

THE LION'S SHARE

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1936 years ago the greatest man who ever lived gave up the greatest life ever lived on Calvary's cross. He waited 30 years, no more nor less, to begin the laying down of a perfect life. He was hated and finally at the proper time he permitted his detractors to even take his life--accused of being a blasphemer of the very God he served. What had he done to incur such hatred? Did he lie, deceive, kill, wound? No, he healed, brought to life, and brought to light! His only "crime" was telling the truth. It took precisely 3-1/2 years to complete that sacrifice and through it he purchased all the human race in Adam. For 3-1/2 years the fate of the human race and its destiny lay in the balance. Under terrible conditions this one man kept God's own perfect law inviolate. Because he did so much so faithfully, his Father, the righteous judge, restored his life and more--He gave him HIS nature. Life inherent without dependency--immortality. For the first time since the creation of the universe there were two divine beings.

At our Memorial we will remember once again the culmination of that magnificent work. It is at this time that we especially remember a feature of God's plan so incredible that without these yearly reminders we should surely soon falter in awed disbelief! The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Cor. 11:23-26, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Takes eat: this to my body, which in broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For an often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." We call this communion (or common-union) and this is the clue to the revelation of this amazing feature of God's plan. True, 1 Cor. 5:7--"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:" But there is more here, yet more: Rom, 6:10, 11, "For in that he died, he died in place of sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed in place of sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Could it be that we may have a share in our Lord's part in God's grand plan? It would SEEM so--but how is it possible?--Rom, 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." No. It cannot be! Through God's mercy can we likewise give our lives in His service even as Jesus did! Yes we can! What a wonderful privilege. Through our Lord's one offering we, in advance of the world of mankind, can be reckoned perfect and therefore worthy of service to the God of the Universe. This should be enough for any man. It WAS enough for faithful Abraham, Moses and others called friends of the Almighty God. Even Daniel was called greatly beloved of God, How would you feel to be called "greatly beloved" by the God of Heaven? Dan. 9:23.

But there is more: Rom. 8:16-18, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together, For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Joint heirs of Christ! Not friends, but Sons! Not beloved of the Great God of Heaven, but beloved of our Father! Rom. 12:4, 5, "For as we have many members in one body, . . . So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Heb, 3:14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Heb. 3:6, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." 1 Cor, 6:14, 15, "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" There it is! The mystery hid from ages, We are also that body which was broken so long ago. And if we allow ourselves to be broken, used up, in His service then we as body members must also receive that same reward. Since Jesus was raised from the dead we will be raised from the dead. Since he was faithful and received a resurrection to the divine nature, so, if faithful, we too must receive the divine nature. We must not forget that we are HIS body. We do not receive ONE thing of ourselves, but all through our Lord Jesus. It is only by considering the Head as ALL that our Father may now include us--the body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:12-14, "For as the body is one., and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, . . . For the body is not one member, but many."

We do not offer a separate sacrifice deserving of a separate reward. It is our covenant to FOLLOW, not lead or make paths for ourselves--but to follow in our Master's footsteps. If this is our course and we truly walk where he has trod, then surely we must finally meet him face to face. And why have we taken up this cross? Is it to receive separate pay at the end of our labors, or do we desire but to be with our Father and to share in what our elder brother Jesus has already received!

Yet even as one loaf is composed of many individual grains, we do retain our diverse identities. 1 Cor. 12:18, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."--not as it pleases us! Have we all grasped the idea? You all know it of course; it has been there all the time, but at this memorial season while it is fresh before us, let us grasp it firmly again. Can you see it? Then you have the key to the mystery hid from ages and STILL hidden from those without. Thus we perceive the KEY--Jesus receives it all, but we are privileged to have a share, He is the head--we are the body. He is the bridegroom--we are the bride. 1 Cor. 12:26, 27, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Wherever the pain, when it hurts we hurt all over--but especially the head. And when we feel good, we feel good all over--and especially the head. There are other Scriptures which now shine forth, no longer obscure, as this key opens the mystery. Col. 1:24, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." Yes, Paul said his afflictions were actually the afflictions of Christ, and again in Acts 9:3-5, "And as he journeyed he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: . . ." Impossible! How could this now divine being be persecuted! You answer, since his followers were being persecuted, HE was being persecuted. Now how clear it is. We fill up HIS afflictions, not ours, and therefore as his broken body, our sacrifice is counted in with his--and we receive HIS reward.

A wife receives a share in her husband's wealth because she is his wife, not because of some great work she has done to earn that share. Yes, our Lord FIRST in all things. Then if faithful, we too may participate in what he long ago first earned, made possible and by God's grace chooses to share with us.

The Apostle Paul also calls to our mind the picture of the tabernacle in the wilderness and we remember the sacrificed bullock. The bullock was killed and its life, its blood, was full atonement for Israel's sins. We know too that this bullock and its life's blood was typical of our Lord Jesus and his atoning blood. This was a feature of the law and therefore a shadow of the better things to come and we have all learned to look closely at this program acted out for our benefit, a program so important and so precise that to deviate in any way meant death. This was forcefully illustrated for us in the Tabernacle arrangement wherein the Blood of the Bullock was sprinkled before the mercy seat in the most holy for Aaron and his house--not for the people. The Lord's goat was then sacrificed and its blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat--co-mingled with the blood of the bullock. It was this sacrifice which was presented for the people. Notice carefully that the blood of the goat was effective ONLY because the blood of the bullock first made it so. Here is our picture, our offering to justice before God is possible only because of our Lord's presentation first on our behalf. One sacrifice, but in two parts.

Moreover, we recall the two burnt offerings of two identical rams manifesting God's full acceptance of the sacrifice of the bullock and the Lord's goat, Notice that the rams were the SAME showing that from the view of justice they are identical. Further, the rams were cut in pieces, the legs and inward parts were washed and laid to the head, which required no cleansing. Let's read Paul's statement again--"For as we have many members in one body, . So we, being many, are one body in Christ, ." From our heavenly Father's standpoint fully acceptable and we are, after all, his body. Do not overestimate our contribution--we can return to our Father only that which we have first received through our Lord and Head. God's absolute justice under the law required a perfect life in exchange for Adam's and that Ransom price was earned by our Lord alone long ago on the cross--before Pentecost. It should be clear then that we could not share in the Ransom. The new and living way as his body members did not open for us until later at Pentecost. We have but one thing which is ours truly to give--our heart. Yet, to Him who has everything it is counted precious for even God must ask for our love and devotion, we must freely give it. And so we

give our heart, our all. Willingly we follow our Lord. For the first time we truly understand the Apostle's words.

Rom. 6:3-6, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DESTROYED, THAT henceforth we should not serve sin." "Body of sin destroyed?" What body might that be? Ours died and was buried at baptism, crucified with him. But there is a body of sin collected over 6,000 years under which the whole world groans and travails. Yes, the entire world awaits our success, then, that body of sin will be destroyed. God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, does not share his nature in order that we might selfishly enjoy it. No. those molded in that glorious pattern shall also be givers and doers on behalf of all creation.

Here again we see that same principle. Even as Christ shared his fortune with us through God's mercy so our reward is not for us only but a power to be used in the service of all in the ages to come. Soon there shall be 144,000 and 2 divine beings. Once beyond the veil, and with the mortgage on our Lord's sacrifice thus released, Adam's life will be purchased and so all will be purchased. What a remarkable genius! If a family yet unborn can be condemned to death through the head of that family--then that same justice DEMANDS that the same family be restored to life with the head of that family. So it is with Adam's house. 1 Cor. 15-.22-26, "For as in Adam all die, even so 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. Then the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

How was that again? Will this golden age and its blessings be accomplished when the reign begins? Then the END, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." It is at the END of the 1,000 years that we find the golden age. It is at the END that the patient is sent home healed by the great

physician after a 1,000 year stay. First the surgery, even as we now see about us, then the hospital stay to follow.

1 Cor. 15:28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Did you mark well those scriptures? He shall deliver up. . . He shall have put down. . . He must reign. . . Enemies under his feet. . . Subdued unto him.... Then shall the Son also be subject. . . All things under him.... Did you find yourself mentioned? Did you see yourself in the picture? Even though Jesus alone is mentioned, yet you too are there--receiving a share with the Lion. A bride shares her husband's possessions--they are not hers by her right. All belong to her head. Now Rev. 3:21 begins to make sense: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Notice again that it is his throne, not ours, his by deeds and by right --ours by union with him. Again, 'Rev. 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign WITH HIM a thousand years." Whose reign? Ours or his? If a man came into an inheritance, his wife shares also, no matter when the union. Of course, how simple! It is Jesus who reigns a thousand years, it is HIS Millennium, and we by virtue of being his body, his bride, may be considered as having a full share in that reign begun with his return in 1874. I marvel sometimes at how easily pride may overcome us. Some place their wisdom above that of the 7th and last messenger to the church and feel that he must surely have made a mistake in teaching that the Kingdom began in 1874 seeing, that it is now 1969, Often they suggest that the Scripture just read so proves it. However, as we have seen, rightly understood this is in harmony with the volumes and Bro. Russell's other statements. Can we imagine for a moment that Bro. Russell and the brethren then were so stupid as to fail to notice that as each year passed by, their share in that 1,000 year kingdom work had to be one year less beyond the veil? Can we imagine the wise and faithful servant serving us poisoned food from the Lord's table and being so unwise, unfaithful and foolish as to neglect reading Rev. 20? Do any of us believe that he was that childish and we that much wiser? Are we willing to edit passages, chapters, yea, even whole volumes of the Studies in the Scriptures, rather than admit that possibly, just possibly Bro. Russell could have been right and it is we who have not yet come to understand. I thank my heavenly Father that you

brethren are not so affected. And watch, I pray, and be diligent, please, that none may take subtilely from you what has brought you this far along the narrow way. For this test of faithful stewardship will surely come.

1 Cor. 15:57, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And what a victory it is! Can our minds grasp it? Can we reach out and take hold of it? 1 Cor. 15:51-53, "Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" Has the trumpet sounded? Do you hear that Jubilee trumpet, the 7th trumpet, the last trumpet? Truly it can be heard sounding on Headlines across the globe.

The dead are being raised even as we have so long believed. Since 1878 the sleeping saints have been raised and are with their returned Lord. And even as the Apostle has revealed to us, we, if faithful, need not sleep but will be changed at once at the moment of death. Then shall we too be with the Lord and our brethren on the other side. And what shall we be doing? Shall we be with him? Yes. Shall we be associated with him in his work? Yes. If then our Lord is reigning in any sense are not all those with him, sharing in his work, also sharing in his reign? Yes surely! The first resurrection has begun, yet for us who remain the burden of the cross does not change. 2 Tim. 2:11, 12, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."

How great and marvelous is our prospect, made possible through that worthy Passover lamb slain for us. And when did this prospect come to light? When did its burning brilliance first light the lives of those called of God? At that last trumpet, at the beginning of the new age, at the return of the Lion of the tribe of Judah! Do we see as did John in Rev. 5:1-5, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who Is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the

Root of David hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”

Can you read, harmonize and understand that opened book? Then blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear. Be faithful to what you have seen and heard that you may indeed receive a share with the Lion of the tribe of Judah.