

HOW JESUS GOT TO THE MANGER

Christmas Letters: Philippians 2:1-11

December 5, 2021

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing
Philippians 2:5-6*

Reading Paul's "Messiah Poem"

1. The Epistles focus more on the cross than the manger
2. The Epistles connect the First and Second Advents
3. The Epistles always connect the incarnation with Christian living
4. Philippians, a prison letter, gives us insight into what fulfills Paul's joy

The "if" that ends up with an example to follow

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:1-4

1. This is an "if" that might better be translated "since"
2. Note how the structure of this passage emphasizes humility (NIGTC commentary attached)
3. Unity can't be achieved without humility

A “deeper magic”

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

- ⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
⁷ but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:5-8

1. Four movements reveal God’s initiative in the incarnation

morphē of God pre-existed (*huparchōn*)

morphē of a servant he took on himself

homoiōma of humanity he made himself

schēma of human-ness he was found

2. Jesus poured out the privileges, not the essence, of his deity

3. The highest form of servanthood always includes a cost (and it’s sometimes very steep!)

There’s something about that Name

- ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ 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.

Philippians 2:9-11

1. The Jesus pattern: exaltation follows humiliation

2. There is no place in creation that is outside the Lordship of Jesus Christ

The “Messiah Poem” for today

1. It really was God who gave up heaven to become a servant, to die on the cross for us!

²² *“Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.*
²³ *By myself I have sworn,
my mouth has uttered in all integrity
a word that will not be revoked:
Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.*
²⁴ *They will say of me, ‘In the LORD alone
are righteousness and strength.’ ”*

Isaiah 45:22-24

2. Are we really ready for the humility/unity connection?

²⁰ *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

John 17

3. Am I ready to pay the cost of Jesus-style servanthood?

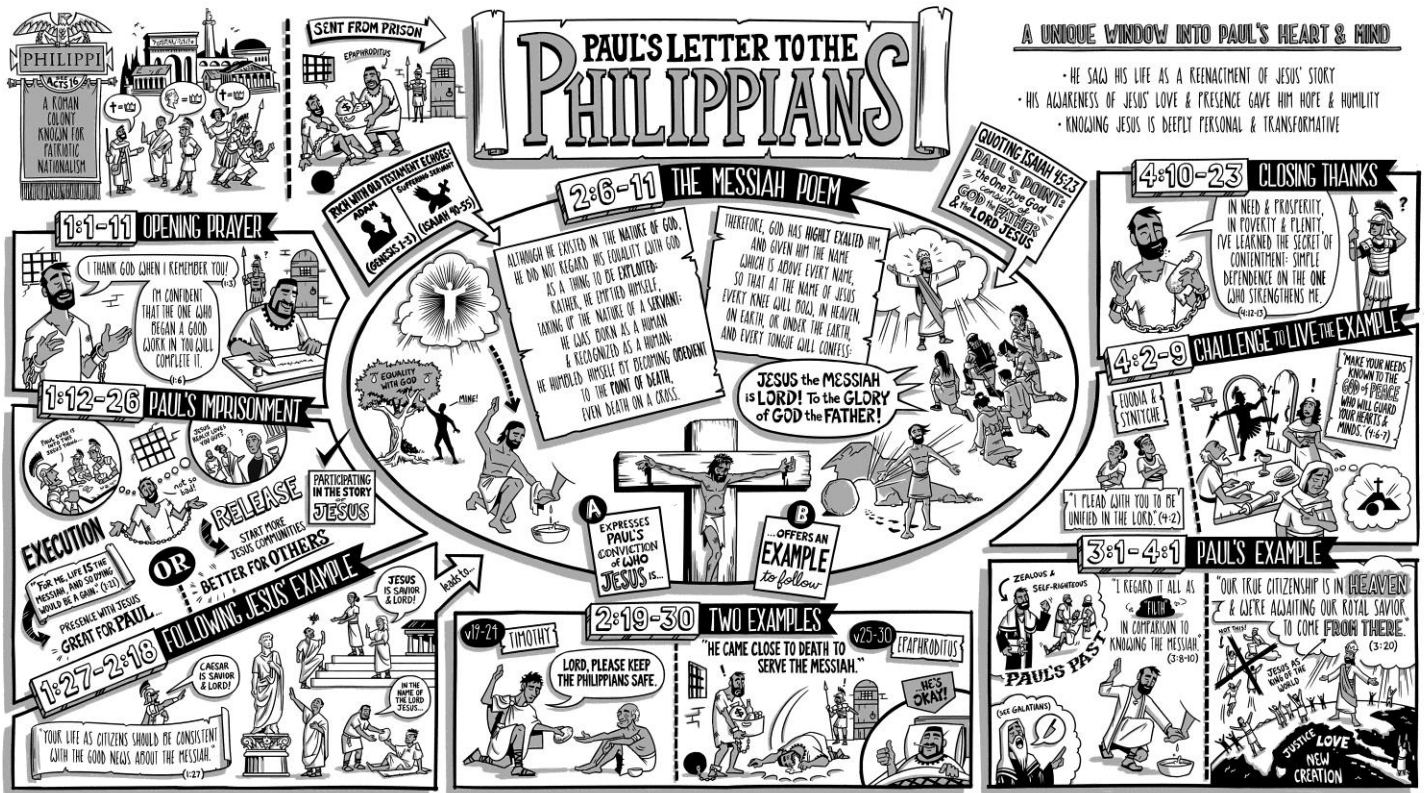
²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*
Ephesians 5

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

1 Peter 4:1 (read all the way to 4:11)

² Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”

Romans 15



Resources for the Philippians 2

Please be sure to check the [Bible Project's poster](#) on the Philippians.

Bob Deffinbaugh's "Ultimate Humility" message at <https://bible.org/seriespage/7-ultimate-humility-leaving-comfort-zone-phil-23-11>

Alexander Maclaren has a good summary of this text at <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/mac/philippians-2.html>

On the Kenosis problem, [Phil Johnson has a good summary](#), [Sproul has this good answer](#) to what Jesus actually poured out in the incarnation, and Packer contributed to [this short analysis](#), and Berkhof has [an interesting take on the limits of Kenosis Theory](#).

I especially liked the Peter O'Brien's NIGTC commentary on this passage (Eerdmans, 1991).

Spurgeon has several good sermons on this text: "The Exaltation of Christ" at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-exaltation-of-christ/#flipbook/> the "Consolation in Christ" on Philippians 2:1, and the attached "Our Lord in the Valley of Humiliation"