

Vicarious Sacrifice: Isaiah's Report of the Gospel, Isaiah 53:2–12; the First Advent of Messiah & the Cross, vv. 2–4; the Virgin Birth: the Tender Shoot, v. 2; Luke 2:52; Principles from the Doctrine of Kenosis; Jesus as Creator & Sustainer of the Universe, Col 1:16–17; Negative Volition of First-Century Palestine Is Described as "Dry Ground"

Isaiah 53:2 - For He [the true humanity of Jesus] grew up before Him [God the Father] like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. (NASB)

1. The verb "grew up" is the Hiphil, causative active, imperfect of **הִצְמַח** ('alah): "He shall be caused to grow up" before the Father.
2. The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in:

Luke 2:52 - And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom [σοφία (*sophía*): consistent spiritual growth] and stature [ἡλικία (*hēlikía*): physical prowess], and in favor [χάρις (*cháris*): benevolent attitude or disposition] with God and men [teachers of doctrine].

3. As Jesus grew physically in His true humanity, He also grew in grace utilizing His own mental attributes.

Principles from the Doctrine of Kenosis:

Kénōsis (κένωσις) is the noun form of the verb *kenōō* (κενῶω) which means "to empty or deprive oneself of proper function" (Philippians 2:7a).

During the dispensation of the Incarnation, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes in compliance with the Father's plan for the Incarnation and the First Advent.

This means that Jesus Christ did not use the attributes of His divine nature to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, to glorify Himself, to act independently of the future protocol plan of God for the Church Age by the compromise of the prototype spiritual life.

The objectives of the dispensation of the Incarnation were related to the human nature of Jesus Christ.

To resist this temptation, the human nature of Jesus Christ must not call on the divine nature for help. He had to use the prototype spiritual life to maintain His human perfection and to be qualified to go to the cross and be judged for the sins of the world.

During the dispensation of the Incarnation, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes in compatibility with His own objective and purpose in living among men with their limitations.

During the dispensation of the Incarnation, our Lord veiled the preincarnate glory of His deity by giving up the outward appearance of God and voluntarily taking Himself the form of a man.

This is called the doctrine of the humility of Christ. The union of Christ to unglorified humanity is a necessary factor of humiliation.¹

4. He did not utilize His deity to acquire knowledge of the Tanakh, but His academic perspicacity and application won the approval of both God and adult teachers.
5. Simultaneously, His deity continued to function independently of His humanity. For example, the deity of Christ continued to hold the universe together throughout the Incarnation:

¹ R. B. Thieme, Jr., "Doctrine of Kenosis," in *Spiritual Dynamics*, R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1992, L: 941.

Colossians 1:16 - All things in heaven and on earth were created [aorist passive indicative of κτίζω (*ktízō*): *ex nihilo*: to create from nothing; same as Hebrew בָּרָא (*bara'*)] by Him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through Him and for Him.

v. 17 - He Himself is before all things and all things are held together [present active indicative of συνίστημι (*sunístēmi*): permanently preserved system] by Him.

Visual:
Gen-1.1-2
cf. Isa-45.18

6. In verse 16, the aorist tense of *ktízō* is constative which not only contemplates the act of creation in its entirety but also gathers it into a single whole which is in complete opposition to the present notion that the universe evolved into its present state over billions of years.

The passive voice indicates that the universe, including Earth, received the act of instant creation from nothing; the indicative mood affirming this as an absolute fact.
8. Jesus is also said to be personally sustaining the universe in verse 17. The perfect tense of *sunístēmi* is intensive which places emphasis on the existing result. Jesus Christ produces the action of sustaining the universe and all in it; the indicative mood indicates this is an irrefutable fact.
9. While the deity of Jesus was performing this duty on the one hand, the humanity of Jesus was using his superior intellect to grow in grace at an impressive rate.
10. Isaiah describes this process as “growing up before God as a tender shoot.”
11. The words “tender shoot” are one word in the Hebrew: יָנֵק (*yoneq*) which refers to a tender shoot of a plant and, metaphorically, to an infant.
12. Plants were often used to characterize certain types of people. Kings and aristocrats were depicted as giant trees.
13. Consequently, Israelites expected Messiah to arrive in the regalia of a reigning and conquering king; in other words, a full-grown tree.
14. They did not comprehend that He would enter human history as a newborn infant. Their negative volition failed to take literally Isaiah’s prophecy in:

Isaiah 7:14 - “The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel: God is with us.”

15. This prophecy was fulfilled and confirmed when Matthew quotes Isaiah in his summary of Gabriel’s annunciation to Joseph in:

Matthew 1:22 - Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [**Isaiah**]:

v. 23 - “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us” [**Isaiah 7:14**].

16. Messiah entered into history as a newborn Babe; His first bassinet was a wooden feeding trough.
17. Clearly prophesied; clearly confirmed. Yet, the Jewish religious hierarchy who should have been alert to “signs” from the carousel was not even aware that Messiah has arrived in Bethlehem.

18. Throughout Jesus' public ministry, the religious establishment and the people of Judea did not look on Jesus as qualified to be Messiah.
19. Isaiah foresees this with his next phrase, "and like a root out of parched ground." "Root" is the noun שֶׁרֶשׁ (*sheresh*).
20. *Sheresh* does mean "root," but more than that it refers to the "life-generating tentacles that a plant puts out in the ground – the tap root. Figuratively "it refers to an origin or a beginning."²
21. Isaiah had already introduced this concept earlier in his prophecy regarding the two advents:

Isaiah 11:1 - [**First Advent**] Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

Isaiah 11:10 - [**Second Advent**] Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples ...
22. Religious Israel will not respond to Isaiah's prophecy and thus the Lord will be regarded as a "root out of dry ground."
23. The root that signifies the arrival of Messiah is said to flourish while in "dry ground." The word "dry," is the noun יָבֵשׁ (*siyyah*) plus the noun for "ground": אֶרֶץ (*'eres*): earth.
24. These words together form an idiom describing the spiritual status quo of Jews at the beginning of and during the time of the Incarnation.

The root of David has entered into history to provide salvation and eternal life. He prospered in "dry ground" under the ministries of the Holy Spirit but His message fell on those whose perceptive capacity was "dry ground."

² Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 1203.