

"THE CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST"

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-9

A Study

By Mike Burnham

Last week we saw that the design of Paul was to exhort Christians to spiritual fellowship among themselves---to be likeminded, to love one another, to be humble and lowly, to esteem others better than themselves. To have the mind of Christ. We also saw that Paul himself had this mind that considered other's needs, feelings and desires above his own. To enforce WWis, the example of our Lord is proposed in the verses to follow.

These verses trace the path of the mediator from highest glory to deepest humiliation, and back again to his supreme honor. To set before us the example of Christ Paul takes us back to the position which he occupied in eternity.

"Who being in the form of God." first of all, this affirms the absolute deity of the son, for no mere creature could ever be "in the form of God." "form" means the same attributes (that which makes one what he is), the same glory, the same majesty, the same dignity. This is one of three passages that concern the son's relation to the Godhead. The second is in Col. 1:15: which tells us that Jesus is the unveiling of the invisible God to us. And the third is in Heb. 1:3: which tells us that Christ radiates the glory of God and all the characteristics of God are brought into clear focus in him...John 14:9

"Who being" points to his self-existence, he always was in the form of God, always has been and always will be. God is immutable, he

does not change, what he has eternally been he will eternally be.

"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God." the son did not reckon equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit an act of usurping. He considered equality with God as what justly and essentially belonged to him. It was his by indisputable right. Nor did he regard that equality as a thing to be grasped or a prize to be tenaciously retained.

"But made himself of no reputation." he willingly put aside that equality, to appear in the form of a creature, (he took on that which would make him a creature), the likeness of fallen man. He abdicated his position of supremacy and entered one of servitude. The only one worthy of service, himself became a servant. In doing so, he did not cease to be all that he was before, but he assumed something he had not been previously. There was no change in his divine nature, but the uniting to his divine person of a human nature. None of Christ's divine attributes were relinquished, for they are inseparable from his person, he is immutable. As far as what makes him God, he can never be more or less than what he is. His majestic glory was, for a time, obscured by the veil of human flesh...Heb. 10:19,20. It was God himself who was "manifest in the flesh"...1 Tim. 3:16.

It's not possible for us to fully grasp the depth that our Lord descended in humbling himself. Look at Psa. 113:6, how much more so to actually become "flesh" and be amongst the most lowly. He entered an office which placed him below God...John 14:28, lower than the angels...Heb. 2:7; under the law...Gal. 4:4; and lower than the ordinary condition of man, for he was "a reproach of men, and despised of the people...Psa. 22:6.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" Phil. 2:5. How earnestly we need to seek grace to be content with the lowest place God and men assign us; to be ready to perform the smallest service; to be and do anything which brings glory to God. Humbleness is not

degrading but a characteristic of God, humbleness is being God-like.

While Christ was all God, he was also perfect man. At the moment of Mary's conception, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, Jesus assumed a human nature from his mother and that human nature was united with his divine personality, Jesus was not two persons, one divine and one human, but one person with two natures, one divine and one human. In clothing himself with flesh and blood, Christ also clothed himself with human feelings, so he did not differ from his brethren, except that he was sinless, without the fallen nature common to man...Heb. 2:14,16,17. God prepared a body for him to offer up as a sacrifice...Heb. 10:5. Only as flesh and blood could the son of God die in our place, for God cannot die. The humanity of Christ died and was resurrected, not his deity, for his deity is immutable.

Christ's humanity was real. He is called the last Adam because he is our kinsman-redeemer, the natural and legal representative of his people. His humanity was holy because he was conceived of the Holy Ghost...Mat. 1:20; Luke 1:35, which is contrasted with what David said in Psa. 51:5; "we are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin". For this reason he could say, "for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"...John 14:30. There was nothing in his pure humanity which could respond to sin or Satan.

Where is our pride when placed alongside his humbleness, where are our rights when placed alongside his servitude.

There was something else that the mind of Christ had, obedience to the Father no matter what, even unto death, even the death of the cross. The master of all became the slave of all.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

For his selfless work and perfect obedience, the father highly exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name. Even today the name of Jesus enjoys unrivaled pre-eminence. There is no

name like the matchless name of Jesus.

It is above every name for "purity". No other name in human history has been without spot or stain. Only Jesus could safely say, "which of you convinces me of sin?" Judas said, "I have betrayed innocent blood". Pilate, explained, "I find no fault in him?"

It is above every name for "popularity." No other name has ever had so many worshippers, nor so many who would gladly lay down their lives for him.

It is above every name for "power". In his name the apostles healed the sick, raised the dead, and cast out demons. His name opens the door into the presence of God. To him all power is given in heaven and earth. By him were all things created both visible and invisible. By him all things consist.

It is above every name in "wealth". Jesus is the heir of all things. The Rothschilds, the Rockefellers, the Hunts, etc. are paupers compared to Jesus.

It is above every Lord because Jesus is the Lord of Lords.

It is above every king because Jesus is the king of kings.

It is above every name in "permanence". Other great names have come and gone but Jesus is forever. Eph. 1:20-22.