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THE UTMOST (FIRST) RESURRECTION

INTRODUCTION- This study is very special because it lays out the amazing plan and purpose of God for His beloved creation. The words of John resonate in our hearts, ever louder as time goes on, *"For God SO LOVED the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..."* (Jn.3:16) What an enormous price to pay! A loving Father giving His only Son to save His creation... but only the Son could accomplish the Father's plan.

By the Spirit, Paul said, *"As in Adam all die, in Christ, shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order..."* (I Cor.15:22) We may have thought that this meant, "When the first man died, all those who were to be born of his seed died at the same time." But Paul did not say, "All died..." Paul said, "All die..." This means that each one who is born in Adam, each baby who is born, was alive, and died as it came into this world. For we who have life here on earth are actually dead. Jesus told one, *"Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."* (Matt.8:22) The truth is that it is through death and resurrection that new life appears. The seed of Adam produces death called life. The Seed of Jesus Christ produces eternal life. So the Son came and died as a new Seed in the earth. When we are caught up into Him, by faith, we die to this life, and we are raised to a higher life, even eternal life. Our previous life was not eternal life; man had not eaten of the tree of life. But Christ is the tree of life, and as we partake of Him, (His Word, His fruit), we are raised into His eternal life. This is the process that works in us daily. This was God's plan for His beloved creatures from the beginning. Our God is the most ingenious Gardener of all!

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION- The word resurrection means to rise again, to return to the previous state of life. Jesus Christ declared, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* We were all born in the first Adam; this is our present state of life. Jesus came to earth in the body of an Adam man, of the seed of Abraham, a Hebrew, but He was sinless. When He called forth Lazarus out of the tomb, He declared, *"I AM the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."* (Jn.11:25) Jesus was demonstrating the power of the Word of God that overcomes death and the grave. He added, *"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* (Vs.26) Resurrection is not a power that falls from the sky; resurrection is Jesus Christ Himself. He was saying, when one believes in Him, he receives Jesus Christ Himself, His own seed, in his spirit. *"...know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"* (II Cor.13:5b)

Resurrection is not an event; resurrection is Jesus Christ. Many religions teach good morals and even an afterlife, but none can claim the resurrection without Jesus Christ. Christ IN US, and we in Christ, overcome the death in us. Jesus added that the believers would possess eternal life and never die again because He is their life. *"Because I live, ye shall live also."* (Jn.14:19) This process takes place each time one hears the voice of the Son of God, and responds: every man at his own time, in his own order. Paul writes, *"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, in Christ, shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."* (I Cor.15:21-23)

Jesus came to this world in the garments of the Adam man, *"For verily he took not on him the nature of*

angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." (Heb.2:16) He walked through all the temptations and testing known to man, but He did not sin. While the first Adam man failed the test of obedience to God, Jesus was tested and proven; He passed all the tests and never sinned. *"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb.4:15) And because *"...he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor, (help), them that are tempted."* (Heb.2:18) Through His death, Jesus put an end to the first Adam man, and through His resurrection, He became the Savior of all who follow Him.

THE GROANING OF CREATION- Paul writes that when the whole world is groaning and travailing for the manifestation of the sons of God, the sons themselves groan for the redemption of their bodies. *"For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God... because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."* (Rom.8:19,21-23 NKJV) These verses are beams of light, unveiling more understanding on what the world is going through, and what we are feeling in our spirits at this time. Indeed, the whole world is feeling the distress of the dying of an old creation, and the pangs of the birthing of a new one. Christians are waiting to see Jesus again, and the world is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God; they are both waiting for the same appearing. The sons of God are the body of Christ, the new creation of God in Christ of which Jesus is the Head. The manifestation of the sons of God is the appearing of Jesus Christ as He is now.

HEIRS OF GOD- It was by the Spirit that David said, *"The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever."* (Ps.37:29) As I was praying earlier, my heart felt bare before my Father and Lord Jesus Christ. I could feel how small and insignificant I am, and how useless and often reckless my soul could be. I sat with my head bowed, and then the Lord impressed me, "I know how worthless you feel, but it is not the worthless one that I am talking to, and dealing with; that one has died on the cross with me. I am talking to the one whom I have raised in you, all these years... the one who loves me and follows me everywhere I lead. The one whose hand I have held through the many perils and fires of this life. The one whose heart calls out to me, 'Abba Father!' This is the one for whom I have prepared beautiful garments. This is the one who will shortly be clothed, and who will wear the crown of life. And this one is not alone; I have reserved many brethren, sons of God whom I love and who have followed me throughout this journey of death unto life." These are words that I heard in my spirit, and I knew they were life, truth and love.

Yes, the righteous that shall inherit the land is not our "old man." It is the one who is now reborn of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who has been disciplined as a son, and taught in the school of hard knocks of this life, and made to understand the ways of God and His love too. He is the Abel in us, who has been slain over and over again by the Cain man's jealousy of us. He is the Jacob who fought in the womb of his mother and was overcome by Esau. He is the Joseph who stirred the rage of his own brethren, yet overcame all obstacles in the Egypt of this dark world to become the savior of the world. He is the one who overcame the flood of religious doctrines from the mouth of the dragon, the systems of this world that control the people and rob them of the wealth and liberty that is theirs in Christ. He is the one who is *"...heir of God and joint-heir with the Son of God."* *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs... and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Rom.8:16-17) He is the Overcomer Son who inherits all things. He is the many-membered Christ of God.

Suffering with Christ is necessary to our coming into maturity. By the grace of God and through faith we are children of God, but as children we need to grow. Just as Jesus was born as a little child who had

to grow and learn, so the Christ that is formed in us must grow and be taught, disciplined, tried, tested and proven. I know that after I came to Jesus, I went through times of spiritual babyhood, when I was fed on the milk of the word. I grew in stages in my spiritual understanding. I became as a teenager, ready to conquer the heathens and bring them all to Jesus, wielding my sword. The Lord told me in a dream at that time to put down the butcher knife that I thought was the sword of the Spirit. Each member of this body has to grow up and be taught and disciplined by the Spirit, in whatever manner He chooses. Then when we reach maturity, as Job whom God called perfect did, we go through times of being stripped of all the tools used to grow us up. He separates us from our cherished doctrines, even from our teachers, our sweet fellowships, and more. We are brought low, even unto death, that we might rise to sit even at the Lord's right Hand, in heavenly places in Christ. Job is a perfect example of a son whose faith is being tested to the nth degree, and still stands steadfast, rooted and unmovable. This is a son who inherits the double portion.

Even so, among all of God's children, there are those who yield themselves quickly and learn obedience willingly, and there are some who are just much slower. As it is in the natural, there are also many who remain spiritually as little children all their lives. Of such, Jesus said, *"...Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."* (Lk.18:16) Howbeit, the heir who is still a child is not able to handle such an inheritance. *"Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father."* (Gal.4:1-2) So it is for Christians; no matter how old they are, they need to go through a time of learning to submit to teachers and leaders, until Father recognizes the Spirit of the submitted son in them, confessing from the heart, "Abba Father." It was when Jesus submitted Himself to the baptism of John that God's Spirit descended upon Him as a dove, and the Father's voice was heard, proclaiming, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

FIRST RESURRECTION AND INHERITANCE- The first resurrection is part of our inheritance. The word "first" does not only mean first in time of happening; it is first in terms of quality or preeminence. Those who are part of the first resurrection are not only the first to mature; they are close followers and overcomers in Christ. Jesus was talking about the first resurrection when He explained, *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (Jn.14:2-3) Jesus was saying that in His Father's house, there are many levels of life. He Himself dwells in the highest level. He began to prepare His disciples by sending them the Holy Spirit. This preparing comes with all the suffering that sons who attain maturity have had to walk through. As the scripture states, *"...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified (receive a higher level of life) together."* (Rom.8:17)

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul prays fervently that we might see and understand what is the exceeding greatness of the power of God, who raised Christ from the dead and *"...set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."* (Eph.1:20-23) This is the order of life to which Jesus was raised; it is a life powerful enough to loose the bondage, and to destroy all the works that the devil has wrought over the people of this world. It is a life ready to take over the dominion of God's creation.

As for us, *"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, (gave us new life), and hath raised us up together, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."*

(Eph.2:4-7) This is the inheritance of Jesus in the saints, and the inheritance of the saints in Christ. We inherit an order of life that is above all others, and He inherits our souls, (the church, His bride), which is the expression of Himself in visible form.

THE HIGHEST ORDER OF LIFE- There are many forms of life in our universe. Science divides them into six kingdoms. Humans are part of the animal kingdom; as Homo sapiens we have human life. Through His death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus Christ attained a form of life neither known nor found in the earth. From the smallest microscopic cell life to the largest plant or animal life, all need some kind of sustenance to exist. Animals need food, so do plants and fungi. Cells have need of energy, oxygen, water or more to continue to live. No earthly creature or being has life within itself. Only OUR GOD Jehovah can lay claim to that kind of life. In His resurrection, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, obtained a body with this quality of life. And then He prepared a people in whom He would impart that same life, so that they would be as He is. Jesus Christ has need of nothing else to sustain His immortal body. *"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."* (Jn.5:26) This is the reward of "first or foremost resurrection." It is the highest form of life obtainable.

HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED? AND WITH WHAT KIND OF BODY DO THEY COME?- *"...that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain... But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."* (I Cor.15:35-38 abbr.) Paul further expounds, saying that in nature each seed has its own body, so each body has its own kind of flesh, (flesh of fish, birds and so on), and each heavenly body has its own glory... then he concludes, *"So also is the resurrection of the dead... It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit... And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."* (I Cor.15:42-49 abbr.) We read earlier that *"...As in Adam all men die and in Christ all men are made alive but each man in his own order."* This means that each man is raised at his own time, and with his own order of life and body. Each man is raised a last Adam man, and each has eternal life. Each man lives in one of the many mansions in God's Kingdom, but each in his own order of life or state of being, in accord with what suits his eternal heavenly calling and function.

There is much to ponder about these things, but only the Holy Spirit can reveal them to each one who seeks to know them. In any case, we know that God's plan and purposes for the ages to come are perfect and perfectly on time. And we know that as sons, we are now looking for the redemption of our bodies, which is the first resurrection; we know that this is our goal, and the next great happening on our journey. We do not know the exact time, but God has stirred a witness within us that it is very soon. Two dreams that I received a few years ago confirm that indeed we are on the last lap of our journey. I have written about these dreams before, but now they come up with clearer understanding and more power than at first.

DREAM ONE- "My husband Michael and I were traveling with others. We were going 'Home,' each in our own car, although we were traveling together. It was evening and we were checking out of our motel. We were packing our cars, and I told Michael to be sure and not forget my little red footstool. Then, standing by the car, I saw this tall, nice-looking man. He looked very kind and extremely knowledgeable. I asked him if we could make it 'home' in one trek. He said, 'Yes, if you don't get too sleepy.' We were traveling on a two-lane road, not on an expressway. There were 225 miles to go, but because it was evening and we would be traveling by night, we would probably get sleepy. He said, 'If you get sleepy, don't feel bad if you have to pull over; you must pull over.'" (End of Dream)

DREAM TWO- "I was in a hotel with many others who were all going to their destination. Most were leaving by plane, but a man came to tell Michael and me that we would be leaving by car tomorrow morning.

'Be by your car at 7:30 and we leave at 8 AM.' Michael and I brought our stuff to put in the car and waited until eight. We were overjoyed because with the car we didn't have to check our baggage and be separated from all our stuff; everything would stay with us." (End of Dream)

There are many details in these dreams, but what we want to see is that both dreams speak of the last lap of the journey of each one moving toward the same goal. The first dream, with the little red footstool under my feet, speaks of putting death under our feet (The name Adam means red, and red is the color of blood in this frame speaks of death of the flesh).

In the second dream, we leave at 8, the number of new beginning. This is the journey of sons who will overcome death and the grave. Some, perhaps because of old age or some other reason, will go to sleep (die on the way); there is no shame in that. In the second dream, going by car is the way of the land, in these bodies, (keeping our stuff with us). Going by plane speaks of going through death into heaven first. By car we take our stuff (bodies) with us to our destination. These dreams are great confirmations that the time of our full redemption is almost here. A dear sister called me recently to say that the Lord told her, "Hang Tight!" Oh sons of God! HANG TIGHT in the faith and in the hope of that Day!

Because God is love, *Angèle Caporaso (Jackie)*