

“Pondering the Humility of the Son of God at Christmas”

It’s amazing to ponder the humility of the Son of God. That’s a truth about Him that Christmas invites us to ponder, yet it’s seen throughout His incarnation (and beyond it). Let’s begin by looking at...

1 Peter 2:21 “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, **that you should follow in his steps.**”

That raises the question, “*How did Jesus, the Son of God, live?*” In a word, the answer is *humbly*. Everything about Jesus speaks of humility.

Discuss: What comes to your mind? How did the Son of God demonstrate humility?

Let’s look at the footprints He left behind, and in so doing we’ll discover four primary ways in which He demonstrated humility.

A. He exhibited humility in His birth.

It’s impossible for our finite minds to appreciate the change in living conditions the Son of God experienced when He came to earth. He left heaven—the loving presence of His Father, the praise of the angels, conditions of absolute bliss and total comfort. He left all that and far more, and came to earth—where there’s sickness, suffering, pain, disease, sin, and man’s greatest foe, death itself.

But He didn’t just come to earth. This was no casual, impersonal visit. He whom angel hosts adore entered this world as a human being. The Maker came as a mortal. He robed Himself in human flesh.

I’ve tried to ponder this before by examining an anthill. I’ve bent over to observe those tiny creatures scooting along at frantic pace. If those creatures were in danger and I could rescue them, would I do so *if it required me becoming an ant*? No way. Yet in a very real sense, it would be less a step down for me to become an ant than for the Son of God to become a man, for the human to ant transition is a move from being one kind of created being to another kind of created being, whereas in Jesus’ incarnation, the infinite Creator actually became a creature!

How can that be? It’s beyond the capacity of our tiny minds to fathom the fullness of this demotion.

But there’s more. He didn’t just become a *man*. He chose to enter humanity in the lowliest of human circumstances. You know the story.

Luke 2:7 “...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

He chose the home He would enter, but He bypassed the splendor of the Roman Emperor’s palace, the dignity of the High Priest’s dwelling, and went down, down, down the line. The King of kings chose a family so poor that his first bed was a cattle trough. Think of the stale smells in that stable, the sounds, the sights.

And think of Peter’s charge again, “To this you were called,” Peter said, “because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, **that you should follow in his steps.**” This is our calling, beloved, to approach life humbly as did our Savior. Paul emphasized the same point...

Philippians 2:5-7 “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

Without question, Jesus demonstrated humility in His birth.

Discuss: How does knowing this about Jesus affect you right now?

B. He exhibited humility in His life.

He did so in countless ways but for time sake I'll merely mention five.

1. It's seen in His attitude towards authority.

Who was Jesus Christ? He was and is God Himself (John 1:1-2), the Creator of heaven and earth (Col. 1:15-16), the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16), and the One who sits on the throne of heaven and receives the worship of heavenly beings (Isa. 6:1ff). All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him (Matt. 28:20). That's what makes the following so amazing. When He came to earth, He submitted Himself to other authorities. Yes, He chose to place Himself under authority. I'll give three examples.

a. He submitted to sinful parents.

Luke 2:51 “Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them...”

b. He submitted to sinful government officials.

Luke 20:25 “He said to them, ‘Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.’”

c. He submitted to divine authority.

John 14:31 “...the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.”

2. *It's seen in His response to mistreatment. 1 Pet. 2:22-23*

1 Peter 2:22-23 “‘He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.’ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”

Discuss: Why is it important for us to regularly rehearse the truth about our Savior's humility?

C. He exhibited humility in His death.

Philippians 2:8 “And being found in appearance as a man, *he humbled himself and became obedient to death—* even death on a cross!”

D. He will exhibit humility in His response to personal glory.

We read about this in 1 Corinthians where Paul tells us how God’s plan for the ages will culminate...

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 “Then the end will come, **when he [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father** after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he ‘has put everything under his feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. **When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him** who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.”

Picture this future scene. The Risen Christ is going to return and establish His kingdom over the world. He’s going to reverse the curse brought on the world by Adam. He’s going to destroy every foe, including death. And then, with His people praising Him for His accomplishment, He’s going to turn to His Father and say, “Mission accomplished. This is for You. It’s all for Your glory! I’ve served You as You asked, and I will always do so. I gladly place Myself in submission to You!”

Discuss: What are some practical implications of what we have observed in this Bible study?