

// / Being Found in Fashion

Philippians 2:5 – 8

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~ In our modern society, most people live by the mantra “.... *every man for himself*.” People scratch, claw and clamor their way forward in a quest to the top, as they say. “*Onward and upward*” is declared; in spite of the second law of thermodynamics, which states that everything moves from organized to disorganized. They smugly announce the only constant is change — when human nature never changes. So, professing themselves to be wise, they contradict themselves, and risk becoming fools. Most men will not hesitate to crush your fingers on the “*ladder of success*” if you happen to be standing on the rung beneath them. Well, even most Christians today have no earthly idea that the way up is, actually, by going down! John said, “.... *I must decrease so that Christ might increase*.” In this report, our Spiritual Safari is going to learn all about this truth as we examine one of the most glorious passages in the entire Word of God regarding the Lord Jesus Christ....

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

~ In our last report, we began to consider the seven steps downward the Lord Jesus Christ took from Heaven to earth. If you haven't read our last report, I suggest you go back and do so now. His humiliation was step number one. Christ's downward progression ultimately brought Him all the way to where we are today. You and I cannot even begin to conceive in our human comprehension what an undertaking it was for Christ Jesus to leave Heavens glory and come to this retched and fallen world. Frankly, even with the facts of the death, burial and resurrection, we cannot understand what God really did for us. In Hawaii, there is what is known as the “*Pali*.” It is the dividing line where one crosses over from Honolulu to the windward side of O'ahu Island. They are some rather high cliffs, and a shear drop. If you were to step off of one of those cliffs, you would discover it really wasn't all that far down – but that first step sure is difficult. Of course, for us, it would be the last step we ever took.

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

~ The Lord Jesus' position as the second Person of the Godhead is not a position He clings to precariously. There was no danger of losing His place on the Throne of God when He descended to earth as a man. There was no lack on His part — and there was no challenge to His authority. Jesus didn't say, "... Father, make sure you keep your eye on Gabriel; because I know he wants My Throne; and he might attempt a coup while I'm gone." Jesus was — and is — God; and that without effort. Christ didn't make the trip to earth reluctantly, either; it wasn't something forced upon Him. Jesus was a gift to this world — and a gift is never forced upon anyone. No, Christ submitted Himself as a free-will offering for the joy that was set before Him. If He hadn't done so *willingly*, then it would not have been a proper sacrifice....

7 But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

~ This is the second step; which we also began to discuss in our last report. In this step, Christ emptied Himself by making Himself of no reputation. But Jesus did not relinquish His deity when He came to earth as a man. There exists what is labeled the "*kenosis*" theory; but Christ did *NOT* empty Himself of His *deity*. We know that very definitely because Jesus commanded the weather and walked on water. He was very God of very God and very man of very man. That which He "*emptied Himself*" of was His glory. That means He emptied Himself of the prerogatives of His deity. One of the first heresies in the church was that Christ emptied Himself of His deity at His first advent. The Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons — and some other denominations — subscribe to this blasphemy. Some assert Jesus left His deity, but it came upon Him at His baptism, and left again when He was on the cross. Well, if you believe any of those theories then, may I say this kindly? — You are not a believer in the Word of God. Jesus was one hundred percent God in that manger in Bethlehem — and He was in full control of this universe on the cross. There has never been a single moment in eternity when Jesus was not God.

Many people seem to be confused that, because Jesus does not force anyone to believe, then He must not be God. But the night Jesus was arrested, Judas had to kiss Him so the soldiers would know Who He was. Think about that for a moment. The pictures of Jesus with a halo around His head are a huge mistake; not accurate. When Jesus was a man, He didn't stand out in a crowd. He was a human being, but He was also God manifest in the flesh. When Jesus had completed His earthly ministry, and He was gathered in the Upper Room on that last night, He prayed a remarkable prayer in John chapter seventeen. That's the true *"Lord's Prayer."* Jesus prayed, saying, *"and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."* That was the time when Jesus asked the Father to restore His glory to Him. This is how we can know very definitely that Jesus did not lay aside His deity; but that He laid aside His glory. That's the account we're given — it has remained unchanged throughout the ages, friends; and the perverted philosophical thinking of men cannot alter or void this truth one whit.

The third step Jesus took downward was to take upon Himself the form of a servant. Jesus was a simple carpenter in Nazareth. If you had lived in Jesus' day, you could have knocked on His door and He would have come over to repair your house or building. Jesus could have been born in Caesar's palace — or in Herod's temple — but Jesus did not claim His Kingship in the home of Joseph and Mary. Not until Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey did He ever make a claim of being a King! Jesus lived His life as a servant. Today, the working man — the little and insignificant man — is what Jesus would have looked like to you.

The fourth step down was for Jesus to be made in the likeness of men. For me, that was not very impressive for many years. Candidly and personally, as a man on this earth, I can declare I enjoy being a human being. I think there is a very definite dignity in our existential being. It's most difficult to convey to you dear readers how that might be humbling — because that fact alone doesn't humble me. However, it was *BEYOND* humbling for Christ Jesus to take upon Himself the form of a man! Man is made in the likeness of God; but for God to be made in the likeness of men is uber-humiliation.

Jesus came to redeem mankind; but also to reveal God to mankind. That's so very important to understand, friends. You and I don't know a single thing about God except for what He has told us *in His Word*. When Jesus came to this world, when the Word became flesh, we learned a whole lot about God. The only way we can know anything about God is through the Lord Jesus Christ – Who is God. A-men ~

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

~ The Lord Jesus Christ was not humbled by others. No, friends, He humbled Himself! I have been humiliated by other people doing certain things – and I'm sure you have, too. Well, humbling ourselves is the most difficult thing in this world for a man to do. However, a humble attitude can be cultivated if we are willing to do it intentionally and deliberately. John Wesley was crossing a stream one day on a very narrow board. As he went over he encountered a liberal preacher who swelled up and said, “.... *I never give way to a fool.*” Wesley smiled, backed up, and replied, “.... *well, I always do!*”

Now, I know most of you dear readers think I am the last person in the world who should be talking about humbling ourselves – and, you're probably right. That's why I very seldom talk about myself in these reports – I speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death – even the death on the cross – which was also a tremendously humiliating experience. We'll examine that more in-depth in our next report; and we'll continue those downward steps that Jesus took. In the meantime, meditate on this passage of Scripture; and I hope you can continue along with us in our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God ~

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