



I press on
toward the goal to
win the prize for
which God has
called me
heavenward
in Christ
Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

Following the upward call through Philipppians ...

Christ Shall Be Exalted

The apostles of Jesus Christ were the ones who, through special revelation from the Spirit, exposed the entire plan of God to the view of man. The people of the Old Testament did not know, even the prophets who wrote the Old Testament. As the apostle Peter noted, "The prophets made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." They did not know, so they were asking.

"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Peter 1:10-12). So it was that the apostles exposed the plan of God to the view of man. That plan was to exalt Christ, as Paul stated it in the Ephesian epistle, "the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth" (Ephesians 1:10).

- ◆ **Paul's expectation** — Later in his life the apostle knew that he was going to die physically. As he explained to his child in the faith, Timothy, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come" (2 Timothy 4:6). But as he writes to the Philippian brethren, he comments that "I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit." Thus he states that this is "according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything" (Philippians 1:20). At some point in his near future, the apostle expects to be vindicated, and to walk out of that jail a free man, not put to shame.

- ◆ **Christ exalted** — If persecution and jail time could not shut Paul's mouth, it was pretty clear that only physical death could quiet the voice of this great proclaimer of the faith of Christ. The continuation of the thought of his earnest expectation is "but with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." It is an interesting, but not surprising, expression that the apostle uses, "with all boldness." The apostle was not an advocate of just quietly letting your light shine, and having people so impressed that they would come to you. He was an advocate of *all boldness!* In this way, Christ would be exalted as the message of the gospel would go forth. The commission of Christ requires that saints "go" and "preach" (Mark 16:15). Paul in his actions and words showed how that commission was to be carried out in boldness. The result, then was that Christ would be exalted in his body. If he lived, Christ would be exalted in the spread of the gospel; if he died, Christ would be exalted in the manner by which he faced his earthly termination.

- ◆ **Win-win** — The Christian, of which the apostle Paul was a prime example, has the best possible win-win situation. As he himself puts it, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Properly understood, it just does not get any better than "to live is Christ." He does not say here, "live in Christ"; rather, he says to live *is* Christ. This is the apex of sojourning on this earthly carpet, but it gets better, "To die is gain!" This is the maximum win-win, and it is available for each saint of God.

The challenge, then, is for each who makes a claim to godliness to exalt Christ. The proper mental habits must be developed, so that each action, each attitude, each thought, and each word bring glory to King Jesus. It is axiomatic that how a person lives, that's how a person dies. "Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death."

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JAY WILSON