New Apostolic Church International

October 14, 2020: Thoughts on the Bible text

Foto: P. Johanning

“[Christ Jesus] who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2: 6–8).”

Bible reading: Philippians 2: 5–11

The Bible text from the letter to the Philippians describes the path of the Son of God from divine glory into the world of humanity. He renounced all sovereignty and appeared as an ordinary man among the people.

“...who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God...”

The Son of God decided of his own free will to leave His glory and become man. He did not selfishly hold on to the divine omnipotence and omniscience, but renounced it and chose instead the humble position of a bondservant (literally “slave”), and put Himself in a situation that was completely unworthy of Him.

“And being found in appearance as a man...”

In Jesus Christ, the Son of God was recognised as a man among the people. People saw Him as the son of Joseph the carpenter and knew that His mother’s name was Mary (Matthew 13: 55–56). In terms of His position in society, Jesus was an ordinary man who appeared with authority to proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand.

Jesus Christ as man was, however, fundamentally different from all other human beings in that He was not tainted by sin. Jesus is actually what humankind was always intended to be like (Romans 5: 12–15). He is our example and His actions and words show us how we should act and speak.

- Jesus aligned Himself to the will of God: “Your will be done” (Matthew 6: 10). Let us also seek to understand the will of God and then fulfil it.
- Jesus helped the people who were suffering and in need (Luke 7: 13). Let us also not ignore the needs of others but whenever possible be prepared to help.
- Jesus endured contempt and derision and did not allow any of this to deter Him from proclaiming the kingdom of God (Matthew 27: 29; Mark 15: 31). Let us also not allow ridicule or disinterest to deter us from professing the gospel and imminent return of Christ.

“He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

The incarnation and humbling of the Son of God, as man, reached its conclusion in the crucifixion. This demonstrated that, although Jesus also felt the fear of pain and death, He accepted everything that was placed on Him. Why did He do this? It was because He wanted to provide all humankind with the opportunity to find their way back to God and attain eternal life.

It is because the Son of God humbled Himself and suffered and died that we can be redeemed and have eternal life.

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