



## The Inscrutable Question: Kenosis: Voluntarily Restriction of the Independent Use of Divine Attributes, Phil 2:7; Christ as Mediator

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

1. The verb **kenōw, kenoo** is the vocabulary word from which the term **kēnōsis, kenosis** is derived. It is an aorist active indicative:
 

aorist:	Constativ; contemplates the action in its entirety and gathers it into a single whole. It expresses the entire act of self-deprivation related to the independent use of divine attributes.
active:	The reflexive pronoun <b>~autōj, heautos</b> translated “himself,” not only identifies Jesus Christ as the One who produces the action of kenosis but also confirms that His decision to do so was voluntary.
indic.:	Declarative for a statement of fact.
2. In addition, the Lord took on the nature or characteristics of a servant: The divine purpose for Him taking on the essence of true humanity was so that He might become a Mediator to reconcile the differences between the righteousness of God and the depravity of man: **morfēn doūlou, morphen doulou**: the nature or essence of a servant.
 

Mediator: One who mediates between two parties with a view to producing peace. In the salvation plan of God, only by being possessed both of Deity and humanity could Jesus comprehend the claims of the Father and the needs of the sinner. These claims and needs could be met only by One who, Himself being proved sinless, would offer an expiatory sacrifice on behalf of men.
3. Thus the doctrine of kenosis stresses the fact that during the Incarnation, Jesus Christ voluntarily determined not to access the attributes of His divine essence in such a way that would compromise the Father’s plan for salvation.
4. He would use the power of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles and heal the sick in fulfillment of the prophecies related to Messianic identification. He would continue to utilize His omnipotence to hold the universe together and to control history.
5. These things were within the rules of engagement for the appeal trial. However, the Lord’s mission was more than just salvation. Another aspect was the execution of the prototype spiritual life in order to qualify as a substitutionary Sacrifice.
6. The plan of God for the Incarnation stipulated that the Lord could only use the four spiritual mechanics to maintain His human impeccability.



7. This means that the independent use of His divine attributes was not available to Him. To resort to the use of divine attributes would violate the rules of engagement for the appeal trial.
8. Jesus Christ in His true humanity could not resolve problems of human life in a way that would not be available to members of the human race. We do not have divine attributes on which to call.
9. This does not mean that the deity of Christ surrendered His divine attributes or “emptied Himself” as the New American Standard Bible translates the word **kenōw, kenoo**.
10. It is true that **kenōw, kenoo** means “empty, vain, purge, or evacuate,” but without further explanation the simple translation “empty” leaves the possible impression that in the Incarnation Christ surrendered His divine attributes. This is simply not true.
11. In fact, it is impossible. The immutability of the divine nature forbids change. Hebrews 13:8 assures us that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”
12. Consequently it is impossible for the divine nature of Jesus Christ to be altered in any way. To do so would destroy His deity.
13. Therefore, the unique relationship between the divine nature of Christ and the human nature of Christ is defined by the term the Hypostatic Union.