***The Kenosis of Jesus Christ, No. 2 - PH37-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:5-8***

Please turn to Philippians 2:5-8. We are looking at one of the great cathedral-like doctrines of the Word of God, which generally, in theological circles, is referred to as the kenosis of Jesus Christ.

**Philippians 2:6**

We began with verse 5 last week where we were told that the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's example of the mental attitude of humility. The Philippians, in effect, are told to imitate in their thinking the mental attitude of the Lord Jesus, which we have expressed in Philippians 2:3-4. We found in the first part of Philippians 2:6 that the Lord Jesus Christ existed in the form of God before He assumed a human body. The first part of the verse we may render in this fashion: "Who, though He always has been, and at presence continues to exist in the essential nature of deity." The word "exist" indicates that what He was before His incarnation, He continued to be after it. This is very important. We are seeking to establish that Jesus Christ is declared in this verse to be God, and to continue to be God after he took on a human body.

When you find someone who says, "No, I don't believe that Jesus Christ is God," you must realize without a question of a doubt that they did not get that idea from the Bible. We understand that people do think that. People have some strange ideas about salvation, but they don't get those ideas from the Bible. The liberals have a whole concept of Christianity, but it is not the Christianity that you find in the Bible. We don't fault these people for saying that they don't believe Jesus Christ is God. We just want to make it clear that they didn't get that idea out of the Bible. We don't fault them for having their own caricature or their own invention of what they call Christianity. We just want to make it clear that they did not get that view of Christianity out of the Bible.

**Jesus Christ is God**

So what this verse is saying is something very important. Jesus Christ was God, and when He became man, He continued to be God. The word "form" is not external physical shape, but internal quality of being. The form of Jesus Christ was that of God. That is, He had the essence of deity. The form of God, the essence of deity, has an expression, and it is the expression of that deity that these verses are dealing with. The deity of Christ is very clearly declared in Scripture by Himself; by His followers; by His enemies; and, by God His father. His deity is attested to by His attributes; by His prerogatives, like forgiving sin; and, by His works.

**The Son of God**

One title that He is given is the title of "Son of God." And "Son of God" is a technical title which requires the deity of Jesus Christ. The term "son" in Semitic thinking connotes likeness or sameness of nature more than just source of being and subordination, as when we use the word "son." When the Jews used the word "son." they thought of likeness of nature. Jesus Christ claimed that God was His Father, in the sense of being like or equal to God. This is very clearly taught in such passages, for example, as John 5:17-18, where we read, "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father works, and I work.' Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." When He called God His father, He was saying in the Semitic way of thinking, "I am just like God." There was no doubt in the minds of the enemies of Jesus Christ that He was claiming to be God. That's why it's so ludicrous today to hear a liberal preacher say, "Even Jesus never claimed to be God, you know." The truth of the matter is that He very much claimed to be God.

Take a look at John 10:30: "'I and My Father are one.' Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'Many good works have I shown you from My Father. For which of those good works do you stone Me?' The Jews answered Him, saying, 'For a good work, we don't stone you, but for blasphemy. Because that you, being a man make Yourself God.'" As far as they were concerned, they held the liberal view. The Pharisees held what we call today's liberal view of Christ--He was a man. He was not God. But the Lord Jesus claimed to be God. His enemies knew that.

When we get to this term, "Son of God," this term actually means "deity." This is made very clear to us. Please turn to Matthew 26:63. We again have this term used in the way that it was used by Jesus in the presence of His enemies. And they understood that this was a technical reference to deity. This does not mean simply "Son of God," the way we may say that every human being is a son of God because God created him. That's how the liberals like to interpret this. God created all of us. So we're all sons of God. This does not mean that we have been adopted in salvation, and so we are sons of God that way. That is true. But Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a different way. When this term was applied to Him, it had a specific different technical meaning. Thus in Matthew 26:63, we read, "But Jesus held His peace, and the high priest answered and said unto Him, 'I adjure You by the living God, that you tell us whether you be the Christ, the Son of God.'" Here these terms "the Christ" and "Son of God" were equated in this fashion. "The Christ" is equal to "the Son of God." Again, both of those indicate deity.

So, the high priest said, "Alright. We are putting it point blank to you. Are you guilty or not guilty? Are you the Son of God?" What did he mean when he was asking Jesus, "Are you the Son of God?" He didn't mean, "Are you created by God?" He didn't mean, "Have you received eternal life by the grace of God?" He meant, "Are you saying that You are deity? Are you saying that You have the essence of deity? That's what the term "Son of God" meant in the mouth of the high priest. We know this from the verses which follow: "Jesus said unto him, 'You have said, nevertheless, I say unto you.'" When He said, "You have said, that was saying, "Affirmative. Yes, I am the Son of God," which was the same as saying, "Yes, I am God."

"Nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall you the Son of Man (the technical term for His humanity) sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." The Lord Jesus not only said to him, "Yes, I am God," but He said, "I'll tell you something else. I am a God man. And as a God man, you're going to see Me someday sitting at the right hand of God the Father in all the power and majesty of deity."

If you understood how loathsome blasphemy was to a Jew, you could enter into what a bombshell of a statement that was for Jesus Christ to make. It was bad enough that he said, "Yes, I'm the Son of God." But when He said, "I am a God man, and I am going to reign as a God man," that was too much. Verse 65 says, "Then the high priest tore his clothes (the Semitic expression of horror), saying, "'He has spoken blasphemy. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy. What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is guilty of death.'"

The term "Son of God" as applied to Jesus Christ refers to his deity. It is a technical word used in a specialized way. The Sanhedrin, which was to try Him, understood it very, very well. So Jesus claimed both the titles. He claimed the title of the Christ. He claimed the title of the Son of God, both of which are equated to God. The Jewish rulers understood this claim very clearly. John 19:7: "The Jews answered, 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die because He made Himself the son of God.'" What did they mean? Should He die because He claimed salvation? No. Should He die because He's been adopted into the family of God, through faith in God, as Abraham had faith in God? No. They were saying He should die because He made Himself the Son of God because that meant He made Himself God.

**Equality with God**

Whatever the liberals may have to offer as their opinions, there is no doubt in the Bible that Jesus Christ was God. So coming back to Philippians 2, we take up the story with the last part of the verse. We have the dramatic statement that says, "Thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The first part of the verse says, "Who being in the form of God "(having the essence of deity, which we sought to establish, then "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Here we come to the crux of the doctrine of the kenosis. First of all, the word "thought" in the Greek Bible is "hegeomai." "Hegeomai" is a verb which simply means "to consider." Literally, it means "to leave before the mind," and thus "to consider," but to consider on the basis of weighing all the facts that are involved. It connotes a decision which has been made after you have considered the facts.

It says, "He did not think" something. The word "not" is this Greek word "au", which you may remember is the strongest word for "no" or "not" in the Greek language. It's the strongest negative. What he did not think is aorist here, which means at a point in time, namely out in eternity past when he had to make the decision, "Am I going to take on a human body or not?" It is actually active, though it's middle in form. This is known in the Greek as a deponent verb. It's one form, but really, in meaning, it's a different form. It's middle in voice the way it is in the Bible, but it's actually active in meaning. So it means that He Himself deliberately decided and made this decision. It's indicative. It is as a statement of fact.

Put yourself back into the situation that existed. People were sinners. There's no way for a sinner to have life. Life requires righteousness, as the book of Romans so ably puts forth. Without righteousness, you can't have life. If you're dead in sins, there's no way you can get life. There's no way you can get righteousness. Therefore, there's no way you can get life. This was the problem. Therefore, everybody who was born into the human race was on a slide right into hell. You were born at one end; they put you on a slide; and, you spent your life sliding down toward hell. That was the destiny of the human race. Something had to be done. Man could do nothing to get himself off of this toboggan that he was on. That is the issue that is being dealt with here. Out in eternity past, the Godhead got together and had a conference and said, "Here is the problem, and here is the solution" that the Father offered as His plan. The Son said, "I accept it." The Holy Spirit said, "I'll give you the power to execute it." The plan simply was that God the Son was going to do something to pay the penalty for sin, which is spiritual death, and to bear our suffering and our punishment.

That's what all this is about. If Jesus Christ did not agree to do this, and if he was unwilling to do this, then there was no destiny for you and me but to stay on the slide (just like a chute headed for hell), from one end of our lives to the other. That would've been our destiny. This verse tells us that "He thought it not robbery." The word "robbery" is "harpagmos." "Harpagmos" refers to a prize or a treasure to be held onto. This noun has two kinds of meaning. It has an active meaning, which means a robbery. It just means actively going up and holding up somebody. However, it also has a passive meaning, and this is the one which is applicable here in the Scripture. The passive meaning means a prize or a treasure to be held on to. What "harpagmos" means, therefore, in this verse is that Jesus Christ, absolutely (using the strongest negative) did not insist on hanging onto something as a prize--clutching it--something that he would not give up. And what was that?

It says, "To be equal with God." "He thought it not a prize to be clutched at all costs, to be equal with God." The word "to be" is the familiar "eimi". This simply means a state of being. It is present. It was His constant attitude. It was active. It was His choice. Infinitive means it was His purpose. It was the purpose of Jesus Christ not to determine to hang on to something. What is that? To be equal? "Isos." "Isos" here in the Greek is plural, which is an indication of the Trinity. He does not consider it a thing to be clutched--to express His equality with the other two members of the Godhead with God ("theos"--referring to God). He did not think that His equality with God and His position of deity, with all of the expressions of deity, was something He had to clutch onto and hold onto at all costs--something that He would not yield.

Verse 6, therefore, putting it all together, says this: "Who, though He always has been, and at present continues to exist in the essential nature of deity, after weighing all the facts, He did not consider the expression of His equality with God a treasure to be clutched and held onto." What we're talking about is the expression of Christ's deity. So let me make it clear right off the bat. When we speak about the word kenosis, which we're going to come to in a minute, which means emptying, we are not saying that Jesus Christ in any way gave up His deity. However, He certainly gave up the expression of His deity. He certainly gave up the use of His attributes. Although He was (before His incarnation) God, with all the expression of being on an equality with Father and Holy Spirit, He did not consider that a position that He would not yield for any reason. Jesus Christ is not said to be trying to secure a deity which He did not already possess. Nor is it saying that He is trying to hang on to His deity after He took on human form. He did maintain His deity after He took on human form. He did have His deity before He came in human form. In the act of the incarnation, He did not have to clutch onto His deity itself as if it were some treasured prerogative that He could lose.

In other words, this verse is telling us that Jesus Christ simply decided He would set aside the expression of the glory of his deity and the independent use of His attributes. From now on, He would use his attributes as God the Father directed Him as a man to use those attributes. He would continue as God, but you wouldn't look at Him and see that He was God. The reference here is holding onto His deity in terms of its outward expression--His visible glory and the use of His attributes. He was willing to veil the glory of His attributes, and set aside the independent use. This was an exemplary act of condescension on the part of Jesus Christ. It is the principle which was expressed here in Philippians 2:4: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Verse 6 stressed the deity of Christ, but when we come to verse 7, it stresses His humanity.

He didn't determine to hang on to the expression of His deity. What did He determine to do? "But" is the Greek word "alla," and it is a contrast. It contrasts the treasure of His position of deity with an attitude of condescension, humility, and sacrifice. What He did is something that was the supreme sacrifice of love. This word "but" contrasts verse 6 with verse 7. He didn't do this. What did he do?

**Ephesians 2:7**

Verse 7 says, "He made Himself of no reputation." Here we come to the famous word. "Made of no reputation" is one word in the Greek. It is the Greek word "kenoo." "Kenoo" simply means "to empty." It is aorist which means that at some point in the past, He determined to empty Himself of something. It's active. He chose to do it. Indicative is a statement of fact. And He applied this to Himself: "heautou." The applied something to Himself. This sets up at the front of the sentence in the Greek, so it's emphatic. This is a determined voluntary act on His part. It was a decision of His sovereignty to empty Himself.

What did he empty Himself of? Paul doesn't specify. He doesn't tell us what it is that Christ emptied empty Himself of, but the explanation which now follows does indicate to us what he emptied Himself of. The word "kenoo" actually comes to us from the noun "kenosis" which is related to the verb. That is where we get the word for the doctrine of kenosis. The noun "kenosis" simply means an emptying.

So, "He took" is the Greek word "lambano" which means "to assume." He assumed something here. It is aorist. At the point of His incarnation, He took this. It is active, indicating by choice. Since it is aorist participle, these two together, this means that this action of assuming had to come time before the main action of the verb which is "emptied Himself." In order for Him to empty Himself, He had to take on human form. That is how He emptied Himself. He had the form of God. Now He emptied Himself and He took on a different form.

It says He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form. Again, we have our word "morphe." "Morphe" refers not to an external shape, but to an inner essence. He took on Himself a totally different form.

This is the same word we have up in verse 6, "Who, being in the form of God had the essence of God." Now He took on Himself, the form or the essence (the inward qualities) of a servant. He chose the place of a servant, which is a "doulos" which means a bondslave. The humanity of Jesus Christ was the vehicle for expressing His condescension. This doesn't refer to the fact that He took on humanity. It says He took on the form of servant which means He took the place of humility, of condescension. So "was made" is the Greek word "ginomai". Again, this is one of those deponent verbs. It is aorist. It was when He took the body, and when He was born in Bethlehem. It's active. He chose to do it. It is participle. Again, we have an aorist participle. Therefore, before He could empty Himself, He had to take on this human form. So taking on humanity was in the process of emptying Himself. He condescended to empty Himself of something that was naturally His.

**Jesus was a Man**

So what did He become? He became "in the likeness of men." The Greek word is "homoioma." "Homoioma" refers to the fact that Jesus Christ was a true human being, but we know He was different. He was a God man. He differed from God in that respect, and He differed from man in that respect. But Jesus Christ has a likeness to humans in having a human body and the fact that He has a human soul and a human spirit.

But He is not like men in having an old sin nature. That's not part of being human. I know you've heard that it is. When you do something that is wrong, somebody helps you to feel better by saying, "Well, that's just human." But the old sin nature is not part of being human. It is an insertion of an aberration. It is a distortion of what it is to be human. We struggle with it, and we have to live with it. That is true. But the Lord Jesus Christ was in the likeness of man. That meant He had a body; He had a soul; and, He had a spirit. He was absolutely true humanity.

Furthermore, he was a perfectly normal man in every respect. There were no outward qualities to set him off from other men. That's what the word "homoioma" (likeness) means. He looked just like everybody else in this room. He did not walk around with a halo hovering over His head. He did not go around with any affectations. He didn't speak in a pontifical voice. When he preached, He didn't get up and say, "Beloved, we are gathered here in order to lay before you the riches of the Word of God in its depth. And God in His mercy has laid out for us these truths in order that you may not be sinful." There were no offbeat mannerisms in Jesus Christ. He didn't go around, and when you saw him, you said, "Oh boy, there's one of those." He just was in every respect a normal human being.

I'll tell you one thing for sure. The appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ was not that of a weak man. He was in no way weak. These feminine girly portraits that you see of Jesus Christ are a travesty and a blasphemy. They are pathetic. You can't buy church bulletins without these cute girly portraits of Christ on the cover. Somebody came to me some time ago and they gave me one of these portraits of Christ. It was framed. It had a light at the top. It was a shrine in itself. There was this beautiful girl looking out at me from that picture. They thought I might want to hang it up in my office to help me along. When you see these pictures of Christ, you know what I'm talking about. He comes out lacking any appearance of strength. Why? Because he was good. If He's good, it is assumed that He lacked strength; He lacked ruggedness; and He lacked manly character. So he comes out as a very delicate-looking man with female length hair, a thin face, and puny hands. Take a look at the pictures and see if that isn't the case.

The truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ was a very manly, vigorous Jew, and He had short hair. I guarantee you He had short hair, so don't be ignorant about that. There is no question in the world but that He had short hair. Period. Over and out. If you haven't learned that yet, catch on to it. He had short hair. The people who looked at Him full in the face, and who walked with Him, and who stood by the side of the curb of the streets as He walked by, and who had the visual images of personal recollections with Him, then were driven down into the Roman catacombs. As they would gather together to praise the Lord, they began symbolizing what they remembered of Him, both in terms of symbols and in likeness. One of the symbols was the fish. The Greek word for fish was "icthus," and the first letters of that word can stand for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. It was a sign among Christians. They drew the portraits of Christ in the catacombs, which you can go down there and see today, and every one of them is in the short hair of the day, which was the style, of course, set by the Romans. There was no such thing as men walking around with shoulder-length hair. That is a revolting, disgusting travesty. Every idiot artist that has ever imagined Christ thinks about a good man, and he thinks He had to be a weakling and He had to be effeminate in order to prove that He was kind; good; gentle; and, understanding.

Jesus Christ was a vigorous, manly Jew. He had a strong voice. He had short hair. He had a good mind. He had a muscular body, and He had hands that did carpenter's work, and did it every day. He actually was an impressive man who could plow into the midst of his enemies, and He would bowl them over with His command presence when He identified himself. He stood alone for truth against organized religion when he was being shot at and fired at by people who had all kinds of human viewpoint opinion as to what the Bible taught, and who were antagonistic because He was countering some opinion that they were determined they were going to hold. He bravely stood up against their organized oppression. He bravely followed the path that led Him right to the cross. I think it's high time that preachers and church members rise up to strike down this ignorant insulting image of our Lord as being weak; inoffensive; and, a harmless soul.

It is obvious that many women were drawn to Jesus Christ. They became His able assistants and companions in the work that He was doing. The reason they were drawn to Him is because of His masculinity; of His strength; of His initiative; and, of His leadership. Women are not drawn to female-like men. So you girlie boys learn better. You're out of it if you're looking for feminine companionship. Women are not looking for female-like boys to associate with. That's why these women were drawn to Christ. He was a man. He had a mission that took a man to fulfill.

Men were drawn to the Lord because He exemplified courage. He obviously exemplified fearlessness of people. He was no respecter of persons. He knew what it was to be hit and to be treated with disrespect; with contempt; and, with indifference. But He was not bowled over. Men respected that. They respected His tireless energy and His air of confidence. They respected His visionary leadership. The truth of the matter is that a man is really tough, in the true sense of toughness. When we say tough, what do we usually think of? If you don't understand what tough is, you think it means brutal. Tough in our language comes to mean the mafia. That is not what is tough. The men who are really tough know what it is to be gentle; to be sacrificial; to be men of honor; to have a sense of duty; to have a determination; to have a singleness of mind; and, to be sympathetic to for the situation in which people may find themselves. That's what it is to be tough. A man who is genuinely tough will reflect those qualities.

They should have come out with completely the opposite picture of Christ, when they wanted to draw a portrait of Him, than what they have. The reason is because human viewpoint has contaminated the thinking of people and the thinking of artists. Our lord was a Man who was a Man in every sense of the word, and He was strong.

So what verse 7 is telling us is that Jesus Christ exchanged the expression of His deity role for the expression of a servant's role. Verse 6 is His pre-incarnate expression of deity. Verse 7 is His incarnation expression of a servant. The opposite happened, you remember, on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17. There, His usual earthly servant form (where you could look at Him and see His likeness, and He appeared like any other man) suddenly was removed, and instead the deity was permitted to shine through. It scared the thunder out of the disciples. They knew him well, and they had seen Him in all kinds of circumstances of life, and they knew Him as a human being, but they had never seen Him in the glory of God, and it scared them silly.

Then it caused them to be ridiculous. Right away, Peter thought he had to make a speech on every occasion that something happened. So he started babbling and said, "Let's build three tabernacles here to commemorate this great occasion. That's all he could come up with at the spur of the moment. But that was because he was so unnerved by suddenly seeing the glory of God right before his face, as Moses had experienced it on Sinai. The opposite took place. He permitted His glory to come through, and they saw what they knew was true about Him. Now they saw it, as you will someday see it. What you know now to be true of Him as being our God, you will someday in heaven see that glory. You will see that which He veiled while He was here on earth.

The expression of His glory is not the same as His divine essence. Separate those two. He could not turn His divine essence on and off. If He is God, He is God. He can't change that. But the visible glory of that essence, He could turn that on and off. That's what he did. While he was here on earth, He turned it off. On the mount of transfiguration, he flipped the switch for just a minute; let them see it; and He turned it back off again. It gave the confirmation to these men who were at the center of the apostolic party. It gave them the confirmation as to who He was.

So verse 7 says this" "But Himself He emptied as he took on the outward expression of a servant and entered a new state of existence, that of humanity." So we speak about the kenosis of Jesus Christ. I want you to know that term; I want you to respect it; and, I want you to love it for the great, awesome doctrine that it represents. This is what took you and me off the slide into hell. It was because Jesus Christ willingly condescended to take upon Himself the form of a servant and to shield and to cover that form of deity. It did not imply that He emptied Himself of His deity. He expressed His deity after his incarnation, as you know. The expression of deity requires that He be God, or He couldn't express deity. Christ set aside only the outward expression of deity. The basic natural desire and prerogative of deity is to be glorified. This is what He set aside. When the Lord Jesus set this aside, He took a position of humility. This is being brought to the attention of the Philippian Christians as it is being brought to our attention in order that we learn not to look only upon our own things, but to condescend and to look upon the things of others and the consideration that others should get from us.

This condescension on the part of the Lord Jesus is illustrated in John 13:1-17 in the foot washing incident where you may view what He did there as a visual aid. It was a picture of what He did here in the kenosis. You remember that incident that here Jesus is seated at the table with His disciples. There He is master. That is the picture of His pre-incarnate state where He was God in all of His full glory expressed before the angels. Then He begins washing their feet which is a type of His incarnation, His expression of His role as a servant. He is still master. He was still the master of the disciples, while He was on his knees, washing their feet in front of them like a servant. He was both at that moment. Then we have that He laid the outer garment aside as He proceeded to wash their feet, which meant that was a picture of His laying His expression of deity aside, while He washed their feet. When he was through washing their feet, He took this outer garment and put it back on, which pictured the resumption of the Lord's glory after his resurrection. When we do see Him, it will be with the outer garments of His glory fully draped around his shoulders, and you'll see Him in all of His magnificent beauty.

**The Doctrine of the Kenosis of Jesus Christ**

So let's summarize the doctrine of the kenosis:

1. The doctrine of the kenosis receives its name from the Greek noun "kenosis," which means **an emptying**. This word "kenosis" comes into theological use through Philippians 2:7 where we have it as the verb "kenoo" that we looked at a moment ago. This noun has become a technical word for the veiling of Christ of the visible glory of His deity when He became a man.
2. The kenosis of Jesus Christ was **His willing condescension to become incarnate, and voluntarily yielding the independent use of His divine attributes as a man**. Jesus Christ subjected himself to the Father's plan for the incarnation. Therefore, He did not use His divine attributes ever to benefit Himself as a man. He always used his attributes under the direction of God, through the guidance of the Spirit of God. During the First Advent, Christ relied, therefore, on the power of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of Bible doctrine in His humanity, just as you and I must. The Bible speaks of Christ laying aside, in His incarnation, something which He had already as a divine person in His pre-existent state (John 17:5, 2 Corinthians 8:9). This condescension included His laying aside the visible expression of His deity, and using His attributes only as the Father directed.
3. Before the kenosis, Jesus Christ was **in the form of God**. But afterward, He was made **in the likeness of man**, and formed and fashioned as a man. The contrast is between His eternal visible manifestation as God, and the veiling of divine glory while He was incarnate here on the earth. Paul says that God loves in light (1 Timothy 6:16). This is the glory that the incarnate Christ laid aside. You may compare this with Revelation 21:33 where you see the Lord coming in His visible glory. The Lord was not united to glorified humanity at the point of the incarnation. He was only united to sinless humanity. Consequently, the Lord was subject to pain; He was subject to temptation; He was subject to weakness and sorrow; and, so on--all the other human desires and needs.
4. In the incarnate state, during His First Advent, Jesus Christ was **both undiminished deity and true humanity in one person**. This is what we referred to as the hypostatic union. He did not empty Himself of His deity and of His attributes in any way whatsoever (Matthew 1:23, Matthew 11:7, Mark 1:1, John 3:13, John 14:9, Romans 1:4). The kenosis is not the subtraction of deity, but it is the addition of humanity to Christ. It is the humble acceptance of God the Son in a self-limitation capacity. It is not the subtraction of deity. It is the addition of humanity. That's the kenosis. The transfiguration incidents showed that He did not give up His deity. He just veiled it. He covered it up. Immutability, as a matter of fact, is part of the essence of deity. If God is immutable, that means that He can't change.
5. The expression of deity and the independent use of divine attributes was **not viewed by Jesus Christ as a treasure to be clutched** if He was to fulfill the Father's plan in providing salvation for the world. He had to become human so He could become obedient to the cross. Divine sovereignty obeys nothing. Eternal life cannot die. Therefore, He had to be a man. He voluntarily took on the form of a man in order to reconcile and redeem sinners, and thus to propitiate the Father. So while the Lord is on an equality with God, He did not selfishly choose to hold on to the visible, glorious expression of that state.
6. Involved in the kenosis is **the sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit** to the humanity of Christ. Jesus was supported by the Holy Spirit. This was prophesied (Isaiah 11:2-3, Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 60:1). The Holy Spirit was given without measure to the humanity of Christ (John 3:34). The Holy Spirit sustained Christ during His earthly ministry (Matthew 12:18, Matthew 18:28, Luke 4:14-15). The ministry of the Holy Spirit was discontinued at the cross while He was bearing our sins (Psalm 22:1, Matthew 27:46). But the Holy Spirit was part of the resurrection of Christ (Romans 8:11, 1 Peter 3:18). The present ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church age is related to the Lord also (John 7:39, John 16:14). The Holy Spirit indwells us, in other words, to glorify Christ.
7. The kenosis is related to the doctrine of **the humiliation of Christ**. This humiliation included the veiling of his pre-incarnate glory. He gave up the outward appearance of God. The union of eternal God with unglorified humanity is part of the humiliation. The humiliation continues under the concept of kenosis. He didn't use His attributes independently of the Father's plan. He relied on the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1-2). The greatest part of humiliation, of course, was bearing our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24).
8. There is **a valid difference between the full possession of divine attributes by Jesus Christ and their constant exercise.** The Lord kept His deity, but He limited the expression. This limitation resulted from His willingness to accept the human form.
9. The terms **"emptied Himself" and "took the form of a servant" are mutually explanatory terms**. Christ placed Himself in relation to the Father in the lowly position of a servant (John 5:30, John 4:34, John 17:4-18, John 14:28, Matthew 26:39). His miracles were performed in the power of the Holy Spirit as a servant for the benefit of others, not for Himself (Matthew 4:3-4, Matthew 15:15-21, Matthew 15:32-39).
10. Jesus Christ described Himself as having **a limitation to His knowledge, but also a possessed, divine, unlimited knowledge**. He was both God and man.
11. (Just to call your attention to this in passing), **the false doctrine of the kenosis declares that Jesus Christ gave up His divine attributes**--that is, He ceased to be deity. Instead, He became a good man. Or, that He had to develop during the incarnation the consciousness of His deity. This false doctrine says that as He grew up as a boy, it gradually dawned on him around the age 12 that, "You know, I'm God." And He suddenly realized that He had a ministry. This is another false view of the kenosis--that He was blanked out, and then gradually He woke up to the fact that He was God. Neither is true. He was God. He knew He was God. As He came to consciousness as a child, He knew who He was, what His mission was, and what He was supposed to do in going about His Father's business. So this is a false doctrine of the kenosis.

All of these, just to try to tie it very briefly together for you, should again cause us to stand in awe as we would in a great cathedral, realizing that if the Lord Jesus Christ had not condescended to do what is connoted in the doctrine of the kenosis, there would be no hope for us; there would be no chance of eternal life; and, only the lake of fire and brimstone would lie before us. Thank God for a Savior who was willing to be that kind; that humble; that condescending; and, that accommodating.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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