

The Perfecting Of Jesus

"... though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and having been made perfect, he became unto all those that obey him the author of eternal salvation ..." (Heb. 5:8f).

In this Hebrew passage the writer tells that Jesus "*learned obedience*" by the things which he suffered. Before Jesus came to this world, he existed in the "*form of God,*" on an equality with Him. The Philippian writer said, "*... have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant being made in the likeness of man*" (Phil. 2:6f). Of this word "equality" Vine defines it thus "the same in size, number, quality, etc." Jewish leaders determined to kill Jesus because "*he made himself to be equal with God*" (Jn. 5:18).

Jesus surrendered His equality with God. He did not cease to be God (He could not cease to be what He eternally is), but He took on an added aspect to Himself. He became "incarnate." Webster defines this word to mean, "invested with flesh or bodily nature or form." This word is not found in our English Bibles but it does define Christ's sojourn on this earth. When He took upon Himself the form of man, He took on Himself the duty to "obey" God in the things God purposed that His role should be on this earth for He became a "*servant,*" literally, a "*bondservant.*" As the writer shows in chapter ten, the Father prepared a "*body*" for the Son. "*Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith 'sacrifices and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: then said he, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God'*" (Heb. 10:5-7). In taking on Himself the body of man, He took on Himself the role of a servant: one who obeys another, who does the will of His master whether that will be contrary to or coincides with His own will. Throughout His earthly sojourn He exhibited this spirit. He taught His disciples to have the same spirit, teaching them this by the model prayer: "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (Mt. 6:0). Always He prayed, "*Not my will but thine be done*" (Mt. 26:30). And when He had the cross and its agony even in full view, He said, "*I have completed the work which thou hast given me to do.*" Always, every step of the way, He yielded Himself to the Father's will: He learned obedience to the greatest degree, by the things which He suffered. Although He despised the cross and the shame attached to it; He steadfastly submitted Himself to whatever the consequences were from faithfully performing the Father's will (Heb. 12:2). He "*learned*" obedience because He experienced all the injuries that His (and our) adversary thrust upon Him!

"And having been made perfect." There was never a time in Jesus' life on earth nor His eternal existence either before or since His *"being made flesh"* that there were flaws or faults in our Savior's life. The word *"perfect"* indicates completeness and Jesus used it elsewhere of Himself to indicate completeness. When He was warned that Herod sought to kill Him, His answer was *"... Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am perfected"* (Lk. 13:31f). By this He meant His work in Galilee would be finished, completed. It was by His suffering that Jesus was made *"perfect."* He came to *"seek and save that which was lost"* and to *"give more abundant life"* to believers (Lk. 19:10; Jn. 10:10). But, Jesus could not give abundant life to man until He, Himself, had made the supreme sacrifice which made that salvation possible. Through His suffering (and death) He was made perfect, and became thereby *"the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him"* (Heb. 5:9). The earthly advent; the temptations, trials, death and resurrection of Jesus were all necessary ingredients in equipping Him in perfection, making Himself truly a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

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