

I've been talking about the Christ poem in Philippians 2:6-10, and given some keys to its interpretation. If you are new to the discussion, here is the poem itself, about "Jesus Christ....

Who, although he was in the form of God
Did not regard being equal with God
Something to be grasped after.
But he emptied himself
Taking on the form of a slave,
And coming in the likeness of humans.
And being found in appearance as a human
He humbled himself
Becoming obedient unto death - even death on a cross.

Therefore God highly exalted him
And bestowed on him the name
That is above every name.
That at the name of Jesus
Every knee should bow
Of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.
And every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord
To the glory of God the Father.

I've said some things about its interpretation, but here I want to give a fuller explication of its meaning. I've drawn this from my book [How Jesus Became God](#) (so that there will be a bit of overlap with some of my earlier comments; but hey, just think how much better you'll remember them now!)

[The Christ Poem and Incarnational Christology](#)

There are in fact lots of things that could be said about this amazing passage. Among scholars it is one of the most discussed, argued over, and commented upon passages in the entire New Testament. If the majority of scholars are correct in their opinion that it embodies an incarnational Christology, then the basic perspective on Christ it paints is at any rate clear: Christ was a pre-existent being who chose to come in the “likeness” of human flesh, who because he humbled himself to the point of death was elevated to an even higher status than he had before, and was made the Lord of all. This view of Christ makes sense if we think of him as existing before his birth as an angelic being who abandoned his heavenly existence to come to earth to fulfill God’s will by dying for others.

I want to stress that Christ appears to be portrayed here, in his pre-existent state, as ...

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