

*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 Philippians ...

## Christ's Attitude

The great attributes of God and His accomplishments are generally so magnificent and on such a large scale that they are missed by the mind of man. They are missed because man in general refuses to have the God of the Bible receive the honor and thanksgiving due Him. "For since the creation of the world," said Paul to the brethren in Rome, "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). But because they chose to be blind, God gave them over to

the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. But He was not content that man should remain in that condition, so He sent Christ into the world, demonstrating to the "lost sheep" of this planet that He truly loves each one of them and desires each's eternal redemption.

- **The eternal Christ** — "In the beginning was the Word," the apostle John propounded, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1,2). This "Word," then, "became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). All of God, in this way, was in the body of Jesus Christ, as Paul expressed it, "For it was the Father's good pleasure for *all the fullness* to dwell in Him (Colossians 1:19). Jesus thus was co-equal with the Father from all eternity, but was willing to take human form. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," is Paul's train of thought here, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself ..." (Philippians 2:5-7). Jesus was not reaching and grasping to be God; He was and is! But for the sake of man, he "emptied Himself."

- **The incarnation** — As amazing as the creation of the universe is, it shrinks in comparison to the awesomeness of God in His taking human form. Jesus is described as having "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). In being conceived as a single living cell in the womb of Mary, being born as a normal baby, and growing into full manhood, He divested Himself of any character advantage over the rest of mortal men. Whereas as the great God in the heavens He could not be tempted, in emptying Himself and taking the form of a bond-servant He put Himself in the position where He could be tempted and could have sinned. "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses," stated Hebrews' author, "but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:16). He could have sinned, but He didn't; He can show His followers how to have the same victory as overcomers!

- **His death** — Ultimately, Jesus, in human form, died physically. But His death was not keeling over from a heart attack, or even a drawn out death due to some chronic disease. "And being found in appearance as a man," is Paul's exposition, "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). As brutal a death as is crucifixion, Jesus' was even worse because the beatings He took before the cross, and because of the separation from the Father He experienced in bearing the sins of all mankind upon Him. What humility!!

The goal of the apostle Paul's instruction here is to get the brethren to be imitators of Christ in attitude and in action. Although He is the highest of the high, He was willing to subject Himself to the lowest level of degradation in order to communicate to any observant and thoughtful people His love for them. There is no reason, therefore, for any saint to elevate himself to being some sort of "untouchable"; rather Christians are to meet the masses of humanity where those masses are, and exhibit of the love of Christ to them as well.

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