

Bite Size Bible Study

Name above all Names #79

By Pastor Lee

From time to time we hear that Jesus' name is above all names. In our culture we take this to mean the Jesus is greater than all the rest of us. That is certainly true but Paul was trying to tell us more than that. He is stating that Jesus' character, reputation and authority are greater than ours as well.

In the Hebrew culture a persons name represents their identity within the community, in this case the Messianic Community especially. The word most often used is *shem* (name) or *ha-shem* (the name). But it means more than just a handle (a name or nickname), it is a representation of ones reputation, authority, and honor.

Here the name is Jesus is identified with the Father. His authority, reputation and honor are the same as the Father's, because He and the Father are one.

In this passage Paul recites some of these traits of Jesus' life and death – i.e. His willingness to be an exact example of the Father's traits, and the Father's will. Paul is telling the Philippians to develop these traits in their own lives.

Let your attitude toward one another be governed by your being in union with the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus):

Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be possessed by force (used to his own advantage).

On the contrary, he emptied himself, in that he took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are.

And when he appeared as a human being, he humbled himself still more by becoming obedient even to death — death on a stake as a criminal!

Therefore God raised him to the highest place and gave him the name above every name; that in honor of the name given Yeshua, every knee will bow — in heaven, on earth and under the earth — and every tongue will acknowledge that Yeshua the Messiah is Adonai — to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:5-11 (CJB)

In these few verses Paul is encouraging the Philippians to have the character and reputation that Jesus represented. That Jesus was the one to pattern their lives and actions after, and not the culture that they lived in. Jesus was to be their example not their priests, or the Romans or the Greeks, or anyone else.

Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be possessed by force. It is interesting to consider that Paul says Jesus was *in the form of God* and Genesis 1:27 says that we were created “in the image of God”. We corrupted that image when we chose to do things our way, but Jesus always did what the Father instructed Him to do. *...I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.* John 8:28b (NIV)

...he emptied himself, in that he took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are. And when he appeared as a human being, he humbled himself still more by becoming obedient even to death. Remember Jesus lived in an Honor/Shame culture. A slave had little to no Honor, and being crucified as a criminal removed any Honor that He may have had; and that left Him with nothing but Shame. However, rising from death gave Him more Honor than anyone had ever had and removed all Shame that may have once existed in the eyes of the people.

As Paul tells the Ephesians the result is that Jesus has a Name (rule, authority, dominion) above anything we can muster; above any other so-called gods. He is, in all respects, above us and we should respect Him as such.

*That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, (which is) **far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.***

Eph 1:19b-23 (NIV)

I believe that we all should learn as much as we can about Jesus' character and reputation, then strive to develop our character to match that of His; knowing all the while that this will not only take time but that we will only come close to his character, never match it or excel over it.

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