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The Meaning of Philippians 2:6

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THE MEANING OF PHILIPPIANS 2:6

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by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Paul is urging the Philippians to cultivate a finer fellowship by denying themselves in order to help others. This is accomplished by letting Christ, their Savior, live in them and give to them His attitude (Phil. 2:1-5). Then they will have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

As Paul pictures how Jesus denied Himself for us, the exhortation of the Apostle gives way to a glorification of the Savior whom he loves. In majestic phrases he tells us what was in the mind of the Son of God in that momentous interval between the eternities when He came to us, what it meant for Him to go the way of sorrows that began and ended in glory. There are cosmic implications which give his comprehensive and rather factual statements an epic tone. But there is also Paul's simple and direct way of appealing to Christ.

This passage has unfortunately been subjected to a host of conflicting interpretations and has become a focal point of a theological controversy which has marked it as a difficult passage.

> The diversity of opinion prevailing among interpreters in regard to the meaning of this passage is enough to fill the student with despair, and to afflict him with intellectual paralysis.[1]

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[1] A. Bruce, The Humiliation of Christ, quoted in M. R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), III, 432.

It is said to be "just as famous as it is difficult."[2] Yet Paul makes the statement with an ease which leads us to believe that much of the confusion is unnecessary. There was no doubt in his mind in regard to the intelligibility of what he was saying. And we ought to be able to think his thoughts after him and by eliminating the uncertainties make this passage, instead of a source of confusion, a key to the power of the Gospel so that its truth may strike our hearts with a simple clarity and an undiminished force.

I have examined the various meanings given to the words in Phil. 2:6 and have tried to trace the reasons for them in the non-Biblical usage of the words and their cognate forms. As far as the materials were available, I have examined the primary sources in order to ascertain the usage of a word in its context. I have tried to discover where the exegetical approach of the interpreters may have been faulty and to cull the valid evidence and its sound interpretation from their material. From the dogmatic helps I have taken some statements which would show what is implied in various interpretations. I carefully examined the text itself to distinguish sharply what is textual and what is not, to get the grammatical relations embedded in the words, and to re-establish the contracts which Paul was manipulating.

In that way I tried to get exact answers to the following questions:

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[2] G. Staehlin in Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1950), III, 354. All translations in this thesis which are not specially credited to someone-else are the author's.

What is the morphē theou? Does it mean the "appearance," the "expression," or the "essence" of God? What according to these meanings happened to the morphē during the humiliation?

Does this text refer to the preexistent or the incarnate Christ?

What is harpagmos? Is it passive or active in meaning? Is it past, present, or future? Does it mean "display," "booty," or "exploitation"?

My aim was to find out what the text means. Some of the conclusions differ from the doctrinal statements of men whom I respect very highly. I made no special effort to uphold Lutheran doctrine. It was therefore reassuring to see how the text, when freed of all encumbrances, stands there in its simple doctrinal glory.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING OF MORPHĒ

Morphē as "Appearance"

Socrates speaks of changing a shape into many morphas.[1] Eumorphia is the "beautiful form" of the body.[2] Vincent may be right when he says,

> Prior to the philosophical period of Greek literature, the predominant sense of morphē was "shape" or "figure.". . . It includes the coloring and the whole outward appearance--the body itself with no reference to other than outward pecularities. This sense is retained to some extent in philosophical usage.[3]

"Outward form" is the only meaning of morphē in the Septuagint,[4] and that is why it is never used of God in the Old Testament. It is used for the human shape of an idol (Is. 44:13). In Ecclesiasticus 9:8 we read: "Turn your eyes away from a beautiful (eumorphou) woman, and don't gaze at the beauty of a stranger." Symmachus uses metamorphoun to say that David "changed" his appearance.[5] If this verb

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[1]Plato, Republic, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), I, 188.

[2]Plato, Laws, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 294.

[3]M. R. Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 79.

[4]E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1897), pp. 575, 934.

[5]Ibid., p. 916.

is used in the same way in Matt. 17:2 and Mark 9:2, then the noun morphē, as far as these passages are concerned, would mean "outward form." The evangelists show clearly that Jesus changed only outwardly: "His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as light" (Matt. 17:2); "His clothes became glittering white; no one on earth could bleach them so white" (Mark 9:3); "His face changed and looked different, and His clothes flashed like lightning" (Luke 9:29). Morphē means "outward form" in Mark 16:12, where the person of Jesus stayed the same, but His appearance changed to something different (heterai; compare Gal. 1:6-7).

Lightfoot speaks of morphōsis in Rom. 2:20 and 2 Tim. 3:5 as "an appearance which is superficial and unreal. . . . Here the termination denotes the aiming after or affecting the morphē."[6] Robertson says morphōsis is "the outward shape without the reality."[7] Bauer defines it for 2 Tim. 3:5 as "outward form, the appearance of false teachers," and as evidence he quotes Philo, tines tōn epimorphazontōn eusebeian, "some of those who cover piety."[8] But epi- alone carries the meaning of "over the surface." Epargyros and epichrusos mean "overlaid

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[6] J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), p. 131.

[7] A. T. Robertson, Epistles of Paul, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931), IV, 623.

[8] W. Bauer, Griechisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments (Second edition; Giessen: Alfred Toepelmann, 1928), col. 834. The definition and the evidence in the 1952 edition are the same.

with silver and gold"; these terms do not prove that lumps of silver or gold have only the appearance of silver and gold.

Duncan supposes that Philippians 2:6-11 was originally an Aramaic hymn and cites the Aramaic equivalents as evidence that morphē means "likeness":

> If (as seems certain) it is a translation from an Aramaic original, then we may link up the hymn with an early stage of the Christian movement in Palestine, or more probably in Syria. . . . (Following Hering, Le Royaume de Dieu et sa Venue, p. 161) I take morphē as representing the Hebrew demouth, Aramaic demoutha), i.e. "likeness" (Gen. 1:26). This is confirmed by the Peshitto rendering of the Philippian passage.[9]

So Thayer defines morphē as "shape" or "appearance," "the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance,"[10] and Bauer defines it as "Gestalt, aeussere Erscheinungsform allgem. von einer koerperlichen Gestalt."[11] We begin to suspect the accuracy of these definitions when we see that they are practically the same as those for schēma, which according to Thayer means "the habitus as comprising everything in a person which strikes the senses, figure, bearing, discourse, actions, manner of life."[12] Bauer defines schēma as "d. aeussere

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[9]G. S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 193.

[10]J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1889), p. 418.

[11]Bauer, op. cit., col. 418.

[12]Thayer, op. cit., p. 610.

Erscheinung, d. Gestalt."[13] The Revised Standard Version translates both morphē in Phil. 2:6 and schēma in v. 7 with "form."[14]

In ordinary speech "form" means "outward shape" and may be contrasted with reality. The external appearance may or may not show the real character. Chemnitz defined schēma as "the figure and outward appearance" and added, "From this we cannot know the real man."[15] False apostles have the schēma of true apostles, and the devil puts on the schēma of an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-15). If morphē is like schēma and means only "external appearance," we cannot prove from the use of morphē in Phil. 2:6 that Jesus is God. Lightfoot says,

> Morphē, like schēma, originally refers to the organs of sense. . . . It comprises all those sensible qualities, which striking the eye lead to the conviction that we see such a thing. The conviction indeed may be false, for the form may be a phantom.[16]

When interpreters speak of laying aside the form of God (and by "form" they mean "appearance"), they may mean that in His humiliation

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[13] Bauer, op. cit., col. 1277.

[14] Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952), N.T., p. 222.

[15] C. Chemnitz and J. E. Gerhard, Commentariolus in omnes epistolas D. Pauli. (Lipsiae & Jenae: Johannem Theodorum & David Fleischern, 1676), p. 130.

[16] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 127.

Jesus either did not appear as God while He was God or that He was not God. So Hollaz spoke of "the evacuation of the form of God."[17] Meyer said, "the earthly Jesus never was in the form of God."[18] And Thayer says, "He laid aside equality with or the form of God (said of Christ), Phil. 2:7."[19]

Morphē as "Expression"

From mere "appearance" we pass to "inevitable appearance" or "expression" as the meaning of morphē.

Morphōsis (Rom. 2:20) is defined as the "outward form as determined by inward substance."[20] Beza said that morphōsis (2 Tim. 3:5) is "the true form or expression of piety as it is presented in the Law to be seen by the eyes of all."[21]

Cyril of Alexandria said, "The form of God reveals the essence of God."[22] For Luther morphē meant "expression" (his terms are unusually difficult to translate):

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[17]H. Schmid, Die Dogmatik der ev.-luth. Kirche (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1893), p. 228.

[18]A. W. H. Meyer, Briefe an die Philipper, Kolosser, und an Philemon (Second edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1859), p. 51.

[19]Thayer, op. cit., p. 344.

[20]W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 65.

[21]T. Bezae, Annotationes (Geneva: n. p., 1594), comment on 2 Tim. 3:5; p. 469.

[22]Cyrilli Alexandriae Opera, Patrologiae Patrum Graecorum (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1863), 75, col. 1428.

> "Form of God" means therefore that someone presents himself as a God and acts as one, or that he employs the deity or assumes it; this does not happen secretly by itself, but towards others who become aware of such action or form. We can state it most clearly in this way: He acts divine or presents himself as a God when he shows and also speaks and acts that which belongs to God or fits Him. So also the form of a servant means presenting oneself and acting as a servant towards others. To speak more clearly, morphe tu dulu means a servile form or acting as a servant, that is, he acts in such a way that anyone who sees him must take him for a servant. From this it is clear that this passage does not speak of a divine essence or a servant's essence, outwardly, but of the action and expression of the essence. For, as it was said before, the essence is secret, but the expression is public; and the essence is something, but the action does something or is a deed.[23]

Cremer defines morphē as "the form, distinctively belonging to any essence."[24]

> It is quite legitimate to define morphē in this passage as that "form," whatever it be, which carries in itself and expresses or embodies the essential nature of the being to whom it belongs. . . . It is the perfect expression of the essence, proceeding from the inmost depths of the perfect being, and into which that being spontaneously and perfectly unfolds, as light from fire.[25]

Green defines morphē as "the form as indicative of the interior nature."[26]

Stoeckhardt: "Morphē means the form, external appearance, in which the essence expresses itself; morphē theou is the appearance-form of God."[27]

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[23]Martin Luther, Kirchen-Postille, Saemmtliche Schriften (Edited by J. G. Walch; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1883), XII, cols. 468-69.

[24]H. Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated by W. Urwick (Second edition; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), p. 422.

[25]Vincent, op. cit., pp. 80, 82.

[26]S. G. Green, Handbook of the Grammar of the New Testament (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912), p. 384.

[27]P. M. Kretzmann, "'Hielt er's nicht fuer einen Raub,' Phil. 2,6," Concordia Theological Monthly, (April, 1931), p. 252.

Kretzmann: "In the word morphē lies the idea of showing oneself."[28]

"Expression" Implies Deity

Those who believe that this "form" is the "expression" of God insist that this "form" is not the essence of God. Luther said:

> Although it is true that Christ is true God, Saint Paul is here not speaking of his divine, hidden essence. . . . For no one can see the divine essence, but people saw the divine form.[29]

Quenstedt: "Morphē theou does not formally and exactly mean the divine essence itself."[30] Bengel: "The form of God does not mean the deity itself or the divine nature, but something shining from it."[31] Stoeckhardt: "The term is not identical with the essence of God. Morphē is not phusis."[32] Wohlenberg: "There is no doubt that morphē theou . . . is not identical with the essence and nature of God."[33] Pieper: "'Being equal to God' does not express the divine essence any more than 'the form of God' does; it means the divine appearance."[34] Vincent:

> A common error of the Greek Fathers, adopted by Calvin, Beza and others, was the identification of morphē with ousia, "essence,"

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[28] Ibid., p. 247.

[29] Luther, op. cit., col. 468.

[30] Schmid, op. cit., p. 277.

[31] J. A. Bengel, Gnomon Novi Testamenti (Fifth edition; Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1860), p. 381.

[32] Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 252.

[33] Ibid., p. 247. The quotation is from the Strack-Zoeckler Commentary.

[34] F. Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), II, 323.

and phusis, "nature." Morphē is identified with ousia, not identical with it.[35]

Yet this group of interpreters holds that, since the "form of God cannot be separated from His essence, the "form of God" in Phil. 2:6 proves that Jesus is God. Luther says:

> He cannot do the other, that he should act like a God and yet not be one or not have the essence; but that is proper for the devil and his own, who put themselves in God's place and present themselves as God, although they are not God.[36]

Bengel:

> Man becomes visible through his form; likewise God and His glorious majesty; and so this passage presents an excellent proof for the deity of Christ. For as the form of a servant . . . presupposes the human nature, so He who was in a divine form was God.[37]

Stoeckhardt:

> The essence is presupposed. Only one who according to his essence is God has such a form as God, a divine form. The form is the expression of His essence. . . . It is presupposed, of course, that He was God at the same time. God and divine form do not permit themselves to be separated.[38]

The Expositor's Greek Testament: "Morphē always signifies a form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it."[39]

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[35]Vincent, op. cit., p. 82.

[36]Luther, op. cit., col. 469.

[37]Bengel, op. cit., p. 771.

[38]Kretzmann, op. cit., pp. 252-53.

[39]H. A. Kennedy, "The Epistle to the Philippians," The Expositor's Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), III, 436.

Preexistent or Incarnate?

For those who hold that this Philippian passage speaks of the preexistent Christ, this phrase means that Christ was in some way visible to heavenly beings. Weiss says,

> As epouranios He was in the form of God, . . . the form of manifestation corresponding to the divine spiritual nature, consisting of supersensual light-substance.[40]

Thayer:

> (Formerly when He was logos asarkos) He bore the form (in which He appeared to the inhabitants of heaven) of God.[41]

Robertson:

> Morphē means the essential attribute as shown in the form. In His preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God and so appeared to those in heaven who saw him. Here is a clear statement by Paul of the deity of Christ.[42]

Bengel asserts that the "appearance" of Christ needed no one to view it:

> The divine nature had an infinite beauty by itself even apart from any creature which might see that beauty. That beauty was the morphē theou, the "form of God," just as in a man there is beauty shining from the health and elegant proportions of his body, whether anyone sees it or not.[43]

But those who hold that Phil. 2:6 refers to the incarnate Son of God say that the form of God showed itself in His miracles and His preaching with divine authority. Luther says:

> The "divine form" is nothing else than showing Himself towards others to be God and Lord by words and works, and Christ has

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[40] B. Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated by D. Eaton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), II, 100.

[41] Thayer, op. cit., p. 418.

[42] Robertson, op. cit., pp. 444.

[43] Bengel, op. cit., p. 771.

done that by miracles and saving words.[44]

Vincent states:

> The majority of the Lutheran and rationalistic expositors, on the other hand, explained vs. 6 of the incarnate Son. According to this view, the form of God was retained by him in his incarnate state, and was displayed in his miracles and words of power.[45]

Is Morphē the Glory of God?

Is this "form" the glory of God? The interpreters who define morphē as "expression" have three answers to this question: 1. "Glory" also is the expression of God and therefore is equal to the "form." 2. There are two kinds of glory, an outer expression and an inner essence. 3. "Glory" is the essence of God.

For Calvin morphē was the same as "glory," but by "glory" he meant the external insignia:

> The form of God here means His majesty. . . . The form of a king is the equipment and splendor which marks a king, such as a scepter, diadem, robe, public servants, throne, and other marks of a kingdom. The form of a consul are a toga bordered with purple, an ivory throne, lictors with rods and axes. . . . Form means figure or appearance. . . . As therefore God is known by His virtues, and His works are eternal testimonies of His deity, Rom. 1:20, so the majesty of Christ, which He had equally with the Father before He humbled Himself, correctly proves the divine essence of Christ. I am certain that not even all the devils can distort this passage, because in God the argument from glory to essence, which two things are inseparable, is very strong.[46]

Quenstedt says that morphē means

> really the divine condition of glory or the glory and the universal use of the divine majesty, which cannot exist without

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[44]Luther, op. cit., col. 473.

[45]Vincent, op. cit., p. 83.

[46]J. Calvin, In omnes Novi Testamenti Epistolas Commentarii (Second edition; Halis Saxonum: Sumptibus Librariae Gebauerianae, 1834) II, 90-91.

the true deity, but presupposes it in the same person.[47]

Wohlenberg:

> It does not mean being God, but the characteristic form of the divine essence, the glory shining out of Him, who is the everlasting and unapproachable Light.[48]

Vincent believes that "glory" is more exterior than "form":

> Morphē, however, applied to God, is not to be identified with doxa. . . . Doxa is the manifestation, the unfolded fullness, of the divine attributes and perfections, while morphē theou is the immediate, proper, and personal investiture of the divine essence. Doxa attaches to Deity; morphē is identified with the inmost being of Deity. Doxa is and must be included in morphē theou, but doxa is not morphē. . . . . Glory may belong to one in virtue of birth, natural endowment, achievement, and the possession of great qualities; but it does not belong to him in the immediate and intimate sense that his form does.[49]

McClain distinguishes an outer and an inner glory; Jesus laid aside the outer glory, which is the form or function, while He kept the inner glory, which is the essence or potentiality:

> Doubtless the more important reference is to the divine attributes. For it is through the exercise or function of these that, from an external viewpoint, God appears most truly as God. In this functioning we find, in the deepest sense, the morphē of God. . . . Granted that the active functioning might cease for a time, still the potentiality remains. To suggest that this might also be given up is to say that God may cease to be God. . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> But there was another, an inner glory; and this glory, of which the external glory had been indicative, was still present, though veiled by the servant-form. He did not--it is not too much to say that He could not--empty Himself of this. And to those who came to know Him because their eyes were enlightened by the Spirit, His blessed inner glory became apparent in spite of the veil of flesh, so that they could witness that,

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[47]Schmid, op. cit., p. 277.

[48]Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 247.

[49]Vincent, op. cit., p. 80-81.

> "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth."[50]

We must distinguish between McClain's modern use of terms and the Aristolelian use of them. For Aristotle the hulē or "mass" had the potentiality, and the "form" was the finished product; the "form" was not a "function." It is improbable that Paul ever thought of morphē as a mere function.

For Stoeckhardt "form" was exterior, but it was at the same time the "glory" which is the essence of God. "Form"

> ascribes to the Man Jesus the divine attributes, the divine glory. . . . The same is said here as what we read in John 1:14. Men saw in the Word which was made flesh the divine glory which is peculiar to God. . . . There too the glory of God is the divine majesty, the totality of divine attributes.[51]

Was the Morphē Laid Aside?

The basis of the difficulty is a conviction that Jesus gave up something when He assumed the "form" of a servant. Since He could not lay aside His essence, He must have laid aside a manifestation. The problem is most clearly stated by Pieper and Dau. Pieper defines kenoun as "abtun, zunichte machen," "lay aside, destroy," referring to Rom. 4:14; 1 Cor. 1:17; 9:15; 2 Cor. 9:3 as instances of similar usage. This is his basis for stating:

> His selfdenial consisted in this that, when He came to men, He according to His human nature surrendered His divine form or the equality with God and instead of that assumed the servant's form.[52]

The definition of morphē is based on a definition of kenoun. Dau

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[50]A. J. McClain, "The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8," The Biblical Review (October, 1928), pp. 519,520.

[51]Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 253.

[52]Pieper, op. cit., pp. 326, 323.

says the same:

> "Morphē theou" is not the divine nature, because there is an unmistakable connection between this term and "ekenōse," which latter signifies He made Himself void of it. But Christ never made Himself void of the divine nature, else He should have ceased being the God-man.[53]

That is why these men follow Luther, who said, "He laid aside the form of divine majesty."[54]

> The morphē theou was laid aside. . . . A common error of the Greek Fathers, adopted by Calvin, Beza, and others, was the identification of morphē with ousia, 'essence,' and phusis, 'nature.' . . . If the two were identical, the parting with the morphē in the incarnation would have involved parting with the ousia. But Jesus did not surrender the divine nature, which is the ousia clothed with its appropriate attributes. Morphē expresses both ousia and phusis, but neither is surrendered in the surrender of the morphē.[55]

Vincent objects to the Lutheran interpretation that "it would imply the contemporaneous existence of the same subject in two opposite forms, both having reference to the outward condition."[56] It is contended that there must have been an exchange of one "form" for another.

> In the kenosis this "form" was exchanged for the form of a servant. . . . The form of God in this passage is not the nature of God. God-form certainly presupposes a God-nature, but is not essential to it. Verse 7 draws a similar distinction on the human side of the kenosis; there is here a servant-form and also a human-nature. The nature is a necessary condition of the form, but the form is not essential to the nature. A man may cease to be a servant, but he cannot cease to be a man. Likewise, Deity may change form, but not nature.[57]

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[53] W. H. T. Dau, Doctrinal Theology (mimeographed, St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, n. d.), I, 234.

[54] Luther, op. cit., col. 474.

[55] Vincent, op. cit., p. 82.

[56] Ibid., p. 83.

[57] McClain, op. cit., p. 518.

> He did not use his being equal to God by clinging to the form of God, the divine form of existence. But He rather emptied Himself for a time and took instead of the divine form the servant's form.[58]

The statement is frequently made that Jesus laid aside His glory in His humiliation. This is confusing, since "glory" is either not defined at all or it is defined in an odd way. Pfleiderer speaks of "the doxa of the free Son of God, which He had given up,"[59] and Baugher distinguishes between a heavenly glory which was laid aside and an earthly glory:

> He laid aside God's likeness to take up man's likeness, never however, having laid aside the divine nature (ousia, phusis). He could have two natures in the same person, but not two forms at the same time. . . . The "glory" which men saw in Jesus (John 1:14), and which He manifested in and by His works (John 2:11) must not be confounded with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5) or be taken for the "form of God," which had then been laid aside.[60]

Hoenecke presents a similar confusion in regard to the "glory" of Jesus:

> Scripture gives us many instances in which Jesus, always possessing and keeping the divine majesty, yet laid aside the divinely glorious appearance, presenting Himself and acting as God, and He humbled Himself in this way that He surrendered the glory (John 17:5).[61]

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[58] G. Staehlin, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1950), N.T., 354.

[59] Pfleiderer, Paulinism, translated by E. Peters (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877, I, 149.

[60] H. L. Baugher, "Interpretation of Philippians II. 6,7," The Lutheran Quarterly (January, 1878), p. 121.

[61] A. Hoenecke, Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912), p. 115.

Morphe as "Essence"

Extra-Biblical Evidence

Morphē also means "essence." Parmenides[62] called the elemental principles of the universe morphai. In Aeschylus and Sophocles[63] morphē is the person, the whole individual being, which remains the same during all changes. For Plato the morphē of an object is its nature or the sum of its properties; it is part of the morphē of the number three that it is an odd number.[64] It is a synonym of Plato's "idea." It is the independent, unique, concrete structure or Eigenart of a being.[65] "In Plato's language the morphē is . . . the specific character. It need not therefore denote any material sensible quality."[66] According to Aristotle, hulē, "mass," has a path of potentiality along which it progresses to a realization of its morphē, "form." So brass is shaped into a statue, which is the morphē of brass; wood becomes a bed, which is the morphē of wood. He spoke of the morphē of physical objects and of immaterial things such as courage, justice, prudence. Aristotle said directly: hē ara morphē phusis, "then the form is the nature."[67]

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[62] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 128.

[63] H. Schumacher, Christus in seiner Praeexistenz und Kenose (Rome: Paepstl. Bibel-Institut, 1921), II, 166.

[64] Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1914), p. 356.

[65] Plato, Republic, II, 188-92.

[66] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 128.

[67] Schumacher, op. cit., p. 187.

He said:

> The term nature is used to signify three things; sometimes it is equivalent to the matter, sometimes to the form, sometimes to both combined. Of the nature according to matter and the nature according to form, the latter is the more influential (kuriōterа).[68]

Lightfoot adds that kuriōterа means that "it has a more important function in making the thing what it is."

Lightfoot also answers the criticism that morphē was too philosophical a term to be used by Paul:

> We need not assume that St. Paul consciously derived his use of the term from any philosophical nomenclature. There was sufficient definiteness even in its popular usage to suggest this meaning when it was transferred from the objects of sense to the conceptions of mind. . . . The speculations of Alexandrian and Nationalistic Judaism formed a ready channel, by which the philosophical terms of ancient Greece were brought within reach of the Apostles of Christ.[69]

> This sense of morphē, as the specific character, was naturally transmitted from these great original thinkers to the philosophers of later ages. It is found for instance in Plutarch. It appears very definitely in the Neoplatonists.[70]

Philo[71] speaks of a man's quality and morphē as being known by his face and appearance.

> It is undeniable that in the philosophico-popular mode of speech here employed "form" means just that body of characterizing qualities which makes anything the particular thing it is--in a word, its specific character.[72]

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[68] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 129. This is Lightfoot's translation.

[69] Ibid., p. 133.

[70] Ibid., pp. 129-30. Lightfoot cites the Greek usage in footnotes.

[71] Schumacher, op. cit., pp. 201-2.

[72] B. B. Warfield, Christology and Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 271.

The meaning of morphē is even more definitely and clearly "essence" when it refers to a god. Xenophon[73] said a man cannot see the morphai of the gods, while he can see their erga, for which he honors the gods. For Plato[74] the morphē of God precludes a variety of morphai because God is the absolute, the most beautiful and good. For Aristotle[75] God is pure morphē or essence, the potentiality of matter having in Him reached its fullest reality. Just as a child, when it is full-grown, is no child any more, so mass, when it has reached its entelecheia in God, is no more matter: God is without matter, the true, permanent, unchangeable being or morphē. According to Plutarch[76] God is undivided and always has the same morphē and eidos (eidos is also used by Jesus of the Father, John 5:37). Philo[77] speaks of the morphē of God being in the flaming bush. Josephus says:

> He is to be seen in his works and in the favors which He bestows, and He is more conspicuous than any other thing whatsoever, but in regard to His morphē and greatness He is most invisible to us.[78]

Justin Martyr[79] said that Christians do not believe that the idols formed by men's hands have the morphē of God; they have only the names and the

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[73]Xenophon Memorabilia and Oeconomicus, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), IV, 304.

[74]Plato, Republic, II, 188-92.

[75]Schumacher, op. cit., pp. 180-94.

[76]Ibid., p. 199.

[77]Philo, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), I, 310.

[78]Thayer, op. cit., p. 418.

[79]J. Behm, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1942), IV, 759.

schemata of demons; the morphē of God is not of this kind; God's doxa and morphē are unutterable. And a papyrus of the second or third century uses morphē of the invisible God: God is a spirit.[80]

Cognate Forms of Morphē in the New Testament

Metamorphoō in Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2 is like metagraphō, which can mean "change the writing"; or it can mean "copy," implying that the writing stays the same. Metamorphoō can mean "change the morphē" or "change the appearance of the morphē." None of the evangelists uses metaschematizō, perhaps because they wanted to avoid the impression that the glory of Jesus was merely outward (compare 2 Cor. 11:13-14).

> Why, then, it may be asked, is a compound or morphē employed in this description of the transfigured Savior, since the change described is a change in his outward appearance? It may be answered, because a compound of schēma, expressing merely a change in the aspect of Christ's person and garments, would not express the deeper truth of the case, which is, that the visible change gets its real character and meaning from that which is essential in our Lord--His divine nature. A foreshadowing or prophecy of his true form--His distinctive character--comes out in His transfiguration. He passes over into a form identified, so far as revealed, with the divine quality of his being, and prophetic of his revelation "as he is" (1 John iii.2), in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5). . . . The profound and overwhelming impression upon the three disciples was due to something besides the shining of Christ's face and garments, and the presence of Moses and Elijah; and was deeper and subtler than the effect of these combined. There was a fact and a power in that vision which mere radiance and the appearance of the dead patriarchs could not wholly convey: a revelation of Deity breaking out in that glorified face and form, which appealed to something deeper than sense, and confirmed the words from heaven: This is my beloved Son.[81]

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[80] J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), I, 417.

[81] M. R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), I, 99-100.

Any transient assumption of radiance would have been meaningless if not a delusion. Moses and Elijah speak to Jesus as one whom they knew from His preexistence; His glory was no news to them, but His intention to die is the immediate topic of their conversation. The Father's special explanation of the glory of Jesus was: "This is My Son." We are dealing here with the eternal Son of God. The disciples who saw this revelation of Jesus realized that even in the days of His humiliation He was "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8), since John (1:14) says, "We saw His glory," and Peter (2 Peter 1:16), "We once saw His majesty."

It may have been the possible ambiguity of metemorphōthē and Paul's use of morphē which induced Luke to omit metemorphōthē in his record of the transfiguration. Paul is independent in his use of morphē and its derivatives. He refuses to use metamorphoō even of the change of the body in the resurrection. In 1 Cor. 15:52-54 he uses allassō, "change," and endunō, "put on"; and in Philippians 3:21 he says that our body "will be changed" (metaschēmatisei) so that it will be "the same as" (summorphon) the body of Christ.

The meaning of morphosis needs clarification.

> I cannot accept Lightfoot's explanation of morphōsis in Rom. ii. 20 as signifying the aiming after or affecting the true morphē of knowledge and truth. There was actually a truthful embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law. The law was "holy and just and good," and Paul habitually recognized in it the impress of the divine character and will. It was this fact which aggravated the culpability of the Jew, to whom had been committed the oracles of God (Rom. iii. 2).[82]

When the Expositor's Greek Testament (2 Tim. 3:5) says that morphōsis is "external," it means "theoretical":

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[82]Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, p. 80.

> The morphōsis, embodiment, is external in both cases, but not unreal as far as it goes. The ineffectiveness of it arises from the coexistence in the mind of him who "holds" it of some other quality that neutralizes the advantage naturally derived from the possession of the morphōsis in question. In this case, it was that they of whom St. Paul is speaking had a purely theoretical, academic apprehension of practical Christianity (eusebeia, see 1 Tim. 2:2), but a positive disbelief in the Gospel as a regenerating force. Compare what St. John says of the rulers who believed on Jesus but did not confess Him (John 12:42,43). They too were philēdonoi mallon ē philotheoi. In Romans the case is similar: the possession of an admirable moral code did not make the Jews moral practice better than that of the Gentile (see Sanday and Headlam on Rom. 2:20). There is therefore no necessity to suppose with Lightfoot that "the termination -ōsis denotes the aiming after or affecting the morphē."[83]

There is no evidence in Paul's usage that morphōsis means an outward "form of religion."[84] This is a guess which seems to be derived from the contrast of dunamis with morphōsis in 2 Timothy 3:5. But dunamis is similarly contrasted with sophia (1 Cor. 2:5), with logos (1 Cor. 4:19; 1 Thess. 1:5), and nomos (Heb. 7:16); in each case "wisdom," "word," and the "law" are not made superficial by the contrast, but, like morphōsis, they are ineffectual due to a lack of vital power (dunamis). The three verses which precede 2 Tim. 3:5 make it clear that Paul is not speaking of an outward appearance of piety:

> People will love themselves and money; they will boast and be proud; they will blaspheme; they will be disobedient to parents, unthankful, and unholy; they will be without love or forgiveness; they will slander; they will be without control, wild, without a love for what is good, treacherous, reckless, proud; they will love pleasure and not God.

These people had a theoretical content of guilt which did not express itself in their daily life. There is no reason why morphōsis should not

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[83] M. J. D. White, "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy" and "The Epistle to Titus," The Expositor's Greek Testament (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), IV, 171.

[84] Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, N.T., p. 240.

mean pratically the same in 2 Tim. 3:5 as in Rom. 2:20 where it means the definite, concrete embodiment or substance of the truth, "the permanent element in things,"[85] "die Verkoerperung der Erkenntnis und Wahrheit."[86]

Morphē Is Not Schēma

> The morphē of a definite thing as such, for instance of a lion or a tree, is one only, while its schema may change every minute. Thus we often find morphēs schema, as in Latin 'figura formae,' but rarely, if ever, schēmatos morphē. . . . The schēma is often an accident of the morphē.[87]

Morphē is intrinsic and essential, the permanent inward character and reality. Schēma is the accidental dress or costume, the outward display, the changing and variable shape, the figure of speech in which a thought is expressed, or the role or part which a person plays.

> If I were to change a Dutch garden into an Italian, this would be metaschēmatismos; but if I were to transform a garden into something wholly different, as into a city, this would be metamorphōsis. It is possible for Satan metaschēmatizein himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi.14); he can take the whole outward semblance of such. But to any such change of his it would be impossible to apply the metamorphousthai, for this would imply a change not external but internal, not of accidents but of essence, which lies quite beyond his power. When Proteus transforms himself into a flame, a wild beast, a running stream (Virgil, Georg. iv. 442), each of these disconnected with all that went before, there is here a change not of the schēma merely, but of the morphē (cf. Euripides, Hec. 1266; Plato, Locr. 104e). . . . Thus schēma basilikon (Lucian, Pisc. 35; cf. Sophocles, Antig. 1148) is the whole outward array and adornment of a monarch--diadem, tiara, sceptre, robe (cf. Lucian, Harmot. 86)--all which he might lay aside, and remain king notwithstanding.[88]

For Paul morphē is not schēma. We see that from his use of

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[85] Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 65.

[86] Behm, op. cit., p. 762.

[87] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 127.

[88] R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Ninth edition; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1915), pp. 246-48.

morphoō, which as a simplex or with sum- or meta- means inner changes, the renewing of the spirit and mind: "to be thoroughly like His Son" (Rom. 8:29), "to be changed from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18), "until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19; this passage uses the metaphor of a child growing in the womb). The inner life of a Christian is a morphē, while the life of the world is a transient schēma.

> Metaschēmatizein tì is to change the outward appearance (schēma) of a thing, the thing itself in essence (morphē) remaining unchanged.[89]

> As metasch. denoted change of outward fashion, summorph. denotes conformation to what is essential, permanent, and characteristic, . . . a conformity which is inward and thorough, and not merely superficial.[90]

> Summorphous denotes inward and thorough and not merely superficial likeness.[91]

Rom. 12:2 is translated:

> Do not adopt the external and fleeting fashion (suschēmatizesthe) of this world, but be ye transformed (metamorphousthe) in your inmost nature.[92]

> Not to follow the fleeting fashion of this world, but to undergo a complete change, assume a new form, in the renewal of the mind.[93]

And Phil. 3:21:

> Will change the fashion of the body of our humiliation and fix it in the form of the body of His glory.[94]

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[89] J. H. Bernard, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," The Expositor's Greek Testament (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917) III, 103.

[90] Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, p. 121.

[91] Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., 218.

[92] Ibid., p. 353.

[93] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 131.

[94] Ibid.

The "Essence" of God

Luther has an odd argument against morphē being the "essence":

> He uses the same little word morphē or forma later when he says: Christ has assumed a servant's form: There the form of a servant cannot mean the essence of a natural servant, who has the characteristics of a servant's nature, because Christ did not by nature but out of good will and kindness become our servant. Therefore the divine form here cannot mean His divine essence.[95]

But the motive does not determine the status. We, too, did not "by nature" become slaves of God and are such without a slave's motive or spirit (Rom. 6:16-18). Baugher also claims that the "servant's form" was only external:

> We cannot conceive of this "form"; but it was something external, just as its antithesis, "the form of a servant" (morphēn doulou), was.[96]

If Jesus had taken on Him only the appearance of a slave, He would not have helped us. The fact is that outwardly He did not appear as a slave but was called "Rabbi" and "Lord." His being a slave was an inner quality. Jesus completely submitted to God's will, to the Law and its curse (Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13), and so He really became a slave for us. He was the "Servant" who "poured out His life in death" (Is. 53:12--the Hebrew word means "slave"; compare Matt. 20:27-28; John 13:13-15).

> By 'form' is meant not the external semblance only . . ., but the characteristic attributes, as in ver. 6. . . . He who is Master (kurios) of all, became the slave of all.[97]

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[95]Luther, op. cit., col. 468.

[96]Baugher, op. cit., p. 121.

[97]Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 112.

> He took the characteristic attributes (morphēn as in verse 6) of a slave.[98]

> God the Word is by nature God, . . . for He had by nature this equality. But if it is said that the morphē of God is not the essence of God, such people should be asked what they think the servant's morphē is. . . . If then the servant's morphē is the essence of a servant, then also the morphē of God is the essence of God.[99]

> As the servant's morphē is the nature of the servant, but not his activity, so also the morphē of God is God's nature, but not His activity.[100]

Paul has a Jewish horror of any visible representation of God. For him the things of God are "unseen" (Rom. 1:20); God is "the invisible" (Col. 1:15), "immortal and unseen," "whom no one has ever seen or can see" (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16).

> Here, in a deliberate contrast with all mythical stories about many forms of deity, morphē means the one indivisible and unchangeable essence of the deity, cp. Philo Leg. ad Caium 110 p. 561M ou gar ōsper to nomisma parakomma kai theou morphē ginetai.[101]

(Philo's statement may be translated: "For the essence of God does not change like a counterfeit coin.") Lightfoot said, "Morphe must apply to the attributes of the godhead."[102] We add two recent testimonies:

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[98]Robertson, op. cit., p. 544.

[99]Theodoreti Opera Omnia, Patrologiae Patrum Graecorum (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1864), 82, col. 572.

[100]Oecumenii Opera Omnia, Patrologiae Patrum Graecorum (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1893), 118, col. 1280.

[101]M. Dibelius, An die Thessalonicher I-II an die Philipper, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Third edition; Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1937), p. 74.

[102]Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 132.

> Interpreters in general agree that by the "form" of God, Paul means the essential and unique nature of God. In the Aristotelian terminology, the "form" of anything is given in that complex of qualities which distinguishes it from all else. The term, of course, has nothing whatever to do with shape or dimension: the form is that by which the thing is as it is. The form determines all the possibilities and all the activities of the being that has it.[103]

> The "form" of God is that which differentiates God from all other beings, godhead. That Jesus was in the "form" of God means nothing less than that He was God.[104]

Since "form" means "outward shape" (schēma) to the ordinary reader, it is an incorrect translation.

> We must here dismiss from our minds the idea of shape. . . . Form inevitably carries with it to us the idea of shape.[105]

The correct word is "essence," but this term is cold and odd. There is perhaps no better way to translate the exact meaning than to say, "being God, . . . He became a slave."

The Glory of God

Again we ask, Is morphē the glory of God? Chemnitz answers:

> Paul says Christ was in the form of God, that is, in the highest glory of the deity, majesty and power, as it is natural for the true God.[106]

Stoeckhardt, who said that morphē "is identical with the glory of God," continued to say of the morphē:

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[103] M. Lewis, "The Humiliated and Exalted Son," Interpretation (January, 1947), p. 22.

[104] F. C. Synge, Philippians and Colossians (London: SCM Press LTD, 1951), p. 30.

[105] Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, III, 430-31.

[106] Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 253.

> It is identical with the glory of God, John 1:14. It is the divine glory or majesty, which includes all divine attributes. We are thinking especially of the divine omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Those are divine attributes. They belong only to God and show the real essence of God. The ecclesiastical expression here is the divine majesty, which is the sum of divine attributes.[107]

Either there is a fault in the shorthand notes of this report on Stoeckhardt's exegesis, or Stoeckhardt tried to retain a double meaning of morphē: "expression" which he acquired from his Lutheran predecessors and "essence" which he saw in the text.

> The morphē in which the preexistent Christ was is nothing else than the divine doxa; en morphē theou hunarchon of Paul means the same as John 17:5: tē doxē hē eichon pro tou ton kosmon einai para soi.[108]

The Kurios of Isaiah 42:8 says, "I will not give Thy glory to another." Jesus is that Kurios and has that untransferable glory. This glory is one glory belonging to both the Son and the Father (John 17:5,22,24; Eph. 1:17; Phil. 4:19-20). That is why those who know Jesus know the Father; those who see Jesus see the Father (John 14:7). Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30). And that is the reason why the world should give the same honor to the Son as to the Father (John 5:23). That is why honoring Jesus does not dishonor the Father but adds to His glory (Phil. 2:11).

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[107] Ibid., pp. 252-53.

[108] Behm, op. cit., p. 759.

Why Doesn't Paul Say, "Is God"?

The question may be asked: Why does Paul say Jesus is "in the essence of God" instead of simply saying Jesus "is God"? Warfield answers:

> To say that Jesus Christ is 'in the form of God' is then to say not less but more than to say shortly that he is 'God': for it is to emphasize the fact that he has in full possession and use all those characterizing qualities which make God the particular Being we call 'God'; and this mode of expression, rather than the simple 'God,' is employed here precisely because it was of the essence of the Apostle's purpose to keep his reader's mind on all that Christ was as God rather than merely on the abstract fact that he was God.[109]

Then, too, Paul faced the difficulty of being considered a polytheist whenever he spoke of the deity of Christ. His non-Jewish hearers were much too eager to welcome any suggestion of several gods. And those Jews for whom God is one person to this day insist that Christianity breaks the first Commandment by teaching polytheism. Paul wants to avoid the impression that the Christian religion has more than one God. So he carefully coins the phrase en morphē theou, which really cannot be misunderstood: It does not mean two gods, because there is only one morphē; yet there is clearly a duality of persons. As in John 1:1, theos is without an article. This excludes identity of person while it expresses unity of essence. Morphē theou is linked, without articles, as closely as possible, and like a compound it expresses one idea, "God's-being."

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[109] Warfield, op. cit., p. 271-72.

> When a noun linked with an attributive genitive represents one concept, the article of the governing noun is usually omitted.[110]

All this agrees with the opening verse of Philippians, where Jesus is placed on a level with the Father, and both are one source (apo) of love and peace.

En

Pieper objects that according to Col. 1:15 and Heb. 1:3 Christ is not "in God's image" or "in the shining of God's glory," but He "is God's image," and He "is the shining of God's glory."[111] Moenecke also says,

> According to Phil. 2:6 Jesus is not the divine essence and the divine majesty, but he is in the divine form, in the morphē theou, in the divine essence; therefore He possesses it and has it.[112]

The preposition en needs to be examined.

En is very flexible. We, too, are "in" God or "in" Jesus and God or Jesus is "in" us.[113] A spirit may be "in a man" (Eph. 2:2), or a man may be "in a spirit" (Mark 1:23); the meaning is practically the same. Nursing children are called hoi en galakti paides, "the children in milk," just as we may say in English, "He is in his cups."[114]

The general meaning of en is used for the special relation of the Father to the Son: The Father is "in" the Son, and the Son is "in" the

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[110] R. Kuehner and B. Gerth, Ausfuehrliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1898), II, 1: 607.

[111] Pieper, op. cit., p. 322.

[112] Moenecke, op. cit., p. 114.

[113] John 6:56; also Acts 17:28; Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3; 1 John 2:5,24; 3:24; 4:13,15; 5:20.

[114] H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised by H. S. Jones (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), I, 335.

Father (John 10:38; 14:10). Jesus is the Son in a unique sense (John 1:18). Here in Philippians this uniqueness is expressed by one mighty phrase after another.

We find various facets of meaning in en when we look at its Biblical equivalents. The phrase en rusei haimatos (Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43) means the same as the verb haimorrousa (Matt. 9:20). We may then translate such a sentence as that of 1 Timothy 2:15, "if they continue in faith and love and holiness," by "if they continue to believe and love and to be holy" (compare 2 Cor. 13:5). We may render the phrase en tini parantōmati hamartontōn (1 Clement LVI,1) "whoever has fallen into any sin." So our modern phrase "to be in love" means "to love." Therefore en in en morphē theou expresses a vital relation like the action of a subject expressed in a verb.

En pneumati (Mark 1:23) is the same as echōn pneuma (Luke 4:33).[115] So we may translate the en in Luke 1:17: "He will have the spirit and power of Elijah," and in 4:32: "What He said had authority." Similarly Paul tells Timothy, "Don't neglect the gift you have" (1 Tim. 4:14; cf. 2 Tim. 1:6). And in Phil. 2:6 we may say, "Jesus has the essence of God."

> A thing cannot be in the morphē of another unless it possesses the essential qualities of that other. All this goes to show that the rendering of our translation--though He was divine--represents the meaning of the clause.[116]

The equivalent of an en phrase may be a noun, a participle, or an

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[115] For a similar case see Mark 5:2 and Luke 8:27. Mark, too, uses echō in this connection, 3:30; 7:25; cf. Acts 8:7 and daimonizomenoi, Matt. 8:28.

[116] J. H. Michael, The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927), p. 86.

adjective. The classical phrase hoi en telei means "those in office," or "the magistrates."[117] So we may translate: "The Son of Man coming as a King" (Matt. 16:28); "his goods are not disturbed" (Luke 11:21); he was "tormented" (Luke 16:23); Herod and Pilate "had been enemies" (Luke 23:12).[118] We might then render Phil. 2:6: "He was (the essence of) God." In Luke 4:1, en tōi pneumati is synonymous with plērēs pneumatos. And Paul says, "You are . . . in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you" (Rom. 8:9). Accordingly we may say here, "The essence of God lives in Jesus," and then we have the equivalent of Colossians 2:9.

There is one more facet of en suggested in 1 John 5:19: "The whole world lies" en tōi ponerōi, "in the power of the evil one."[119] Here we may say: Jesus was dominated by the essence of God.

En therefore does not separate Jesus from the morphē so that He might not "be the essence of God." Otherwise we would have to conclude from Paul's words, "God was in (en) Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19), or from the words, "God was with (met') Him" (Acts 10:38), that God was not Christ. That the preexistent Christ as a separate person from the Father may linguistically be linked to His deity by such a preposition as en we see especially from John 1:1: "The Word was with (pros) God, and the Word was God." We may make a parallel statement of Phil. 2:6:

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[117] Liddell and Scott, op. cit., II, 1773.

[118] For similar cases see 1 Cor. 15:42-43; 2 Cor. 10:6; 1 John 3:14.

[119] There is a touch of that in egenomēn en pneumati—John's own spirit—Rev. 1:10; 4:2; cf. Acts 11:5; 12:11; 22:17.

He was in the essence of God, and He was the essence of God. En, meaning "inside" (Matt. 4:21), says even more than pros, meaning "face to face." We see that from the contrast of these two propositions in Luke 23:12: Herod and Pilate were "in" (en) enmity "against" (pros) one another. Here pros separates the two, while the en binds them together in one enmity (singular) which fills both of them. In Luke 23:40 one crucified robber tells the other: You are in (en) the same condemnation (singular). Again one condemnation holds both Jesus and the robber to their crosses. Just so one morphē (singular) binds Jesus and the Father in one deity.

Isa

This is confirmed by isa, and adverbial neuter plural, used as a predicate adjective (like houtōs, Rom. 4:18). It is like theos without an article, and so it emphasizes the qualitative and quantitative characteristics rather than the personality (compare John 5:18).

> In John 5:18 isos expresses neither comparison nor identity, but equality of dignity, will, and essence, the same for which men later fought for with homoousios. . . . Isos characteristically meant exactness as well as quantitative equality, and it was for that reason, especially since the idea of qualitative equality is not foreign to the term, better fitted than homoios for that which it was to express in the New Testament, the essentiality as well as the perfection of the equality. . . .
>
> Homoios and its derivatives are actually never used in the New Testament for the equality of Jesus with God, and, later, men emphatically refused to use it for that purpose.[120]

Isos is used in Luke 6:34: Men who loan money want to get "the same amount" back. There are two papyri (from the years 138 and 190 A.D.)

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[120] Staehlin, op. cit., p. 353.

which use to ison to mean "a written copy."[121]

Theodoret comments:

> If the Son had not been equal, but less than the Father, He would not have humbled Himself when He obeyed, but He would have done His duty as a subordinate.[122]

And Bengel:

> "To be equal to God" means "fullness" and "height" as it is clear from the double antithesis, "He emptied Himself, and He humbled Himself." . . . No wonder, then, that He never called Himself "God," rather infrequently "the Son of God," and mostly "the Son of Man."[123]

The article in to einai isa theo; resumes the idea in the phrase en morphei theou.[124] The two phrases mean the same thing: Being in the essence of God implies being equal to the Father. This equality is illustrated particularly in the work of Jesus as the Creator (John 1:3,10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16).

Is the Morphē Visible?

It is not necessary to exclude every kind of visibility from morphē. Vincent says of Aristotle:

> Even in his most abstract and immaterial conceptions of "form" the abstract is brought into concrete realization.

And of Paul:

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[121] Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 307.

[122] Theodoret, op. cit., col. 573.

[123] Bengel, op. cit., p. 771.

[124] F. Blass, Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch (Seventh edition, revised by A. Debrunner; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943), par. 399, 1. Cf. Phil. 1:21,22,24,29; 2:13.

> He conceived essential personality of God externalizing itself and expressing itself in some mode apprehensible by pure spiritual intelligences if not apprehensible by the human mind.[125]

We are here dealing with the paradoxes of an invisible God becoming visible. God speaks in nature (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-23). He did more than that when He appeared in some corporeal form (Ex. 33:18-23; 34:5-7; Is. 6:6; 40:5). When men saw that form, they saw God. He showed Himself in the miraculous created forms of fire, cloud, and magnificent scenes.[126] Sometimes we are specifically told that God became "like" created things (Ex. 24:17; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23). In Christ God became concrete flesh and blood. He is God sōmatikōs (Col. 2:9). Those who saw Jesus saw the Father (John 12:45; 14:9). We shall see "Him" as He is (1 John 3:2); the antecedent to "Him" is theos. Here on earth our vision is limited. And it is impossible to estimate how much the glorification of the body will expand our powers of vision. "Now we see by a mirror and are puzzled, but then we shall see face to face. Now I learn little by little, but then I shall know as well as Someone has known me" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Morphe during the Humiliation

Was the Morphē Laid Aside?

For many a "Kapazitaetstheologe" the man Jesus never could be God; He had to be without the "form" of God and without equality with God. It is quite frequently asserted that His status during His preexistence as well as during His humiliation was inferior to His status after His exaltation.

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[125] Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, p. 79.

[126] Ex. 3:2-4; 40:34; Lev. 9:23-24; Num. 14:10; 16:19,42; 20:6; Deut. 5:24; 2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-3; Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:4,19; 11:22-23; 43:2-5; 44:4.

> Equality with God did not inhere in Christ's preincarnate being. He received it first at his exaltation and as a reward for his perfect obedience.[127]

Thomasius said:

> To isa einai does not mean to be equal to God but to have a manner like that of God. . . . It is the form of existence in which Christ could have appeared . . . but which was allotted to Him only after He assumed the form of a servant and as a reward for His obedience in that form at the end of the way.[128]

Weiss:

> The correct distinction of this passage . . . depends on the correct distinction between to einai isa theo, which was only appointed for Christ, and morphē theou, which He already posseses in His pre-temporal existence. . . .

The exaltation

> must . . . have given Him more than He possessed, namely, . . . the einai isa Theo, . . . despised by Him by the way of wilful usurpation. To be sure, He who descended has again, suitably to His nature, ascended above all heavens (Eph. 4:10), and has thus been restored to His original Being; but, according to Col. 3:1; Eph.1:20, God, after raising Him from the dead, has set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly world (comp. Rom. 8:34), and has thus made Him to be absolutely the first (Col. 1:18). This position of dignity, equal with God, He never possessed before.[129]

Some interpreters more definitely define the situation by claiming that certain divine attributes, such as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence are relative and may be surrendered without a loss of the divine essence: The deity is only stripped to its essence. Barth says that "Jesus permitted Himself to be robbed of His omnipotence."[130] "He completely laid aside, not the essence, but the form of His deity."[131]

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[127]Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, p. 84. This is not Vincent's own position.

[128]Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 249.

[129]Weiss, op. cit., II, 101-2.

[130]Karl Barth, Die Lehre von Gott, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik (Third edition; Zollikon-Zuerich: Evangelischer Verlag Ag., 1948), II/2. 545.

[131]Ibid., II/1, 447.

"He did not want to be God, but denied Himself."[132]

These conceptions of the humiliation are based on the idea that the morphē of God and the morphē of a servant could not be together in the same person[133] and therefore the morphē of God was laid aside. But this is a picture of the person of Jesus which is not given in the text. Nowhere does Paul say that the morphē of God was laid aside. It is not in the word labōn (v.7). Jesus could take the morphē of a servant without surrendering the morphē of God. The rich man in Nathan's parable who took (elabon) the poor man's lamb did not lose any sheep or cow of his own by his action (2 Sam. 12:1-4). In the phrase, "He was made in the likeness of men" (v. 7), the word "likeness" guarantees that there was no change in the person of Christ. Also the verb genomenos implies no such change. When Paul became (egenomēn, Col. 1:23,25) an Apostle, he did not stop being Paul. The reason for laying aside the morphē is most commonly found in ekenōse. But in order to prove the point by this verb, we have to select one of several meanings of ekenōse without considering the real fitness of that meaning and then coerce the rest of the passage to fit the selected interpretation. Sound exegesis will take account of all the facts of the text and by mutually fitting the meanings of the words together let them yield a self-interpretation. According to the meaning of ekenōse established in chapter IV of this material, Christ never laid His morphē aside.

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[132]Karl Barth, Die Lehre von der Schoenfung, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik (Zollikon-Zuerich: Evangelischer Verlag Ab., 1951), III/4, 193.

[133]Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, p. 83.

> The word does not indicate a surrender of deity, nor a paralysis of deity, nor a change of personality, nor a break in the continuity of self-consciousness. Christ's consciousness of deity was not suspended during his earthly life.[134]

That Jesus was given an equality with God in His exaltation also is nowhere in the text.

> How can equality with God be conferred or superinduced? The words are to einai isa. It is a matter of essential being. Equality with God can belong only to essence. Equality of power or of rank can be conferred, but not equality of being.[135]

An Unchangeable Deity

Even Socrates[136] insisted that God always stays in His own form because He is perfect. God cannot change (Mal. 3:6).

> To change the form of an existence would be impossible, because that would be to change the existence itself, which again would be to destroy it, since it is a truism that one thing cannot become another thing and still remain itself. The form is what determines and establishes identity. It constitutes the law according to which an actuality must be and must act and must continue.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> God has his own distinctive "form." His nature is his and his only. . . . He cannot destroy his nature, and he cannot change it. His nature is as eternal, as necessary, as inevitable, as his existence. He has the rights, the prerogatives, and the responsibilities which go with his nature-- that is to say, with his "form"--and he acts accordingly. Indeed, he could not act otherwise.[137]

An unchanging God could lose nithing in Christ's humiliation and gain nothing in His exaltation. Jesus did not exchange the essence of God for that of a slave; the loss of one attribute of the Son of God would be His self-negation. He had not assumed the morphē of God and

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[134] Ibid., p. 89.

[135] Ibid., p. 86.

[136] Plato, Republic, I, 190-92.

[137] Lewis, op. cit., pp. 23-23.

could not lay it aside. Hyparchōn (see chapter III) and einai indicate that He was and continued in the morphē of God and equal to God through all the actions of the aorists which express His humiliation and exaltation. The Jews understood that (John 5:18). And He could not acquire an equality with God which He already had.

Jesus does not stop being the Son any more than the Father stops being the Father. There is always a Father and a Son in God. His divine person continues undiminished during His humiliation. He remains the unchangeable God while He becomes a changeable man. He is always free and independent while He becomes dependent on space, time, and external circumstances; He is infinitely superior to all human weakness and pain while He becomes exhausted and suffers agony. He is the Life while He dies.

Glory

In order to understand more clearly the condition of the morphē of God and of the equality with God, we may see what happened to the "glory" of Jesus and to His being Lord during His humiliation.

Peter says that Jesus received (labōn) glory from the Father in the transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:17), and the exaltation is said to be His glorification (John 7:39). The Lamb is "worthy to receive glory" (Rev. 5:12). But Jesus also says that the Father is glorified in the Son (John 14:13). He says "glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You" (John 17:1). God receives (labein) glory (Rev. 4:11; 11:13). If we argue that Jesus did not have the glory, because He received glory, we also must argue that the Father lacks glory, because He receives glory. The Bible text is much more precise than its interpreters have been.

Unlike other human beings (Rom. 3:23), Jesus had the glory of God during His humiliation, because "He showed His glory" (John 2:11; cf. 1:14; 11:40). Paul says, "They . . . crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8; cf. Heb. 1:3).

Kurios

Just as Jesus had the glory of God, so He also was Lord during His humiliation. Kurios was thoroughly understood by Paul's pagan hearers, who had called their gods "lords" (1 Cor. 8:5-6) and for whom "lord" was a common title for divinity as it was throughout the Mediterranean world. It was just as thoroughly understood by his Jewish hearers for whom "Lord" meant the Yahweh of the Old Testament. Paul uses this term "Lord" for Jesus about 250 times. He meant it in an absolute sense. In this Philippian passage Jesus is the "Lord of heaven and earth" (vv.10-11) and sharply contrasted with "slave" (v. 7).

Jesus was the Kurios of the Old Testament. He did not stop being that in His incarnation, because the angel of the Kurios calls Jesus Kurios at His birth (Luke 2:9,11). During His humiliation He had the divine authority to speak the truth (Matt. 7:29) and to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6); He is the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8) and has power over wind and wave (Matt. 8:26-27), over the spirits (Matt. 10:1), over life and death (John 11:41-42), even over His own life and death (John 10:18). It was this divine lordship which during His humiliation made His redemption valid and effective.

> His being equal to God means nothing else than to be Lord, and He remained Lord also when he was a servant, when He was altogether a man. Through this self-denial and humiliation He rises to the

public dignity of Kurios.[138]

> Equality with God he had as his birthright, but his Messianic lordship was something which could come only through his incarnation and its attendant humiliation; and it was this, and not equality with God, that he received in his exaltation. . . . Out of the human life, death, and resurrection of Christ comes a type of sovereignty which could pertain to him only through his triumph over human sin (Heb. i. 3), through his identification with men as their brother. Messianic lordship could not pertain to his preincarnate state. As Messianic lord he could be inaugurated only after his human experience (Acts 2:36). Messianic lordship is a matter of function, not of inherent power and majesty. The phrase "seated at the right hand of God" is Messianic, and expresses Christ's Messianic triumph, but not to the detriment of any essential dignity possessed before his incarnation. But the incarnation places him, in a new sense, in actual, kingly relation to the collective life of the universe. . . . Lordship won by conquest in incarnation is distinguished from inherent lordship. This is the lordship which Jesus preferred to that which was merely inherent in him as the equal of God,--lordship through self-renunciation, mastery through service.[139]

What the limitations were during His humiliation we learn from what follows Philippians 2:6a. Since He is now at the right hand of God, those limitations were set aside, and He, our Brother, rules all things for the benefit of His Church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18).

Summary

Morphē often means "outward form" in classical Greek; it always means that in the Septuagint; and it means that in Mark 16:12. If it means mere "appearance," it is equal to schēma and may be deceiving: Then Phil. 2:6 would not prove that Jesus is God.

Luther and those who followed him defined morphē as "expression": While it is not the essence of God, the "expression" of God proves that Jesus is God. Those who refer this passage to the preexistent Christ say that Jesus appeared in this morphē to the inhabitants of heaven;

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138 Staehlin, op. cit., p. 354.

139Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, pp. 86-87.

those who refer it to the incarnate Christ say that it consisted of His teaching and miracles. This morphē may also be identified with doxa, which is ambiguous and may be defined as "expression" and as "essence."--The whole difficulty may be traced to the assumption that Jesus laid something aside in His humiliation; this something must be the morphē; therefore morphē cannot mean "essence."

Morphē also meant "essence" in classical Greek and was used of non-corporeal things, including an invisible God. In the transfiguration morphē could mean "appearance." But even there it is likely to mean the eternal Son of God. Paul did not use morphē, like schēma for the "external form." When Jesus assumed the morphē of a servant, He really did become a servant for us; likewise the morphē of God was the essence of God. It was the glory of God, one glory of the Father and the Son. "Being in the morphē of God" means "being the essence of God." Isa, too, means qualitative and quantitative equality. Such a divine essence does not exclude some kind of heavenly visibility.

The text does not say that Jesus laid aside the morphē or that He was not equal to God until His exaltation. Jesus never stopped being God. The deity of Jesus, being unchangeable, could not be laid aside or diminished when He became a changeable man. As God He had the glory of God and was Lord throughout His humiliation.

CHAPTER III

THE MEANING OF HĒGĒSATO

The Time of Action

The Incarnate Christ

Since only the incarnate Christ provides the example for Christians to follow, Philippians 2:6 has been referred, particularly by Lutherans, to the incarnate Christ. Then morphē theou and to einai isa theo are ascribed to Christ during His humiliation.

Hoenecke offers three reasons for this interpretation:

> The subject in this passage is Jesus Christ, therefore not the preexistent Word, as Papists and Calvinists want to interpret it, but the incarnate Word, who has already become man. That is shown by:
>
> 1. The name Jesus Christ;
> 2. The explanation that Christ was en morphei theou, in the form of God, for the preexistent Word is not en morphē theou, in the form of God, but He is Himself the form of God (Heb. 1:3);
> 3. The fact that the humiliation, dying, is ascribed to the subject, which would not fit if the preexistent Word were the subject. We can say: God has died, but only of the God-man, not absolutely of the Son of God, who has not yet assumed the human nature.[1]

Stoeckhardt gives the main reason for referring this passage to the incarnate Christ:

> It is clear that only the last fits the entire context of the passage. . . . The example is not the eternal Son of God, but the Son of God who appeared in the flesh and now stays and lives as man among men. The Gospel presents the picture of Christ as He

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[1] A. Hoenecke, Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912), III, 112-13.

lived and showed Himself on earth. The expression, "He was in a divine form," refers to Him.[2]

Kretzmann says:

> We reject every presentation which permits the subject of the sentence to be the preexistent Christ, in His preincarnate, spiritual existence.[3]

But this interpretation involves a serious textual difficulty. The incarnation is simultaneous with the action of ekenōsen (v. 7). If we refer hēgēsato, which precedes ekenōse, to the incarnate Christ, the action of this verb is made to follow the action of ekenōsen. The action of ekenōsen flows as a result from the decision of hēgēsato. The decision cannot follow the action. Referring hēgēsato to the incarnate Christ, therefore, is an intolerable inversion of the sequence of the text.

The Preexistent and Incarnate Christ

Did Paul perhaps use hēgēsato loosely so that it could refer to both the preexistent and incarnate Christ?

The aorist means an effective decision "whose execution is self-evident."

> So it was necessary to use ērōtēsan (Acts 10:48), because the fact that the request was granted is indicated only by this aorist (similarly 23:18).[4]

If the request is not granted, the imperfect is used (Acts 3:3).

The aorist may suggest an effect without including it in the scope

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[2]P. E. Kretzmann, "'Hielt er's nicht fuer einen Raub,' Phil. 2,6," Concordia Theological Monthly (April, 1931), p. 252. Kretzmann gives a report of Stoeckhardt's exegesis of the passage.

[3]Ibid., p. 251.

[4]F. Blass, Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch (seventh edition, revised by A. Debrunner; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943), p. 146.

of its tense. From the statement that God loved us (ēgapēsen, John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10) we may expect the redemption, but this effect reaches ahead of the time indicated in the aorist.

> That which began in the past can exist in the present; this, however, does not lie in the aorist, but in the context.[5]

The aorist can be used to express an action extending over many years: ekenōsen, verse 7, covers thirty-three years. It can sum up many individual actions: Hundred of instances are included in heuretheis. But it cannot express an action and its effect. (In the following examples the English translation of hēgeomai is underscored.) A papyrus from the third century A. D. reads: "I think it is superfluous to write to you";[6] here hēgēsamēn is an epistolary aorist expressing the decision which resulted in the action (graphein). (For similar instances see 2 Cor. 9:5; Phil. 2:25.) In 1 Timothy 1:11-17 Paul tells about God's appointing him as an Apostle in a series of eight aorists, one of which is hēgēsato: It expresses God's choice. He also uses the aorist elsewhere to express that appointment (Rom. 1:5; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). The result was that Paul was an Apostle, but that result is not expressed in these aorists. His appointment was due to God's mercy (ēleēthēn, 1 Tim. 1:16). When Paul wants to express that the mercy once given to him is also his present source of apostolic authority, he uses the perfect ēleēmenos (1 Cor. 7:25).

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[5] R. Kuehner, F. Blass, and B. Gerth, Ausfuehrliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache (Third edition; Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1890-1904), II, 1: 156.

[6] J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), p. 277.

Since hēgeomai with the meaning "believe, hold" so commonly has a present effect it is "usu. in pf."[7] We have the perfect in the following passage in Job 30:19: "He has considered me equal to the clay: My lot is in dust and ashes." The present attitude of hēgeomai is expressed by the present (1 Tim. 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:13; 3:15).

Now if Paul had wanted to state that Christ's decision had a past or a present effect, what verb form of hēgeomai would he have used? We have Paul's own usage nearly given in Philippians 3:7-8; it is as if he meant to answer our grammatical question:

> But any advantages I had I decided to count (perfect) a loss for Christ. Yes, I count (present) everything a loss because it is so much better to know Christ Jesus, my Lord; I have lost (aorist) everything for Him and count (present) it as rubbish in order to win Christ." Here tauta hēgēmai . . . includes in its perfect the subsequent effect, ta panta ezēmiōthēn. (Compare Acts 26:2.) Another perfect expressing a past effect is found in Job 33:10-11: "He considered me his enemy. He put (aorist) my feet in the stocks and watched (aorist) wherever I went.

It is clear that if Paul had wanted the verb hēgeomai in Philippians 2:6 to express also the effect (ekenōse), he would have used hēgētai and not hēgēsato. The grammars agree with Paul:

> Since the Aorist and the Perfect both involve reference to a past event, the Perfect affirming the existence of the result of the event, and the Aorist affirming the event itself, without either affirming or denying the existence of the result, it is evident that whenever the result of the past action does still exist, either tense may be used, according as the writer wishes either to affirm the result or merely the event. . . . See, e.g., 1 Cor. 15:4; hoti etaphē, kai hoti egegertai tei hemerai tei tritei, that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day. The burial is simply a past event. Of the resurrection there is an existing result, prominently before his mind.[8]

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[7] H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised by H. S. Jones (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), I, 763.

[8] E. D. Burton, Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek (Fifth edition; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1903) p. 41.

Moulton contrasts the aorist in Mark 16:6 with the perfect in 1 Corinthians 15:4:

> Ēgerthē states simply the past complete fact, the astounding news of what had just happened. . . . Egēgertai sets forth with the utmost possible emphasis the abiding results of the event, which supply the main thought of the whole passage.[9]

Hēgēsato, therefore, does not refer to the incarnate but to the preexistent Christ. It tells us what part Christ had in the planning of our salvation; this was done during His preexistence (John 3:16; Eph. 1:4; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). The name Jesus is no argument against that, since it is used for the preexistent Christ (1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 8:9; Jude 5 BA,V).

> It was said that the subject of the entire passage is named "Christ Jesus," and that, even granting a pre-existent state, such a title would be inappropriate to designate the Logos prior to His incarnation. To me this objection has little weight. Even common usage is against it; no one thinks it is inaccurate, for instance, to speak of the "childhood of President Coolidge," though, strictly speaking, President Coolidge had no childhood.[10]

The fact that hēgēsato refers to the preexistent Christ does not compel us to limit Christ as our example to His preexistence. Paul cites the exemplary action of Christ in hēgēsato and six additional aorists. These six aorists form a group separated from hēgēsato by the adversative alla; in his Hebrew translation Delitzsch[11] correctly makes a separate group of these six by rendering them as a perfect followed by five waw consecutives with the imperfect. Hēgēsato refers to the preexistent Christ, and the following six aorists refer to the incarnate Christ.

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[9] J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Third edition; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1949), I, 137.

[10] A. J. McClain, "The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8," The Biblical Review (October, 1928), p. 512.

[11] F. Delitzsch, The Books of the New Testament, a translation from the Greek into Hebrew (Berlin: Trauwitzsch und Sohn, 1901), p. 366.

> The Greek Fathers and Augustine, followed by the Catholic and most Reformed expositors, held that vs. 6 referred to Jesus in his preincarnate state; while vs. 7 and 8 referred to the incarnate Savior.[12]

The incarnation is passed over quickly and forms no sharp dividing line in the Greek text. En morphei theou huparchon, like plousios ōn (2 Cor. 8:9) may reach back into eternity without losing the time of the humiliation. Moulton says: "The durative present in such cases gathers up past and present time into one phrase."[13] (For examples see echōn and echō, John 5:5-6.) The preexistent "Christ" appears as "Jesus" in time. His decision to sacrifice Himself flowed through the whole work of redemption from His lowly wrappings in the manger to those in the grave. The mind which should be in us He had in heaven and on earth. In His preexistence the path on earth lay clearly before Him, and in His incarnation He carried out what He had promised. Jesus says, "I know where I came from and where I am going," and "This is the purpose for which I am here now" (John 8:14; 12:27). Before Paul's mind is this Person with a consciousness reaching back into eternity, and this Person, without beginning but coming into our time, is our example.

Huparchōn

Stoeckhardt argued that if this were the preexistent Christ we would have huparxas instead of hyparchōn. (We may note here an unintended admission that hēgēsato may be preexistent.)

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[12] M. R. Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 83.

[13] Moulton, op. cit., p. 119.

> The participle huparchōn fits only the incarnate Christ, the man among men. . . . Of this One it is said now: He was in a divine form.[14]

Theodoret contrasted the present huparchōn with the aorist genemenos:

> He did not say, "Having been made in the form of God," but "being in the form of God."[15]

Luther similarly contrasted huparchōn with the aorist labōn and emphasized that it meant that Jesus really was God:

> He did not assume such divine behavior as He assumed the form of a servant, but He was, He was, He was, I say, in it. In the little word "was" lies the power that He had the divine essence together with the divine form.[16]

In certain settings the verb does carry the meaning of "being originally by nature." The International Critical Commentary translates the verb in 1 Cor. 11:7, "since he is by original constitution,"[17] referring to man made in the image of God and implying his descent from Adam. In 2 Cor. 8:17 Paul uses huparchōn in speaking of the zeal of Titus as a trait of his personality. In 2:14 he speaks of Peter "being" (huparchōn) by birth and culture a Jew. In Phil. 2:6 huparchōn is contrasted with einai, from which it is separated by only four words, and it must mean more than einai. Both verbs in the present tense express continuation. Particularly huparchōn gives us the background which

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[14]Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 253.

[15]Theodoreti Opera Omnia, Patrologiae Patrum Graecorum (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1864), 82, col. 572.

[16]Martin Luther, "Am Palmsonntage," Kirchenpostille, Saemtliche Schriften (edited by J. G. Walch; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1883), XII, col. 470.

[17]A. Robertson and A. Plummer, First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1929), p. 231.

continues before, during, and after an action: Joseph, being a member of the Jewish court continues to be that while he requests the body of Jesus, during the burial, and later (Luke 23:50-53); David continued to be a prophet while he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:30-31); Abraham continued to be a hundred years old while he trusted God (Rom. 4:19-20).

The present participle can express the past, the present, and the future. Since hēgēsato refers to the past, huparchōn seems to represent an imperfect rather than a present. Staehlin says: "Hyparchōn stands for an imperfect."[18] Lightfoot says, "The word denotes 'prior existence,' but not necessarily 'eternal existence.'"[19] We see that from Luke 16:23: The rich man "being" (huparchōn) "tormented in hell"; the action of the verb began at his death (cf. Gen. 22:13; Ruth 4:9; Ps. 103:16). But while huparchōn does not itself mean eternity, it lends itself well to express eternity. In Phil. 2:6 huparchōn is in a setting which goes beyond the ordinary time limits of the imperfect, aorist, or perfect. En morphe; theou takes the participle into the preexistence as a background for hēgēsato.

> The phrase en morphe; theou huparchon is then to be understood of Christ's preincarnate state. To say that he was en morphe; theou is to say that he existed before his incarnation as essentially one with God, and that objectively, and not merely in God's self-consciousness as the not yet incarnate Son--the ideal man.[20]

Morphē theou or His doxa are the constant possession of Christ. Jesus continues to be or have the morphē theou before, during, and after the

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[18]G. Staehlin in G. Kittel, editor, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1950), III, 354.

[19]J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), p. 110.

[20]Vincent, op. cit., p. 84.

time in which His saving acts take place. En morphei theou takes huparchōn back into the eternity of God's being. Vincent translates, "Though He existed from eternity in a state of equality with God."[21] The participle is like ōn in "being rich," (2 Cor. 8:9) and in "being God over all blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5). It is like the finite verb in the present, eimi in "before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), or estin in "who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15) or in "He is before all things" (Col. 1:17), or katoikei in "in Him . . . lives the whole being of God" (Col. 2:9). It is the equivalent of the imperfect in the statements, "in the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1), "that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4), "the glory I had with You" (John 17:5).

The eternal background of Jesus stands in contrast with an act in time. "In the beginning was (imperfect) the Word," says John, and then he adds, "all things were made (aorist) by Him" (John 1:1-3; cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2). "The Word was (imperfect) God," he says, "and it became (aorist) flesh" (John 1:1,14; cf. Rom. 1:3-4; 8:3; Here we have the preexistent Christ referred to in huparchōn and contrasted (alla) with the historic act of redemption expressed in ekenōsen (aorist) and the following aorists.

Huparchōn reaches back into an endless eternity: Ho theos . . . ho huparchōn pro tōn aiōnōn (Ps. 55:20); and it reaches forward into an endless eternity: Ho nomos ho huparchon eis ton aiōna (Baruch 4:1). It gives us the Lord of heaven and earth: Houtos ouranou kai gēs

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[21] Ibid., p. 57.

huparchōn kurios (Acts 17:24).

The tense sequence of the text is as follows: Have this mental attitude in the present and in the future (phroneite), which was in Jesus, who, being in the essence of God in the present and future, but particularly in the eternal past (huparchōn), decided (hēgēsato) to redeem us.

A Choice

Weizsaecker correctly observes that there could hardly have been a choice if hēgēsato had not taken place in eternity.

> Had he not given his doctrine of Christ this backward extension, the human life of Christ would have become for him a sort of impersonal event, and Jesus a mere instrument. His doctrine of the preexistence accordingly enables him to look upon Christ's work as a personal act.[22]

Of course, Paul did not extend his doctrine into preexistence; he reported what he was told.

Jesus was more than an instrument of our redemption controlled by an irresistible destiny. He could have chosen always to act only as God. No one compelled Him to make a different choice. He made a voluntary decision to redeem us by a self-imposed slavery. He says of His life which He is sacrificing for us: "No one takes it from Me; no, I Myself am giving it. I have power to give it, and I have power to take it back again" (John 10:5).

The choice in hēgeomai is determined by a purpose: Paul finds it necessary to urge men to go to the Corinthians to prepare the collection (2 Cor. 9:5); he considered everything a loss in order to win Christ

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[22]Quoted in Vincent, op. cit., p. 84.

(Phil. 3:9; cf. 1 Tim. 6:1; Heb. 11:26; James 1:2-4). So the choice of the Son of God was determined by His purpose to redeem us (Gal. 4:5; Heb. 2:14-15). His heart was set on this purpose, because He loved us (John 13:1; 15:13).

Hēgeomai implies an evaluation: By His love and mercy the Lord rated Paul a faithful person (1 Tim. 1:12); Sarah considered the Lord, who had promised her a child, faithful (Heb. 11L11); slaves "should think of their masters as men who deserve every honor" (1 Tim. 6:1). The result of this evaluation is often new and surprising: James (1:2) writes, "When you are tried in different ways, . . . think it a pure joy." The Son of God made an evaluation, weighing His heavenly life of glory in one hand and the Cross in the other. It was a surprise that He should want to suffer and die; His disciples found it hard to believe; even Moses and Elijah discuss it with Jesus. The amazement of the New Testament writers runs through their writings from the surprise felt by Elizabeth when Mary comes to her to the doxology to the Lamb in Revelation. Even at the end of the century John still writes that God so (outōs) loved the world (John 3:16).

Two papyri from 67 B. C. and 54-67 A. D. show how the aorist of hēgeomai with a negative express scorn for a good thing.[23] So Moses considered the abuse that Christ suffered greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and he chose to be mistreated (Heb. 11:26).

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[23]Moulton and Milligan, on. cit., p. 277.

Christians who sin deliberately treat the blood of Christ a common thing (Heb. 10:29). Paul counted all the advantages which he had as a cultured Jew a loss (Phil. 3:7-8). And Jesus disregarded all His divine prerogatives and chose the cross, thinking nothing of its shame (Heb. 12:2).

That was the choice of the Son of God, the "must" (Luke 24:26) which brought Him to the cross.

Summary

Since the example which Paul wants us to follow is the incarnate Christ, it is argued that hēgēsato refers to the incarnate Christ. But hēgēsato precedes ekenōse which is simultaneous with the incarnation and must therefore give us the action of the preexistent Christ. The verb tells us what part the Son of God had in planning our salvation.

Could the aorist include both the preexistent and the incarnate Christ? The aorist may suggest the effect, but if Paul had wanted to include the effect in the scope of the verb, he would have used the perfect. Hēgēsato states only the fact of the action of the pre-existent Christ. This does not limit the example of Christ to His preexistence; the preexistent and incarnate Christ is our example.

Huparchōn, contrasted with the aorist, means "being originally by nature." Morphē theou takes the participle into the eternal background of God's being, contrasted with the redemption in time.

Hēgēsato means a voluntary choice made by the Son of God to accomplish our redemption. He made an evaluation and a surprising decision: to go to the Cross.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEANING OF HARPAGMOS

Active or Passive

The Latin church fathers took harpagmos (the object complement of to einai isa theoi) in an active sense, the "act of robbing." Words like baptismos (baptism), brugmos (gnashing), peirasmos (temptation), seismos (shaking), have an active meaning. Plutarch uses harpagmos in an active sense.[1] So the King James Version translates the word with "robbery": He had not seized what did not belong to Him; He had equality with God. This interpretation makes the phrase a continuation of the preceding phrase: He was in the essence of God and considered Himself equal to God.

Meyer enlarged this active meaning by making arpagmos "an opportunity to rob."

> He did not look at His being equal to God as a relation in which He could take booty, as though He could actively express it by snatching the property of others.[2]

In this interpretation an important part, the object, has to be supplied: the glory of the world, wealth, honors. Even when stated negatively such a picture of Christ as violently robbing does not fit Jesus in this text.

But just as the active participles, "clothing," "warning,"

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[1] H. Schumacher, Christus in seiner Praeexistenz und Kenose (Rome: Paepstl. Bibel-Institut, 1921) II, 330.

[2] A. W. H. Meyer, Briefe an die Philipper, Kolosser, und an Philemon (Second edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1859), p. 53.

"writing," become nouns with a passive meaning, expressing the result of an action, so words ending in -mos also may be passive. Matthew uses theriasmos with an active meaning, "reaping" (13:30), and with a passive meaning, "the grain in the field" (9:38). The Latin for harpagmos, rapina, also is used actively and passively. The following words are passive: desmos (chian) himatismos (garment), porismos (means of gain), phragmos (fence), psalmos (Psalm). In this text "being equal with God" is not an action; the phrase has a passive content which makes harpagmos passive in meaning.

The Greek church fathers, followed by Luther and Lightfoot, took harpagmos in a passive sense: res rapta, praeda, "that which has been robbed," "plunder," "prize." This interpretation makes the phrase a contrast with the preceding: Although He was in the essence of God, He did not consider it something robbed. More recent developments in the interpretation of this passive meaning are the meanings: res rapienda (a prize to be snatched), hermaion, Gluecksfund (a fortunate find).

The Time

The noun harpagmos is timeless, and so it may be past, present, or future. Modernists have exploited the possibility that it may be future. When the Revised Standard Version translates, "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,"[3] it arbitrarily makes "equality with God" something that Jesus did not have and by the gerundive "to be grasped" inserts a future which is not there. The unitarianism of the Revised Standard Version in this passage is taken for granted by its translators.

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[3]Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952), N. T., 222.

who have issued the statement:

> ASV has given an improved reading of this theological passage, particularly in the idea that Christ would not grasp for equality with God, in contrast to the KJ idea that Christ thought there was nothing wrong with being on an equal basis. . . . In contrast to KJ, RSV gives us the impression that Christ was not necessarily equal with God before the incarnation; he would not grasp for equality out of turn, but because of his humiliation he was given the high position and the name "Christ-Lord."[4]

> According to Dr. Craig, there was not even any discussion about the translation of harpagmon in Philippians 2:6, all nine members of the committee agreeing upon this point, that equality with God was not something to be held onto but booty to be grasped.[5]

Craig's personal interpretation was as follows:

> This preexistent heavenly being existed in the form of God. Adam also had been made in the image of God. The first man had been tempted to eat of the fruit of the tree that would have made him like God. But this second heavenly man had not looked upon equality with God as booty to be seized. . . . Here is the Pauline Christological affirmation: "Jesus is Lord"--not God.[6]

Grant interprets this passage to mean, "as the rebel angels did, aspiring to seize the throne of the Most High."[7]

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[4] M. J. Shroyer, Understanding the Scriptures (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1948), pp. 50-51. Foreword by L. A. Weigle and C. T. Craig. This is a book recommended by the Committee on Leadership Education of the International Council of Religious Education, which also issued the RSV, for use as a textbook in two courses.

[5] J. T. Bayly, "Further Light on the Revised New Testament," The Sunday School Times (June 1, 1946), p. 494.

[6] C. T. Craig, "The Cristological Foundation of the World Council of Churches," Christendom (Winter, 1946), p. 17.

[7] F. C. Grant, An Introduction to New Testament Thought (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 236.

Adam and Eve aspired to "be like God and know what is good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). God says to Lucifer:

> You thought, "I will go up to heaven. I will set up my throne above God's stars, and I will sit enthroned on the mountain where God meets with men, in the sides of the north. I will go over the top of the clouds; I will be like the most high God!" (Is. 14:13-14)

Antiochus had similar aspirations:

> The man who just now had thought he could command the waves of the sea, in his superhuman boastfulness, and thought he would weigh the mountain heights in a scale was flat on the ground. . . . A little before this he thought he could touch the stars in the sky, but now no one could carry him because he stank so unbearably. . . . And when he could no longer bear his own stench, he said, "It is right to submit to God,and, since a person is mortal, not to think he is equal to God" (onta isothea phronein).

When Antiochus repented, he decided "to make all the Jews equal (isous) to the Athenians." (2 Macc. 9:8,10,12,15)

God condemns all such aspirations. Jesus, too, would stand condemned for blasphemy if He as a mere carpenter aspired to be God.

Baugher, who declares that Jesus was God from eternity, tried to harmonize "to be grasped" with the deity of Christ:

> The condition belonging to his being in the form of God, viz., his being "equal with God," the glory and majesty of his equality with the Father, was not a something to be seized and held on to in self-enjoyment, an object of grasping ambition.[8]

But even for Vincent the interpretation "thought it not a thing to be grasped" is the reason for Christ's "voluntary renunciation of his preincarnate majesty."[9]

Chrysostom pointed out that it is no humility to do without what

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[8]H. L. Baugher, "Interpretation of Philippians II 6,7," The Lutheran Quarterly (January, 1878), pp. 129-31.

[9]M. R. Vincent, The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902) pp. 78, 83.

doesn't belong to one.

> No one wishing to exhort to humility says, Be humble and think less of yourself than of your compeers, for such and such a person being a slave did not set himself up against his master; therefore imitate him. May, one might reply, here is a question not of humility, but of infatuation. . . . It is no humility for the inferior not to set himself up against his superior. . . . If being a man, He washed the feet of men, He did not empty, did not humble Himself; if being a man, He did not grasp at equality with God, He deserves no praise.[10]

It is not noble to forego what is impossible. And if Jesus did not deny Himself, Paul could not praise Him or tell us to follow His example. When Paul is made to say: "Think as Jesus thought: He didn't try to be God, since He wasn't God," that is a unitarian fiasco which modernism injects into this text. It makes no sense, and it cannot bear inspection. So Niebergall, who calls the facts about Christ "mythological," despairs of using this passage effectively:

> The meaning is clear: By the wearisome way of humiliation Jesus has earned his position of equality with God, which he has now instead of carrying it off by way of a quick robbery. . . . I could neither as a preacher support the admonition to be humble on that, nor could I as a hearer feel myself stimulated to deny myself. . . . The nearest and entirely practical application is this: Don't try to gain influence by way of robbery, but only by way of service.[11]

But take the text as it is, with Jesus being God and equal to God, and yet becoming a lowly slave for us--and you have a supreme example for us to follow. The higher the level from which Jesus acts, the greater the self-denial and the more emphatic the lesson which He teaches.

If Paul had meant that Jesus would acquire a divinity in the future, he certainly would have used <u>gignesthai</u> with <u>morphē</u> and with <u>isa</u>.

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[10] Translated by J. B. Lightfoot, <u>Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians</u> (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), p. 137.

[11] F. Niebergall, <u>Praktische Auslegung des neuen Testaments</u> (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1914), p. 455.

and perhaps also a note. There is no future in harpagmon or elsewhere in the text. The text states clearly that Jesus was and is God, that He was and is equal to God: He could not reach for such an equality.

Chrysostom said:

> If He was God, how could He snatch it? . . . For who could say, "Such a one, being a man, did not snatch being a man"? How could anyone snatch what he is?[12]

The correct interpretation is the following: Whether He was equal with God

> that question cannot be decided by harpagmon hēgeisthai, since this expression may mean "using something present" as well as "snatching at something that is possible." . . . To decide this question, we must start with isa einai theōi. Christ was and is essentially equal to God; this equality is His possession which He cannot surrender or lose.[13]

> Does it mean "He did not greedily desire to be like God? Then He did not possess equality with God. But that does not agree with statements like 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15ff, in which Paul ascribes to Christ participation in the creation.[14]

Display

Luther said, "He did not make a show of it over against us."[15]

Calvin: "He did not display what He was.[16] Chemnitz:

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[12] Meyer, op. cit., p. 53.

[13] G. Staehlin, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1950), III, 354.

[14] G. Heinzelmann, "Der Brief an die Philipper," Die kleineren Briefe des Apostel Paulus, Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Fourth edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), VIII, 92.

[15] Martin Luther, "Am Palmsonntage," Kirchenpostille, Saemmtliche Schriften (Edited by J. G. Walch; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1883), XII, col. 474.

[16] J. Calvin, In omnes Novi Testamenti Epistolas Commentarii (Second edition; Halis Saxonum: Sumptibus Librariae Gebaueriae, 1834), p. 90.

> Grotius comments that it is a Syriac way of speaking; and that it is a custom for anyone who has acquired anything by his bravery in war to display it before all people, as the Romans used to do it in a triumphal procession.[17]

Hoenecke:

> He did not display it in constant use, as a human victorious and triumphant king makes a triumphant boast of his spoils.[18]

And Pieper:

> The context shows that the meaning of the words, "He did not consider being equal to God a robbery," is: Christ did not make a show of being equal with God; He did not display it.[19]

Pieper gets the meaning of "display" from a contrast with etapeinōsen (v. 8). But contrasts often lack definite polarity: The opposite of a straight line may be an angle as well as a curve. This context does not definitely prove that harpagmos means "make a display." Then, too, in order to get the meaning of "display," we have to reach into verse 8 for a contrast with etapeinōsen. But this is the distant context and may give us at best only a peripheral meaning of the word. The immediate contrast set up by ouch . . . alla is between harpagmon and ekenōsen. I have searched all the available passages, secular and sacred, in which harpagmos or one of its cognate forms is used, and I have not found one instance where it means "make a display."

As far as I can trace it, the idea of "display" originated with Origen:

> He does not consider His being equal to God a booty, that is, by Himself He does not count Himself anything great.

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[17] C. Chemnitz and J. E. Gerhard, Commentariolus in omnes epistolas D. Pavli (Lipsiae & Jenae: Johannem Theodorum & David Fleischern, 1676), p. 130.

[18] A. Hoenecke, Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912), III, 114.

[19] F. Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), II, 326.

But Origen himself has another interpretation:

> Christ, not pleasing Himself and not considering His equality with God to be a booty, emptied Himself.[20]

Lightfoot has citations to show how Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Cyril of Alexandria adopted the meaning of "display."

Something Robbed

The early church understood by harpagmos "something robbed" and therefore not owned.

> In the early Church the interpretation of the passage is weighted with thoughts of definite christologies, e.g.: Christ did not need to rob the dignity since He owned it.[21]

That was Luther's interpretation:

> Since Christ does not get it by robbery, but was in it and had it essentially by nature, He did not consider it a robbery. He could consider it a robbery, because He was certain that He had the essence within Him and it was begotten in Him, and so He considered it His natural eternal possession. . . . All want to be God and by robbery take the deity which they do not have, and they consider it a robbery, yes, they must consider it a robbery, for their conscience testifies and must testify that they are not God. And though they may despise such testimony of their conscience and not do according to it, yet there it is, and it certainly affirms that it is not right, but a wicked robbery. But the one Man, Christ, who did not assume a divine form, but was in it, and it was His own, and from eternity He had a right to it--therefore He did not consider it a robbery nor could consider it such that He was equal to God. Yet He humbled Himself and took on a servant's form, which was not His own.[22]

But Pieper disagrees:

> The words could mean that if the contrast which is added pointed to that. But now the antithesis does not speak of the use of property which is legitimately owned, but on the contrary of this that Christ has denied Himself by assuming the form of a servant and was found in His appearance to be like an ordinary man.[23]

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[20]Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 135.

[21]Dibelius, An die Thessalonicher I, II an die Philipper, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Third edition; Tuebingen: J. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1937), p. 76.

[22]Luther, op. cit., col. 470-71.

[23]Pieper, op. cit., p. 326.

Wuest says the same:

> To assert one's right to a thing does not partake of an attitude of humility and self-negation. Therefore, this meaning of the word will not do here.[24] Where there is such disagreement, we must examine the word itself for its meaning.

The basic meaning of harpagmos is found in the usage of the verb harpazein. It describes the taking of Helen, the wife of Menelaus;[25] the main point is that she did not belong to Paris. Euripedes contrasts rightfully owned property with plunder:

> It is right to respect rightly owned property rather than plunder; for legitimate wealth is never wrong.[26]

In the Plutarch[27] passage cited above harpagmos means "rape." (Philo has a statement that is similar to Paul's: "The self-loving, godless mind that means to be equal to God is ungodly"--fasebei, an equivalent of harpagmos.)[28]

Biblical Greek offers us an interesting parallel in Ps. 68:5: "What I had not robbed (herpasa), then I paid back"; as in Philippians 2:6 the person is innocent of the theft involved in "robbed."[29] In the New Testament harpazein is used seven times with the meaning "to take forcibly and suddenly" without the implication of a wrong done (Acts 8:39; 23:10;

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[24]K. S. Wuest, Philippians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1945), p. 65.

[25]Homer: The Iliad, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), I, 443.

[26]Schumacher, op. cit., pp. 291-92.

[27]Ibid., p. 330.

[28]Philo, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), I, 176.

[29]Other instances in the LXX where harpazein and cognate words mean "wrongful taking": Lev. 19:13; Judges 21:21,23; Job 20:19; 24:2,9; Ps. 9:30; 61:11; Ezek. 18:7.12; 19:3; 22:25,27; Is. 3:14; 61:8; 1 Macc. 13:34.

2 Cor. 12:2,4; I Thess. 4:17; Jude 23; Rev. 12:5); two of these are by Luke and three by Paul. The verb needs only to be directed towards another person's property to get the meaning of "robbery." Harpazein, harpagē, or harpax are used fifteen times with the meaning of wrongful taking, including two instances by Luke and three by Paul (Matt. 7:15; 11:12?; 12:29; 12:19; 23:25; Luke 11:39; 18:11; John 6:15; 10:12,28,29; 1 Cor. 5:10,11; 6:10; Heb. 10:34). Deisman[30] suggested the term "swindler" as the meaning of harpax. Ouch harpagmon could even be a litotes, common enough in the New Testament;[31] "what is not stolen" is "an honest possession." The meaning is the same whether we take the negative with the verb or with the noun.

The Old Testament had a lofty picture of one God, living among the cherubim and tolerating no one beside Him.[32] And here came a Carpenter from Nazareth who said, "I am the Son of God," and made Himself equal to God. To the Jews this was a blaspehmous presumption (John 5:18; Luke 22:69-71) and a "robbery." But Jesus knew His place was beside the Father and considered being at the right hand of God nothing that He had stolen.

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[30] J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), p. 79.

[31] Matt. 9:13; Mark 9:37; Luke 15:13; John 3:34; Acts 17:4; 20:12; 21:39; 27:14; Rom. 9:25; 1 Cor. 1:26; Phil. 1:17; 2 Tim. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:10.

[32] Ex. 20:3; Deut. 4:35; 6:4; 32:39; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Kings 8:60; Is. 37:16; 44:6.

> Equality in this regard was not something for the Son to grasp at, to seek to possess unlawfully, since he already possessed it as his true right. He could not regard as a harpagmos, the Greek word used by Paul for "something wrongfully snatched at," that which was properly his own.[33]

Selfish Use

Much recent comment has been devoted to proving that harpagmos means "a lucky find," since the word is associated with hermaion, " a gift of Hermes," "a godsend." Once in the fifth century A. D. hermaion is even substituted for harpagmon in this Philippian passage.[34] While such a tinge of meaning may be attached to the word, the evidence does not seem to me to point conclusively to that meaning. Two things seem to be overlooked in this interpretation: a. When harpagmos and hermaion are used as synonyms, they are not for that reason identical, but quite the opposite may be true--the second word is used because it adds an element of new meaning. b. The basic meaning of harpagmos is not"a lucky find." Menander has the phrase, harpazein blepei, "looks thievish."[35] Sophocles: harpasai peiran, "seize an opportunity of attacking."[36] Plutarch:

> He did not like a robber overrun Asia, nor did he decide to destroy and plunder it like a prey or spoils gotten by unexpected good luck.[37]

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[33] H. Lewis, "The Humiliated and Exalted Son," Interpretation (January, 1947) p. 25.

[34] Dibelius, op. cit., p. 76.

[35] H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised by H. S. Jones (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), I, 246.

[36] Sophocles, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929), II, 6.

[37] Dibelius, op. cit., p. 75.

Instead of showing that harpagma means "a lucky find," it seems to me that this passage rather clearly indicates that it does not mean "a lucky find" since it adds "gotten by unexpected good luck." The same is true of a statement of Heliodorus, who is speaking of a woman clinging to a man:

> He did not treat the matter as something to be exploited or as a lucky find.[38]

Eusebius says of martyrs: ton thanaton harpagma themenoi.[39] This passage is similar to Philippians 1:21, where Paul calls dying a kerdos, "a gain," and it may be rendered, "considering death a gain." Eusebius contrasts the phrase in Phil. 2:6 with egenēthē penēs, "He became poor."[40] Foerster grants a double meaning: "The word has the meaning of exploiting something as well as snatching something," and he adds a footnote that Plutarch used ton kairon harpazein with the meaning "take advantage of an opportunity."[41]

Standing in its emphatic position before the verb, harpagmon reminds us to examine it closely and to find its meaning, not in various interpretations, but in the preceding and contemporary Biblical usage. In the Septuagint harpazein is the regular equivalent of the Hebrew gazal, "tear away," "rob" (29 times) and of taraph, "tear," "pluck";

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 135.

[41] W. Foerster, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1949), I, 473.

it is used for the lion and the wolf as they "snatch" their prey. (In the following instances, italics will indicate the use of harpazō or cognate forms in the Greek text.)

> The lion tore enough prey for his cubs and strangled it for his lionesses, and he filled his caves with torn flesh and his dens with prey (Nahum 2:12).

Here we have the literal meaning. But most commonly the lion is a picture of men. "Benjamin is a wolf, tearing his prey, devouring it (Gen. 49:27), and victorious Israel is a lion that "tramps down and tears" (Micah 5:8). The enemies of the Messiah are a devouring lion: "They open their jaws wide at me--like a rending and roaring lion" (Ps. 22:13). So the enemies of Israel are lions (Ps. 7:2; 35:17; Jer. 4:7; 49:19; 50:17), and also evil rules os Israel may be lions and wolves (Zeph. 3:3). The wicked man holds his stolen goods as "prey" (Job 29:17; cf. 24:2). "He lies there to catch the poor" (Ps. 10:9).

> You who hate what is good and love what is evil, who pluck their skins from them and their flesh from their bones (Micah 3:2).

> He became a young lion and learned to catch his prey; he devoured man. (Ezek. 19:3; cf. v. 6).

The devil is like "a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He "takes away what is sown in his heart" (Matt. 13:19). False prophets also are "greedy wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

> The conspiracy of pf her prophets which arein her midst are like a roaring lion, tearing his prey; devouring lives, they take treasure and wealth (Ezek. 22:35).

The scribes and pharisees are "full of greed and uncontrolled desires" (Matt. 23:25). "The wolf carries off" the members of the Church (John 10:12; cf. vv. 28-29). The term is used side by side with "greedy" (Ezek. 22:27; 1 Cor. 5:10). At Shiloh the men of Benjamin

"snatched" girls to be their wives (Judges 21:21). After Jesus had fed the five thousand people, they wanted to "take Him by force to make Him a king" (John 6:15).

In these many instances we have the meaning "to use selfishly." It is correct then to interpret the phrase in Phil. 2:6 to mean "fuer ein gefundenes Fressen halten" if we emphasize Fressen and omit gefundenes. Devouring is a concrete picture of a total selfish use, of grabbing for one's own advantage.

We have in the Septuagint a contrast which is parallel to the one in Phil. 2:6-7.

> He will not rob anyone of anything. He will give his bread to the hungry and put clothes on the naked. (Ezek. 18:7; cf. v. 16)

That is what Jesus did according to Paul's statement: He did not use His deity for His own purpose, but He gave Himself for us.

While modern commentators are puzzled about harpagmon, the early Greek and Latin Church fathers seem to be unaware of any difficulty connected with it. They lived closer to the basic meaning of the word and to the verb harpazein, which means "to snatch like a thief for one's own advantage." His deity was for Jesus no such thing. It was His own and He refrained from using it, in order to save us.

By his selfishness Adam brought sin into the world (Rom. 5:19). Natural man is selfish, a wolf and a robber, unconcerned about others, each one interested only in himself and his own things (Phil. 2:4). But Christ came to do the opposite. Luther said: "He did not look for any honor or advantage in it, but our advantage and salvation."[42]

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[42] Luther, op. cit., col. 474.

> Those who are given the opportunity of a sudden advantage, are accustomed to rush on others greedily, and quickly to snatch, without any inclination to consider others, and promptly to use and enjoy things. . . . But Christ, when He could have been equal to God, did not snatch it, did not consider it a plunder, did not suddenly use that power.[43]

Staehlin: "He did not take advantage of His being equal to God."[44]

The Context

The context supports such a meaning of harpagmos. This section is often referred to as an exhortation to humility. But if we look at it closely, we find that himility is a subordinate element in a larger picture of self-sacrificing love. The preceding text reads:

> Now if you feel encouraged in Christ, if love can persuade you, if you share the Spirit, if you are tender and sympathetic--fill my cup of joy: Be one in thought and in love, live in harmony, keep one purpose before your mind, don't do anything selfishly or for empty glory, but humbly think of other people as better than yourselves. Each of you, be interested, not only in your own things, but also in those of others. All of you, think just as Christ Jesus thought. (vv. 1-5)

Hēgēsato

Hēgēsato has the effect of making something appear to be different from what it really is. Leviathan

> treats (hēgētai) iron as chaff, and bronze as rotten wood. If anyone hits him with a sword, spear, javelin, or dart, it will not take hold. . . . The arrow cannot make him flee; stones from a sling turn to chaff for him. A club is no more than chaff for him, and he laughs at the whirring lance." (Job.41:19,18,20-21).

The point is that leviathan does not change iron to chaff or bronze to rotten wood, but iron and bronze have lost their normal function. The

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[43] J. A. Bengel, Gnomon Novi Testamenti (Fifth edition; Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1860), p. 771.

[44] Staehlin, op. cit., III, 354.

same is true of the following statements: "I considered (hēgēmai) myself to be dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). "You treated (hēgēsai) me as your enemy (Job 13:14; cf. 19:11; 33:10). "I considered (hēgēsamēn) riches nothing " (Wisdom 7:8). He considers (hēgētai) it a glory that he is making counterfeit products" (Wisdom 15:9). We have the same without hēgeomai in 1 Cor. 2:14: The things of the Spirit of God certainly are no foolishness, but when they lose their function in a man, they become a foolishness to him.

Hēgēsato involves a repression of function. It is also in the word etapeinōse (v. 8). While this word can mean the actual cutting down of hills (Baruch 5:7; Luke 3:5), it is used in Proverbs as the equivalent of the Hithpael of rosh, "to act poor." "The use of the Hithpa'el often conveys the idea of pretense."[45] The passage in Proverbs 13:7 reads: "Others, being very wealthy, act poor" (tapeinountes). Just so Jesus, "being rich" (2 Cor. 8:9) "acted poor"; we mean by that not docetism, but a real self-denial. He acted as though He didn't have the deity (cf. 1 Cor. 7:29-30).

> He kept it hidden for a time so that, under the weakness of the flesh, it did not appear.[46]
>
> The humiliation is first a genuine and real, not only an apparent, concealment (krâpsis), namely a concealment of the divine majesty, inasmuch as Christ in his humiliation was not a nominal or reduced, half, but the entire essential God, and He remained that and yet did not in His earthly life appear as God, but as a man like other men, who are not God.[47]

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[45] J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs with Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950), p. 140.

[46] Calvin, op. cit., p. 91.

[47] Pieper, op. cit., p. 358.

> Also the occasional use of the divine glory was always still hidden or covered by the servant's form. . . . There is according to Scripture in the humiliation not only a hidden possession but also a hidden use (occulta usurpatio) of the divine majesty.[48]

This concealment of the majesty of Jesus was illustrated by various instructions which He gave to others not to tell who He was. It agrees with the statement that in a miracle He "revealed" His glory (John 2:11).

According to Job 30:1 ouch hēgēsamēn axious, "not consider worthy," has the positive meaning, "consider unworthy," since it is the translation of maasti, "despise," "reject." By the same process ouch harpagmon hēgēsato could have a positive meaning, "act unselfishly."

> In describing the humiliation the formula of Concord uses the terms "concealment" and "non-use" and in describing the exaltation "manifestation" and "use" as synonyms.[49]

> This majesty He had immediately at His conception, even in His mother's womb, but, as the apostle testifies (Phil. 2,7), laid it aside; and, as Dr. Luther explains, He kept it concealed in the state of His humiliation, and did not employ it always, but only when He wished.[50]

> Jesus did not treat His being equal to God as everyone might expect, as a gain which is to be exploited.[51]

But while potentially the negative implies the positive, we have in Phil. 2:7 the contrast, ouch . . . alla, where the negative expresses rather exclusively the negative in order to make the following positive effective.

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[48] Ibid., p. 334.

[49] Pieper, op. cit., p. 313.

[50] Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 1023.

[51] Foerster, op. cit., pp. 473-74.

Ekenōse

The humiliation was a skenōsis, but it was also a kenōsis. It was more than secrecy; it was self-denial.

> He remained full, John 1:14, and yet He acted as if He were empty, because He hid it as far as possible from men and angels, and even from Himself (Rom. 15:3); but He didn't only hide it, but also denied Himself and abstained.[52]

> It would finally also be contrary to Scripture if we conceived the humiliation to be only a concealment (krupsis) and not at the same time a real surrender (kenōsis) in regard to the use of the divine glory.[53]

Much confusion has been created in regard to Philippians 2:6 by arbitrarily adopting some kind of annihilation of essence as the meaning of kenoō. So Thayer simply assigns the special meaning, "He laid aside equality with or the form of God (said of Christ), Phil. 2:7," while he grants the meaning, "render . . . of no effect," "to make void, i.e., deprive of force, render vain, useless, of no effect," to other passages in Scripture.[54]

When we empty a jar or a money box (ekkenoō, Gen. 24:20; 37:24; Judges 7:16; 2 Chron. 24:11), we do not crush the jar or the box or throw them away. When Jesus emptied Himself, He did not eliminate Himself. He stayed rich while He became poor (2 Cor. 8:9). Something happened to the Son of God without changing Him. He stayed in the morphē theou and continued equal to God when He humbled Himself.

> He acted as though He were laying the deity aside and did not want to use it. . . . ; not that He laid aside the deity or could lay it aside or put it away. But He laid aside the form of divine majesty

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[52] Bengel, on. cit., p. 771.

[53] Pieper, on. cit., p. 333.

[54] J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1889), p. 344.

> and did not act as God although He certainly was that. He also did not lay aside the divine form in such a way that it could not be sensed or seen; for then there would have been no divine form any more.[55]

> The humiliation, then, affects not the possession, ('ktēsis') but the use ('chrēsis') of the divine majesty. The possession was actually shown in every miracle of Christ.[56]

> What the Son emptied himself of was not what he was but how he was. He did not empty himself of himself. . . . The Son gave up the conditions of Deity for the conditions of humanity, the experience of the common glory of the divine for the experience of the servitude and subjection of the human.[57]

Sophocles[58] uses the phrase kenos tou nou, meaning not the absence of the mind--the same person is previously said to be full of wisdom --but that the mind does not express itself naturally. Philo has the sentence, "everything that is against nature is empty (kena)," that is, everything which does not have its normal function is kenos.[59] The bow which has not shot its arrow into an enemy and the sword which has not struck an effective blow is kenos (2 Sam. 1:22; cf. Jer. 50:9). Isaiah (45:8) is speaking of a depopulated land: "He did not make it in vain (eis kenon), but He formed it to be inhabited." So Plato[60] says that

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[55]Luther, op. cit., col. 474.

[56]W. H. T. Dau, Doctrinal Theology (mimeographed, St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, n. d.), I, 234.

[57]Lewis, op. cit., p. 25.

[58]Schumacher, op. cit., p. 345.

[59]Ibid., pp. 346-47.

[60]Plato, "Republic", The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), I, 516.

a plain which has no trees on it is empty (kenos). The seed which does not grow is kenos (Lev. 26:16,20). Theophrastus[61] speaks of plants which are wasting away as kenoumenoi. As the rain makes plants grow to give people food, "so My Word . . . must not return to me empty (kenon) until it has accomplished what I want" (Is. 55:10-11). Luther translates Isaiah 59:4, "redet nichts Tuechtiges" (kena). Moses says,

> This isn't empty (kenos) talk; no, it means life to you, and what was said here will enable you to live long in the land (Deut. 32:47; cf. Wisdom 1:11).

Job's friends give him "empty" comfort (Job 21:34).

Habakkuk (2:3) says, "The vision . . . does not lie"; the Septuagint translates "does not lie" with ouk eis kenon. "Lying words" (Ex. 5:9; cf. Eph. 5:6) are logoi kenoi or words which do not function normally. If we do a bad job at preaching the Gospel, the Cross of Christ becomes empty (kenothei; 1 Cor. 1:17). When grace has no effect in a man it is kenos (1 Cor. 15:10).

Persons who become kenoi are similar to things which are kena. Thirsty people who cannot drink are "empty" (Is. 32:6). Isaiah (29:8) speaks figuratively of the "thirst" of the enemy wanting to destroy Jerusalem: He de psuchē (which sometimes means "appetite") autou eis kenon elpisen, "his appetite hoped in vain." So 4 Maccabees 8:18 (cf. 1 Macc. 9:68) speaks of "vain" purposes, and Psalm 2:1 says "the people plot in vain." Life is quickly spent in a "vain" hope (Job 7:6). The works of the ungodly are useless and their hope is "empty" (Wisdom 3:11; cf. Sirach 34:1).

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[61] Theophrastus, Inquiry into Plants, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), p. 288.

Wealth which a man worked hard for but does not enjoy is like tough, gristly meat which isn't chewed or eaten; this is eis kena (Job 20:18). Work which is done without success is "in vain" (Is. 6:29; 65:23; Jer. 51:58; 1 Cor. 15:38; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 3:5). Nebuchadnezzar sent ambassadors, but the people sent his ambassadors back "empty," with shame on their faces (Judith 1:11). The man in the parable sent a slave to get the fruits of his vineyard, but the men who were in charge of the vineyard sent the slave back "empty" (Mark 12:2-3). People who sacrifice to false gods do so "in vain" (Jer. 18:15). Christian faith, too, if it had no advantage over unbelief, would be in vain (Rom. 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:14).

"In vain" means "useless." A papyrus of the third century B. C. uses eis kenon of water that flows away and is wasted.[62] In several instances the Septuagint links kenos with its opposite ōpheleō or its cognate noun: There is no "profit" in arguing with "empty" words (Job 15:3, codex A); the Egyptians will give "vain help" (Is. 30:7); healings which are multiplied "in vain" bring no "benefit" (Jer. 46:11).

Cremer, therefore, defines ekenōse in Philippians 2:7 as follows:

> Christ declined, by His own perfect power, to give effect to, or by force to demonstrate, the einai isa theō; that belonged to Him in virtue of His morphē theou.[63]

When the deity of Christ became kenos, it did not function with its

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[62] Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 304.

[63] H. Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, translated by W. Urwick (Second edition, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878), p. 353.

expected effect. Kenos means "non-use."[64]

And so harpagmos means "full-use."

Doulos

In order to help men, Jesus became a man, not an angel. Anthrōpōn and anthrōpos (v. 7), both without articles, mean the essential characteristics of humanity. Schēma (etymologically the same as habitus, Haltung, and "behavior,") refers to His human activity. Luther defines schēma as follows:

> He used everything like any other man, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, being awake, walking, standing, hungering, thirsting, freezing, sweating, getting tired, working, dressing, living somewhere, praying, and everything as a man otherwise lives in relation to God and the world.[65]

It was no illusion: He proved Himself by convincing evidence (heurētheis) to be a man, born of a woman and having flesh and blood.[66] He was so thoroughly a man that most of the world has seen no more than a man in Him.

Paul is careful to avoid the impression that Jesus became a man so completely that He wasn't God any more: "He was made in the likeness of men" (v. 7; cf. Rom. 8:3). Likeness is partial identity. Herod was like a fox in his evil ways, but not in his body, which was human. (Luke 13:32). Jesus was a man in every way but two: He was the Son of God, and He had no sin. Sinlessness did not make Him less a man because sin, a universal characteristic, is not an essential characteristic of man.

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[64] It is a synonym of mataios, which, however means using in a foolish, worthless, purposeless, or wrong way (Ex. 20:7; Eccl. 1:2).

[65] Luther, on. cit., col. 475.

[66] For the evidence on heuriskō and hōs see 2 Cor. 11:12; Mark 14:10; Luke 19:32; 22:13; 24:24; John 1:14; 1 Cor. 13:11.

Just as He became a real man, He became a real servant. Although the incarnation is sometimes loosely spoken of as a humiliation,[67] the incarnation was not in itself the subordination of a servant; otherwise the man Jesus could not now be the Lord of heaven and earth. When Jesus became man, He stepped into the arena for the struggle, and His flesh and blood was the means by which He submitted to the task of redemption until it was finished at His death.

Labōn, coincident in time with the action of ekenōsen,"[68] is closely knit with it. "Becoming a servant" is Paul's definition of "emptying Himself."

Outwardly people called Jesus "Lord" (Luke 6:46; John 13:13). And just as Jesus demanded from His followers an inward submission of the spirit, so His being a servant was an inward condition (Matt. 20:28; Mark Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27).

> It does not mean the outward appearance or physical characteristics, for a slave (better than a "servant") is in these respects like a free man. He has the same anatomy, the same limbs, the same shape as a free man. Nor is there necessarily any difference of temperament between the two: Servility and obsequiousness were not displayed only by slaves. Form, then, refers to something other than an outward sign. It refers to the essential, fundamental feature. The "form" of a slave is his slavehood, the fact that he is a slave. When we read that Jesus took the form of a slave, we are told that he adopted the complete obedience of a slave, slavehood.[69]

Jesus was a servant in His submission to the Father. We have here that blending of choice and obedience which Paul describes in his

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[67] C. Hodge, Systematic Theology (London: Theo. Nelson & Son, 1874), p. 611. See also H. Schmid, Die Dogmatik der ev.-luth. Kirche (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1893), p. 276.

[68] Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 112.

[69] C. C. Synge, Philippians and Colossians (London: SCM Press LTD, 1951), pp. 29-30.

picture of a perfect slave (Eph. 6:5-7).

> So Jesus told them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, you will know that I am He and that I do nothing by Myself, but I say what My Father has taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him. (John 8:27-28)
>
> The Father loves Me because I give My life— in order to take it back again. No one takes it *from* Me; no, I Myself am giving it. I have power to give it, and I have power to take it back again. This is what My Father commanded Me to do. (John 10:17-18)
>
> I do not speak for Myself, but the Father who sent Me commanded what I should say and tell. I know that what He commands gives everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I say, I say it just as the Father told Me. (John 12:49-50)
>
> The world should know that I love the Father and I do just as the Father commanded Me. (John 14:31)
>
> Then I said, "I have come (as the writing in the roll of the book tells of Me) to do Your will, O God." (Heb. 10:7; cf. Ps. 40:8)

His service for our redemption included being under the Law and keeping it for us (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 5:19). He completely submitted to the divine purpose of redeeming us (Matt. 20:28; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:2).

To accomplish all this, He set Himself (heauton, v. 7) aside. He did not please Himself (Rom. 15:3), did not manipulate His powers for His own purpose or as He pleased, and did not strive for His own glory (John 8:50). He stated His desire not to die in the prayer to His Father (Matt. 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42), but contrary to that desire He had led the way to Jerusalem, announcing that He was going there to be crucified. (Luke 9:51; 18:32).

Jesus wore a chain like Paul (Phil. 1:1,13) except that it was invisible and voluntary. Pseudo-Athanasius compares Jesus as a servant with the young David:

> When David had been anointed king, he did not immediately snatch (ērpase) the kingdom, but he constrained himself for a long time

> by serving (douleuōn) Saul. Our Savior, too, when He was born a King, . . . constrained Himself and "did not treat His being equal with God a thing He had robbed."[70]

As a servant Jesus did not use His powers of lordship; He acted as if He wasn't a Lord. This is also the meaning of etapeinōse. A papyrus speaks of the Nile "running low" as tapeinoutai, a limited non-use of its normal function.[71] Jesus was like a warrior not using his weapons or his strength.

> Since He in the meanwhile remained in the divine form, the assumption of the form of a servant consisted in withdrawing the rays of divine glory which continued to live in his flesh and which He concealed and repressed with the curtain of His flesh.[72]

It was a real, not an apparent limitation, a subjection to the weakness of the flesh (2 Cor. 13:4). He limited Himself in space (Luke 2:7), in knowledge (Mark 13:32), and in strength, getting tired, hungry, and thirsty (John 4:6). He became the Servant (Is. 53:11), despised by men(v. 3), enduring humiliation and shame (vv. 2-8,14), so that He could say, "I am a worm and no man" (Ps. 22:7). He was obedient to the utmost, to a cross (without an article to stress its meaning), which was to the Jews a curse (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 12:2) and to the Romans the worst torture inflicted on a slave and a

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[70] Lightfoot, op. cit. p. 135.

[71] Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 625.

[72] F. A. Philippi, Die Lehre von der Erwaehlung und von Christi Person und Werk, Kirchliche Glaubenslehre (Stuttgart: Samuel Gottlieb Liesching, 1868), IV,1: 473-74.

violation of the rights of a free man.[73] Here, in the darkness of death where people are most alone and where they perish, the Servant touches the bottom, and there we see how truly and completely He became a servant for us.

This is the attitude which we should have.

> Several years ago, while I was engaged in a study of the Philippian Epistle, a letter came to me bearing news of the death of a friend and former classmate who had laid down his life for Christ in foreign missionary service. He had been a brilliant student, was wealthy in his own right, and at the completion of the seminary course he was married to a beautiful and talented young woman. In this country he might have had everything ordinarily desirable to men--business success, comfort, ease and luxury. But there was in him the mind of Christ; if I may dare to use words reverently, he freely "emptied himself" of all these prospects, becoming a servant of the cross in Egypt. There, having given what he could in service, he was obedient "unto death."[74]

While Jesus submitted to death, He became its Master, as His last word from the Cross shows (Luke 23:46). His resurrection declared Him to be no more a servant, but the Son of God (Rom. 1:4) who "usurped" (etymologically meaning "took the use of") the glory (Phil. 2:9-11; Is. 45:23,25; 52:13) of the Son of God. To that glory He takes man, originally created in the image of God but then sold into the slavery of sin, and gives him the freedom and the royalty which He as a Servant has earned for him.

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[73] Cicero: The Verrine Orations, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), I, 126,130,134; II, 654-57.
Cicero: The Speeches, The Loeb Classical Library, "Pro Rabirio" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), pp. 466-69.

[74] A. J. McClain, "The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8," The Biblical Review (October, 1928), p. 524.

Summary

While words ending in -mos are often active, there are sufficient instances to justify a passive meaning. In this passage the phrase "being equal with God" makes harpagmos a passive.

Those who insist that harpagmos refers to the future, make equality with God something which Jesus did not have. This is not an example of self-denial for us to follow. The text says that Jesus, who is equal with God, became a slave for us; that is an emphatic lesson in self-denial.

It has never been shown from usage that harpagmos means "display." This meaning seems to have come down to us from Origen. The early Church fathers and Luther took harpagmos to mean "something robbed." That meaning is prominent in the verb harpazō. When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, His enemies considered the title something He had robbed. Jesus insisted that He was everything implied in the term. The evidence for considering harpagmos a "lucky find" is not well established: Each instance cited seems rather to mean "something exploited." In Biblical Greek harpazō describes the lion tearing his prey and human beings who are greedy. Harpagmos would therefore mean that Jesus did not make a selfish use of being equal with God.

This meaning is supported by the context, which speaks of self-denial. Hegeomai often means to make something appear different from what it is; here it would mean the repression of a function. Ekenōse should not be taken to mean that Jesus laid aside some of His essence. Heavy evidence in secular and Biblical Greek shows that it means "to deprive of a function," "to refuse to use." Jesus did this when He became a Servant: He voluntarily obeyed His Father, kept the Law for us,

and so redeemed us. In this He did not please Himself, but for the redemptive purpose He limited Himself in the use of His divine powers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Morphē means "appearance," "expression," or "essence."

A. Morphē does not mean "appearance" here.

1. While morphē means "appearance" in the Septuagint, it is never used of God there.

2. Those who say morphē means "appearance" do not distinguish it from schēma, which Paul uses for "appearance."

3. If morphē is "appearance," morphē theou does not necessarily mean the deity of Christ; but isa presupposes His deity in the phrase.

4. Paul considers God invisible.

B. Morphē does not mean "expression" here.

1. Even those who adopt this meaning are so convinced that the entire phrase means the deity of Christ that there ought to be adequate evidence to show that the deity is not given in morphē.

2. Those who believe that morphē is "expression" differ widely in the way they identify morphē with doxa, which is defined as "expression" or "essence." These difficulties suggest that morphē may mean more than "expression."

3. "Expression" has little meaning in regard to the preexistent Christ of whom Paul is speaking.

4. The basis for defining morphē as "expression" apparently is not textual or linguistic evidence, but a conviction that Jesus laid the morphē aside in His humiliation, since He could not lay aside His deity.

it is claimed that morphē cannot mean "essence."

C. Morphē means "essence," here.

1. "Essence" is an established meaning of morphē in secular Greek. Morphē was used of incorporeal things, such as courage, justice, prudence.

2. Morphē was used in secular Greek for the invisible God.

3. The evidence for morphoō and morphōsis being merely outward is very weak. The reference of these terms to an inner content suggests that morphē means "essence."

4. Morphē is not schēma. Morphē is the intrinsic character, while schēma is the outward, variable shape.

5. Morphē doulou, v. 7, means the "essence" of a slave.

6. Paul's God was invisible.

7. The morphē of God is His "glory."

8. En does not separate Jesus from the Father but in this phrase unites them in one divine Being.

9. The to phrase resumes the idea of morphē and expresses the quantitative and qualitative equality which is to be found in morphē theou.

10. Since the text nowhere says that Jesus laid aside the morphē theou, it can well mean the essence of God.

11. Jesus retained the essence of God just as He retained His divine glory and lordship.

Hēgēsato means a choice made by the preexistent Christ.

1. Hēgēsato precedes ekenōse, which coincides with the incarnation. The action of Hegesato must therefore precede the incarnation.

2. The choice in hēgēsato was a part of the eternal plan for our salvation.

3. If Paul had intended to have the verb refer to the preexistent and the incarnate Christ, he would have used the perfect.

4. The example which Jesus gives us is found in hēgēsato and the following six aorists which refer to the incarnate Christ.

5. Huparchōn with morphē takes us back to the preexistence of Christ.

6. Only in eternity could Christ have chosen to do what He did in time.

7. This choice was determined by a purpose. It was an evaluation with a surprising decision.

Harpagmos means "something robbed" and "used selfishly."

1. The phrase "to be equal with God" gives harpagmos a content which makes it passive.

2. The text nowhere says that this possession was something that Jesus acquired in the exaltation. It speaks of Christ's deity as a present possession.

3. There is no evidence that harpagmos means "display."

4. Harpazein commonly means "wrongful taking." The opposition to Jesus was based on the belief that He made a dishonest claim.

5. The passages which are cited to show that harpagmos means "a lucky find" are interpreted better by substituting the meaning, "something exploited."

6. The central meaning of harpazein is "to devour greedily."

7. The major lesson of this section is self-denial.

8. Hēgēsato is used to express a change of function.

9. Ekenōse need not mean "lay aside." Overwhelming evidence shows that it means "to deprive of function," "to refuse to use."

10. Without laying aside His divine personality, Jesus became a real servant, inwardly submitting to the Father, to the Law, and to suffering. He did not do that for Himself, but for us.

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Philippians 2:6 means: "Although Jesus was God, He decided not to use His equality with God for His own advantage."

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