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RESURRECTION AND REDEMPTION

WHO AM I? I clearly remember the time when suddenly, I thought I was losing my mind. I was thirty years old, happily married, I had a good job, and yet I felt totally lost in a strange and vast universe. I did not know it at the time, but this was how the Lord was stirring me to hear His voice, and shake myself from the dust. The answer to my question, "Who am I?" did not come all at once; it came by stages, through struggles and experiences, until I met the new person that Jesus was unearthing, and awakening from within me. The Lord wants us to know who we really are; He desires to show us His works in us. It is good for sons to want to know more, *"Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask of me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts."* (Isa.45: 11-13)

When we ask concerning God's sons, we find out that we were once spirits, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, (Eph.1:4). We then became souls in Adam, where we began the process of dying and were clad with the temporary bodies of this death. Then we heard the Lord calling us and we began a journey toward resurrection and redemption, when we receive eternal life and eternal bodies. So we are sons of God in the making, the ones who become the many brethren and who are no longer in Adam, but in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We are the body of the Son who will deliver the captives. God's way of making sons is to bring us through the death which is in Adam, and raise us into the life which is in Christ. This is done in a very orderly fashion. It is just as when a seed is planted into the ground and dies, then comes a time of struggle and growth, a time of gestation, before the plant begins to break through to the light of day, so as the seed of Christ in the earthen vessel of Adam, we begin our journey in the darkness of death, we struggle in our graves to reach the light of the sun or Son. Then much effort and determination is yet needed until the plant becomes strong and mature enough to yield the fruit thereof. The growth of that seed depends much upon the kind of soil that it is in. It also depends upon the tending of that soil and of that plant; it must be watered and covered with mulch and manure in order to make it strong enough to keep pushing upward. It must get enough exposure to the sunshine each day, yet not too much. Furthermore, the little plant must be brave, it must endure and resist the storms and strong winds which will cause its roots to push down deeper and to be strongly established and not easily uprooted. All these things and more make a difference to the quality of life, the stability and productivity and even the wealth and beauty of this plant. This is the way of the "sons of God."

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION- Paul aspired to win Christ and the power of His resurrection; he had a vision and a goal for which he was willing to leave all that he had attained in this life. *"...that I may win Christ, and be found in him...That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means, I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead...Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do,*

forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil.3:13-14). He desired to become a son of God, through the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees, he was highly educated and esteemed by his peers, yet he left all of these honors and traditions behind, to press forward, and to attain a special prize; Paul wanted to win Christ. We know that Paul was not talking about the salvation which is a gift of God by grace through faith; he was a believer in Christ. The prize that Paul wanted above all things, was beyond that wonderful gift and it was very costly to obtain. Paul desired to know the **power** of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; not just any resurrection, but HIS resurrection. Jesus was raised by the Spirit of holiness that resided within Him; Paul wanted to be empowered from within, by the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. He wanted to be quickened in his mortal body. *"But if the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."* (Rom.8:11). Jesus was not raised by someone praying over Him, or by His own faith; He was raised by the Spirit of holiness that dwelt in Him. Jesus was holy. Although He was tempted in every way even as we are, Jesus remained sinless. This holiness is the power that raised Him from the dead; the grave could not hold Him. Paul was pressing toward obtaining that power within himself. He desired to be holy as God is holy and as Jesus is holy, this is why he separated himself from all the traditions and teachings of man. *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* (Matt.5:48) Paul wanted to be raised from the dead, by the holiness within Him. Paul gave his life and all that he had been, just for that. He desired to win Christ, and Christ Himself is the resurrection and the life.

FIRST RESURRECTION AND SECOND DEATH- *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* (I Cor.15:20) And those who follow the Lamb, follow Him in His death and resurrection, and are also the firstfruits, *"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto to God and to the Lamb."* (Rev.14:4b). Firstfruits are the first offerings of sons unto Father God. In His death, Jesus and those who are in Him, are also the firstfruits offerings of the first resurrection. Paul was praying that he might *"...know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Phi.3:10) Paul was wanting to attain unto the power of His resurrection. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus became the Firstborn of a new creation of sons. We know that this work was finished from the foundation of the world, *"...Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev.13:8b). But Paul knew, as we do, that he was in this present life to bring forth this new creation of sons, visibly in the earth. Paul greatly desired to be found in the resurrection of Jesus, for such is the "first resurrection." The meaning of first in this context is defined in Strong's lexicon as "first in time, in order or in **importance**." *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power..."* (Rev.20:6) Jesus was first to be raised, and His resurrection as firstborn Son means that He is heir of all that His Father owns. Christ is the "Firstfruits, and all who are found in Him are firstfruits and joint-heirs with the firstborn Son." *"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam, all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; after, they that are Christ's at his coming."* (I Cor.15:21-23). In John's vision, those who are following the Lamb, are called *"firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."* (Rev.14:4)

Firstfruits partake of the first resurrection. They are made alive in the Spirit while here on earth. We all go through the first death when we are born into this world, *"In Adam all die."* (and continue to die.) In Christ, we move into life and continue to overcome that death. If we don't move into Christ while in this life, we go through the second death when we leave this world. In the second death, we find the

"lake of fire" where the death and hell that remains is destroyed. *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."* (Rev.20:14). When we go through fire with the Holy Spirit in this life, we have no need to go through the lake of fire on the other side of the veil. Either way, **HELL AND DEATH ARE DESTROYED BY FIRE.** *"For our God is a consuming fire."* (Heb.12:29 and Deu.4:24) Note that it is "hell and death" that is cast into the lake of fire. If the fires that we go through in this life do not destroy the death and hell that work in us, then the second death which is the "lake of fire," will do the job. If we are found in the first resurrection we are not hurt by the second death; we have gone through our fires of purification, little by little in this earth, and we have overcome all death by suffering and dying in Jesus, and being raised with Him. *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Rom.8:17) In Him we overcome the death that works in us, and we grow into sons who are heirs of all things. *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be my son."* (Rev.21:7) *"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* (I Cor.15:26) All death is destroyed by fire.

Because of the teachings established by the leaders and teachers of the early churches, the word which the King James version of the Bible translates as hell, brings up fictional images of Dante's inferno to our minds, and not images of truth. The word translated as "Hell" comes from the Greek word, "Hades," which is the translation of the Old Testament Hebrew word "Sheol" meaning, "the dwelling place or habitation of the dead." The catechism of the Roman Catholic church affirms the existence of hell as a place of conscious and eternal torment. Most Christian churches follow these teachings. Some even adapted the levels of hell from Dante's Inferno, starting with "limbo," which is a form of "purgatory," unto the nine levels of "hell" described by the writer. Dante Alighieri was a 14th century poet and philosopher from Florence, Italy. He wrote the book titled, "The Divine Comedy" in which the section called Inferno, is such a vivid and strikingly real description of his visit to hell, that it was and still is believed to be real. These beliefs, adopted by the church's fathers, have remained the teachings about the "afterlife," well-known today.

With such teachings, the leaders of Babylon's churches, up to our day, have kept the people under fear and in servitude to their ambitious agendas. Just as the Israelites who slaved to build the great pyramids for the Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt, so Christians have contributed to the building of great cathedrals, monuments or all manners of mega and smaller churches and programs of man, to a god of religion that they believe to be Jesus. To this day, even some movements who teach "sonship," are still blinded by such teachings. Those who have found the truth have been shunned by their peers and cast out as devils. Through fear of being thrown alive, into an eternal furnace of raging flames, the people have given their wealth and resources, and even their souls. After naming all the merchandise and treasures of great value that Mystery Babylon has amassed from the sweat and blood of the people, the list concludes with *"...and slaves, and souls of men."* (Rev.18:13b)

In dreams, the Spirit showed me some who died as non-believers. One was a brother of my husband who had stood against us because of what he called our religion. In the dream, *"I saw him as he was in a morgue, attended by men in white coats, standing all around the gurney where he laid face down. He was in "a morgue," which was the word used in my dream. Then I saw him as he was turned around and I could see that he was now breathing."* A morgue is a temporary place where the "dead" are held until they are directed some place else. So is "Hades" the abode of the dead. My dream showed my brother-in-law being held in such a condition, until he was worked upon and began to live. Jesus declared victoriously, *"I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forever more, and have the keys of hell, (hades), and death."* (Rev,1:18) I don't think that Jesus ever thought of giving the keys

back to the devil; and He is not going to keep them in His holy pocket without putting them to good use. This is exactly what He does to every creature that dies without knowing Him. *"He descends into Hades, just as He descended into the earth, to preach to every creature in prison."* (I Pet.3:19)

RESURRECTION AND REDEMPTION- *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which SLEEP IN JESUS will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain shall not prevent them, (shall by no means precede them), which are asleep."* (I Thess.4:14-15) Those who are "asleep in Jesus" have left this earthly realm and have entered into the invisible realm of Spirit. They are not dead, for they are asleep; they are alive because they are in Jesus, who is the "resurrection," yet they are asleep, because they have not received their final garment; they have not received their complete redemption which is the complete or better resurrection. They have lost the physical bodies of this death. They have been caught up in Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, but they have not yet received their full redemption. Their souls are not naked for they are in the body of Jesus, but their soul has not yet been clothed with its own new body, and this cannot happen until all the firstfruits are ready, even the last one who still remain in the earth. This is the "better resurrection" that the saints of Hebrews 11 are awaiting; it is the complete work of God that we are all groaning for. *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, are waiting for the adoption, (placing of sons), to wit, the redemption of our body."* (Rom.8:23)

Resurrection power already works within us, for He who is the resurrection dwells in us. When God's Holy Spirit awakens us to His presence, our transformation begins from inside out. But the complete work is not finished until we receive our outer transformation as well. This is coming first to the firstfruits, then in God's order until all death has been conquered and the Son turns over the entire kingdom, back to the Father. *"For he, (Christ), must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death...And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself, be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."* (I Cor.15: 25-26, 28) Jesus visibly appeared and revealed His glory to His disciples. He showed them that He was now a new eternal being with a body that could be touched or remain invisible. Those who are "asleep" in Him are partakers of the same body which will appear when those who remain are ready. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the body, *"...Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body."* (Eph.5:23)

Our entire beings have been, and still are in a time of transition in Christ. God is gathering all things into Christ; this is the mystery of His will that Paul speaks about. *"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."* (Eph.1:9-10). Then Paul goes on enumerating all things that are being gathered in Christ. They are scattered on both sides of the veil, in heaven and in earth. They are all being transformed as well as transported. The will of God is supreme above all and Jesus Christ is Lord and holds the keys of both realms. He will continue to accomplish His work until it is complete. What is taught as "the rapture," is actually the appearing of the saints, in the likeness of Jesus Christ, in their full garments of redemption. Jesus is the resurrection working in us, giving us life and light until we are ready to appear in our new garments. Our redemption is what we often think of as the resurrection; it is the putting on of our new eternal bodies; it is a "better resurrection" in the way that it is complete. *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* (Matt.5:48).

Because our God is love, *Jackie Caporaso*