

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Ananias, in a vision from Jesus Christ, was told to go and anoint Saul of Tarsus to heal the blindness that He had laid upon him. Because Saul was going around persecuting many Christians, Ananias expressed concerns about helping him. Jesus told him that Saul, soon after renamed Paul, was chosen to take the name of Jesus to the Gentiles but then added this statement:

ACTS 9:16 “For I [*Jesus Christ*] will show him [*Paul*] how many things **he must suffer** for My name’s sake.”

Did Jesus simply want to punish Paul for persecuting the followers of Christ? Perhaps, but that is not the whole reason since all who would enter into the Kingdom must suffer:

1 PETER 5:9 Resist him [*Satan*], steadfast in the faith, knowing that **the same sufferings are experienced by your [brethren] in the world.**

The Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ paid the penalty for the sins of those who repent, but the PURPOSE of that singular sacrifice was something much greater than simply providing a way to deal with the sins of mankind. The Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the pivotal beginning of a completely NEW creation:

ISAIAH 65:17-19 “For behold, **I [the LORD] create new heavens and a new earth;** and **the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.** 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

God told Isaiah that *everything* will become a New Creation and the Old Creation will be forever forgotten. It may sound strange, but the Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes the New Creation possible. This is because the sacrifice of Jesus Christ establishes the centerpiece of the New Creation: eternal spirit CHILDREN of God.

REVELATION 21:1-5 Now I [*John*] saw a **new heaven and a new earth,** for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “**Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.** 4 “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” 5 Then He [*God the Father*] who sat on the throne said, “**Behold, I make all things new.**” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

There will be a New Heaven and New Earth but the New Kingdom of God will also have newly created citizenry. The Kingdom of God exists right now, but never in the entirety of its existence has there been a family of God’s children in it! **It is the birth of spiritual children that make the New Kingdom of God a truly NEW creation!** In fact, the New Creation is a place FOR the spiritual children of God:

HEBREWS 2:5-8 For He [God] has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and **set him [mankind] over the works [the NEW Kingdom]** of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”¹ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

Even if nothing in this universe changed, it will be a completely New Kingdom because there will be children of God. But the New Kingdom of God comes with a cost—the ransom paid by Jesus Christ for the lives of those children. While His sacrifice took care of sins, the ultimate purpose for the suffering of Jesus Christ was so that God could create a New Kingdom with children:

HEBREWS 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that **He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.** 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in **bringing many sons to glory,** to make the **Captain of their salvation** perfect through sufferings.

Jesus Christ is now the Captain of Salvation, *perfected* through sufferings in His role of “bringing many sons to glory.” The sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the hands of His Father is absolute *proof* of the depths of Their desire for children:

HEBREWS 2:11-13 For both He [God] who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He [Jesus Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying: “**I will declare Your [God the Father’s] name to My [Jesus Christ’s] brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.**”² 13 And again: “I will put My trust in Him.” And again: “**Here am I [Jesus Christ] and the children whom God has given Me.**”³

Jesus’ deep love for His Father motivates Him to declare God’s name and sing praises to Him. These verses record Jesus’ own love for the children of God who will be His brothers and sisters. As the Captain of Salvation, He is the mediator and protector of those children:

JOHN 17:11-12 “Now I [Jesus Christ] am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. **Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.** 12 “While I was with them in the world, **I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost** except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

God placed His children into the hands of His Son for safekeeping and protection. The Captain of the salvation of those chosen by God plays a vital role in the success of the New Creation. As such, Jesus had to be perfected through sufferings:

HEBREWS 2:14-18 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself [Jesus Christ] likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He [Jesus Christ] does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His*

¹ Ps. 8:4-6.

² Ps. 22:22.

³ Isa. 8:18.

brethren, that He [*Jesus Christ*] might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining to* God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For **in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.**

Jesus Christ overcame all temptations and endured the torments of a blood sacrifice not simply to be the propitiation for sins but to become the Captain of Salvation for all God's children. Likewise, all who would be children in the New Kingdom of God must also be perfected through sufferings. This is the price of admission into the Family of God:

1 PETER 4:12-14 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning **the fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but **rejoice to the extent that you partake of [share in] Christ's sufferings,** that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

1 PETER 5:10 But may the God of all grace, **who called us to His eternal glory** by Christ Jesus, **after you have suffered a while,** perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

Paul, too, talked about suffering for the New Kingdom:

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also **count all things loss** for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom **I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish,** that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

The "loss" Paul mentioned involved great suffering. He used the same word when he prophesied of the "great loss" to the ship that would result if they sailed from the city of Lasea in Crete⁴. Paul's ministry cost him everything and it came by terrible sufferings. But he counted his losses as dung or "rubbish" so that he might "gain Christ." What he said next is entirely contrary to a rational human mind:

[TS2009] PHILIPPIANS 3:10-12 **to [absolutely] know Him [Jesus Christ], and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,** 11 if somehow I might attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already received, or already been perfected, but I press on, to lay hold of that for which Messiah [Jesus] has also laid hold of me.

The KJV and others translate it as, "**may know** Him," but this gives a sense that knowing Christ is not certain or has little depth. It falls far short of the Greek word, which is a certain and absolute, intimate knowledge. Moreover, verse 10 is translated as list of four things that Paul wanted: 1) to know Christ, 2) the power of His resurrection, 3) the fellowship of His sufferings, and 4) to be conformed to His death. However, this is a case where the Greek is more subtle.

However, the first "and" in verse 10 is not a conjunction connecting two phrases but an epexegetical adjective, which indicates the phrase that follows clarifies or explains the leading phrase. While this sounds complicated, it simply means that Paul says that *knowing* Christ, absolutely and deeply, is the RESULT of two things: 1) the power of His resurrection, and 2) fellowship (or participation) in His sufferings. It makes more sense when worded as, "**to**

⁴ Acts 27:10, 21.

intimately know Jesus Christ through the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, by being conformed to (or becoming like Him in) His death."

The point that Paul is making is that a deep knowledge of Christ can only be had through the power of His RESURRECTION and fellowship in His SUFFERINGS! As Scripture says, "if we have been united together in the **likeness of His death [through sufferings]**, certainly we also shall be **in the likeness of His resurrection**." (Rom. 6:5).

The resurrection of children has always been the ultimate purpose for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who said:

JOHN 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life**. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Why does Jesus say He IS the resurrection and He IS the life?

MATTHEW 22:31-32 "But **concerning the resurrection of the dead**, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? **God is not the God of the dead, but of the living**."

Jesus IS the resurrection and He IS the life because it is through His Passover sacrifice that children of God will exist! And this is a large part of the reasons the Passover is a memorial and remembrance⁵. We keep the Passover so that we may KNOW Christ by "**the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings**"⁶.

ROMANS 6:8-11 Now **if we died with Christ**, we believe that **we shall also live with Him**, 9 **knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead**, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. 11 **Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord**.

The Passover sacrifice prepares the core element of the New Creation—spiritual children of God. The Passover sufferings of Jesus perfected Him as the Captain of Salvation for all who would have life through the power of His resurrection from the dead. Without the Passover, the new heavens and new earth would just be a makeover of the existing universe. With it, the New Kingdom of God will be a New Creation in which God will be "all in all"⁷ with "everyone who is called by My [God's] name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."⁸

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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⁵ Exod. 12:14; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

⁶ Phil. 3:10.

⁷ 1 Cor. 15:28; Eph. 1:23.

⁸ Isa. 43:4.