

► FOUR ◀

“And the Word Became Flesh”: The Son’s Relationship to His Human Nature

I. Introduction

The previous chapter began to discuss the Son’s assumption of a human nature. The goal of this chapter will be to describe in more detail the Son’s relationship to the nature that he has assumed. The first main section will exegete certain scriptural passages that illumine that relationship and provide an entryway into broader dogmatic considerations in catholic Christology (e.g., the way in which Christ “subsists” in his humanity or the way in which Christ is a “composite” person). The next main section will work through that broader dogmatic elaboration, highlighting how it sets forth the genuineness of the Son’s human life and how it fits together with divine attributes like immutability and simplicity. After this, the chapter will address certain debates among Lutheran and Reformed authors about the notion of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the so-called *extra Calvinisticum*.

II. Biblical Description

In an important sense, John 1 and Philippians 2 contain all the central features of orthodox teaching on the person of Christ and his act of assuming a human

nature. In this section I will lean on John 1, Philippians 2, and a few other scriptural texts and attempt to present these key features in terms of (1) the divine person who acts to assume the human nature, (2) the act of assumption and resultant union with the human nature, (3) the integrity of the nature assumed, (4) the unity and sameness of the person of the Son after the assumption of the human nature, and (5) the ongoing distinctness of the Son's divine and human natures.

(1) After telling us that the eternal Word was with God the Father in the beginning and that he was the one through whom the Father made all things (John 1:1–5), John also calls the Word the “true light” who illumines all things and comes into the world (1:9–11). “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us [Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν], and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father [μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός], full of grace and truth” (1:14). “No one has ever seen God; the only Son who is God [μονογενῆς θεός], who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him” (1:18). Thus, the person who became flesh is the eternal Word, who was with God the Father before the creation of the world and was himself the true God and Creator described in Genesis 1.¹ Whether something like “only Son” or “only begotten Son” is the correct translation of μονογενῆς, it remains that the μονογενῆς is “from the Father” (παρὰ πατρός) in such a way that this relation of origin explains his sharing the glory, grace, and truth ascribed to YHWH in Exodus 33:17–34:7. In other words, the person who became flesh is the eternal Word or eternal Son who has (eternally) received from God the Father the divine essence.² In fact, in order to fulfill the purpose of his coming, he must be the true God. Unlike John the Baptist, a man sent from God, the incarnate Word must himself be the true light that illumines the world (John 1:5–9, 15). He must be the Son who is in the “bosom of the Father” and who can therefore decisively reveal the Father and grant the right of sonship to others (1:12, 18).

Like John's prologue, the hymn of Philippians 2 also teaches that it is the Son who is equal with God the Father that assumes a human nature. Christ is the one “who, being in the form of God [ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων], considered it not ἄρπαγμός [KJV “robbery”; NRSV “something to be exploited”] to be equal with God [τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ], but he emptied himself [ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν], taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of human beings” (2:6–7). While some biblical scholars have suggested that Christ being in

1. Regarding the links between John 1 and Gen. 1, see, e.g., Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 240–42.

2. On John 1:14 and the Son's eternal procession, see chap. 2, sect. II.

the *forma Dei* in 2:6 is akin to Adam bearing the image of God,³ an “Adam Christology” by itself does not account for certain details of the text. First, the being in the *forma Dei* is a matter of being “equal with God.”⁴ Christ’s subsistence in the *forma Dei* therefore signifies something beyond human likeness to God. Second, Christ becoming human is not mentioned until the next verse.⁵ Third, the parallel between the *forma Dei* and *forma servi* implies that being in the *forma Dei* is not merely a matter of being *like* God insofar as having the *forma servi* is not merely a matter of being *like* a servant.⁶ Fourth, if the initial being in the *forma Dei* concerned only a human likeness to God, that would undermine the flow and force of the whole passage: “What is the point of saying that a human being chose to become a human being and was found in appearance as a human being?”⁷

Scholars who have recognized that Christ being in the *forma Dei* transcends Adamic likeness to God have proposed different interpretations of what this “form” signifies: the divine nature,⁸ a certain sphere of existence,⁹ a high status or position,¹⁰ an outward appearance or visible manifestation of divine glory.¹¹ In my view, it is justifiable to maintain that the “form of God” in this passage does signify the divine nature, not least because the signification of the parallel “form of a servant” includes human nature itself and not just the outward appearance of human nature or servanthood. However, it seems to me that even interpretations that hesitate to take the *forma Dei* directly to signify the divine nature will end up at least implying that Christ shares the divine nature with the Father. If biblical thought allows for no middle ground between Creator and creation, then the only “sphere” or “status” in which this person might exist prior to taking up a creaturely form is that of the one

3. E.g., Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 176–77; Talbert, “The Problem of Pre-existence in Philippians 2:6–11”; Murphy-O’Connor, “Christological Anthropology in Phil., II, 6–11,” 39–42, 49–50; Dunn, “Christ, Adam, and Preexistence,” 74–79.

4. Cf. Käsemann, “A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5–11,” 62; Fee, *Philippians*, 207; Silva, *Philippians*, 100–101; Hansen, *Philippians*, 138. The article in the phrase τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ appears to have an anaphoric function, indicating that Christ’s “being equal with God” has the same referent as his “being in the form of God” (Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 83; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 114).

5. So, e.g., Wanamaker, “Philippians 2.6–11,” 183.

6. Cf. Fee, *Philippians*, 203; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 110–11.

7. Hansen, *Philippians*, 141.

8. John Chrysostom, *In Phil.* 2.6.2 (220); Aquinas, *Super Phil.* 2.2.54 (101); Zanchi, *In Phil.*, 131; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 127–33; Fee, *Philippians*, 204; Thompson and Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon*, 71.

9. Käsemann, “A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5–11,” 61; Reumann, *Philippians*, 341.

10. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, 54; Hawthorne, “In the Form of and Equal with God,” 98, 104.

11. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 126–29; Fowl, *Philippians*, 91–94.

divine essence. And if Christ was in the outward appearance of divine glory in such a way that he was also equal with the Father, then, again, he shares the divine essence of the Father.¹² In short, the “form of God” might signify the divine essence directly and its outward manifestation indirectly, or vice versa.¹³

The importance of the divinity of Christ in his assumption of a human nature can be reinforced by examining what it means that he “considered it not ἄρπαγμός to be equal with God.” Analyses of the meaning of ἄρπαγμός abound. Older interpreters often take the term to signify a prize seized (or to be seized) or an act of seizing something (“robbery”).¹⁴ More recent interpreters often assert that the meaning of “robbery” is impossible in Philippians 2.¹⁵ They also break up the interpretive options in several categories with the use of Latin terms. The word ἄρπαγμός could be taken to signify (a) a thing seized (*res rapta*), (b) a thing to be seized (*res rapienda*), (c) an act of seizing (*actus rapiendi*), or (d) a thing to be clung to, perhaps for selfish ends (*res retinenda*).¹⁶ Roy Hoover’s influential study of the word ἄρπαγμός has led a number of exegetes to conclude that Christ did not consider equality with God something to be exploited for selfish ends as though it might excuse him from coming to serve others.¹⁷ In my view, several possibilities could work: Christ considered being equal with God the Father (a) not something seized or gained since he always was in the form of God in the first place, (b) not something to be seized or gained (i.e., not something he had to seize or gain) since he always was in the form of God in the first place; (c) not something to be exploited to avoid an act of self-giving love toward others. Whichever option is best, the text affirms that Jesus always has been equal to the Father, for one can be said not to misuse or exploit only what one already has.¹⁸

On a related note, some interpreters have also debated whether the participle ὑπάρχων has a concessive function (“*although* he was in the form of God”) or a causal function (“*because* he was in the form of God”).¹⁹ The

12. So Calvin, *In Phil.*, 2.6 (25–26). Cf. Zanchi, *In Phil.*, 132–33.

13. Cf. Coccejus, *S. Pauli apostoli epistola ad Philippenses*, 43, who writes that the *forma Dei* signifies “the true thing itself and this thing made manifest.”

14. E.g., Ambrose, *De fide* 2.8.70 (2:296, 298); John Chrysostom, *In Phil.* 2.6.2–3 (220–22); Calvin, *In Phil.*, 2.6 (25–26). Cf. Aquinas, *Super Phil.*, 2.2.55 (101).

15. E.g., BDAG, 133; O’Neill, “Hoover on *Harpagmos* Reviewed,” 448; Fee, *Philippians*, 205.

16. See Moule, “Further Reflexions on Philippians 2:5–11,” 266–68, 271–76; R. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ*, 134–53; Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 62–82; Fee, *Philippians*, 205–7; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 129–31; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 115–16.

17. Hoover, “The HARPAGMOS Enigma”; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 82–90; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 129; Fowl, *Philippians*, 94–95; M. Martin, “ἄρπαγμός Revisited.”

18. So, e.g., Hoover, “The HARPAGMOS Enigma,” 118; M. J. Gorman, “‘Although/Because He Was in the Form of God,’” 155–56.

19. See M. J. Gorman, “‘Although/Because He Was in the Form of God.’”

concessive approach seeks to honor the contrast between the *forma Dei* in Philippians 2:6 and the *forma servi* in 2:7. However, the causal approach affords more flexibility on the meaning of ἀρπαγμός and can still maintain the contrast between 2:6 and 2:7. On the one hand, the text could convey that because Christ subsisted in the fullness of divine majesty, he considered equality with God not something he had to gain, but he stooped low and took a servant’s form. On the other hand, the text could convey that because Christ was in the form of the self-giving God, he considered equality with God not something to be exploited in order to avoid a display of self-giving love but rather emptied himself by taking a servant’s form.²⁰ The first version of the causal approach may not fit well with what is now the prevalent understanding of ἀρπαγμός, but the second version may not fit well with the striking novelty of the Son’s servanthood and obedience in 2:7–8.²¹ Either way, the text highlights that the one who assumes the servant’s form must be the true God who manifests God’s love and whose astonishing example of condescending by taking a servant’s form calls Christian believers out of arrogance and selfish ambition.

(2) As to the act of assuming the human nature, when God the Word comes into the world, he does not merely reside in the flesh by grace. His dwelling in the flesh is not merely another iteration of God’s gracious presence with the saints or prophets. As Cyril of Alexandria repeatedly emphasizes, since God the Word *became* flesh, the flesh is not just an “instrument” (ὄργανον) with which the Word might have only an “external relation.” Likewise, the person of Jesus Christ is not an additional person involved in the incarnation, an “assumed man” or “God-bearing man” (θεοφόρος ἄνθρωπος) used to accomplish certain tasks.²² In the case of God the Word, the name “Emmanuel” means something much greater. The Word himself is “God-made-man” (θεός ἐνηνθρωπηκώς).²³ The Word “makes human traits his own.”²⁴ The Word’s flesh is proper to him—even permanently proper to him (John 2:18–22; 20:27). So Cyril: “It was not the body of another from among us but rather the proper body of him who is the Word from the Father that was begotten from [the virgin Mary].”²⁵

20. Cf. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 90, 97; M. J. Gorman, “Although/Because He Was in the Form of God.”

21. Cf. Fee, *Philippians*, 208n65. The first version allows the whole of 2:6 to stand in contrast to 2:7, whereas the second version allows only a more restricted contrast between the last clause of 2:6 (“he considered it not something to be exploited”) and 2:7 (“but he emptied himself”).

22. E.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Ad monachos* 1,19 (19); Cyril, *Tertia ad Nestorium* 6,4 (36); 6,12 (41); Cyril, *Contra Theodoretum* 169,54 (130); 169,83 (142).

23. E.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Theodoretum* 169,71 (137–38).

24. Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Theodoretum* 169,39 (124).

25. Cyril of Alexandria, *Ad monachos* 1,20 (20).

In Philippians 2, when the Son is said to have the “form” of a servant, to be made in the “likeness” of human beings, and to be found in “appearance” as a man (2:7), the language does not imply that the Son is not really human. Instead, since the *forma servi* is parallel to the *forma Dei*, and since being in the *forma Dei* is a matter of being equal with God, this suggests that assuming the *forma servi* results in being equal with a servant or really being a servant.²⁶ That the Son really is a servant is borne out in 2:8, according to which Christ obeyed the Father to the point of death. While the use of the word “likeness” (ὁμοίωμα) in “being made in the likeness of human beings” arguably leaves room for some distinction between Christ and sinful humanity (cf. Rom. 8:3), the word can easily be taken to signify a shared condition or set of experiences,²⁷ which would presuppose having the same kind of nature according to which one could have such common experiences. And the word “appearance” (σχήμα) in “being found in appearance as a man” is aimed not at denying Christ’s authentic humanity but at declaring that his humanity was observable to others. It was a verifiable humanity (cf. 1 John 1:1–3).²⁸

The writer of Hebrews also teaches that in order to help human beings the eternal Son came to associate himself with us in the closest way. As the children of Abraham have “shared in flesh and blood,” so “*he himself* likewise partook of *the same things*” (αὐτὸς παραπλησίως μετέσχευεν τῶν αὐτῶν) (Heb. 2:14).²⁹ To help Abraham’s children, he had “to be made like his brothers and sisters according to all things” (2:17). Scripture further illumines the meaning of the Son’s assumption of a human nature by simply calling him “a man.” He is “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God” (Acts 2:22; cf. 17:31). He is “the one man, Jesus Christ,” through whom God’s grace abounds to sinners (Rom. 5:15, 17). He is “the second man” through whom God will raise the saints from the dead (1 Cor. 15:21, 47). And he is the only mediator between God and human beings, “the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). That he can be called “a man” entails a real union between the person of the Son and a human nature that is proper to him and individuated by him. And because of that real union of the person of the Son and the Son’s flesh, the Son can say that he gives this flesh for the life of the world (John 6:51–59). Paul can say that Christ has reconciled us to God “by the body of his flesh through death” (Col. 1:22). Insofar as it is something by which the Son acts for our salvation, the flesh of the Son is an instrument (ὄργανον) of the Son—not a

26. Cf. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 135.

27. Cf. BDAG, 707.

29. On the significance of the terms μετέχω and παραπλησίως, see BDAG, 642, 770; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 172.

mere external instrument but still an instrument of a sort, to be discussed in the next section. And as an instrument of the eternal Son, who is eternal life (John 5:26; 14:6; 1 John 5:20), this flesh is “life-giving.”³⁰

(3) What the Word became or assumed is called “flesh” (σάρξ) in John 1:14. In Scripture, the term “flesh” sometimes signifies the material component of created things (e.g., Gen. 2:21; 9:4; 17:11; 40:19; Exod. 4:7; 22:31; Lev. 4:11; Matt. 26:41; Luke 24:39; Rom. 1:3). The term can also function synecdochally, taking the material part for the whole of the human person or the human race, sometimes with an emphasis on humanity’s weakness and mortality (cf. Gen. 6:3, 12; Pss. 56:4; 65:2; Isa. 40:5; 66:23; Ezek. 21:4–5; Matt. 16:17; Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 15:50). Insofar as embodied persons often act wickedly in connection with their bodily desires, the apostle Paul in particular uses σάρξ to signify the sinful condition of human persons (e.g., Rom. 7:5, 14, 18, 25; 8:3–13; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 10:2–3; Gal. 5:13, 16–17, 19, 24; cf. 1 John 2:16).³¹ Certainly when John teaches that the Word “became flesh,” this does not have to mean only a material body. In fact, John himself uses “flesh” to speak in more general ways about human life and activity (John 1:13; 17:2). Yet John does present σάρξ as something that is weak, mortal, and in need of the renewing work of God’s Spirit (3:6; 6:63), though John’s use of σάρξ by itself does not convey all the Pauline connections with sin and evil desire.³² In the case of the Word in John, “flesh” signifies humanity in its weakness and frailty, its mortality and dependence upon the Spirit’s work.³³ Cyril of Alexandria fittingly comments that σάρξ in John 1:14 does not signify “soulless flesh” but rather humanity as a “composite” (both soul and flesh). But there is a certain strategy in using a term that often directly designates the most corruptible part of humanity in order to signify the whole. For this expression accentuates humanity’s need to come to participate in the Word’s immortal life. One recognizes the “wound” and the “medicine” at the same time.³⁴

John’s Gospel is clear that what the eternal Word has become or assumed includes a human soul or spirit. When Lazarus dies, the incarnate Word, Jesus, is “moved in spirit and troubled” (11:33, 38). In his last week, Jesus says, “Now my soul has been troubled” (12:27). At the Last Supper, Jesus is “troubled in spirit” and announces that one of the disciples will betray him (13:21). Other places in Scripture confirm this and shed light on why it is so important that

30. See Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joann.* 4.2 (1:530); Cyril, *Le Christ est un* 722e–724a (330–31).

31. See, e.g., Alexander Sand, “σάρξ,” in *EDNT* 3:230–33.

32. Lee, *Flesh and Glory*, chap. 2, finds an especially strong emphasis on the goodness of flesh in Johannine thought.

33. Cf., e.g., Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 125.

34. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentaire sur Jean* 1,9 (530, 532, 534).

the eternal Son should have a human intellect and will. For example, Isaiah promises that the Spirit will communicate to the messianic figure virtues of the intellect and will like wisdom, righteousness, and the fear of YHWH (11:1–5). In some sense (to be explored in chap. 6), Jesus advances in wisdom as he grows older (Luke 2:40, 52). Furthermore, in his eschatological discourse, Jesus tells the disciples that he does not know the hour of his return (Mark 13:32). Though Jesus wills to remain unseen while in Tyre and Sidon, he is not able to do this (7:24), which implies that he has a created will that in some way can be frustrated. In Gethsemane he experiences profound sorrow and anxiety and submits his will to the Father's (Matt. 26:37–39, 42). At Golgotha he wills not to drink wine that is offered to him (Matt. 27:34; Mark 15:23), which implies that he has a human will that has some respect to bodily matters, a will by which he had chosen not to dull the corporeal pain of his crucifixion.³⁵

Christ's role as the representative of God's people brings into focus the importance of the integrity of his human nature and of his human volition in particular. He is the true Israel and second Adam whose remit is to act in human righteousness and obedience to God the Father in order to bring justification to the people united with himself (Isa. 53:11–12; Matt. 3:15; Rom. 5:12–21). He takes on the *forma servi* in order to become obedient to the Father to the point of vicarious death (Gal. 3:13; Phil. 2:6–8; 1 Pet. 2:24). His being made like us and having a human volition that abhors the grievous elements of his earthly sojourn is what enables him to become a sympathetic high priest for us (Heb. 2:17–18; 4:14–15). Moreover, his human determination to do the Father's will in the face of suffering is an example and encouragement to the saints (e.g., Phil. 2:5; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 2:21–23; 4:1–2). At a more general level, the scriptural account of human nature provides a rationale for the necessity of Christ having a human soul with intellect and will. For human nature involves a rational intellect and will by which one can apprehend spiritual and moral truth and make choices about spiritual and moral matters (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 32:8–9; Rom. 7:15–25; 12:2; Eph. 4:17–18, 22–23; Col. 3:10). In order for Christ truly to participate in the human condition, to be like the children of Abraham whom he comes to help, Christ's humanity must include the soul's rational intellect and will. In light of this, Maximus the Confessor points out that Christ possesses a "natural" human will (θέλημα φυσικόν), by which he wills "according to essence" (κατ' οὐσίαν).³⁶

35. Cf., e.g., Keener, *Matthew*, 677–78; Nolland, *Matthew*, 1190–91.

36. Maximus the Confessor, *Opusculum* 7, 77. Cf. John of Damascus, *Expos. fidei* 3.14 (137–38, 140–41).

(4) The Son who assumes the human nature in its integrity remains one and the same person after the assumption. According to John 1:14, the glory of the Word that is made visible to others in the incarnation is still the glory “as of the only Son from the Father,” the particle “as” (ὡς) indicating not a comparison of a lesser thing to a greater thing but rather a specification that the glory of the Word made flesh is precisely that of the eternal *μονογενής* from the Father.³⁷ The visibility of the glory does not mean that the disciples fully comprehend the divine essence; nevertheless, the glory seen by finite creatures in a finite way is still that of the Word’s eternal deity. As Cyril notes, the Word became human “not according to change or alteration but by the power of ineffable union.”³⁸ Later in John’s narrative, then, while Jesus is “not yet fifty years old,” he announces that he remains the eternal, unchanging God who calls himself “I am” (8:57–58).³⁹

The sameness of the Son across the time preceding the assumption of his humanity and the time after the assumption is necessary for the efficacy of his revealing and reconciling work. Only if he remains what he was as the divine Son who is “in the bosom of the Father” can he decisively reveal God to those who have never seen him (John 1:18). Only if he remains the one in whom all the fullness of God dwells can it be said that in beholding him believers have full assurance of spiritual knowledge (Col. 2:2–3, 9). Likewise, only if all fullness dwells in him can Christ atone for the world’s sin and reconcile the world to himself (Col. 1:19–20, 22; 2:14–15; Heb. 1:3–4; 9:11–14; cf. 1 Pet. 1:18–20).

Though the Son’s *κένωσις* in Philippians 2:7 has sometimes been taken to mean that the Son undergoes some change in the incarnation, the description of it in Philippians 2:7 actually corroborates the Son’s sameness in his incarnate ministry. To be sure, a number of interpreters hold that the statement “he emptied himself” in this text signifies that Christ gave up the *forma Dei* or exchanged the *forma Dei* for the *forma servi*.⁴⁰ However, if Christ being in

37. “The point of *ὡς* (‘as’) is not that the glory of the Word is simply analogous to the glory of ‘a father’s One and Only,’ but that it actually is that glory” (Michaels, *John*, 80n19). On the use of the particle *ὡς* to specify or restrict the consideration of something, cf. BDAG, 1104; John Chrysostom, *In Johann.* 12.1 (82).

38. Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Theodoretum* 169,71 (138). Cf. more recently, e.g., Barrett, *John*, 138. Pace, e.g., Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, 221–22, who, in a commendable effort to set forth the genuineness of Christ’s humanity in Johannine thought, unfortunately ends up suggesting that the very “nature” of the Logos was changed in the incarnation.

39. On the “I am” sayings in John, see Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 246–50; Macaskill, “Name Christology, Divine Aseity, and the I Am Sayings in the Fourth Gospel.”

40. Cf. Käsemann, “A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5–11,” 64; Wanamaker, “Philippians 2.6–11,” 183, 185; Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, 58, 64; Hurst, “Christ, Adam, and Preexistence Revisited,” 86.

the *forma Dei* is a matter of Christ being equal with God the Father, and if God the Father cannot cease to be the true God, then Paul would not envision Christ divesting himself of the *forma Dei*. Positively, Paul actually explains the κένωσις not by subtraction but by addition, by the assumption of the *forma servi*.⁴¹ Various exegetes still attempt to find something of which Christ emptied himself: for example, the exercise of certain divine attributes;⁴² lordship over the world;⁴³ certain rights, privileges, or prerogatives that he once had;⁴⁴ a position of equality with God that he once had.⁴⁵ However, the passage simply states that Christ emptied himself and then follows this with two participial phrases: “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of human beings.” The participles have an adverbial and instrumental or modal function, explaining how or in what way Christ emptied himself: *by* taking the form of a servant, *by* being made in the likeness of human beings.⁴⁶

Philippians 2 therefore gives no basis for positing a change in the Son’s exercise of certain divine perfections or in his divine lordship. After all, divine omniscience, divine omnipotence, divine providence, and so forth do not have an on-off switch.⁴⁷ At the same time, one can add that Christ’s divine glory was generally hidden under the veil of the flesh in his humble human sojourn.⁴⁸ Indeed, this seems to be implied by the fact that, after the Son’s obedience to death, the Father outwardly exhibits the divine glory of the Son (Phil. 2:9–11). Yet the transition from temporary economic veiling to economic display does not involve a change in the Son’s divinity. In fact, it would be fitting for the Father to grant an outward manifestation of the Son’s divine glory only if the Son always was and remained the true God. For this glory is that of YHWH himself, the only God and the unchanging God, before whom every knee must bow (Isa. 45:22–23).

41. So, e.g., Fee, *Philippians*, 210–11; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 117–18; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 325.

42. MacLeod, “Imitating the Incarnation of Christ,” 329–30; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 326.

43. Byrne, “Christ’s Pre-existence in Pauline Soteriology,” 317.

44. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 133–35; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 118; cf. I. Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 348; Reumann, *Philippians*, 368.

45. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul*, 58.

46. Cf., e.g., Fee, *Philippians*, 210; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 133; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 118. Barth is right that when it comes to the Son’s κένωσις, “the decisive commentary is given by the text itself.” Thus, the Son “never became a stranger to himself” (CD, IV.1, 180).

47. Intriguingly, a “kenotic” theologian like Gottfried Thomasius agrees on this point: with respect to attributes like omniscience or omnipotence, “renunciation of the use is thus here *eo ipso* divesting of the possession” (*Christ’s Person and Work*, 71).

48. Cf., e.g., Aquinas, *Super Phil.* 1.3.71 (103–4); Turretin, *Inst.*, 13.6.13 (2:340–41); Witsius, *De oeconomia foederum Dei*, 2.3.17 (116).