

CHRIST IN THE EPISTLES

(1 Cor., 1 Thess., 2 Thess.,
(Gal., Ephesians, and Col.)

INTRODUCTION: At Christmas, we usually think of the story of Christ's birth, according to the gospels of Matthew and Luke. These narratives give us the physical facts about the Nativity.

In the epistles we have the doctrinal aspects or theological teachings that are rightly associated with the coming, person, and work of Jesus Christ.

Let us look at three of these important passages now.

II. In Eph. 1:7-12, "The Work of the Son"

A. The Son is the Redeemer

1. We have now (pres. tense) redemption through his blood.
2. The death of the Son as a sacrifice ~~for us~~ for sin.
3. This redemption consists of the "forgiveness of sin; = "to dismiss, or send away."
4. This forgiveness is in proportion to the riches of God's grace.

B. The Son is Lord

1. It is this Lord who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will (vs. 11)
2. This reveals God's purpose in Christ, (vs. 9)
3. This reveals God's eternal plan (vs 10)
4. Our destined part in God's eternal plan, (vs. 12)
5. The meaning of Christ as Lord in your own life.

III. In Philippians 2:5-11,

"The Self-Emptying of Christ"

A. An early hymn about Christ (vs. 6-11) similar to another hymn in Col. 1:15-20.

1. The poetic nature of the passage.

Possibly in 2 parts, with 4 lines each or some such arrangement.

2. The intention of the hymn

a. Traditionally, that the Philippians are challenged to follow the example of Christ in humility and servanthood.

b. More recent theologians have questioned this meaning because Paul

likened "the mind" to which the Philippians are called with the mind already belonging to being "in Christ." So understood, the call is to "be what you are" --- live in your life according to the mind which you, as Christians, already have in Christ Jesus."

3. The context of the hymn

a. It rises naturally out of what has been said before, and it prepares the way for all that follows.

b. It is a call to commitment or decision.

c. There was a call to humility in vs. 3, and there is the call to obedience repeated in vs. 12.

4. There is no sound reason why the Philippians could not have been challenged to follow the example of Christ in his self-abnegation, obedience, and servanthood.

- I. In Galatians 4:4-5, "The Coming of Christ"
 - A. God sent forth His Son
 - 1. Christ, the pre-existent Son of the Father
 - 2. Sent forth by God at the proper time.
 - B. The humanity of Christ -
 - "born of woman."
 - C. His relation to the Law -
 - "born under the law."
 - D. The purpose of his coming: "To redeem those who were under the law."
 - E. The result of the redemption:
 - "so that we might receive adoption as sons."

B. The Mind of Christ

The clue is in who Christ was and what Christ did. ^{Jesus}

1. He was in the "form" of God, ^{Jesus}
(Gr = "morphe")

He was equal with God, but did not consider this a thing to be clutched or snatched at, or grasped.

He did not need to clutch what was already rightfully his.

2. This probably refers to his pre-existent and incarnate state.

The "mind" that was Christ's before and after his birth in Bethlehem remained with him all the way to the cross & his exaltation.

3. The "Kenosis" or emptying of Christ: "he emptied himself."

He does not give away his equality with God, but "he does let go of it" for a time (Barth).

He relinquished privilege,
not essence.

He had the rights of deity, but he gave these rights up and took on the form of a slave.

4. The humility of Christ, vs. 8.

It takes a deliberate choice for a superior person to take the role of servanthood.

Story of the man who heard the thumping against his window.

Christ's humility & obedience took him to the cross. The cross was not a beautiful crucifix; it was a brutal means of torture and humiliation devised by pagan depravity.

5. Vs. 9-11 complete the picture, and affirm the victory which is a part of humble servanthood. By losing life he found it. By becoming servant of all He became Master of all. Every knee bow and every tongue confesses his Lordship.

(Close by singing "All Hail the
Power of Jesus" Name....
Crown Him Lord of All."

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