

Evaluation of Mark Brown's Exegesis Paper on Philippians 2:1-11
Evaluators: Joel Hart and Wade Mann

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Mr. Brown has put forth a commendable exegetical analysis of Philippians 2:1-11. There is much to appreciate in the paper as it relates to Mr. Brown's ability "to exegete and interpret a given Biblical text in a scholarly way and articulate his understanding in a paper that reflects excellence in research as well as communication skills"¹.

We would highlight three areas of strength in the paper, before noting a few areas that could be pursued for improvement.

First, Mr. Brown devotes himself to a close reading of the Greek text. Philippians 2 is a well-known passage, where standard readings or basic exegetical observations could come quite naturally. But Mr. Brown shows a desire to be in the text, closely exploring issues of Pauline syntax, grammar, and flow of thought. As one example of this, he takes what he argues to be an awkward English reading but accurate Greek reading of Philippians 2. He argues for the unity of mind in the Philippians believers as a product of fulfilling Paul's joy and not the cause of fulfilling Paul's joy. Whether one agrees with this reading entirely, one must appreciate his desire to be working closely with the text.

Second, Mr. Brown shows a good awareness of the broader theological concerns present in Philippians 2. The three primary Christological questions Mr. Brown proposes to answer (page 2) are central to theological debates through the centuries. Mr. Brown shows an awareness of the exegetical issues in view and argues well for conclusions that do affirm Christ's full divinity and the nature of His incarnation.

Third, Mr. Brown writes well and communicates clearly. Though there are a few typographical errors in the paper, the paper has a natural flow that combines a desire for scholarly engagement with a personal warmth of style in many places. This pastoral style overflows into the section on preaching, where we find that Mr. Brown has thought deeply about how this text could be communicated in a sermon and placed within a worship service.

A few points of recommended improvement can be noted.

First, in some places, one would wish for more clarity in the clearer analysis of certain source material. As one example of this, in the work on textual variants, not much clarity is given on the source of the textual variants themselves.

Second, the bibliography submitted lacks proper formatting and style for an academic bibliography. As one example, some of the entries are simply copy-and-pasted footnotes. We understand from Mr. Brown that he faced issues in file transfer between versions of the paper that made the bibliography formation more difficult. So we understand with Mr. Brown that this weakness is present in the paper.

¹ From the GLG Presbytery Student Handbook requirements for exegesis papers (page 51).

Third, in a few places, his analysis of the theological issues of the text reads more as a copy-paste of various commentators' assessments of the text. In those places we might have wanted to see more direct interaction from Mr. Brown himself with those theological issues.

With these points of recommended improvement in mind, it is our recommendation that Mr. Brown's exegesis paper on Philippians 2:1-11 be sustained by the presbytery. The paper meets the presbytery's requirements² and is a commendable demonstration of faithful work by Mr. Brown.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Hart and Wade Mann

² See pages 52-53 of the student handbook.