

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for December 23, 2007

The Christmas Story from Paul's Perspective
Philippians 2:5-6
Dale Whitehead

What steps did Christ have to take in order to descend from riches to rags?

The first step in Christ's descent from riches to rags was His willingness to give up His rights (Philippians 2:6).

The word "form" (MORPHE) refers to the essential character of something.

"Form" (MORPHE) is the essential character of something. "Likeness" (SCHEMA) is the outward form that it takes. MORPHE never changes but the SCHEMA can.

When Paul wrote of Christ as having existed in the form (MORPHE) of God, he was in essence declaring Christ, prior to His incarnation, to be God.

The word "existed" is a present participle followed by aorist participles implying that Christ existed in the form of God in the past and is still existing in the form of God in the present.

Christ as God not only had the right to be loved, honored, cherished, worshiped, served and obeyed, but He also had the right to equality (Philippians 2:6).

The right to equality simply meant that Christ, in the form (MORPHE) of God, had every right as God to be equal with every other member of the Godhead in terms of how His deity was displayed (SCHEMA).

The reason why Christ did not demand His right to equality was because it was a necessary first step in His descent from the riches He enjoyed in heaven to the rags He experienced on earth.

Based on the example of Christ we, in seeking to serve others, should be willing to give up all our so-called rights.

Christ's willingness to give up His right to equality eventually cost Him the glory that He enjoyed with His Father before the world was (John 17:4-5).

May God give us the grace to be willing to give up our rights in seeking to serve others even as Christ Himself, in His service to others, was willing to give up His rights.