

I. THE STATE OF HUMILIATION (continued)

A. Review

1. The Son of God existed/exists in two distinct states: Humiliation and Exaltation

- a. The state of humiliation is Christ’s position of guilt before the Law of God; whereas the state of exaltation is Christ’s position [status] of innocence before the Law of God.
- b. Associated with these two states are two conditions [or sets of circumstances]: while in the state of humiliation Christ was in the cond. of misery; in the state of exaltation He is in the cond. of bliss/glory.
- c. Christ was in the state of humiliation on account of the guilt of our sins; Christ is in the state of exaltation because He has removed the guilt of our sins from Himself and therefore from us.

2. In the state of humiliation the Son of God laid aside His Majesty [not His Deity] and made Himself low.

- a. He, the Lawgiver, became subject to the Law of God, its demands and its curse.
- b. He, the infinitely blessed Son of God, became subject to misery, suffering & death in the human nature.
- c. All of this is taught in passages such as Phil. 2:5-11; II Cor. 8:9 and II Cor. 5:21 [read the last one].

B. Christ’s state of humiliation began at His conception and ended with His resurrection

1. It consists of five distinct steps, each one a descent lower into misery and shame

- a. These steps are not in chronological order [order of time] but in order of intensity.
- b. They are Christ’s lowly birth, His [lifelong] suffering, His death, His burial, His descent into hell. During each of these steps Christ was subject to the wrath of God because of our sin.

2. Christ entered the state of humiliation by the Incarnation by means of the Virgin Birth.

- a. However, becoming a human being was not *as such* humiliation for Christ. If it were, we would have to say, that Christ remains forever in a state of humiliation because He remains forever a man.
- b. Instead of humiliating Himself in becoming a man, He exalted [glorified] our human nature by uniting it to Himself.

II. THE FIVE STEPS (begun)

A. His lowly birth

1. Christ’s Incarnation was humiliation for Him, because of the kind of human nature He adopted.

- a. If Christ had become incarnate in the Garden of Eden, before the Fall, with that human nature, He would not have entered into a state of humiliation. Adam’s “un-fallen” nature was not subject to sin or suffering.
- b. But, Christ took upon Himself the human nature of fallen man, *that* was the humiliation. That was not the human nature of a superman, a supernatural being, but human nature affected by sin, subject to weakness, suffering and death. Rom. 8:3, Phil. 2:7, Heb. 2:14-16.

2. Christ’s birth was humiliation for Him because of the circumstances in which He was born.

- a. The Son of God could have ordained His birth into whatever circumstances He chose. He could have chosen to be born in a palace, but instead He chose lower class parents [despised], an insignificant village, a wretched place [a stable] and an inconvenient time [the king was Herod, the rulers were Romans, a census was being taken, etc]. *The Son of God did not prepare for Himself a grand entrance.*
- b. His birth was a sign of things to come: from His birth He was rejected. There was no room for Him in the inn [Luke 2:7]. King Herod tried to kill Him [Matt. 2:3-6, 16] and He and His family fled to Egypt.

3. Christ’s childhood and youth were humiliation also.

- a. When Mary & Joseph returned from Egypt they settled in Nazareth, so that Jesus had the stigma of being a Nazarene all His life. Nazareth was in Galilee, known as “Galilee of the Gentiles.” Nazareth was a despised city even in Galilee (John 1:46, 7:52; Matt. 2:23).
- b. He did not have the advantages of an education under the great Rabbis; He was a carpenter (Matt. 13:55, Mark 6:3), and He had to work to support Himself and others. He had to live with a sinful mother, adopted father [possibly with the stigma of illegitimacy] and sinful siblings.
- c. Throughout His childhood He was subject to Mary and Joseph, and obeyed them as the Law demanded. And His family often misunderstood Him and were an hindrance to His ministry [Luke 2:48-52; Mark 3:21, 31; John. 7:5].

B. His [Lifelong] Suffering [To suffer means to experience pain and anguish. We usually imagine that Christ's sufferings were limited to the cross, but in fact He suffered in body and soul throughout His life. That suffering peaked on the cross].

1. Christ suffered because He was legally guilty: therefore God inflicted suffering, making Him miserable.

- a. So long as Christ was guilty on our behalf, *He had to* and He did experience misery. It would not have been right for God to allow His Son to suffer unless He was guilty of our sins. And once He rid Himself of our guilt, no more suffering could be inflicted upon Him.
- b. First, Christ suffered those things which were common to man, but with greater intensity, and He suffered both in body and in soul. We think of hunger, thirst, fatigue, grief, sorrow, etc.
- c. Second, Christ suffered at the hands of men: He suffered physically and mentally at their hands. He suffered shame and reproach. He suffered their slander, their scorn, their hatred (Matt. 11:19, 12:24, John 9:24, Heb. 12:3).
- d. Third, Christ suffered at the hands of Satan. He was truly tempted and temptation was suffering for Him, more than temptation is suffering for us (Heb. 2:18).

2. Christ's suffering was particularly intense because of who He is.

- a. Christ suffered deprivation. By that, we mean Christ experienced the loss of something which He once knew. Suffering was worse for Him because He had known the bliss of life in heaven. In entering the state of humiliation, He lost the glory of heaven and He experienced that loss.
- b. Christ suffered because of His own innocence and purity. It was suffering for Christ to be placed into a sinful environment, surrounded by the wicked and their sins (cf. II Peter 2:8; Matt. 17:17).
- c. Christ's sufferings were attended by a sense of God's wrath. That was the most terrible aspect of His suffering – all the days of His life He felt in His soul the terrible burden of sin, and when He suffered and felt misery, He knew that God was angry with Him on account of sin. Terrible!

C. Those lifelong sufferings intensified near the end of His life.

1. As Christ reached the end, man's opposition to Him increased

- a. At the beginning, Christ was popular with the people, but as people began to understand Him, they rejected Him more and more, until the religious authorities and the civil authorities rejected Him.
- b. Particularly painful to Christ was that Judas betrayed Him (a close friend showed such hatred that he sold Him for money), Peter denied Him, and His disciples fled from Him.
- c. It was suffering for Christ to be arrested in the middle of the night, to be mocked, spat upon and beaten by the Sanhedrin, to be convicted of blasphemy, to be whipped and then given over to be crucified.
- d. The purpose of God in this was that Christ must suffer *alone*. He was alone in Gethsemane [the disciples fell asleep], He was alone at His trial [no one stood with Him] and He was alone on the cross [contra the view of Rome of Mary's being co-Redemptrix, that Mary gave consent to give life to the Redeemer and offered that life willingly on the cross for us].

2. Near the end, His sense of the burden of God's wrath increased. This explains Gethsemane.

- a. Jesus, who was so calm and composed, came under intense stress in Gethsemane. He confessed "my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). And He was "in an agony" (Luke 22:44). And "He began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy" (Mark 14:33). *Sorrowful, sore amazed, very heavy, agony!*
- b. With the emotional distress Christ showed physical symptoms of intense pressure. He began to sweat great drops of blood! (Luke 22:44). And He cried out to His Father in earnest prayer to turn back the sufferings He knew were coming. An angel had to come and strengthen Him (v. 23). *Read Heb. 5:7-9.*
- c. The reason for Christ's distress was not that He was afraid of death. He calmly faced death. It was not that He lacked the courage which martyrs have displayed. *It was the cup*. Christ knew what was in the cup.
- d. And so His prayer in Gethsemane was this, "Let there be some other way apart from my drinking the cup. Anything is preferable to the cup. But, if there is no other way, then not my will – my human will which naturally shrinks back from suffering thy wrath – but *thy* will – the perfect, righteous will of the Triune God which wills glory and salvation for the elect – be done! (Matt. 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42).
- e. And from Gethsemane, having submitted His will to the Father's, He goes forth to meet His arrest, trial and death. And we will continue with those parts of His sufferings next time, DV.