

Philippians Lesson 4 Articles

2:7 Jesus' self-emptying (*kenōsis*) cannot mean loss of deity or divine attributes; God cannot become less than God. Rather, He emptied Himself of divine privileges by becoming human.

2:9 God highly exalted Jesus, giving Him a new position. He became the visible focus of the Godhead, a position graciously bestowed because of His self-humbling death.

2:10–11 Contrary to what some critics claim, this description does not reflect an outdated cosmology or view of universal reality. Jesus' lordship is comprehensive—over all personal beings in heaven (spiritual beings), on earth (living human beings), and under the earth (the dead awaiting resurrection).

2:12 To “work out” our salvation (which was “worked in” to us) is opposed to “working for” salvation.¹

2:12 - When Paul tells us to “work out” our own salvation “with fear and trembling,” he means that we are to give careful attention to our actions and behavior, making sure that they well represent the One who saved us.

2:15 — If our behavior as God's children does not differ from that of unbelievers, then we look just as “crooked and perverse” as anyone else, and instead of shining “as lights,” we leave the world as dark as we found it.²

2:12 One central theme ties these verses together. The Philippians were to make salvation work in their lives. It will be helpful to determine the nature of the word “salvation” and whether this refers to the church at large or the individuals within it.

To live like Christians, the Philippians were to have an attitude of obedience. The obedience was not to Paul, although apparently his presence encouraged it in their lives.¹⁷⁴ The obedience was to God. The church members were to solve their problems as an act of obedience to God. Such obedience confirmed the fact that they were truly saved. Perseverance, whether in individual purity or harmonious group relations, was expected of Christians.

In addition to obedience, the Philippians were to be sober. The precise words are “fear and trembling.” These words reminded them of their relationship to God and that they were to conduct their lives with a seriousness and reverence due him. After all, he worked in them.

¹ Parker III, J. A. (2007). The Incarnation: Could God Become Man Without Ceasing to Be God? In T. Cabal, C. O. Brand, E. R. Clendenen, P. Copan, & J. P. Moreland (Eds.), *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1777). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

² Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (Php 2:12–15). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.

¹⁷⁴ He wrote with some apprehension that they would act differently if he were not there. This may well mean that he entertained the idea that he would die before seeing them again.