been interpreted throughout Christian history, and what are their implications for understanding Christ's identity and mission?
4. Discuss the concept of "kenosis" as it relates to Philippians 2:7. Explain the historical development of the kenotic theory and analyze Dr. Darko's critique of this doctrine. What alternative understanding of Christ's self-emptying does Dr. Darko propose, and how does it align with the broader message of Philippians 2?
5. Examine the themes of humility and exaltation in Philippians 2:5-11. How does the example of Christ's descent and ascent serve as a model for the Philippian church and for contemporary Christians? What are the practical implications of embodying the "mindset of Christ" in personal and communal life, as highlighted by Dr. Darko?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Christ Hymn:** The passage in Philippians 2:6-11, often identified by scholars for its poetic and theological depth, describing Christ's pre-existence, incarnation, humiliation, death, and exaltation.
- **Ethical Reading (of Philippians 2:5):** An interpretation that emphasizes verse 5 as a moral imperative, calling believers to emulate the mindset and actions of Christ as described in the following verses.
- **Soteriological Reading (of Philippians 2:5):** An interpretation that focuses on the salvific context, viewing verse 5 as a call for believers to have a mindset consistent with their identity and standing "in Christ Jesus." Also sometimes referred to as the charismatic reading.
- **Mimesis:** A Greek term referring to imitation or emulation. In this context, it refers to the idea of Christians following Christ as an example.
- **Redactor:** An editor who modifies a text by adding, removing, or rearranging content. The theory of a later redactor inserting the Christ hymn into Philippians suggests someone other than Paul added this section.
- **Kenosis:** A Greek word meaning "emptying." It is the basis of the "kenosis doctrine," which explores the extent to which Christ emptied himself of his divine attributes during his incarnation.
- **Phronesis:** A Greek word often translated as "mindset," "wisdom," or "practical understanding." Dr. Darko highlights its importance in Philippians, referring to the cognitive and moral orientation of believers.
- **Form of God (morphe theou):** A term in Philippians 2:6 referring to Christ's pre-existent divine nature and status. Its precise meaning has been debated, but Dr. Darko suggests it indicates Christ's participation in the essence and attributes of God.
- **Form of a Servant (morphe doulou):** A term in Philippians 2:7 describing the state Christ took upon himself in his incarnation, emphasizing his humility and servanthood. The word "doulos" can also be translated as "slave."
- **Exaltation:** The act by which God raised Jesus to a position of supreme honor and authority after his death and resurrection, as described in Philippians 2:9-11.

5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 12, Christ Hymn (Phil 2:5-11), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Philippians 2:5-11

1. What is the primary function of Philippians 2:5 within the broader context of the passage and the letter to the Philippians?

Verse 5 serves as a crucial transition, linking Paul's exhortations for unity and humility in Philippians 2:1-4 with the profound depiction of Christ's self-emptying and exaltation in verses 6-11, commonly known as the Christ hymn. It sets the stage for interpreting the hymn by calling the Philippian believers to adopt a specific mindset, one that mirrors the character exemplified by Christ Jesus. This verse bridges the practical call for communal harmony with the theological foundation of Christ's example.

2. What are the two main interpretations of Philippians 2:5 regarding the mindset believers should have, and which one does the lecturer lean towards?

There are two primary readings of verse 5: the ethical reading and the soteriological/charismatic reading. The ethical reading emphasizes emulation, urging believers to follow Christ's example and think as He did. The soteriological/charismatic reading focuses on having the mindset that is already present in Christ as those who are "in Christ," suggesting a way of thinking befitting the saved community. The lecturer leans towards the ethical reading, highlighting that Paul presents Christ, and even other figures like Timothy and Epaphroditus, as models for the Philippians to follow.

3. The passage in Philippians 2:6-11 is often referred to as the "Christ hymn." What are the scholarly debates surrounding the origin and nature of this passage?

Scholarly debate exists regarding whether Paul authored this section specifically for the letter to the Philippians, if it was a pre-existing Christian hymn that Paul incorporated (possibly with modifications), or if it was added to Paul's letter by a later redactor without Paul's knowledge. While the poetic structure and unique vocabulary suggest a hymn-like quality, there is no concrete manuscript evidence of it existing independently of Pauline writings in the early church. The lecturer expresses skepticism towards the idea of a pre-existing hymn, noting the lack of early Christian discussion of it as such and questioning the motives and feasibility of a later redactor inserting it without any historical record.

4. What does it mean that Christ, being in the "form of God," "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Philippians 2:6)?

This verse indicates that Christ, existing in the very nature and essence of God, did not consider His divine status something to be selfishly held onto or exploited for personal gain. Instead of clinging to the privileges and advantages of His equality with God, He chose a different path, one of humility and self-sacrifice. It emphasizes His willingness to set aside the prerogatives of His divine status for the sake of humanity.

5. How did Christ "empty himself" (Philippians 2:7), and what does this "emptying" not entail according to the lecturer and cited scholars?

Christ emptied himself by "taking the form of a servant" (or slave), being born in human likeness, and humbling himself to the point of death on a cross. This emptying is not understood as Christ relinquishing His divine nature, power, or divinity. Rather, it signifies His voluntary setting aside of His heavenly status, privileges, and the outward expressions of His divine glory to fully identify with humanity in servitude and obedience. Scholars like Wright, Fee, and Witherington emphasize that He did not treat His equality with God as something to be grasped but as an opportunity for self-sacrifice, taking on the limitations and status of a human being and a servant.

6. What is the "kenosis doctrine" or "kenosis theory," and what are the lecturer's concerns regarding it?

The kenosis doctrine, emerging in 19th-century European theology and based on the Greek word for "emptying" (kenosis) in Philippians 2:7, proposed that Christ emptied himself of certain divine attributes like omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence during his earthly ministry. The lecturer expresses significant concerns about this theory, noting its late emergence in theological discourse and arguing that it undermines the doctrine of the Trinity by suggesting Christ was not fully God while on earth. The lecturer emphasizes that the text describes *how* Christ emptied himself (by taking the form of a servant) rather than *what* He emptied himself *of* (His divinity).

7. What is the significance of God "highly exalting" Jesus and bestowing on Him "the name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9)?

God's exaltation of Jesus is a direct consequence of Christ's profound humility and obedience, culminating in His death on the cross. This exaltation signifies Christ's ultimate victory and the divine ratification of His self-sacrificial path. The "name above every name" represents the supreme authority, reputation, and status granted to Jesus, before whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Him as Lord. This demonstrates that true greatness comes through humility and obedience, a stark contrast to worldly notions of power and dominance.

8. How does the example of Christ in Philippians 2:6-11 relate to the call for unity and a specific mindset within the church, according to the lecture?

The Christ hymn serves as the ultimate example of the mindset that Paul calls believers to adopt in Philippians 2:5. Christ, despite His divine status and privileges, chose the path of humility, service, and obedience for the sake of others. This self-sacrificial mindset is precisely what Paul wants the Philippian church to cultivate in their relationships with one another, fostering unity, selflessness, and a focus on the well-being of others rather than personal gain or pride. The example of Christ's emptying and subsequent exaltation illustrates the radical nature of this mindset and its ultimate vindication by God.