

Bible Questions Continued

By Louis T. Talbot

[Musical Intro]

Announcer:

The Bible Institute of Los Angeles Inc., half-century old Christian training center of the West presents Verse by Verse with Dr. Louis T. Talbot, Biola Chancellor and one of America's great evangelical leaders. And now, once again, your radio Bible teacher, Dr. Louis T. Talbot.

Louis T. Talbot:

Now here are some questions, my friends, and some of these may have been in the minds and the hearts of many of you folks.

"My pastor states that he upholds the kenosis theory of the person of Christ." And the question is: What is the kenosis theory? Well, my friends, the kenosis theory is held by Unitarians and modernists, and asserts that the Lord Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, emptied himself of his divine attributes, all of them, to such an extent that He shared the same infirmities and limitation of knowledge with the ordinary man. Now these say that he shared alike their ignorance and their mistakes and that he was no better off than the fallible teachers of his day.

Some theologians would go so far as to say that Christ did absolutely abandoned the relationship of equality with God and his functions in the universe. Now those who hold this view, that is, the kenosis theory, and that word kenosis is spelled k e n o s i s. Those who will hold this view base their hypothesis upon the statement found in Philippians, chapter 2, and verses 5 to 8. And I want to quote, my dear friends, from the revised version here, in second, second chapter of Philippians. The apostle Paul says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted it not to robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself and, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Now the term kenosis theory comes from the Greek expression rendered in our Authorized Version, "made himself of no reputation." Now, as we noted from the revised version, these words really mean "he emptied himself." But Unitarians and others who hold the kenosis theory have read into Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 to 8, something that is not there at all. The text says that Christ emptied himself of something, but of what? Of what did the Lord Jesus empty himself? Not of his deity, surely, for that could not be.

He could not abandon what he was. He could take manhood into union with deity, but he could not cease to be divine. He divested himself of his rights as the son of God. He chose to come to the earth to take the place of subjection. Now I want you to note, my dear friends, the meaning of Philippians, chapter 2, where it says that he, his change was me. You know, that is very, very clear as to what the change was, for in those verses, and when this broadcast is over, you just turn to Philippians 2 and just note these things for yourself.

It says two things, first: that the Lord Jesus, before the incarnation, that he was in the form of God. And then, at the time of the incarnation, he took the form of a servant. Now I want you to note, my dear friends, that word form. He was, before the incarnation, in the form of God and then, at the incarnation, he took the form of a servant. Now according to these texts, what was changed? It was only the form, my dear friends, that was changed. That is, before the incarnation, the Lord Jesus was in the form of God. But at the incarnation, he was in the form of man, yea, in the form of a servant. That is, the second person of the Trinity took upon himself a human form and he is the only one of the Trinity whom became incarnate and took upon himself a human form. Now the form and not the personality was changed. Now if you have any difficulty in regarding that statement in second Philippians in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ emptying himself, you just underscore that word form. He was in the form of God. He took the form of a servant. My dear friends, the Lord Jesus was changed only in form.

That is, before the incarnation, he was a spirit. Just as God is a spirit and, and the Holy Ghost is a spirit. But at the Incarnation, he was in the form of a man and in the form of a servant. The form and not the personality was changed. He was ever the eternal Son of God. You know, in the eighth chapter of John and verse 24, our Lord Jesus Christ said to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins and whither I go, ye cannot come." And all through the gospel according to John, the Lord Jesus Christ was talking about himself and presenting himself as the "I am." He constantly said "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the light." He said "Before Abraham was, I am."

And when he said that to the people of his day, those that heard him took up stones to stone him, because he took upon himself the very name that God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. When Moses said, "When I go down to Pharaoh and, and deliver the message concerning the children of Israel, and they ask me who sent me, what shall I say?" And God said, "Say to them, I am that I am." Now my friend, Jesus took that very name and that's the reason why the Jews attempted the stoning. It was because he took upon himself the name of God and they said, Thou being man makest thyself equal with God.

The kenosis theory is just Unitarianism, pure and simple, and it is not taught in the second chapter of Philippians at all. It's strange, my dear friends, what [inaudible] and what, and what unorthodox people can read into the Word of God.

Now here is another question.

Somebody writes: How would you explain the statement in Luke, Chapter 2 verse 52, which reads, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." And then the questioner goes on to say: if he were the eternal God in human form, then how could he increase in wisdom? For one of the attributes of deity is omniscience, that is, to know everything, and therefore, if Jesus increased in wisdom, he could not be the eternal son of the eternal God. Well, my dear friends, that's the way that Unitarians argue. I don't mean that the person who wrote in this question is tainted with Unitarian beliefs, but that's the way that Unitarians argue. That Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, which shows that he grew just like any other boy.

Well my friends, this statement is taken from the second chapter of Luke, and a few mornings ago I was showing you the difference between the four gospels. That is, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And I pointed out to you that Luke is writing from the standpoint of Jesus as being the son of man. That is, his humanity was real and that is what Luke is emphasizing here, the real humanity of the Lord Jesus. You know that there was a cult in the beginning of the Christian era, which denied the reality of the human body, and they, they went so far as to say that Jesus worked all of his miracles on the basis that he did not believe that his body was real.

And of course, there are a lot of cults that believe that today. And the exponent of that cult, back there in the days of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, claim that Jesus did not have a human body at all, and that his body was a phantom, just a creation of mortal mind. Now you folks, if you're associated, uh, if you're familiar with the cults of the day, you know that there is one cult in particular that teaches that very thing, that your body doesn't exist. My body doesn't exist.

And they claim that the so-called body of the Lord Jesus Christ was not real at all. My friends, that system of teaching, that matter is not real, and consequently, the human body is not real did not originate with any man and with any woman in recent years. That goes back two thousand years or farther back than two thousand years, and those who held that view even applied the same teaching to the, to the humanity of Christ. Now the humanity of Christ is emphasized by Luke because the Spirit of God foresaw that at the end of the age there would be a denial of his humanity as there would also be a denial of his deity.

Now accordingly, Luke tells us that Jesus developed as other boys did. He was subject to Mary and Joseph. He ate. He slept. He grew in wisdom and stature. You must remember, my dear friends, that he became man in order to die for sinners. You know that God is a spirit and a spirit cannot die. God cannot die, but he devised a plan by which he could be at the same time both man and God, and as the Son of Man, he died that sinners might live. I don't have time to read the second chapter Hebrews but there, in verses 14 to 18, you have set forth that the Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself a human body in order that he might give his life as a ransom for many and to die the ignominious death of the cross.

Now this is our gospel message: that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered, was tempted in all points such as we are, apart from sin. But because he knew hunger and thirst and weariness and loneliness, because he suffered being tempted, he was able to suffer, that is, strengthen those that are tempted. Moreover, when he became flesh, he laid aside his glory. He didn't lay aside his deity, my friend, he laid aside his glory. Do you remember how about, in the seventeenth chapter of John, where the Lord Jesus is praying that great intercessory prayer?

He says, "Father, glorify me with a glory that he had, that I had with thee before the world was." I want to emphasize, my dear friends, the Lord, he did not lay aside his deity. He laid aside his glory. He took upon himself a human form and he was born as you and I are born in the sense that he became a little baby and he grew and he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with men and God. It's all with a view of emphasizing the real humanity of Christ.

And my dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ was just as much man, that is, his humanity was just as real as was his deity. That's the reason why Luke tells you something about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ that neither Matthew nor Mark nor John mention. For instance, when he was born, Luke says that he were, that Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. That word swaddling. You know it emphasizes the reality of the clothes and you know that that needed to be emphasized, otherwise the folks who spiritualize a lot of things, they would have, would have spiritualized the clothes, and so of the Spirit of God puts in swaddling clothes, to emphasize the reality of that body. My friend, what was in, what was born on that first Christmas morning was a real baby, not an idea, not a philosophy, not a new thought. It was a real body that was born and the Spirit of God led John to say that he grew in wisdom and knowledge and stature.

Now here is another question along that same line. This comes from another reader, another one of our listeners, and he says, "How would you harmonize Mark 13, verse 32, with the doctrine of the deity of Christ?" Speaking of the time of his return to the earth, the Lord Jesus said that of that day and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but my father only. Now here in the Gospel, according to Mark where this statement is taken, the Lord Jesus Christ said nobody knows about his second coming, the time of it, not the angels, not even the son. And so this question was asking: how could the Lord Jesus Christ be deity and yet be ignorant of anything at all?

Because to be, to be deity is to be omniscient and that means the attributes, uh, the attribute of, of all wisdom and all knowledge. I want to say, my dear friends, in regard to this statement in

Mark 13, verse 32, that modernists have used that statement in a futile attempt to prove that Jesus is not eternal God. And of course, the Unitarians use it to the, in the same way. Our Lord here seems to claim, dis-claim rather, omniscience, but the reference is perfectly clear when one bears in mind the purpose of Mark's gospel, to portray Jesus as the faithful servant of Jehovah.

And do you remember, my dear friends, how that, in the 15th chapter of John, the Lord Jesus said "The servant knoweth not what his father doeth." And it's Mark that is presenting the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect servant of Jehovah. How significant it is, then, that it is Mark who records this statement about the hour of his return as king of kings and lord of lords. My friend, in the aspect of his ministry as a servant, our Lord made a voluntary surrender of certain knowledge in order that he might walk the walk of faith, and thus be an object lesson to all believers, while he ever remained the eternal son of the eternal God, coequal and co-eternal with the father, yet as a servant, he chose our limitation of knowledge bounded by the Father's will. He put himself as a man in the very pathway of faith that God places you.

And therefore, the Lord surrendered, that is, he chose a limitation of his knowledge, in order, my dear friends, that he might be a perfect object lesson to you and to me who are called to walk by faith and not by sight. Here is another question that has to do with the person of Christ, and it reads on this wise: How would you harmonize the doctrine of Christ's deity with John Chapter Five, verse nineteen, where Jesus says that the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeith the Father do. For what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. And this person who has written that question says that he believes in the deity of Christ but he's having a

little trouble to harmonize that statement in John five with his belief that Christ was the eternal son of the Eternal God. Let me read that verse again, my friend. That is John 5, verse 19:

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeith the father do, for that what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. I want to say, my dear friends, the words which you quote express one of the strongest affirmations of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible. Christ is here affirming that he, the son, is in full unison in complete identification with the Father, that he does nothing without the Father. But all he sees the father do, He does also. Now these words of the Lord Jesus Christ do not mean a limitation, but rather a test. The complete, perfect unity which is between the father and the son. In his relation to the father, the son can do nothing independently of the father. If He did that, he would be another god which would be impossible. When the Lord Jesus said "the Son can do nothing of himself," he was stating that he would not act differently from the Father from his own independent will. Do you see, my friend, what you have quoted is one of the great arguments, or one of the great proofs of the unity of the Son with the Father. Now we've just got time, I guess, to answer another question. Somebody writes this: since the Lord Jesus was sinless, why was he baptized in view of the fact that baptism speaks of death and resurrection? Well my dear friends, the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized at the beginning of his ministry to show at the very beginning why he came into the world.

He came into the world to be a savior. He came into the world to be a redeemer and in his baptism, he identified those who would listen to John's message concerning repentance. And those who repented of their sins went into the water and the Lord Jesus Christ had no sins to

repent of. But he came into the world to be identified with sinners and therefore, as John was baptizing in the River Jordan, the Lord Jesus Christ said to John, "Suffer this to be." You remember that when John came, or the Lord came to be baptized, John said to him, "I need to be baptized by thee."

But Jesus said, "Suffer it now to be, that we might fulfill all righteousness." My dear friends, the river Jordan represented death, and Christ going down into that water foretold or pictured forth the approaching sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord came into the world to die on behalf of sinners, and here at the beginning of his ministry, he identified himself with sinners who were being baptized by John, and by so doing, He just foreshadowed the purpose of his coming into this world. At Calvary, He went into death on behalf of transgressors. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. And my dear friends, it was at Calvary that the Lord Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and made it possible for you and for me to be clad in his own righteousness, and at the same time, meet the demands of the Lord of God which we had broken. Jesus went and identified with himself with all of those folks who were going into that water representing death. He had no sin but he was going in there in behalf of others.

Well, I see that my time as, is gone. Thank you for listening and goodbye and God bless you all.

[Musical Interlude]

Announcer:

Talbot: Bible Questions Continued

You've been listening to your radio Bible teacher, Dr. Louis T. Talbot, Chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles Inc. Address all mail to Dr. Louis T. Talbot, 558 South Hope St., Los Angeles 17, California.

[Musical Outro]