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RESURRECTION POWER IN JESUS.

– LUKE 7:1-17. – *APRIL 15.* –

**"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life."
– John 11:25**

RESURRECTION power resided in our Lord Jesus because in the divine plan it was he who was to redeem the world by the sacrifice of himself and consequently to restore it. This included not merely an awakening from death, but also such vitalization as would overcome the dying processes of disease and ultimately bring the revived one up, up, to the full perfection of being originally enjoyed by our first parents in Eden but forfeited because of disobedience under the sentence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4.) This is the most important feature of all the plan of God revealed to us, and if we discern it clearly it assists us in the understanding of every other feature of that plan. We must see that death is the absence of life, the loss of life – that it is a penalty upon our race because we are judged unworthy of life.

All references to a future life imply a redemption from the curse or sentence which came upon us because of the original sin. The cancellation of the debt or sentence, however, does not revive or restore mankind, but it does remove the legal barrier to man's restitution to all that was lost. [R3755 : page 108] Hence it is that our Savior's work is to follow. First, it is to be a redemptive work: the redemption was accomplished at his first advent – though he has used this Gospel age as the period in which to accept also some of the redeemed ones as his members, his Bride, his Church, under him as their Head, to be his associates in the great work of restitution which belongs to the next age.

Second, restitution is to be our Lord's work at his second advent, when his Church, his members, will have been selected,

polished, prepared, glorified and associated with him in glory, honor and immortality. Then the full work of the redemption will be granted to the world of mankind – not by raising them from the dead to absolute perfection in an instant, but by first awakening them from the sleep of death, and then, under the disciplines and instructions of the Millennial age, lifting them gradually in harmony with their own wills and cooperation, step by step, out of sin and death conditions into life eternal, as they may respond to **[R3755 : page 109]** these mercies and opportunities. The disobedient, being counted unworthy of life eternal, will be cut off in the Second Death.

JESUS, THE LIFE-GIVER

The words of our Golden Text, although specially applicable to our Lord in the future, at the beginning of his Millennial reign, when he will abolish death by lifting mankind out of its power, out of the great prison-house and out of the weaknesses that are associated with the fallen condition, nevertheless were applicable also in some degree at the first advent. True, our Lord's own sacrifice was not finished until he died at Calvary, and the sacrifices of the members of his body would not be finished for centuries; but when our Lord at thirty years of age made a full consecration of himself to do the Father's will, to lay down his life, etc., that divine plan which he there undertook to carry out included all these subsequent features – the completion of his own sacrifice and that of his completed body, of the Church.

That our heavenly Father so regarded his sacrifice was evidenced by the impartation of the holy Spirit, which anointing upon him constituted him the Messiah, the Christ, and the hope of the Church, which is his body, as well as ultimately the hope of all things. Hence, since our Lord had never abrogated that covenant of consecration, sacrifice, since he was still in line with his Covenant, and since the Father still so recognized him, it was

proper for him to think and act and speak from that standpoint, which not only looked down to the end of his own course with faith, but also looked down to the end of this Gospel age with confidence, and to the end of the Millennial age with assurance that all the good purposes of God would finally be accomplished in and through him. From this standpoint, therefore, he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He knew that the sacrificial work he had undertaken would secure to him the privilege of being the Life-Giver to the world, and that in the exercise of that right he would raise up not only from the tomb, but completely out of death conditions up to perfection, all who would come unto the Father through him – all who would have the right desire of heart to return to loving obedience to the Creator.

OUR LORD'S MIRACLES ILLUSTRATIVE

Our Lord's miracles were performed with a view to proving him to be the Life-Giver, not merely as having the right or privilege of giving life but as having pleasure in so doing. From this standpoint our Lord's miracles were small illustrations on a limited scale of that much grander work which he, with and through his glorified Church, will accomplish for mankind during his Millennial reign, when all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and all the mentally, morally and physically lame shall be healed, and all the dead in trespasses and sins will be revived and, through obedience, gradually obtain full restitution of all things lost, as promised through the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. – Acts 3:19-23.

Our present lesson follows the Sermon on the Mount – the thought evidently in the minds of Matthew and Luke in thus arranging matters being to show that he who had given the wonderful teachings on the mount was fully attested by the miraculous powers shown to reside in him. He had returned to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, the home city of Peter and

others, and now the home city of Jesus, since he had been spurned and rejected at Nazareth. We remember that on a previous occasion at Capernaum he had healed many, and cannot doubt that his fame had reached all classes. A centurion, captain of the Roman guard, with a company of soldiers, resided here, and a much-prized servant having been taken sick the centurion was anxious to have Jesus cure him. That he was a man of humble mind, as well as full of faith and benevolence, is clearly shown by the narrative. Indeed, so far as we remember, all three of the centurions mentioned in the New Testament were evidently reverential: this one, the one who put Jesus to death and who subsequently declared, "Surely this man was the Son of God," and the centurion Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. – Matt. 27:54; Acts 10:1.

THE NOBLE CENTURION

The centurion of our lesson was both wise and humble. He realized that as a Gentile he could have no special claim upon this Jewish Prophet and the work he was doing for the Israelites, and hence he secured the cooperation of some of the elders of the city – not the elders of the Synagogue, but the chief men of the city – to present to Jesus on his behalf a request for the healing of his servant. A man of less humble mind would doubtless have thought of the dignity of his own position, and would have ignored the distinctions which the Jews and the Scriptures both fix, the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile excluding the latter from the divine mercies of the former. He was like the Syro-phenician woman who desired a crumb from the children's table without claiming to be one of the children.

The elders, his representatives, besought Jesus on his behalf, testifying that although he was not a Jew he was a noble character, a lover of Israel; he had built them a synagogue for their worship, in which he himself could not engage because a Gentile. Had he taken any other position, had he ignored the fact that he was not

one of the "children," doubtless it would have been necessary for our Lord to have impressed this lesson before granting the request; but since all this was conceded in the request our Lord promptly acceded thereto. A lesson for each of us in this connection would be humility of mind in approaching the Lord on any subject, which would make us ready for his favors and blessings. We, too, should concede that we have nothing of right or of merit to demand, that we should approach the Lord from the standpoint of unworthy suppliants, seekers of grace and mercy, not justice, at his hands.

Then the centurion bethought him of the fact that, being a Gentile, according to Jewish custom it would be an impropriety for a Jew to enter his house, that a certain measure of defilement would be implied. Doubtless, too, he thought of himself as a sinner, and that here was a representative of the Almighty, whose power he acknowledged. His feelings, doubtless, were akin to those of Peter when the latter cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." – Luke 5:8.

The centurion reasoned that if the Lord could exercise the power when present he could also exercise the power of healing though absent, and possibly he had heard of the healing of the son of the nobleman of his own city, Capernaum, [R3755 : page 110] when Jesus was at Cana and merely spoke the word. For these reasons the centurion at once sent a messenger to Jesus, explaining his own disinclination to incommode the Master, his unworthiness to have him under his roof, and his complete faith that a word from him would be sufficient. He explains this faith in the Lord's word by the illustration that he himself had been given a certain amount of authority by which he could tell his servants to go and to come, and that, recognizing Jesus as the Lord's anointed, he was sure that he had control over the influences of nature as his servants, so that he could bid the disease go from the servant and he should be well.

MARVELLOUS FAITH OF AN ALIEN

Jesus took him at his word and went no further, but he expressed his astonishment at the amount of the man's faith, saying to the multitude with him, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Only in one other place do we read that Jesus "marvelled," and that was at the instance of the unbelief of the people of Nazareth. (Mark 6:6.) The people so long favored, so greatly blessed, so richly fed with divine promises and instructed by divine providences, lacked the faith that might have been expected of them, while the Gentiles, unfavored, were possessed of faith in many respects remarkable. No wonder our Lord contrasted the people of Capernaum with the heathens of Sodom and Gomorrah. No wonder that he declared that if the mighty works done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah they would have remained – would never have been destroyed – would have repented in sackcloth and ashes.

How glad we are that the Scriptures assure us that it is the divine plan to give all the heathen peoples – yea, and all the Jews – the favorable, gracious opportunities of the Millennial age whereby to rise out of sin and death conditions and to restore to the obedient the life conditions lost through sin, redeemed by the precious blood. Are we not sometimes surprised today, likewise, to find that some prominent in religious affairs seem to have less faith in the Lord **[R3756 : page 110]** in his goodness, in his power, in his wisdom, in his love, than have some who are of the world? What surprises there may be in this respect by and by when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth and the eyes of understanding of all mankind shall be opened to appreciate the knowledge of the glory of God. How many who were not God's people shall then become his people; and how many who now have much advantage everyway, and who have forms of godliness without the power, may then be seen to be inferior to some who now appear to be their inferiors.

Soon afterward (R.V.) our Lord, the disciples and quite a multitude of followers were approaching the little city of Nain, when forth from the gateway of the city came a funeral procession, a widowed mother and mourning friends, pall-bearers, and a bier or litter on which lay a dead young man, the widow's only son. Our Lord was touched with compassion as he saw the widow's tears, and he said to her, "Weep not," and, approaching, the pall-bearers stood still and Jesus touched the bier and said, "Young man, I say unto thee arise." The dead man stood up and began to speak. In a manufactured story it would be considered the proper thing to suppose that the widow fell at the Lord's feet, praised him in a loud voice, and that the whole multitude would join in acclaiming him; but in the simple narrative of our lesson, "there came a fear upon all" – a realization that God was very near to them as represented in the power of Jesus.

The very thought of the imminence of God is very sure to bring awe to mankind as they realize the holiness, the absolute perfection of the Almighty and their own blemishes and imperfections in contrast. The multitude glorified God, not with loud hosannas, but with a reverential appreciation of the fact that a great Prophet, a great Teacher, was in their midst, and that God was thus with him, saying, "God hath visited his people." The Jews at that time looked back to God's special dealings with their fathers, in which miracles attested the Lord's favor. They remembered also the promise that a Prophet like unto Moses would be raised up to them with still greater power than Moses. They expected to some extent what Peter refers to in [Acts 3:19-21](#), that "times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord" – that the Lord Jehovah would manifest his favor toward his people in reviving them, blessing them, sending them times of restitution spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets.

PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING.

Their anticipations were quite correct: Jesus was the great Prophet, the representative of the Father and of his favor. And yet how long the test of faith! How long the period necessary for the raising up of the members of the body of Christ, and until the heavenly Father's plan should thus be fully developed and the times of restitution fully ushered in at the second advent of the Lord. Our Redeemer's work of healing and of awakening from the sleep of death were merely premonitions or foreshadowings or illustrations of the great universal blessings coming to mankind through the merit of his obedience even unto death as our sin offering. No wonder the message of Jesus and his work spread over all parts of the country.

A greater work was being accomplished by our Lord's miracles than was apparent at the time. We are inclined to be surprised that only about "five hundred brethren" were gathered during the Lord's ministry – that only that number were counted worthy of the name brethren and of the privilege of meeting our Lord after his resurrection during the forty days. However, we may reasonably suppose that under the new dispensation, under the ministries of the apostles from Pentecost onward, a large fruitage was found to our Lord's ministry. For instance, we would think it very probable that this widow of Nain and her son would ultimately become followers of Jesus, and that others in that multitude who witnessed the miracle and who were in proper condition of heart would therein find a sufficiency for a foundation to their faith in the Messiah. We cannot doubt either that after "the middle wall of partition" had been broken down, and Cornelius the first Gentile convert had been brought into faith-fellowship, this centurion, whose servant was healed and who manifested everyway so noble a character, would be one who would be specially susceptible to the message of grace and truth. One lesson we may learn from this is that we must not at once look for the full

fruitage to our own efforts in the Lord's service. We must be content to labor and to wait, and must realize that the Lord himself is behind his Word, his message, making the selections of those whom he esteems worthy of joint-heirship in his Kingdom. Another thought would be that there may be worldly persons who may now come to some knowledge of the Truth and yet not be blessed fully by it – who will by and by, under the trials and difficulties of the time of trouble, or later on during the Millennial age, be profited through our ministries of the Truth and our present endeavors to glorify the Lord in our bodies and spirits which are his.

Let us then scatter the good seed everywhere as we have opportunity, for we know not which shall prosper, this or that. Sometimes that upon which we bestowed the greatest zeal and effort proves fruitless, and sometimes that from which we expected the least proves very fruitful. Let us remember that the Lord will reward us according to our zeal or efforts, and not according to results; and indeed the **[R3756 : page 111]** chief results he seeks are in ourselves, in the development of the graces of his Spirit, which will manifest themselves in so many ways in connection with our love for him, for his message, for the brethren, yea, for the whole world of mankind, even for our enemies.

"QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES"

Our Lord's ministries of healing lasted but a few years and reached comparatively few of the Jewish people, but since he ascended he has been carrying on a work of healing on a still higher plane – through his disciples whom he acknowledges as "members of his body." (1 Cor. 21:27.) Operating through these, many eyes of understanding have been opened, many deaf ears have been unstopped, many morally halt and lame have been cured, and many have been raised from the dead in the sense that the Apostle refers to when he says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in

trespasses and sins;" and again, "If ye be risen with Christ seek those things which are above;" and again, "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." – Eph. 2:1; Col. 3:1; Rom. 8:11.

If we are inclined to marvel that the Jews rejected Jesus after seeing his mighty works, what might be said of us if for any reason we become doubters or unfaithful to him who has so clearly spoken to us from heaven, by whose stripes we have been healed and who have realized him to be indeed the resurrection and the life? Whoever, therefore, has experienced this quickening to newness of life, this begetting of the Spirit, has come under so clear a demonstration of the divine power and goodness and wisdom and love operating through Jesus as to be without excuse "if they fall away." Hence the Apostle tells us that it would be "impossible to renew them again unto repentance." (Heb. 6:6.) He tells us that in their case such a falling away would be a wilful act, not one of ignorance or weakness, and that to thus fall away would imply the same attitude of heart which the Jews entertained toward our Lord when he was with them – that it would be virtually crucifying the Lord afresh and putting him to an open shame. – Heb. 6:6.

But, dearly beloved, to use the Apostle's thought, we have more confidence in each other than to surmise such an unworthy ending to our call, such an unworthy response to the mercies and favors which we enjoy at the hands of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. Let us be faithful, let us remember that the resurrection work begun in us as New Creatures is the one which is to be completed by the grace of God in the First Resurrection, when in a moment of change we shall be like our Lord, see him as he is and share his glory.
