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Angèle Caporaso
10552 SE 151st Street
Summerfield FL 34491
Ph.352-288-5257
jackiecaporaso@gmail.com

THE VISITOR TO PERGAMOS!

There came a time when our resurrected Lord Jesus visited the harsh and arid Isle of Patmos, to show some amazing things to his beloved disciple John who had been banished there because of his faith. At the time, Patmos was a dangerous place, being a destination for criminals and political prisoners, who were allowed to roam freely throughout the island. Jesus found John as he was, caught up in the Spirit, on "the Lord's Day." This does not mean that it was Sunday; it means that the Day of the Lord which had been prophesied by God's prophets, had already begun. Jesus instructed John to write down everything that He had come to speak or show to him in visions. He first directed His word to the seven churches that had already been formed in that day, through the faithful work of the apostle Paul. Together, these seven churches were the beginning of the formation of the church that would grow to someday become the virgin church of the Lamb and the one who would give birth to the "manchild." It is with much love that our Lord speaks words of correction and admonition to these young churches. He exhorts them to follow His counsel so that they might attain unto the perfection to which they had been apprehended.

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD- There is no doubt, that we, who are followers in this calling, have been going through the cycles that these seven early churches were exhorted to go through. The resurrected Lord Jesus introduced Himself to the church at Pergamos, as He *"...which hath the sharp sword with two edges."* (Rev.2:12) Throughout the Bible, the Lord is introduced by different images and names, depending on what His word is sent to accomplish at the time. In this case, it is the sharp two-edged sword, sent to detect and expose the thoughts and intents of the hearts. *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."* (Heb.4: 12-13 NKJ) Note that this Word is so piercing that it divides soul and spirit. When I was a young Christian, I had no idea that there was a difference between soul and spirit. I thought they were both the same. Well, in a way they are both spirit, but nevertheless, when the sharp Word of God comes, He divides them asunder, that is, He separates them in pieces. Thus the Word as a sharp two-edged sword is the discerner of the thoughts which come from the mind or soul, and intents of the heart which issues from the spirit. This word also divides the joints and the marrow. We know that the marrow is where the blood cells are produced and the blood is the life of the flesh. The joints are what give motion to the body; together they are what sets the body in action. This sharp word is cutting into the depths of our beings, to expose the forces that influence and direct the actions of our daily lives. As humans, we are masters at hiding ourselves behind disguises, even a smile can be a mask. But the sharp sword comes to cut out the culprits, not just on the surface, but those which motivate our daily actions from deep down. This is a work of deliverance that only the Spirit of God can do. For indeed, the future deliverers need first to be fully delivered themselves.

THE DEEPER WORK IN THE SAINTS- The city named Pergamos was an important center. It was part of the Byzantine Empire, a city which led in political, economic and cultural advancements. Pergamos was also a city of many gods; even Cesar Augustine was worshiped as a god among them. They had erected

massive temples to their many gods throughout the city. Jesus called it "Satan's seat," and yet, this was the dwelling place of these saints who were called to grow up in the truth. Our Lord's visit was not meant to change the city; He had come to do a work in a little group of saints gathered there in His name. They were one of the churches that the apostle Paul had labored to set together. Jesus came to do a deep, cutting work in the midst of these saints. This is a clear example of the ways of God; He hides His saints in Light, in the midst of gross darkness. He does not take us out of the world; He grows us to maturity in Christ, in the midst of the world. He uses the pressures of the world to make us stronger in Him.

Today, as it was in the days of Pergamos, the Lord is bringing His sharpest word to those whom He called to be sons. The small group that gathered in His name, in the city of Pergamos, were a faithful people, holding fast to His word, and some among them were even slain and martyred for not denying the faith. *"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is..."* (Rev.2:13) These were the people to whom Jesus sent His sharpest, deepest word. By comparison, today and now by the same Spirit, this sharp sword is sent to deal with the depths of our own hearts. This is not a work to condemn; it is sent to the heart of those who have indeed been faithful to hold onto the Word of life, and who have embraced the daily cross. Over time, much of what was of the flesh has been cut out, but now the sharp sword is discerning the hidden thoughts and intents of the heart. This church which suffered much in the furnace of earth, who many times resisted the gods of this world and their daily temptations, is now required something more. And so, our Lord is dividing asunder, or separating that which is spirit from that which is soul, and cutting unto the joints and marrow. Jesus is penetrating down deep and touching the core, the engine, the force that motivates and activates our actions. The things that are taking place in our lives today, are all part of that deep work.

THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST- Paul knew that he had been apprehended or called, to reach the perfection of Christ; he said, *"I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus... 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."* (Phil.3: 12-14) Is this not what the Spirit is urging us to do each day? We feel the need to move forward and to leave behind the things of the past. At the same time, each day brings its own unexpected measure of changes in our lives, so that we are faced with leaving even more of the old behind. For me, things changed mightily in 2020, when I fell and broke a vertebra. That day, my life was rearranged and a new chapter of my book was opening. In life, it is often the unexpected things that suddenly change our direction. Such things are often difficult to accept, but they are the work of the Spirit, to move us on toward the goal set for us from the foundation of the world. We can choose how we walk, but we cannot change the final outcome. Paul knew this; his life had been turned around many times, and he kept pressing toward the mark of becoming a son. Salvation is free, but sonship comes through suffering. Paul explains. *"And if children, then heirs,(sons); heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that **we suffer with him**, that we may be glorified together."* (Rom.8:17) And, *"...the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all."* (Gal.4:1) With salvation, we are children of the kingdom, but it takes a growing up, a lot of suffering, a seasoning, and much testing and overcoming to become sons and heirs of God. *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."* (Rev.21:7)

A SIGNIFICANT DREAM- The Word that God sends to us, and that we behold and become, changes us from glory to glory. Little by little, our vision is enlarged, and the affections of our hearts are changed. Each time we reach a new level, it would be easy to believe that we have now attained our goal. After all, we no longer desire what the world has to offer, and we no longer belong to a worldly church, and we no

longer yearn for the ways of life that we have left behind; we strive to do only what we see our Father do; surely, we are matured sons. Indeed, we praise Him for the mighty work that He has done in us, but there is more. God told Satan that Job was "...an upright and perfect man..." (Job 1:8) Yet Job had not arrived; the perfection or maturity that he had attained, had yet to be sorely tested. Recently, the Lord spoke to me in this dream, *"I had found the most beautiful and exquisite diamond ring among my things. The diamond was set in a large square white gold setting; a sort of masculine ring. It fit me just right. It seems that I had kept it for a while now, but the day came when my husband and I were going to finally go to church and I could wear it. This was not an ordinary church, it had an exquisite interior with a very high dome ceiling with much light pouring in. Its massive structure reminded me of Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, only much more magnificent. I looked forward to wearing my diamond ring. I was dressed and ready, but then my husband looked at my face closely and focused intensely on my left cheek. He kept studying something there. I figured it might have been a little spotty as sometimes it gets with allergies, but after a while he said he thought it might be a virus. It could barely be seen, but I knew I could not go to church with any blemish at all."* End of dream.

At first I interpreted the dream and perhaps shared it with you then. But the Spirit kept nudging me to look at it again until I began to understand the depths of its message. First, I saw the hidden meaning of that most beautiful church which I compared to Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Notre Dame translated means Our Lady, which speaks of the virgin church, the woman, the bride that Jesus is preparing to present to Himself. The Spirit then led me to look at the "church of the Firstborn;" the one called, New Jerusalem, the "city of the living God! The one we are coming to. *"For ye are come unto mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, (messengers), to the general assembly and **church of the firstborn**, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."* (Heb.12:22-23) Yes, this is that church! She is the bride who is, His body. *"For he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."* (Col.1:18) And she is the one in the dream, that I, (representing the sons), was eager to go join. The masculine diamond ring on my finger represents the sons. And the sons are almost ready to go join the church prepared and adorned as a bride.

In the "Epilogue," to his anointed and detailed study of the Revelation, (No.355), Preston Eby explains Rev.22:17 in this way, I quote, *"The Spirit of the bridegroom dwells in the bride. Hence it is through the Spirit that the bride says, Come. This also shows that it is Christ who is speaking through the bride, imploring men to come. The Spirit and the soul, the Bridegroom and the bride, for the Lamb's wife has made herself ready, the union has been consummated, the wedding feast has been lavishly spread, and now, blessed be God, the Spirit and the bride say, Come!"* End of quote. This all happens after the union between the Spirit and the bride had taken place. It is the marriage of the Lamb, and the message of my dream too.

A FURTHER UNVEILING- We have the picture of the bride and her bridegroom as one. And we know that the Bridegroom is Christ. But as I ponder my dream, the Spirit raises a question. I represent the bridegroom, with the masculine diamond ring on my finger, and the yearning in my heart to go meet my bride, the church. We know that Jesus Christ the Lord was sinless and never had a blemish. Yet in the dream, I was found with just one more blemish to be treated. I asked the Spirit, "I know that I am a symbol of the bridegroom in the dream, but if the bridegroom is the Lord Jesus, there can be no blemish...so?" The answer is clear, "the bridegroom is not Jesus the firstborn Son. The bridegroom is the Christ formed in the sons. Scriptures speaks of the Lord and His Christ, *"...the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of **our Lord, and of His Christ.**"* (Rev.11:15). Jesus is the head of the

body, the church. So it is obvious that in the dream, I do not represent Jesus the Head, I represent Christ the sons who are still in progress. As it is written in Col.1:18, Jesus Christ is indeed *"...the head of the body, the church..."* Jesus has had no place to lay His head. When His church which is His body is wed to her bridegroom, the Christ in the sons of God, Jesus and His Christ, will rule and reign in the earth. Remember the candlestick of Revelation chapter 1- The candlestick is the church and Jesus is speaking from the midst of her. And the church IS HIS BODY. The sons are His brethren, those who follow the Lamb, those who lay their lives down. And church is the wife of the Lamb, Jesus Christ and His Christ. Sonship speaks of manhood, the man is the life-giver; he imparts life to the woman. The great mystery is that sons were birthed in the church, the woman. They came out of the church, and now as mature sons, they will marry the church. The church has been prepared by the Lord to receive this new life, and the sons have been prepared in hiding. This is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, *"For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy son marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."* (Isa.62:5) What a great joy it will be, when the complete, perfect, new creation of God in Christ, is made manifest in the world. The Lord and His Christ, "The spirit, (man), head of the woman, (soul), and Christ Jesus, Head of the man. This is the perfect man, *"...the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."* (Eph.4:13) What a joy it will be, when together as one, the Spirit and the bride will call to the thirsty world, "Come and drink!"

This has been our journey from salvation to sonship; from the quickening of our spirits, unto perfection. Thus we are born of the Spirit and born of God and we become the new creation of God in Christ. *"For God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"* Then He began the work of raising us up together, and *making us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Jesus Christ..For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph.2:4-7,10) This is our journey from conversion, to salvation, to sonship and unto the greater works of showing forth the riches of God's glory throughout eternity.

The bride has been prepared; she stands in waiting upon the mount of Sion, with the innumerable company of angels. She is the church of the firstborn, she is the new Jerusalem, and within her are the spirits of just men made perfect while on earth. She is the church that Jesus is bringing with Him, to be joined unto her bridegroom, the sons of God, the heirs, the overcomers that have been prepared in the earth. *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."* (Rev.21:7) The sons of God, the overcomers in Christ are joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, the only and unique Son of God, and with Him, they inherit all things. This is what is coming soon. This is why all of the old Adam creation is in such turmoil, trying to hold on to what they thought was theirs. Even nature is upset by this great shaking. As for us, the sharp two-edged sword of Pergamos is working deep within, and cutting out the last of our blemishes and diseases of the flesh, that we might appear as His glorious temple. Jesus is the Lord and we are His Christ. At the name of **Jesus** *"every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* (Phil.2:10-11) The name is His identity, His calling and His nature; All creation will bow to the One who conquered all and remained true to that name and the nature of that name. God is the creator of the entire universe, but He is also our Father through His only Son Jesus Christ. What a most excellent and wonderful gift!

Because He is love, *Jackie Caporaso*