

Doctrine of Christ

The Incarnation

1. Theologians make a distinction between the Person of Christ, and the Work of Christ. While it is an important distinction, it should never become a separation. The two are intimately connected.
2. The work of Jesus begins much earlier than His Virgin birth. It begins in eternity past in the first covenant, the Covenant of Redemption, which is one of several covenants God has made.
 - Covenant of Creation
 - Covenant of Works
 - Covenant of Grace
 - Abrahamic Covenant
 - Noachian Covenant
 - New Covenant
3. The Covenant of Redemption took place in eternity past within the Triune Godhead.
 - God the Father was the Author of this Covenant of Redemption.
 - God the Son was the Executioner to accomplish this Covenant of Redemption.
 - God the Holy Spirit was the Applier and Sustainer of this Covenant of Redemption.
4. As creation was a Trinitarian work, so is redemption, by eternal agreement.
5. During His earthly sojourn Jesus spoke about this Covenant of Redemption.
 - *John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*
6. The ministry of Christ begins with His descension. Jesus left His glory in heaven to come to this world by way of incarnation. Jesus was born of the seed of David.
 - *Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;*
7. To speak of “*the flesh*”, with reference to Jesus, is to speak of the Lord’s incarnation.
8. Christmas is not about the birth of a baby, but the incarnation of God Himself.
 - *John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
 - *John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

9. In the incarnation, God did not subtract from the glory and essence of His divinity, but rather, the second person of the trinity, added to Himself a human nature for the purpose of redemption.
- *Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
10. Philippians 2:5-11 is known in history as the Kenotic Hymn. The term kenotic comes from the Greek (ekenosen, to empty). This hymn celebrates the incarnation.
11. The focus of the hymn is on the transition from heaven to earth. The pattern of the hymn is distinct.
- **Humiliation.** *Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*
 - **Exaltation.** *Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Special Note.

The purpose of the hymn is to exhort Christians to pattern their lives after His humiliation with a view to exaltation.

Jesus did not grasp for the glory which He enjoyed from eternity past, but humbled Himself. He emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation.

The Kenotic Theory of Christ, advanced by Liberal Theologians, pressed the humiliation of Christ to an error by saying that Jesus did not possess in His incarnation any of His divine attributes. Of course He did, for God cannot be God. In the mystery of His divinity, which Christ retained, was all the fullness of the Godhead, but it was revealed in His humanity.

B. B. Warfield noted that the only true “kenosis” of the Kenotic Liberal Theologians was their own personal “kenosis”, for they emptied their own brains in advancing their erroneous doctrine.

What Christ emptied was His glory, His exaltation, His privileges, not His essence as the eternal Son of God. He made Himself of no reputation. He allowed His own divine standing to be subject to human indignities.

Jesus did not just come as a man, but as a slave, and in such a state Jesus became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross.

Therefore, because of His humiliation, God has highly exalted Him.

On the night before His execution, Jesus asked the Father to restore to Him the glory He had. *John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* The Father heard that prayer, and honored it by raising Jesus from the dead, and receiving Him into heaven.

12. Throughout the life of Christ, the humiliation of Christ descends deeper, and deeper, into darkness, even the darkness of the Cross. Then, on the other side of Calvary, following His resurrection, Jesus Christ is exalted to the right hand of God, and reigns in glory in heaven.

- *Acts 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

13. The progression and patten, from humiliation to exaltation, is not absolute. The glory of Christ flashed forth during His incarnation and days of humiliation, for the incarnation could not fully contain the glory of the Lord's divinity. There were bursts of glory.

- On the night of His birth the angels sang.
- The angels came to minister to Him in the wilderness.
- The disciples called Him Lord.
- On the Mount of Transfiguration, He spoke with Moses and Elijah.

14. The basic pattern, is humiliation, to exaltation.

15. There was an end point to the Lord's humiliation, but of His glory and honor there will be no end. At the name of Jesus every knee should bow and call Jesus LORD, for that word, Adonai, belongs to Him.

- *Revelation 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*
- *Revelation 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

16. By exalting Christ, the Father is exalted, and the work of Christ comes full circle: Glory, humiliation, glory. Mission accomplished.