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THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

TO WIN CHRIST- Saul, had an impressive degree of education and rank as a Pharisee, when he became Paul and left his high position and traditions behind, and counted all of them as "dung," to press to attain a much more valuable prize. He declared, *"...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). Surely, Paul was not talking about the salvation which he knew is a gift of God's grace. Salvation is a most wonderful gift, but Paul was talking about something more, something that was acquired through great effort. More than anything, Paul desired to "win Christ," and to be found in Him. Paul wanted to partake of Christ's sufferings and to be made conformable to His death; he wanted to attain to the same resurrection. Jesus was raised from the dead by the Spirit of holiness that dwelt in Him. It was that Holy Spirit in Jesus, that triumphantly broke through the sin and death of the world that had been placed upon Him. This resurrection is obtained when the Spirit of holiness within, breaks through the powers of sin and death. It is the "First Resurrection." *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up 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)

Paul desired to be made holy even as God is holy. *"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."* (I Pet.1:16) He desired to attain Jesus's resurrection, and to overcome death from the power of holiness within. As sons of God, it is also our goal to overcome death even as He did, by the Spirit of holiness within. It is even our calling to put on incorruption, that death might be swallowed up in victory, *"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."* (I Cor.15:54)

ASLEEP IN JESUS- *"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 which are asleep."* (I Thess.4:14-15) What does it mean to be "asleep in Jesus?" We know that Jesus is the first of a new creation of God; He is the firstborn of many brethren. *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."* (Rom.8:29) Jesus walked as a man and was tempted in every way as we are. He fulfilled the Scriptures and overcame the strong temptations and the attacks of the devil. He suffered all the pains and humiliations of this mortal life even unto the death of the cross, and all in perfect obedience to His Father. When on the cross, He cried, "It is finished," Jesus had brought this earthy, Adamic creation to its final death. Then, through the Spirit of holiness in Him, He arose from the dead, and received an eternal and immortal body. Thus He became the first of a new creation in heaven and on earth, called the "last Adam." *"And so it is written, the first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit... The first man was of the earth, earthy. The second man is the Lord from heaven."* (I Cor.15:45,47) The second man is the man who is now given all dominion in the spiritual world, (heavens), and in the earth. This "last Adam" is clad with a body that can live and be seen in the earth as well as in the spirit world. Those who are asleep in Jesus

have entered into that last Adamic creation, and will awaken or appear in the same kind of bodies as the firstborn Son. The seed of the first Adam had become polluted by the seed of the serpent, but the new seed of this last Adam is the incorruptible seed which is sown in our earth by the Holy Spirit. This seed is quickening or giving life to the spirits of those who receive it. (see the parable of the Sower). Then as the earthly souls yield unto their quickened spirits, the two become new creatures, with new bodies which will be manifested at the appointed time. So to be "asleep in Jesus," is to have died to this present creation, and be found in the same new creation as Jesus is. When those who remain in earth, become totally dead to their old selves, those who died in Jesus will appear and all will be changed.

A BETTER RESURRECTION- After His resurrection, Jesus told His eleven disciples to meet Him in Galilee. When they saw Him, *"...some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."* (Matt.28:18) Jesus showed them that He was not just a spirit, but that His new body was alive eternally and visibly, in the heavens and also on the earth. In this way, He had all authority, total dominion over all of God's creation; spiritual and earthly. This is the kind of resurrection that Paul desired so much, and it is the better resurrection that those who are asleep in Jesus, are ready for as well. We read about the saints who kept the faith through horrendous circumstances, yet did not receive the promises and are patiently waiting for them. It says that *"...they were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a **better resurrection.**"* (Heb.11:35) Those that Jesus brings with Him are all the saints who have been waiting for this better resurrection, also called "first resurrection." They are those who have attained unto His resurrection by the same Spirit of holiness dwelling in them. To my understanding, the expression "being asleep in Jesus," denotes that they are dead to this world, but alive in the Spirit and one with Jesus. Until the time of their manifestation, they are the witnesses that surround us and as the angels who bring messages to the heirs of salvation. *"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* (Heb.1:14)

Paul knew that he already had a body in the heavens. He declared, *"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life."* (II Cor.5:1-4-NKJV) The house or tent that Paul is talking about, is a symbol of the temporary body in which our spirit and soul dwell here on earth. Paul also speaks of a body, an habitation that we have in the realm of spirit. Within ourselves we yearn for this heavenly body, especially as we go through the wear and tear, the suffering and decay that our earthly body has to endure. If when our earthly body dies, we have run the race and kept the faith and entered into the "first resurrection," we will be caught up in Jesus and clothed with the same eternal body as the Son of God.

Paul gives us a glimpse of that day, *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* (I Thess.4:16-17) The last trump is the final Word that will loudly be heard by the Spirit; it is the resurrection call. Then, those who died will return in the same body as Jesus, and we who are still here will be changed into the higher form of life with them. As His body, will all be clad with the same body as Jesus and every member will have become one with Him, who is the Head. This is the manifestation of the sons of God.

DIVERSE KINDS OF FLESH- *"All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beast, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."* (I Cor.15:39-44) This is about our "flesh," the substance or material that our bodies are made of.

Paul draws a clear distinction between the diverse kinds of "flesh." One thing is significant, the bodies that shall be are also of a substance called "flesh." This reminds me of a dream I had years ago, which I can never forget. A young man in our assembly, had been killed in a plane crash. This young man had a close walk with the Lord and it was a shock to me and others when this happened. *In the dream I was in a restaurant which had not yet opened, but was all set up to do so. There was another room in the back, but the doors were locked and no one was ever permitted to go there. Someone took me behind those doors, and I was told that this would be just for a few seconds. In the room, I quickly recognized Charlie who was standing all dressed up on a chair with his arms by his sides. I approached and was able to reach up and touch one of his hands. I was so impressed as I could feel flesh, but it was a kind of flesh that I had never touched or felt before. I was then quickly ushered out of the room."* Charlie's terrestrial body had been buried in the ground, but now Charlie was again recognizable in a body of "other" flesh; this was a celestial body. Through this dream, the Spirit confirmed that in the resurrection, there is indeed another kind of flesh. The bodies of resurrection, are substance and not just like vapor. Jesus proved this, *"Then said he, (Jesus), to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."* (Jn.20:27) Jesus was adamant about proving to His doubting disciple that His resurrected body was indeed touchable flesh. Jesus, as He showed Himself then, is who we are becoming. The resurrection of our bodies is our "redemption." We will be fully redeemed when we are all changed into the same image as the Firstborn Son. *"For our conversation, (citizenship), is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* (Phil.3:20-21)

Let us ponder these words of our Lord Jesus, *"I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world...Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. This is that bread that came down from heaven..."* (Jn.6:48-51, 54-56) When we eat the good food that is provided for us, our bodies are nourished and our flesh is alive and well. The good food that we eat keeps us alive on the earth, it keeps our flesh healthy. Jesus was saying that He is food for our spirits and our souls. He is the Word of life that He provides to feed the flesh of our new, eternal bodies. His living Word feeds our eternal bodies, as bread feeds our natural ones. He is the true Bread of life. May we eat of this Bread daily, and be changed into this new life forever!

FROM RELATIONSHIP TO KINSHIP- What Jesus brought to us is much more than a set of doctrines, a religion or even a relationship; Jesus came to gather us into a "kinship" with Himself and with our heavenly Father. We are made kinfolks with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through the blood of Jesus,

and by the power of His Holy Spirit who as a husband, comforts us, leads us and impregnates us with the seed of the pure, unadulterated Word of life. Today, we hear a lot about our relationship to God, but **kinship** is much more, for it relates us by nature, by heredity or genetics, by likeness; it is knowing Father, Son and Holy Spirit by being family with them through birth. Jesus prayed over His little flock, *"That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* (Jn.17:21) He was praying that we might be found in this same divine kinship. To be one with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, means that we have inherited the same characteristics of life, DNA, the same source and quality of life. *"We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."* (Rom.8:17)

Day by day, the Holy Spirit reveals the Father to us and opens the Word of life to our understanding so that from glory to glory, our spirits come to life. In this way, we are changed daily, being "reborn" into the flow of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we first come to Jesus, we are baptized into the waters of repentance and are reconciled to God. When we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit and follow Him, we are baptized or immersed daily into His Word, and our spirits are quickened into new life. As we continue in obedience to the Spirit, we are tested as sons by our Father, and we become overcomers in Christ until we are born of God. And so, the God who is the Creator of the universe is now our Father. It is then that we receive the spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba Father." We have then become sons who sin no more. *"Go ye therefore unto all the world and teach the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."* (Matt.28:19). This is a daily immersing into the divine river that flows within, until we are no longer kindreds by faith only, but now we are true kins of Father, Son and Holy Spirit by nature. *"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."* (I Jn.3:9 NKJV)

Many books and studies have been written by men and women in search of knowing God. We are comforted and often enlightened by these, yet only the Spirit of life has the power to transport us into the kingdom of the Son of God. *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in love. Who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and hath translated, (transported), us into the kingdom of his dear Son."* (Col.1:12-13) The apostle John addressed maturing sons in this way, *"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, **but we know** that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."* (I Jn.3:1-2) Before leaving the earth, Jesus spoke of these sons to His Father, *"I have given them my word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."* (Jn.17:14) And again, *"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: because I live ye shall live also."* (Jn.14:19) The world's systems hated Jesus then, and the same world hates Him even more now. He has since appeared in the world many times, unrecognized, through men and women who came with divine missions and were persecuted or killed for their good deeds. It was Christ in a young teenage girl called Joan of Arc, who arose with boldness and courage and led the French armies to victory over the invaders, and it was their hatred against Christ who burnt her at the stake. Over the centuries, it was Christ who stirred brave and heroic men and women to stand for justice and truth, against oppression and tyranny, and it was Christ moving through them, who was silenced and murdered again and again. It is Christ who keeps people yearning for justice and fills them with the hope of a better day. Soon this much awaited Christ will arise as the Head of His body, the perfected company of sons, to deliver the world from evil, and to bring God's kingdom in earth, as it is in heaven. Oh Lord, hasten that day!

Because He is love, *Jackie Caporaso*