

## CHRISTOLOGY (40)

We cite Dr. Walvoord: “The act of kenosis as stated in Philippians 2 may therefore be properly understood to mean that Christ surrendered no attribute of Deity, but that He did voluntarily restrict their independent use in keeping with His purpose of living with men and their limitations” (*Ibid.*, p. 144).

When it comes to this matter of kenosis, or for that matter to true Christology, there are three important theological words that need to be understood.

**Word #1** - Condescension –This term refers to the fact that Jesus Christ willingly left His native, heavenly sphere to become a man.

**Word #2** - Humiliation –This term refers to the fact that Christ, as God-man, was willing to suffer all of the negatives which He endured, which culminated in His death by crucifixion.

**Word #3** - Exaltation –This term refers to the fact that after His humiliation, He arose from the dead and eventually ascended back into heaven where He is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father.

Although all three concepts are referred to in Philippians 2:7-9, the kenosis matter is primarily one concerned with Christ’s condescension.

**QUESTION #17** – What were the offices held by Jesus Christ and the God-man?

Eusebius, who has been called the “Father of Church History” because he was the first to write a valuable history of the Christian Church from the time of the apostles down to his own time, approximately A.D. 325, was the first to classify Christ’s work into three major offices. We may observe then that Christology has its roots in the early development of God’s Church. Eusebius lived, researched and wrote from A.D. 263-339.

**Office #1** - Jesus Christ held the office of a prophet.

Dr. John Walvoord writes: “Without question, Christ is the greatest of the prophets. His teachings, contained in the four Gospels, demonstrate a greater variety of subjects, a broader scope of prophecy and a more comprehensive revelation than is found in any of the Old Testament records of the prophets” (Walvoord, p. 136). The fact that Jesus Christ held the office of a prophet is clearly established in Scripture:

(Proof #1) - It was established by prediction of Moses. Deut. 18:15-19

Dr. C.I. Scofield’s note on these verses is worth noting—“That the allusion in vv. 15-19 is to the Lord Jesus Christ is made clear by the N.T. (John 1:21, 45; 6:14; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).”

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(Proof #2) - It was established by the testimony of the majority of people. Mt. 21:11, 46

Even those who were enemies of Christ recognized He was a great prophet of God.

(Proof #3) - It was established by the reaction of religious leaders. Mt. 21:11, 46; Jn. 7:40-53

The religious leaders of Christ's day, who hated Him, did not dare move against Him because they knew He was a great prophet of God.

(Proof #4) - It was established by the testimony of Jesus Christ. Mt. 13:57; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:24; 13:33; Jn. 4:44.

The primary purpose of a prophet was to communicate God's Word to man. This involved **forth-telling** the truth of God and **fore-telling** the future. Jesus Christ fulfilled this role far beyond any other prophet whoever showed up in Scripture. Christ's entire life, work and words so emphatically communicated God's Word to man that He actually is the Word of God. Everything about Him was a prophetic declaration of Almighty God (i.e. John 1:14-18). He was never formally trained, but all people, even enemies, recognized that there was a great prophetic power and authority to His life and teaching. He forthtold the message of God and He foretold the future of God.

Jesus Christ did and said so many prophetic things that all the books in the world could not contain it (John 21:25). However, during His life He did give three major verbal addresses:

Verbal Address #1 - The message of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5-7

This message has been interpreted in three different ways:

- 1) Some believe Jesus Christ is teaching the way of salvation. The major problem with this interpretation is that works are stressed and the great theological terms of salvation—justification, redemption, propitiation, etc., are nowhere to be found in the passage.
- 2) Some believe Jesus Christ is presenting a blueprint for Christian living. A major flaw with this interpretation is that the Church and Christianity had not yet been established and there is absolutely no mention of the Holy Spirit which is the central dynamic of the Church and Christian living.
- 3) Many believe Jesus Christ is giving instruction concerning the Kingdom for Israel. This is clearly what fits the context. John had been proclaiming that the Kingdom was at hand (i.e. Mt. 3:2), so Christ gives instruction and prediction concerning the attitude and righteousness that Israel needs and will exist when the Kingdom is established.

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The Jewish people of Christ's day were looking for and expecting a political kingdom, but they neglected to acknowledge their need, so Christ used the Sermon on the Mount as a means of informing Israel concerning the proper attitudes which are needed and ultimately will exist when He does establish His Kingdom.

Verbal Address #2 - The message on the Mount of Olives . Mt. 24-25

By the time Jesus Christ ended His earthly ministry, it was evident that the Jewish leaders and majority of Jewish people had totally rejected the Kingdom. A natural question arose as to whether or not God had cancelled the Kingdom program forever. This particular address is designed to establish that God has not eliminated the Kingdom program, and it shows the conditions which will exist just prior to its establishment. This is Christ's earthly farewell message to Israel.

Verbal Address #3 - The message in the Upper Room . John 13-17

This address is clearly different in content and tone from the preceding addresses. The reason for this is that this message was designed to set the stage for the coming Church Age.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer does an excellent job on this point: "This message is spoken to the eleven after the dismissal of Judas, for the most part, and they are no longer reckoned to be Jews under the Law (cf. 15:25), but are those who are "clean" through the Word spoken unto them (cf. 13:10; 15:3). As for its application, it is dated by Christ beyond His death, beyond His resurrection, beyond His ascension, and beyond the Day of Pentecost. The discourse embodies, in germ form, every essential of that system of doctrine which is distinctively Christian. This portion is like a seed plot in which all is found that is later developed in the epistles of the New Testament" (Vol. 3, p. 25).

From these major addresses we conclude that Jesus Christ was indeed a prophet who gave enough revelation for all people of all ages, not just Israel. He prophetically states what will happen in the future, even predicting His own death. He was without question the greatest ever to hold the office of a prophet.

**Office #2** - Jesus Christ held the office of a Priest .

The major difference between a prophet and a priest is that the prophet speaks to men from God. The priest speaks to God for men.

Dr. Hodge says the office of a priest means at least three things: (Vol. 2, p. 31)

- 1) He was a man duly appointed to act for other men in things pertaining to God.
- 2) He was a man who was appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin.
- 3) He was a man who was appointed to make intercession for the people.