

The podcast that aims to start conversations about the oneness and unity of God and about the humanity of Jesus.

1. Let's look at the passage in context and offer initial considerations:

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 9:1-5)

ὧν οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλο γητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

Is the phrase “God who is over all” a relative clause that further defines Christ, or is it an independent doxology about God the Father? In other words, should we put a period after flesh, thus making the reference to “the one who is over all” refer to God the Father? A quick survey of modern translations shows a variety of ways to punctuate the verse, and since punctuation was absent from the original manuscripts, any attempt at punctuation is an interpretive choice by the reader.

We still need to consider other pieces of relevant data.

2. Let's look at other similar doxologies within the Epistle to the Romans itself:

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom 1:25)

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. (Rom 11:33-36) citing Isa 40:13

3. Let's look at doxologies in some of Paul's previous letters:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen. (Gal 1:3-5)

The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. (2 Cor 11:31)

ὁ ὢν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας

4. Let's look at other places where Paul gives a blessing, using the same adjective appearing in Rom 9:5:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, (2 Cor 1:3)

[There is another reference in Ephesians that might fit under this particular category, depending on if the interpreter attributes Pauline authorship to Ephesians. Although I don't personally have a dog in that particular interpretive fight, I'll include the reference here just to be thorough]:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, (Eph. 1:3)

5. Just for fun, let's look at the other NT occurrences of the Greek adjective εὐλογητός (which is translated as "blessed"):

But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" (Mark 14:61)

"Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, (Luke 1:68 NAU)

[Jesus isn't even born yet.]

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Pet. 1:3)

That is every occurrence of the adjective. It is highly interesting that the NT never uses it for Jesus but always reserves it for God the Father.

There, it appears that Romans 9:5 is almost certainly distinguishing Christ from the God to whom Paul ends the verse with an independent doxology. In other words, Paul is almost unquestionably intending the phrase “over all” be a description of God the Father, rather than a description of Christ being God over all.

In conclusion, we have observed that

1. It seems unlikely that Paul would refer to Christ according to the flesh, that is, as a human being descending from Israel’s patriarch, as God over all;
2. The other two doxologies within Romans are clearly doxologies given to God the Father, rather than to Jesus, suggesting that the same is true in Rom 9:5;
3. The doxologies in Paul’s other letters are all, without question, given to God the Father, rather than to Jesus;
4. Paul reserves the adjective εὐλογητὸς (which is translated as “blessed”) in all of his letters to refer to God the Father. In fact, Jesus Christ is never described with this adjective by Paul.
5. Outside of the Pauline corpus, no other NT writer uses the adjective εὐλογητὸς (which is translated as “blessed”) to refer to Jesus. It is always used of the Father.

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