

# BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT GOD THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

## Lesson 12: Jesus is Truly Man

Biblical doctrine is the study of what the Bible teaches about God and other important truths. This is the second of ten lessons about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and our Lord and Savior. We will explore what the Bible teaches about who Jesus is and what He did.

### MAIN TRUTH, CENTRAL SCRIPTURE, AND OUTLINE

Jesus Christ took on human flesh and has a true human nature. He is the one and only perfect Savior. He is fully divine and fully human. There is no one else like Him. Since He is truly human He could die for sins, and since He is truly divine His death has infinite value to redeem sinners. Christ's taking on human flesh is called the incarnation. By taking on human flesh and human nature, Jesus is able to be a valid substitute and sympathetic representative for all who believe in Him. Because of Christ's complete obedience as the incarnate Son, God the Father highly exalted Him and gave Him the name above all names, so that every person will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11 tells us about these deep and glorious truths.

#### 1. Christ's humble humanity (Philippians 2:5-8)

##### A. His perfect nature

Scripture tells us that Jesus is one person with two distinct, full, and separate natures—one divine and one human. Redemption is impossible without a perfect human representative and mediator (Rom. 5:18-19; 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus has and always will exist as God—in past, present, and future. But He wasn't always a human. Only when Jesus came to earth did He take on a truly human nature and body, which He will have forever. Philippians 2:6 refers to Christ's divine nature, which we examined in Lesson 11, as "the form of God," but the passage continues to say that while being completely divine, He "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." This statement makes sense only in light of Christ's humanity. Not only is He truly God; He is truly man. Philippians 2:7 says that Jesus "emptied Himself." Since God cannot change (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17), this phrase cannot mean that Jesus lost His deity even in the slightest, or that He surrendered any of His divine attributes. Instead, the text makes clear what His self-emptying entailed, which is that He humbled Himself and "took the form of a servant." His self-emptying was not a subtraction of anything, but an addition of a human body and nature. This supernatural reality, that God became a man, is called the incarnation (enfleshment). If Jesus had not been a real man, we would have no opportunity for salvation. One early church father put it this way, "What Christ has not assumed, He has not redeemed." Jesus assumed a complete human nature in order to be a complete representative for His people.

##### B. His perfect obedience

Man is God's creation (Gen. 1:27) and we belong to Him (Ps. 24:1), so all mankind owes Him perfect obedience. But all have sinned in Adam (Rom. 5:12), and thus, from before birth, we were unable to fulfill our obligation to obey God perfectly. Jesus alone was born without a sin nature because He alone was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18). He is therefore the only man who ever has or will live a perfectly obedient life, fulfilling all righteousness. Adam represented humanity when he sinned and disobeyed God. Jesus represented His people when He obeyed perfectly. Philippians 2:8 says that Jesus was obedient to the uttermost, "to the point of death, even death on a cross." Jesus obediently endured the scorn, scourging, and the anguish of the cross for the sins of His people (Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24). God poured out His full wrath upon Jesus and was pleased to crush His beloved Son. Christ's sacrifice made perfect atonement for every sin of every one of God's chosen people. God treated Jesus on the cross as sinners deserve so that He could treat everyone who believes in Him as if they possessed Christ's perfect righteousness. The believer's sin is imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer.

Marvel at the humility of Jesus. He who eternally exists as God took on a human nature, lived a perfect life, and died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). The Gospels give many examples of Christ's humility, including His washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1-5). Though He rightfully deserved the service and homage of all creation, Christ humbly served the unworthy to the uttermost (Matt. 20:28).

## 2. Christ's glorious exaltation (Philippians 2:9-11)

### A. The nature of His exaltation

God highly exalted Jesus through His resurrection, ascension, and coronation, and Jesus now and forever intercedes for believers. To exalt is to raise up, and to highly exalt means that God elevated Christ above everything and everyone else in creation. From the lowliest of states, God exalted Christ to the highest position and authority. God raised Him from death to life and from earth to heaven where God rewarded Christ's perfect obedience by elevating Him from humble servant to Lord of all and bestowing on Him the position of High Priest. Christ is alive today in heaven interceding for all His people (Rom. 8:34).

### B. The purpose of His exaltation

God exalted Christ, and He will ensure that all creation bows before Him and calls Him Lord. Every person will humble themselves before God either in this life by choice, or in the next life by irresistible divine authority. To "confess" Jesus as Lord (Phil. 2:11) means to make an open, public declaration that agrees with God. It is not a vague confession of your own making. You must agree with God that you are a great sinner in need of a great Savior. You admit that Jesus is Lord of all and that there is no other way to be saved except by Him (John 14:6). For believers, this confession is a willing, continuing, and loving declaration of submission, allegiance, and adoration.

## **MEMORY VERSES**

**Philippians 2:8** *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

**Luke 2:52** *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*

**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.*

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

The following notes are taken from Pastor Stan's sermon, *The Humble and Exalted Christ*, based on Philippians 2:5-11 (preached 12-22-19).

The theme of Philippians 2 is the mindset and the privilege of serving others. It is essential that we have a submissive attitude or servant spirit. This chapter focuses on three aspects of a servant spirit: the reasons for a servant spirit (vs. 1); the requirements for a servant spirit (vs. 2-4); and the role models for a servant spirit (vs. 5-30). In this text we have one of the greatest descriptions of the Christian life and one of the greatest statements about Christ in the New Testament.

### **1. Christ is the supreme example of humility (vs. 5)**

The key to serving others is an attitude of humility and Jesus is the greatest example of this servant attitude. Believers must have the mind (mindset, attitude) of Christ.

A. Jesus taught the importance of humility

**Matthew 23:12** *And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

B. Jesus modeled the virtue of humility

**Matthew 11:29** *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* This is the only description He ever gave of Himself.

### **2. Christ is perfectly co-eternal and co-equal with God (vs. 6)**

A. He has the same nature as God

In order to fully appreciate Christ's humiliation we must understand His eternal glory. Verse 6 speaks of His perfect deity. He was "in the form" (*morphe*, inner essence) of God. This term does not refer to outward appearance, but to the essential, unchanging nature of someone or something. Jesus was fully God from eternity past (Jn. 1:1-3, 14).

**John 1:18** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

**Colossians 2:9** *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

**Hebrews 1:1-3** <sup>1</sup> *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,* <sup>2</sup> *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;* <sup>3</sup> *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Christ is the express image (exact representation) of God.

B. He has perfect equality with God

He was not only eternal, but He was equal with God. He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped or seized. Deity was His by right. J. Vernon McGee comments: “He was God without effort.” MacArthur adds: “Though Christ had all the rights, privileges, and honors of deity—which He was worthy of and could never be disqualified from—His attitude was not to cling to those things or His position but to be willing to give them up for a season.” The point is obvious: if anyone had the right to be self-centered, it was Jesus. As God He had all the rights of deity, and yet during His incarnate state He gave up His right to manifest His visible glory and splendor.

**3. Christ laid aside His divine rights to become a man (vs. 7)**

In July 2019 we celebrated the anniversary of man’s first walk on the moon and those famous words: “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” The greatest step ever taken was not when man walked on the moon, but when Jesus stepped out of heaven to earth. It was a step that Bible scholars refer to as the “humiliation” of Christ.

A. He made Himself of no reputation (emptied Himself)

This verse describes Christ’s incarnation. It tells us what Christ gave up and what He took. He willingly chose to make himself “of no reputation” (literally, he emptied himself). What did He empty himself of or what did He lay aside? He did not lay aside His divine nature. He laid aside the constant use of His divine rights and privileges. He laid aside the independent use of His divine attributes. He laid aside His heavenly glory. One writer said that “He left the immunity of a heavenly life.”

*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.

*John 17:24* Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

*2 Corinthians 8:9* For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

MacArthur suggests that He set aside His privileges in five areas: 1) heavenly glory; 2) independent authority; 3) divine prerogatives; 4) eternal riches; and 5) a favorable relationship with God the Father.

B. He took upon him the form (nature) of a servant

This is the same word used in verse 6 (form of God). He did not just appear to be a servant, but He had the very nature of a servant. Elisabeth Elliot: “Does God ask us to do what is beneath us? This question will never trouble us again if we consider the Lord of heaven taking a towel and washing feet.”

*Mark 10:45* For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

C. He was made in the likeness of men

He was made in the likeness of men. The word “likeness” suggests similarity but difference. Though Jesus was fully human, He was different than other men because He was without sin (Heb. 4:15). He was the eternal Son of God and yet limited Himself to time and space. He gave up His complete freedom to be confined to a human body. He gave up the constant use of His omnipotence for human weakness. He was in every sense a human being, except without sin. He was hungry, thirsty, tired, wept, and was tempted. As a man He was poor (2 Cor. 8:9), so that He was constantly borrowing. He borrowed a place for His birth, a house to sleep in, a boat to preach in, an animal to ride on, a room in which to institute the Lord’s Supper, and finally a tomb to be buried in. Jesus further demonstrated His servant spirit in the manner of His birth, His submission and obedience to His parents, in His refusal of personal honor, in His washing of the disciples’ feet, in His ministry to the needy and outcasts, and ultimately in His death on the cross.

#### **4. Christ humbled Himself even to death on the cross (vs. 8)**

This was the lowest step in His humiliation. Death on the cross was the most shameful and horrible means of death. Crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals. Christ did this in complete obedience to God the Father in order to fulfill His eternal plan. We recall Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His arrest: “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done.”

#### **5. Christ was exalted and rewarded by God the Father (vs. 9-11)**

God the Father is the subject in these verses. Because Jesus was willing to humble Himself and obey the Father’s plan, God the Father has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above all others. In addition to receiving back His glory (Jn. 17:5), Christ’s new status as the God-Man meant that God gave Him privileges He did not have before His incarnation. The extent of His sovereign authority is revealed in verse 10.

- His authority over those in heaven: cherubim, seraphim, holy angels, and all saved people
- His authority over those on earth: all human beings
- His authority over those under the earth: all unsaved people and evil angels in hell

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. There are no exceptions: every nation and language, every race and color, every religion, every man and every woman, every king and rich man, and every servant and poor man. Some will make this confession willingly and some unwillingly, but all believers, all unbelievers, all angels, and all demons will acknowledge that He is Lord and in that confession God will be glorified.

This passage covers Christ in His eternal and heavenly glory, His earthly humility as a servant, His incarnation as a man, His obedience in crucifixion, and His exaltation as Lord. This is the story of Christ from glory to earth and then back to glory. What is the point of this passage? It is to follow Christ’s example and to have His mindset. Look again at verses 3-5. Among believers in the body of Christ there is to be no divisiveness, selfishness, strife, jealousy, ambition, self-seeking, putting others down, or air of superiority. There should only be an attitude of humility and a heart of concern for others.

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## THE THREE STATES OF CHRIST

### 1. Pre-incarnate Glory of Christ

**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.*

### 2. The Humiliation of Christ

- A. Incarnation – **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.*
- B. Earthly Life – **Mark 10:45** *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*
- C. Crucifixion – **Philippians 2:8** *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

### 3. The Exaltation of Christ

- A. Resurrection – **John 11:25-26** <sup>25</sup> *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: <sup>26</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*
- B. Ascension – **Acts 1:11** *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*
- C. Heavenly Session – **Romans 8:34** *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*
- D. Second Coming – **1 Thessalonians 4:16** *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*
- E. Eternal Glory – **Revelation 5:13** *And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*