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HE REIGNS!

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, laid aside His divine glory for a season, to minister in a physical body on earth. Then He returned to heaven to resume the fulness of His glory there - and to reign.

We saw last time how Jesus fulfills the "Son of Man" vision of Daniel 7 as He returns on the clouds of heaven to His coronation, resuming His rightful place at the right hand of the throne of God. As the eternal second person of the Trinity, He is co-regent over the universe. He is reinstated with all the authority of the Godhead, to reign over His kingdom on earth and in heaven. Worship Him!

1- RAISED - Ephesians 1 also talks about the glory of the risen, reigning Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: *"the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name, in this age and in that to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things."* AMEN! This is a most glorious passage about the present reign of Christ over EVERYTHING!

Ephesians 4 continues, *"when He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men."* Colossians 2:15 adds, *"He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, triumphing over them in Him."* Jesus was raised from the dead as a conquering king, overcoming sin and the grave. He also defeated Satan and the demonic powers of darkness. The cosmic rebellion against God has failed. Human kings in ancient times paraded vanquished foes with all their captured treasures. God did this to Egypt, making a public spectacle of His enemies, and giving gifts to His own people.

The apostle Paul quotes from an Old Testament passage associated with Pentecost, the feast of first-fruits, a spring festival of harvest. Pentecost was 50 days after Passover. Jesus was crucified and resurrected at Passover, and ascended 40 days later. For Christians, Pentecost marks the giving of the Holy Spirit - the firstfruits of Christ's resurrection, the guarantee of our resurrection. The Holy Spirit also indwells God's people to empower them to carry on His ministry of growing God's kingdom on earth.

2- REIGNING - Acts 2 records how on that day of Pentecost nearly 2,000 years ago, Peter preached, *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed... but God raised Him up and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."* Jesus was raised to glory and given all the authority of God. He had already commissioned his disciples with that authority, and had promised them the indwelling baptizing energizing power of the Holy Spirit. And that's what happened on the day of Pentecost.

Ephesians 4 goes on to say *"He gave the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."* All Christians are commissioned by Christ, by His authority as His representatives to carry on His mission on earth as He rules from heaven, interceding for us, preparing a place for all who come to faith. Jesus was raised to reign - and He does!

3- RESPONSE - Philippians 2 exults in the exalted glory of the risen reigning Christ, and says, *"therefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."* The proper response: worshipful obedience. Because God has done it all for YOU. Picture a great "U-shape." With the pre-incarnate glory of Christ on the top left, His "humiliation" curves down as His incarnation and earthly ministry culminate in His death in crucifixion. Then His "exaltation" curves up to the top right, as He is raised to new life, ascends, and reigns in glory.

Jesus did all this for YOU - so that you may believe in Him, receive His new life, and one day reign with Him in glory. If you are a believer, then live out His salvation, as God indwells you with the Holy Spirit - so you worship Him and work for Him as His commissioned representative, awaiting His return in glory.

On this Fourth of July, consider how our Founding Fathers clearly recognized God as reigning supreme over all earthly authority and government. Does Jesus REIGN in your life? *Declare your dependence upon Him today - and live out His new life by His power within you! That's truly "glory"!*