

TEACHING GOAL

To study the humiliation of Christ which was incurred by His birth and life on earth.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death on the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

S.C. 27; L.C. 46-48; W.C. of F. VIII, XXV, XXX, XXXI; Savoy 8, 31, 32; Young 47

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Philippians 2:5-11

Support Passages: Luke 2:7; II Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 2:9, 14

BIBLE STORY

Hebrews 11:24-28, Exodus 2; Moses refuses the treasures of Egypt for the greater riches of the reproach of Christ.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Galatians 4:4-5

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

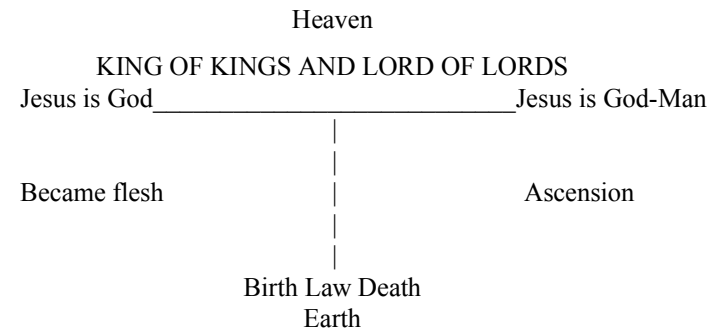
APPLICATION

We are to be like Jesus by humbling ourselves before God confessing our sins to Him and by regarding our Christian brother more important than ourself. We are really nothing compared to God.

SUMMARY

In the classic passage concerning the humiliation of Christ, Philippians chapter 2, we observe two elements, (a) the emptying, consisting of His laying aside His divine majesty as the sovereign ruler of the universe to assume human nature in the form of a servant, and (b) the humiliation of becoming subject to the law and having to suffer the Adamic curse unto death on the cross. He who was Lord of all the earth from all eternity, the one who gave the law, subjected Himself to it in order that He might discharge the penal obligations on behalf of His people.¹

The "God is Dead" theologians (e.g. Thomas Altizer) seek to show that when Jesus died on the cross God died. A blasphemous obituary was published in this regard which sought to lead us to believe that Jesus' emptying Himself meant that He emptied Himself of His deity. In fact He did no such thing as the following diagram indicates:



Jesus left His throne above to come to this earth, which was vile with sin, to do His priestly work (Review lessons 28 and 33). When He did so He became no less God than He was before but He took on a body of flesh and now is both Son of God and Son of Man. Philippians chapter 2 tells us that Jesus left heaven for a short while and is now back in heaven so glorious that everyone should bow before Him. He was and is worthy of our worship and the worship of all creation.

In lesson 28 we studied the fact that Jesus became real flesh and blood, becoming true Man by means of His virgin birth. It is not our intention to repeat that lesson but to draw attention to the nature of the humiliation and indignation of Jesus' subjection to the law. It was our sin in the first place that brought Him here, for He came to seek and to save sinners (Luke 19:10). And when He did come to be born, itself an indignation for this glorious being, He was not born in the palace but in a cattle trough, a stable manger, for there was no room at the inn. Can you imagine having a baby in a filthy stable in today's society? You wouldn't do it! Why the poorest person can get better conditions today than the Lord of all the universe did when He was born.

¹ L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, p. 332

In heaven there is no disease, no crying, no sorrow (Jesus wept over Jerusalem and upon the occasion of Lazarus' death), nor any curse. Would you be willing to leave such glories to enter into a sin cursed world where everything groans and suffers? Jesus did. Think of the filthiest task you can. Would you be willing to do it? But God loved this world, black with sin, so much that He sent His only Son into it, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. In John 3:16 our attention is drawn to the sinfulness of the world and not to every individual in it. Jesus was born under the law that He Himself instituted to regulate this sinful world. Of course, He kept the law perfectly. He is God. But the supreme indignity of it all was that He was surrounded by His enemies and by those who did not keep the law.

Paul tells us that we should have the attitude of Christ. If Christ was willing to suffer indignation for a righteous cause, so should we. The least we could do, it would seem, is to love our Christian brother more than ourselves. Jesus certainly loved His people more than He loved Himself. Moreover, we must not be too proud to confess our sins to Jesus.