



1 | PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

Jesus went from the highest place to the very lowest place to be our advocate. He deserves our complete trust and devotion as Lord of our lives.

Outline

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Call to Worship

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. ³² When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. ³³ For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise his own people ³⁴ Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. —*Psalm 69:30, 32-34*

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O Come Let Us Adore Him
Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Meekness and Majesty
What Child is This

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: You can give over Zelle through your bank with no fees (use secretary@livinghopechurch.net). We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center. Malachi 3, “Test me in this” Proverbs: **“Give of your first fruits.”** We believe blessing comes by putting God first.

Introduction

We are in a new series for Christmas called “What Child is This?”

Just who is the baby in the manger? Who is the Lord Jesus Christ? People are asking that question perhaps now more than ever before. Perhaps you equate Jesus with some dead religion, or some set of rules. I want to show you from the Bible that Jesus is so much more. He is **the almighty God who became human for you**, so that he might take all your sin upon himself, forgive you, and grant you eternal life. That’s the purpose Jesus came into the world. It’s breathtaking when you think about it.

Go back with me to the first Christmas. Who is that baby there lying in the manger? Could this be the almighty God who created the world, sleeping there robed in the flesh of an infant child? **The baby who cries for his mother is the God who created his mother.** The little one who looks so helpless is **the one who flung the stars in space.** We learn more about his journey from ruling as the glorious Son of God in heaven to the becoming the baby in the manger in Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:5-11 | Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It is estimated that of all the people who have ever lived from the beginning of creation to this time, there have been about **a hundred billion people** who have lived here on this planet.¹ Out of those hundred billion, very few have had any major effect on human history. There **is one person who stands out, unique above all of the rest.** That one person, Jesus Christ, has attracted a greater amount of attention, devotion, criticism, adoration, and opposition than any other person of those other hundred billion people. Every recorded word that this man spoke has been studied and sifted through and analyzed from generation to generation by theologians and by philosophers and by

¹ Wesley Stephenson, “Do the Dead Outnumber the Living?” in *BBC Magazine* (London: BBC News, 2012, February 4), <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16870579>.

historians. And while we are sitting here talking, at this moment, there are **millions of people studying what he said**. Even as we study God's word, right now multiplied millions are praying in his name. He is Jesus of Nazareth. He existed on this earth some two thousand years ago, and he preached and taught in a tiny little land called Israel. Yet the **birth of this baby has divided the centuries** into B.C.—“Before Christ”—and A.D.—“*Anno Domini*” or “in the year of our Lord.” His birth divides world history.

He never wrote a book, so far as we know; but **more books have been written about him** than any person in all of history. He never painted a **picture**, or wrote a **poem**, or formed a **sculpture**, as far as we know. He **never wrote any music**, as far as we know. Yet his life has been the motivation and the inspiration for every kind of art forms. He **never raised an army**; and yet millions of people have laid down their lives for him to spread the gospel. He never traveled very far from that tiny little area where he walked; and yet his influence is worldwide. He never spoke to more than **a few thousand people at one time** in his earthly ministry; and yet today, more than thirty percent of the world's population claim to be followers of Jesus Christ.

His ministry lasted for only three years; and yet today by radio and television and printed literature his word goes around the world. So far as we know, he never had **much formal education beyond synagogue school**; yet thousands of universities and seminaries and schools are built in his name. And no one can claim to be educated who does not understand who this baby was and is. The great noted historian Kenneth Scott LaTourette said this.

Jesus has had more effect on the history of mankind than any other of the human race who ever existed.² –Kenneth Scott LaTourette

Nobody has had the powerful influence of our Lord Jesus Christ. To explain him is beyond comprehension; to ignore him is beyond foolishness; to reject him is damnable. Human speech is inadequate to fully describe him. My mind is too small to comprehend him. And my heart is insufficient to fully contain this one whose name is Jesus. Who is this baby lying in the manger? He is the name above all names! He is the pearl of great price! He was the Word at the beginning who spoke all things into existence. He is God who came to us in human flesh!

In this one passage in Philippians 2, we find at least seven designations of deity for the Lord Jesus Christ. Each designation shows him going from the most exalted position in the universe to the very lowest position, and then exalted to the highest place once again, above all other names.

Key Thought: Jesus went from the highest place to the very lowest place to be our advocate. He deserves our complete trust and devotion as Lord of our lives.

1. JESUS IS THE SUPERNATURAL SON OF GOD (2:6)

Jesus is the supernatural Son of God. Look how highly exalted Jesus was in time before his incarnation.

² Kenneth Scott Latourette in John Blanchard, *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: Evangelical Press, 1989), 13.

HIS PERSON IS SUPERNATURAL

Philippians 2:6 | Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

The text plainly says that Our Lord Jesus, before his incarnation, existed “in the form of God,” that is, **he was in full possession of the divine nature.**³ **The infant is the infinite one.** He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, or literally “taken advantage of.” That tells us not only is this one born in the manger **the Son of God, but he is God the Son.**

What does it mean that Christ existed in the “form of God” from all eternity? It means he exuded the very same resplendent glory as the Father. Because he shares all the transcendent attributes of God, his glory was such that even the angels had to cover their eyes when in his presence (*cf* Isa 6; Jn 12:41). Jesus alluded to eternal glory in the Upper Room in his high-priestly prayer on the eve of his death.⁴

John 17:5 | And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Paul said those who are blind need to have their eyes opened to his divine nature.

1 Corinthians 4:4 | Christ ... is the exact image of God.

It is the highest privilege of a human being to gaze up Christ as the Lord of glory.

The disciples said, “Show us the Father, and it will satisfy us” (Jn 14:8). And Jesus said, “He that has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9) Now, suppose I were to ask someone, “Show me God,” and that someone replied, “You’re looking at him.” You’d say, “Go get the guys with the straitjacket. We’re going to need to haul him off.” But our Lord Jesus was telling the truth of his divine nature. He is God.

Paul said, “He is the **image** of the invisible **God**, the firstborn over all creation” (Col 1:15). And, “in him [*Jesus*] all the fullness of **God** [*fullness of divinity, of a divine nature*] was pleased to dwell” (Col 1:19). Paul says to Timothy, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God** was manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim 3:16). Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn 8:58).

C.S. Lewis famously said that when Jesus says he’s God, he’s either a wicked and satanic liar, or an out of his mind lunatic, or he is the Lord of glory.⁵ Wesley said, Jesus is either the devil from hell or he is the Lord God Almighty. He cannot be anything in between. There is no other option. What will you do with Jesus?

HIS POSITION IS SUPERNATURAL

Philippians 2:6 | Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

³ J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Philippians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 112.

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 83.

⁵ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis Signature Classics (New York: HarperOne, 1952), 52.

Another translation put it this way, “**Precisely because he was in the form of God, he considered equality with God not a matter of getting but of giving.**”⁶ Paul is making the point that we should have the same mind as Christ, who though he was in the highest position of authority, used that supernatural position to give of himself, not to protect himself. Having the highest position, he gave all for us.

Because Jesus is God, he has the right to grasp, or literally “take advantage” of his own deity. He could have enjoyed remaining robed in his brilliant glory instead of becoming human. He could have remained the glorious Christ of splendor with the angels worshipping him without redeeming mankind. Nothing at all would be wrong with Christ remaining in his unveiled glory in heaven. But he chose to lay aside his divine privileges of receiving worship and instead received the scorn and hatred of men. He chose to leave the place of highest honor to go to the place of greatest contempt. He veiled his glory and power and eternal attributes in the robe of human flesh in order to redeem us at the highest cost.⁷

Let me clear. He did not give up his attributes or his authority, for that is something he could never do. But he chose to use that authority to save sinners. He chose to veil and conceal his divine attributes to give a gift of eternal salvation to humanity. He laid aside his divine privileges of being worshipped in the place of honor, and came down so low, so that he could become like one of us, and go to the place of greatest dishonor and shame in order to substitute himself for unworthy sinners. **The baby in the manger is almighty God, in the position of God, but he veils his person and position as God in order to save us.**

In this series we are going to be studying the titles of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6, and they tell us how Jesus is going to save us from our sin.

The old hymn asks “What child is this?” Chapter 7 of Isaiah says He is Immanuel, God with us! But Isaiah 9:6 Goes into not just His name, but these titles reveal, not just an outward name, but these names are an actual description of this Child’s being and character. Five designations are given.

Wonderful

Wonderful: This title has to do with Christ’s **deity**. He is the wonder worker, the miracle maker, the chain breaker. His name is wonder working Savior. Have you been touch by his miracle working hand?

Counselor

Counselor: This title has to do with Christ’s **omniscience**. Christ is the incarnation of wisdom itself. Christ is the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24). He is the one that can counsel and convict the heart. He is called “The Word” (Jn 1:1), the *Logos* or the very logic of everything.

Mighty God

The mighty God: This title has to do with Christ’s **omnipotence**. Revelation 1:8 has Christ proclaiming this very title as “the Almighty”.

⁶ Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 102.

⁷ Silva, *Ibid.*, 95.

Everlasting Father

The everlasting Father: This title has the idea “Father of eternity”, his **eternal existence**. He is from everlasting to everlasting! He’s the Word who is from everlasting who stands outside of time and is the source of all things.

Prince of Peace

The Prince of Peace: He is the Regent of **reconciliation**! God made Christ “to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). We are now at peace with God!

2. JESUS IS THE INCARNATIONAL SON OF GOD (2:7-8)

Look at the supernatural Son of God and worship. Then look at him incarnate as the baby in the manger and wonder at the mystery. The immortal God was made in the likeness of men. This speaks of his virgin birth.

THE POSITION OF HIS INCARNATION

Philippians 2:7a | He ...emptied himself.

Our Lord came to “empty himself,” that is, to make himself nothing through the sacrifice of himself. He who was everything became nothing. He would pour himself out completely for us by substituting himself entirely for us. **He who was everything became nothing.**

He emptied himself, like I would empty everything in my cupboard for you. **He did not become less.** He applied his deity and mercy and omnipotence to sacrifice and substitute himself for mankind. The infinite gave everything. The healer would bleed. The one who made the oceans would say, “I thirst.” He emptied himself! What a mystery!

THE PURPOSE OF HIS INCARNATION

Philippians 2:7b | He ...emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant.

Christ became nothing by taking on the form of a slave. Jesus went from being worshipped as God in complete self-sufficiency, to becoming weak like us. The Creator entered into his creation, taking on the form of a slave. The one who commands the angel armies became completely obedient to the plan of redemption, like a slave. He would carry it out in perfect obedience. In Adam, we are born slaves of sin. Christ was a slave of righteousness. He was made man to carry out God’s plan of redemption for us: our sin for Christ’s righteousness. Like a perfectly obedient slave, he carried it out perfectly.

THE PROCESS OF HIS INCARNATION

Philippians 2:7c | Being born in the likeness of men.

Our Lord was born in the likeness of men. God who rules the universe was born. Think about that. He looked like one of us, and he was born like one of us. The infinite became

a fetus! But he was not conceived like any other child. He was born of a virgin. Isaiah tells us clearly.

Isaiah 7:14 | Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The immortal became mortal. Do you find that hard to believe: that a virgin could conceive a child by the Holy Spirit? Well, may I tell you, the first person to doubt it was Mary herself? When the angel announced this to Mary, Mary said, “How can this be?” (Lk 1:34). And the angel answered, “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Lk 1:37). Can you say amen to that?

Now if you have difficulty with the virgin birth, what you really have difficulty with is the **omnipotence of God**. Think about it: “For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Jesus was the virgin-born, supernatural, incarnate Son of God. Mary was his virgin mother, but he was conceived by the Holy Spirit with God as his Father.

THE PERFECTION OF HIS INCARNATION

Jesus, being found in human form, was absolutely sinless. Jesus was perfectly obedient throughout his life, even though his obedience brought him to the point of death.

Philippians 2:8a | And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

Christ was obedient. No one else on earth has ever had a perfect record, but Jesus did. The Lord Jesus said he was perfect.

John 8:29 | I do always those things that please my Father.

God the Father said of God the Son with a loud voice from heaven:

Matthew 3:17 | This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Do you always please God the Father? None of us can say we perfectly please our Father in heaven. But Jesus always pleased the Father. The Bible tells us in Hebrews that Jesus was “*without sin*.” Satan tempted him, but Satan never won a victory over the Lord Jesus Christ. All the artillery of hell was aimed at the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:15 | He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Satan had no trophies that he could put on his wall. Jesus looked at those who were accusing him and said, “Which of you can convict me of sin?” (Jn 8:46). He was sinless and perfect in his incarnation.

3. JESUS IS THE MEDIATORIAL SON OF GOD (2:8-11)

Christ is our mediator. That means he’s our advocate or our lawyer. He mediates on our behalf. We couldn’t have a better lawyer. Here he is as God, and he became human for us in order to bear our sins upon himself and represent us before God.

1 Timothy 2:5 | For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Everything Christ did in his incarnation, he did for us. Who is that baby in the manger? It's our advocate and our mediator.

HE DIED FOR US

Philippians 2:8b | Even death on a cross.

Jesus was born to die. This one born in a manger would die on a cross. Crucifixion was the cruelest form of death ever devised. Jesus' death was not incidental. It was not accidental. He did not die as a victim. He did not die as a martyr. He died in obedience to the Father's eternal plan, that you and I might be saved the death of the cross.

Revelation 13:8 | Jesus is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

This was in the heart and mind of God before this planet was flung into space. From eternity past, he has always been the sacrificial Son of God. You see, the blood that was shed on that cross was the blood of God, because he is the God-Man. God became flesh.

John 1:14 | The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

We have to understand that Jesus was born to die. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Jesus is the sacrificial Son of God.

HE WAS RAISED FOR US

That baby was foreordained to live the perfect live and then to die a substitutionary death. Then he would rise again from the dead. The Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead for us. They put him on the cross. They nailed him up there, and **they said, "He is finished." But he wasn't finished. Jesus said, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30)**—"The plan is finished; it is done; I've paid the sin debt." And now, look in verse 9—Jesus, the substitutionary Son of God not only died for us, he was raised from the dead for us. And he was raised to the highest position. He conquers sin and death, and God raises him from the dead and exalts him!

Philippians 2:9 | Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

This one who was born to die, was also born to conquer death and live. **The grave could not hold him.** He is the Lord of life, and he is the Lord over death, because he conquered death.

John 10:18 | No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

Revelation 1:5 | Jesus is "the firstborn from the dead."

You say, “Weren’t other people raised from the dead?” Well, in the truest sense, they were resuscitated. They may have been dead physically, brought back to life. But the first thing they did after they were brought back to life was to begin to die again.

Who is Jesus? He is the divine substitute. He substituted himself for us in his death, and also in his resurrection. **Because he lives, we live as well.** Jesus is the risen Son of God. Confucius died: he’s dead! Buddha died: he’s dead! Muhammad died: he’s dead! Jesus died and rose again. He’s the living Son of God. “He’s shown to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection of the dead” (Rom 1:4).

HE’S COMING AGAIN SOON FOR US

I’ll tell you what else Jesus is: Jesus is the soon-coming Son of God. We are united with him in his death and resurrection. But we are also united to him as he comes again and judges the world. That’s why Jesus was born. He came to give mercy to the world. But anyone who does not receive mercy must then receive judgment.

Philippians 2:9-11 | Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is the soon-coming Son of God. And when he does return, knees will bow. Satan will bow on his thorny knees and confess that Jesus is Lord. Osama bin Laden will bow and confess that Jesus is Lord. Every atheist that ever denied God, will bow and confess that Jesus is Lord and God. And all of the people on Planet Earth—all that who have lived or will live—will bow one day and say that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is coming again.

His coming is literal, actual. Some missed his first coming because they did not believe the prophecy. Jesus is literally, actually, visibly, bodily coming back to this earth. Acts 1:11 says Jesus was there on the Mount of Olives when he ascended to heaven. I’ve visited the Mount of Olives, and I wonder if I have stood in the same spot where Jesus stood before he ascended up into the glory. Those blessed feet that still bear the marks of the nails ascended up from the Mount of Olives. He was taken up into the sky. Acts 1:11 says there were some angels there who spoke to the disciples who were gazing in amazement at seeing Jesus ascend.

Acts 1:11 | Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

This same Jesus is coming again. Those feet left the Mount of Olives at his ascension. Those feet will stand again on the Mount of Olives when he returns. Those dimpled feet that lay in the straw of Bethlehem, those feet that walked among the shavings in Joseph’s carpenter shop, those sandaled feet that walked the dusty shores of Galilee, those miracle feet that walked on water, those nail-pierced feet, those glorified feet that ascended from the Mount of Olives, are the same feet that the will come again. And when Jesus returns, those feet will crush the serpent’s head, and Satan’s head will be crushed: his kingdom issued the final defeat. My greatest desire at the second coming is to bow at Jesus’ feet. We all ought to fall at his feet.

Jesus Is the Saving Son of God

4. JESUS IS THE SAVING SON OF GOD (2:8)

Last of all, Jesus is the saving Son of God. This is who the Lord Jesus is.

Philippians 2:8 | And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Why Christmas? Because of Calvary. Why did Jesus come?

Luke 19:10 | For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

John 14:6 | Jesus said... “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

He is the solitary Savior. I’ve often said, **Jesus is not a good way to heaven; Jesus is not the best way to heaven; Jesus is the only way to heaven.** Apart from Jesus, there is no salvation. This was the apostolic message. Peter says so in Acts 4.

Acts 4:12 | There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

What wonderful news! What child is this? It’s a child that was born to die. He can save anyone. Whether you are on death row, or Wall Street, or Madison Avenue, you need Jesus. He’s the saving Son of God. There’s no one that he cannot save.

Let us praise God for Christmas. Think, if there had been no Christmas, what that would mean. If there had been no birthday of Jesus, what your birthday would mean. Every birthday you have would mean that you’re one year nearer death, nearer a Christless eternity. But, oh, because of the birthday of Jesus, think what your birthday means! Each birthday you have means you’re one year closer to heaven, closer to seeing his dear face. Praise God that the Word was made flesh, and he became like us. Praise him that he emptied himself: he gave all for us!

Conclusion

Who is Jesus? What child is this? Jesus is not just a baby in the manger, he is God incarnate, sent to save you from your sins. He is the Son of God who left heaven, came to this earth, suffered, bled, and died, and walked out of that grave a living, risen Savior. And he’s the one who sent me to tell you that he loves you and he wants to save you. Indeed, he will save you today if you’ll give him your heart. He came to us on that first Christmas that he might save you and me and any who will come to him. Come to him today, and he will grant you eternal life!

I’ve never needed a lawyer, but can you imagine a lawyer that is God himself? Can you imagine this God would come down to earth and live a perfect life for you and die a substitutionary death for you? Can you imagine that? You don’t have to. It’s true. What child is this in the manger? It’s your advocate who came from the highest place to the very lowest place just for you.