

# The Doctrine of Kenosis

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These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

This doctrine was taken from the study of the book of Luke ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This study includes all of lesson #69 and portions of lessons #70–71, 76–79 (as well as other lessons from Luke).

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**Preface:** The concept of kenosis is, Jesus emptied Himself of His Deity and confined Himself to His humanity throughout most or all of His human life. This was done for two reasons: (1) He had come to die for our sins. As God, He could not be confined to one place at one time (that is,

the cross). As God, He could not have any contact with sin in any way. Our sins could only be paid for by a Man. (2) Jesus lived the prototype Christian life during His first advent. He depended upon the plan of God and upon the power of the Holy Spirit. These functions depended upon the Word of God, which Jesus, in His humanity, learned (Luke 2:40, 52). What Jesus did is how we are able to live our lives as believers in the Church Age.

This doctrine is presented in narrative form, rather than point-by-point. Throughout, I give perhaps a half-dozen analogies to the concept of kenosis. Bear in mind, this is such a unique event in human history that it is hard to find a good parallel.

At the end of this doctrine, I am going to ask a rather serious and surprising question.

We know that Mary and Joseph have spent time in Jerusalem at the Temple and that Mary gave birth to Jesus in Nazareth. We have been told about some isolated incidents of interactions between various people and the infant Child. We do not know how often this or that group came to worship the infant; or how many individuals knew Who the Lord was while He was an infant. However, we have studied each recorded interaction (more briefly for those in the book of Matthew). Now it has come time for Mary and Joseph to leave the Jerusalem area.

Luke 2:39 **And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.**

As we have already studied, Joseph and Mary did everything according to the Mosaic Law, including the redemption of their firstborn. Then, because of a warning, they went to Egypt to live for a time (according to Matt. 2). At this point in the Luke narrative, they return to the Galilee area to the city of Nazareth. They had completed their ritual requirements, then they were guided by an angel of God to go to Egypt. They have now been given the okay to return to their own city in the Galilee region. During this return, they were warned not to go through Jerusalem (most of this information comes from Matt. 2).

Luke 2:40a **And the Child grew...**

*To grow* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, imperfect active indicative of the Greek word *auxanô* (αὐξάνω) [pronounced *owx-AN-oh*], which means, *to grow, to increase, to enlarge*. The imperfect tense is action which began in the past and continues on into the future—the perfect description of any growing child. This might well have been translated, ***and the child kept on growing***.

Quite obviously, all children grow; but the emphasis here is going to be upon the Lord's spiritual growth. Even though, as God, there would be no reason for spiritual growth, in Jesus' humanity, He had to grow in the human spirit just like anyone else. Jesus is going to learn spiritual information (as well as information about the world around Him), which will bring us to a Biblical conundrum: *how does the omniscient Son of God learn anything? Why would He need to?* Nevertheless, the next phrase reads:

Luke 2:40b **...and became strong, filled with wisdom.**

This is how spiritual growth is achieved; it is by the increase of divine wisdom in the soul. Or, as R. B. Thieme, Jr. often put it, *by the intake of Bible doctrine* (he also coined the term *epistemological rehabilitation*, which refers to much the same thing).

Again, the imperfect tense for the main verb indicates an ongoing process begun in the past and continued into the present.

You will note that both verbs are in the passive voice, indicating that the subject, Jesus Christ, received the action of the verb. He did not make Himself strong; He did not fill Himself with wisdom; both of these are grace processes which require the person to utilize grace provisions. As a child, Jesus ate food and he did activities that children might do which involved His muscles (which could have included learning His father's trade). These processes are designed by God for a child to naturally grow. Jesus did not make Himself taller; nor did He have much to say about his body type. He accepted the diet at home and the natural growth function of His body—as happens to every child.

Similarly, God provided a way for Jesus to learn wisdom, which would have been, presumably, going to the synagogue and hearing the Word of God spoken and taught. Whereas, we have Bibles and can teach the Word of God to our own children; the ownership of a private Bible would have been nonexistent in a common household during the time of Jesus (although there were some private libraries). However, many families went to their local synagogue where they heard both the reading of Scripture and explanations for what was read. A responsible parent would then bring this home and teach it to their children.

I do not know if one could go into the synagogue and request a specific scroll (much as we can do in the libraries of today). This seems unlikely to have occurred in any synagogue. They believed that the Scriptures were inspired; they believed them to be the Word of God. They would have had limited access to all of the Scriptures (that is, the Old Testament); and they would have had limited copies.

Although it is our understanding that, when a new copy of the book of Samuel was provided through the scribal system, that the old copy was promptly destroyed. It is not impossible that some of these were not always destroyed or that imperfect copies were not always destroyed. Furthermore, there were translations made of the Old Testament—in the Greek, for instance—and these copies would have been maintained and replaced by something other than the scribal system. My point is, it is reasonable to think that some copies of Scripture to end up in private libraries—the Greek manuscripts for certain, but why not a few Hebrew imperfect manuscripts?

That all being said, this would not have been the likely place for Jesus to have received His teaching. The synagogue would have been the place for Him to learn.

The exact specifics of the Lord's spiritual growth, from a human standpoint, may be guessed at. Mary was well-versed in the Scriptures, as we have previously studied. Recall that when she spoke to her relative Elizabeth, much of what she said had parallels throughout the Old Testament. Joseph himself was obviously open to divine revelation (I believe that there are at least 3 dreams mentioned in Scripture where God speaks to him). So, my assumption would be that both of them taught Jesus; and that His appetite for spiritual information was insatiable. No doubt, Jesus began going to the synagogue at a very early age—perhaps as early as age 3 or 4. Obviously, He would have gone with His mother. We know today that a child may begin to learn how to read at age 3; so I would speculate that Jesus began to actively seek out spiritual information around that age.

But, we have this problem, an apparent contradiction. How can Jesus, as God, be omniscient; and yet, here, He is clearly learning? These two seemingly contradictory facts need to be reconciled in some way, or we have to question the orthodox tenet that Jesus is God.

This takes us to a study of the concept of *kenosis*.

## What is the kenosis? (from Got Questions)

**Question:** "What is the kenosis?"

**Answer:** The term kenosis refers to the doctrine of Christ's "self-emptying" in His incarnation. The word comes from the Greek of Philippians 2:7, which says that Jesus "**emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men**" (ESV; capitalized). The word translated "emptied" is a form of *kenōō* (κενόω) [pronounced *keh-n-OH-oh*], from which we get the word *kenosis*.

Notice that Philippians 2:7 does not specify what the Son of God "emptied" Himself of. And here we must be careful not to go beyond what Scripture says. Jesus did not empty Himself of His divine attributes—no such attributes are mentioned in the verse, and it is obvious in the gospels that Jesus possessed the power and wisdom of God. Calming the storm is just one display of Jesus' divine power (Mark 4:39).<sup>1</sup> In coming to earth, the Son of God did not cease to be God, and He did not become a "lesser god." Whatever the "emptying" entailed, Jesus remained fully God: "**in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form**" (Colossians 2:9).

It is better to think of Christ's "emptying" of Himself as a laying aside of the privileges that were His in heaven. Rather than stay on His throne in heaven, Jesus "**made himself nothing**" (as the NIV translates Philippians 2:7). When He came to earth, "**he gave up his divine privileges**" (NLT). He veiled His glory, and He chose to occupy the position of a slave.

The kenosis was a self-renunciation, not an emptying Himself of deity. Nor was it an exchange of deity for humanity. Jesus never ceased to be God during any part of His earthly ministry. He did set aside His heavenly glory. He also voluntarily refrained from using His divinity to make His way easier. During His earthly ministry, Christ completely submitted Himself to the will of the Father (John 5:19).

As part of the kenosis, Jesus sometimes operated within the limitations of humanity. God does not get tired or thirsty, but Jesus did (John 4:6; 19:28). God knows all things, but it seems that, at least once, Jesus voluntarily surrendered the use of His omniscience (Matthew 24:36). Other times, Jesus' omniscience was on full display (Luke 6:8; John 13:11; 18:4).<sup>2</sup>

There are some false teachers who take the concept of kenosis too far, saying that Jesus gave up all or some of His divine nature when He came to earth. This heresy is sometimes referred to as the kenosis theory, but a better term is kenoticism or kenotic theology, to distinguish it from biblical understanding of the kenosis.

When it comes to the kenosis, we often focus too much on what Jesus gave up. The kenosis also deals with what Christ took on. Jesus added to His divine nature a human nature as He humbled Himself for us. Jesus went from being the glory of glories in heaven to being a human being who was put to death on the cross. Philippians 2:7–8 declares, "**Taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!**" In the ultimate act of humility, the God of the universe became a human being and died for His creation.

The kenosis is the act of Christ taking on a human nature with all of its limitations, except with no sin. As one Bible scholar wrote, "At His incarnation He remained 'in the form of God' and as such He is

## What is the kenosis? (from Got Questions)

Lord and Ruler over all, but He also accepted the nature of a servant as part of His humanity” (J. J. Müller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon*, p. 82).

<sup>1</sup> I would disagree with Got Questions that this is necessarily a function of Jesus’ Deity. There are many miraculous things which the Lord did. However, there were many seemingly miraculous things that Moses did, and we know that Moses himself did not do any of the miracles which are recorded in the book of Exodus. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that everything (or anything) that the Lord did came from His Deity. That is, He may have said the words which appeared to still the waters (in this particular illustration), but that does not mean that He Himself actually did the miracle.

<sup>2</sup> It is also possible that the Lord, in His humanity, continued to experience the limitations of humanity; and that God the Holy Spirit revealed some information to Him. We will discuss these things in more detail when we come to them.

From <https://www.gotquestions.org/kenosis.html> accessed January 3, 2020 (slightly edited).

Additional resource material: <https://gbible.org/doctrines-post/doctrine-of-kenosis/> (Robert R. McLaughlin, who is an excellent teacher)

The first and second chapters of Colossians deal with this general concept of kenosis. We read in Col. 1:17 **And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together**. We may translate that final phrase, **by Him, all things are held together**. So how does Jesus hold the entire universe together and yet, as a child, He is still learning and growing spiritually?

I can explain this by analogy. We all have bodies and we all have free will. If I choose to, I can blink my eyes; I can close my eyes and shut down my visual access to the world. But, can I stop my heart from beating or stop my blood from flowing, if even for a few seconds? No. There are certain things that our body does automatically—on autopilot if you will—that we have no control over. So, whereas, I can lift up or move my hand; I cannot stop sensory information from being transmitted from my hand to my brain—when I touch something, I can feel it—particularly if that object is hot or cold.

I believe that, in a similar fashion, the Lord’s Deity and His function as a Member of the Godhead was put on autopilot. Jesus, even as a child, is holding all the universe together; but not as an act of conscious volition but as an automatic function of His Deity. From before I was born right up to this moment, my heart has been beating. Even though it is a part of my body, I do not have volitional control over it. Now, I can run and my heart will speed up, and I can lay down and sleep, and it slows down. But my volition is involved only in the actions which I take; my volition in and of itself does not speed up or slow down my heart. I believe this is, more or less, how the Lord’s Deity functions. I believe that Jesus had, at any time, the power to access His Deity and all that implies; but that He chose not to throughout most or all of His life on earth. Did Jesus *never* access His Deity during his 33 or so years on earth? At this point, I am not able to answer this question; and given what we know, that might even be an unimportant question.

Luke 2:40a-b **And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.**

Our study of this verse has led us into the doctrines of Kenosis and the Hypostatic Union. How do we briefly describe what Luke is saying here? God the Son *chose* to set aside His attributes of Deity and to grow physically, mentally and spiritually just as any other believing child would.

Luke 2:40c **And the favor of God was upon Him.**

The word *favor* here is *charis* (χάρις) [pronounced *KHAHR-ic*], which means, *grace, graciousness; acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, joy, liberality, pleasure, thanks*. I prefer translating it *grace*. Strong's #5485.

God the Father watched over Jesus and provided Him with logistical grace, protection and guidance.

Jesus, in His humanity, acted like the humanity of anyone else. He had to grow physically; His brain developed and grew; He had to grow spiritually. In His Deity, Jesus was omniscient; but in His humanity, He had to learn Bible doctrine. When functioning as a man in this world, Jesus accessed the doctrine in His human spirit, doctrine that He had learned from the Word of God.

Furthermore, Jesus used the same grace assets that we do when it comes the spiritual growth. We are given the filling of the Spirit when we name our sins to God (obviously, Jesus never lost the filling of the Spirit). Then we are able to hear and understand Bible doctrine as it is being taught by a well-qualified pastor; and we are able to make the free will choice to believe that we are being taught. This results in spiritual growth. Jesus grew in His humanity in exactly the same way that we do.

Luke 2:40 **And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor [= grace] of God was upon Him.**

As Jesus grows, He becomes strong, and He is filled with wisdom, having God's grace upon Him. This is one of the few passages on Jesus growing up as a young boy. However, the emphasis is upon His being filled with wisdom, which is Bible doctrine in the soul that functions as a part of a person's daily life.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. had an excellent approach to this. He taught that Jesus Christ test drove the spiritual life of the Church Age. He was the first Person to have a spiritual life with all of the spiritual operating assets which we as believers enjoy today. He began with the filling of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of God's Word. One primary difference is, Jesus lived during the Age of Israel; and because of this, many believe that His life was a separate dispensation, the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union. He was still under the Law; Israel was God's client nation; but the Church Age was on the horizon. So Jesus had all of the spiritual assets which we have today, but He grew by learning the Old Testament (we have both the Old and New Testaments to grow by).

When Luke speaks to various people in order to gather material for this gospel, I believe that this suggests that Luke directly interviewed Mary for much of this information. First of all, there is no better person in this regard to get this information from; and this wording suggests that this is something that Mary put aside and remembered about Jesus.

From this very specific incident, Luke makes a general observation about the Lord as a young man. This would have been an observation that Luke made, based on several interviews; and also, as inspired by God the Holy Spirit when he wrote his gospel.

Luke 2:52a **And Jesus increased in wisdom...**

The verb used here can mean *to advance* or *to increase*. One seems to work well in one place; and the other works well in another (this verb is properly applied to all of the 3 nouns which follow).

Jesus increased in knowledge, meaning that He learned the Law of Moses; and He learned the prophets; and that He properly understood these things. Obviously, this increase in knowledge occurs in His



humanity. The omniscience of His Deity does not bleed through to His humanity. The Doctrine of Kenosis (**Lesson #69**). Jesus learned the Word of God much in the same way that we do.

Luke 2:52b *...and in stature...* Or, *...and [Jesus increased] in stature...*

Even though I placed the word *in* in brackets, it is a legitimate translation because of the locative case here (all of three nouns are in the locative case).

Physically, Jesus matured or aged just like any son would. He would have gone through puberty; His brain and His body would have grown and advanced.

His human spirit also advanced, as He continued to take in Bible doctrine.

It is reasonable to suppose that Jesus was the healthiest man alive, his body not having been beset by sin.

Luke 2:52c *...and in favor....* Or, *...and [Jesus increased] in grace...*

Jesus advanced and increased in grace. This meant that He made critical use of God's grace system to advance spiritually. He used every opportunity available to Him to learn the Scriptures and He concentrated when they were read in the synagogues.

Even though the Bible says nothing of Jesus going into the synagogues as a child and a young man, I would assume that He did, considering that He went to the synagogues throughout His public ministry.

If a person is functioning on positive signals towards God after believing in Jesus Christ; then God must provide that person the opportunity to take in His Word.

His discussions with the teachers at age 12 suggests that He took the opportunity to partake in similar discussions at other times. Again, the Bible does not specifically confirm this, but Jesus would have been hungry for Bible doctrine from His earliest age. God the Father gave Jesus opportunities to take in Bible doctrine. It is logical to assume that Jesus wanted to discuss this information with learned men.

Luke 2:52d *...with God and man.*

Both God and men observed these changes taking place in Jesus. God was pleased with the Lord's progress spiritually (again, He advanced in Bible doctrine); and men were also engaged by Him. People liked Jesus. There will be a change here; and it is reasonable to try to figure out, *how did that happen?* Here, people are said to favor Jesus; but Jewish people will, in the end, clamor for Him to go to the cross (and the Romans were willing participants in His murder). Jesus did not change during this time; but there would become a point where the religious hierarchy of Jerusalem would turn against Him.

Luke 2:52 *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*

This is the spiritual growth of Jesus in His humanity. He grows in wisdom; and He also grows physically. He is favored by God and man.

Just as a person's physical growth is imperceptible from one day to the next, the same is true of one's spiritual growth. Most of the time, after attending a Bible class, you feel about the same as you did when

you walked in (once and awhile, you might feel better). But, in terms of spiritual growth, you would be unable to really quantify any actual changes from day to day. However, after a year of accurate Bible teaching, you ought to notice some differences in your life, those differences being good. As you have more and more years of Bible teaching, you can see more of a spiritual arc to your own life (just like your parents marking off your height on a door sill each birthday).

One thing that you might do, after a year of learning Bible doctrine, is attempt to apply the doctrine which you have learned.

This final verse of Luke 2 is one of the most important verses in the book of Luke. This verse caused us to consider one of the most important doctrines in Christianity—the doctrines of kenosis and of the Hypostatic Union. We learned that Jesus was much more complex than God wandering about in a human body. And, for as believers, there is something found here that is fundamental to our Christian walk—learning Bible doctrine.

Luke 2:52 **And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.**

R. B. Thieme, Jr. used to say, “Jesus test-drove the spiritual life for believers in the Church Age.” That is, we grow spiritually in much the same manner as Jesus did. We are filled with the Holy Spirit through rebound (through naming our sins to God); and we take in Bible doctrine on a regular basis (I believe that daily intake is key for every believer’s spiritual growth). Jesus did not have to rebound, as He did not sin; but He grew spiritually in His humanity in the same way that we do. Jesus did *not* access the omniscience of His Deity in order to grow spiritually (that is an application of the doctrine of kenosis). He heard Bible doctrine (that is, the teaching of the Word of God), He believed the Word of God when He heard it, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, grew spiritually in His humanity as a result.

Just as Jesus consumed food and grew physically (that is, He increased in stature), He took in spiritual food and grew spiritually (that is, He increased in wisdom).

Although Jesus had access to all the divine attributes of His Father, He willingly set aside that access to function on earth as a true human being (which we learned in the Doctrine of Kenosis).

When it comes to spiritual growth, we as believers look to Jesus Christ, Who set the precedents for us as Church Age believers. Even as our physical bodies grow, so our spiritual life should grow, and that can happen in one way and one way only—the intake of Bible doctrine while we are filled with God the Holy Spirit (which is the result of naming our sins to God<sup>1</sup>).

From Luke lessons #102–103:

We know that Jesus, for nearly all of His life, has studied the Scriptures (these would have been the Old Testament Scriptures, as there was no New Testament at this time), and is prepared to launch His ministry. Jesus, in His humanity, did not automatically know everything that He needed to know. Spiritual knowledge was developed in his soul over this period of 30 years. In other words, Jesus learned Bible doctrine as a child and as a young adult. We are told this in Luke 2:40 **And the Child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor [= grace] of God was upon Him.** Also Luke 2:52 **And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.** This *must* refer to Jesus’ humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> We all have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the point of salvation.



God's knowledge never increases. God does not learn something new every day. Let's say that we do something out of the ordinary; do you think that God then looks down and remarks, "Well, I'll be doggoned; I did not see that coming!"? God knows every single decision that we will make. He knew this in eternity past.

Jesus is God, but in His humanity, Jesus did not access the perfect, complete knowledge which God possessed. This is the doctrine of kenosis, where Jesus, in His humanity, voluntarily restricted the assets which He had as God. It would be quite a theological discussion to determine whether Jesus ever accessed His divine attributes. I would lean towards our Lord *never* accessing His Divine nature throughout His entire life to His death during the crucifixion—however, this is not a theological position which I have fully developed. Obviously, at specific times when He is glorified, the physical representation of this could have been done by God the Father and not by Himself as God the Son.

From Luke lessons #114–115:

Luke presents Jesus (primarily) as the Son of Man; that is, Luke emphasizes Jesus' humanity. Therefore, Luke emphasizes Jesus' human birth and human origins. Jesus is fully and completely human; the doctrine of Kenosis tells us that He voluntarily sets aside His Deity in order to accomplish His work on earth. I believe that it is entirely possible that Jesus did not rely on His divine attributes to do anything during His life on earth (including the Transfiguration). However, I am not yet ready to defend that position.

Defining the concept of Kenosis is squaring the true humanity of Jesus Christ with His Deity. How is it possible for Jesus to be truly a man and yet the God of the Universe?

### **Kenosis (from Theopedia)**

The term kenosis comes from the Greek word *kenoō*, translated "emptied" in chapter 2 of Paul's letter to the Philippians:

**"Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied** Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."** (Philip. 2:6-7 NASB)

What has come to be called "Kenotic theology" attempts to understand the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity in light of the kenosis alluded to in Philippians 2:7. Its aim is to solve some of the supposed paradoxes arising from Jesus having both a divine nature and a human nature. For example, how could an all knowing God become a baby, how could God be tempted, or how could Jesus (being God) not know the time of His return?

The danger comes when it is concluded that in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity took on human nature and gave up or lost some of the divine attributes -- so that Jesus was not fully divine. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ (known as the hypostatic union) maintains that Jesus possessed a full undiminished human nature and a full undiminished divine nature, which were not combined or confused into some new nature but were added to each other forever (yet remaining distinct) in the one person Jesus Christ.

The question regarding the kenosis comes to this -- What does it mean when Scripture says Christ "emptied" Himself? Did Jesus cease to be God during His earthly ministry? Certainly not, for deity

## Kenosis (from Theopedia)

cannot stop being deity or He would never have been true deity to begin with. Rather, the "emptying" is satisfactorily explained in the subsequent words of the verse, taking note of the two participles which grammatically modify and explain the verb: He emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. This emptying, in fact, was done as the man Christ Jesus, and neither of these ideas necessitates or implies the giving up of divine attributes.

Christianity maintains that Jesus did not "empty" himself of any of his divinity in the incarnation, although it is true that his divine attributes were veiled. When the Kenosis theory concludes that Jesus is or was less than God (as has been the case in the past), it is regarded as heresy.

From <https://www.theopedia.com/kenosis> accessed August 29, 2018; slightly edited.

Two links to outstanding studies on the Doctrine of Kenosis: [Charles Clough](#); [Robert McLaughlin](#).

We might understand that the humanity of Jesus Christ set aside His Deific nature or chose not to access it.

From Luke lesson #116:

Right after being introduced to John's disciples as the Messiah of God—which is confirmed by Luke's genealogy—Jesus then is led into the desert-wilderness by God the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly enough, in the middle of Luke 3, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus; and here, at the beginning of Luke 4, the Spirit leads Jesus into the desert-wilderness. What makes this interesting to me is, even though the first two chapters of Luke mention the Holy Spirit; Jesus is not associated with the Holy Spirit until He is baptized by John.

This certainly suggests the question, was Jesus filled with the Holy Spirit prior to John's baptism? Let's consider this logically. Jesus has grown spiritually throughout His life. We know that because of Luke 2:40, 52. Was the Spirit a part of His life in some way prior to John's baptism. It seems logical that He must be, since He grew spiritually (by studying the Word of God). So, what occurred before the disciples of John in chapter 3 was actually for their benefit. They were able to see a physical manifestation of the power of God being given to Jesus, the man.

There is a different sort of relationship between the Spirit of God and man in the Old Testament economy. I believe that it is referred to as enduement. I do not know that I could adequately distinguish between the filling and the enduement of the Holy Spirit. However, it seems fairly clear that Jesus sending the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) is far superior (perhaps what is far superior is the fact that all believers receive the Spirit?).

In any case, Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit at the beginning of Luke 4. I believe that we are told that for our benefit, as the audience for Luke's biography of Jesus. I do not think that Jesus being led by the Spirit is something new that had never happened before.

Luke 4:1a **And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan...**

Jesus had been in the Jordan Valley being baptized by John. This is what we studied in the previous chapter.

Whereas, John has a full-blown ministry in the desert-wilderness—which ministry continues on at this point—Jesus begins His public ministry. However, His public ministry does not begin as we might think it would. There is a crowd, gathered there to see John, but Jesus does not take it over. Jesus did not look out over John's disciples and say, "You have been following John; now you will follow Me." The herald announces the King and the King is before His people; but, at a point where we might expect an inspiring inauguration speech—nothing is recorded by any of the disciples. In fact, for a short time, Jesus will disappear from the public's radar for 40 days.

Luke 4:1b **...and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness...**

Jesus is said to be filled with the Spirit; and here, He is led by the Spirit. This is all true, but the information is given to us for our benefit.

I mentioned the doctrine of kenosis at the end of Luke 3. What we read here helps us to better understand how the Lord's ministry operated. Jesus did not, by means of His omniscience, decide, "Next on My agenda is going off to the desert-wilderness to be tested." Instead, He is being led there by God the Holy Spirit. As God, Jesus would have had direct access to the plan of God. He would know, this is #1 event, #2 event, etc. And he would go wherever based upon God's plan. However, as a man, Jesus has this understanding only through the doctrine in His human spirit combined with the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. Just like you and I.

Jesus was very much like us, inasmuch as, He did not know what was going to happen over the next day, week or month. Now and again, this is going to explain His words or behavior. Because Jesus voluntarily functioned within the confines of His humanity, setting aside His access to His Own Deity, exactly what the future held for Him on any given day was not known to Him. Where He was to go next was not known to Him, except when guided by God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is here in the desert-wilderness being led by God the Holy Spirit. One of the remarkable things regarding Jesus—and I rarely see any of these being emphasized—He spent a considerable amount of time alone. He took time out to get away from the crowds. I can totally relate to that.

At this point in time, there were no crowds, apart from those who were gathered to see John. Jesus was a part of that crowd; but He was then baptized by John. Interestingly enough, Jesus does not say to John, "What you did was great; now I will take it from here." and then He turns to teach the crowds. Jesus did not do that at all. Insofar as we know, He exchanged a few words with John and did nothing else. Interestingly enough, Jesus did not stand before the crowd and begin to speak (insofar as we know). John baptized Him, told the people Who He was; but I do not believe that Jesus even addressed the people there. He does not appear to have even lifted His hand in a friendly gesture, as if to say, "Hey, how's it going?" With no real commentary in between, we go from Jesus' baptism out to the middle of the desert-wilderness to being led by the Spirit, even further into the uninhabited regions of Judæa.

He was being guided at this time, by God the Holy Spirit.

One of the many doctrines developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr. is, Jesus Christ test-drove the spiritual life for the believer in the Church Age. The spiritual life which you and I live was first lived by Jesus (*not* by Abraham, *not* by Moses, *not* by David). At the second birth, we are given the same resources that the

Lord had. Even though He was minus a sin nature, we function without sin during the periods of time that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. This time may be 5 seconds, 5 minutes, and even, for some people at some times, 5 hours (at least until the time you have to enter into *rush* traffic).

One possible option is that Jesus had the enduement of the Spirit from birth to around age 30—thus having exactly the same spiritual assets as the Old Testament saints; but, at the beginning of His public ministry, he is filled with the Holy Spirit, having the same spiritual assets of the Church Age believers. Was there a difference between Jesus prior to His public ministry and Jesus during His public ministry? I don't know that there was exactly; and, at this point, I don't believe that I could quantify this difference in any way. We can differentiate between believers in the Church Age and believers in the Age of Israel; but I don't know that I can do that with Jesus.

**Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness...**

Jesus is relying upon the Spirit of God to guide Him. We do not know the mechanics for this, exactly; apart from Jesus Christ being in fellowship and being steeped in the Word of God. However, as we moved further through this chapter, there will be some things which occur that help us to understand some of the ways that the Lord was guided in His humanity.

Jesus Christ grew spiritually in His humanity (**And the Child grew, and became strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was upon Him.** —Luke 2:40; LitV)

We do not know if Jesus knows that He is going out in the desert-wilderness in order to be tested by the devil; but that is what is about to happen. It is my opinion that He does not know what is about to happen.

Jesus, in His Deity, was omniscient; however, in His humanity, His knowledge was limited. The doctrine of Kenosis tells us that Jesus set aside the use of His divine assets, and He used only that which Church Age believers will be given. Again, He test-drove the spiritual life for us believers in the Church Age. In my opinion, He understood where the Spirit was guiding Him; but He did not know what would happen next.

From Luke lesson #117:

In any case, we should understand what fasting is all about. Fasting is where you set aside normal and non-sinful activity in your life, in order to do something else—specifically to engage in spiritual activity. Although we are not told *what else* Jesus was doing, let me suggest that He was spending this time studying (or meditating upon) the Scriptures. And when I said *meditating upon*, what I mean is, He is thinking about passages which He has memorized and He considers what they mean.

Did Jesus, in His humanity, read the Scriptures, and immediately understand them? Or, did He add Scripture upon Scripture, precept upon precept, advancing spiritual and He learned more?

In order to follow the plan of God, Jesus was able to turn off or set aside His Deity. By choice, he kept His Deity and humanity separate. In some way, that had to happen. We have Him speaking sometimes from His humanity (***I thirst; the Father is greater than Me***); and sometimes He speaks from His Deity (***Before Abraham lived, I existed eternally***). It should be clear that, these sets of statements clearly proceed from His humanity or His Deity, specifically.

Jesus setting aside the attributes of Deity is known as kenosis. An illustration that occurs to me is, you are playing football with your young daughters, and you are carrying the ball, and you are running, but they grab you and pull you down. Quite obviously, if your daughters are under 10 years old, then you have the ability to smash right through them, and take that football wherever you want to, leaving those little girls lying on the field. But you don't do that; you would never do that. You withhold whatever skills, power and strength that you have, and you let them enjoy taking you down. This is how a normal father behaves. He sets aside his prowess as a football player and adjusts himself to the situation at hand (which is giving in to two pint-sized daughters who want to tackle him).

From Luke lessons #118–119:

There is one more thing to be discussed, and that is the doctrine of Kenosis. This is where Jesus voluntarily restricts His Divine Nature. Although there were times when Jesus was in touch with Himself as God (at least, theoretically); most of the time, it appears that He was not. How do we explain this? How does God stop being God, even for a second? Or, how is it possible, if Jesus is God, for Him to set that Essence aside for a period of time (I believe this could have been for His entire earthly life)?

The best I can do here is to propose an analogy. Your body does a massive number of things that you are unaware of, but these things are programmed by your brain. You breathe, your heart beats, your blood flows, your food is digested; and these things all take place without you actually thinking about it. At no time in the day do you say, "Okay, for the next minute, my heart will beat 50 times and for the next minute, it will beat 70 times." We can't do that. At most, we can exercise vigorously and increase our heart rate. But, even though our brains are closely involved with the beating of our hearts, this is not something that we consciously determine and will. You may be able to hold your breath until you pass out, but, your brain will take over and restore your normal breathing function after you are passed out.

So, let me suggest that the Godly qualities of Jesus—His Divine Nature—are sort of placed on auto-pilot. He may access these things from time to time, as per the Father's plan; but His Divine Functions are carried out but somehow separate from His conscious mind. Much as our physical functions occur throughout the day, every day, without our having to contribute any conscious thought to them (and there are a huge number of things which our brain seems to direct throughout the day which bypasses our volition). Throughout most of Jesus' life, He functions with the same mind and the same bodies that we have; subject to similar limitations. His lacking sin allows Him to be able to do some things which we cannot (having a complete memory; being able to go long periods of time without food); but we should also bear in mind that, these things are not necessarily better, in the strict sense.

If you or I had a perfect memory, then there would be people that we could never forgive (possibly every person we have known). The wrong which they did to us would always be fresh in our minds. We could not let go of it. I know someone who had an event take place in his past, and he could not let go of it; and eventually, he took his life as a result (combined with, in my opinion, taking psychotropic drugs at the same time).

My point being, having a perfect memory is not necessarily an asset. If our memories were perfect, we might not forgive anyone at anytime for what they have done to us. We might not ever get over love that is lost. I have lost a few girlfriends; but in retrospect, the emotion and the friendship are things which I remember without actually having the emotion affect me. There is a point at which, the highly charged emotional aspect of a lost relationship is filtered out of my conscious mind. I cannot even bring a re-experience of those emotions, if enough time has transpired.

Jesus, on the other hand, could not do this. When He heard something, He could not un-hear it; nor was He capable of forgetting it. Throughout His entire life, people said mean and hateful things to Jesus—and these are people for whom Christ would die—and unlike problems we have had in interactions with other, Jesus could not simply set these things aside and forget them. I believe that these things stayed with Jesus all of His earthly life (and probably still).

Jesus has a perfect memory, not because He is God, but because He is uncorrupted humanity.

Again, I am speculating here; but I believe that these are reasonable and logical conclusions which we can make about our Lord in His humanity.

From Luke lesson #140:

**Luke 4:38 And He arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to Him on her behalf.**

The fact that Jesus arises from the synagogue and goes to Simon's house suggests that Simon is in the synagogue and that there are no intervening events. If my understanding of this series of events is accurate (and I believe that it is), then Jesus really has no reason to recognize that God will use Him to heal, apart from the Scriptures. What I mean is, within the humanity of the Lord, there is no inner discussion, *will I be able to heal this woman or not?* Jesus simply goes along with Peter, as this is the next increment in God's plan for Jesus' life. Jesus is aware of the several Old Testament passages where Messiah is associated with the bearing of the illnesses of others.

I realize that most people view this narrative and think to themselves, *well, Jesus is God, so He can do anything*. However, I believe things to be more complex than that. I do not believe that Jesus accessed His Deity regularly; in fact, possibly not at all during His earthy ministry (or during His life on earth). You may recall that, when tempted by Satan, Jesus did nothing miraculous. When taken to the pinnacle of the Temple and told to throw Himself down, Jesus did not go, "Watch this" and *poof*, Jesus is back on the ground, seated and eating a meal. Although Satan clearly had some extraordinary powers, Jesus did not reveal any super-human abilities during the temptation (regarding His 40-day fast, I would attribute that to a body which lacks sin).

There is a doctrinal reason for this self-imposed limitation (known theologically as *kenosis*): Jesus is test driving the Christian life. That is, we have the same portfolio of invisible assets that He has; so that we can operate in our lives very similar to the way that He lives His life. Now, if Jesus accesses His Deific nature on a regular basis, then how exactly does this work for us? We do not have that option. We can certainly pray to God the Father; but we cannot access the essence of God for our own personal use. We are unable to plan out our day by deciding, *let us see this coming day using omniscience*.

I believe that Jesus understands that God the Father is with Him and that God the Holy Spirit empowers Him; and that He has potential access to all that being God entails. However, I also believe that Jesus chose not to access His Own Divine Nature (this is known as the doctrine of Kenosis, which we have already studied—see Lessons 114–115).

Let me draw an analogy. When a movie star goes out, dressed to the 9's, posing for photographs, they are accessing their movie star notoriety. But, let's say they want to avoid all of that. Then some of them disguise themselves, just to simply be able to step out into the world and live a normal life (like going to



the store for a quart of milk and eggs). They are still the same person, in both situations, but in the second example, all that they are by way of a movie star is carefully hidden.

From Luke lesson #146:

As I began this chapter, one of the things which struck me—and I should have really noticed this much earlier—is the Lord's humanity. This is an important factor in this chapter of Luke, and I suspect, in many of them. We tend to emphasize the Lord's Deity because the unbelieving world (and even some cults) reject that Jesus is God. So often, we put so much emphasis upon this truth that we forget that Jesus is also very human. He is not part-man and part-God—He is not 50% of each. Jesus is fully God and He is fully man. Throughout most (or all) of His life on earth, Jesus *chose* to live as a man, with the very same limitations to which we are subject (although, because Jesus does not have a sin nature, His body is not corrupt—both the body and soul of everyone else are corrupted by the sin nature).

There are things which come with Jesus choosing to function fully as man (I believe that His entire ministry was the humanity of Jesus). He does not call upon His Own omnipotence or omniscience. All divine traits are available to Jesus, but He sets these things aside and does not use them or depend upon them. I am leaning towards this being the case throughout His entire public ministry.

One might compare Jesus to Clark Kent, the secret identity of Superman, where, as Kent, he does not use his super powers (I am drawing an analogy here, so just go with it). Whereas, Clark Kent often takes off his glasses and bursts forth as Superman, Jesus does not appear to do that. In fact, even when He is glorified, I would guess that this was done by the power of God the Holy Spirit and not through any employment of Jesus' innate power.

Particularly at the beginning of this chapter, I consider the events that are taking place and intertwine this with Jesus, in His humanity. *Considering His humanity alone, what might I conclude about these interactions*, is the focus of my thinking early on.

Luke 5:1a **On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on Him to hear the word of God,...**

It appears that Jesus was teaching the Word of God; but the people apparently kept moving closer, pressing in on Him.

What I believe the situation is, Jesus, in His humanity, recognizes a need for assistants, helpers—disciples, in fact—to help control such situations. Big guys. Strong guys. The situation described here could use some security, if you will. I would assert that much that Jesus did was both in the plan of God as well as a logical step for Him.

Let me use this occasion to explain what I mean. Jesus is trying to teach a large crowd of people who are, for the most part, positive towards His message. However, these are people who have sin natures, and many of whom lack common sense. Why press so closely on the Lord, so that He has nowhere to go?

Jesus is certainly God, but, under the doctrine of Kenosis, He willingly sets aside His divine attributes. Obviously, this is not something which we can fully appreciate, each of us being 100% human and 0% divine<sup>2</sup>. However, we have had examples in the past where, an all-powerful God could have done

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<sup>2</sup> We have the filling of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of God the Father and God the Son, but that does not make us divine.

something, but Jesus did not. For instance, when Jesus was being tempted by Satan. Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Now, since God knows everything all at once, was that really necessary? Let me suggest, yes, that Jesus in His humanity was not fully aware of every kingdom in the world.

It is very hard to find an analogous situation. Right now, the best I can come up with is a Jew in Germany during the second world war—a Jew who might do whatever is necessary to hide His Jewish heritage. His vocabulary, his traditions, even his clothing, is all set aside in favor of appearing to be German. Such a person would be fully aware of his Jewishness and the importance of suppressing it.

In reality, Jesus appears to operate nearly all of the time completely separate from His Deity.

What I am trying to say is, Jesus considers the situation, the crowds, the difficulty in speaking and teaching when so many people are crowding in upon Him; and realizes that He needs assistants. I believe that is *why* we find v. 1 leading us into Jesus choosing some disciples at this point. This uncontrolled crowd of people require some control.

There are other reasons why Jesus needs disciples. His teaching cannot be spread throughout the world apart from having disciples. Jesus will never write anything down; He limits Himself to a very small geographical area, and His earthly ministry would only last 3–4 years. Based upon all of this, there is no reason in the world that we should know anything about Him. However, His disciples will spread the word of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. They will also teach Church Age doctrine.

From Luke lesson #156:

Luke 5:17f **And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.**

Let's take this in points:

### **The Power of the Lord was with Jesus to Heal**

- 1) First thing to note is *Lord* translates the Greek word kurios (κύριος) [pronounced KOO-ree-oss], which means, *lord, master; Lord; he to whom a person or thing belongs; a prince, chief, sovereign*. Strong's #2962.
- 2) *Kurios* is most used to translate Y<sup>e</sup>howah from the Old Testament. *Kurios* is not always used to refer to deity; but its emphasis is on authority. However, in this case, *Lord* refers to Deity in the same way that Y<sup>e</sup>howah does.
- 3) Y<sup>e</sup>howah can refer to any Member of the Trinity; and *Lord* is used in that way here.
- 4) We are *not* speaking of the inherent power of Jesus, because, throughout all or most of His life, He operates from His humanity. That is, even though Jesus is the Son of God, it is possible that He never accesses this power as a part of His ministry (I am leaning towards Him never accessing it throughout His entire life).
- 5) If we were speaking of Jesus' Deity, then He would always have the ability to heal. There would not be one day where this power is more pronounced than on another day.
- 6) However, Jesus operates within the confines of His humanity, which is known as the doctrine of kenosis.
- 7) This suggests that there are times when Jesus is able to heal; and times when He is not.
  - (1) However, I do not recall any examples of Him being unable to heal anyone.
  - (2) Jesus appears to have some awareness when it is in the will of God to heal.

## The Power of the Lord was with Jesus to Heal

- (3) Jesus could have healed every person in the world (had this been the will of His Father). He could have ended all diseases forever, had He chosen to (acting from His Deity, of course).
- (4) However, there appear to be some limitations upon His healing, despite the fact that an inability to heal is never discussed in the biographies of Jesus (insofar as I can recall).
- (5) That is, we do not actually read the words, *Jesus could have healed everyone in Judæa, but He did not*.
- (6) We also do not read the words, *Jesus wanted to heal those in the crowd this day, but the power to heal was not with Him*.
- (7) However, every time that Jesus walked to the Temple courtyard, He probably saw a man who was lame soliciting donations for himself at one the entrances. Jesus never healed this man. In the book of Acts, Peter will heal this man instead (which will cause quite a stir).
- (8) So, although we do not have a verse that says, *Jesus walked by this lame man near one of the entrances to the Temple complex, but He chose not to heal him*; that appears to be exactly what happened on a number of occasions.
- 8) Nevertheless, this verse tells us that Jesus' power to heal was either with the Father or with the Holy Spirit, either of Whom may be referred to as *Lord* (I would assume the Holy Spirit).
  - (1) Regarding Jesus and the plan of God (the Father); God the Father is the Author of His plan; Jesus executes the plan; and God the Holy Spirit provides the power for Jesus to execute God's plan.
  - (2) Therefore, *Lord* refers to God the Holy Spirit.

As believers in Jesus Christ during the Church Age, we have the plan of God for our lives and we have the empowerment of God the Holy Spirit (which is *not* a feeling or an emotional experience). When we learn Bible doctrine, we are best able to apprehend the plan of God; and God the Holy Spirit has something with which to work with in our souls (our volition and our knowledge of divine information).

Let me put this in another way: Jesus Christ *test-drove* the Christian way of life<sup>3</sup>; and that is the life which we are supposed to live.

As an aside, I cannot tell you how many times when I am studying 2 or 3 books at the same time (during the same week), and I find interesting overlaps, and very interesting connections between these books (such as this verse that we are studying and Peter's healing of the lame man at the Temple in the book of Acts).

Luke 6:12a **In these days he went out to the mountain to pray,...**

From Luke lesson #170 (or thereabouts):

Throughout the Lord's ministry, we read of Him going off to be alone to commune with God. We may think that, since He only has a very short time on earth, He should be out teaching and healing as often as possible. However, it was beneficial to Him in His humanity and beneficial to His ministry to be able to spend time with His heavenly Father.

<sup>3</sup> I believe that R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined this phrase.

Just as I am certain that there are healings and teaching sessions left out of the gospels (several chapters in John are devoted to Jesus teaching essentially over a period of a few hours); I believe that there are many occasions where Jesus got away from all of the people and communed with God. I would make the assumption that Jesus, on most occasions, had similar access that we have. That is, we pray to God; and we do not expect to hear an audible voice respond, "That prayer will be answered; that prayer will not be; here is something that you need to do..." That is not for our time period; and even though God the Father does speak on a limited number of occasions, there is nothing to indicate that He ever does when Jesus is in prayer.

This continual need or desire for the Lord to pray to His Father is completely consistent with the doctrine of Kenosis. That is, with the concept that Jesus does not access His Deity for most or all of His earthly ministry. If Jesus is functioning as God, then He would have no need to pray to God the Father. They would be perfectly aligned in all things. But, as a man, Jesus has great limitations which He has fully accepted and embraced (so to speak). Jesus has chosen to function strictly as a man. Therefore, His humanity would want to be in close contact with God the Father, for guidance, strength, and fellowship.

This section which follows comes from Luke 5 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### **Jesus' Ministry and His Humanity**

Recall that Jesus has had a ministry going on for awhile. If I were to guess, perhaps for 6 months. All of this was a solo ministry which did not involve signs, miracles, healings or disciples. Based upon some of the things which we read in the first chapter of Acts, Jesus probably had some followers. They heard Him speak, and they wanted to travel with Him.

In any case, the Lord's ministry was Him simply reading and then teaching the Word of God. What we know of the Lord's ministry is very different than He started out (and the time period I have allowed for this ministry is purely speculative).

Only recently had Jesus begun to use the sign gifts given Him by God the Holy Spirit (from about the middle of Luke 4 to this point).

If Jesus is not depending upon His divine nature (that is what I believe), then He is only beginning to use these sign gifts, and the fact that He is able to cure people or cast out demons comes from passages which Jesus has read in the Old Testament.

When it comes to choosing His disciples, Jesus is evaluating these men as a man would. He does not look at Peter and decide, "I know that Peter will recognize Who I am." Jesus does not know that Peter will write two epistles. Although Jesus is a prophet, this does not mean that He knows everything from the future. He can speak of things only as they are revealed to Him. There is nothing that I have read which suggests that Jesus, at this point, had any information from the future about Peter. But Jesus was very able to read people, and that is what He did with Simon Peter.

Jesus is simply meeting and speaking with His various followers and evaluating them. He recognizes, for a number of reasons, that He needs more than casual followers.

This next section was taken from Luke 7 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

**Jesus rarely, if ever, accesses His Deity:**

There are a great many things about the Lord's ministry and the interplay of His Deity and humanity that we are unaware of. Based upon my study, I believe that, throughout most (and possibly all) of the Lord's life, He willfully shut down His Deity. That is, when this man's delegation came to Jesus, Jesus did not necessarily know who the man was, or whether or not He should deign to honor his request. Jesus, from His Deity, is omniscient, so that, potentially, He could have known every single moment of His life and life events in advance. However, I do not believe that Jesus did that. I believe that Jesus evaluates each situation and every person from His humanity (using the Bible doctrine in His human spirit), and from there He made whatever decision was the right decision.

When entering a city, Jesus did not know what would happen once He arrived. I believe that most of this can be justified by the text that we will study. Furthermore, this is very much indicative of the Lord's earthly ministry.

We often think of Jesus as God—all-powerful, all-knowing—sort of trapped within a physical body; but (1) this is completely the Lord's body; He will never be separate from it (apart from the 3 days which followed the crucifixion); (2) Jesus clearly allowed for His humanity to overshadow His Deity throughout all or most of His ministry. (3) Because Jesus is our example in the spiritual life, it is possible that He never accessed His Deity (essentially, Jesus test-drove the spiritual life for us). (4) Finally, bear in mind that, the most difficult thing that Jesus would do is die for our sins. He has to bear these sins in His humanity, not in His Deity. Deity cannot have any connection with sin (if Deity could have contact with sin, then God would not have had to become a man in order to redeem us). If Jesus did the most difficult thing that He had to do—die for our sins—without His Deity, then why would He have needed His Deity to function for much lesser acts?

As an aside, I am not, in any way, moving in the direction of making an argument that Jesus is not God. I am simply making the argument that Jesus did not access His Deity during His incarnation; or very rarely (and I do not have an example where He did).

My explanation for how this can possibly be—that is, how could Jesus be God and yet, somehow, not access His Deity—can be illustrated by our own physical bodies. Now, I might will myself to walk from point A to point B, but I do not will my heart to beat, my blood to flow, or any of the millions of physical processes which occur every single day. This stuff happens, and the master computer board which directs all of this is my brain, the same brain which I use to think, speak and wander about. Now, I am completely unaware of these other processes being directed by my brain apart from my will as I live out each day, even though the commands to do so emanate from the exact same brain. I use this brain to direct myself from day-to-day, to have an occasional thought or two; yet this brain also does a myriad of things which I am only aware of because of my understanding of biology. That is, my body is going to take in air, distribute oxygen and circulate blood; and there is never a time when I can make the decision to stop my blood flowing, even for a few seconds.

Between the functions of my body over which my volition has no control and the activities which my volition controls, there appears to be a great gulf fixed. Theoretically, I could hold my breath and temporarily alter some of these processes; but I would eventually pass out and everything would return to normal again.



I believe that the Deity of our Lord was very much like my brain which directs these millions of processes which I don't seem to have a say in. Somehow, all of this is compartmentalized, separated—yet fully functioning even to the point of holding the universe together—but without the humanity of the Lord consciously willing any of it to happen or even being aware of it any more than I am aware of these various automatic bodily functions. I know in theory that these processes are taking place, I know my brain is directing them, but this is intellectual information only. So, I believe that the Lord's Deity is something like this in relation to His humanity.

I am setting up an analogous situation; but there is a key difference. If the Lord wants to access His Deity, He is able to do that, in an instant. I obviously could not choose to suddenly shut down my heart beat by willing that to happen. I do not have a way to access that part of my brain. Now, based upon my studies, the Lord *chooses* not to access His Deity throughout most (or all) of His life and public ministry.

This reason that these things come to mind is, Jesus has been approached by a small delegation of Jewish elders, perhaps 2 or 3 or 4 of them. Jesus is aware that the pharisees are not very happy with Him; so, does it ever occur to Him that this could be a trap? (Obviously, if you know this story, you know that it is not.) Let me suggest that Jesus moves and functions about day-to-day based upon the guidance of God the Holy Spirit and the doctrine which is in His soul. I do not believe that He accesses His Deity to determine, by means of omniscience, whether this request is on the level or not. I believe that He simply takes each situation as it comes and makes an evaluation based upon all of the relevant factors.

Let me further suggest that Jesus is a genius when it comes to reading people. That is, He can look at these people and determine—without anything supernatural going on—that they are sincere; and that this is all a very real request.

As a further digression, there are two pertinent questions: *why do I think this* and *why is this important*? As taught by R. B. Thieme, Jr., Jesus is our model of the spiritual walk. In fact, Jesus test drove the Christian life for us today. He has the same resources that we have and all that the Lord had that He used is the same as what we have. In fact, we have the entire New Testament as well, which is quite helpful in our daily walk. In order for all of this to be true, Jesus must be self-limited. See the doctrine of **Kenosis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). In [Lesson #115](#), we had one approach to explaining kenosis; along with two links where the doctrine has been more fully examined. Luke 3 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) has also been posted, which contains that same information.

The idea of Kenosis is, just as we cannot access the portion of our brains which cause our hearts to beat or our blood to flow, Jesus chooses not to access the Divine aspects of His Own Person. This in no way makes Him any less Divine.

### Final Point:

I have taken the position that Jesus operated directly from His humanity and not from His Deity for all or most of His life. One of my nephews questioned this, and this is the strongest argument which I believe that I can give for taking this position:



When Jesus is crucified and He is paying for our sins, He does this in His humanity. Deity cannot be confined to one point in time and space and Deity cannot have contact with sin. Therefore, He must pay for our sins in His humanity. When God the Father began to place our sins upon Jesus, He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He is speaking to God the Father and to God the Holy Spirit. Jesus in His humanity takes upon Himself the penalty for our sins. His Deity is not involved; the Holy Spirit is not filling Him. He is separate and alone on the cross for the 3 hours during which He pays the penalty for our sins.

Now, if Jesus does the Greatest Act in human history in His humanity, why would He need to access His Deity in order to do lesser things (that is, lesser things like the rest of His public ministry).

#### Objections:

One logical objection is possibly found in John 1:48 “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

Jesus was, in His humanity, a prophet. So there were things which He knew and things which He said based upon this gift of prophecy which He had.

God, on many occasions, speaks of knowing us even before we were born. There are a list of such verses here: [https://www.openbible.info/topics/god\\_knew\\_us\\_before\\_we\\_were\\_born](https://www.openbible.info/topics/god_knew_us_before_we_were_born) What is remarkable here is, Jesus does not say this (which would have been Him speaking from His Deity).

### Final Theological Question

If Jesus always operates within the confines of His humanity, why does He need to be God? I am asking this question, not from the standpoint of Scripture (as I think Scripture clearly proclaims that Jesus is God), but from more of a philosophical or theological point of view.

If Jesus were not God, this would set up quite a dichotomy for the believer. Logically, could not a believer hate God and yet love Jesus? If Jesus is God, then *no*, such a position would make no sense. But if Jesus is not God, we could express dissatisfaction with our own situation and circumstances on this earth—blaming this upon God—and yet be grateful to Jesus for providing the way out. Could we not blame God for everything, and pray to Jesus exclusively?

Let me suggest that, such a circumstance where Jesus is not God, would encourage a confused reaction to Jesus and to God. All that we are and all that we have is based upon what Jesus did for us (paying for our sins); could we not just as easily assign our difficulties in life to God? The Unity of God the Father and God the Son makes such a reaction impossible. If I believe that I have something against God, then do I not have the same objection against Jesus? And if my gratitude to Jesus is real, then is not that same gratitude to be directed toward God the Father? The Unity of the Godhead requires this.

A good illustration of this is Satan. There are, no doubt, men who owe their temporal fame and riches to Satan (or to another demon). Such men would not have a favorable attitude towards God. Automatically, there is animus; if you hold to one, that you cannot hold to the other (I think Jesus said something like this when talking about serving two masters).

If Jesus is fully and only man, then who do we serve in this life? Jesus or God? This is the two master situation which Jesus spoke of. If Jesus and God the Father are in perfect unity, then we are serving the same Master.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

## Addendum

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Kenosis

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

### Bibliography

Additional resource material: <https://gbible.org/doctrines-post/doctrine-of-kenosis/> (Robert R. McLaughlin, who is an excellent teacher)  
See also **Charles Clough**.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

**Kukis Homepage**

**Doctrines**