



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Philippians 2:6-11

"The Hypostatic Union: or the Union of the Two Natures in Christ - II" TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we again turn to Thee with thanksgiving for the privilege of opening the word of God again and studying the things that have to do with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We're thankful for the revelation that it contains concerning his person and his work. We would ask, Lord, particularly tonight as we consider again the person of our Lord, that Thou will give us understanding. We realize that all of the things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ are important, and we know that the mind of our great God is centered upon the person and work of the Son, that Thou art greatly pleased by the things that he has accomplished. Enable us, Lord, to enter into fellowship with Thee in the understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. May our response be not only the response of understanding, but of a true love for him that issues in obedience to the words that he has left with us to follow in this life which we have to live here upon this globe. We ask Thy blessing upon each one present. May the spiritual needs that each have be met through the Scriptures. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] This is the second of our series of several studies in "The Hypostatic Union: or the Union of the Two Natures in Christ." Now, if you have a New Testament,

will you turn with me again to Philippians chapter 2, verse 6 through verse 11, a passage that we want to begin to look at tonight, then look at also, the Lord willing, next Wednesday night. Philippians chapter 2, verse 5, I really should say, through verse 11. The apostle writes,

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The hypostatic union or the union of the two natures in Christ. Now when we talk about the hypostatic union, hypostatic is a word that is built on a Greek word hypostasis, which means person. So we're talking about the personal union of the Lord Jesus Christ, the union of the human nature with the divine personality and the divine nature in our Lord. The passage in Philippians that we want to look at a little later on is probably the normative passage on the hypostatic union. Remember in the study of the Bible, there are normative passages concerning the major doctrines of the Christian faith. For example, the normative passage concerning the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is Romans chapter 3. The normative passage on the work of the Holy Spirit is probably Romans chapter 8. The normative passage on the doctrine of reprobation is Romans chapter 9. And so on. The normative passage for the doctrine of the hypostatic union is probably Philippians chapter 2, verse 6 through verse 11.

Now, when you read Philippians chapter 2, you might be amazed to think that it had to do with biblical doctrine at all, because there are some people who tell us that we shouldn't really be interested in doctrine, we should only be interested in life. You often hear people say doctrine is unimportant, but the experience of the life of Christ is tremendously important. Theory is relatively unimportant; the practice of biblical truth is the important thing. Now, the Apostle Paul would have been very unhappy with that kind of statement, because he never conceived of any kind of practice that was a biblical practice that was not related to the doctrinal teaching of the word of God. For example, right here in Philippi we find a beautiful illustration of it. The apostle longed to unite the saints of Philippi in the holy bands of humble love. And so he takes them to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and talks about the hypostatic union, because you see, it is a truth of the word of God that it is doctrine that is the foundation of all true Christian living.

There were difficulties in the church in Philippi. In the 4th chapter we read about two women. Now, incidentally, I'm not suggesting that all the problems in Philippi were related to women, but the apostle does say in the 4th chapter in verse 2, "I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord." Vernon McGee used to like to say that Euodia was the soprano soloist in the church choir and that Syntyche was the president of the ladies' auxiliary and they got into a dispute over who was going to use the church parlor. Well, whatever the difficulty was, there was need for the uniting of the Philippians in the bonds of love. Incidentally, Dr. Ironside, who was the teacher of Doctor McGee, used to say that somebody used to mispronounce their name and call them, perhaps with more than a grain of truth, Odious and Soon-touchy. There are people who are such, but anyway the difficulties in the church at Philippi led the apostle to issue an exhortation.

Now, notice the exhortation that begins chapter 2, "If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same

mind, maintaining the same love, united in Spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Do not merely look on your own personal interests, but also on the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus." And then the apostle launches into this heavy doctrinal material. So you can see then that this passage is a passage that has to do with something very practical, two saints and the local church coming to be united in the bonds of Christian love, but the apostle points them not simply to the exhortation to unity, but goes on to talk about the attitude of the Lord Jesus in his saving work, because that attitude is the secret to the solution of the so-called practical problems in the church at Philippi.

So he takes them to the cross, now that is an apostolic disease, I've often said. The apostles, when they write, they cannot stay away from the cross of the Lord Jesus. Mr. Spurgeon used to say, "He is never a dry well or a vine from which every cluster has been taken." And that is true of the cross of the Lord Jesus. We can study the cross of our Lord for the remainder of our lives, and never exhaust its teaching. Well, this is a passage then that has to do with something very practical, Christian love among the saints in a local church in the city of Philippi. But probably the passage is best known for its theology. It is the famous kenosis passage. Kenosis is simply the transliteration of a Greek term a Greek work which means "emptying." Kenosis and it is known as the kenosis passage, because the word that the apostle uses in verse 7 "but emptied himself" is the Greek word kineo, and kenosis is the noun which means "emptying." So this kenosis passage is one that has to do with the self-emptying of the Lord Jesus. It is the normative passage for the doctrine of the hypostatic union, which is the personal union of the two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, it's to this passage that we want to devote most our study in this hour. Whatever it teaches specifically, it teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God, both before and after he became Son of man. One thing that we must keep constantly

before us is that he did not empty himself of himself. In other words, the Lord Jesus was God and after he came here and took to himself an additional nature, he was still God. Now, the passage might seem to teach otherwise at first glance, and so we want to, I say, in a few moments consider it. Let me review just the points we have made in the last study first. We made these points. First of all, we defined the term nature, because we are going to be talking of nature and person. Nature we defined as substance with its essential qualities. When we say our Lord Jesus had divine nature, we mean that he possessed divine substance with the essential qualities of deity, the essential attributes. We defined person as a substance endowed with reason. The characteristic thing is the word reason.

Incidentally, these are not divinely given definitions. They are my definitions, and consequently they may not be absolutely accurate. But I think they make sense, at least to me. So a person is a substance endowed with reason, or the individual self. We then discussed very briefly three forms of union, general union, which we referred to as our Lord's immensity. We discussed special union, that is the mystical union that exists between the Lord and the saints. And we discussed the personal union. That's what we want to talk about, the personal union, the union of the two natures in the one person, a unique union, not nominal, not natural, not accidental, and all of the other things that we went on to say about it last time. So that is the place to which we have come, and from that point we want to move on tonight.

And first of all, I want to discuss, this is Roman III in the outline, for these messages form one lengthy subject. Roman III in the outline is the scriptural proof of the uni-personality of Christ. I want to talk now for just a few minutes about what the Bible says concerning our Lord Jesus Christ's person in order to stress the fact that he was not two persons, even though he possessed two natures. He was one person who possessed two natures. So let's talk for a few moments about the scriptural proof of the uni-personality of the Lord Jesus.

Now, we must be careful when we talk about things like this, because the hypostatic union ultimately transcends human reason. Do not think that I understand everything about the personal union of our Lord Jesus Christ about the relationship of the divine and human natures to the divine person, because I do not. I may speak very dogmatically, but I want you to understand that I do not think that I understand everything about it. We are talking about a super-sensible reality. We are talking about an incomprehensible mystery in its ultimate, because we are talking about God. We do not have any human analogy that we can use to enable us to accurately understand what it means for a divine person to possess not only a divine nature, but a human nature, and for a union to exist between them, so that we have one person with these two natures. We are talking about incomprehensible mystery. There are some things, I think, that we can say this does not mean, and perhaps we can be more dogmatic about what it does not mean than what it does mean, for the simple reasons that the Bible does warn us about certain things that cannot be true of our Lord.

But let's turn now for the first passage to Romans chapter 1 verse 3 and verse 4. In the proof of the uni-personality of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is one of the great Christological passages. And I've often said that it would probably be much better known were it not for the fact that it has one or two phrases in it that are very difficult to understand. They do not occur elsewhere, and consequently this passage has escaped the emphasis that it should have had. He begins his Epistle to the Romans, Paul does, by saying "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son," now notice that, "Concerning his Son," that is God's son, "who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness," and then he sums up the person about whom he's speaking in these words, "Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, what I want you to notice here is that the two natures of our Lord are referred to here. Notice verse 3, "concerning his Son who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh." It is clear from this text that our Lord Jesus had a human nature. He had a substance with its essential qualities of humanity, a human nature. He was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. He could say, "David is my great, great, great etcetera grandfather." In other words, he was of a certain family. He belonged to that family. He possessed human nature. At the same time we read that he was Son of God. Notice, "Concerning his Son," now he's just mentioned the gospel of God, which he promised concerning his Son. So he's talking about God. And he says that the Lord Jesus is Son of God. He's Son of David and he is Son of God. And he sums it up by saying in verse 4, "Jesus, Messiah, our Lord." Now, Lord is a term that suggests, also, deity. So we have Jesus the human name by which he was known. If you had been living in Nazareth, you would have said to him, Jesus. That is the name by which you would have referred to him. That is his human name. That located him in family and in history and in locale. But he is Jesus Christ our Lord. That is, divine.

But notice now, while we have the two natures set forth here, there is only one person referred to throughout. We have one person. Now, we said person was a substance endowed with reason or the individual self. We do not have any indication here that there are two persons. We have indication of two natures, but only one person. He may be described with reference to his divine nature, or he may be described with reference to his human nature. He may be called Jesus. He may be called God's Son. He may be called Lord, but we are still talking about the same person. So you can see that that passage is support for the doctrine of the hypostatic union, the one person who possessed divine and human nature.

Turn with me to Galatians chapter 4, verses 4 and 5 for a second passage. This is capital B in the outline. Galatians chapter 4, verses 4 and 5, the Apostle Paul again is writing and we read, verse 4 of Galatians 4, "But when the fullness of the time came, God

sent forth His Son." Notice again, God sent forth his Son, Son of God, "born of a woman," who came to be of a woman, literally, "Came to be born under the Law." So again, our Lord Jesus possesses human nature. He was born of a certain time, of a certain woman, lived under the Law of Moses as all Israelites were expected to do until the time of the cross. And he goes on to say "In order that might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." So again, he is a divine Son with a divine and human nature, and yet one person. He is God's Son and he is the Redeemer of other men. But at the same time he came to be of a woman. He is not divinity in the abstract, but he is a concrete Son. That is, a person.

Now, there are other passages that teach this, and if you are taking notes you can put right at this point Romans chapter 8, and verse 3, "What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of flesh, of sin and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. John 1:14, the passage that we looked at a few weeks back. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth." Now, you know these things are theological things, but have you noticed how often the apostles speak about them? Evidently they thought that they were rather important. They did not say, "Now we'll talk about the hypostatic union in one passage, and we'll forget it, because it's a little complicated thereafter." No, it's found all through the Bible, all through the New Testament, all through the writings of the apostles. Why? Because they thought it was important. They thought that a Christian who was a genuine Christian and who was to live a life to glorify the Lord God should know these things. That's why we talk about theology. It isn't to satisfy my personal desires, I admit it does. But it isn't for that reason. It's because the apostles thought that these things were necessary for Godly living, that we know the things that concern the Lord Jesus.

Now, let's turn to the third of the passages, Acts chapter 20 and verse 28, Acts chapter 20, and verse 28. This is part of the apostle's great message to the elders of the



church at Ephesus. Church elders ought to read this over and over and over again. It wouldn't be bad for an elder to read it once a month, because it contains some important instruction for men who have the responsibility to shepherd the flock of God. Listen to the 28th verse, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." "To shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." Now, there are two textual problems in this verse and for those of you who are maybe theological students, or are perhaps some of our individuals who have taken the Greek class, let me say that I do know both of these problems quite well. But we are going to use this text that we have before us here, because the doctrine that I want to bring out of this text is found here regardless of the readings that we accept as genuine at this point.

So I want you to notice then the last words, "To shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." Here the attributes of one nature are predicated of the person, while the person is designated by a title derived from the other nature. Notice, verse 28, "The church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." But now, blood is something that pertains to the human nature, does it not? Blood pertains to the human nature of our Lord. He took blood and flesh. "In as much as the children became partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." But, even though the attributes of the human nature are referred to here, the person is designated as God. Look the last part of the verse again, "the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." So the human action is predicated of the person who is designated as God.

Now, let's turn over to Romans chapter 9 in verse 5, because the reverse is true here. And I want you to see that the apostle does not hesitate to do things like this. He may refer to the person in reference to the human nature of the person and call him by the divine title. And he may refer to a divine activity and designate the person by a

human title. Now, Romans chapter 9, in verse 5 we read, "And whose are the Father's and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever." Now, notice what we have here. We have the exact reverse of the other. We have here the Messiah according to the flesh, now what does that refer to, "the Messiah according to the flesh?" Well, it refers to our Lord as the Son of David, "of the seed of David according to the flesh." The Messiah according to the flesh, but he goes on to say, "Who is overall God blessed forever." So here this human nature is referred to, and he is said to be God, the reverse of the preceding.

In both of these passages then we have the divine nature and the human nature, but one person. And the one person may be looked at as human or divine. And still we do not have two persons. We do not have one mingled nature. Two separate natures, one personality. There are some other things that we might note. They are by way of negation. There is no evidence in all of the New Testament of a duo personality in our Lord Jesus Christ as in the triune God, where one person addresses another. Let me give you an instance of this. In the Old Testament, back in Psalm 2, verse 7, you might turn there if you can find the Book of Psalms. Psalm 2, and verse 7, now let me read at verse 4. "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he will speak to them in his anger and terrify them in his fury. But as for me, I have installed my King upon Zion, my holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord. He said to me, Thou art my Son, today I have begotten Thee." So you see here in Psalm 2 we have a conversation that takes place between the Lord and the Son. A conversation between the two persons, not that is what we should expect.

We read in other places of a similar type of thing. The Lord Jesus addresses the Father in John 17. They carry on a conversation in the sense that our Lord addresses his prayer to him. You never find our Lord Jesus speaking to himself. In other words, there is no evidence of a duo personality in our Lord Jesus Christ. The evidence is of just one personality who posses two natures, not two persons. If there were two persons you

might expect them to be speaking to one another. You never have that. Nor does he ever use the plural of himself as is used of the triune God. Take Genesis chapter 1 verse 26, we read in that verse, in the verse that has to do with the creation, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Genesis chapter 3, verse 22 a passage we shall look at if I'm still living on Sunday morning. And my automobile operates and I get here. The passage says, "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become like one of us." So we have within the Trinity these personal pronouns that suggest multi-personality, plurality of personality within the Trinity. But in the Lord Jesus, with reference to him, there is never a use of the plural in this way. He never speaks to himself and the plural is used.

So, to sum up then, it seems very plain the Scriptures teach the uni-personality of the Lord Jesus, one person, two natures. Don't make the mistake of talking about two persons, a divine and a human person; one person, two natures. Of course, we have a little bit of an analogy of this in a born again Christian. There is no such thing as a Christian who is not born again. That was really something that was totally superfluous wasn't it? You can't speak of a Christian who is not born again. But anyway, in the case of a Christian, we have one person, but he does have two natures, two principles at operation within him. He has a divine nature, but he still has the principle of sin within his members.

Well, let's turn now to Roman IV, the hypostatic union, and Philippians 2:5-11. This passage in Philippians 2, as I mentioned in Philippians 2 develops from a practical problem, but notice that the solution to the practical problem does not rest with a psychologist or a psychiatrist or even with a man who has a great deal of common sense, but with theology. The apostle, in order to solve the difficulties in the church at Philippi, turns their mind to some good theology. I don't know, incidentally, of any theological book of any worth at all that does not refer to Philippians chapter 2, verse 5 through verse 11 as a significant theological passage. But its context should not be missed. It has a practical aim, and to show you that clearly, look at verse 12. "So then, my beloved, just

as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling." So he urges them to unity. He points them to Jesus Christ, and what he has done in his self-humiliation. And then he says in the light of this, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," bearing in mind the illustration given of our Lord Jesus.

First of all, his preeminent station, verses 5 and 6. Let me read those verses again. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God." Now, that's a very interesting expression. "He existed in the form of God," at first glance you might say, well he wasn't really God. He was only in the form of God. Ah, but if you said that you would indicate by that that you did not understand the meaning of this word "for." If I were to sum it up very simply, I would just say this, "The term *morpha* which is used here is a term that refers to the possession of the essential attributes. So that if a person exists in the form of God, he has the essential attributes of deity, so that this becomes, strictly speaking, a very strong passage on the deity of the Lord Jesus. He is pre-existent. Notice, it says although he existed in the form of God.

Incidentally, that word "exist" is a word in the Greek text that its roots suggest that his origin was before his earthly existence. That is, he did pre-exist. It does not say he was eternal. Other passages teach us that. This says simply that he pre-existed with the essential attributes of God as his possession. He has all the characterizing qualities that make God God.

Now, let me try to show you what is meant by this expression, "who existed in the form of God." And maybe as a result of it, you will be better able to understand Paul's language. He says, "He existed in the form of God." This language is what we would call philosophical language. Now, the apostle does not call it that, but uses a term that was used by the philosophers of that time. They resolved everything into matter and form, matter and form, into the bear material out of which it was made. And then those things

made it specifically what it was. Matter and form, bear material, and then the body of qualities which constituted it what it was; form is then the word that would be equivalent to our phrase "specific character." Let me illustrate. I'll use the illustration of a well known theologian. Let's take the case of a sword. The matter of the sword is steel. We're assuming this is a steel sword. So the matter of the sword would be steel. Its form would be that which made it a sword, what would that be? Why, its shape, its contour, its matter would be steel. Its shape, or its form, would be its shape and contour. Matter, form, form makes it what it is. Now, it doesn't make a bit of difference whether it was wood or steel or iron or paper. It could still be a sword if it had a certain shape and a certain contour. It would be much more effective if it were steel. But nevertheless the important thing so far as its form is concerned is what makes it what it really is.

We might even take the metal, of which the sword was made and resolve it in to steel. Steel is, as far as its matter is concerned, a metal. I don't whether I pronounce that too well, I'm a southerner. Metal, M-E-T-A-L, so that the steel metal, its form which makes it steel would be its iron alloyed with carbon, so that metal, the steel would be metal plus iron alloyed with carbon. Matter, form, now let's take metal. What is metal? Well, it's matter is it's a material substance in a class, and its form would be a class of chemical elements characterized by ductility, malleability, luster, conductivity of heat and electricity. So its matter would be material substance, its form the chemical elements that would make up metal. Let's take matter itself. What is its material? Well, it's a substance, and its form would be that its form would be that it occupies space, is visible, matter.

We can even talk about spirit, human spirit. And we would, of course, talk about the matter of spirit. It's a spiritual matter, and its form would be that which makes it spirit. It's invisible. You cannot touch it. You cannot see it. Or we could come down to angels. What is the matter of an angel? The matter of an angel would be its spiritual substance. Its form would be that which makes an angel and angel, a messenger of God. And finally, we could even come down to God himself. And in God himself, we would

have to have substance, or what we have been saying here matter. It would be the divine being and then the form would be those things about God that make him God. That is, his divine attributes. So when we say a person is in the form of God we mean he possesses all those characteristics that make God God. Don't you see this is a magnificent statement of the deity of the Lord Jesus? He existed in the form of God; of course he possessed the divine essence. He possesses the divine essence with the Father and the Spirit, but he possesses everything that makes God God. He's in the form of God.

Now, having said that, the apostle goes on to say, "Although he existed in the form of God he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." Now, this term "a thing to be grasped" is the translation of one noun in the Greek text. It's a word that means something like robbery. Or perhaps prize, and while there is a great deal of debate over the precise force of it, it doesn't effect the ultimate sense. I'm going to suggest to you that what it means is this, although he existed in the form of God he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped after. Now, that is what this text seems to say, but I suggest to you that what it really says is, He did not regard equality with God as a prize to be retained at all costs. In other words, the point is, he possessed it. He did not consider this something that he needed to grasp after. For he already possessed deity.

Today's English version, a very popular version, it's sold now, I guess, between ten and twenty million copies of the New Testament, at least. I don't know what the sale of the Bible is. Today's English version is called, *Good News for Modern Men*. Various other names have been given to it. In rendering chapter 2, in verse 6, unfortunately because the translator of this version has certain doctrinal aberrations that have manifested themselves in this translation, this version has read Philippians chapter 2, verse 6 as "He always had the very nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God." That would suggest that he was not really equal with God. I know that a great number of complaints were sent to the American Bible Society

concerning this particular rendering, and whether the latest editions of that version have modified it or not, I don't know. At one time that was the rendering, and it certainly suggested that the person did not believe that our Lord is called in the New Testament God. I happen to know that that is true, because he did write a letter; I have a copy of the letter in which he said he did not believe that the New Testament did say specifically that Jesus Christ was God. He did not deny the deity of Christ, but he said he just did not think that the term God was ever applied to our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Now, of course, that I think is wrong. But that rendering certainly is suspect from the standpoint of theology.

Well, let's turn now to the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, verses 7 and 8. There are 7 significant steps here in these verses that have to do with the self-humiliation of the Lord Jesus. In verse 7 and 8, let me read them, "But emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Seven significant steps and we want to look at the first one for the remainder of our time. That's, I think, all that we will have time for tonight. He made himself of no reputation is the rendering in the Authorized Version. Now, if you have a New American Standard Bible, you will notice that the rendering of the word here is "but emptied himself," and if you look over in the margin and you can read that small print it says, "He laid aside his privileges."

Now, that took a good deal of strain on my part, because I have information to convey to you. I am getting old. And do you know that I have a little difficulty in reading that small print without glasses. Some people say, "He has difficulty with glasses." But I do have difficulty without them, and the time is coming. That's when I stop preaching, when I have to use glasses. [Laughter] It seems to me unapostolic to use glasses and preach. Now, coming to the point, verse 7, but emptied himself, made himself of no reputation, laid aside his privileges is really a kind of paraphrase.

What does this mean? He emptied himself. Modern kinotic theory, now we're talking about, when we say kinotic theory, we are using an adjective derived from the Greek word *kinao*, which means, "to empty." The Greek word *kinao* means "to empty." So kinotic means simple, modern kinotic theory means theory having to do with what happened when he emptied himself. We're talking about theologians and attempts to explain what was meant when the Bible says that he emptied himself. Modern kinotic theory, various types of contemporary and 20th century theologians say that the Lord Jesus laid aside some or all of his divine attributes. The kinotists appeal to such passages as 2 Corinthians chapter 8, and verse 9. Let's turn over there. Let's look at some of these passages, because after all, most of these men were very intelligent men. And they had reasons for the things that they were saying. They did not simply think these things up without any basis for things whatsoever. 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9 reads, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." And they interpret "becoming poor" the he laid aside some or all of his divine attributes.

Well, that's not too clear. That might be simply a figure of speech. And it certainly would suit the fact that our Lord Jesus did humble himself. Turn to John chapter 17, and verse 5. Here is another passage to which they often appeal to tell us that the Lord Jesus laid aside some or all of his divine attributes. This verse has more substance to it. Here, the Lord Jesus in his final high priestly prayers, "Now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was." So there was a time when he had the glory and now evidently he does not have it, for he prays that the Father glorify him with the glory that he had before the world was. What is this glory? What is he referring to? Is he saying, "Give me back the attributes of deity that I possessed before I became a man in order that I became God again?" Well, that's not too definite is it? It again is somewhat indefinite.



What does glory mean? It might simply mean the use of the possessions that he possessed because he was the eternal Son. Let's turn to Mark 13 and verse 32, a great deal has been made over this verse by our modern kinotostists. Mark 13, verse 32, here in the Olivet discourse the Lord Jesus makes the statement, "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." And here the Lord Jesus confesses that he does not know the time of the Second Advent. Does not that show us that he laid aside some or all of his divine attributes? If it could be said that he does not know something, how can it be said that he is God? I know all of you would answer, "Ah, but that ignorance that is there exists in the realm of his human nature. He learned as he went along. He learned obedience by the things that he suffered. "He grew in wisdom and in stature before God and men," does not Luke say? So he did learn things in his human nature. The important thing is that our Lord never knew anything falsely. He never had any wrong ideas, but it is true that he matured in wisdom as he went along.

Well, these are the bases of the claims. So they claim that he advocated divine prerogatives that were inconsistent with a proper human experience. One of the men, Franz Delitsch for example, said "He laid down such as omnipotence and omniscience and omnipresence." He no longer had those attributes while he was here in his human flesh. Others said he gave up all of them, like Frederic Gaudier a well respected commentator on the word of God. Still others said he abandoned the divine mode of existence to assume the human. Many, including some very recent and highly respected men like H.R. McIntosh and James Denney said that he ceased from his cosmic functions and his eternal consciousness during his earthly life. Someone has said that was "incarnation by divine suicide," which I think puts the finger on the point of dispute. They said his consciousness was the point of a human soul only and therefore he was peccable. That is, he could sin, even though he did not sin. Can we believe such doctrine as this, that the Lord Jesus laid aside certain of his divine attributes, or all them

while he was here in the flesh? No, we cannot believe that, I cannot, I don't know about you, but I cannot. I cannot believe that, and I cannot believe that for these reasons. First of all, that would be an annulment of the Trinity, an annulment of the Trinity because the Son would no longer be a being who had divine subsistence in Trinitarian life. So it would be an annulment for a time of the divine Trinity.

He would no longer be a divine person because he would not have a divine nature, so we would not have a Trinity during that time. Now, many of these are not so interested in the doctrine of the Trinity in the first place. So all we do is smoke them out and say to them "You're not Trinitarian." Now, you cannot be Trinitarian and be evangelical Christians. So that's an important thing. But furthermore, that would be a denial of the immutability of God. We are taught in the word of God that God does not change. You remember the passage; it's in the last book of the Old Testament. In Malachi chapter 3, in verse 6 we read, "For I, the Lord, do not change, therefore you, O sons of Jacob are not consumed." But if we can say that the Lord Jesus, that divine Son laid aside some or all of his divine attributes, then we cannot say that God is immutable. He can change.

Now, God cannot change because a change is either from better to worse, or from worse to better. And so, we cannot have an eternal God and a God who changes. If we say it was a change from better to worse, then what follows must be something that cannot be divine. He cannot be God. If it's from worse to better, then he was not the eternal God. Now, the reason why we must have immutability is because all of the promises of God depend upon divine immutability. My promises are not worth a whole lot, because I am a mutable being. Frequently my wife has said, "But you said so and so." And I have to "Yes, that's true. I forgot all about that." And then I do what she says. [Laughter] I'm mutable, but God is immutable. And our whole saving experience depends upon the fact that he is immutable. He has never changed and he will never change in the future. Therefore, the promises of eternal life are valid forever.

Now some people do not like theology, but I want you to know that it makes me want to say hallelujah. I didn't say it; I just want to say it. [Laughter] It is also an annulment of the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus, because his self-humiliation loses its saving power if he is not God. We affirm that that death of our Lord is sufficient for the sins of all men, sufficient for the sins of all men, because the person who laid down his life had infinite value before God. The sacrifice has infinite value before God. It is sufficient for all. We don't say it was intended for all, if it was everybody would be saved. But is it sufficient for all, because of his divine personality. But if he laid aside his attributes, some of them or all of them, his saving work does not have saving power. If he is not very God and very man, he's no longer a true mediator. It's necessary that he be truly man, have a true human nature so he can represent us, but it's also necessary that he be truly God, truly God and truly man, a shrunken deity will not save men, please remember that. That's why the Jehovah's Witnesses do not have any Savior at all, for their Savior is a human person and not a divine person. They do not believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John Smart was a Bible teacher whom I knew. He was called upon in his home by representatives of Jehovah's Witnesses. He looked to the side of them, and he noticed one of their tale-tell magazines hiding behind their arms as they stood in front of him. He said to them, "You're identified with those known as Jehovah's Witnesses, aren't you?" The men said, "Yes." He said, "Then you don't believe Jesus Christ is God, do you?" And the men said, "No." He said, "Well, let me tell you about a friend of mine. He bowed down before the Lord Jesus Christ, his name was Thomas the Apostle and he said, 'My Lord and my God.'" He said, "Now you can have your literature, but I'm going to pray that one day you will bow your heart before Jesus Christ believingly and say, 'My Lord and my God.'" That was a pretty good response. He got the message over. "My Lord and my God."

Well now, if this does not mean that the Lord Jesus laid aside some or all of his divine attributes, what does it mean when it says in Philippians chapter 2 that he emptied himself? I suggest to you that it means this. He did not surrender his divine attributes, but he did surrender the voluntary use of the divine attributes. In other words, he was just as much God after he was incarnate as the Son as he was before. But he did surrender the voluntary use of his divine attributes, the prerogatives of deity. To speak exegetically, to speak of just this text right here, his self-humiliation was servanthood in the likeness of men. Listen to the words that follow, they explain what is meant. You know, people often fail to read the Bible that way. They pass right by the context. How many of you read the rest of the verse? "He emptied himself taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men." Let me translate this as it could be translated in the Greek text, because what we have here is a participle of manner, an adverbial participle of manner. "He emptied himself by taking the form of a bond-servant." That's what he emptied himself of, his divine prerogatives, the use of his divine attributes, his right to choose to act to live apart from the Father. What does he say about his relationship to the Father, particularly in the Gospel of John? Do you remember what he says? He says, "I don't say anything but what the Father says. I don't do anything but what the Father tells me to do." He became a bond-slave. A slave does not have the right to be sovereign. By the very fact that he is a slave he has relinquished his sovereignty. So the Lord Jesus lived in a state of subjection rather than a state of sovereignty during his mediatorial activity.

And in fact, he still does. He still does. Because the time is coming when the Father is going to say to the Son, "Okay," now he's not going to put it that way. But he is going to say to him, "Now is the moment for the Second Advent." And he's going to come and execute judgment and deliver up the kingdom to the Father, concluding his mediatorial work that God may be all in all. So he emptied himself. Of his deity? No, of

the voluntary use of his divine attributes for a time, his right to choose, his right to act, his right to live as sovereign, gave himself over to the Father as a total servant of him.

Now I think I can understand why Paul brought this right at this point, because after all what is he telling the Philippians? Why, he's saying, Philippians I certainly do wish that you would do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others, because this is the attitude that our Lord Jesus manifested in his worked of redemption. Theology serving Christian life, how beautiful it is. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the truth that the apostle has given us, and we do rejoice in the illustration before us of a true servant. Enable us also, Lord, to in measure follow in the steps of our Lord Jesus and be servants of the saints rather than sovereign...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**