

The Father-Son Relationship (Part Two)

The Word and Form of God

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During my Pentecost sermon we began a series looking into disproving the Trinity doctrine from a somewhat different angle from in the past. The Trinity doctrine states that the Godhead consists of a three-in-one arrangement, but the Bible clearly states in many places and in many ways that there is only one God. The Trinity doctrine teaches that these three are co-equal and of the same substance. But we saw many scriptures asserting, from Jesus' own lips, that the Father and He are *not* co-equal, that the Father is the greater of the two, and that it is impossible if one is greater that the two can be co-equal.

I want to go back to a scripture that we used last week that the apostle Paul wrote in I Timothy 1.

I Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

The apostle Paul writes very clearly, as you can read with your own eyes, that there is only one God. This is a parallel of what it says in Deuteronomy 6:4. In addition to that, Paul also states that He is invisible, and the King of all creation. Now since the one named is King, and there is no one (including Christ and the supposed Holy Spirit) who supersedes Him in authority, how then can those three be co-equal?

Jesus Christ is directly named by Paul as the "image" of that One God. If one is the image, and the other the reality, how can they be the same being in one Godhead, and how can they be co-equal?

As the image, Jesus is the sole representation of that One, that only God. He is the only one who God permits to portray Him in that manner; that is, as God. All other representations are idols, and demean Him, giving representations of Him that are not true, and therefore they are *not* representations of Him. The Image alone truly reflects what that One—the Reality—is in character, in attitude, in purpose, and in all forms of virtue such as wisdom, mercy, kindness, and so forth.

That One (named by Jesus as the Father) is consistently shown in the Bible as the Source of all things, and also the object toward which all of creation is moving. The Son—the image of God—is the One through whom all has and is being worked out. Again, this too implies a greater/lesser relationship. That One (the Channel) is the Revelator of Absolute Deity (the Father), and the One to whom *we* must look in order to know the Father, and to know Him is, in Jesus' own words, eternal life. Let us look at that in John 17. In His prayer, Jesus said:

John 17:3 And this is life eternal that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

We saw Paul say it, and now Jesus said "the only true God." In this very verse Jesus clearly states that the Father is the only true God, and that the Father sent Him. Again, that statement suggests a greater/lesser relationship.

John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men which you gave Me out of the world: [Here Jesus is stating what His responsibility to God the Father is, to manifest God's name unto the men.] Yours they were, and You gave them Me: and they have kept Your word.

Again, God is shown as the Source, giving to Christ the things that He needs to carry out His operation.

John 17:7-8 Now they have known that all things whatsoever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.

Jesus is stating here how He fulfilled His role as the Channel through whom all is being accomplished. Basically, what He did in regard to the apostles, and continues to do in regard to us as our High Priest, is that He reveals the Father—the only true God—to us.

In verse 6 the word "name" is used because it indicates what the Father is in all of His attributes; that is, all of His reputation and the things that He has demonstrated through the Christ. Again Christ shows that God the Father is the source of all. The Father gave the Son the disciples to work with, and the Son gave the disciples the words the Father had given Him. The One of whom Jesus speaks Mr. Armstrong occasionally referred to as "the Supreme God." In other words, he called the Father "the Supreme God."

A plaque that had been on the wall of the lobby in the auditorium of the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College stated that that building was dedicated to "The Great God," meaning the Father, and it was from that plaque that the Church of the Great God took its name. I want you to understand then that this church is named after the Father—the God of Jesus Christ.

We are now going to continue in this sermon to look at this "Great God" and His Son. In this sermon, I believe, are going to be more technicalities than we had in the last one, and also it is going to contain quite a number of scriptures.

Let us go to John 1. This passage contains what I think probably are among the best known of all in the Scriptures.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Verse one, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," has a rhythmic cadence to it that helps to lodge it into our minds. The term "Word" is undoubtedly used to show that this person called the Word performs a revelation of God through sound; i.e., through the *spoken* word. In doing this John used yet another figure of speech named *hypocatastasis*.

This figure of speech indicates a likeness between the actual person and the term "Word" by which He (the subject) identified. In this case Jesus is the subject of whom John writes, and he uses the term "Word" by which the subject is identified.

Now sound is not as effective as sight in giving expression to the fullness of witness testimony, but we need to pay close attention as to how John opens his Gospel, because it helps to again identify the relationship between the Father and the Son. I will tell you right now it is a multi-faceted relationship.

We are going to go now to John 20 because John says something here that will help us to understand John 1:1.

John 20:30-31 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you might have life through His name.

The Gospel of John provides a revelation of Jesus Christ from a different point of view from the other three [Gospel accounts], and the opening announces that difference. Now here at the end of the book, John states it in a way that might be more clearly understood by those who are listening with "English" ears, or at least listening in the English language.

What John said in John 20:30-31 is very clear; however, he also stated it at the beginning of the book, and it is not quite so clear to us. The translators chose to translate what he wrote in a way that actually conceals to some degree what John is writing about.

We are going to go to Galatians 2 because I want to establish something with you right there.

Galatians 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

I just wanted to establish scriptural proof that John was an apostle to the "circumcision." Now why? Because the book of John is clearly written to Hebrew people, and most specifically Jewish people who were very familiar with the Old Testament. It was not written for the benefit of Gentiles. There may have been some Gentiles who would have benefited from it, but those to whom it was written could *really* benefit from it *if they believed what John said or what John wrote*.

The Jews were not people merely aware of the Old Testament's existence like the Gentiles would be, but rather were people who lived with it, being virtually the only book available to be read, believed, and lived by. Now it was not *the* only book, but they did not have big libraries like we have where people could go to where maybe there are tens of thousands of books. There were very few books available for the Jewish people to read, but they would be familiar with the Old Testament.

John's purpose was to demonstrate, through words, that Jesus of Nazareth *is* the Messiah, that Jesus of Nazareth *is* the Son of God, that Jesus of Nazareth *is* the Image of God.

The first chapter of John, and especially the first five verses, is how John chose to get his purpose across right from the very beginning to people who would generally understand what he was talking

about. He did not begin with any long philosophical discussion, but rather right in the first verse he shows the connection between the Son and all previous revelation to mankind before the Word became flesh.

Though not absolutely necessary for understanding, Knoch (the author of the book that I have been using) feels that it is helpful to a clearer grasp of what John wrote to translate the Greek word *Logos* into the English term "Expression" rather than the term "Word," because "Expression" is closer to John's purpose here than the narrow term "Word."

John's theme at the beginning is God's Expression; that is, His means of manifesting or revealing Himself. John is saying that God wishes to be known by His creatures, and that the One John is writing about is the means by which the Father has *always* accomplished this, not just during Jesus' lifetime, but rather Jesus is a continuation of that revelation.

The term "Word" tends to narrow God's manifestation to sound. We cannot hear Jesus. Those people in that day, during His lifetime, did hear Him; whereas expression opens, broadens the revelation to many other means of witnessing or giving testimony, such as example, attitude, body language, facial expression, and gestures. If one is merely limited to hearing words, a testimony becomes narrow. In a way, what is unfortunate here is that we did not actually get to see and hear at the same time like those people did, and we are somewhat confined to only reading how the Word expressed Himself.

But if you are careful, you will see in many places that there is more of how Jesus gave an example than mere words. It tells us in places what His eyes looked like. It tells us that He got tired. It tells us that He did this, did that, or the other thing. It tells us about His gestures and His body language. That kind of thing is included within it, and all of it was an expression of the way the Father would act as well.

If one is able to witness body language, gestures, the look on another's face, or how the eyes are displayed, the testimony is given breadth and depth that is lacking when one only hears words.

John is saying that from the very beginning Jesus of Nazareth has been the means, the Channel, the express Image of God's revelation of Himself, and thus what John is saying to all those to whom he wrote, and especially to the Jews who were most familiar with the Old Testament, and now to us, is that Jesus of Nazareth *is* the God of the Old Testament. That is the way the book opens. But you see, the way we look at that, we do not tend to get that from this. We get it from other places. It was *He*, Jesus of Nazareth, through whom the Father, Absolute Deity, expressed Himself to mankind through all of the ages of Israel's history. Can you begin to understand how important this would be to a Jew in that day?

John then proceeds through the rest of his narrative in the book to show Jesus of Nazareth's first century ministry as the literal *human* expression—the fulfillment of many, but not all, of the prophecies regarding the Messiah. In plain language the One who was the God of the Old Testament *is* the promised Messiah—"God is Savior." Do you know that is what His name Joshua means? Joshua means "Savior." That is what it calls the Messiah in the Old Testament. And so John, right off the bat, in the first verse identifies Jesus of Nazareth as being the God, the Messiah, of the Old Testament.

Before we go any further I want to clarify for you that the term "Word" is *not* a wrong translation. That is literally what the word *Logos* means, and Knoch does not want you to feel that you have to stick with "Expression." He just thinks that it is helpful if you do that.

There is another technical adjustment in the translation that is helpful to understanding this better. It has to do with the preposition "with," where it says, "the Word was *with* God." I feel the use of that preposition "with" was greatly influenced by the translators' belief in the Trinity doctrine, but it is ridiculous once one begins to see the impossibility of what they said.

How can a person be *with* himself? They say that God is three-in-one. In other words, there is really only one Being, that they are a unity. You cannot be with yourself. It is *only* in the Trinity doctrine where they try to get us to believe that three are one, is it possible for one to be with himself.

The Bible reveals that in the Father and Son we are dealing with two distinct separate Beings. Indeed *both* are God, but they are separate Beings, and each bears distinct responsibilities.

In addition to that fact is that the Greek really does not say "with." The term "with" indicates nearness, or association, and John's point is not that the Word (the Expression) was near, or in association with God, but He was in reality *toward* God. That is what that word that has been translated into the English "with" really means. "And the Word was toward God." This will make sense in a minute.

The translators seem to have translated here with the idea that all that John was attempting to do was to show that Jesus was God. Yes, indeed he was doing that, but he also had in mind a very practical reason for pointing this out. The term "with God" is transliterated *pros ton Theon*. Knoch believes that this term should be translated with the thought of a specific sense of guidance. The Word *guides* us to God; in mind that one can receive from identifying the *Expression* of God.

It might help to understand that this Greek preposition *pros* is capable of very wide application. Believe it or not, it is translated into English thirty-five different ways in Scripture, but almost all of them indicate movement *toward* someone or some thing. This might also help you to understand the English prefix "pro," which indicates *for* something, like you are pro sports, meaning you are for sports. It indicates a *forward* position, and is the opposite of the prefix "con," which means against.

The English prefix "pro" is derived from the Greek word *pros*. It means *for*. It means *toward*. It means *unto*. It means *into*—all toward some person or object. The sum of this is that "with" is not drastically wrong, but rather it is weak, because indicating *toward* is so much more correct.

Now I am going to give you a couple of examples.

John 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God. . .

That last phrase is exactly the same phrase that appears in John 1:1—*pros ton Theon*, but here they translated it correctly. It is to God, toward God, and it is very interesting that in the previous phrase that He was come *from* God. You see the direction. He was from God, but He is going *to* God.

Pros ton Theon appears thirteen times in the New Testament. In three cases the translators translated it "with." In ten cases it is translated *to, unto, toward, Godward, and against*. If you are against somebody you are going toward them. The direction should be "toward."

Let us look at a few examples:

I Thessalonians 1:8-9 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward [*pros ton Theon*] is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how you turned to [*pros ton Theon*] God from idols to serve the living and true God.

Acts 4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to [toward] God with one accord, and said, Lord, you are God, which has made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.

The word "to" there obviously means "toward." "They lifted up their voice toward [or to] God."

Acts 12:5 Peter was therefore kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

The word there "unto God" is *pros ton Theon*.

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Here the word is translated "against." So if you are against, you are toward the one that you are against.

Changing the translation of "with" to "toward" may sound awkward to our English-speaking tongues and hearing ears, but it is what John wrote, and thus what God intended that we understand, that the Word was *toward* God; not *with* Him. Of course He was with Him, but there are two Beings. But He was *toward* Him. You will see how this begins to fit into the manifestation of Christ. It was always to give men direction *toward* God in everything that He did, whether in word, whether in gesture, or whether with His eyes. Whatever it was, it was to direct people *toward* God all the time.

Between John 13:1 and John 16:28, five more times John used the same preposition (*pros ton*) except that *Theon* is sometimes replaced by the Greek equivalent of the English word "Father." It is the same phrase—*pros ton Father*. But again it is translated by the translators as *to, unto*, and usually He is saying, "I go to the Father."

Let us understand then that the apostle John clearly intended to convey to us in all of these verses just before His crucifixion, that Jesus was going toward the Father. That is what happens between John 13:1 and John 16:28. Jesus kept telling His disciples over and over again, "I am going to the Father," "to the Father," "to the Father." Five different times He did that.

Now just as surely as John intended those verses the way Jesus said them there in John 13 through John 16, John also intended that the term *pros ton Theon* mean *toward God* in John 1:1.

What John is saying very briefly is that the Word (the Expression) pointed to God. The Expression directed others toward God, and the point is not *nearness* or *association*, but guidance by way of word and example. In short, John intends that we understand that the Expression is a comprehensive manifestation of the God of the Old Testament whom those Jews knew as Yahweh, Eloah, El, Yah, Adonai, Shaddai, and on and on. John was saying that was Him, meaning of course Jesus.

The Expression (the Word) was indeed the Image of the invisible and the inaudible God, and John was a minister to the Circumcision, and so John intends this introduction to bridge the gap between the previous revelations the Jews were familiar with, and that through Christ was the continuation of God's unfolding purpose and plan.

God is invisible and inaudible, and has chosen not to reveal Himself personally; thus, when Abraham listened to the One he entertained in his tent, it was not Absolute Deity, but rather it was the Absolute Deity's Word, or Expression. It was the Image of God—the Word of God, the Expression of God—whose voice shook Mount Sinai. He was visible and audible, and as far back as mankind has any revelation of the Father (Absolute Deity), it is the Son who was manifestly pointing toward Him.

John is not seeking to identify the Word with the Father, but rather with the God of the Old Testament—the One the Jews were already familiar with. The Word (the Expression of God) is the same one God (Absolute Deity) has always used as the Mediator between Himself and mankind, and thus John is announcing that the same One whom Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, and all of the prophets dealt with is now become flesh in order to finish the revelation begun all the way back in Genesis.

During mankind's existence, the One who became Jesus manifested Himself to man in many forms. In one place it says He took on Him the form of a slave. In another place He appeared to Joshua in the form of the Captain of the Lord's host. He was transfigured into radiant glory on the mount before the eyes of His disciples. He appeared to Abraham as a wayfarer whom Abraham entertained in his tent and Who made prophecies. Yet in another He appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus in a different form—different enough that they did not even recognize Him.

Let us turn to Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

In this section of scriptures we are dealing with what the theologians call *kenosis*, which is a Greek word that means *to empty*, or *emptying*. It deals with Christ divesting Himself of much of His rights as God in order to serve mankind as one of us.

You might recall that I mentioned in the very first sermon of this series of Christ imposing limitations on Himself. This is one of the primary areas in the New Testament where that is drawn from, that He imposed limitations on Himself. You might remember in that sermon I said to you, in order to clarify, that God (the Absolute Deity) never has imposed a limitation on Himself. The One who imposed the limitations on Himself has always been the Christ, because He is the One that has appeared to men. This is where this comes from.

I am going to read this from the *Concordant Literal New Testament*, which is a very interesting translation. It is a little bit different, but maybe we can get something from it.

Philippians 2:5-8 (CLNT) For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, who being inherently in the form of God deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

This translation has just a little bit different take on those verses.

The Greek word that is translated into the English term "form" is *morphe*, and it has to do with outward appearance. But those who believe and support the Trinity doctrine invest that Greek word with more than its usage allows by their writings (meaning their commentaries and so forth) by expanding its meaning to include one's internal being or nature.

In fact, in explaining this passage in their writings, they will go so far as to change the word "form" into the word "substance," which the Greek equivalent means "like estate." It is an entirely different word, but they want to do that to make the Trinity look as though it has more authority in the Bible, that they were *one*; see, "like estate." That term, "like estate" would indicate a co-equal Godhead of three. That is not what Paul said here. Paul said *morphe* (form), so this takes Paul's statement beyond what he clearly wrote.

I want to show you some places where *morphe* is used. We are going to go to Mark 16. This is Mark's account of "the road to Emmaus" experience.

Mark 16:12 After that He appeared in another form [*morphe*] unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

Obviously, you know from the book of Luke that they did not recognize Him. He was in a different form. His face looked different. His outward appearance, as far as these two men were concerned, was different from what it was when He went into the tomb. I am not talking about His beating. I just mean the many times they saw Him preaching and walking around and talking to them, He looked different. He was in a different form. You know that they did not recognize Him.

Let us go to Romans 2. This is used in a different context. Here Paul is talking about the Jews, and he says:

Romans 2:20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form [*morphe*] of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Here Paul is using "form" as the opposite of "the reality," and what he is saying is that the Jews did not actually possess the knowledge and truth of the law. They had the law, but they did not possess its reality, if you understand what I mean. All they had was its outward form. It is no wonder he said later about things that were written on stone rather than on the tables of the heart.

Maybe another way of putting this is that they had the law in the letter, but they did not have it in their heart, in the spirit, and therefore they really did not grasp it. So *morphe* is used for that which is literal as opposed to that which is the reality, and so they did not grasp the fullness of the law's practical intention.

We are now going to go to II Timothy 3. Here it is used in somewhat the same way as Paul used it in Romans 2:20. Paul is describing mankind at the time of the end, and here is the way he says it:

II Timothy 3:5 Having a form [*morphe*] of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

What is Paul saying here? He is saying that their religion is superficial. Outwardly they appeared to be devoted, but the truth's reality is not in them.

I hope you are seeing here that *morphe* pertains to that which is *without*; i.e., it is something that is visible on the outside. Now we are going to look at one that is a little bit more difficult, but once you know the key, it is not difficult at all.

Galatians 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed [*morphoo*] in you. [*Morphoo* is the past tense of *morphe*.]

The reason I said this looks a little bit more difficult is because Paul said, "I want to see Christ formed *in* you." It appears to be pointing to the *interior* of the person rather than what I said earlier that the word applies to that which is *without*—what we can see with our eyes. In this case, indeed it does point *within*; however, it is preceded by the preposition "in."

Now the mere fact that "in" had to be used with *morphoo* proves that it had to be put there to give the intention to what Paul wrote. If the word stands alone, it always means that which is *external*, but it can be used to point *within* if other words are put within the context. Part of the key to understanding Philippians 2, beginning in verse 5, is that the word "form" has nothing supporting there to point inside. It is only used by itself to mean the *external* form. This becomes very important. So there is no such preposition used in relation to *morphe* in Philippians 2; thus all that Paul intended was *outward* form.

Let me review something here. When Mary saw Him at the tomb after His resurrection, He was apparently in the same form as before His crucifixion. Again, I do not mean all beat up. But on the road to Emmaus He changed His outward appearance to suit His purpose to the situation; thus His outward form may change depending on what He is accomplishing. We are dealing with somebody who is really powerful. If you can walk through walls, there is something about you that is different. Why should we think that He would not have the power to change His appearance? He does! He will change it to suit the occasion that the Father has demanded the kind of representation be made.

The Son always submits, and that is why in one place He appears as the Captain of the Lord's host. It was needed for Joshua at that time. In another case He is a wayfarer, and good old hospitable Abraham invites Him in, and right away, it appears to be, Abraham knew who He was. He appeared entirely different to Samson's father and mother, and they were frightened half to death when they finally realized who it was.

Philippians 2:7 But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form [*morphe*] of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

It is obvious that *morphe* here has to be used for *outward* appearance. The word for "servant" in the *King James* here is woefully mistranslated. Some modern translations use the word "bond servant." That is a little bit better, but it is not as good as "slave." It should be translated "slave." That is what the Greek word *doulos* means. What is so significant is that *doulos* is used in the New Testament over one hundred times. This is the only place it is ever applied to Jesus. Do you know why?

Jesus was not really a slave. Of all men who have ever lived on earth there was never anybody who was as free as He was. He was never in bondage to Satan. He was never in bondage to anybody, but here He is called a slave.

Apparently in those days you could tell by looking at a person that the person was a slave, or you could come awfully close. Paul said He took on Him the external appearance of a slave because it suited the Father's purpose, and His purpose was to appear that way.

You have got to understand that internally He was *not* a slave. He was the most free of all who have ever lived. All of mankind has been slaves to Satan, and above all, Christ never was. He was free and clear inside, but on the outside He gave the appearance of being a slave.

In John 15 Jesus gives His own characterization of a slave. It is important that we get this distinction between the way He appeared on the outside and what He was intrinsically, or within, in His nature.

John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.

There is His characterization of a slave. It does not fit Christ's position in the least. He knew what the Father was doing, and His service was always voluntary and intelligent. He only had the *outward* appearance of a slave; thus we can begin to understand what Paul is doing here in Philippians 2. Jesus is described as having the form of God, emptying Himself of this and taking on the form of a slave. In neither case does the description given fit exactly what He was intrinsically, because intrinsically He was always God.

When Paul says that He was in "the form of God," it may at first begin to sound as though it was a downgrading of Jesus, as though He was merely in God's form. However, I want you to understand that it is not Paul's purpose here to prove that Jesus was God. That is dealt with in other places. I will give you some examples.

In Matthew 1, the angel told Joseph to name the baby "Immanuel," which means "God with us." This is a title indicating that despite what He appeared to be on the outside, He was *God with us*.

In John 1, it clearly states that the Word—the Expression, if you will—was God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (verse 11)

The Bible also clearly shows Jesus being worshipped, and unlike angels, He did not prohibit it, because He was God. He is mankind's Savior—*Joshua*.

Now no being less than God—the Channel of creation—can shed His blood in payment for all the sins of all of mankind.

Romans 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure [perhaps] for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ [God in the flesh] died for us.

Hebrews 2:14-17 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same: that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. [He was not in bondage like a slave.] For verily He took not on him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham, wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

It was no super-angel who died for us. It was God in the flesh. He is so far beyond a mere angelic being, there is no comparison at all. He was, and is, intrinsically of the God-kind, but He was not the Supreme, Absolute Deity.

So here in Philippians 2 Paul is illustrating that how Christ appeared outwardly He appeared to be another, and that His glory consisted not in being that other, meaning God, but having the visible appearance proper to the Absolute Deity necessary at that time for the Absolute Deity's purpose. What Paul is beginning to show us is that each and every time that Christ *appeared* in some form, He carried out each representation perfectly.

Remember that He appeared in many forms throughout time, and even a number of times following His birth, death, and resurrection. He changed forms mostly after the resurrection.

In Philippians 2 Paul calls upon us to consider the highest and the lowest manifestations of God. Christ's appearance in the form of God is the highest, and His appearance in the form of a slave is His lowest.

I realize that this is somewhat mind-bending because we have been strongly inclined to think that whenever He appeared to man it was always in the same form, but that does not fit the facts. He was always the same *intrinsically*, but the form He appeared in *outwardly* changed from time to time according to need.

Paul's point here is to illustrate that however Christ appeared, He carried His responsibilities perfectly and in a certain disposition. Did you notice how that paragraph began? "Let this disposition be in you." "Let this mind be in you." That triggered everything here. The thing about the form is part of an illustration to show us how we are to follow practically in Christ's footsteps.

What Christ divested Himself of was all of His previous forms that He appeared in. In addition to that, as a slave He gave up His privileges and rights as the God of the Old Testament. He put everything on the line. He actually became mortal.

In Philippians 2:8 it begins to show how Christ fulfilled His responsibility in His appearance as a slave. "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

In verses 9-11 Paul shows Christ's reward for carrying everything out right to the tee.

Philippians 2:9-11 Wherefore [as a result of His humility, as a result of His submission to God, even to death] God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

No one will ever be in authority over Jesus Christ except for the Father. Jesus Christ is exalted above all, except for the Absolute Deity, who is His Father.

Let us look at verse 12.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

There is a very, very significant lesson in this for us, and it begins in verse 12. Do you see the word "Wherefore"? That conjunction is used to conclude Paul's purpose for his illustration about the forms.

The conclusion is Paul's application of the illustration for us that actually began with the word "disposition" or "mind." We are to follow Christ's example by working out our responsibilities that God gives to us in the same mind, the humility, the thoroughness, and determination. "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

The example is before us. God limited Himself to becoming a man, and then submitted perfectly.

Philippians 2:13-18 For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That you may be blameless [We are looking here at exaltation that is going to follow if we follow the practical application.] and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do you joy, and rejoice with me.

When Isaiah saw God—Yahweh—exalted on His glorious throne in Isaiah 6, he was seeing the One who became Jesus of Nazareth because the Father—Absolute Deity—still remained invisible. But he saw Christ with all of the accompaniments of the Absolute Deity, and Isaiah was overwhelmed enough to fall to the ground as if he were dead, and say, "Woe is me!" He thought he was a dead man.

The One he saw became the Image of God, and when we combine that with what Paul wrote in Philippians 2, we can understand that He—the Form of God—also had the heart, because

intrinsically He still was God. He had the nature of God as well as the form of God in the Old Testament, and when the time arose in the Absolute Deity's purpose, He vacated the glory in order to reveal God's inmost affections. Did you get that?

There are people who will tell you that the God of the Old Testament was mean and cruel and everything, but that the God of the New Testament was loving and kind, forgiving and just and everything. But it is the same One. It is just that the revelation in the New Testament of the same God focused on His affection. How deep is that affection? As Christ, in the guise of a slave, He was manifesting the serving, sacrificing, merciful heart of God. And since He had the same heart, He is always the express Image, character Image, and thus regardless of the form in which He appeared to men, He was always an unvarying true manifestation of the Absolute Deity—His Father.

God willing, the next time I speak we will take the next step in revealing this.