

DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES (PART 2)

Brethren, we find in the Bible many scriptures which pose issues to the basic doctrinal beliefs of the Church. We call those occurrences difficult scriptures. It is important to review apparent difficult scriptures in order to present to others the correct meaning of the scriptures.

Please turn with me to 2 Timothy 2, where we will read a very important exhortation by the Apostle Paul for our spiritual lives.

2 Timothy 2:15 – “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Being able to explain difficult scriptures is part of rightly dividing the word of truth, the Bible.

Brethren, in my message this afternoon entitled “Difficult Scriptures – Part 2”, I would like to explore 3 sections of scripture to determine a more correct meaning of those scriptures.

Now, I do not want to get too technical in this sermon, but the proof is in the pudding, so we must explore a little into the pudding. And that pudding is the Greek language and Greek grammar, and the meaning of phrases using certain Greek grammatical constructs.

The first difficult scripture we will explore today is:

1) Philippians 2:05-11

Philippians 2:05 – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: **:06** – Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **:07** – But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **:08** – And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. **:09** – Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **:10** – That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; **:11** – And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The first important aspect of these scriptures is to recognize that the Apostle Paul was discussing the nature of Jesus the Anointed One, as a spiritual Elohim before His physical birth, His nature as a human after His physical birth, and His nature as a spiritual Elohim once again after His death and resurrection.

Let’s begin with verse 5.

- **Philippians 2:05** – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”

The words “Let this mind be” is actually one verb in Greek, which is “φρονέω” (fronéo – Strong’s #5426 – meaning to think, to have a mindset, to understand). So, Paul was exhorting the Philippian brethren to have this

mindset in them which was also in Jesus when He was on the earth as a human. So, this mindset comes from God Our Father, because it was in Jesus and it should be also in us.

So, verse 5 could read – “Have this mindset or understanding in you which was also in Jesus the Anointed One.”

- **Philippians 2:06** – “ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ”

The Greek word for “form” in verse 6 is “μορφή” (morfé – Strong’s #3444 – meaning shape, outward appearance, likeness). Furthermore, the Greek verb for “being” in verse 6 is “ὑπάρχω” (hupárkhō – Strong’s #5225 – meaning to exist).

So, the first part of verse 6 could be read as: “Who, existing in the likeness of God Our Father”.

Furthermore, the Greek verb for “thought” is “ἡγέομαι” (haygéomai – Strong’s #2233 – meaning to consider, to regard, to think about).

The Greek adjective for “equal” is “ἴσος” – (ísos – Strong’s 2470 – meaning equal or equivalent). Strong’s Lexicon states: “ The Greek adjective ‘isos’ is used to denote equality or sameness in quantity, quality, or status. It often conveys the idea of fairness, balance, or parity.”

The Greek word for the English noun “robbery” is “ἁρπαγμός” (harpagós – Strong’s #725 – meaning something of value to be seized or grasped, something of value which is kept and not let go of).

Before His birth as a human baby, the Being who became the man Jesus was an Elohim, a mighty spiritual Being who had the same nature and essence as God Our Father.

So, all of verse 6 could be written as: “ Who, existing in the likeness of God Our Father, did not consider being equal in nature with God Our Father (being an Elohim) something to hold on to.”

Please turn with me to John 1, and we will read a very well-known scripture.

John 1:01 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

We have explored the third part of this verse in the previous sermon “Difficult Scriptures – Part 1.

The verb “was” in all three parts of the verse is “ἦν” (ayn) which is the imperfect tense of the verb “to be” in Greek. Part of the meaning of these three phrases is lost in the English because this imperfect tense was translated using the simple past tense. As discussed in other sermons, the imperfect tense in Greek and in English is used to show a repetitive action in the past as in “I used to study every day” and to show a previous ongoing action in the past

when something else happened, as in “I was talking on the phone when he arrived.”

Using the imperfect tense in English for the first two parts of the verse yields: “In a beginning, the Word was already being or existing, and the Word was already being or existing with “the God” (ο θεος – ho theos – God Our Father).

We have explored the third part of this verse in the previous sermon “Difficult Scriptures – Part 1. Because of the Greek grammatical construct of preverbal anarthrous predicate nominatives, the third part of this verse can be better rendered as: “And the Word was just like the God in nature, quality, and characteristics.” We also understand that “the Word” is the spiritual Being who became Jesus as a human and that “the God” is God Our Father.

Therefore, John 1:01 states: “In a beginning, Jesus was already existing, and Jesus was already existing with God Our Father, and Jesus was just like God Our Father in nature, quality, and characteristics.

So, Philippians 2:06 and John 1:01 show that, before his physical birth, the spiritual Being who became Jesus had already been existing as a spiritual Being who was just like God Our Father in nature, quality, and characteristics. But Jesus did not consider being in that same nature as God Our Father something not to let go of or hold on to. Let’s read on.

- **Philippians 2:07** – “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:”

The phrase “made himself of no reputation” is the reflexive form of the verb “κενόω” (kenóō – Strong’s #2758 – meaning to empty, to make void). The reflexive form of the verb has the meaning of “to empty oneself”.

The Greek noun for “form” in verse 7 is again the noun “μορφή” (morfé – meaning shape, outward appearance, likeness), which is the same noun as we read in verse 6.

Verses 6 and 7 are discussing the change in nature of the Being who became Jesus the Anointed One from being a mighty powerful spiritual Elohim Being to a physical human man. We read that Jesus willingly emptied Himself of being an Elohim to take on the form and likeness of a physical human.

Please turn with me back to John 1, where we will continue to read about the Word.

John 1:14 – “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

So, this verse shows that the Word, the Being who became Jesus, was made flesh by God Our Father and that He dwelled among us as a human.

By the way, this phrase in Greek of “the Word became flesh” is “the Word flesh became.” This phrase is another example of a pre-verbal anarthrous

predicate nominative. The word “flesh” comes before the verb and does not have the word “the” in front of it. Jesus became flesh in a nature or quality sense, not just a literal hunk of flesh or meat. Where that is intrinsically understood in English, the Greek language has a grammatical way to show exactly that.

- **Philippians 2:08** – And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Verse 8 reiterates that Jesus emptied Himself of being a mighty powerful spiritual Elohim Being to be in the appearance of a mortal human man and that Jesus was totally and completely obedient to God Our Father up to and including His death on the cross. Jesus truly humbled Himself.

- **Philippians 2:09** – Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

The word “God” in the Greek is again “ο θεος” (ho theos – God Our Father). So, God Our Father highly exalted Jesus. When did this happen? Please turn with me to John 20, and we will read about an important event on the Sunday morning during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After His resurrection approximately at sundown on Saturday night, Jesus talked with Mary Magdalene at the tomb early Sunday morning. She reached out to touch Jesus. What did Jesus tell her?

John 20:17 – “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” This ascension was the fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf Offering listed in Leviticus 23.

Please turn with me to Mark 16. Later that Sunday, after meeting and eating with His disciples, He again ascended to our Heavenly Father’s throne.

Mark 16:19 – “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.”

So, Jesus the Anointed One ascended to be at the right hand of God Our Father. Please turn with me to Acts 2. In his sermon to the multitude on Pentecost, the Apostle Peter also preached concerning the ascension of Jesus.

Acts 2:32 – “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. **:33** – Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. **:34** – For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, **:35** – Until I make thy foes thy footstool.”

So, turning back to Philippians 2:09, God Our Father exalted Jesus back to His right hand at the Father’s throne.

Furthermore, in verse 9 of Philippians 2, we read that God Our Father gave Jesus a name which is above every name. What exactly does that mean? Much confusion has come out of this verse. Many Protestant churches believe that the name of Jesus is the name above all other names. But is this what the verse actually says? Whose name is exalted above all names?

Please turn with me to Psalm 138.

Psalm 138:02 (English Standard Version) (last part) – “for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”

Psalm 138:02 (Berian Study Bible) (last part) – “You have exalted Your name and Your word above all else.”

Psalm 138:02 (World English Bible) (last part) – “for you have exalted your Name and your Word above all.”

The other scriptures in Psalm 138 show that it is the name of Yehovah that is exalted above all other things.

Please turn with me to Psalm 148. David again shows the exaltation of the name of Yehovah.

Psalm 148:13 – “Let them praise the name of the LORD [*Yehovah*]: for his name alone is excellent; his glory *is* above the earth and heaven.

So, if the name of Yehovah is the name above all other names, what does that have to do with Jesus?

Please turn with me to Jeremiah 23, and we will learn about the future name of Jesus (at least future at the time of Jeremiah).

Jeremiah 23:05 – “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD [*Yehovah*], that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

This righteous Branch is Jesus, who was a descendent of David. Jesus will be a king who will reign over His kingdom in the Millennium.

Jeremiah 23:06 – “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

In Hebrew, that name is “יְהוָה צְדִיקָנוּ” (Yehovah Tsedqenu – Yehovah Our Righteousness).

יְהוָה צִדְקָנוּ

Yehovah Tsedqenu

Yehovah Our
Righteousness

So, it appears that Jesus' new name will be this name. And this name that He is given contains the name Yehovah, which is the name above all names.

Furthermore, in Philippians 2:09, the verb "given" is actually the Hebrew verb for "to grant". So, God Our Father granted Jesus the Father's name which is above all. As I have shared in other sermons, my name is James Mark Sappington. My son's name is James Mark Sappington, Jr. Without the addition of the "Jr." at the end, the name is my name and not my son's name. However, with the addition of the "Jr." at the end, that name ceases to be my name and instead becomes my son's name. My name with any other suffixes or additions is not my name. It ceases to be my name. And without that suffix, the name is not my son's name.

I believe that the same will be true with our Heavenly Father's name. His name is Yehovah. With the addition of other words, it ceases to be His name and would be the name of another Being.

Please turn with me to Revelation 3.

Revelation 3:12 – "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and ~~I will write upon him~~ my new name."

As firstfruits, we will have the name of God Our Father (Yehovah), the name of the New Jerusalem, and Jesus' new name (Yehovah Tsedqenu). As His spiritual children, we will all have our Heavenly Father's name on us.

So, our Heavenly Father has granted our elder brother, Jesus the Anointed One, a new name, patterned after the Father's name, which is the name above all other names.

Let's continue on in Philippians 2.

- **Philippians 2:10** – "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;"

Again, this verse is widely misunderstood by many Protestant churches. Their belief is that this verse states that in the future, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in reverence to His name. Basically, they believe that in the

future, all mankind will bow in reverence upon hearing the name of Jesus. But is this what the verse actually says?

The Greek word in verse 10 translated as “at” is “ἐν” (en – Strong’s #1722 meaning in).

Please turn with me to Colossians 3, and we will read a verse with this Greek word connect to the name of Jesus.

Colossians 3:17 – “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Please turn with me to Acts 19.

Acts 19:05 – “When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Please turn with me to Acts 9.

Acts 9:27 – “But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”

These three verses all have the phrase “in the name of” with the Greek word being “ἐν” (en). In Acts 19:05, the disciples were not baptized at the name of Jesus, but in the name of Jesus.

Let’s return to Philippians 2:10. So, verse 10 would be better translated as “That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;”

What verse 10 is stating is that every knee will bow and worship our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus. The key is that every knee will bow to the Father.

- **Philippians 2:11** – “And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The exact phrase of the first part of the verse in Greek is given on the following slide:

καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα
and every tongue
ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι
should confess that
Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός,
Lord Jesus Christ

It is important to note that there is no verb in the last part of this phrase. In the King James Version, the verb “is” appears in italics, showing that the word does not appear in the Greek text.

Most translations in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese among the many, place the verb “to be” in what would be between Lord and Jesus. This placement is shown in the following slide.

Κύριος (ἐστίν)
Lord (is)
Ἰησοῦς Χριστός,
Jesus Christ

Now, as shown in the slide, it is important to note that Jesus Christ is the subject of the phrase and that it comes at the end of the phrase. The Greek word “Κύριος” (Kurios) comes in front of the verb and does not have the word “the” in front of Kurios. Therefore, we have another example of a pre-verbal anarthrous predicate nominative, just like we have explored in John 1:01 and Philippians 2:06, as shown in the following slide.

Κύριος (ἐστίν)
Lord (is)
Ἰησοῦς Χριστός,
Jesus Christ
PRE-VERBAL ANARTHROUS
PREDICATE NOMINATIVE SUBJECT

In many sermons, we have explored that in most every instance of Kurios without the Greek word “the” in front of it is a reference to the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) or Yehovah. Therefore, this phrase takes on a special meaning, which is that Jesus Christ is just like Yehovah in nature and in quality. Jesus the Anointed One is just like God Our Father in nature and quality.

So, verse 11 could be written in English as: “And every tongue shall confess that Jesus the Anointed One is just like God Our Father.”

Brethren, in the verses in Philippians 2:05-11, the Apostle Paul is discussing the nature of Jesus the Anointed One, before His birth when He was a powerful spiritual Elohim, after His birth when He was a flesh and blood human, and after His spiritual resurrection when He once again became a powerful spiritual Elohim at the right hand of God Our Father.

So, in summary, the verses of Philippians 2:05-11 could be better understood, translated, and amplified as:

Philippians 2:05 – “Let this understanding (which comes from God Our Father) be in you, which was also in Jesus the Anointed One: **:06** – Who, existing in the likeness of God Our Father, did not consider being equal in nature with God Our

Father (being an Elohim) something to hold on to **:07** – But He humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **:08** – And being found in the likeness of a man, he emptied himself of being an Elohim, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. **:09** – which is the reason why God Our Father also has highly exalted Him, and granted Him a name (Yehovah Tsedquenu) which is above every name: **:10** – That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow (to God Our Father), of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; **:11** – And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus the Anointed One is just like God Our Father (Yehovah) in nature and in quality, to the glory of God Our Father.”

Brethren, the second difficult scripture we will explore today is:

2) **Romans 9:29**

Romans 9:29 – “And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.”

In talking with many members in the Churches of God over the years, the common thought is that the meaning of the phrase “Lord of sabaoth” is simply “Lord of the Sabbath.” However, this is not the case.

In Romans 9:29, the Apostle Paul is quoting Isaiah 1:09. The Hebrew words for “Lord of Sabaoth” in Isaiah 1:09 are “יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת” (Yehovah Savaoth – Yehovah of Hosts).

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
Yehovah Savaoth
Κύριος παντοκράτωρ
Κύριος σαβαὼθ
Kurios Sabaoth

Throughout the Old Testament, the one of the titles with the name of our Heavenly Father was Yehovah Savaoth or Yehovah of Hosts [LORD of Hosts]. The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi are full of occurrences of this title. Yehovah Savaoth occurs 245 times in the Old Testament.

Please turn with me to Malachi 3, and we will read a very well-known verse and prophecy.

Malachi 3:01 – “ Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts [*Yehovah Savaoth*].”

In the Septuagint, the Hebrew words Yehovah Savaoth were translated into Greek as “Κύριος παντοκράτωρ” (Kurios pantokrator). Kurios in Greek means “Lord”.

Kurios without the Greek “the” in front of it is how the 70 Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew “Yehovah” into the Greek. “Pantokrator” in Greek means “Allmighty”. So, with few exceptions in the Old Testament, Yehovah Savaoth in Hebrew was translated into Greek in the Septuagint as Yehovah Allmighty.

However, one of those few exceptions is in Isaiah 1:09, where the Hebrew word “צְבָאוֹת” (tsavaoth) was transliterated – not translated – into the Greek as “σαβαώθ” (sabaoth).

So, when the Apostle Paul wrote the verse in Romans 9:29 referring to Isaiah 1:09, he directly quoted Isaiah 1:09 word for word from the Greek Septuagint. The verse in Romans 9:29 in Greek is exactly the same as Isaiah 1:09 in the Septuagint.

So, when the translators of the King James Version translated Romans 9:29, they again transliterated the Greek word “σαβαώθ” (sabaoth) as “sabaoth” instead of translating the meaning of the Hebrew word “hosts”. So, both Isaiah 1:09 and Romans 9:29 should read:

Romans 9:29 (Corrected) – “And as Esaias said before, Except the Yehovah of Hosts had left us a seed, we would have been as Sodoma, and would have been made like unto Gomorrha.”

There is only one other verse in the New Testament in which the Greek word “σαβαώθ” (sabaoth) is used. Please turn with me to James 5.

James 5:04 – “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.”

James 5:04 is a quote from Deuteronomy 24:15. Again, as we just discussed in Romans 9:29, “σαβαώθ” (sabaoth) is just a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word “צְבָאוֹת” (tsavaoth) or “hosts”.

So, again, “Lord of sabaoth” in James 5:04 should be translated as “Yehovah of Hosts.” The term has nothing to do with “Lord of the Sabbath.”

Brethren, the third difficult scripture we will explore today is:

3) Psalm 82:01

Please turn with me to Psalm 82, and we will read a psalm which has been a source of much confusion for many.

Psalm 82:01 – “A Psalm of Asaph. God *[Elohim]* standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods *[elohim]*.”

There has been much confusion about this verse. Many believe that this verse shows that there are numerous “gods” or Elohim in heaven surrounding God Our Father’s throne, and that Jesus is just one of many, many Elohim (Mighty Ones) in heaven. Some believe that this verse shows that God Our Father’s throne is similar to Zeus’ throne in Greek mythology where Zeus holds court with all of the

other gods such as Poseidon, Hera, Hestia and Demeter, Hades, Apollo, Artemis, Hermes, Athena, Hephaestus, Aphrodite and Ares. But let's continue reading the psalm to better understand what is being said here.

Psalm 82:01 – “A Psalm of Asaph. God [*Elohim*] standeth in the congregation of the mighty [*El*]; he judgeth among the gods [*Elohim*].

אֱלֹהִים

Elohim – Mighty One(s)

אֵל

El – Mighty One

Based on context and on Hebrew grammar, the word “Elohim” (Strong’s #430 – Mighty Ones) can mean angels, human judges, or the Heavenly Beings of God Our Father and Jesus the Anointed One. One way to distinguish whether “Elohim” is referring to a Divine Being or is referring to angels or humans is by the conjugation of the verb associated with “Elohim”. For all occurrences of “Elohim” referring to a Divine Being, the verbs are conjugated in the third person singular, showing that the subject was “He” even though “Elohim” is a plural noun. For all occurrences of “Elohim” referring to angels or humans, the verbs are conjugated in the third person plural, showing that the subject is “They”.

Such is the case in Psalm 82. Let's explore each verse. Verse 1 shows “Elohim” conjugated in the third person singular, such as “He stands”, not “They stand”. Furthermore, the word for “mighty” in verse 1 is the Hebrew word “אֵל” (El – God – singular – Strong’s #410). So, Verse 1 states that “Elohim” or Yehovah stands in the congregation of God and He judges among the “Elohim”.

To understand the meaning of the second occurrence of “Elohim” in verse 1, we must continue reading further into Psalm 82.

Psalm 82:02 – How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. **:03** – Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. **:04** – Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. **:05** – They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. **:06** – I have said, Ye *are* gods [*Elohim*]; and all of you *are* children of the most High. **:07** – But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. **:08** – Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.”

The context of Psalm 82 verses 2 through 8 is concerning the unrighteous human judges in Israel in contrast to the righteous judgment of Yehovah. Yehovah is admonishing the human judges that were perverting righteous judgment in Israel.

Brethren, there are spiritual beings surrounding our Heavenly Father's throne. We know that Jesus is at the right hand of our Heavenly Father's throne. We know that there are 24 elders who give praises to God Our Father day and night before His throne. And we know that there are multitudes of righteous angels serving Him before His throne. That constitutes the divine assembly of God Our Father.

Psalms 82 is not describing a court where God Our Father is surrounded by other Elohim beings like multitudes of Jesus-like beings. There are only two Elohim Beings – God Our Father and Jesus the Anointed One.

The Elohim Beings described in verse 2 through 8 are unrighteous human judges, not spiritual Elohim Beings.

So, brethren, this afternoon we have explored three difficult scriptures to determine the more correct meaning of each scripture. These scriptures are:

- 1) Philippians 2:05-11
- 2) Romans 9:29
- 3) Psalm 82:01

I hope these explanations will be helpful in discussing these scriptures with others.

Brethren, let's continue to pray and draw closer and closer to our Heavenly Father and to His Son. Let's continue to dig into the scriptures, spending time to research their meaning in our lives. And let's continue to study to show ourselves approved of our Heavenly Father, rightly dividing His inspired Word.