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**Question: "What is the kenosis?"**

**Answer:** The term kenosis comes from the Greek word for the doctrine of Christ's self-emptying in His incarnation. The kenosis was a self-renunciation, not an emptying Himself of deity nor an exchange of deity for humanity. Philippians 2:7 tells us that Jesus "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." Jesus did not cease to be God during His earthly ministry. But He did set aside His heavenly glory of a face-to-face relationship with God. He also set aside His independent authority. During His earthly ministry, Christ completely submitted Himself to the will of the Father.

As part of the kenosis, Jesus sometimes operated with the limitations of humanity (John 4:6; 19:28). God does not get tired or thirsty. Matthew 24:36 tells us, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." We might wonder if Jesus was God, how could He not know everything, as God does (Psalm 139:1-6)? It seems that while Jesus was on earth, He surrendered the use of some of His divine attributes. Jesus was still perfectly holy, just, merciful, gracious, righteous, and loving - but to varying degrees Jesus was not omniscient or omnipotent.

However, when it comes to the kenosis, we often focus too much on what Jesus gave up. The kenosis also deals with what Christ took on. Jesus added to Himself a human nature and humbled Himself. Jesus went from being the glory of glories in Heaven to being a human being who was put to death on the cross. Philippians 2:7-8 declares, "taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!" In the ultimate act of humility, the God of the universe became a human being and died for His creation. The kenosis, therefore, is Christ taking on a human nature with all of its limitations, except with no sin.

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