

Imitating The Incarnation of Christ

Philippians 2:5-8



“Let this attitude be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus: Who, existing in the form of God, thought not the being on an equality with God a thing to be retained with an eager grasp, but took no account of Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross.”

We Are Exhorted to Imitate Christ in Many Places throughout the New Testament



**Philippians 3:17 Brethren,
join in following my
example, and note those who
so walk, as you have us for a
pattern. NKJV**

**1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate
me, just as I also imitate
Christ. NKJV**

Even By Christ Himself



Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." NKJV

In Order To Follow Christ All The Way, One Must Begin by Trying To Realize and To Grasp Just Who and What Our Lord Was, and Is!



1 Peter 2:21-23 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, *leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps:* 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: 23 Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered threatened not; but committed (Himself) to Him that judgeth righteously:

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24 Who his own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. ASV



We See Jesus

AT BIRTH – the most proper child ever given to a mother's arms, through all the years of childhood at Nazareth, *“subjecting Himself to His parents.”*

IN HIS YOUTH – with but one thought, and that was *“to be about His Father's business.”*

IN THE WILDERNESS – calmly rejecting the most subtle trials of the devil; refusing to supply His needs by a misuse of His divine power – repelling the confusion of *tempting* God with that of *trusting* God.



NOTE!

Every time we yield to the devil, we are tempting God to do something about it – and sooner or later He will!

Amos 6:3 Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, who cause the seat of violence to come near;

Amos 4:6-8 "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places; yet you have not returned to Me," says the Lord. 7 "I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city.



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Amos 4:9-10 "I blasted you with blight and mildew when your gardens increased. Your vineyards, your fig trees, and your olive trees, the locust devoured them; yet you have not returned to Me," says the Lord. 10 "I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; your young men I killed with a sword, along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; yet you have not returned to Me," says the Lord.



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Amos 4:11 "I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; yet you have not returned to Me," says the Lord.

12 "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"



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Amos 4:13 For behold, He who forms mountains, and creates the wind (**Omnipotence**), Who declares to man what his thought is (**Omniscience**), and makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth — (**Omnipresence**), - The Lord God of hosts is His name!

Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. NKJV



We See Jesus

DECLINING – to seek His Father's **ENDS** by any other than His Father's **MEANS!**

WE SEE HIM AMONG THE THOUSANDS – with no pride of birth, though He was a king; with no pride of intellect, though He had the Spirit without measure (**John 3:34**); with no pride of power, though all power in heaven and earth would be given to Him (**Matthew 28:18**); with no pride of superior goodness or holiness, but in **lowliness of mind esteeming every one else better than Himself** – **Philippians 2:3b**

“Let this attitude be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus: Who, existing in the form of God, thought not the being on an equality with God a thing to be retained with an eager grasp, but took no account of Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross.”

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“*Form*” is Equivalent to our Phrase,
“*Specific Character*” or “*Essence*”

ILLUSTRATION: The “*matter*” and “*form*” of a pulpit.

The “*matter*” of this pulpit is wood; the “*form*” of this pulpit are those essential characteristics which make a pulpit a pulpit and make it differ from every other piece of wood (matter) in existence!

But how does this relate to Christ?

Before coming to earth, Christ existed in the form of God – He was Equal to God?

In Contrast

All men on earth existed in the form of sinners – **Romans 3:23; John 8:34**

Romans 6:17-18 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. KJV

What Did Christ Do?

“Let this attitude be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus: **Who, existing in the form of God**, thought not the being on an equality with God a thing to be retained with an eager grasp, but took no account of Himself, ***taking upon Him of the form a servant***, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross.”



God Incarnate!

Please be advised that the *“form”* of God was *not* changed into the *“form”* of a servant, but Christ *took on* the *form* of a servant! He was both God and man – He was God incarnate – He was God in the flesh!

John 1:14 And the **Word** became **flesh**, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. ASV

FORM

(Morpha)
(Unchanging)

Servant (Attitude)

Soul (Mind)

Inward Man

Short Stocky Trunk
Scaly Bark
Gnarled Branches
Rounded Head

Illus. An
Apple Tree

FASHION

(Schema)
(Changing)

Man (Likeness)

Body (Flesh)

Outward Man

1. Tree Budding
2. Blossoming
3. Bearing Fruit
4. Picked Clean

The Grace that Prompted Christ to Leave Heaven and Come to Earth!

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

May we suggest that we, too, must become servants before we can truly imitate the incarnation of Christ!

1 Peter 2:21 For hereunto were ye called:
because Christ also suffered for you, *leaving you*
an example, that ye should follow his steps: ASV

Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his
disciples, If any man would come after me, *let*
him deny himself, and take up his cross, and
follow me. ASV

Luke 14:11 For every one that exalteth
himself shall be humbled; and he that
humbleth himself shall be exalted. ASV

What Determines Greatness in the Kingdom?

No matter how great and righteous we may be in our own eyes or in the eyes of the world, we must humble ourselves before God *“submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God!”* –
Ephesians 5:21

Greatness in the kingdom of heaven is not determined by some title we wear, but by the *SERVICE* we render as a servant of God and to one another.

What Determines Greatness in the Kingdom?

Matthew 20:25-29 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 **Not so shall it be among you**: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your **minister**; 27 and whosoever would be first among you shall be your **servant**: 28 even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The Attitude of Christ in Performing this Act

“Let this attitude be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus: Who, existing in the form of God, thought not the being on an equality with God a thing to be retained with an eager grasp, but *took no account of Himself*, *taking upon Him the form of a servant*, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross.”

Would Christ Have Ever Left Heaven?

If Christ had *“taken account of Himself”* in His equality with God the Father, He never would have left heaven! There was no possible incentive that we could offer Him to cause Him to want to leave!

God did not force His Son to leave heaven – there was no compulsion from the Father; no possible desires for Himself; no hope of gain nor fear of loss; but, simple *UNSELFISH, SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE!*

In Contrast – What About You and Me?

How many of us *“take account of ourselves”* and refuse to give up certain things to be a Christian!

How many who call themselves Christians *“take account of themselves”* when asked to teach a class, or complain because they have to come to the assembly, study their Bible, pray, give, visit the sick or those in prison, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and be faithful unto death?

Yet, Paul said, *“Let this attitude be in you, which also was in Christ...Who took no account of Himself!”*

Jesus Was Not Humbled – He Humbled Himself!

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The Devil Did Not Humble Jesus!

John 14:30-31 I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. *He has no hold on me,* 31 but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. "Come now; let us leave. NIV

LESSON: If we wait until we are humbled on the Day of Judgment, we will have waited too late! We must learn to humble ourselves voluntarily to be like Jesus.

Christ Had To Learn Obedience!

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He Learned Obedience Through Suffering!

Hebrews 5:8-9 Although He was a Son, *He learned obedience from the things which He suffered*. 9 And having been made perfect, He became *to all those who obey Him* the source of eternal salvation,... NASU

NOTE: In order to have the mind of Christ, we, too, must be willing to learn obedience by the things which we may suffer. Can we learn obedience any easier than Jesus did?

What is the Emphasis in This Passage?

The emphasis in this whole passage is not that somebody sacrificed Christ – but that He willingly SACRIFICED HIMSELF!

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, (which is) your spiritual service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. ASV

Christ Cared Less For:



(1) His equality with God

**(2) Himself and His own
things**

**Than He did for you and
me!**

**Let this mind (attitude) be
in you and me!**

POINTS OF EMPHASIS!

(1) Christ's will (attitude) was always to do the will of the Father – So must ours be!

(2) We should rejoice that we have a God whom we can LOVE and TRUST!

We may stand in awe in the presence of a storm or an earthquake or hurricane; we may feel completely helpless before a tornado or a flood – but we cannot love or trust such power! We are all alone in a storm or an earthquake or a tornado or a hurricane!



If All Men Had the Mind (Attitude) of Christ

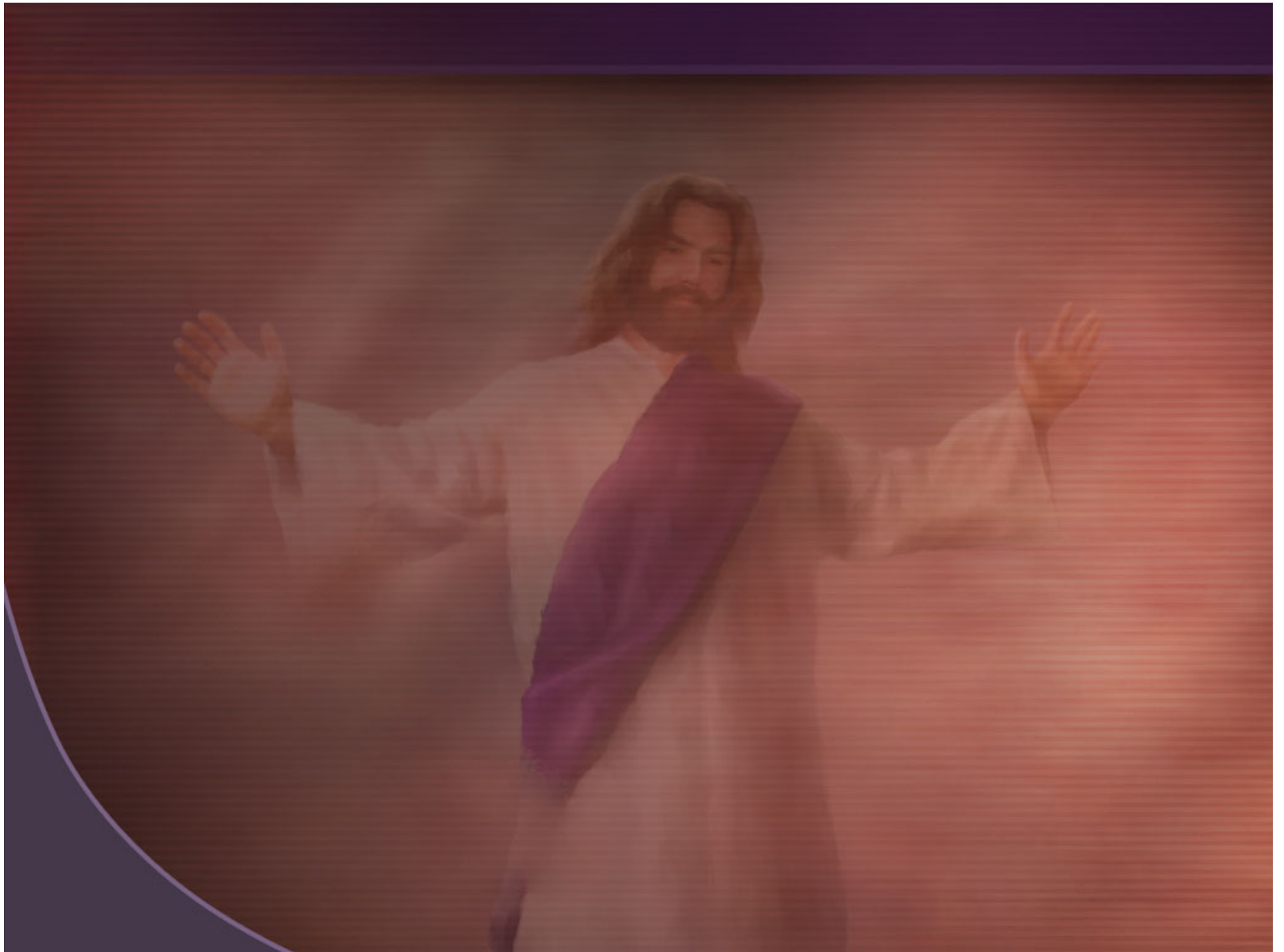
- 1. There would be no denominationalism!**
- 2. There would be no divisions in the Church!**
- 3. We would never be called upon to do too much for the good of our brethren or for the Cause of Christ!**

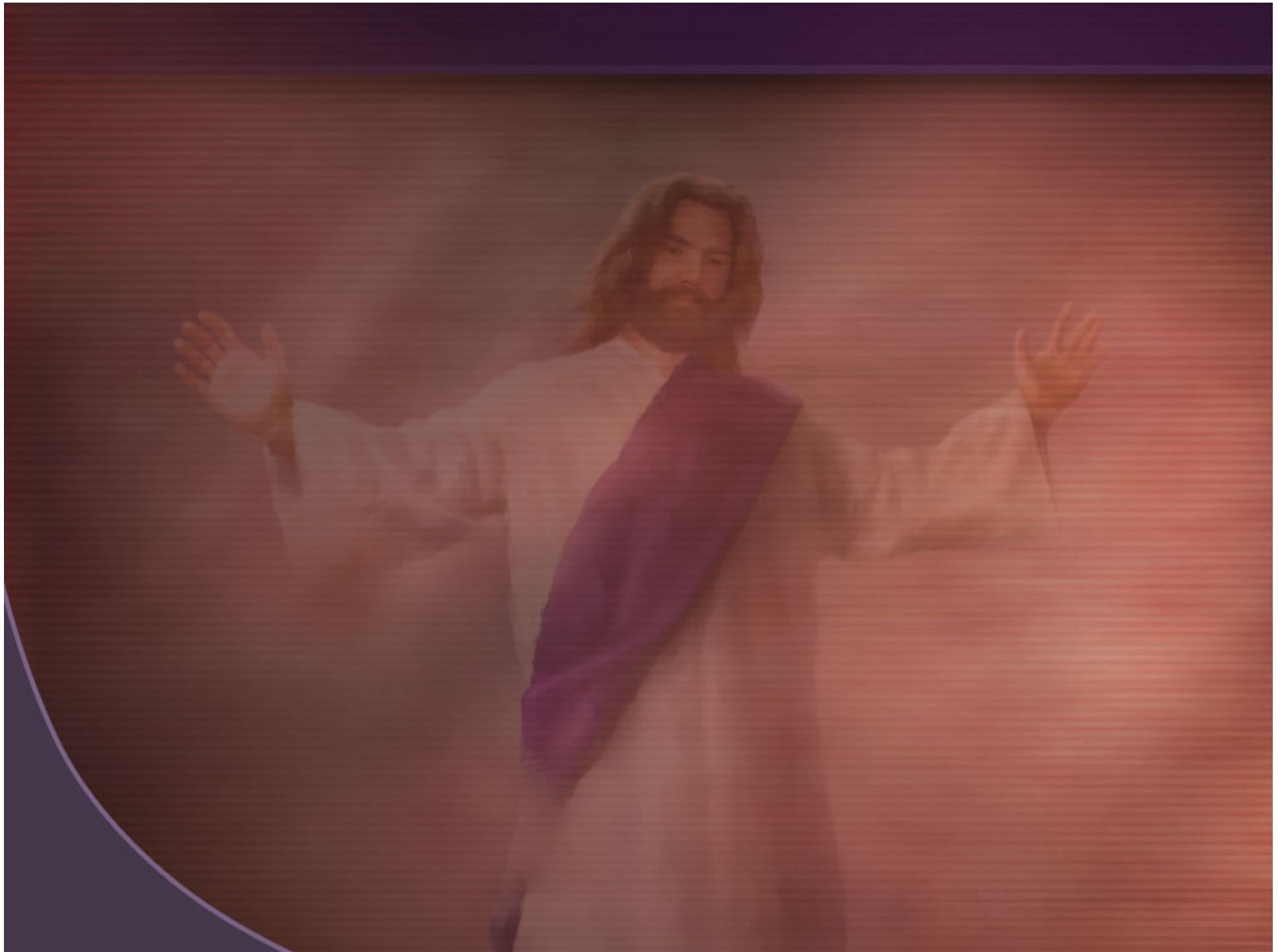


Conclusion:

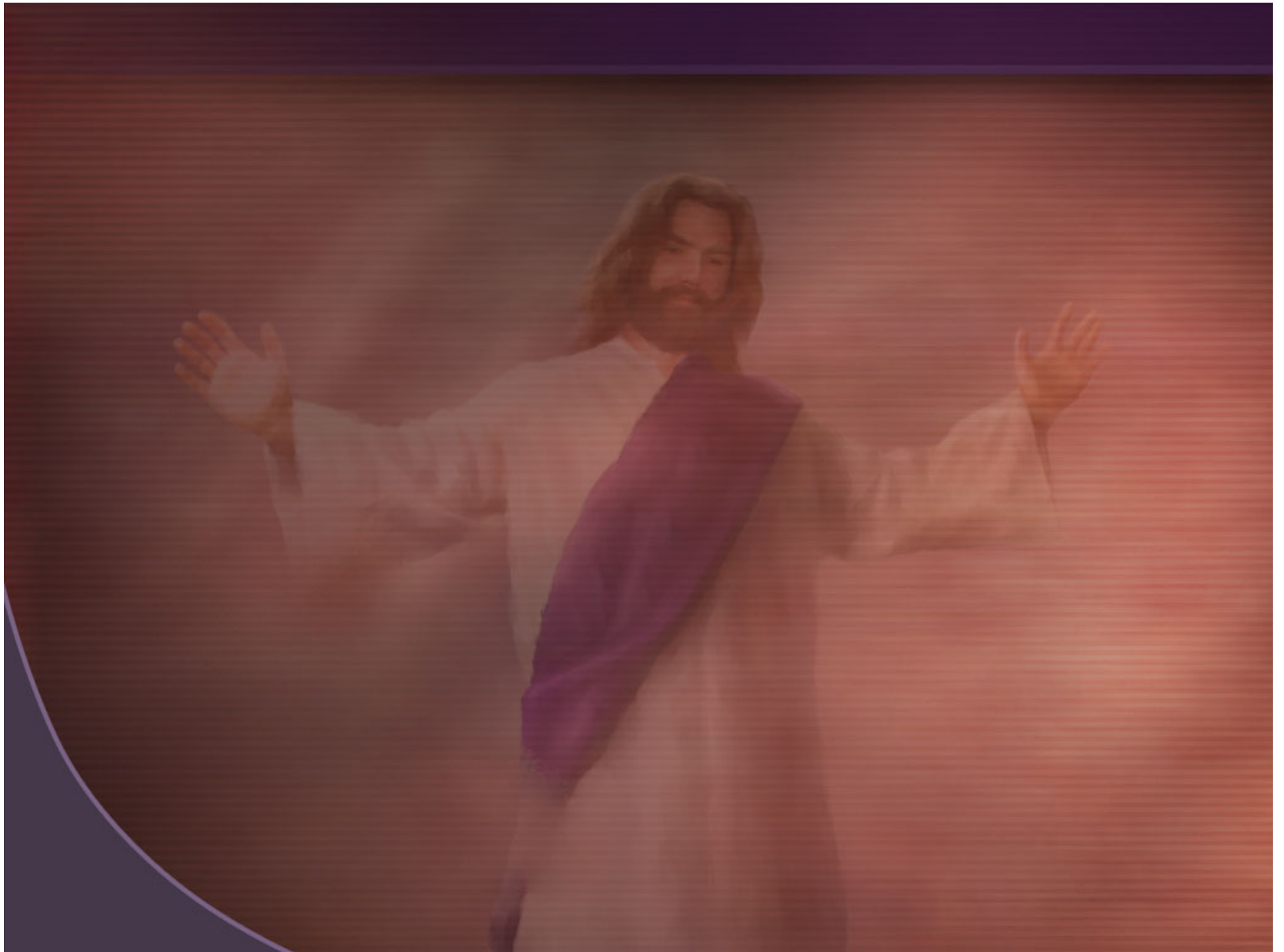
SELF-SACRIFICE brought Christ into the world and *self-sacrifice* will lead you and me, His followers, *not* away from, *but into the midst of men.* Whenever men suffer, *there we will be to comfort;* Wherever men strive, *there we will be to help;* Wherever men fail, *there we will be to uplift;* Wherever men succeed, *there we will be to rejoice.* *SELF-SACRIFICE* means the forgetfulness of *SELF* in service to others

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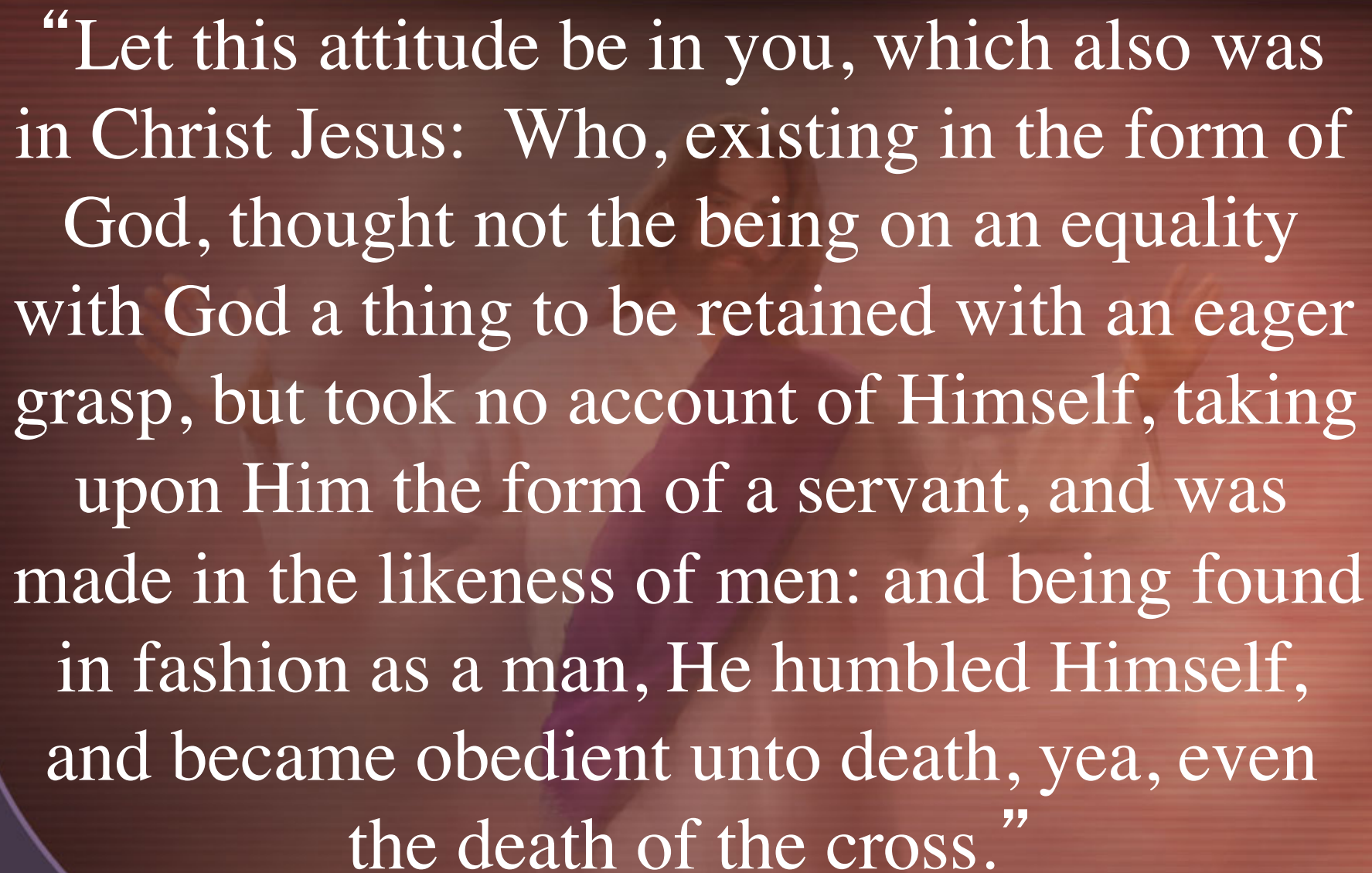




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