

“Liar, Lunatic, or LORD?”

(Phil. 2:5-8)

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I. Introduction

A. I love Christmas Eve

1. Visiting Bethlehem and the manger
2. Contemplating what happened there
3. Central to all we hold dear

B. The Incarnation

1. When God became a man
2. Humbled himself to become one of us

C. Was Jesus truly God walking the earth?

1. Was the creator of the Universe really lying in a humble manger?
2. The importance of how you answer this question
3. This is where we part company with so many other religions
4. They try to make Jesus anything but God
 - a. Almost all of them say Jesus was a good man...but just a man
 - b.or a really good teacher...but just a teacher
5. Examples
 - a. Mormons
 1. Jesus was created just like us
 2. Jesus was the spiritual brother of Satan

b. Jehovah's Witnesses

1. Jesus was an important *created* being,
2. On a par with Michael, the archangel

c. Hindus

1. Jesus was another holy man... a *guru*

d. Buddhists

1. Jesus was another holy *man*

e. Muslims

1. Jesus was one of the prophets
2. ...and inferior to Mohammed

f. Rosicrucian Society

1. Jesus was the reincarnate cosmic *man*"

g. Scientology

1. Jesus reached, as a man, a state of *clear*, but not the highest state of an *operating fe' tan*"

h. Unitarians

1. Jesus was a created man!

i. Atheists

1. Jesus was a decent man

j. Agnostics

1. Don't know who Jesus was

k. Post-modern

1. Jesus can be whomever you want him to be

5. The importance of this passage of scripture
 - a. States without equivocation who Jesus was

II. Review

A. Philippians

1. A letter from their pastor, Paul
2. Great instructions for daily living
 - a. ...and every word is inspired by God

B. Like Paul, I'm sharing them with my church

1. Last week.....so very practical
2. Today I'm going to as they say "go deep"
3. Importance of these verses
4. Referred to as "the kenosis"
 - a. Especially Phil. 2:7
 - b. Different translations
 1. "but made himself nothing"
 2. "but made himself of no reputation"
 3. "but emptied himself"
 - c. "kenosis" is the Greek word for "emptying"
 - d. God became man
5. The incarnation
 - a. "carne asada"
 1. "roasted meat"
 - b. "in carnation"

1. God embodied in flesh

6. Foundational to our faith

III. Text...Phil. 2:5-8

A. The call for “humility” (v. 5)

(5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

1. A call to humility

- a. Contrary to today’s philosophy
- b. The “Me First” generation

2. Jesus exemplified an attitude of humility when he became a man

(5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross

Important facts about the “Incarnation”

1. Jesus was...and is all God (v.6)

(6) Who, being in very nature God,

a. “being”

1. “existed”

b. “in very nature God”

1. “nature”

a. Greek.... “morph”

1. “form”

b. “essential and unchanging character”

c. “in His very essence” He was God

2. In other words, Jesus was and is all God
- c. Jesus was 100% God and 100% man
1. The Hypostatic Union
- d. The deity of Jesus is essential for Salvation
1. Only the holiness of God was able to pay for our sins
 2. And Jesus is the only means leading to salvation
 - a. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to my Father **except by me.**”*
 3. Point of attack
 - a. Belief that all religions lead to heaven
 4. Attempts to make Jesus less than God
- e. Josh McDowell’s classic
- “Liar—Lunatic—or Lord”**
1. Only two possible choices
 - a. Either Jesus was God...or Jesus wasn’t God
 2. Therefore:

***If Jesus claimed to be God and he knew he wasn’t
...he was a liar***

***If Jesus thought he was God and he wasn’t
...he was a lunatic***

***If Jesus claimed to be God and he was
...he was LORD***
- f. But did Jesus really say he was God?
1. Some try to say that Jesus never claimed to be God
 2. But the Bible consistently affirms that he did

2. Jesus clearly claimed to be God

- a. That's why they crucified Him

(John 5:18)—“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”

- b. Even His doubters became convinced his claim was true

(John 20:28)—“And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

- c. He claimed equality with God the Father

(John 8:58)—“Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

- a. Moses at the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:14)

- b. “Who are you?”

- c. And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the Children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”

- d. YAHWEH

*the most sacred name of God

*wouldn't even say it out loud

- e. (John 8:58)—“Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

- d. He claimed to be one with the Father

(John 10:29-30)—“My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.”

3. The Bible claims Jesus was and is God

(John 1:1-3 & 14)—(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was with God in the beginning. (3) Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

(14) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us

4. It was love that caused Jesus to become a man (v.6)

(5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

a. ***“equality with God”***....v.6

1. “isos

a. “exactly equal”

b. “isosceles triangle”

*two sides that are exactly equal

2. Jesus was and is equal with the Father

3. Although the Bible consistently teaches that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one...I don’t believe we will fully understand the reality of one god in three persons until we get to heaven

b. ***“something to be grasped”***.....v.6

1. Didn’t cling to His place

a. Didn’t “clutch” it

2. Agreed to step down from heaven’s splendor

c. It was love that sent him to us

5. It cost Jesus dearly to become one of us (.7)

a. ***“but made Himself nothing”***.....v.7

1. “of no reputation”

b. He emptied Himself

1. “kenosis”

2. He gave up things

c. Never gave up His deity

d. Then what did it cost Him?

The glory of Heaven

- a. His personal glory at the right hand of the Father
- b. The worship of the angels
- c. The splendor of Heaven

(His prayer in John 17:5)— ***“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”***

- d. He became poor
 - 1. Emptied of riches
 - 2. (II Cor. 8:9)— ***“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”***
- e. Didn’t look like royalty in that humble manger
 - 1. If we planned salvation...
 - a. Born in a palace
 - b. Born to a king
 - c. Honored from birth
 - 2. Not God’s plan
 - a. Came to die...not reign
- f. Why the Jews missed his birth?

The freedom to exercise His independent will

- a. Submitted to Father’s authority

(John 5:30)—“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”

- b. Difficult to understand

The use of His attributes

- a. Still had them
 - 1. Yet chose to limit their use
- b. Voluntary submitted His attributes
 - 1. Omnipotent
 - 2. Omnipresence
 - 3. Omniscience

His special relationship with His Father

- a. Cry from the cross—“My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?!”
- b. What was it that separated Him from His Father?
- c. My sins

His holiness and freedom from sin

- a. The Son of God had no taint of sin until he became one of us

(II Cor 5:21)— ***“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”***

- b. Separated from God by our sins
- c. As our sins were heaped on Him at the Cross

6. Our sins led Jesus to an unspeakable death (v.7-8)

(7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

- 1. ***“He made himself nothing?....v.7***
 - a. Compared to God
- 2. ***“Taking the very nature of a servant”v.7***

- a. Servant
 - 1. “doulos”
 - 2. Slave
 - b. From sovereign supremacy → slavery
 - c. Had nothing of His own . He had to borrow a...
 - 1. bed
 - 2. boat
 - 3. donkey
 - 4. house
 - 5. upper room
3. ***“being made in human likeness”***.....v.7
- a. Truly human
 - 1. All man.....and all God
 - 2. More than God in a body!
 - b. (Luke 2:52)— ***“Grew in wisdom and stature”***
 - c. (Heb. 2:17 & 18)— ***“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”***
 - d. (Heb. 4:15)— ***“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”***
4. ***“And being found in appearance as a man”***.....v.8
- a. People saw a man
 - b. Most refused to acknowledge His deity

1. “We know His parents”

2. “He’s a liar”

c. Saw a humble man

5. ***“He humbled Himself”***v.8

a. Took the lowest form

b. Obedient to His Father

c. Had great privilege

1. Yet never demanded it

d. How do you handle privilege?

1. “Demand my rights!”

2. “How dare you speak to me like that?”

e. Humility is marked by...

1. Sacrifice

2. Service to others

3. Obedience

f. The obedience of Jesus

1. Unlimited!

6. ***He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!.....v.8***

a. Many of us are obedient up to the point of personal sacrifice

1. Until it causes you loss or pain

b. Jesus—

1. To the point of death

2. Total obedience

7. *“Even death on a cross”.....v.8*

1. Dt. 21:22 and 23
 - a. “Cursed is he who is hanged on a cross”
 - b. Cursed for us
2. Horrible way to die
 - a. Pain
 - b. Suffering
 - c. Exposure
 - d. Humiliation
 - e. Spat upon

IV. Summary

A. But wait until He comes next time!

1. The rest of Philippians 2:9-11

(9) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name, that is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

B. It was love that drew Jesus to the Cross

For God so loved the world that he sent his only son that whosoever should believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life