

What Child Is This? He Is The One Who Humbled Himself To Save Us

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[0:00] Now I want you to imagine with me a cold, dirty animal stable six miles outside of Jerusalem. Nowhere in the Gospels are we told what kind of labor Mary had.

So we don't know if it was a long labor or a short labor. We don't know if it was a one-push birth or multiple pushes over multiple hours. We're not told. We're not told if Jesus was a breech baby or He was a head-first baby.

We don't know. But we are told that Mary gave birth to a firstborn son and they named Him Jesus. We also know that secretly Mary and Joseph knew that this baby boy was not conceived by Joseph.

But this baby was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit. There was some controversy stirring around this lady's pregnancy. Now, surely the conception of Jesus was a miracle.

But nine months later, His birth was oh so mundane. There was pain. There was sweat.

[1:13] Blood. Exhaustion. After birth for sure. In a mess. The baby may have been miraculously conceived, but this baby was delivered in the most mundane of ways.

He wasn't born with a halo around His head. He certainly didn't deliver Himself from Mary's womb. He didn't start feeding Himself. He didn't clothe Himself in swaddling clothes.

He didn't start changing His own diapers. This little baby was completely dependent on His mother. Now, if you were in that stable and you witnessed this delivery and you were looking at this baby lying in the manger, would you have any sense of who this baby truly was?

His true nature? His true identity? Why did the Magi come and worship Him? What child is this?

If you would open up your Bibles to Philippians 2, we're going to look at a classic passage in the Apostle Paul. We're going to kind of jump in kind of midstream of Paulian thought.

[2:33] And if you would turn to Philippians 2, verses 5 through 11. I'm going to read this to you. And then I just want to kind of bathe your mind in the truth of this passage on this Christmas Day.

So you'd be amazed of who this baby is. What child is this? Listen. Verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves. Paul's writing to Christians in the town of Philippi.

And he's saying to them, Have this humble mind among yourselves. The humility that Jesus demonstrated. And so he says, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, speaking of Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Merry Christmas. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Father, what child is this? This baby lying in the manger, kids the one that you're drawing right now, hopefully not sleeping. This is the second person of the Trinity who humbled himself for you.

[4:20] And so this morning, I just want to point out three truths from this passage, and I'll be moving at a quick clip. First truth is, this baby, he is God.

Second truth, he humbled himself. And third truth, he was exalted. So first truth of this little baby in the manger, he is God.

He was alive before he was born. When you read verse 6, we read, who though he was in the form of God. Now when you hear that word form, I'm not sure what goes through your mind.

What goes through my mind is, I'm lying in my bed in my house. It's dark. Some of our kids have come home. They light up the hall, and they're standing in my bedroom doorway, and I can't see them, but I see their form.

I know who they are. I see their shape. I know who it is. Now if you look around the room, we are a people of a variety of shapes and forms, aren't we?

[5:18] But when Paul talks about who is in the form of God, he's not just talking about the form, the shape of God.

That word in the original language actually means to take on its full and true essence. So what Paul is saying there is, Jesus, who was very God, that phrase, the form of God, has a lot of similarities to Colossians 1.15 where Jesus is described as the image of God, the icon of God.

Or in Hebrews 1.3 where Jesus is said to be the exact imprint of God's nature. Or of course in John 1 where Jesus is described as the Word of God.

The Word was with God. The Word was God. And we learn in John 1.18 that it's this Word of God, Jesus, who makes known the unseen God.

So it would be possible for you to read who though he was in the form of God and think that Jesus isn't quite fully God. But that's not what Paul's saying. He's saying that Christ, the second person of the Trinity, has always been the true display of the full essence of God for eternity.

[6:48] He is equal in essence to God the Father and God the Son. He is fully God, eternally existent with God in a relationship that experienced love forever.

The Trinity. The Word was with God and the Word was God. Understanding that phrase that way, it really helps you understand the next phrase.

And so when you read who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, you're kind of like, huh? If you look back at Philippians 2, 1-5, Paul is calling the Philippian Christians to live with each other in humility.

Look at verse 3. He says, Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. But in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

And verse 4, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. This was all about living their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[7:53] And so for them to live in unity together, they need to be humble with one another. In order to be humble with one another, the Apostle Paul says, Look at Jesus, who is fully God and did not consider using His divinity to advance His personal purposes.

That's what Paul's saying here. He did not consider equality. He did not consider using His equality with God for His own advantage.

That's what the Apostle Paul's saying. Jesus, before He became a man, exercised humility. In His pre-incarnate state, the second person of the Trinity did not consider using His divinity for His own personal advantage, and so He became a man.

Pretty cool, huh? So what child is this? He's the second person of the Trinity. He was fully God in essence who existed before He took on human likeness.

That's who this little child is. He's God. Second point, He humbled Himself.

[9:10] In verses 7 and 8, we read about Jesus making Himself nothing. Emptying Himself. That phrase, making Himself nothing, you might be reading a version that says He emptied Himself.

And when you think about making Himself nothing or emptying Himself, you start thinking in terms of subtraction, don't you? You start thinking in terms of taking something away.

And so some Bible-believing Christians, when they read this verse, they'll say that when the second person of the Trinity took on human flesh, Jesus emptied Himself in such a way that He emptied Himself of some of His divine attributes, at least for a little bit.

but there's no reason to draw that conclusion from this passage. When the second person of the Trinity took on human flesh, He did not in any way cease to be fully God in all that He is.

If He subtracted something, it would have been this, the glory that was His before He took on human flesh, and we read that in John 17, 5. But nothing about His essence, who He is, any of His attributes.

[10:38] So when we read He made Himself nothing or He emptied Himself, you might start thinking about subtraction, but you shouldn't think subtraction. You need to think in terms of addition.

Jesus emptied Himself. He poured Himself out. He made Himself nothing by taking on some things. And the next three phrases in v. 7 and 8 show that.

And so we read, but made Himself nothing by taking the form of a servant. Do you read that? That word form is the same word used in v. 6.

And so the One who is fully and truly God became a servant. A slave. Fully and truly.

In all essence. A slave. And if you're familiar with anything with the first century world, a slave was the lowliest of all human beings on the status ladder of the time.

[11:45] No rights. So this emptying is actually a humbling, a humble pouring out of the second person of the Trinity for others.

So the shock of Christmas is that the One who is fully and truly God became fully and truly a slave. Mark 10.45, I came not to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many.

So He emptied Himself by taking on the form of a servant. And then we read, He emptied Himself by being born in the likeness of men, of human beings.

He poured Himself out. He emptied Himself. He made Himself nothing by adding to Himself the fullness of human experience. experience. He experienced everything that we have experienced.

And He did so without sin. He knows firsthand what it means to lose somebody you love. He knows firsthand what grief is. He knows it. He's our sympathetic High Priest.

[12:58] Christ. And He's interceding for us now. What Paul is saying here is that the birth of Jesus, being born in the likeness of man, was part of His humiliation.

It was an act of humility. It was Him emptying Himself, pouring Himself out for others. But His humble emptying didn't stop at His birth.

It continued. And so we read the third phrase and we find that in verse 8. In being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

How did Jesus humble Himself? By becoming obedient to the point of death. His humility was obedience to the will of His Father.

The will of His Father was to send His Son to die for others. For us. So just as His incarnation was an act of obedience, so was His going to His death.

[14:08] And we read what kind of death He died. Even death on a cross. So this baby born to us was born to die for us on a Roman cross.

Have you heard of the word excruciate? It's an English word that means some of the most deepest pain physically we experience.

Excruciate literally means out of the cross. crucifixion was designed to inflict as much physical and psychological pain as possible.

It was one of the most demeaning ways to die. It was brutal. It was brutal. Physically, it was awful. Psychologically, you are publicly dying slowly naked.

It was humiliating. He did it for us.

[15:20] He emptied Himself by becoming a slave. He emptied Himself by taking on human likeness. He emptied Himself by dying on a cross for a purpose. And that was our salvation.

He came as a suffering servant in the flesh for our sake. You can't disconnect the incarnation from the crucifixion.

He humbled Himself for us. It's in the name. Jesus, the Lord saves. Emmanuel, God with us in humility.

The wonder of Christmas is not the display of the majesty of God. but the display of the humility of God. That God would do this?

It's amazing. So this little baby, He's God. He humbled Himself. And He was exalted.

[16:19] In verses 9-11, we read how God the Father responded to God the Son. Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name

that is above every name.

Notice the humility that the Son displays even reaches to the way He's exalted. He doesn't exalt Himself. Rather, God the Father is the one who exalts God the Son in verse 9.

And God just didn't exalt Him. He highly exalted Him. This is classically one of the Apostle Paul's kind of made-up words he does. It literally means hyper-exalted.

And most likely, Paul made it up to try to get this sense of the degree by which God the Father exalted the Son. So as a response to the humble, sacrificial obedience to the Son who went to the lowest possible descent, a slave, God the Father raised Him up to the highest possible degree. Highly exalted. And then God the Father bestowed on Him the name that is above every name. Again, it's an expression that gets to degree of exaltation.

[17:36] And so we're left asking, so what's the name? What's the name above every name? Well, we've got two choices. We've got to decide between Jesus, that name, and another name, Lord.

And so in verse 10, we read, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. So that since in heaven, the angels, and on earth, everyone living, and under the earth, all the dead will be raised up and they will bow the knee one day to Jesus. So it's Jesus and you can make a case for that. But the other option is Lord. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Now there is a little, there's a little something that makes the case. Would you turn back in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 45? Isaiah chapter 45.

Verses 10 and 11 are actually the Apostle Paul quoting Isaiah 45, 23. But he's quoting it in a very interesting way.

[18:54] But in order to understand that, you need to understand who's speaking in Isaiah 45, 23. And in Isaiah 45, 23, we read this.

Let's start in verse 22. Turn to me and be saved to all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other. Who's speaking? God. Yahweh.

The Lord. By myself I have sworn from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return. To me, every knee shall bow.

Every tongue shall swear allegiance. allegiance. When you start realizing that Paul is quoting Isaiah 45, 23 and he's quoting God speaking, you start realizing he is attributing Isaiah 45, 23 to Jesus. He's saying Jesus is God. He is the one whom every tongue will confess and every knee will bow. So the name that is above every name it's not Jesus.

[20:07] It's Lord. And the way that Paul is using Lord is the name of God. Yahweh from the Old Testament.

So the name that is above every name is the name Lord as in God. Jesus Christ is the Lord God. every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

So on that day when the child who was born in utter humility and who died in utter humiliation, on that day when he returns, his exaltation will be complete.

Every knee bows and every tongue confesses that he is the Lord God and God exalted him. All glory to God the Father. What child is this?

He's the preexistent Christ fully and truly God who humbled himself by becoming a servant taking on human likeness died on a cross was then exalted think resurrection ascension current reign he was exalted by God the Father and bestowed the name above every name the name Lord God of all he is our Lord what child is this?

[21:26] He's Jesus he's the Lord of all he's Emmanuel God with us how do we respond? We bow our knee to him we confess Jesus as our Lord God we worship him and we demonstrate the same kind of humility to one another as he showed in him becoming flesh so the magi in Matthew 2.11 had some sense of who this child is we read in going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother and they fell down and worshipped him then opening their treasures they offered him gifts gold and frankincense and myrrh so despite this child's humble appearance and humble origin and humble surroundings and one day humiliating death the magi knew that this child was the Christ who is the Lord he humbled himself for the salvation of others that's what you go tell on the mountain that Jesus

Christ is Lord let's pray God we do thank you so much for Philippians 2 we thank you for this day
God help us to celebrate the incarnation of the second person of the trinity Merry Christmas it's your
plan for the salvation of sinners Lord Jesus we confess you as our Lord now and know one day that
every knee shall bow and every tongue confess who you truly are God in the flesh it's in your name
we pray amen amen no you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you