

**The Inscrutable Question: Evidence Test #2: Challenge to Kenosis, Mt 4:3; Ps 33:6, 9; Definitions of Hypostatic Union & Kenosis, Phil 2:3-7**

3) Evidence Test #2.

a. Phase 1: The Challenge to Kenosis:

1. The verbal cross examination by Lucifer seeks to attack the Lord's relationship with God the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 4:3** - And the tempter [ **Lucifer** ] approached and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God [ **Messiah** ], speak [ **See Psalm 33:6, 9** ] in order that these stones should become loaves of bread."

**Psalm 33:6** - By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.

**v. 9** - For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

2. The Lord is now under cross examination before the Court in the appeal trial. The Father publicly proclaimed Jesus to be His Son just before the fasting period began.
3. Now, some forty days later, Lucifer is going to seize upon this fact as an enticement to lure Jesus into solving his physical weakness by violating the conditions of the hypostatic union.
4. The condition under which Christ agreed to function in the Incarnation prohibited Him independent access to His divine attributes and restricted Him to the utilization of human attributes empowered only by the filling of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word of God.  
  
These are the two power options that develop the spiritual skills necessary to utilize the ten problem-solving devices so that under momentum testing production skills can combine with wisdom to prepare the believer to excel under evidence testing.
5. This condition recognizes the hypostatic union: Jesus Christ possesses two natures, one eternal and one human. Undiminished deity is inseparably united with true humanity but without mixture or loss of separate identity and without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.
6. However, our Lord did not use His divine attributes to benefit Himself, provide for Himself, glorify Himself, or to act independently of the prototype spiritual life for the Incarnation.
7. He resisted these temptations to call upon His divine omnipotence for help and instead relied upon the four spiritual mechanics to overcome temptations and to resolve problems.
8. The voluntary restriction of the independent use of divine attributes is known as the doctrine of kenosis which is a transliteration from the Greek word **κένωσις**, **kenosis**. It comes from the root word **κενόω**, **kenoo** and means "to be emptied" or "to make empty."

9. This word is chosen to define our Lord's voluntary restriction of the independent use of His divine attributes because it is found in the key passage that teaches the doctrine. It deals with the mental attitude that should characterize the believer. This mental attitude was manifest in Christ Jesus in the Incarnation. The entire context is found in:

**Philippians 2:3** - Do nothing according to the motivation of lustful ambition [ **approbation lust** ] nor according to the motivation of ambitious arrogance [ **self-promotion** ], but with genuine humility of grace orientation [ **tapeinofrosunē, tapeinophrosune: humility of mental attitude** ] let each one of you regard the other as more important than himself;

**v. 4** - Do not look out for your own personal interests but also the personal interest of the other.

**v. 5** - Keep on having this objectivity of thought in you which also resided in the thinking of Jesus,

**v. 6** - who, because being [ **existing** ] in the nature or essence of God, He did not think coequal association with God the Father as something to be seized and held,

1. This sets up the doctrine of kenosis which comes up in verse 7. Important concepts about the divine essence of the Incarnate Christ come out in this verse and explain the necessity for kenosis.
2. The phrase "because being in the essence of God" establishes the Lord's undiminished deity. The verb "being" is the present active participle of **ὑπαρχω, huparcho**.
3. The retroactive progressive present tense denotes what has begun in the past and continues into the present. This is also called the present of duration. Jesus Christ has always existed in association with divine essence.
4. The active voice indicates that Jesus Christ produces the action of eternally possessing divine essence.
5. The participle's impact is amplified by:

Vine, W. E. *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 108:

**BEING**. When not part of another verb this word translates the present participle of **ὑπαρχω, huparcho**, to exist, which always involves a pre-existent state, prior to the fact referred to, and a continuance of the state after the fact. Thus in Philippians 2:6, the phrase "who being in the form of God," implies His pre-existent Deity, previous to His Birth and His continued Deity afterwards.

6. The word we translate "nature" or "essence" is the noun, **μορφή, morphē** and is translated "form" in most English translations.
7. The word's origin goes back to Hellenistic Greek when it meant, "stature, form, feature, or external appearance. When applied to a person it referred to his image in sculpture, to his bodily features, physique, or image" (TLNT, 2:520-24).

8. We learn from verse 6 that prior to the Incarnation, Jesus Christ had always existed in the “form” of God. But we also know from John 1:18, “No man has seen God at any time.”
9. When God is revealed to man He takes on the form of a man, an angel or a phenomenon of nature. When these occur in the Old Testament they are referred to as theophanies. Jesus Christ appeared to Moses as the Burning Bush in Exodus 3, as the Pillar of Fire and a Cloud to the Israelites in Exodus 13-14, and as the Shekinah Glory when inhabiting the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle.
10. These are visual manifestations of the presence of deity. But the phrase in verse six speaks of the very nature or essence of God that Jesus had possessed from eternity past.
11. It is expressed by Paul with the phrase **μορφὴ Θεοῦ, morphē Theou**, the “nature or essence of God” and is in contrast to the phrase in verse 7, **μορφῇ δούλου, morphēn doulou**, the “nature or essence of a servant.”
12. The only way that mankind can visually identify deity is by means of His **μορφῇ, morphē**. But His actual nature or essence cannot be viewed by the human eye.
13. Whenever God allows man to view His nature or essence it is always manifest by some form of light. The Jews refer to it by the Hebrew phrase, **Shekinah Kavoth**, the Shekinah Glory, and the New Testament writers use the Greek word, **δόξα, doxa**, “glory.”
14. Thus Jesus Christ possesses the divine nature or essence in His undiminished deity. He had chosen on occasions in the past, e.g., to Moses and the Israelites, to reveal His glory to them.
15. However, here we see that the Lord does not look on the independent use of His divine essence to be something He is willing to “seize and hold,” the translation of the Greek noun: **ἡρπάγματος, harpagmos**.
16. This word refers to something that is available for the taking but not currently in one’s possession.
17. It indicates that Jesus Christ has within his grasp the independent use of His divine attributes. All that prevents Him for seizing and utilizing them is His voluntary decision not to do so.
18. The reasons for this come out in the verses to follow.

**Philippians 26** - who, because being [ **existing** ] in the nature or essence of God from eternity past as undiminished deity, He did not think coequal association with God the Father as something [ **an advantage** ] to be seized and held,

**Philippians 2:7** - but, on the contrary, he deprived Himself [ **kenōw, kenoo: self-negation, -depravity, or -denial** ], taking the form of a servant [ **mōrfēn doûlou, morphen doulou: the form of a servant** ], having been born in the likeness of man.