

# THE BIRTH OF THE GODMAN

## Philippians 2:6-8

### INTRODUCTION

**Al Mohler** wrote *My Take: Kim Jong II and the Danger of Deifying Leaders*, about North Korea at [CNN's Belief Blog](#):

“There are no atheists in dictatorships. The death of North Korea’s “Dear Leader” Kim Jong II underlies a basic fact of earthly politics: when a political regime denies any transcendent supernatural reality, it deifies itself ... the North Korean regime mandated worship, the worship of its own supreme leader.

As Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis explained, North Korea’s founding dictator Kim Il Sung “was allowed to build a Stalinist state, with its own cult of personality centered on himself, at just the time when Khrushchev was condemning such perversions of Marxism-Leninism elsewhere.”

The North Korean cult of personality goes far beyond anything Josef Stalin could have envisioned. Kim Il Sung became known as the Great Leader, the nation’s protector, gifted with supernatural powers.

The Great Leader was said to be able to control the weather with his moods. Kim was credited with saving the North Koreans from ... subservience to foreign powers ...

Kim Il Sung came to be considered a god. He was the “iron-willed brilliant commander,” the “Fatherly Leader” and “the leader who unfolded paradise.” The calendar was reset to start with his birth year. His birthday replaced Christmas. Children were taught to give thanks to the Fatherly Leader before eating meals.

North Koreans were subjected to coerced indoctrination, especially through the schools. They were told that Kim Il Sung was immortal and would never die. Thus, they were unprepared for his death in 1994.

As veteran reporter Barbara Demick recalled about the shock around the death that Kim Il Sung “wasn’t merely the father of their country, their George Washington, their Mao, he was their God.”

Next in line came Kim Jong II, Kim Il Sung’s son and chosen successor. Once he had consolidated power, the cult of deification went into full swing. Kim Jong-II was the deified “Dear Leader” whom North Koreans were commanded to adore and follow. Like his father, Kim Jong II constructed a cult of personality that defied imagination. His birth was claimed to have been accompanied by supernatural special effects, heralding his arrival as the infant of destiny.”



- He existed from before the beginning of time, and still exists – a **timeless existence** – strengthened by all the aorists that follow
- the word and grammar point to Christ’s pre-time and continuing existence – His pre-incarnate Glory

“**the form of God**” is His essential **nature** and **character**  
 → both inwardly and outwardly

NIV – “being in very nature God”

“**did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped**”

In high priestly prayer – anticipating return to glory

**John 17:5 – “And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was”**

“**a thing to be grasped**” → “something to cling to”

**Consider this illustration:** Recall the story of the hemorrhaging woman (**Matthew 9, Mark 5, Luke 8**) and how, in great faith, she clung to the cloak of Jesus. This is the same imagery that Paul is using in his writing here.

→ denial of self – a willingness to release, to sacrifice

**Consider this illustration:** Contrast the 1<sup>st</sup> Adam who sought (grasped at) equality with God and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam who had equality with God and willingly emptied Himself

**Application** – If Jesus can regard His equality with God as something not to be held onto, how much more should the Christian hold onto nothing in this life?

This is the Heart Attitude –the heart of self denial - that leads to the actions

The 2<sup>nd</sup> **Humiliation** of Christ ...

**II. His Sacrifice of Self (Philippians 2:7)**

Point – this is the first action that comes from the denial

Proof – **Phil 2:7 – “but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”**

“**emptied**” → subject of massive volumes of research and study

Boil it down to the simple:

- voluntary release of the independent exercise of His divine prerogatives
- voluntary veiling or limitation of His glory

He who created and owns everything forsook everything.

2 aspects of the release:

1. Put off
2. Put on

**“taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men”**

“**taking**” is addition not substitution

“**the form of a bond-servant**” – powerful expression of the humanity of Jesus

“**form**” – very nature of man He became man both inwardly and outwardly

“**likeness**” – conformity to human experience:

- pressures
- longings (non-sinful)
- temptations
- sufferings
- disappointments

His glory was veiled in His humanity

- He “emptied” by putting off
- He “emptied” by putting on

“**a bond-servant**” owns nothing, not even the clothes on his back ... “**a bond-servant**” is required to carry other peoples burdens. As the supreme Bond-servant, Jesus carried the supreme burden, the burden that no one else could carry the sin-burden for the world.

- The Creator took on the form of the created
- The infinite became finite
- The rich became poor

**2 Corinthians 8:9** – “**though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might become rich.**”

Jesus became like us in order that we might become like Him →in Humiliation not in deity!

The **humanity of the Savior** is both a stopping place and a starting place.

What could be greater than that God became man?

→ There is something greater, something far more marvelous.

Calvin – “Since then, the Son of God descended from so great a height, how unreasonable that we, who are nothing, should be lifted up with pride.”

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Humiliation of Christ ...

**III. His Submission of Self (Philippians 2:8)**

Point – obedience – even to the point of death

Proof – Phil 2:8 – “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

“being found in appearance as a Man” – He looked like a man.

**Isaiah 53:2-3** – the Man of Sorrows – “He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”

Jesus is truly human

**Philippians 2:6** – 100% God

**Philippians 2:7** – 100% Man

uniqueness      commonality

Jesus is fully man – born of a woman (virgin-born)

The Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. was in response to the Arian heresy that assaulted the deity of Jesus

Council of Chalcedon – against the assault on humanity

2 Natures in one Person:

- the hypostatic union means the Christ exists as 100% God and 100% Man
- He is one Person with two natures
- this union of the Deity of Christ and the Humanity of Christ is
  - without confusion
  - without change
  - without division
  - and without separation

Deity of Christ, Humanity of Christ – absolutely necessary

- the incarnation is the central miracle of all Christianity

“He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death”

- different than v. 7, grammatical emphasis is on the act of Humility!

The preliminary act – Emptying

The culminating act – Suffering

“to the point of death”

## Romans 5:12, 15, 18-19

It was the mind of Christ by an act of deliberate choice to bring His **glory** down into the dust of death.

- in these few words, the essence of the magnificent plan of redemption is captured!
- these few words span the entirety of His perfect sinless life.
- from birth to death
- from the womb to the tomb (and beyond in 2:9-11)

### “even death on a cross”

- this is the bottom of the descent, the deepest pit in the deepest valley, the very lowest point of Christ’s humiliation
- it was reserved for slaves, the lowest of criminals, and enemies of the state

Cicero (Marcus Tullius), said in 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. “Let the very name of the cross be far removed not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears”

“The crucifixion of Christ is the climax of redemptive history. God’s plan of salvation culminates in the cross, as the Lord bears the sins of the world and provides salvation for all who believe in Him.”

These 3 verses lead in great sweep

- from the greatest height to the lowest depth
- from the light of God to the darkness of death

The lowest humiliation leads to the highest exaltation (vv. **9-11**)

## CONCLUSION

Realize that a seed first dies ... **1Corinthians 15:35-36** – “**But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies”**

C.S. Lewis has a chapter in the book *Miracles* on the incarnation.

“The central miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this. . . .

In the Christian story God descends to re-ascend. He comes down; down from the heights of absolute being into time and space, down into humanity . . . down to the very roots and sea-bed of the Nature He has created.

But He goes down to come up again and bring the ruined world up with Him. One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated

burden. He must stoop in order to lift, he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulders.

Or one may think of a diver, first reducing himself to nakedness, then glancing in mid-air, then gone with a splash, vanished, rushing down through green and warm water into black and cold water, down through increasing pressure into the death-like region of ooze and slime and old decay; then up again, back to color and light, his lungs almost bursting, till suddenly he breaks surface again, holding in his hand the dripping, precious thing that he went down to recover. He and it are both colored now that they have come up into the light: down below, where it lay colorless in the dark, he lost his color, too.

In this descent and re-ascent everyone will recognize a familiar pattern: a thing written all over the world. It is the pattern of all vegetable life. It must belittle itself into something hard, small and deathlike, it must fall into the ground: thence the new life re-ascends ...

The doctrine of the Incarnation, if accepted, puts this principle even more emphatically at the centre. The pattern is there in Nature because it was first there in God. All the instances of it which I have mentioned turn out to be but transpositions of the Divine theme into a minor key. I am not now referring simply to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. The total pattern, of which they are only the turning point, is the real Death and Re-birth: for certainly no seed ever fell from so fair a tree into so dark and cold a soil as would furnish more than a faint analogy to this huge descent and re-ascension in which God dredged the salt and oozy bottom of Creation.”

**Luke 9:23 – Denial of Self, Sacrifice of Self, Submission of Self** – we see the same model of teaching on discipleship

Exaltation in **Philippians 2:9-11** ... so also you ... your being lifted up is coming

Today and every day we celebrate: His birth, His life, His death and → His humiliation  
We also celebrate: His exaltation