

THREE – THE PERSON OF CHRIST INCARNATE and THE KENOSIS

The statement of the person of Christ incarnate formulated at the council at Chalcedon (A.D. 451) has been considered definitive by orthodox Christianity. Read pg. 284

I. THE FULL DEITY OF CHRIST INCARNATE P284

A. He possesses Attributes that only God has.

- a. Eternality – He claimed to exist from eternity past (John 8:58, 17:5)
- b. Omnipresence – He claimed to be everywhere present (Matt 18:20; 28:20)
- c. Omniscience – He showed knowledge beyond his human ability (Matt 16:21; Luke 6:8; 11:17; John 4:29)
- d. Omnipotence – He demonstrated and claimed power of all powerful person (Mat 28:18; Mark 5:11-15; John 11:38-44)

B. He performs works that only God can do

- a. Forgiveness – Christ granted eternal forgiveness (Mark 2:1-12)
- b. Life – He gives spiritual life to whomever He wishes (John 5:21)
- c. Resurrection – He will raise the dead (John 11:43)
- d. Judgement – He will judge all people (John 5:22,27)

These are all claims that He made of himself and not claims that others made of Him.

C. He was given names and titles of Deity.

- a. Son of God – Our Lord used this designation of Himself (though rarely, John 10:36) and He acknowledged its truthfulness when it was used by others of Him (Matt 26:63-64). What does it mean? Though ‘son of’ means ‘offspring of’, it carries the meaning ‘in the order of’. Thus in the Old Testament “sons of the prophets” meant “of the order of” the prophets. (I Kings 20:35, Singers (Neh 12:28). The designation “Son of God” when used means in the order of God and is a strong and clear claim to full Deity. *In the Jewish usage of the term Son of... did not generally imply any subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature.*
- b. Lord and God – Jesus is called Yahweh in the NT, a clear indication of His full diety (cf. Luke 1:76 with Mal 3:1 and Rom 10:13 with Joel 2:32) He is also called God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb 1:8) Lord (Matt. 22:43-45), and King of kings and lord of lords (Rev 19:16)

D. He claimed to be God

Perhaps the strongest and clearest occasion of such a claim was at the Feast of Dedication when He said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). The neuter form of “one” rules out the meaning that He and the Father were one person. It meant that they are in perfect unity in natures and actions, a fact that could only be true if He were as much Deity as the Father. The people who heard this claim understood it that way, as they retaliated in trying to stone Him for blasphemy. (vs33)

II. THE PERFECT HUMANITY OF CHRIST INCARNATE

Denials of the humanity of Christ are less common than denials of His deity. Why? Because as long as you do not inject the Deity factor into the person of Christ, He is only a man, however fine or exalted and as merely a man He cannot disturb people with His claims so much as if He is the God-man. Still... those who affirm his humanity may not affirm his perfect humanity.

- **He had a Human Body** (Luke 2:52; John 8:40)

- **He had a Human Soul and Spirit** (Matt 26:38; Luke 23:46) Material and immaterial. It was not that the human nature provided Christ's body while the divine nature consisted of soul and spirit. The Humanity was complete and included both material and immaterial aspects.
- **He exhibited the characteristics if a Human Being**
 - He was hungry (Mt. 4:2)
 - He was thirsty (John 19:28)
 - He grew weary (4:6)
 - He experienced love and compassion (Mt. 9:36)
 - He wept (John 11:35)
 - He was tested (Heb 4:15)
- **He was Called Human Names**
 - Son of Man – his favourite. This name linked Him to earth and to His mission on earth. It focused on His lowliness and humanity (Matt 8:20); on his suffering and death (Luke 19:10) and on His future reign as King. (Matt 24:27)
 - Son of David – a title that linked Him to His ancestor David and to the royal promises to be fulfilled ultimately by Messiah.
 - Paul called him 'a man' in 1 Tim 2:5.

KENOSIS – THE SELF EMPTYING OF CHRIST

Phil 2:7 - What did Christ empty himself off?

I. THE TRUE MEANING OF THE CONCEPT

- A. **The Central Passage on Kenosis – Philippians 2:5-11**, begins with an exhortation to humility of mind, following the example of Christ who left glory to suffer on the cross. Then we have this concise statement about the pre-incarnate and incarnate Christ.
- *The eternal existence of Christ (v.6)*. This emphasizes the eternality of Christ as pre-existing in the “*form of God*”.
 - But he *came in the form of a servant (v.7)*. The full reality of him being a servant is the point of the passage. Likewise the full reality of His deity is the point of “the form of God” in verse 6.
- B. **The Self –emptying (vss. 7-8)** Notice that whatever the emptying involved, it was self imposed. ‘Empty’ not meaning ‘void’ as in Rom 4:14 or I Cor 1:17.
- The self-emptying permitted the addition of humanity and did not involve in any way the subtraction of Deity or cancelling the use of attributes of Deity. There was a change of form but not of content of the Divine being. He did not give up Deity. He added Humanity and this in order to be able to die. Isaiah put it this way – “He poured out himself to death” (53:12)
 - To be sure, the God-man experienced limitations but we are equally sure that he evidenced prerogatives of Deity.
 - The passage does not teach the extent or what and how much content was emptied. The point is that he became human and a servant in order to die.
 - This cannot be a full orb doctrine since it originates out of one passage.
- C. **Definition** – In the Kenosis Christ emptied Himself of retaining and exploiting His status in the Godhead and took on humanity in order to die.

II. THE FALSE MEANINGS OF THE CONCEPT

- Christ surrendered some or all of his attributes
- Christ appeared as a Man by disguising His deity

The doctrine of Kenosis focuses more on the fact of His incarnation as necessary to His death.