

Deity of Christ: Major Parallel Passages

DIVINE RELATIONSHIP	COLOSSIANS 1-2	JOHN 1, 14	HEBREWS 1-2	PHILLIPIANS 2
Father	image 1:15, 19	Word 1:1, 14 radiant glory 1:14, 14:7	revelation 1:2	form 2:6
	first begotten 1:15, 18	only begotten 1:14, 18	first born 1:6	equal with God 2:6
	Son 1:13	Son 3:16	Son 1:2a, 5, 8	servant 2:7
DIVINE W				
Creator	(all) 1:16-18	(all) 1:1-3	(all 1:2-3, 10	
Salvati	1:4-5, 10; 2:6	1:12-13	1:3; 2:10-11	2:6-8
Therefore, DIVINE NATURE	Theotetos 2:9(1:19)	Theos 1:1, 18	Theos 1:8	Theos 2:6
Exclusively	1:19, 2:9	1:18, 14:6	1:3	2:6
In Flesh	2:9	1:14	1:6, 9-10, 2:14-18	2:7-8

The Christ Hymn of Phil. 2:6-11

Introduction

This is the 4th and final major Christological text of the N.T. (cf. Col. 1:15-23; 2:9-10; Heb. 1-2; John 1:1-18). Other text of the N.T. also contribute to our understanding of the person of Christ (e.g. Matt. 16:13-20; Rom. 1:3-4; Rev. 1:8, 13-18; 5:1-14; 19:11-16), but these four stand out as foundations upon which we might begin to construct a balanced and Biblical Christology.

This particular passage is especially noted for two important aspects of Christology:

- 1) The "kenosis" doctrine or "emptying of Christ."
- 2) The hypostatic union (uniting of two natures in one person).

Our study will reveal a number of similarities to the other three major text, and it will also provide some new insights as well (note the parallel chart). The preexistence of Christ will be affirmed for a fourth time, as will the incarnation (Heb. 1:1-2; John 1:14). A new element, however, will be "the exaltation of Christ" following His work on the Cross.

Background Issues

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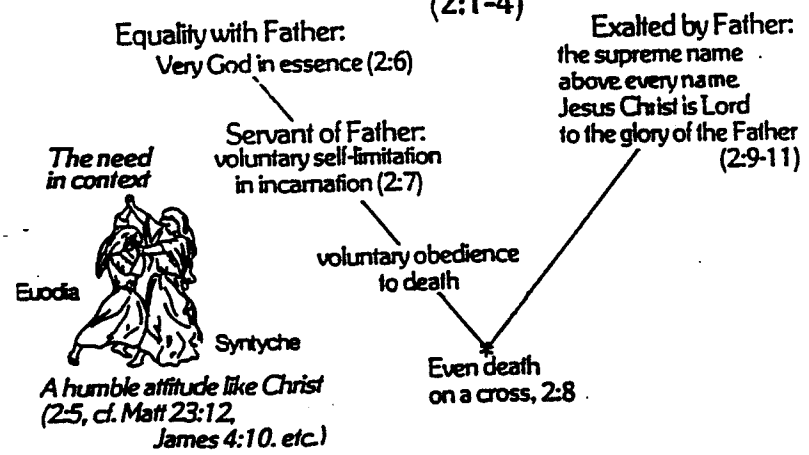
A number of debatable issues surface when this text is examined. Most scholars now agree that the passage is probably an early Christian hymn. At this point however, agreement ceases and debate begins. Four major issues are significant at this point:

- 1) Is the hymn Pauline or pre-Pauline?
- 2) Is the intent of the hymn: A) ethical B) metaphysical or C) soteriological?
- 3) Is the background of the hymn: A) Aramaic B) Hellenistic or C) Hebrew?
- 4) How many stanzas and in what arrangement are the stanzas?

It is not imperative that we have definitive answers to these questions. Our view of inspiration (inerrancy) after all, is concerned ultimately with the end product and not the means unto the text. For our purpose we tentatively answer the above questions as follows, noting that good scholarship may be called in support.

- 1) The author is Paul, though his adapting of an existing hymn for his epistolary purpose is certainly plausible.
- 2) The primary intent is ethical, though metaphysical and soteriological questions may legitimately be raised.
- 3) A Hebrew background, such as Is. 53, is most probable.
- 4) The hymn should be arranged in two stanzas as follows:
 A) stanza 1 vv. 6-8 Christ's humiliation
 B) stanza 2 vv. 9-11 Christ's exaltation

**Philippians 2:5-11;
 The Incarnation of Christ
 As the Supreme Example
 of True Humility and Greatness
 (2:1-4)**



Context

That the hymn has an ethical context is clear from 2:1-5. Here Paul urges the Philippians to "have the mind of Christ" (v. 5, literally "think you," a pre. imp. of command). This command is preceded by a call to: 1) unity (v. 2), 2) humility (v. 3), and sensitivity (v. 4). Humility above all is identified as that character trait which exemplifies most

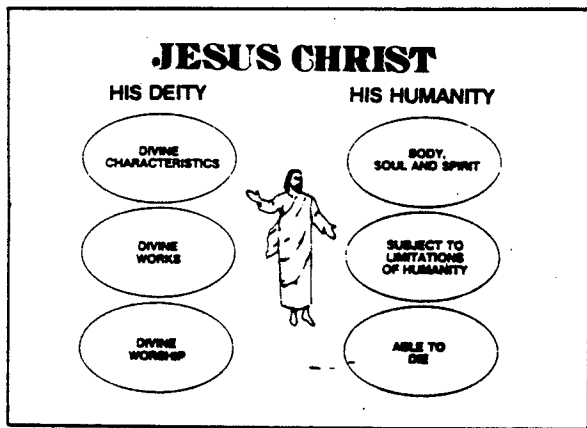
the mind of Christ. Interestingly, therefore, the hymn of 2:6-11 actually serves as an illustration (a divine one at that!) of the mind of Christ; the mind the believer should seek after and cultivate. Believers need to express genuine concern and compassion for one another, but this is not possible without adopting the same mind or attitude (disposition) which we discover in Christ. That Christ demonstrated such concern and compassion is the theme of the Christ hymn.

PHILIPPIANS 2

- 1. THE CONTRAST ("BUT", 7)
PREEXISTENT FORM (6) TO
INCARNATE FORM (7)

CHRIST'S HARBAGNOS =
"EMPTYING" TO BONDSERVICE

- 2. THE CHIAISM (7-8)
BONDSERVICE, 7A
INCARNATION, 7B
INCARNATION, 8A
OBEDIENCE, 8B



- 3. THE CONSEQUENCE (9-11)
THE PRINCIPLE OF SERVICE AS THE BASIS OF SOVEREIGNTY

Exposition of 2:6-11

Incarnation comes from Latin: in + carnis = "in flesh." It means the state of being clothed or invested with flesh. Ryrie notes that theologically, "the incarnation" refers to "the hypostatic union of undiminished deity and perfect humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ forever (continuum from first advent)" (Bible Doctrine, p. 51). For Paul the starting point of the discussion is with "the preexistence of Christ."

2:6 "Who being in very nature God" (NIV)

"Being" is hyparchon, (Gk.), and emphasizes continued existence (Being is a pre. act part). Christ exist in the realm of eternity forever. He always is (cf. John 8:58). There never was a time when He was not. He is eternally existent. He therefore is God.

"Very nature" is morphe, (Gk.), translated "form" in the KJV. This word has been various understood. Opinion includes:

- 1) image of God (as 2nd Adam, cf. Gen 1:26-27).
- 2) glory of God (Johannine theme)
- 3) essence of God

The word itself can mean "form," "shape," "appearance," or "essence." Vincent says, "Morphe is that expression of being which is identified with the essential nature and character of God and which reveals it" (ICC, p. 57-58). The idea of an "outward display of an inner reality or substance" is set forth by Rienecker. He states further, "Here it refers to the outward display of the divine substance, i.e., divinity of the preexistent Christ in the display of His glory as being in the image of the Father" (Linguistic Keys Gk. N.T., vol. 2, p. 204). The point therefore is clear, Christ eternally exist in the very nature, essence, essential being of God. Whatever it is that makes God God, Christ is! Morphe denotes Christ as possessing, of being the permanent unchangeable pattern of deity. Jesus is God!

"did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" This phrase looks back to the expression "being in very nature God." Fiercely debated, the phrase may mean that his equal status and privileges with God were not that which He violently sought to seize or believed He must forcibly retain. Grasped is harpagmos (Gk.), and can mean: 1) robbing (active sense) or 2) a prize gained through robbery (pass. sense). The idea seems to be that being co-equal and co-eternal with God by the very nature of His being, equality with God was not something Christ had to forcibly strive for (as if He did not possess it) or assert (as if he could lose it). The comments of Bruce are appropriate in this context:

There is no question of Christ's trying to snatch or seize equality with God: that was already his because he always had the nature of God. Neither is there any question of his trying to retain it by force. The point is rather that he did not treat his equality with God as an excuse for self-assertion or self-aggrandizement; on the contrary, he treated it as an occasion for renouncing every advantage or privilege that might have accrued to him thereby, as an opportunity for self-improvement and unreserved self-sacrifice.

Several commentators have seen a contrast here with the story of Adam: Christ enjoyed true equality with God but refused to derive any advantage from it in becoming man, whereas Adam, made man in the image of God, snatched at a false and illusory equality; Christ achieved universal lordship through his renunciation, whereas Adam forfeited his lordship through his

"snatching." But it is not at all certain that this contrast was in the author's mind.

Whether the Christ/Adam contrast is in Paul's mind or not, a comparison of the two is certainly enlightening (note also the contrast of Christ with the attitude of Satan as typified in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28).

**ADAM AND CHRIST:
Comparison and Contrast**

ADAM	CHRIST
Made in the divine image.	Being the image and very essence of God.
Thought it a prize to be grasped at to be as God;	Thought it not a prize to be grasped at to be as God;
Aspired to a reputation.	Made himself of no reputation.
Spurned being God's servant.	Took upon Him the form of a servant (slave).
Seeking to be in the likeness of God;	And was made in the likeness of men;
And being found in fashion as a man (of dust, now doomed),	And being found in fashion as a man (Romans 8:3),
He exalted himself,	He humbled himself,
And became disobedient unto death.	And became obedient unto death.
He was condemned and disgraced.	God highly exalted Him and gave him the name and position of the Lord.

Christ therefore grasped not at sovereignty but service. Adam was humanity seeking deity. Christ was deity seeking humanity. His high and lofty position was not something He could not give up for the salvation of souls and the pleasure of the Father. He did not grasp, He gave. He did not climb, he condescended.

2:7-8 "but made Himself nothing" NIV (Better "He emptied

Himself"). The crucial word is kenoo (Gk.), meaning simply to empty. The import of this word would seem, to require both a contextual and theological interpretation, or an ethical and metaphysical perspective.

A) Contextual/ethical insights

Verses 7-8 basically express an understanding of Christ's "making himself of no reputation."

- 1) He took the form (morphe, Gk.) of a servant (doulos, Gk.)
- 2) He was made in the likeness (homoima, Gk.) and fashion (schema, Gk.) of a man.
- 3) He humbled himself (cf. vv. 2-4).
- 4) He became obedient unto death.
- 5) He died a cross-type of death (one of ultimate humiliation)

These verses express the idea that there was an emptying by addition. The Son did not surrender His deity, He added humanity. Further the type of humanity He added was not of a sovereign, but a servant/slave. He received not a crown, but a cross. Bruce says it well, "He yielded himself to the furthest limit of submission, to a death reserved for those who have no claim on society."

Practical Application: If our Lord so humbled himself, what type of attitude, self-evaluation should we cultivate?

B) Theological/metaphysical insights

Deity cannot cease to be deity, so any understanding of kenoo which would point in this direction must quickly be dismissed. Yet a real and genuine emptying took place. Verses 7-8, as well as John 1:14; 17:1-26 are helpful at this point. John 17:5 is especially significant, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (KJV). Jesus did not surrender His deity, but He did surrender His glory. He became in a sense God incognito. Laid aside willingly in humble obedience to the Father (v. 8) were:

- 1) the praises of heaven.
- 2) the position of heaven.
- 3) the prerogatives of heaven.


The wedding of deity and humanity was permanent. The emptying however only temporary. CHRIST TEMPORARILY LAID ASIDE THE FREE AND VOLUNTARY EXERCISE OF THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF DEITY! The emptying therefore involved self-limitation as well as ultimate humiliation. Christ partook of unglorified humanity. He voluntarily forfeited, for a time, the free use of His divine attributes, depending instead on His Father and the Holy Spirit. God however, Paul notes, does not leave the drama unresolved. Jesus in humiliation totally reverses the priorities and principles of this world system. His Father affirms His pleasure in His exaltation.

GOD

JESUS—THE GOD-MAN

HE EXISTED AS GOD.
LIMITLESS
ALL POWERFUL
ETERNAL

HE BECAME MAN.
WEAK
LIMITED
MORTAL



WHEN JESUS BECAME MAN, HE DID NOT STOP BEING GOD —
HE ONLY GAVE UP (TEMPORARILY) THE VOLUNTARY EXERCISE
OF THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF GOD.

2:9-11

Man gave Jesus a Cross but God gave Him a Crown
 Man gave Jesus a Grave but God gave Him back His Glory
 Man gave Jesus Anguish but God gave Him Adoration
 Man Expelled Jesus but God Exalted Jesus
 Man gave Jesus Thorns but God gave Him a Throne

These verses affirm a three-fold exaltation of the Saviour.
 v. 9 An exalted position
 v. 10 An exalted adoration
 v. 11 An exalted confession

"Wherefore" (dio, Gk.) notes the consequent action of God (the Son humbles, not exalts Himself) in light of the Son's voluntary obedience and humiliation. "Highly exalted" means to exalt above and beyond, to super exalt. No doubt Paul has in mind here our Lord's resurrection, ascension and session in heaven. "Given him a name" may have reference to the name Yahweh, Lord or Jesus. The later seems more likely, though merit lies in all three options. Indeed as the following chart shows, a multiplicity of names are ascribed to our Saviour, each highlighting or drawing special attention to some unique facet of His person and/or work.

Jesus is Lord! Blessed be the names of the Lord!

A Adam, the Second <i>1 Cor. 15:45-47</i>	E Elect <i>Isa. 42:1</i>	Lord, Your Redeemer <i>Isa. 43:14</i>
Advocate <i>1 John 2:1</i>	Emmanuel <i>Matt. 1:23 (RSV)</i>	Love <i>1 John 4:8</i>
Almighty <i>Rev. 1:8</i>	Eternal Life <i>1 John 5:20</i>	M Man of Sorrows <i>Isa. 53:3</i>
Alpha and Omega <i>Rev. 21:6</i>	Everlasting Father <i>Isa. 9:6</i>	Master <i>Matt. 23:10</i>
Amen <i>Rev. 3:14</i>	F Faithful and True <i>Rev. 19:11</i>	Messiah <i>Dan. 9:25</i>
Ancient of Days <i>Dan. 7:9</i>	Faithful Witness <i>Rev. 1:5</i>	Mighty God <i>Isa. 9:6</i>
Angel of His Presence <i>Isa. 63:9</i>	First Begotten <i>Heb. 1:6</i>	Mighty One of Jacob <i>Isa. 60:16</i>
Angel, Mine <i>Exd. 23:20-23</i>	First Born <i>Psa. 89:27</i>	Most Holy <i>Dan. 9:24</i>
Anointed Above His Fellows <i>Psa. 45:7</i>	First Born Among Many <i>Rom. 8:29</i>	Most Mighty <i>Psa. 45:3</i>
Anointed, His <i>Psa. 2:2</i>	First Fruits <i>1 Cor. 15:23</i>	N Nazarene <i>Matt. 2:23</i>
Apostle of our Profession <i>Heb. 3:1</i>	First and Last <i>Rev. 22:13</i>	O Only Wise God <i>1 Tim. 1:17</i>
Arm of the Lord <i>Isa. 51:9-10</i>	Foundation Laid in Zion <i>Isa. 28:16</i>	Our Passover <i>1 Cor. 5:7</i>
Author and Finisher of our Faith <i>Heb. 12:2</i>	G Glorious Lord <i>Isa. 33:21</i>	P Physician <i>Luke 4:23</i>
Author of Eternal Salvation <i>Heb. 5:9</i>	God of Israel <i>Isa. 45:15</i>	Prince of Peace <i>Isa. 9:6</i>
B Begotten of God <i>1 John 5:18</i>	God with Us <i>Matt. 1:23</i>	Prince of the Kings of the Earth <i>Rev. 1:5</i>
Beloved <i>Eph. 1:6</i>	Great God <i>Titus 2:13</i>	Prophet <i>Deut. 18:15-18</i>
Bishop of Souls <i>1 Peter 2:25</i>	Great High Priest <i>Heb. 4:14</i>	Propitiation <i>Rom. 3:25</i>
Blessed and Only Potentate <i>1 Tim. 6:15</i>	H Head of the Body <i>Col. 1:18</i>	R Rabbi <i>John 1:49</i>
Branch, The <i>Zech. 3:8</i>	Head over all Things <i>Eph. 1:22</i>	Redeemer <i>Isa. 59:20</i>
Branch, A Righteous <i>Jer. 23:5</i>	Headstone of the Corner <i>Psa. 118:22</i>	Resurrection <i>John 11:25</i>
Branch of Righteousness <i>Jer. 33:15</i>	Heir of all Things <i>Heb. 1:2</i>	Righteous Servant <i>Isa. 53:11</i>
Branch of the Root of Jesse <i>Isa. 11:1</i>	Holy One of Israel <i>Isa. 41:14</i>	Rock <i>1 Cor. 10:4</i>
Bread of Life <i>John 6:35</i>	Hope of Glory <i>Col. 1:27</i>	Root of Jesse <i>Isa. 11:10</i>
Bright and Morning Star <i>Rev. 22:16</i>	I I Am <i>John 8:58</i>	Rose of Sharon <i>Song of Sol. 2:1</i>
C Captain of the Lord's Host <i>Josh. 5:15</i>	Image of the Invisible God <i>Col. 1:15</i>	S Saviour of the World <i>1 John 4:14</i>
Carpenter's Son <i>Matt. 13:55</i>	Immanuel <i>Isa. 7:14</i>	Seed of David <i>John 7:42</i>
Chief Cornerstone <i>1 Peter 2:6</i>	J Jesus Christ Our Lord <i>Rom. 1:3</i>	Seed of the Woman <i>Gen. 3:15</i>
Chiefest Among Ten Thousand <i>Song of Sol. 5:10</i>	Judge of Israel <i>Micah 5:1</i>	Shepherd, Good <i>John 10:11</i>
Christ, The <i>John 1:41</i>	K King of Glory <i>Psa. 24:7</i>	Son of God <i>Rom. 1:4</i>
Christ the Lord <i>Luke 2:11</i>	King <i>Zech. 9:9</i>	Son of Man <i>Acts 7:56</i>
Christ Jesus Our Lord <i>Rom. 8:39</i>	King over all the Earth <i>Zech. 14:9</i>	Son of Mary <i>Mark 6:3</i>
Christ the Power of God <i>1 Cor. 1:24</i>	L Lamb of God <i>John 1:29</i>	Son of the Highest <i>Luke 1:32</i>
Counselor <i>Isa. 9:6</i>	Light of the World <i>John 8:12</i>	Star out of Jacob <i>Num. 24:17</i>
Covenant of the People <i>Isa. 42:6</i>	Lily of the Valleys <i>Song of Sol. 2:1</i>	Stone <i>Matt. 21:42</i>
D Dayspring <i>Luke 1:78</i>	Living Bread <i>John 6:51</i>	Sun of Righteousness <i>Mal. 4:2</i>
Daystar <i>2 Peter 1:19</i>	Lord God Almighty <i>Rev. 4:8</i>	Sure Foundation <i>Isa. 28:16</i>
Deliverer <i>Rom. 11:26</i>	Lord and Savior Jesus Christ <i>2 Peter 2:20</i>	T Teacher <i>John 3:2</i>
Door, The <i>John 10:9</i>	Lord of All <i>Acts 10:36</i>	Truth <i>John 14:6</i>
	Lord Our Righteousness <i>Jer. 23:6</i>	U Unspeakable Gift <i>2 Cor. 9:15</i>
		V Vine <i>John 15:1</i>
		W Way <i>John 14:6</i>
		Wonderful <i>Isa. 9:6</i>
		Word <i>John 1:14</i>
		Word of God <i>Rev. 19:13</i>

That Beautiful Name

John Perry, 1865-1925, alt.

Walter J. Camp, 1871-1927

1 I know of a Name, A beau-ti-ful Name, That an-gels brought
 2 I know of a Name, A beau-ti-ful Name, That un-to a
 3 The One of that Name, My Sav-iour be-came, My Sav-iour of
 4 I love that blest Name, That won-der-ful Name, Made high-er than

down to earth; They whis-pered it low, One night long a-go,
 Babe was given; The stars glit-tered bright Through-out that glad night,
 Cal-va-ry; My sins nailed Him there, My bur-dens He bare,
 all in heaven; 'Twas whis-pered, I know, In my heart long a-go-

REFRAIN

To a maid-en of low-ly birth. That beau-ti-ful Name, That
 And an-gels praised God in heav-en. He suf-fered all this for me.
 To Je-sus my life I've given.

beau-ti-ful Name, From sin has power to free us! That beau-ti-ful

Name, That won-der-ful Name, That match-less Name is Je-sus!

The bowing of adoration (v. 10) and the word of confession (v. 11) serve to emphasize the deity and universal Lordship of the Son, a reality which glorifies the Father. Is. 45:23 is echoed in v. 10. There Yahweh is in view, here the Son. It is no accident that Jesus has ascribed to Him that which is ascribed to the God of the O.T., for He also is God. That all will bow (v. 10) should be understood as a doxological and not a cosmological statement. Nothing in all of creation is outside of the Lordship and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Jesus (Christ) is Lord" is the quintessential Christian creed, and in that creed "Lord" is given the most august sense that it can bear. When Christians in later generations refused to say "Caesar is Lord," they refused because they knew that this was no mere courtesy title that Caesar claimed: it was a title that implied his right to receive divine honors, and in this sense they could give it to none but Jesus. To them there was "only one God, the Father, ... and ... only one Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6). In the Greek O.T. Gentile Christians read, Yahweh was denoted either by theos ("God") or (most often) by kyrios ("Lord"); they reserved theos regularly for God the Father and kyrios regularly for Jesus.

When divine honors are thus paid to the humiliated and exalted Jesus, the glory of God the Father is not diminished but enhanced. When the Son is honored, the Father is glorified; for none can bestow on the Son higher honors than the Father himself has bestowed."

F. F. Bruce

Conclusion

- 1) In the incarnation/emptying of the Son, deity and humanity were perfectly and permanently joined: two natures in one person.
- 2) The kenosis consisted not in a subtraction of deity but an addition of humanity. In the incarnation the preexistent Christ laid aside His glory not His deity. He became God incognito.
- 3) Voluntary and willing humiliation for the benefit of others is the essence of the heart of God. As His subjects, we are constrained to live likewise.

- 4) Jesus is now the exalted and glorified God-man.
 * Spiritual greatness is found in servants not superstars.
 * Spiritual greatness is found in a humble posture not an honored position.

James 4:6, 10 - "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (cf. Prov. 3:34) ... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4b-5).

Thus we summarize as follows:

It was necessary that Christ should be both God and man. It was only as man that he could be a redeemer for humanity; and only as a sinless man that he could fittingly die for others. It was only as God that his life, ministry and redeeming death could have infinite value and satisfy the demands of God so as to deliver others from it. Christ has a human nature, but he is not a human person. The person of Christ is the God-man, the second person of the Trinity. In the incarnation, he did not change into a human person, nor adopt a human personage. He assumed a human nature in addition to his eternal divine nature. With the assumption of the human nature, he is not a divine person or a human person, but a divine-human person possessing all the essential qualities of both the human and divine nature. This is a mystery beyond full comprehension. Also, it is confessed that Jesus has both a divine and human consciousness as well as a human and divine will, yet clearly a unity of person. It is always the same person, Jesus Christ the Lord.

CHRIST AND ALEXANDER

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three;
 One lived and died for self; one died for
 you and me.
 The Greek died on a throne; the Jew died
 on a cross;
 One's life a triumph seemed; the other but
 a loss.
 One led vast armies forth; the other walked
 alone;
 One shed a whole world's blood; the other
 gave His own.
 One won the world in life and lost it all
 in death,
 The other lost His life to win the whole
 world's faith.

* * *

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three;
 The Greek made all men slaves; the Jew
 made all men free.
 One built a throne on blood; the other
 built on love;
 The one was born of earth; the other from
 above;
 One won all this earth, to lose all earth
 and Heaven;
 The other gave up all, that all to Him be
 given.
 The Greek forever died; the Jew forever
 lives;
 He loses all who gets, and wins all things
 who gives.

—Charles Ross Weede

"THE CHRIST OF HUMILIATION"

Philippians 2:1-11

I. We should cultivate the disposition of the one who came.
2:1-4

- 1. There is the experience of divine blessings. 2:1
- 2. There is the encouragement to divine behavior. 2:2-4
 - a) Divine behavior is characterized by unity. 2:2
 - b) Divine behavior is characterized by humility. 2:3
 - c) Divine behavior is characterized by sensitivity.
2:4

II. We should consider the humiliation of the one who came.
2:5-8

- 1. He demonstrated humility in His renunciation. 2:5-6
- 2. He demonstrated humility in His incarnation. 2:7
- 3. He demonstrated humility in His crucifixion. 2:8

III. We should celebrate the exaltation of the one who came.
2:9-11

- 1. He has received an exalted position. 2:9
- 2. He is to receive exalted adoration. 2:10
- 3. He will receive an exalted confession. 2:11