

Romans 14:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Analysis

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God—Gepraptai gar, Zō egō, legei kyrios, hoti emoi kampsei pan gony, kai pasa glōssa exomologēsetai tō theō (γέγραπται γάρ, Ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος, ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ, καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἔξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ). Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23, where Yahweh swears by Himself (Zō egō, 'as I live')—the strongest possible oath. Pan gony kampsei (every knee will bow) signals universal submission. Pasa glōssa exomologēsetai (every tongue will confess) means public acknowledgment, not mere intellectual assent.

Paul applies this to Christ (Philippians 2:10-11 makes it explicit: 'every knee bow...confess Jesus Christ is Lord'), demonstrating Christ's deity. If every knee will bow to Christ, judging His servants now is absurd—you'll bow before Him soon enough. Exomologeō (ἔξομολογέω, confess) has two senses: confess sins (acknowledge guilt) or confess praise (acknowledge sovereignty). The context favors praise—all will acknowledge Christ's rightful rule, whether willingly (believers) or unwillingly (rebels).

Historical Context

Isaiah 45:23 is monotheistic polemic—Yahweh alone is God, all will acknowledge Him. Paul applies this OT Yahweh-text to Jesus (Philippians 2:10-11), evidencing high Christology: Jesus shares divine identity. Early Christians used this text against emperor worship—Caesar demands knee-bowing, but Christ alone

deserves universal submission. At the final judgment, all pretensions crumble; every human judge is judged. This eschatological vision relativizes present disputes—why fight over dietary laws when soon all will confess Christ's Lordship?

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the certainty that 'every knee shall bow' (pan gony kampsei) to Christ affect your current posture toward Him and others?
2. What's the difference between willingly bowing now (as worshiper) versus unwillingly bowing later (as condemned rebel)?
3. If you'll 'confess to God' (exomologēsetai tō theō) for your own stewardship, how does that curb judging others' stewardship on disputable matters?

Interlinear Text

γέγραπται	γάρ,	Zῶ	ἐγώ	λέγει	κύριος	ὅτι	ἐμοὶ	κάμψει
it is written	For	live	As I	saih	the Lord	G3754	to me	shall bow
G1125	G1063	G2198	G1473	G3004	G2962		G1698	G2578

πᾶσα	γόνυ	καὶ	πᾶσα	γλῶσσα	ἐξομολογήσεται	τῷ	θεῷ
every	knee	and	every	tongue	shall confess	G3588	to God
G3956	G1119	G2532	G3956	G1100	G1843		G2316

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 72:11 (Parallel theme): Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

Isaiah 49:18 (References Lord): Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

1 John 4:15 (References God): Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Romans 10:9 (References God): That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 15:9 (References God): And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

Numbers 14:21 (References Lord): But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

Matthew 10:32 (Parallel theme): Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Revelation 5:14 (Parallel theme): And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Ezekiel 5:11 (References God): Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.

Numbers 14:28 (References Lord): Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: