

# Philippians 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

## Analysis

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**But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men** (ἀλλὰ ἔαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενούμενος, alla heauton ekenōsen morphēn doulou labōn, en homoiōmati anthrōpōn genomenos)—Heauton ekenōsen ("he emptied himself")—the verb kenoō ("to empty, make void") gives us kenosis theology. What did Christ empty? Not deity (impossible) but divine prerogatives, glory's visible manifestation, independent exercise of attributes. He veiled glory, accepted limitations, embraced vulnerability.

Morphēn doulou labōn ("taking the form of a slave")—morphēn ("form") again means essential nature. Christ took slave-essence, not mere appearance. Doulou ("slave, bondservant") was society's lowest status. En homoiōmati anthrōpōn genomenos ("being made in the likeness of men")—homoiōmati ("likeness") affirms real humanity while distinguishing from sinful humanity (Rom 8:3). Genomenos ("becoming") marks incarnation's moment—eternal Son entered time, took flesh, became what He wasn't (human) while remaining what He was (divine).

## Historical Context

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The kenosis (self-emptying) has sparked theological debate. Orthodox Christology (Chalcedon): Christ is fully God and fully man, two natures in one person, without mixture, confusion, separation, or division. Kenosis involved assuming humanity and its limitations, not divesting deity. Isaiah 53 (Suffering Servant) forms OT

background—the Servant takes slave-form to redeem. Greco-Roman culture despised slaves; Christ's slave-form was radical reversal.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What did Christ 'empty' in the kenosis—and what did He retain?
2. How does Christ taking 'the form of a slave' challenge cultural values of status and honor?
3. In what ways are you called to kenosis—self-emptying for others' sake?

## Interlinear Text

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ἀλλ᾽	ἐαυτὸν	ἐκένωσεν	μορφὴν	δούλου	λαβών	ἐν
But	himself	made	the form	of a servant	and took upon him	in
G235	G1438	G2758	G3444	G1401	G2983	G1722
όμοιώματι	ἀνθρώπων	γενόμενος·				
the likeness	of men	and was made				
G3667	G444	G1096				

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Corinthians 8:9** (Parallel theme): For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

**Matthew 20:28** (Parallel theme): Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

**John 1:14** (Creation): And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**Romans 8:3** (Parallel theme): For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

**Galatians 4:4** (Creation): But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

**Hebrews 4:15** (Parallel theme): For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

**Romans 15:3** (Parallel theme): For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

**Isaiah 53:11** (Parallel theme): He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

**Hebrews 12:2** (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Luke 22:27** (Parallel theme): For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.