

Kenosis - The Self "Emptying" of Christ

Jesus Christ did not inherit any of man's sinful nature. The Bible teaches us Jesus Christ is the second Person of the "Trinity." He is eternal or has always existed (Heb 1:2), present at the time of creation: John 1:1 - present in the beginning. "Word" as used in this passage in the Greek indicates deity and refers to Jesus Christ: Philippians 2:5-8 - He was in the form of God (v. 6) before taking upon Him a body of flesh. Since He is eternal, He could not "inherit" because He always was and is. He is not a created being.

The reason Jesus Christ became incarnate or became flesh was to reveal God to man. Since God is sinless, Jesus Christ had to be sinless too, to reveal God. By being fashioned as a man, or taking on a body of flesh and bones does not mean He was no longer God. He was fully God AND fully human in one Person. Philippians 2:7 and 8 teach us that Christ did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped at -- He chose not to hang on to God's glory. He chose to veil His preincarnate glory (Jn 17:5) by making himself of no reputation or "emptying Himself." He emptied Himself by making Himself nothing or by adding to Himself the fashion or form of a man or servant. He volunteered not to use His attributes of God but took upon Himself sinless but human limitations.

Christ assumed a true human nature. The word "nature" refers to a complex of attributes which makes us human as personal beings. Christ had a genuine human nature. This does not mean He had a sinful human nature. He was and is God (Heb 1:8). Therefore He could not sin because sin is anything contrary to God's character. The sin nature is the capacity to do all those things (good or bad) that can in no way commend us to God (2 Cor 4:4; Eph 4:18; Rom 1:18-3:20). If Christ had the sin nature, He would not be God.

Scripture tells us Jesus Christ came to earth through the channel of a miraculous conception. There was not any kind of union between God and Mary. Christ's body was prepared by the Holy Ghost (Lk 1:35; Heb 10:5). The Spirit of God formed the humanity of Christ from the substance of Mary. A new person was not formed or created. The eternal Christ's humanity was formed but not inherited.

In Hebrews 2:16 we see Christ did not take on the nature of angels -- He did not undertake the cause of angels. Fallen angels are, according to Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4, reserved for dreadful punishment. They are not the objects of God's grace. Instead Christ took on Him the seed of Abraham -- He became flesh and blood. He became fully human.

Because Christ wanted to help the seed of Abraham He had to be made like his brethren in all things. He had to become human so that He could make propitiation for all sins. Thus, since He has been tempted just as we have He is able to come to the aid of all who are tempted. The word "tempted" means the moral nature of the one tested and the possibility of sympathizing does not depend on one-to-one correspondence in the problems which call forth sympathy. The temptations of Christ proved His sinlessness. They demonstrated His inherent holiness and they made Him a sympathizing High Priest.