

## Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

### Lesson 18 (HCLD 14 ) <sup>1</sup>

**Preparation:** Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

**Background Reading:** Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2.

**Vocabulary:** Humiliation, Estate, Economy

**Question:** What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?

**Answer:** The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

From King of Glory to humble babe born in a manger. From Son of God to a itinerate messenger of God as the prophets before Him with no estate among men. Why did Christ do this? To save those who denied Him and even hated Him. Paul wrote that for a righteous man hardly any would die, but just perhaps some might die for a good man. Yet Christ died for the ungodly. From King of Glory to a wayfarer without post or

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<sup>1</sup> The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 14

Q35: What is the meaning of "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary"?

A35: That the eternal Son of God, who is [a] and continues true and eternal God,[b] took upon Himself the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,[c] by the operation of the Holy Ghost;[d] so that He might also be the true seed of David,[e] like unto His brethren in all things,[f] except for sin.[g]

a. John 1:1; Rom. 1:3-4

b. Rom. 9:5

c. Gal. 4:4; John 1:14

d. Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 1:35

e. Psa. 132:11

f. Phil. 2:7

g. Heb. 4:15; I John 5:20

Q36: What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

A36: That He is our Mediator,[a] and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, wherein I was conceived.[b]

a. Heb. 2:16-17

b. Psa. 32:1; I John 1:9

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 2:6-8; Luke 1:31; II Cor. 8:9; Acts 2:24

pillar of His own to be laid in a borrowed grave. We all know this and even at times perhaps consider its significance to us. I doubt any of us can really understand fully the significance of this humiliation and sacrifice of estate for our friends, much less those who hate us. The closest example among mankind is perhaps the love of a parent for their child, whereby mothers have suffered extreme humiliation to save their children.

We must be extremely careful here not to draw a line of division between the divine and human nature of Christ. At the same time, at no time does Christ give up or do away with His glory, His position as the third person of the Trinity is present from birth. We see glimpses of this throughout the revelation of Him in the Scriptures; as a boy of twelve He says, I must be about my Father's work; next we catch a glimpse of it at His baptism; then upon the mount; and in several other passages where the divine knowledge comes through and he knows and understands (in the flesh) who He is, and what He must do. The two most striking occasions to me being in John where He says, I lay my life down, and I will take it up again, then upon the cross, He utters that fantastic word of promise, "it is finished."

Did Christ "humble" Himself? Most certainly, but to whom and how become the important questions. First, to God the Father, in perfect obedience to the will of the Father. While willingly humbling Himself, even in the flesh and in the role of a servant, we must continuously ask why, and was this a conscious act for a specific purpose? I think the answer is yes, to all of these. To answer in a reverse order, the purpose was the redemption of the elect; for His own glory. Willingly then, He did not make manifest in the flesh His glory, His deity, but it isn't tossed aside, He is the eternal Son of God; fully God and fully man. Even in the human nature, He knew who He was, and the power and glory that were rightly His (He thought it not robbery to consider Himself equal to God). Thus definitely a conscious and deliberate "non-use" of the divine glory and power that were His. Why? Because God said so, that the perfect obedience which man could not obtain for himself as with all other things, is provided by God. I don't try and offer any profound insight here as to how He did this. The Scriptures say so is more than enough for me. We walk by faith not sight. Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man at the same time. But, Christ did not use divine ability or knowledge to fully keep all righteousness.

Logic fails, and we find this an area where faith reigns supreme. As an aside here, it is interesting to look at the word "wisdom" as related in Proverbs, then compare this to the divine logos of the Gospel of John, and then consider from whence we get our word logic. Of all the writers of Scripture, I think only Solomon and then John make the connection that all true wisdom and logic are Christ incarnate in the world; the very word of God. Read the wisdom passages in Proverbs and see for yourself how wisdom there is portrayed in a way that is all but prophetic, or perhaps is, of the person of Christ, the word of God made manifest in the flesh.

As we consider the estate of Christ here I think we need to ask to whom was He a servant? Why? While in the flesh I don't think we find servant and humility in the sense some are want to use them concerning Christ. He was a leader of men, a teacher, and bowed not to the civil nor religious leaders of His day. He firmly, and perhaps almost arrogantly confronted them at every turn in His life. Not blasphemy; who among men would have spoken to the Jewish leaders with the boldness of Christ, except a true prophet of God? Search the Scriptures, who dared confront rulers and kings of Israel with the truth of their sins and boldly so? Who dared to speak to rulers of pagan nations without fear? The humility was in not calling down the fires of heaven on the heads of His foes; even as He points out to those who came to seize Him that fateful morning in the garden. I dare to say that had any of the prophets pointed the finger at their foes and said die, this would have happened. Yet in all of Scripture, except for Moses and Pharaoh and Elijah on Mount Carmel, we see no such use of God's power to His anointed, they humbly die with sealed lips, in obedience to God. How unlike the world and the demand for the rights that are our birthright in the flesh, are the faithful of God.

My mind is drawn first to Christ praying for this cup to be removed, yet "thy will be done." As with Paul and his thorn in the flesh; and the examples abound not only in Scripture, but in the shed blood of martyrs throughout the history of the Jews, the church, and continues today, God's servants quietly suffering and dying for His purpose, His glory. Thankfully most of us will never be called upon for the ultimate test of our faith and obedience, that of eagerly, lovingly, embracing the flames of the martyr's post, praying "Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." Humility? Yes. Humiliation? Only in the eyes of man. In the flesh, the first three commandments and placing God in the proper perspective with regards to His creation were foremost in the Life of Christ. I name the first three because the fourth Christ claimed for Himself, even in the flesh. (More of the divine presence, His glory shining through? I think these glimpses were given lest we forget this is no ordinary man, but the Son of God we are dealing with.)

Humble, yes. Humiliated? I think not. And I do not think this is the sense of the term intended by the church throughout history in speaking of the humiliation of Christ. It takes pride, ego to be humiliated, Christ the perfect servant of God, thus became the servant of all, not in humiliation, but humility; bowing before the sovereign will of God the Father. Yes, He suffered humiliating acts at the hands of the children of Satan, but not because of internal pride, and this humiliation is more in man's perspective than His as the Son of God, living, serving, and dying for the benefit of the elect, but for His own glory. So the word, as we will see drawn out in some detail by the Westminster Divines in this series of questions, is humble (humility) not humiliation. This isn't to change how we deal with this in theological terms, but that we understand the nuances of the words we use to classify this portion of the revelation of our Lord. Jesus Christ was, is, and shall ever be the King of Glory!

What a fantastic lesson for us then, as we quietly, with profound confidence confront the evils of this world, our heads held high, in full confidence of the ultimate exaltation of our God of us, with no need for personal pride. Understanding our purpose

is to glorify Him, that we might know the sureness of our destiny, enjoy Him forever. Fearing not him who can kill the body, but He who can destroy both body and soul in hell. This is our purpose, our goal, but these words are much easier said than done. For, in the flesh, sin still abides, and arrogance and pride are always just beneath the surface. How different to this world where self worth is the cure all of the day, and much sought after. How hard for us to forget self and serve Him at all costs. Yet in so doing we have peace with our Creator and know the only true peace and joy, whereby resting in His hands have what man has sought throughout history, eternal life.

Once more we see the truth of Paul's words about becoming a living sacrifice, which is only reasonable. Servant of all? Yes, but only because we are first the "bond servant" of God. Paid for with an awesome price, not unto bondage, but willingly giving our all, not because of the price, but because of the tender mercies shown toward us by God, in the payment of that price. Perhaps now we might read 1 Cor. 13 about the most powerful gift of the Holy Spirit, and understand the awesome power of love, personified as the very essence of the God we serve.

#### **Suggested Sermon Outline:**

#### **The Virgin Birth**

#### **What is the meaning of Conceived By The Holy Spirit, Born Of The Virgin Mary?**

That the eternal Son of God, Who is and remains true and eternal God, took upon Himself our true manhood from the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, so that He might also be the true seed of David, like his fellow men in all things, except for sin.

#### **What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?**

That He is our Mediator, and that, in God's sight, He covers over with His innocence and perfect holiness the sinfulness in which I have been conceived.

### **I. God Became Man**

**A. God always remains God.** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1: 1)

**1. Creation is distinctively the work of God.** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1: 1)

**2. The Wisdom identified by John with the Word which is in turn identified with God was present from before the beginning.** The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the

fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. (Proverbs 8:22-31)

**B. By being born of the Virgin Mary, God took upon Himself genuine humanity.** 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. (John 1: 14)

**C. The Holy Spirit accomplished the conception.** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

## II. The God-Man Could Fulfill The Ancient Promises

**A. The Virgin Birth enabled Jesus to satisfy the promises related to the heir of David.** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (Romans 1: 1-3 )

**B. As the God-Man Jesus could genuinely face the world we encounter and deal with it.** 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: (Phillipians 2:5-7)

**C. The single difference was the exception of original sin.** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

## III. God-Man Can Mediate

**A. Jesus as God and man can Mediate between God and man for man's benefit.** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (1 Timothy 2:5-6)

**B. Jesus as God and man did mediate between God and man for our justification, sanctification, and glorification.** Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. (Romans 4:7)

**C. It is only as the God-Man that Jesus is able to be the Christ - the solution for sin.** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 014

Questions 35-36

Dr. Edwin P. Elliott, Jr.