

d. The relationship of Christ's divine unchangeability to His incarnation

In John 1:14 John says: "And the Word became flesh."

The Son of God, a divine Person from all eternity, took into personal union with Himself a human nature, and thereby became a divine-human person.

Becoming human in the incarnational sense was not like putting on a new set of clothes, or like taking on a new behavioral role; nor was it similar to the entering of a spirit into a body. It was an actual becoming.

The Son of God actually became what He had not been before the incarnation. It is not that He "put on" human characteristics so as to appear like us; He actually became human. And He became human without ceasing to be divine. The Son of God became the God-man! The Word became flesh!

Here we must again make a distinction between God's nature and God's experience, as well as a distinction between the physics concept of time ("duration measured by physical change") and time in God's self-experience ("a unidirectional continuum of experience, including before and after relationships in sequential order").

The Son of God, viewed not as static but as dynamic, experienced the "before" of his preincarnate state of glory, and then experienced the "after" of His incarnate state of humiliation. But more: the Son of God, who had been a divine Person from all eternity, became what He had never been before -- a real human being. Although the change from glory to humiliation may be viewed as a mere change in outward circumstances (although this may not adequately capture the full thrust of Philippians 2:7), the change from divine to divine-human involves the very Person of the Son of God. He (the Person) became (began to be what He had not been before) man.

What does this do to the immutability of the Second Person of the Trinity? Doesn't the concept "became" indicate change? The answer is that the Son of God changed and yet did not change. He changed by becoming man; but by remaining God He did not change. That is, this is a change, not by subtraction of His divine attributes, but by addition of His human attributes.

Thus in one sense the Son of God was immutable in His incarnation by remaining fully God; and in another sense the Son of God changed in His incarnation by taking into union with His Person a human nature. This was a real becoming! But it was not a change in the divine nature.