

Philippians 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (ἴνα ἐν τῷ ὄνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, hina en tō onomati Iēsou pan gony kampsē epouraniōn kai epigeiōn kai katachthoniōn)—Hina ("that, in order that") states purpose: God exalted Jesus so that universal worship would result. En tō onomati Iēsou ("at/in the name of Jesus") identifies the object of worship. Pan gony kampsē ("every knee should bow") quotes Isaiah 45:23, where YHWH declares every knee will bow to Him alone. Paul applies this to Jesus, asserting His deity.

The scope: epouraniōn ("heavenly beings"—angels), epigeiōn ("earthly beings"—humans), katachthoniōn ("under-earth beings"—demons or the dead). All creation—angelic, human, demonic—will acknowledge Jesus's lordship. This is cosmic Christology: Christ rules all realms. The language assumes eschatological fulfillment: at the eschaton, resistant wills will bow—voluntarily or involuntarily.

Historical Context

Isaiah 45:23's application to Jesus is early Christian confession of deity. Bowing was worship posture in ancient Near East. Paul's threefold division (heaven, earth, underworld) encompasses all reality. Jewish readers would catch the audacity: YHWH's unique worship-claim is transferred to Jesus. This is functional deity—

Jesus receives worship due to God alone. Early Christians faced martyrdom rather than deny Jesus's lordship.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that 'every knee will bow'—including those who currently reject Christ?
2. How does Christ's cosmic lordship (heaven, earth, underworld) affect your daily priorities and fears?
3. How should the certainty of Christ's universal acknowledgment shape evangelism and cultural engagement?

Interlinear Text

ἵνα	ἐν	τῷ	ὄνόματι	Ἰησοῦ	πᾶν	γόνυ	κάμψῃ
That	at	G3588	the name	of Jesus	every	knee	should bow
G2443	G1722		G3686	G2424	G3956	G1119	G2578
ἐπουρανίων	καὶ	ἐπιγείων	καὶ	καταχθονίων			
of things in heaven	and	things in earth	and	things under the earth			
G2032	G2532	G1919	G2532	G2709			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 28:18 (References Jesus): And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Hebrews 1:6 (Parallel theme): And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

Ephesians 3:14 (References Jesus): For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Revelation 4:10 (Parallel theme): The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Ephesians 1:10 (Parallel theme): That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Matthew 27:29 (Parallel theme): And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

Revelation 20:13 (Parallel theme): And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.