



GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

*A Defense of the Apostolic
Christian Faith*

Did Jesus Always Exist in the Form of God? Philippians 2:5-6-7



The Mind of Christ Jesus

Prior to addressing Christ Jesus existing in “the form” (morphē) of God in Philippians 2:6, Paul first addressed Christ Jesus as a man in Philippians 2:5 when he exhorted the Philippians to follow the example of the mind of Christ Jesus.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus?” (*Philippians 2:5 BLB*)

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus** ...” (*1 Tim. 2:5 BLB*)

The context of Philippians 2:5 is the same as the context of 1 Timothy 2:5 in which the words “Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5)” are the same as “the man Christ Jesus” in 1 Timothy 2:5. Thus it is ridiculous to assert that a pre-incarnate God the Christ Jesus (a God the anointed Christ Jesus) could be a pre-incarnate Almighty divine person. For how could the Philippians believers have possibly followed the example of an alleged Heavenly God the Christ Jesus who they knew nothing about? The Gospel narratives plainly declare to us the life and ministry of the mind of Christ Jesus, but nowhere do we find any example of an alleged mind of a God the Christ Jesus up in heaven before the incarnation.

Furthermore, the word “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word “Messiah” (*Hebrew – mashiach*) which literally means the “anointed one.” If Philippians 2:5-6 is addressing an alleged pre-incarnate God the Christ Jesus, then how could a pre-incarnate Almighty Divine Person be said to have been anointed by his God if he was already a coequal Almighty divine person with his God in the first place? For God who anoints, is greater than he who is anointed by His God.

HUPARCHON TRANSLATED AS “EXISTED” IN PHILIPPIANS 2:6

Some Trinitarians have alleged that the Greek verb “huparchon” in Philippians 2:6 means that Jesus “eternally existed” in the form of God.

Philippians 2:6, “Who, although He **EXISTED** (*HUPARCHON* = “*To Begin under*”, or to “*come into existence*”) in the form of God, did not regard **EQUALITY** (*ISOS* = “*identical*” or the “*same as*”) with God a thing to be grasped ...”

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance - EXIST “Huparchon”: “**From hupo and archomai; TO BEGIN UNDER (quietly), i.e. COME INTO EXISTENCE** (be present or at hand); expletively, to exist (as copula or subordinate to an adjective, participle, adverb or preposition, or as an auxiliary to a principal (verb) -- after, behave, live.”

Notice the words, “TO BEGIN UNDER” and “TO COME INTO EXISTENCE.”

Greek scholars could have translated Philippians 2:6 to read, “... although he began existing in the form of God.” Such a translation would disprove Trinitarian theology but perfectly agrees with Oneness theology. I ask our Trinitarian friends to show how the word “huparchon” has anything to do with eternally existing in the “form of God?” Such a view is only in Trinitarian wishful thinking.

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon correctly defines the meaning of “huparchon”: STRONGS NT 5225: *ὑπάρχων*; imperfect *ὑπῆρχον*;

1. Properly, **TO BEGIN below, to make A BEGINNING; universally, TO BEGIN;** (Homer, Aeschylus, Herodotus, and following).
2. TO COME FORTH, hence, to be there, be ready, be at hand

W. E. Vine’s, an Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 390 states that huparcho means “**to make a beginning(hupo, ‘under’; arche, ‘a beginning.’)**”

The Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon by Liddell and Scott (Trinitarians) says,
“[huparchon] ... to begin, make a beginning ... 2. to make a beginning of ... 3. to begin doing ... 4. to begin [doing] kindness to one ... Pass. to be begun” (p. 831, *Oxford University Press, 1994 printing*).

Although the Greek verb “huparchon” can be translated as “existed”, sometimes the full nuance of meaning can imply that one has come into a particular state of existence at some point in time. Huparchon can denote that a person has come from one state of existence into a new state of existence. For example, Luke 16:23 (NASB) says, “he lifted up his eyes, being [huparchon] in torment...” The rich man had lived a life of luxury during his short existence on earth, but after being cast into hell (Hades), he entered into a new state of existence in hell in which he found himself “being (huparchon) in torment.” Wherefore, “huparchon” shows that the rich man had died and went into a new state of existence in hell in which he found himself “being (huparchon) in torment.”

The rich man could not have always eternally existed in the state of torment because “huparchon” proves that the rich man had “come to be” in torment at a point in time. In like manner, Christ Jesus “huparchon” “began to exist” or “came to be” in existence in the form (morphē) of God in Philippians 2:6. Hence, the Son could not have always existed in the form of God throughout eternity past!

Oneness believers affirm that God the Father Himself was manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16) rather than an alleged timeless God the Son. Therefore, “huparchon” only shows that God Himself (the omnipresent Father) entered into a new state of existence when He became incarnate in “the form of God.”

Other examples where “huparcho” is used to prove that persons “began,” or “came to be” in a particular condition: Luke 16:23; Acts 2:30; Acts 7:55; Ro. 4:19; 2 Cor. 8:17; James 2:15 (plural form).

Another example is found in James 2:15 which says, “If a brother or sister be [hyparchosen] naked [‘without clothes’] ...” Obviously a brother or sister could not have always existed in a naked condition. This proves that the Greek verb “hyparchosen” means that a person has “began” or “came into” a particular condition rather than having always been in that condition. While Jesus as a human son obviously pre-existed his virgin conception as God, he certainly came into a new state of existence in the form of God via his virgin conception and birth.

Trinitarian Bible scholar Dr Robert Young noted the correct, complete meaning for uparcho in James 2:15, “BEGIN to be [uparcho] naked” (*Young’s Concise Critical Bible Commentary*; Baker Book House, 1977 ed.)

Wherefore, if Trinitarians want to affirm that the context of huparchon used in Philippians 2:6 proves that Jesus pre-existed his virgin conception as God, then they must acknowledge that God also entered into a new state of existence “in the form (morphē) of God” via his virgin conception.

Dr David Jeremiah wrote, “If anyone had the right to be self-centered, it was Jesus Christ. He had existed throughout eternity. The word used here for ‘being’ (existed - huparchon) occurs fifty-nine times in the New Testament, and every time it has reference to prior existence.” (Source: *Under Philippians 2:6 Commentary* at http://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_26_commentary)

In his book, “The Incarnation (published in 1896);” E H Gifford explained the incarnation within the context of Philippians 2:6 in a very modalistic fashion:

“Thus it is not the nature or essence ... but the mode of existence that is described in this second clause [“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God”]; and one mode of existence may be changed for another, though the essential nature is immutable.” (Source: *Under Philippians 2:6 Commentary* at http://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_26_commentary)

If Mr Gifford was addressing a pre-incarnate coequal God the Son in Philippians 2:6, then why would Mr Gifford describe the second clause of Philippians 2:6b as “one mode of existence” that was “changed for another” mode of existence while “the essential nature” remained “immutable?” Since it is not reasonable or rational to affirm that a pre-incarnate second distinct true God Person could “not consider it robbery to be equal with” another true God Person, Mr Gifford affirmed that the mode of existence of God had already been “changed for another” “mode of existence” “in the form of God” (in Philippians 2:6A) while “the essential nature” of God remained “immutable.”

MY PAST MISTAKE ABOUT HUPARCHON

I had written an online article and published a YouTube video in which I cited a quote from Dr Alfred Marshall which contained erroneous information. Unfortunately, I also used this quote in one of my debates which has been posted on YouTube. The inaccuracy of this quote misled me into denying the full nuance of meaning of the word “huparchon” which can also deal with pre-existence.

I had found and used an online quote from Trinitarian scholar Dr Alfred Marshall which contains false information about “huparchon.” Dr Marshall allegedly wrote that “huparchon” is “not used for God” in scripture. Although this quote appears on several websites, it contains false information from Dr Marshall: <http://searchforbibletruths.blogspot.com/2010/07/huparchon-or-uparcho-does-word-being.html> <http://aservantofjehovah.blogspot.com/2017/08/philippians26-8-demystified.html>

Dr Alfred Marshall wrote, “[*Ginomai*] denotes the coming into existence of what did not exist before.... This verb [just like *huparchon*] is therefore not used of God....”

Perhaps the words “[just like huparchon]” used in brackets were erroneously added to Dr Marshall’s original statement. If that is the case, I apologize to Dr Marshall for citing him incorrectly. Contrary to the quote I found from Trinitarian scholar, Dr Alfred Marshall, the Greek verb “huparchon” is used for God in Acts 17:24 and also in the Greek Septuagint.

Acts 17:24 uses “huparchon” for God becoming the “Lord of heaven and earth” after He had “made the world and all things therein.”

“God that made the world (past tense) and all things therein, seeing that he is (huparchon) Lord of heaven and earth.” Acts 17:24
After God had made the world and all things therein, He became its Lord via creation. Thus, if Trinitarians want to claim that huparchon shows pre-existence in Philippians 2:6, then it only proves that God entered into a new state of existence by becoming incarnate in “the form of God” as the man Christ Jesus.

Although we strongly disagree with Tertullian’s Semi-Arian theology, Tertullian was right when he wrote that God “became LORD by means of those things which He had made.”

“God is in like manner a Father, and He is also a Judge; but He has not always been Father and Judge, merely on the ground of His having always been God. FOR HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE FATHER PREVIOUS TO THE SON, nor a judge previous to sin. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, A TIME WHEN NEITHER SIN EXISTED WITH HIM, NOR THE SON; the former of which was to constitute the Lord a Judge, and the latter a Father. In this way He was not Lord previous to those things of which He was to be the Lord. But He was only to become Lord at some future time: just as HE BECAME THE FATHER BY THE SON, and a Judge by sin, so also did He become Lord by means of those things which He had made, in order that they might serve Him.” (Tertullian, *Against Hermogenes*, chapter 3)

Tertullian’s comments show why “huparchon” is used in Acts 17:24 to indicate that God became (huparchon) the Lord of all of His creation after He had “made the world and all things therein.” Hence, the context of some scriptures proves that huparchon can be used for someone moving from one condition (or state of being) to another new condition (or state of being). For example, Luke 16:23 (NASB) says, “he lifted up his eyes, being [huparchon] in torment.” The rich man could not have always existed in the state of torment because “huparchon” proves that the rich man had “come to be” in torment at a point in time (Luke 16:23). In like manner, Christ Jesus “huparchon” “began to exist” or “came to be” in the existence in the form (morphē) of God in Philippians 2:6.

The fact that “huparchon” is used in the same clause with “morphē” in Philippians 2:6A (hos en morphē theos huparchon – “who in the form of God existing [huparchon]”), proves that the true identity of Jesus Christ previously existed as God before “beginning to exist” (huparchon) in a new mode of existence “in the form of God” as a man on the earth. Although many Trinitarian scholars claim that form/morphē means an eternal nature rather than a visible form (as cited by many Trinitarian scholars in various Commentaries and Lexicons), there is not a single scripture in the Greek NT or in the Greek Septuagint to show that “morphē” ever means an eternal nature.

Morphē is clearly used of Christ appearing in his resurrected body in Mark 16:12. The Septuagint also uses the word “morphē”, but never in the sense of a timeless spiritual nature. In fact, there is not a single verse of scripture to show that the Son of God always existed in the form (morphē) of God throughout eternity past!

Professor Barry Smith of Atlantic Baptist University wrote in his exegesis on the letter to the Hebrews 1:3, "The Greek word (Charakter) can mean the literal imprint of something, that which corresponds to the die. Relatedly, it can refer to something as THE COPY OF AN ORIGINAL. This is confirmed by an inscription on a statue of Antiochus I of Commagene that reads: **exact image** (*charakter*) of my **form** (*morphe*)" (*charaktéra morphés emés*) (Dittenberger, Or. 383, 60).

The inscription on the statue of the Grecian King Antiochus plainly reads, the "exact image of my **form** (*morphe*)." Here we can see that the ancient Greeks thought of *morphe* as an "exact image" of a person's visible **form** (*morphe*) rather than a person's invisible nature. Therefore the Greek word "morphe" used in Philippians 2:6-7 as "the **form** (*morphe*) of God" and "the **form** (*morphe*) of a slave" must refer to Jesus as "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) as the exact image of the invisible Father's Person as a visible human person.

Huparchon is used for God in Acts 17:24 because God entered into a new condition after He began His creation, "The God who made (past tense) the world and all things in it, since He **is** (*huparchon*) Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands ..."

The context proves that God did not always rule over the things he made before he made them. It is in this context that *huparchon* is used because the Lord began to rule over heaven and earth after he made all things in the heavens and the earth. For Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Could the Father have actually ruled over the heavens and the earth before he made them?

The context of Psalm 55:19 (with *huparchon* used in the Septuagint), also indicates that God began to rule over the heavens and the earth as "the one who sits enthroned from OF **OLD** (after he created all things)." The word "old" is translated from *qedem* (*keh'dem*) which literally mean, from "afore time" or from "ancient time." Therefore the word "qedem" strongly implies that the Reigning Throne of God had a beginning ("from ancient time") when God first began to reign over His new creation.

The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Ephesians 1-3, page 111 states,

"IN THE TALMUD tractate Pesachim 54a; cf. Nedarim 39b, seven things, i.e. the law, repentance, paradise, Gehinnom, the throne of glory, the heavenly sanctuary, and the Messiah are not called pre-created, but pre-conceived in (God's) thoughts."

According to the ancient Jewish Talmud, God first "preconceived" "the throne of glory" in His "thoughts" before He actually began to reign upon His glorious throne via His newly created subjects (*His angels*). Hence, "the throne of glory" was clearly "pre-conceived in God's thoughts" before God actually reigned over His new creation. Therefore the ancient Jews have always believed that God did not actually reign upon "the throne of glory" until after He had a creation to rule over.

Most translations have *qedem* in Proverbs 8:22 translated as "beginning" or "first":

New International Version "The LORD brought me forth as the **first** (*qedem*) of his works, before his deeds of old;
New Living Translation "The LORD formed me from the **beginning** (*qedem*), before he created anything else.
English Standard Version "The LORD possessed me at the **beginning** (*qedem*) of his work, the first of his acts of old.
New American Standard Bible "The LORD possessed me at the **beginning** (*qedem*) of His way, Before His works of old.

In like manner Deuteronomy 33:15 translated *qedem* as "**ancient** mountains" and Isaiah 19:11 translated "qedem" as "**ancient** kings." Are Trinitarians prepared to suggest that ancient mountains and ancient kings could have always existed without a beginning? Therefore the context of Acts 17:24 and Psalm 55:19 (Septuagint) prove that the Lord began (*huparchon*) to sit enthroned above His creation after he created all things of old (*qedem*).

Philippians 2:6 says, "Who in the form (*morphe*) of God existing (*huparchon* – God entered into a new state of existence "in the form of God"), esteemed it not something to be grasped to be equal with God."

Philippians 2:7 (Berean Literal Bible) says, "but emptied Himself, having taken *the* form of a servant, having been made in the likeness of men."

Here we can see that God entered into a new state of existence (*huparchon*) by "having taken the **form** (*morphe*) of a servant (verse 7)" which only proves that Jesus pre-existed as "God" who later took on "the form (*morphe*) of a servant" when He "was manifested in the flesh (*1 Tim. 3:16*)." Hence, Trinitarians do greatly err when they assume that an alleged God the Son has timelessly existed in an alleged pre-incarnate form of God. The Greek verb "huparchon" only proves that our only true God the Father became incarnate in the form (*morphe*) of God at the incarnation through the virgin.

ISOS – EQUAL WITH GOD MEANS TO BE IDENTICAL WITH GOD

Philippians 2:6 "Who, although He existed in the **form** (*morphe* = "form" or "outward appearance") of God, did not regard **EQUALITY** (*isos* = "the same" or "identical"), with God a thing to be grasped ..."

The true identity of the Son is equal with the omnipresent Father in the same sense that the Greek word "isos" in Acts 11:17 means "identical" or the "same as."

"If God gave to them (the Gentiles) **THE SAME (ISOS) GIFT** as He gave to us (the Jews) also after believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Just as the gift of the Holy Spirit that was poured out on the Gentile believers is "identical" or "the same" as the gift of the Holy Spirit that was poured out on the Jews, so the deity of the Son is "identical" or "the same" as the deity of the Father.

The same Greek word "isos" is used in Philippians 2:6 which can be translated as "equal, identical, or same." Therefore the man Christ Jesus did not regard being "equal", "identical", or being the "same" as God a thing to be gasped (*Philippians 2:6*). Hence, the deity of the Son is the same identical deity of God the Father via incarnation (as a true man) just as the gift of the Spirit that was poured out on the Gentiles is the same identical Spirit that was poured out on the Jewish brethren.

The Form (Morphe) of God

Paul wrote, "**he existed in the form of God**" (past tense) because the man Christ Jesus began to exist "in the form of God" on earth as a man before his death. The word "form," in the original Greek is "morphe," which literally means "form" or "outward appearance." Hence, Philippians 2:5-9 is not speaking about an unseen spiritual form or nature existing with God prior to the incarnation, but rather, a physical and tangible image of the invisible God (*Colossians 1:15*) that was made visible for all to see after he was "made of a woman (*Galatians 4:4/Luke 1:35/Hebrews 2:9/Romans 1:3-4*)." Hence, the "form" (*morphe*) of God in Philippians 2:6-7 must be an "outward form" or physical "image (*Colossians 1:15*) of the invisible God" after "the word was made flesh" (*John 1:14*) rather than an alleged invisible unseen nature before the incarnation.

Mark 16:12 is the only other place in the Greek NT that uses the Greek word "morphe." The text says that "Jesus appeared in a **different form** (a resurrected *morphe*)." We know that Jesus could not have appeared in an invisible form after his resurrection or Docetism would be true. Therefore the meaning of the Greek word "morphe," translated as "form" in Philippians 2:6, proves that a visible and tangible form or image of the invisible God was already "made flesh" rather than an alleged pre-incarnate form or image.

Ignatius of Antioch who lived in the first century and was taught by the apostles, wrote to Polycarp 3:2,

"Look for Him who is above time - the Timeless, the Invisible, who for our sake became visible, the Impassable, who became subject to suffering on our account and for our sake endured everything." (Ignatius to Polycarp 3:2, written in about 107-109 AD)

Since Ignatius wrote that the God who became visible in the incarnation was first "invisible" before his birth, Ignatius identified Jesus as the invisible God the Father who later became visible as the Son in order to save us in Colossians 1:15. Therefore the Son is the post incarnational "image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15)" the Father who is the God who timelessly and invisibly exists as God the Father Himself. This sheds light on Paul's meaning of Christ Jesus existing in the form of God in Philippians 2:6. Jesus had existed in the visible form of God on the earth as a true man, but before becoming visible, He was first invisible as the Holy Spirit of God the Father Himself. Thus, according to the earliest post apostolic Christian witness, Philippians 2:6 proves that Jesus could not have eternally existed in an alleged visible form of God before his virgin conception and birth.

Trinitarians do greatly err by alleging that the Son could be seen in the form/morphe of God in the Hebrew Bible while the Father could not be seen. Yet Ignatius of Antioch wrote that the God who became incarnate was first "INVISIBLE, who for our sake became VISIBLE." Therefore Ignatius believed that the only invisible Father became the visible Son who was "subject to suffering on our account."

Like Ignatius, Mathetes was also taught by the apostles in the first century. Mathetes wrote in his Epistle to Diognetus Chapter 11, "He who is from everlasting, IS TODAY CALLED THE SON." Since the earliest Christians of the first century taught that the Son is "today called the Son," we know that the Son was not actually called a Son before his birth at Bethlehem.

When we compare Colossians 1:15 with Philippians 2:6, we find that Jesus is spoken of as "The image OF THE INVISIBLE GOD." We know that Jesus actually existed in the form or image of the invisible God when He was born at Bethlehem as it would have been impossible for Jesus to have existed as a pre-incarnate Son in the form or "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) if that form or image was also invisible. For it would be nonsensical if Colossians 1:15 read, "Who is the invisible image of the invisible God" with the word "invisible" being interpolated before the words "image of the invisible God." Jesus could not have always existed in an alleged invisible image of the invisible God and still be that image. So if Philippians 2:6 is speaking about an invisible form or image of the invisible God, then Colossians 1:15 should read something like this, "who is the (invisible) image of the invisible God ..." Since an invisible image of the invisible God is nonsensical and contradictory, we must rightly divine the word of truth by believing that Jesus existed in the physical form or image of the invisible God by being born via incarnation through the virgin on earth.

In Philippians 2:7, Paul spoke of Jesus being in the morphe/form of a slave, but in Philippians 2:6 Paul had addressed Jesus being in the morphe/form of God. If the form/morphe of God meant a divine nature in verse 6, as many Trinitarian scholars suppose, then that would mean that the second use of form/morphe in verse 7 would also have to be a divine nature. Since the second use of form/morphe in verse 7 says, "in the form/morphe of a slave," it is hard to imagine how a divine nature is the form of a slave. For God's Divine Nature as God is not a Divine God the Slave. Hence, if morphe/form meant a divine nature, then how could a divine nature be the divine nature of a slave in verse 7? Since the "form of a slave" clearly implies the "form of a man," the Trinitarian eisegesis of Philippians 2:6-7 is clearly exposed.

Greek scholar Rodney J. Decker wrote in his online article, "Philippians 2:5-11, The Kenosis,"

"A much more likely context in which to understand μορφή [form/morphe] is biblical Greek ... Instead the LXX text must be used. There are four uses there: Judg. 8:18; Job 4:16; Isa. 44:13; Dan. 3:19. Although this does not represent a large number of uses, it does provide a consistent picture of the use of μορφή [morphe]. In each instance the word refers to the visible form of the individual so described, not to his essential attributes. 'Meager though the biblical evidence is, it is sufficient to make a prima facie case for the reference to a visible manifestation' (Strimple, "Phil. 2," 260.)." (Source: http://ntresources.com/blog/?page_id=2757)

"Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "Where are the men whom you killed at Tabor?" They answered, "As you are, so were they. Every one of them resembled the son (morphe in LXX) of a king." (Judges 8:18 ESV)

"Then a spirit passed by my face; The hair of my flesh bristled up. 16"It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form (morphe in LXX) was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice;" (Job 4:15-16 NASB)

"Another shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form (morphe in LXX) of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house." (Isaiah 44:13 NASB)

"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form (morphe LXX) of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated." (Daniel 3:19, Webster's Bible Translation)

The scholarly lexicon by Walter Bauer, translated and revised by Arndt and Gingrich, has under morphe, "**form, outward appearance, shape.**"

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, interprets morphe to be a "**form, external appearance.**"

Joseph Thayer, in his well-respected lexicon, has under *morphe*, "**the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance.**"

In his scholarly online article, "Kenos, Christ Emptied Himself," Trinitarian theologian Dan Musick (of Wheaton Graduate School) wrote, "Verse 6b: 'did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped' - **This is clearly a statement regarding Christ's human nature. Would it make any sense for Paul to state that Christ, as God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped since He was already God? Is the idea of God regarding equality with God a thing to be grasped a sensible issue to raise? It is only as man that Christ did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.** This alone makes sense. Verse 7a: 'but emptied Himself' - ckenesen - **As man Christ emptied himself.**" (Source: <http://kenosis.info/index.shtml>)

Although Jesus is spoken of as the visible "form of God" ("the image of the invisible God" - Colossians 1:15), he "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." The words, "DID NOT REGARD EQUALITY WITH GOD A THING TO BE GRASPED," prove that Philippians 2:6 is not speaking about an alleged non-incarnate Second Divine God Person up in heaven (prior to the incarnation), who would have already been fully God with God the Father in the first place. For how could it be possible for a coequal true God Person to have the capacity to regard "equality with God a thing to be grasped," if He had already existed as a second true God Person to begin with?

Since the text says, "did not regard equality with GOD," and not, "did not regard equality with" God the Father, it is apparent that the person who had the capacity to do the regarding could not have had the capacity to think as another coequal God Person beside God the Father in heaven. For it is nonsensical to believe that an alleged non-incarnate coequal God the Son Person who was not human, could have thought about being equal with another coequal true God Person if that God Person was already a coequal true God Person to begin with.

Philippians 2:7-8, "but emptied Himself, **having taken the form [morphe = "outward appearance"] of a servant, having been made** in the likeness of men. 8And having been found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself, having become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:7-8 - Berean Literal Bible)

Thayer's Lexicon says that "**made**" ginomai (ghin'-om-ah-ee) means "to become, i. e. **to come into existence, begin to be, receive being.**" Hence, Jesus as "God manifested in the flesh" was "made in the likeness of men" by coming "into existence" as a true human son rather than always existing as a son

Like the Berean Literal Bible translation, the conservative Lockman Foundation's Apostolic Bible Polyglot Interlinear (by Charles Van Der Pool) translated Philippians 2:7-8 from the Greek text as follows:

“But emptied himself, **having taken the form of a servant** (past tense), **having been made in the likeness of men** (past tense). And having been found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself ...” (Charles Van Der Pool’s interlinear translation of Philippians 2:7)

The Disciples Literal New Testament says, “Who, while being in *the* form of God, did not regard the being equal *with* God a thing-to-be-grasped, but emptied Himself, having taken the form of a slave, having come in *the* likeness of humans. And having been found as a man *in* outward-appearance, 8 He humbled Himself...”

The Emphatic Greek Diaglott renders Philippians 2:7 as, “but himself emptied, **a form of a slave having taken, in a likeness of men having been formed.**”

The Greek Diaglott shows that the Greek grammar in Philippians 2:7 shows a post-incarnational Christ who emptied himself only after “having taken” “a form of a slave” and only after “having been formed” in the “likeness of men.”

“HAVING TAKEN THE FORM OF A SERVANT, HAVING BEEN MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN.” (Charles Van Der Pool’s interlinear translation of Philippians 2:7)

The literal translation from the Greek text indicates that Jesus “emptied himself,” after “having” already “taken the form of a **slave** (*doulos – literally a “slave”*)” on the earth as a man. Hence, “the form (morphē) of God” in verse six is the same “form (morphē) of a slave” in verse seven. There is no reason to believe that the word “morphē” means an invisible nature in verse six and then a visible form (morphē) in verse seven. Trinitarians should ask how an alleged pre-incarnate Son could timelessly exist in “the form of a slave.” If that were the case, then they should call their alleged pre-incarnate God the Son a pre-incarnate “God the Slave” (an obvious absurdity).

Obviously, Jesus as a child born and son given was already in “the form of God” which was “the form of a slave” as a true man on the earth when he “emptied himself.” Therefore the Son of God could not have “emptied himself” of any divine attributes as a pre-incarnate Son because Philippians 2:7-8 says that the Son “emptied himself” after “having (already) taken the form of a slave” and after already “having been found in appearance as a man” (on the earth), “he humbled himself” to become obedient to the death of the cross.

“HAVING TAKEN THE FORM OF A SERVANT, HAVING BEEN MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN.” (Charles Van Der Pool’s interlinear translation of Philippians 2:7)

It is a flagrant contradiction of scripture to affirm that the Son of God emptied himself of anything as a pre-incarnate Son because the scriptures affirm that the Son of God emptied himself only after he had already “taken the form of a slave” which is post-incarnational rather than pre-incarnational. While Philippians 2:5-9 addresses the incarnation in which God Himself became a man as a living human Son, the passage only addresses the post incarnational man Christ Jesus who emptied himself after he had already taken the form of a slave as “God manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16) and as God who “partook of flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14)” to be “made like unto his brethren (Heb. 2:17 - “fully human in every way”- NIV).

Trinitarian theologian Dan Musick commented on Philippians 2:5-9, “The context clearly indicates that it was only as man that Christ emptied himself.” (Source: Kenosis, Christ Emptied Himself <http://kenosis.info/index.shtml>)

Helps Word Studies says, “**Having been made** (1096 *ginomai* – properly, to emerge, become, transitioning from one point (realm, condition) to another) in the likeness of men” means that the Son of God was already “made in the likeness of men” when he “emptied himself.”

The only way to bring harmony to Philippians 2:5-9 is to believe that the Son continually “emptied himself” of his divine rights and privileges by “not regarding equality with God a thing to be grasped” after God had already become one of us as a true man (a true son) on the earth. For God could not have emptied Himself twice: Once from heaven to earth and again from his new manifestation in the form of God as a true human being.

Wherefore, Philippians 2:5-8 supports Oneness theology because that text states that the Son is the man who emptied himself of his divine rights and privileges as “God with us” as a man. For our One true God had already took “the form of a slave” because he had already “been made in the likeness of men” via his virgin conception and birth. Therefore the Greek text in Philippians chapter two states that the Son of God was already a man when he emptied himself of his divine rights and privileges as “Immanuel,” “God with us” as a man.

Furthermore, an alleged pre-incarnate Yahweh God the Son could not have emptied Himself of His divine attributes by vacating heaven without violating Malachi 3:6, which says, “I am YAHWEH, I CHANGE NOT.” If Trinitarians want to affirm that a pre-incarnate Christ Jesus “emptied himself” to become incarnate as a man, then what exactly did he empty himself of in Philippians 2:6-7? Could an immutable divine person empty himself of his divine attributes while remaining immutable?

Philippians 2:8 clearly reveals that Jesus emptied himself on the earth as a man.

“Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:8

Although Jesus knew His true identity as God with us as a true man, he did not use his divine prerogatives as God in the flesh, but humbled himself by continually laying aside his divine rights and privileges in his earthly ministry. It is in this sense that Jesus continually emptied himself of His divine rights while on the earth as a man. As a true man, he humbled himself by becoming “obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:9).”

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