

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

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Things which accompany salvation: New Creation

Good morning and welcome to *Truth for Today*.

For those who listen regularly to *Truth for Today*, you may remember that on 12 June 2016 we commenced looking at a series of talks with the overall title, 'Things which accompany salvation'. From that date for four weeks we covered the topics, 'Forgiveness', 'Justification', 'Redemption' and 'Reconciliation'. Since 6 November 2016 we have covered five more topics, 'Salvation', 'Sanctification', 'New birth', 'Quickening' and the 'Gift of the Holy Spirit'. Today we will consider the sixth topic, 'New Creation'. God willing, we will consider further topics following through the book, "*Salvation*", written by Mr FB Hole. This book is available free to any who contact *Truth for Today*.

Introduction

At this point I would like to quote from the preface of the above mentioned book: "The Scriptures themselves speak of the "great salvation", which has reached us through the Gospel. We, who have experienced the saving grace of God, know something of its greatness, but it is only as we search the Scriptures and investigate its details that the magnitude of what God has brought to pass begins to dawn upon us."

The topic to be considered today is different from the previous nine topics. Again I will quote from the opening remarks in Mr FB Hole's book as he introduces the truth about "New Creation". "As we have considered in detail most of the features that go to make up the "great salvation" which has reached us, we have hitherto been able to point out how each is designed of God to meet and overcome some particular result or penalty of sin. But now in this chapter, this feature has to be absent. We have left "New Creation" until now as it seems to be the ultimate thing to which the Gospel conducts us, but at the same time it is evident that God is going to establish it, not because it meets some definite need *on our side*, but because it meets the need of His holy nature - it is the thing which is suitable to *Himself*."

As quoted above, this wondrous event of new creation has taken place to satisfy the heart of God. In so doing, new creation makes each redeemed person suitable for heaven. We are suitable in spirit as in Christ now, but physically we still need a change. That change is outlined for us in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 with further detail in 1 Corinthians 15:35-57. What is stated in these two scriptures bring about the complete fulfilment of the new creation change. However, I think it is fair to say that the previous three talks are closely connected to new creation. To refresh our minds, these talks were "New birth", "Quickening" and the "Gift of the Holy Spirit". A new start, a new kind of life and a relationship with God of a depth and quality never experienced before by believers prior to Pentecost.

Before proceeding further comes an illustration from nature may well help us to understand the change that has occurred and will occur in the future. We are probably all familiar with the caterpillar and the butterfly, the same creature that has two distinct phases in its life development. The caterpillar is very much an earth dweller happy to live on or near the ground consuming vegetation, often at an alarming rate. Within the caterpillar is the potential to be a butterfly and to live in a different environment altogether. At some point in its development, it becomes motivated to form a cocoon around itself where an amazing change takes place. After sometime, the creature inside starts to break out and what emerges is no longer a caterpillar but a butterfly! It looks nothing like its former self; it takes to its wings and seeks out different food. In other words, it has a new life to live. Christians have the start of a new life within. When the rapture occurs, that is when the Lord Jesus comes to take His church, the living and the dead, to heaven to be with Himself, we will become fully a "New Creation", able to live life in a completely new environment. However, there are some distinct differences with the above illustration. In some measure we have the capability to live and enjoy "New Creation" now as believers in Christ.

Let us now look at a few scriptures which provide insight on the teaching of this wonderful subject.

What we are

Let us read from 2 Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*"

We should remind ourselves that when the scriptures states, *“in Christ”* that there are features or truths of Christianity which are unchangeable and are always true as far as the three Persons of the Godhead are concerned. We can emphasise this truth by the following scriptures, mainly from the Epistle to the Romans:

- Romans 3:24, *“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”*;
- Romans 8:1, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus”*;
- Romans 8:2, *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death”*;
- Romans 8:39, and *“nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”*; and finally from
- 1 Corinthians 1:2, *“Those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints”*.

These scriptures remind us what has been achieved by the sacrifice of Christ to overturn the devastating impact of sin. These are, justification because Christ has redeemed us, we are beyond judgement and condemnation, the law of sin and death no longer applies and we can never be separated from God’s love in Christ.

The wonderful truth of new creation looks onward to the eternal state where sin and its effects are completely removed forever. Although we are a new creation in Christ now, we still have connected with us the old nature which could, if we are not vigilant, drag us back into our old pre-conversion life style.

So to our scripture in 2 Corinthians 5, we have stated clearly what God is working towards as the final outcome of His ‘great salvation’. Let us point out some positive truths in 2 Corinthians 5:17. In Christ, a true believer knows their sins are forgiven, we are a new creation. We have a new nature and a new life as covered in our previous radio talks. In Christ ‘old things’ are passed away. As with all teaching, we are expected to live to that standard. This is the challenge which comes from God’s word. As to the future we will not have within us anything of the “old things” to cause any failure whatsoever.

To help us to live corresponding to the truth of what we are we will consider some verses from Ephesians 2.

God’s intention now and in the future

Let us read Ephesians 2:4-10, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

In these verses we have the heart of God expressed in rich terms regarding His love for us. We were dead in trespasses and now we have been given a new life with Christ. God, therefore, considers us to be with Christ in heavenly places today. But this will be fully developed in a coming day. All believers will be for the display which highlights God’s rich grace and kindness in Christ. The grace and faith which has made all this possible are entirely the gift of God. However, there is also intended a present day impact in our lives. Because we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10), we have been created for good works. What are these good works? The Lord Jesus while He was in this world did good works perfectly and through them He glorified His Father. Because we have been touched by this new creation, we too are to be occupied with good works. These are works which testify to and give glory to God and Christ. The works show the goodness of God.

Not only are we a new creation as individuals but the church, comprising of Jew and Gentile, is made one creation in Christ. Let us read some further verses from the same chapter.

Ephesians 2:14-16: *“For **He Himself is our peace, who has made both one**, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as **to create in Himself one new man from the two**, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”*

Paul uses the expression *“one new man”*, emphasising the new man is after Christ Himself. God speaks in a corporate way of the whole church. Believers are no longer to consider themselves as either Jews or Gentiles, separate entities, but as one in Christ.

Distinctions removed

Let us read from Colossians and Galatians. Colossians 3:10-11, *“and have put on **the new man** who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but **Christ is all and in all.**”* Also, Galatians 6:15, *“For **in Christ Jesus** neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but **a new creation.**”*

As has already been mentioned, believers are not to consider themselves as either Jews or Greeks, that is Gentiles. National distinctions are not found in Christ and will not be part of the new creation scene of the eternal state. There are no religious or ritual distinctions of circumcision or uncircumcision. Paul in his writings often taught that circumcision had no place in Christianity. Sadly, today, we have our own labels and religious distinctions often as a result of being named after a place, a person or a wrong understanding of a doctrinal insistence. There is also no place for intellectual distinctions as in *“barbarian and Scythian”* and neither is there place for social distinctions as to slave or free. We are all one in Christ and He alone is to be the focus and standard of our conduct as believers. We must not miss out on the need to grow in our understanding - *“renewed in knowledge”*. We are to become more ‘Christ like’ day by day.

Morally, to be what we are

Let us read from Ephesians 4:21-24. *“If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the **new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.**”*

Depending upon the Bible translation that you use, the statement, *“that you put off”*, should be *“having put off”* and the statement *“that you put on”*, should be *“having put on.”* In Ephesians 4:21-24 we might think Paul is teaching us **to do** something, the *“putting off”* and the *“putting on”*. But it should be better translated that it has been done once and for all, both the *“putting off”* and the *“putting on”*. Scripture teaches what is true and accomplished and from that stand point, what God has completed in us, we are to live. We are not to live *“putting off”* and *“putting on.”* We are to live that the *“old man”* is put off and to live as having already put on the *“new man”*. This can be stated in another way that we are not to live as an unbeliever anymore but we are to live as a Christian. A Christian who lives as he or she did before being saved, displaying the corrupt nature, will not be a witness for Christ but will dishonour God who has delivered them from their old life. A Christian belongs to Christ, created anew and should live a Christ like life displaying holiness, righteousness and truth in every part of life, whether at home, work, school, university or at leisure.

The eternal heavenly home

We might ask the question, *“When will we be fully a new creation in Christ?”* This will occur as part of the rapture when every believer, living and dead will be changed and caught up to heaven. After the rapture there will be the seven years of tribulation on earth. After the tribulation will come the millennium reign of Christ when under His rule, righteousness will dominate. This will be followed by the final destruction of Satan and the great white throne judgement, when all the unbelieving, since the beginning of time, will be cast into the *“Lake of fire”* (see Revelation 20:11-15). Then will be ushered in the eternal state or better known as the *“Day of God”*. In 2 Peter 3:2, we have the total change that will occur in the whole of creation: *“Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.”*

If we read from Revelation 21:1-5 we expand on these coming changes. *“Now I 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. Then I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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. 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.**’ Then He 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.**”*

With the establishment of the ‘Day of God’, we see from the above two scriptures the complete eradication of sin from the whole of creation. With the expression *“new heavens and a new earth”* (2 Peter 3:13) we have emphasised the complete change. More important however is the statement *“Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them”* (Revelation 21:3) Remember an earlier statement that there are no distinctions in Christ whether nationally, by race or class of people. *“God is with men [mankind]”* is the intended objective. At the start of this talk I quoted from FB Hole’s book *“Salvation”* and said this, *“We have left ‘new creation’ until now as it seems to be the ultimate thing to which the Gospel conducts us, but at the same time it is evident that God is going to establish it, not because it meets some definite need **on our side**, but because it meets the need of His holy nature - it is the thing which is suitable **to Himself.**”*

God's intention was always to dwell and have fellowship with 'man' and we see a little of this in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-15). But sin entered and destroyed the fellowship (Genesis 3:1-7) and sin eventually resulted in 'man' being ejected from Eden (Genesis 3:24). Now, through the Gospel, God is bringing in a people who are a new creation in Christ and the ultimate aim is that God will dwell with man in the eternal scene of the 'Day of God', in the new heavens and the new earth.

Our hope

In connection with our subject "New Creation" we have a hope as Christians. We will turn to 2 Peter 3:13, *"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**"*

As Christians, we find that our Christian 'hope' is connected with some important things. We have the Lord's promise in John 14:3, that He is coming back for us. In 2 Peter 3:13, we have another aspect connected with the Lord's coming for us. We are looking for the day when there will be *"new heavens and a new earth."* The character of that new place will be that righteousness dwells. There is really no righteousness in this world today as its government is in the hands of people who are sinners and the vast majority of people are sinners who are basically living godless lives. Righteousness is foreign to them!

Finally, I wish to read one more scripture which tells us as believers that we will be fully changed to be a new creation. This is not a change that is only internal and spiritual but it will be true physically and morally. In 1 Corinthians 15:45-49, we read, *"And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being. The **last Adam became a life-giving spirit.** However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the **second Man is the Lord from heaven.** As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and **as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.** And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.**"*

What a glorious prospect in view that believers will be totally like Christ in that heavenly scene! No longer beset with problems, sorrows, tears, failure and any other negative thing that we might like to mention because of sin. But we will be like the One who died for us to deliver us from condemnation and that we might know the joy of sins forgiven and peace with a holy God throughout all eternity.

I will close with a quote from a hymn by Mr. John N Darby:

*The new creation's stainless joy
Gleams through the present gloom;
That world of bliss without alloy,
The saint's eternal home.*

May the Lord bless and encourage you today. Thank you for listening.

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