

CHRIST HYMN

Before we go any further in Chapter 1, I really wanted to start today off by looking at the very heartbeat of this book

JESUS!

You see everything centers around him and the example that he gave to Paul

And to the Philippians

And to us.

Let's read 2:5-11:

This passage is known as the Hymn of Christ. It is thought to be a hymn sung by the early church, and possibly written by Paul. It's such a beautiful description of what Christ did in coming here to earth for us.

Some theologians argue over what does it mean that Christ emptied himself. However, I don't think that Paul wanted it to become a huge theological issue. I think that he was just showing the sacrifice and humility of Christ and finally his exaltation.

Jesus is God of the universe, He is the one who created the heavens and the earth. The one who, as we saw in Galatians, spoke a promise to Abraham. He is the one who led the people of Israel out of slavery In Egypt... the one who parted the Red Sea and descended upon Mt. Sinai terrifying the people of Israel... as they entered the promised land He is the one who felled the walls of Jericho... and he is the one in Revelation whom angels fall before and cry,

"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty!
Who is, and was, and who is to come!"

He is a Mighty and Glorious God!

Although he was a fearful and awesome God ~ too huge to be contained ~ He chose to come and dwell as a man on the earth. He gave up his glory... to become like us. Not only did he become human but **Isaiah 53** says,

“ He was despised and rejected
by others;
a man of suffering and
acquainted with infirmity;...
we held him of no account.”

It goes on to say that he was was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities... by his bruises we are made whole.

He was oppressed, afflicted, led to be slaughtered as a lamb... Yet he said NOTHING. In humility he went to die for our sins.

In the gospels we see that Jesus submitted to every aspect of human nature. He was thirsty so he stopped by a well for a drink. He was tired so he slept in the back of a boat. And ultimately he became obedient to what every human has to face. He became obedient to death. However, this was not just any death. It was death on a cross, a torture device used in the Roman empire. HE was HUMAN. HE felt the pain. Emotionally he felt the rejection, the scorn, the mockery. YET HE SAID NOTHING that would change people's opinions of who he was.

This is what he came to earth for. He knew what it would mean for him to become human. He knew that he would face this kind of pain, from the very first promise of the messiah in Genesis 3 he knew what would happen. Yet he did this. He did it for Paul, he did it for the Philippian church, and he did it for you and me.

This is the Christmas season. Everyone is focused on Jesus' humble and lowly birth. I think that this hymn is one of the most powerful ways in the scripture that the Christmas story is explained. Jesus gave up his Godhood and came to earth born as a baby for you and for me.

And he came here with a purpose, and that purpose was accomplished at the cross.

Yet the story doesn't end at the cross. We all know (especially after studying the gospels for 2 weeks) that Jesus had the victory over death. And we see in this section that because Jesus humbled himself he was exalted.

This isn't a new concept for us. Remember when Jesus said that those who want to be first in the kingdom of heaven must become the least? That wasn't something Jesus just made up... it's what his life was! And it's what the Philippians' lives were to be. And it's what our lives are supposed to reflect.

Now the question is this:

Why did Paul include this in the letter to the Philippians?

As we go through the rest of the statement let's try and see how this portion of the book fits in with the rest.

In order to do this let's look at the first portion of the book...