***The Kenosis of Jesus Christ, No. 3 - PH37-02

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

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians 2 as we conclude the segment on verses 5-8 dealing with the kenosis of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the kenosis, you will recall, declares that as a man on earth, Jesus Christ veiled the outward glory of His deity, and voluntarily set aside the independent use of His divine attributes. We're now going to look at verse 8, having seen that the Lord Jesus Christ did not think the expression of the glory of His deity was something that He should grasp onto, but rather that He willingly set aside the fact that He was an equal-to-God person, and He took upon Himself the form of a servant; that is, the essence of one who is to serve, and He was made, consequently, in the likeness of men. As one looked upon Him, He was seen as a human being, but He was different because He was also God. He was different from man by the fact that He was a God man. He was also different from God now by the fact that He was a God man.

So verse 8 says to us, "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." So let's begin with the expression "being found," which is the Greek word "heurisko." "Heurisko" means "to recognize." You can see that this is where we get the English word "eureka," which means "I have found it." It comes right here from this Greek word "heurisko." It means to recognize something. It is in the aorist tense which refers here to the point of the incarnation of Christ when He was seen in this particular respect of humbling Himself. It is passive, in that others saw this in Him. It is a participle--a statement of fact. It is an aorist participle, and those two combined indicate that this is an action which took place before He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That is, He was found in the fashion of a full genuine human being.

We come again to that word "fashion" that we have seen before. "Fashion" is the Greek word "schema." "Schema" refers to external appearance. It is in contrast to the word which is used in verse 7 "morphe" which refers to inner essence. Verse 7 said, "But made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form (the inner essence) of a servant, and was made in likeness of men." Verse 8 says, "He was found in fashion as a man." So we have two different English words. One is "form" and one is "fashion." "Form," in verse 7 refers to an unchangeable inner essence or nature. Form has something to do with what you are and what you cannot change. Whereas fashion ("schema") here has to do with things which can change. Verse 8 is speaking about the externals. It is speaking about looking at Jesus Christ externally. When you looked at Him, you realized that He looked according to a certain fashion, a certain pattern, and that was the pattern of a man.

So what this verse is telling us is that the Lord Jesus Christ was recognized in the external appearance, and then it says, "of a man," or "as a man." That's the Greek word "anthropos," which is the general term for "humanity," or "mankind." So what this verse is saying is that when people looked upon the incarnate Christ, they saw a genuine male human body with all the normal members. He was moving about on two feet. He spoke a language, and He required all the usual care necessary for human beings to be able to stay alive. He was, in fact, a genuine human being. That's what this word "schema" is declaring to us. He was true humanity.

**The Humanity of Jesus Christ**

We have looked in some detail at the fact that Jesus Christ was true deity. Now we are going to summarize, for just a moment here, the fact that He was also genuine humanity at the same time. So here are some points you should remember about the humanity of Jesus Christ:

1. The humanity of Christ was **purposed in eternity past**. We have this in Ephesians 1:4-5, Ephesians 3:11, and Revelation 13:8.
2. The fact of the humanity of Christ is seen in **His annunciation and birth as a baby** (Luke 1:31-35, Luke 2:12). Mary was told that a baby was going to be born to her, and a baby was born. This baby was the God man. He had the normal process of birth. Christ was conceived in His mother's womb by a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34-35). For this reason, Christ was born to a virgin woman (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35). Mary was the mother of the humanity of Christ only. Mary is not, as the Roman Catholics like to say, the mother of God. She is not the mother of God. She is only the mother of the humanity of Christ.

This humanity is further stressed by the fact that the Bible records **the genealogy of Jesus Christ**--His human line of descent. We actually have two genealogies. One is recorded for us according to His legal parentage, His foster father Joseph. This was His legal line of descent, but His physical line of descent was through His mother, Mary. Solomon lost the privilege of being the line of descendants for the Savior. Because Solomon moved away from doctrine, Solomon got himself terribly mixed up (as you can tell by reading the book of Ecclesiastes). The result with Solomon was that he got way out in left field. Consequently, Solomon was cut off from the line of descent of the Savior. Joseph came through Solomon, but Joseph was still in the line of David. We have this recorded in Matthew 1:16-17. However, Mary descended from another son of David--David's son Nathan. Nathan became the son through whom the Savior came. Mary was descended through Nathan, and thus Mary is also connected to the line of David. And we have that genealogy recorded in Luke Chapter 3. So the genealogies are very clearly recorded in order to make it very clear that Jesus Christ had a true human heritage.

1. Jesus Christ **grew physically to maturity** in the normal human pattern. You can see the progression if you look at Luke 2:6-7, 40-42, and Luke 3:23. He just proceeded from babyhood; to boyhood; to youth; and, to adulthood.
2. Since Christ had no human father, His humanity was **free from an old sin nature**. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He had no old sin nature. The reason He had no old sin nature was because there was something different about His birth from that of every other human being. That different thing was the fact that He did not have a human father, and thus we may conclude that it is because of the human father that the old sin nature is passed on from parents to child. Jesus Christ, for this reason, was born spiritually alive, in contrast to all other human beings since Adam who have been born spiritually dead, Christ was born spiritually alive. Jesus Christ also remained sinless all the days of His life here on the earth (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:22). He not only began sinless, just as Adam began sinless, but all His life, He never sinned once, either in thought or in deed.
3. **The humanity of Christ cannot sin**. It is what we call "impeccable," because it is joined with His deity in one person (1 John 3:5, 2 Corinthians 5:21). The Lord Jesus Christ experienced temptation, but He never experienced temptation from an old sin nature because He did not have an old sin nature. Because He did not have an old sin nature, as Hebrews 4:15 tells us, He was born spiritually alive, and because His humanity was joined to His deity, His humanity could not do something that His deity would not do. Therefore, His humanity was impeccable. It could not sin. It could be tempted. He had to make a bonafide exercise of His will to say "yes" or "no" to sin, but the exercise that He was capable of making was to say "no."

It would be like taking a steel post and saying, "This represents the deity of Jesus Christ;" and, then taking a fine thin wire and saying, "That represents His humanity." You could snap the thin wire by itself. But if you took that thin wire and you welded it or to that post, you would never be able to break it in your hands. That is the condition that existed between the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. For this reason, He remained sinless while He was here on earth. Both Adam and Christ started out sinless. Both faced the issue of exercising positive volition to the will of God.

1. **The Holy Spirit sustained the humanity of Christ** during His life and ministry on earth (John 3:34). It is very important that you understand that while Jesus Christ was the God man, He operated in exactly the same way that you and I must operate in our walk in our lives. We are human beings. He became a human being, in part to demonstrate to us how a human being can live. Remember that His deity never was brought over in any way to become part of His humanity. He had to act in exactly the same way that you and I must act as human beings. Jesus Christ was constantly filled with the Holy Spirit in His humanity. Because He was constantly filled with the Holy Spirit, He never sinned a single time. It was God the Holy Spirit, who was permitted by the volition of Christ to operate in His life, that enabled Him to live that sinless life. The human volition of Christ had to be involved in yielding to the Holy Spirit. The same thing is true of you and me. We too have the same ability to make the choice of allowing the Spirit of God to run our lives.
2. The life of Christ on earth revealed His humanity in various ways. **His names** revealed his humanity. He was called "Son of Man." He was called "the man, Christ Jesus." He was called "the Son of David." His human parentage revealed His humanity. He was called "her first born;" "seed of David;" "seed of Abraham;" "made of a woman;" and, "sprang from Judah." All of these expressions are used to describe His humanity.
3. He was also seen to be human on earth by the fact that **He possessed a human body; a human soul; and, a human spirit** (Matthew 26:38, John 13:21, 1 John 4:2-9). He also demonstrated His humanity by certain self-imposed limitations under which He had to live. These included the fact that He became hungry (Matthew 4:2, Matthew 21:18). He had to go through the regular normal procedures of eating. He had to eat on a regular basis to sustain His physical strength just as we do. He also therefore became thirsty (John 4:7, John 19:28). He could not go for more than three or four days without drinking water or He would have died, just as you would.

He became tired (John 4:6). He could not go on and on and on without sleeping. He had to stop and fall asleep. There were some times when He went so far, and He was pressed with such demands that He could hardly stop to take care of the normal functions of caring for His life; His body; and, the things He needed, that there were times when He sat down and He dozed off because He was so tired. He had to sleep, and He would fall asleep. He required sleep (Matthew 8:24, Mark 4:38).

He felt emotional pressure (Luke 22:44). He suffered pain because He had a genuine physical body (Matthew 26:67-68, Matthew 27:26-34). When they struck the nails into His hands, it hurt on the cross. When they took those whips and beat Him and cut the welts on His back, it hurt when the leather thongs of the Roman soldiers struck Him. When the Jews came up to Him and they took their hands and they slapped Him across the face, and they back-handed Him in their anger and in their indignation when they were putting Him on trial, it hurt when the hand connected with His face. He could experience physical pain because He was human. All of these things demonstrate to us His humanity here on earth.

1. Christ came in His humanity **to fulfill the Davidic Covenant with Israel**. It required a king in the line of David to fulfill the great Davidic Covenant promise (2 Samuel 7:16, Luke 1:31-33, Acts 2:30-36, Romans 15:8). His purpose in fulfilling that covenant has been postponed, and when He returns a second time He will come in order to complete the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant which the Jews refused to accept and permit Him to fulfill when He came the first time.
2. Christ came in His humanity **to reveal God to Man** (Matthew 11:27, John 1:18, John 14:9, Romans 5:8, 1 John 3:16). What we know about God we find very clearly demonstrated in the God man Jesus Christ.
3. **Jesus Christ in His humanity had to learn Bible doctrine** (Isaiah 50:4-5, Luke 2:52). Jesus Christ in His deity knew all truth, but in His humanity, as He grew up as a boy, He had to start learning the Old Testament Scriptures. He had to be taught doctrine as to the extent that it was revealed through the Old Testament. Jesus Christ in His humanity did not automatically know the Bible. The Lord Jesus Christ had to do exactly what you're doing right now. He had to sit in a group and listen to a rabbi instructing Him. He had to sit at home and listen to His father explaining the Word of God to Him. He had to sit and study and learn. That was the only way the humanity of Christ entered into a knowledge of the Word of God.

He was a very, very apt pupil. By the time He was 12 years old and He sat in the temple in Jerusalem, speaking with the doctors; the lawyers; and, the educated scribes of the Pharisees, they were amazed that this 12-year-old kid had such knowledge of the Word of God and such deep insights. Unfortunately, when that story is taught to our children, as perhaps you will recall in your own experience, it is often taught with the impression being given that He did this because He was God. It never occurs to some 12-year-old boy who is sitting in a Sunday school class, hearing this story taught, that what Jesus Christ was able to do, he himself could do as a 12-year-old boy. He could knock the props out from under theologians just as Christ did, providing he did what the Lord did--studied doctrine, and learned the word. He was a human being who had learned his doctrine lessons.

1. Christ came in humanity to become **a merciful and faithful high priest** in these things pertaining to God (Hebrews 2:16-17; 8:1, 9:11-12, 24).
2. Jesus Christ came in the flesh **to destroy the works of the devil** (John 12:31, John 16:11, Colossians 2:13-15, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8). He could not destroy the works of the devil as God. That was why the Godhead had to have the conference to decide what to do, so to speak. They had to decide how They were going to handle the problem of sin. The problem required a mediator, and the mediator had to be like both sides that He was mediating for. He had to be, on the one hand, God; and, on the other hand, He had to be man. Therefore, He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He had to be a human being in order to do that, as well as God.
3. The humanity of Christ is seen in **His physical death on the cross; His burial in a tomb; and, His resurrection** (Matthew 27:50-60, Matthew 28:5-9). In other words, Jesus Christ in His life revealed that He had to do all the normal things that a human being has to do to stay alive. When He died, they did the normal things they do with a human being that dies. They took the body and they buried it, indicating the genuineness of His humanity.
4. The humanity of Jesus Christ is **now in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father** (John 3:13). It is very important that you understand that it is a human being who is seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. This is because the acceptance of Christ in heaven indicates the acceptance of His sacrifice for our sins. This means that the Father's justice and the Father's righteousness have been satisfied. That's why this human being can sit there in heaven. Because Christ is in heaven, it also means that you and I as human beings will also go there physically. If it wasn't for the fact there is a man in heaven now, there would be no way for us to even begin to know that we are going to be in heaven too. It is very important that He be there seated at the right hand of God the Father, and that's exactly where He is and what he's doing. Because He's in heaven, every believer is going to be there in time because He is there. Because you are in Christ--you are positionally in Him--you are in heaven. You are positionally in heaven.

That's what Ephesians 2:6 tells us: that you are now seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Therefore, your practice can be compatible to your position in heaven, which will in time become real.

1. The humanity of Jesus Christ is **glorified above all angels** (Hebrews 1:13). As a human being, Jesus Christ was made like all the rest of us, a little below the status of angels. Since every believer is in Christ, and since He is now above the angels glorified in heaven, we too are positioned right above the angels. We are not actually above the angels yet. That's coming, but positionally, we are. Believers someday are going to judge the very angels who, in God's order of creation, rated above us.
2. When Christ returns to the earth at His Second Advent, **He will come with the same body** in which He ascended to heaven. That's what the angels told the disciples in Acts 1:11 as they watched Jesus Christ physically floating up through the air until a cloud took Him out of their sight. The angel said that He's going to come again just the way they saw Him go.

So these are the basic points that you should know and keep in mind concerning the genuineness of the humanity of Jesus Christ. You can match this up to the summary that we gave you previously of the genuineness of his deity.

**Philippians 2:8**

So coming back to Philippians 2:8, it says, "And being found in outward appearance as a genuine human being, He humbled Himself." The Greek word for "humble" is "tapeinoo." "Tapeinoo" refers to the humanity of Christ being humble. The deity of Christ cannot be humbled. This is what He is did within Himself as a human being. It is aorist, active, indicative. Aorist indicates that He humbled Himself at the point where He accepted the death of the cross. Active indicates that He chose to do it. Indicative indicates that it is a statement of fact. It says He did it Himself ("heautou"). He did this to Himself as a man.

"So that He became" is the Greek word "ginomai." "Ginomai" is aorist. Jesus came under the sentence of death as a result of humbling Himself. It is middle which is really active here. He chose to do it. It is participle--a principle. So what we have here is, "Having become obedient, He accepted the sentence of death on His humanity." That's what this is saying. He humbled Himself and became obedient to what? "He became obedient unto death." The word unto is "mechri" which means "as far as," or "to the extent of." He became humbly obedient to the will of God the Father to the point of taking His physical life. The word for "death" is "thanatos" which refers to the physical death of the body of Christ (1 Peter 2:24, 2 Corinthians 5:21). This was a death which was a payment to meet the penalty for sins. "Even" is the Greek work "de," and it shows the extent. It identifies the kind of debts to which He subjected Himself. That is the death on the cross.

**Christ's Death on the Cross**

The Greek does not have the word "the." That's very important. The English says, "The death, even as far as the death of the cross." But what this stresses without the definite article "the" is the quality. It's not the specific cross that He died on that is in view here. This refers to the kind of death that Christ suffered--the humiliating kind of death which was represented by crucifixion in the Roman Empire. Such a death was the lot of the contemptible and the loathsome criminal type. Deuteronomy 21:23 declares to us that anybody who dies and is hanged on a tree (or hanged on wood) is thereby shown to be an accursed thing; that is, to be under the curse of God. So when a person was executed in Israel, according to Deuteronomy 21:23, for a crime that was a capital crime, a break of the moral law which brought him under the curse of God, the body was hung on a tree. The hanging on wood was a sign that this individual was accursed before God.

When the Jews saw Jesus Christ hanging on the wood of the cross, they understood that He was thereby declared to be under the curse of God. However, Pilate had made it very clear that Jesus was not guilty of death. He had not committed any crime worthy of death. Yet, here was Christ hanging on the accursed cross. Since God is just and absolutely fair and righteous, He would not have placed His Son on that cross. Jesus Christ made it very clear that He was there by the will of the Father. Is God the Father going to put an innocent man on the cross hanging from wood--the sign of being accursed?

Yet, that's what God the Father did. Therefore, it was a very firm clear-cut declaration to the Jews that this man was innocent; He was hanging on wood which signified His being under the curse of God; yet, He Himself was innocent; so, He must be there for some other reason. What other reason could there be? The reason of substitution. He is paying the price for somebody else. He has no price that He must pay for Himself. Therefore, He must die this accursed death. This place of humiliation He occupies on the cross is in behalf of someone else. Such is the kind of death that He died. That's what it means, "Even unto the death of the cross." Even unto such a death where He who did no wrong became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. That was indeed, to the Jew who could see and who had a mind to see, a very vivid picture.

What kind of suffering was actually involved here in His going to the cross? As you know, human governments are constituted by God for the purpose of exercising justice in its courts. The function of government was completely violated toward Jesus Christ, and it led to His death. Who was the defendant? The defendant, Jesus Christ, was One who had no sin nature. He was One who had been born spiritually alive because Adam's sin had not been imputed to Him--not having a human father. He had never committed an act of sin mentally or overtly. He was always filled with God the Holy Spirit. There was not one second when He was not filled with God the Spirit. He was continually producing divine good works, consequently. He was the unique God man. That's the defendant.

Let's look at the nature of the mob which was screaming for His crucifixion, and which was screaming to bring Him to this kind of a humiliating criminal type of death upon the cross--to hang Him in the accursed position on the wood. Some of those people out there could say, "I used to be lame, but He made me walk." Some of them could say, "I was blind, but now I can see what they're doing to Him because He gave me my sight." Some of them could say, "I couldn't speak, but now I can scream, 'Crucify him.'" Some of them could say, "I was dead, and He brought me back to life, and I stand here now."

**Christ's Trials**

Before the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ suffered many humiliations on the road to the cross. He was called a liar. People pointed their fingers at Him and said, "You're illegitimate." They said He was demon-possessed. They told Him that He was a false teacher because He did not teach what the rabbis taught, and like the other churches taught around Him. They said He was a blasphemer because He called Himself the Son of God. And now, He is going to be obedient to the suffering of the cross-type of death which is the ultimate of suffering. As you know, He had six trials that were the epitome of the death on the cross-type of experience that He went through--the suffering by being obedient even unto the death on the cross. There were six trials. Three of them were Jewish. Three of them were Roman.

The three Jewish trials began, first of all, with Annas. We have this in John 18:12-24. This was the night before the crucifixion. It was an illegal trial. Annas was not even the high priest at this time. He had been before. Annas was now the big city boss of Jerusalem. As one who was not the high priest, he was not authorized to be running a court to try Jesus Christ. After he made his determination as to what was to be done, once the Jews had determined to kill Christ, now Annas made the first decision. Actually, it was his son-in-law Caiaphas who was the high priest. So he sent Jesus to Caiaphas. His attitude and recommendation was: set it up; and, get rid of Him. Jesus at this time told Annas, "I have spoken openly. Ask my listeners what I said," when he was interrogating Him (John 18:20-21).

The second trial of the Jewish segment was before Caiaphas. He came to Caiaphas the first time in Matthew 26:57-68. Caiaphas was the high priest. He saw an opportunity to sacrifice Jesus and to get rid of Him; and, as a matter of fact, to put him up as an example of anti-Roman attitude. The Jews were forever carrying on anti-Roman activities. Here was a chance to kind of take the pressure off themselves and to get the favor of the establishment by pointing to Jesus as an anti-establishment personality (John 11:50-52). This was a night trial. This was probably 4:00 o'clock in the morning. Annas had probably interrogated Him around 2:00 o'clock in the morning, right after having left the Garden of Gethsemane. Both of these were illegal.

They needed two witnesses according to Jewish law (Deuteronomy 19:15), so they got themselves a group of liars. The problem was that they couldn't get any two liars to lie the same way together. Consequently, they weren't able to establish a clear-cut case against Him. So the court was prejudiced. It was out to get Jesus Christ. They also violated court rules by the fact that they physically abused Him right there in court. Furthermore, no one acted as the attorney representing Christ. At this point, Jesus Christ declared to them, "I am the Christ. I am the Son of God." As you know, both of those expressions mean deity (Matthew 26:64).

The next morning, right after 6:00 o'clock, they had a second trial before Caiaphas. Now they were trying to make things legal (Matthew 27:1-2). The Sanhedrin court reconvened for just a brief session in order to make it illegal. However, contrary to custom, this trial was held during the Passover. They were not to hold trials on holy days, but they went ahead anyhow. So this concluded the Jewish series of trials, all of which was a travesty of justice, and this by the religious leaders. On this occasion, Jesus Christ told them that as the God man, they would sometimes see Him reigning at the right hand of God the Father. (Luke 22:69).

Then proceeded a segment of three trials, which were the Roman segment. All of this was the suffering of the kind of cross-death that Christ was willing to accept for Himself. He had a trial, first of all, before Pilate. We have this in John 18:28-38, Luke 23:1-7, Mark 15:1-5, and Matthew 27:11-14. Rome did not give the Jews the right to execute a man. Rome retained the right to capital punishment. Therefore, they had to be able to try Jesus on the breaking of Roman laws, or the Roman government would not issue the death penalty. They weren't going to kill Him because He broke some Jewish religious regulations. So they were up against finding a claim against Him.

In their Jewish trials, they said He had claimed to be God, so they brought the charge of blasphemy against Him (Matthew 26:63-65). But this would not stand up before the Roman government. They went to Pilate because it was a holy day. Because these were all godly Jewish leaders, they wouldn't go into a gentile dwelling on the Passover. So he came out to them (John 18:28). Pilate himself was a robber of the temple treasury. He was a cruel administrator. He was under investigation at this time by the Roman Senate for all kinds of Watergate-type activities that he was involved in. However, because of this, he seemed to be very particularly concerned to have a fair trial for Jesus. He's the only one that did give the Lord a fair trial. Later, however, Pilate was banished to Gaul by the Roman Senate in 36 A.D. There he committed suicide.

In any case, on this occasion, Pilate asked, "What are the charges against Jesus?" The Jews tried to railroad a verdict through without Pilate investigating evidence. They said, "If He hadn't been guilty, we wouldn't have brought Him here. Just declare Him under death penalty" (John 18:29-30). They couldn't use the blasphemy charge. As a matter of fact, it would have been kind of bad to have brought up a charge like that in front of Pilate because the Romans viewed as blasphemy not worshiping the emperor (which none of the Jews did, but which Pilate did). So they finally said, "Well, he's guilty of treason toward Rome" (Luke 23:2). They established this on two bases. First, they said that He told the people not to pay tribute to Rome (not to pay their taxes). You know that was false. Luke 20:19-25 shows us that He did exactly the opposite. They claimed that He was a revolutionary out to overthrow the authority of the Roman government and to make Himself king. This too was false. The Jews themselves were guilty of false witness.

Pilate now had an accusation, and he did have to deal with it, so he sought to give a private and objective hearing to Jesus Christ, which he did as we find in John 18:33-37. Jesus admitted to him that He was King of the Jews, but He declared to him that His kingdom was not of Satan's world system, as was the Roman Empire. Jesus does have a kingdom now of regenerated people who form the body of the church, and it is in the world, but it is not of the world. So Jesus differentiated the nature of the kingdom that He was going to bring in. He had declared to Pilate that His mission was to bring divine viewpoint to the world, which He called truth.

In other words, Jesus said, "I'm not guilty," and Pilate himself found Him innocent of the charges (John 18:38). Well, the Jews were unhappy with his verdict. So they tried to intimidate Pilate, who was already in trouble with Rome, by suggesting that he was being soft on a revolutionary, and that this wouldn't look good back in the Roman Senate to hear that (Luke 23:5). In the process, Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean. It so happened that the ruler of the tetrarch of Galilee was a man named Herod Antipas, who was a son of Herod the Great, the one who slaughtered the infant children when Jesus was born. It so happened that Herod Antipas was in Jerusalem for the festivities. So since he was under Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate thought he could get off the hook by sending Jesus over to Herod and letting Herod pass sentence on Him. So he did.

He sent him over to Herod, and apparently on this occasion, Jesus witnessed a very forceful witness by Pilate, as we find in 1 Timothy 6:13 and John 18:36-37. Pilate was really trying to avoid putting Him to death. So He had the second Roman trial which was before Herod (Luke 23:8-12). Herod Antipas is called by Jesus "the fox" because he was cunning, unprincipled, and selfish (Luke 13:32). It was this Herod Antipas who married Herodias who was the wife of his half-brother, Philip. This adulterous union was decried by John the Baptist, and it was this Herod Antipas who cut off the head of John the Baptist. Eventually, Herod was deposed and sent into exile by Rome, six years after this event, as a matter of fact, and there he committed suicide.

However, when Jesus came to Herod, Herod was curious. He had heard about Him. As a matter of fact, he was a little nervous because people said, "This is John the Baptist whom you killed, and he has come back to life. Luke 9:7 and Matthew 14:2 tell us of his concern. So when Jesus came, he wanted to have some miracles performed. He wanted some entertainment. However, on this occasion, Jesus refused to answer anything at all. He said nothing before Herod. So Herod mocked Him; beat Him; found Him innocent; and, sent Him back to Pilate. This is abuse of the God man. It appealed to Herod's ego to be consulted by Pilate. The Bible tells us that over this incident, Pilate and Herod became good friends (Luke 23:5-12, Acts 4:27). So these two became great friends.

The result was the third of the trials before the Romans. He went back to Pilate a second time. We have this in John 18:39 and John 19:16, and we also find this in Luke, Matthew, and Mark. Pilate was convinced more and more of the innocence of Jesus. So he had Him whipped, and he wanted to have Him released. He thought that if he beat the Lord up, the mob would be satisfied. So he tried to release Jesus. They won't do it. So he gets another idea. He says, "I'll release Him as if He were guilty." The way he thinks he'll do this is by bringing up public enemy number one, a guy named Barabbas, a murderer and a criminal of the worst type who is up for execution. As was the custom on the Passover, he would put up public criminals and say, "Pick one, and we'll set him free as a token of my good favor toward you."

So, Pilate said, "I'll put up Barabbas, public enemy number one, against Jesus. I'll pretend that Jesus is guilty. Barabbas is guilty. Surely they'll pick Jesus." Well, he got fooled. He did not understand the mind of antagonistic preachers such as were now leading the people of Israel. The result was Jewish leaders instigated the people to choose public enemy number one, and to reject the most perfect human being who ever lived on the face of the earth.

Pilate tried to satisfy the rage of the mob once again by severely beating Jesus Christ and trying to make Him look like a clown. So he had his soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head; they put a purple robe on Him; they gave Him a stick to hold; and, then he brought Him out, bloodied, bruised, and beaten, and stood Him up on the court and said, "Hey, people of Israel, your King," expecting them to explode in laughter. He thought that if he could make Jesus look like a clown, they'd say, "Ah, forget it," and dismiss Him. But not so. When they brought up this pathetic figure now, the mob screamed for His crucifixion because they said He claimed to be the Son of God. When Pilate heard that, that scared him. Once more, He took Jesus in, and he said, "Tell me who you are, really now. Level with me. Where are you from?" Jesus said, "I'm the son of God. I've come into the world to bring truth," and He identified Himself. Once more, Pilate declared to the crowd, "This man is innocent."

You know the rest of the story. They then accused Pilate of being disloyal to Caesar, which scared Pilate even though because he was already in trouble (John 19:12). So he made the decision that Christ should be crucified (John 19:16). Jesus had told Pilate that everything that was taking place was the fulfillment of the Father's plan.

So this in brief is what is meant here in the Scripture, that He went to a death-on-the-cross kind of death because Jesus Christ knew all this was step-by-step in store for Him. He knew what was coming. He willingly humbled Himself to this kind of death-on-the-cross execution with all of its humiliating and painful treatment in order that you and I might experience the grace of eternal life. This is the great example of mental attitude grace that Hebrews 12:3 calls upon you and me to follow. It says, "For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds."

By 9 o'clock, they had Him on the cross. By high noon, the world was covered in darkness, and the Son of God was crying out in the intense agony of a genuine human being, screaming, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In that moment, the Father and the Holy Spirit turned away from the humanity of Christ, and He died spiritually. Having completed the sacrifice for sins, He came back into fellowship, and then changed the address from God to Father, "My Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit;" He released his life; and, He died physically to complete the provision for our eternal life. Because of His physical death and the consequent resurrection, we will not only be physically alive because He died for us spiritually and paid our spiritual death. We will also rise physically as He did. So we have been ensured a physical resurrection by what He did in dying and being raised.

Such is our example. Such is what Paul was calling upon the Philippians to emulate in thinking upon the things of others, and not only the things of ourselves. This isn't because others are worthy. Those others are usually very, very unworthy. "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest to be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:3).

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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