

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

*"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."*

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 224

### THE FIRST RESURRECTION

(continued)

“And I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and *they lived* and reigned with Christ...*this is the first resurrection*” (Rev. 20:4-5).

In our meditations concerning the first resurrection we have found that it is the resurrection of the *soul*. Let us consider now the resurrection of the body. John refers to this with this remarkable and cryptic statement: “But the *rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*” (Rev. 20:5). What does he mean by “the rest of the dead?” I could be mistaken, but it is my conviction that these inspired words point more to the completion of the work of resurrection within each of us than it does to the multitudes of dead men who were not raised with God’s firstfruits. We are going to have to do more than accept dead doctrines and shallow deductions of the carnal mind. We are going to have to see the living Christ, and the magnitude and scope of His wonderful spiritual work of restoration in our lives. If there is a *first* resurrection and a *second* resurrection — and if we have been dead in both *soul* and *body* — and if resurrection means putting on *incorruption* in our soul as well as *immortality* in our body — then surely we can see that individually, once our *soul* is raised up to live in His sight, the “rest of the dead” would be our *body* which remains to be quickened and changed.

Yes — *all* men will be raised and made alive in Christ! Yes — *all* who are in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of God and live! Yes — there is a resurrection of *both* the just and the unjust! Yes — *all* shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ! And God has an appointed time for every man! But it would be well worth our time to consider prayerfully the fact that each and every man who has ever lived on this planet, or ever shall live, must be quickened, processed, and made fully alive in the same way that both Christ and His firstfruits company were made alive — first in soul, and then in body. Can we not see by this that there is a *first* and a *second* resurrection for EVERY MAN OF ADAM’S RACE! That is the mystery.

And then comes the word: “But the rest of the dead lived not again *until the thousand years were finished.*” FINISHED — the Greek word means to complete, execute, conclude, discharge, accomplish. The signification is clear — the “rest of the dead” — that is, the outer body realm, will not live again, or put on immortality, until the thousand years — THE DAY OF THE LORD IN OUR LIVES — has *finished*,

*concluded*, and *accomplished* its full work in us! It is not just a matter of the passing of time, reaching a date on the calendar. Oh, no! The “thousand years” is the code-word for “the day of the Lord.” And the day of the Lord is not a literal time period, but a *realm* and *work* of God in our lives by the illumination and power of His Spirit and His Word. When the working of that “day” is finished, when it has fully accomplished its mighty work *in us*, then, and only then, will we appear, spirit, soul, *and* body WITH HIM IN HIS GLORY! Oh, the wonder of it!

The life which Jesus gives is Himself, and the life, which He is, is imperishable. Those who partake of it cannot perish, for they have passed from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life. “And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall *never perish*” (Jn. 10:28). Jesus did not die that you might live! Jesus died that He might *give His life* to you. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (Jn. 12:24). HE is the kernel that fell into the ground and died, and, in dying, the life which He is has reappeared in the millions of those who have believed. Because His life is imperishable, they who receive it shall never perish.

The flesh which we inherited from Adam who was of the earth, earthy, is counted by God to be nothing more than a seed. “But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and *with what body do they come?* Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou *sowest not that body that shall be*, but bare grain (seed), it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but *God giveth it a body* as it hath pleased Him, and *to every seed his own body*” (I Cor. 15:35-38). I wonder how many of those who read these lines have asked the same question posed by the apostle: “How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” Ah, how often through many years did I ask myself those very questions! I am confident that you, too, have asked. We have pondered how God would reconstruct the atoms of this flesh body and fashion it again into the likeness we once knew. And yet — though it is our vile body that He will change, He never promised to fashion it again *into the likeness we once knew*. Oh, no! It is not about whether we will recognize Uncle Joe or Aunt Susie in the resurrection, because they look like they did in their earth life. The promise is just this: “*Who shall change (metamorphose) our vile body, that it may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY!*” Not made like you used to be, but made as HE IS! “*God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him.*” That is the mystery.

Consider for a moment the state of those who are dead. Some people suppose that those we lay away in their ornate coffins are to be taken up like those well preserved mummies of Egypt, but it is not so! This body speedily falls into dissolution — the first thing that goes is the brain and soon there is a large cavity between the ears; the heart soon follows. These are the two vital organs of man, and the rest of the body trails along not far behind. The bones are the last to disintegrate. And so man returns to the dust. Open any casket left long enough in the ground and you find but a bit of brown dust.

Consider where these people have gone. Many have been dissolved in lime pits, or burned in great fires, or buried in the depths of the sea. There are some who have been eaten by beasts. I think of Roger Williams, the Governor of one of our first colonies. He had an unseemly fate befall him. When his casket was taken up to give it a more noble burial, it was found that the roots of an apple tree had pried open the lid, reached in and sucked poor Roger out, tooth and nail, head and foot. The poor fellow was gone altogether! He is no exception, for this is what has happened to the vast majority of the people in the world. They have returned to the elements; they have been eaten by other creatures, especially worms; their particles are spread sometimes as far as from pole to pole.

What has happened to the ancient king Nebuchadnezzar? or Alexander the Great? or the mighty Caesars? One part may be in the desert sands of the great Sahara and another part floating in the waters of the great Pacific Ocean. Are these to rise again? Can these live again? Is that not indeed a thing to be thought incredible? Where indeed are the remains of man? Or perhaps we should more accurately ask, "Where are they not?" Blows there any wind down any street that does not contain within its swirl some portion of that which was once the son of Adam? Breaks there a wave upon any shore that contains not in solution some relic of that which once was called man? He is found under every tree, in every crevice and in every corner, under every meadow, perhaps in almost every flower. Shall these live again? Is that not a thing incredible?

Who among us has never questioned whether in the resurrection we will recognize our friends and loved ones, whether they will look as they did at age twenty, or thirty, or seventy-five? We have debated whether in our glorified bodies we will be visible or invisible to the inhabitants of the earth realm, whether we shall eat and drink, wear clothes, travel in an automobile or at the speed of light, and with hundreds of other such notions we have repeatedly asked the *very questions the apostle declared we would ask!* "But some man will say, HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP? AND WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?" Paul had a word for all who raise such questions: "Thou FOOL!" The Phillips translation says, "Now that is a silly question!" The Wuest translation says, "Stupid one!" The Amplified Bible reads, "You foolish man!" And another version renders it, "You unreasonable person!" Why are these questions foolish, stupid, silly, and unreasonable? Because, the apostle explains, appealing to nature, "In your own experience you know that a seed does not germinate without itself *dying*. When you sow a seed you do not sow the 'body' that will eventually be produced in the harvest, but just a seed, of wheat, for example, or one of the other seeds. God gives the seed a new 'body' according to His laws — a different 'body' to each kind of seed." Paul tells us plainly that the "body" of the harvest is not the same "body" that was planted, and calls the man a fool for even questioning whether the corn of the harvest is the same grains of corn that were planted. Let the farmer answer this! The corn you harvest from the stalk is not the same grains of corn you planted in the spring. And yet — in some divine and mysterious way it is *of, from* and *out of* the grains you planted! It came from that seed! It didn't derive itself from some other seed, or from the soil, or from a chicken, or a cow, nor did it float down out of the skies and stand itself up in your corn field! It is a paradox, an enigma, a divine mystery! It is *not* the same seed, yet it *is from* the same seed! Our hearts respond with reverence and a fervent *Amen* to such truth as this. Now consider the caterpillar and the butterfly. Would you say the butterfly *is* the caterpillar? I think not. Yet, did the caterpillar not lay down his life, and did not the mysterious and marvelous power of *metamorphosis* do its work, there would *be* no butterfly! The butterfly is not the caterpillar, but he is certainly *of, from, and out of* the caterpillar. That is the law of *planting* and *harvest*. It is *life* out of *death*. Great is the mystery!

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be" (I Cor. 15:37). The apostle Paul here makes a wonderfully significant spiritual use of an analogy derived from his observation of what takes place in the natural world when a seed is sown in the ground and springs up and grows. He is talking about the resurrection of the dead, and compares the burial of a human body to the covering up of a vegetable seed in the earth in expectation of the bursting forth of new life. This is hardly an appropriate comparison if taken too literally, or applied to the wrong sense of burial. It takes more than carnal reasoning to comprehend the mystery. Only the spirit of wisdom and revelation can unfold the truth within our hearts. A literal dead body does not behave like a vegetable seed; it does not sprout and go on to produce new and more glorious bodies, the exact replicas of the old. When it is laid in the grave it is done with; it putrefies and disintegrates. Paul knew this well enough — just as well as we know it. His language here and elsewhere implies that he believed in a resurrection of the whole man, and that the resurrection body would be transformed into a spiritual, immortal, glorious body which would never again have to know decay or

corruption. But the only sense in which this illustration of his about the sowing of a seed holds good is that the disintegration of a seed in the ground and the death of a human body are in each case the breaking up of a form in order that the LIFE WITHIN may reclothe itself in other and ampler forms — the development and maturity of the life of the spirit and soul that pertain to that body raising it up into a body that corresponds to the power and perfection of the spirit and soul! Thus it is that the *soul* must be fully redeemed before it is able with the spirit to transform the body!

When we really know life, when we understand our own environment and the dynamics of the biological forces within it, we will surely have a clearer understanding of the laws and processes of the *higher spiritual realm* of the kingdom of God. When you sow a kernel of corn in the earth of your garden, you sow it out of sight, to decay and disintegrate, that the life within the seed may spring forth producing a new plant. In this process it is not the visible seed that produces the new plant, but the *inner life* of that seed springs forth and the corn of the harvest is the **product of that inner life** contained in the original seed. The seed's whole purpose is to die, that there may be a release of whatever quality of life dwells within TO CREATE A NEW BODY. The principle is clear — by the power of the first resurrection a new, divine, heavenly life has been impregnated into the soul-womb of our life so that the mortal body of the believer is now a NEW KIND OF SEED CONTAINING A NEW AND HIGHER FORM OF LIFE! Thus it is that as our outer man perishes, as the old man with his works are put off, this outer-man body is *sown*, Paul says, in corruption; it is *raised* (harvested) in glory: it is *sown* in weakness; it is *raised* (harvested) in power: it is *sown a natural body*; it is *raised a spiritual body* (I Cor. 15:35-44).

Can we not see by this that the spiritual body *is not the natural body reconstructed* at all, but a brand new, totally different body, the **product of the Christ life contained within your mortal body — the seed**. Surely, if no other instruction were given in scripture but these few verses, we would have a sound foundation upon which to fasten our firm understanding that the natural body does not of itself *become* the spiritual body, but the spiritual body is the product of the indwelling life of the resurrected, glorified Son of God! With the Christ life raised up in your life you have become a new, higher, and transcendent kind of seed! There is a higher quality of life in your seed than exists in the natural man, or even in the carnal Christian, for that matter. The power of your life to produce a new and glorified body depends entirely upon the quality of the life within the seed! Corn life produces corn, chicken life produces chickens, and the fully developed Christ life produces glorified RESURRECTION BODIES! It's all about the quality of life *in the seed*! If we would heed the voice of inspiration and revelation as it speaks through these words of the apostle, we would at once see and acknowledge that the “embryo” of our spiritual body ALREADY EXISTS AS A PRESENT REALITY WITHIN OUR QUICKENED SPIRIT AND PERFECTED SOUL! It is, as a friend has said, “a life within a life, a MAN WITHIN A MAN, and a B-O-D-Y W-I-T-H-I-N A B-O-D-Y!”

Let us UNDERSTAND! Every man will be resurrected. I do not say all will be resurrected at once, for the times are in our Father's hands. Yet Paul plainly tells us, “As in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*” (I Cor. 15:22). And then he adds this significant statement: “...but *every man in his own order*.” By this we understand that there are various “orders,” “ranks,” “classes,” “levels,” and “arrangements” of resurrection. Not all will be raised up initially to the same plane of life. How can we know this? BECAUSE OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THEIR SEED! Do you suppose that Nero, Hitler, and Billy the Kid will be raised up in the same glorious body as those who have here and now experienced the *first resurrection*? Paul explains this principle more fully when he says, “But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to **every seed his own body**” (I Cor. 15:38). Surely that can only mean that men are raised up with a body that corresponds to the quality of life in the seed!

Paul goes on with his analogy: “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, 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 star in glory*. **SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**” (I Cor. 15:38-42). So many “glories” in resurrection! So many “orders” in resurrection! I don’t profess to understand all the implications and outworkings of so great a mystery, but it is my conviction that all men will, in God’s due time, be raised up into a body that corresponds to the quality of the life in their seed. Multitudes, no doubt, will be raised up in low, dense bodies not so different from our present bodies. But it will be God’s appointed time for the dealings of God, by His judgments and His salvation, to come upon them to cause and enable them to begin to pass through the same process of resurrection that the Lord’s elect is now passing through until the process is complete and they are thoroughly changed and transformed INTO HIS LIKENESS! All must not only be raised — they must be FULLY RAISED! That will be the full and complete salvation, restoration, and transformation of ALL MANKIND! What a plan!

A dear friend in California shared the following experience which beautifully expresses a further aspect of the truth of which I now speak. “Several months ago, as I walked about performing my daily tasks — as I lay upon my bed at night — in times of prayer and meditation before the Lord — or caught up in feverish activity — there began to break upon me the vision of a heavenly man. There in my mind’s eye, I was beholding with unbelievable realness, the form of a man — gigantic in size — silhouetted against the dark heavenly background. The sky around him was extremely dark, and it was as though I could see through him, for the dark sky could also be seen behind him. But there, etched against the sky, outlined with a brilliant light, was that form, daily impressed upon me, constantly with me, and I began to cry out with much depth of feeling, ‘Oh, God. What is it?’ Somehow, I was made to know that in some measure I was beholding the resurrected Christ!

“I am certain that it was only a glimpse of that which is later to be revealed to all those of us who wait for His appearing, but it was a glimpse that lifted my sights to look beyond that which we see in the immediate earth-realm. As that vision was daily presented to me, I began to know within the very depths of my being that that was a resurrection body — and that it was, in fact, the body of Christ which arose from the grave in a glorious victory over death. More than that, I was made to know by the Spirit that somehow, somehow, in some mysterious manner, that it is THAT BODY — that very same body that arose from the grave and ascended to the Father — that *we are being fitted into!*

“How earthy we have been, for we have looked at the divided, carnal, worldly, un-unified camp of believers on the earth and have said, ‘Behold, the body of Christ.’ Never have I been more convinced of anything than this: that verily we are the body of Christ in that we are the *materials* that will be fitted into that glorious body! But THAT MAN — that GLORIFIED MAN in the heavenlies — is the body of Christ, and it is as we are fitted into that Man that it can truly be said, ‘Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.’ ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ Jesus said, ‘ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house (BODY) are many mansions (MEMBERS). 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...’ WHERE??? ‘UNTO MYSELF!’ That place that He has gone to prepare is the place IN HIMSELF — in that glorified, resurrected body. Herein lies the great mystery! The writer of the book of Hebrews has said, ‘Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil WHICH IS H-I-S FLESH...let us draw near with a true heart...’ (Heb. 10:19-22). How we have thought to enter in through the rent veil of OUR FLESH — but the Holy Spirit tells us plainly that we enter through the veil of H-I-S F-L-E-S-H” — end quote.

In the glory of the morning  
from the sea to shining sea,  
Comes the herald of the dawning  
of the risen you and me.

Far away from all the people  
right before their very eyes,  
Birthed a Nation Strong and holy  
from the wearied prayers and sighs.

Come a running all ye peoples  
gather at the birthing womb,  
See the manchild like his Brother  
rise triumphant from his tomb.

Lo this comp'ny of believers  
are the overcoming Saints,  
From the mortal to immortal  
where no earthly flesh can taint.

In the glory of the morning  
shall a people's praises give.  
To the One who comes to free them  
and cause them all to live!

— Preston E. Courtney

Unknown millenniums ago Job uttered an inspired statement as he sat among the dust and ashes of his desolation and affliction. “If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come*. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands” (Job 14:14-15). Never did Job utter a word which bears out the absolute *faithfulness of God* to His creatures than in this passage. He says, So what? If a man comes to the point where he goes by way of the grave — shall he live again? Is that the end? Shall he appear on earth again *in a body*? And then he answers his own question. He made reference to an ***appointed time of waiting***, through which we must pass until ***our change comes***. We will not be left in this “unfinished state.” We will not be forgotten in this low realm of the earthy, this side of the Land of the Interface where heaven and earth are joined in a SPIRITUAL BODY. There is much more work to be wrought in us before we are ***fully changed***. But even physical death will not deny us that fulfillment, because, Job says, sooner or later HE WILL CALL, and we will answer, because it is not dependent upon our state or condition, but upon HIS CALLING AND PURPOSE, and He has a desire to the work of His hands; the end is secure in the FAITHFUL CREATOR’S DESIRE to finish the work of His hands; His desire is towards us and that is the guarantee of our full redemption along with that of ***every man!***

“*Till my change come...*” “*All the days of my appointed time will I wait...*” “*All the days...*” The message is clear—it takes time, there is a process. Do you know why sometimes we look at another person and say, “There’s no way that person is ever going to change!” Do you know what the root of that is? It’s unbelief. What does love do? Love, the apostle tells us, “Believes all things,” that is, love is so powerful and filled with such wisdom that it has faith for *everything*, including the seemingly impossible. God is

love, and that is why with Him ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE! If you read that whole passage in Job there is a verse that speaks of the hope of trees. What do trees signify in scripture? They are *people*. Of the righteous man the Psalmist declares, “He shall be like a *tree* planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3). “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad...then shall all the *trees of the forest* rejoice before the Lord, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth” (Ps. 96:11-13). “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to...appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called *trees of righteousness*, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified” (Isa. 61:1,3). Now here is what Job says about the hope of trees. “There is *hope of a tree*, if it be cut down (die), that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease” (Job 14:7). There is hope for a tree, even if it is cut down, because there is an *indwelling life* that will cause it to live again! This hope is rooted in *change*. This thought is a preface to Job’s declaration that through all the dark days of his appointed time he would *wait* — **until his change came!** Can we not see by this that God has appointed a time of change for every man. If we say, “There’s no way that person is ever going to change,” we are very short-sighted. WAIT! God has a time, a place, and a way! Love believes this! Wisdom proclaims it! And faith waits for it!

Every one of us must change — and that’s a word of hope! There’s change for you, precious friend of mine, so don’t ever say, “I just can’t change.” Put it up on your refrigerator — “My Change.” If you have one ounce of heart toward the Lord, and even if you don’t — guess what? You are going to change! In areas you thought you could never overcome — guess what? You’re going to change! There is no excuse for you to talk down to yourself and tell yourself, “I’ve always been like this, everybody in my family has always been like this, and there’s no way I can change.” God has changed harder cases than you! And He will again. If God can handle old Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Judas Iscariot, and a million more wicked despots, do you suppose your case is hopeless? Love believes all things! As you let the Lord change you, you will be transformed, metamorphosed, into all that He is in the power of His resurrection! Aren’t you glad!

The body of Christ, in the process of its growth and development into the image of God, passes from processing to processing, from change to change, and from glory to glory. God’s purpose in redemption is not to just deliver us from the power of sin and death, but to re-create us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image and after the likeness of God. This marvelous change involves the whole man, spirit, soul, and body. We are being changed from the earthly into the heavenly, from the natural into the spiritual. There are two realms and there are two bodies. Paul tells us, “There is a *natural* body, and there is a *spiritual* body” (I Cor. 15:44). Many seem to think that a spiritual body is not a *literal* body. In other words, that it is not a *real* body, or not actually a body at all, but a consciousness or a spiritual state of being. “Literal,” says Webster, means *real*; not figurative or metaphorical. “There is a *natural body*, and there is a *spiritual body*,” saith the Lord! Does anyone suppose the apostle here teaches that there is a “real” body, and there is a “figurative” or “metaphorical” body; and as we have borne the image of the “real,” we shall also bear the image of the “figurative”? One would suppose they so read, from their exceeding blindness in not recognizing any but the animal body as the “true” or “literal” body. The thing we want to keep in mind is that BOTH ARE **BODIES!** A “spiritual body” is not a spirit — it is a **body**, a **spiritual body**. It is therefore not something figurative, metaphorical, nor necessarily even ethereal. It is a body. And it is REAL!

Now will someone inform me why it is unscriptural, or fanatical to believe that Jesus Christ has a SPIRITUAL BODY; and, as the saints are to be like Him, that they are raised SPIRITUAL BODIES. I hear

some talking about coming into immortality in their present body, the natural body, living for a thousand years, or forever, in a body that eats, drinks, sleeps, bathes, and goes to the bathroom. It will never happen. Because some seem to think that a spiritual body is not a **real body**, but only a spirit or a metaphorical body, and that nothing is either real or a body unless it be “of the earth, earthy,” is no reason why those who can discern spiritual things, which the natural man cannot, should remain in darkness. The realm of the spiritual is a realm which, to those who touch it, is ten thousand times **more real** than the transitory, corruptible realm of the natural world! Man has been excluded from this heavenly realm ever since that calamitous hour when he stretched forth his inquisitive hand to discover by his natural senses that which is good and that which is evil. On that unhappy day his eyes were closed to the celestial world to discover the physical and the natural and to be instructed in this barren realm of death. And yet that heavenly realm is as close to us today as it was then, the only difference being that our darkened vision cannot see it! It is like a blind man standing before a majestic sunset — the sunset is in the same place every day of his life, but he never sees, understands, nor appreciates it. It never changes, but to him it is as though it doesn’t exist.

By His resurrection from the dead Jesus opened up to man again the spiritual-physical realm — the Land of the Interface. “The same day, at evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst” (Jn. 20:19). “And after eight days, again His disciples were within, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you” (Jn. 20:20). “And their *eyes were opened*, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight” (Lk. 24:31). Such language was never applied to the movements of Jesus before His crucifixion, and is used only in speaking of spiritual beings. The spiritual body of Jesus, and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out the door, but simply disappeared or dematerialized before their eyes. He was able to appear in a form, with substance, to be seen, heard, touched, and felt. He even ate with them! He was present with them, not as a spirit, but in a **spiritual body**, which was both spiritual **and a body!** THAT IS THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION!

Jesus only demonstrated TWO BODIES WHILE HE WAS ON EARTH — the *natural body* and the *spiritual body*. There were no others. The first was a body of limitation that grew hungry, thirsty, weary, and died. The second was the body of resurrection, still a body, but a body of glory — unlimited, spiritual, supernatural, and deathless. He never demonstrated a physical body that put on immortality but remained the same. Many brethren today are expecting physical immortality; they look in the mirror to see if the aging process has slowed or stopped; they count the wrinkles to determine whether there may be fewer today than before; they are expecting **immortality** in an **unspiritual body!** But you see, beloved, the very term “physical immortality” is an oxymoron! It is a contradiction of terms! The things which are seen (of this natural creation) are *temporal!* Again I say, it will never happen! You will be CHANGED or you will DIE! No man can be physically immortal who still has to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe in order to sustain his life. No man is immortal as long as he can drown in a lake, burn in a fire, be mangled beyond recognition under the wheels of an eighteen-wheeler, have his head severed by a sword, choke on a piece of meat, bleed from a cut, or be buried in the earth. Hear it! There is a **natural body** and there is a **spiritual body**. Those are the only two options you have, my friend!

It follows of necessity that man’s being, under the curse of sin and death, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. Paul sets forth the majesty of that supernal glory that now appears like a beckoning beacon before the anointed vision of the sons of God: “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall *also bear* the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. 15:49). We are to bear *both* — made one! “We shall **also bear**” signifies the adding of the one to the other, making an entirely new thing, just as the two gases — hydrogen and oxygen — compounded, make one new substance called **water**. Otherwise it should read, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall **instead** bear the image of the

heavenly.” That is also the meaning of the term “spiritual body” — the union of spirit and body — so that it is neither, yet mysteriously and wondrously it is *both!* Can you not see the mystery? He also explains exactly how this ineffable change is to take place within the Lord’s elect. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed** into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Cor. 3:18). “And be not conformed to this world, but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour...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).

Literally Paul says that we are being **metamorphosed** into the image of the heavenly, and that God will **metamorphose** even our vile bodies. The Greek word *metamorphoo* means simply “to change into another form.” It is not getting rid of one thing and *replacing* it with another. Oh, no! It comes from two words: *meta* — which means “beyond,” and *morphe* — meaning “form.” “Beyond form” — or changed into another form. From this Greek root comes our English word “metamorphosis,” meaning to change from one form, shape, or substance to another. Our Lord through death and resurrection was changed or transformed — metamorphosed — from the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had known to the glorified Christ of the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. And this is just the word that is used with reference to believers who are to come into the same image of Christ Jesus. The metamorphosed body is not a body that looks like our present body infused with life while it continues to eat, drink, sleep, sweat, and do all the other things natural men do. IT IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF BODY, IN A DIFFERENT FORM, IT IS A SPIRITUAL BODY, FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS BODY OF GLORY AND POWER!

Metamorphosis is that change which takes place from *within*. “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). It is not Gabriel blowing a horn and suddenly the Spirit of God swoops down from out of the heavens and seizes upon your dead body, raising it up. Oh, no! It is by the spirit DWELLING IN YOU. We are not transformed in either soul or body by external forces acting upon us, but by the breaking forth of a new **energizing from within**, the very life of the indwelling Christ! Let us carefully consider the wonder of this thing, because it is certain that *metamorphosis* has already begun in us and will continue until the complete transformation has taken place. Too many of the Lord’s people sit with folded hands, waiting for a change in some sweet bye and bye, when God’s word clearly shows that this process of change has already begun. This is what must take place within us: we must be changed from what we started out to be, into a creature vastly different in form and nature. But do not look first for the change in the outward. Look not at the skin tone, the wrinkles, the physical strength, healing of the body, as signs of metamorphosis. The change begins *within*, in the soulical nature, character, disposition, and powers, in mind and understanding, in consciousness, attitudes, motivation, and manifestation. This is the power of the FIRST RESURRECTION!

There are certain times and seasons when God brings to life truths that have been allowed to lie in grave clothes for ages and dispensations. As a seed lies dormant in the winter months and then bursts into life in the warmth and rain of spring, so also has the truth of God been allowed to lie in death throughout the wintry night of our walk in Babylon’s religious systems now at last to burst into a fruitful harvest in the spring of God’s purpose to bring many sons to glory. There came a wonderful day when Christ came into our lives. “What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, Since Jesus came into my heart,” we sweetly sing. But did you ever wait in holy reverence for the Spirit to reveal the eternal truth of those words to your deepest heart? Oh yes, we received Him — as a saviour, as an idea or an ideal, as a truth, as a presence, as an experience, as an ethereal kind of spirit, something vague and intangible dwelling in our hearts by faith. The Spirit of the Lord is quickening, however, that there is a **substance** to that *man* within

us. When the incorruptible life of the Christ conceived within us, we must realize that He was conceived within as the *embryo* of a *spirit-body*. Not just a spirit, but a SPIRIT-BODY! That is the man who belongs to the Land of the Interface — where heaven and earth are merged and fused!

When Paul speaks, then, of being strengthened with might in the *inner man*, he is speaking of *substance* within us. When Peter speaks of the *hidden man* of the heart, he is speaking of *glorified flesh* that has been born into the believer but is hidden beneath the veil of Adamic flesh. A *man* is not a spirit. A *man* is a composite being — spirit, soul, and body. The first *man* was of the earth, earthy. The second *man* is the Lord from heaven! The first *man* was of the earth, imbued with the wind of heaven. The second *man* was from heaven in the totality of His being — hence the virgin birth. It is this second *man* who has come into us in His life. Jesus never said, “Except you receive my *spirit*, you have no life in you.” Rather, He said, “Except ye eat the *flesh* of the Son of man, and drink His *blood*, ye have no life in you.” As we feed that *man* within with the *flesh substance* and the *spirit life* of the resurrected and glorified *man*, this infant *spiritual body* begins to grow and when he is fully formed he will swallow up even this vile body into Himself and stand forth in splendor and majesty as the NEW CREATION MAN — spirit, soul, and body! It will be CHRIST and yet it will be US! This man will then live fully in the Land of the Interface!

We will close our meditations on the body of resurrection with these confirming words from brother Bob Torango.

“We will not slack in our race for victory over the grave and all corruptible states and conditions. Our heart is fixed upon the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord, as we press into His substance and nature with total trust in His ability to raise us up in Him. Both sides of the river are rejoicing, as together we progress towards that mark set before us. Jesus is the Pattern Son for this victory over corruption and mortal existence and as He has risen from the dead, we shall be raised also; some of us from that side of the river, some of us from this side of the river, at the last trump, as the sound of resurrection breaks forth from both the visible and the invisible realms, we will have Life as He has Life. It is a glorious morning, as the Light of God surrounds us and darkness flees from His brilliance. I see the Lord, high and lifted up, His train filling the temple. Look up, saints, our redemption draws nigh, the time is at hand and the Day of the Lord is in our midst. We will see our loved ones again, as Christ will bring each child home to Father’s house and, oh, what a homecoming that is! Not up in the sky somewhere, but in the living Christ, we will all cross over into Life. May God be with you all as you run this race. Be strong and courageous in the Lord and be not dismayed as some are, but contend for the faith, make sure your steps, and step out in God with the walk of the Overcomer. We are closer to the full salvation experience of Christ than we have ever been before!”

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY

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