

The New Creature

Opening Hymn: #201 — O Glorious Hope

Genesis 2:2 And God ... rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

At the end of the creation work described in the first chapter of the Bible, we are told that God “rested” which implies all his creation work was finished. And that was true at least as far as the earth was concerned. But there remained one incredible, creative work God had planned but not yet implemented. That work was a “new creation”—beings that had not existed before.

As popular as the phrase “new creature” is in the Bible Student fellowship, it is a phrase that appears just twice in the King James Bible, both in letters by Paul:

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creature**.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

If you don't use the King James, you probably won't find the phrase at all. The Diaglott, NIV, Revised Standard, and others all render the Greek in these two texts with the phrase “new creation.”

2 Cor. 5:17 (NIV) If anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**: the old has gone, the new has come!

What an astounding thought! Coming into Christ means we leave the old [the earthly, human creation] behind and become a part of something completely new. This new thing is, in the words of Hebrews, associated with “the holiest”:

Hebrews 10:19,20 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

The Ransom

I rarely hear any of our Christian friends talk about “the ransom.” Although the ransom is the foundation of the plan of God as we understand it, the English word “ransom” appears only three times in the **New Testament** (plus ten times in the Old).

Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a **ransom** for many. (*Mark 10:45 is the same*)

1 Tim. 2:6 Who gave himself a **ransom** for all, to be testified in due time.

What does this mean? It means that Father Adam and all the unborn within him were because of disobedience condemned to the prisonhouse of death. There they had to remain forever unless they were redeemed or ransomed. And what was required to pay that ransom? The law called for

an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life (Deut. 19:21). God's justice could recognize only one "payment" so to speak: the life of another perfect human being, paid to justice to release the one condemned.

This presented a problem for there was "none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10). The ransom price was the life of a perfect human being, but no perfect human being existed. Still could not God, who created the first man perfect, create a second man equally perfect? Of course he could, but how could one assume a second, newly created man would want to voluntarily give up his life to save someone else? There could be no such assumption, nor could such a thing be asked of another.

The Logos

Logos is the name we use to identify Jesus in his pre-human condition. It is a Greek word and is used in the opening verses of John. (The Diaglott explains in a footnote why it leaves the word untranslated in its English translation of the Greek.)

John 1:2-4 (*Diaglott*) In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was [a god—*Diaglott word-for-word*]. This was in the beginning with [the] God. Through it every thing was done and without it not even one thing was done which has been done. [*Of course that includes the creation of Adam*]

When sin entered the world and mankind began to die and practice great evil, one can imagine the Logos asking his Father if there was anything that could be done to save them. The Father might explain that the continuation of life was based upon obedience, and man had disobeyed. There could be no righteous basis upon which life could be restored—except if another perfect man were to pay with his own life to ransom the condemned one. But of course it could not happen because there was no perfect man. Even if there were one, it is unlikely he'd be willing to give up his life.

It may have been the Logos himself who suggested that he was willing to die if it would mean life for these condemned humans. If such a conversation occurred, I believe the Father would have said, "If you do this, you will remain dead forever as a human being, but I will give you a life here in heaven." There is evidence such must have been said because Jesus told his disciples that he would die and be resurrected back to life (Matt. 16:21); in his prayer at the last supper he seems to specifically claim this promise:

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Yet if justice demands a "life for a life," how could God raise his son back to life without forfeiting the ransom price? Answer: It was Jesus as a "new creature" who was raised to life.

Acts 13:30,32, 33 [Paul is speaking] God raised him from the dead: And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is

also written in the second psalm [verse 7], Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Paul is applying the words of the second psalm to when Jesus was resurrected from the dead, and the context of that psalm shows that is correct because the psalm goes on with the Father telling the son what he has “inherited” now that he has been “birthed.”

When Jesus came to John and was baptized, John saw “the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (John 1:32). This was the start of Jesus’ new life as a new creature. It was this “new creature” that God raised to life in heaven. The “man Christ Jesus” remained dead according to the life-for-a-life rule; his earthly life was the ransom for Adam. The condemned prisoner Adam was now free to leave the prisonhouse of death and in the plan of God, it was Jesus as a resurrected new creature who became Adam’s new “owner.” Jesus would supervise what would happen to Adam and the race when they were brought forth out of the prisonhouse of death.

The Church

The remarkable thing about the “new creation” is that it consists of more than just Jesus alone. As Paul says in Romans 8:29 he was to be the “first born among many brethren.” The special life Jesus received would be given to others who, like him, voluntarily gave up their earthly, human life in consecration to do the will of the heavenly Father. Although the word “new creature” is not found in most translations of the Bible, the idea is frequently expressed by Paul. Here are three examples:

Col. 3:1 Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
[vs. 10] Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Romans 6:4 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.

2 Cor. 4:16 Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
“Putting on the new man,” “walking in newness of life,” and “renewing the inward man” are phrases describing a process that happens in our minds. The first step to becoming a new creature is consecration and it is described in the well-known words of Romans 12:

Rom. 12:1,2 (*Amplified*) I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies—presenting all your members and faculties—as a living sacrifice, holy (dedicated, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world—this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs. But be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind—by its new ideals and its new attitude—so that you may prove [for

yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in his sight for you].

We become new creatures by offering ourselves in sacrifice to God and then under his direction we change our minds from a conformity to what this present evil world considers acceptable, and start to do and say only those things that are considered good and acceptable by God. Although never part of the sinful world, Jesus did more than just offer his life as a ransom for Adam. He completely sacrificed his own will in favor of his heavenly father's will. Here is what the psalmist says of him:

Psalm 40:7,8 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do **thy** will, O my God: yea, **thy** law is within my heart.

Does the “New Creature” Sin?

1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

How do we harmonize this with John's words in chapter one—“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8,9). Do we, as new creatures, sin or don't we?

Observation teaches that everyone sins. None of us would dare to say that WE have no sin. But how then are we to understand that those born of God—those who are new creatures—do not commit sin?

Would you agree that dead people do not sin? That insight may supply the answer to our question. Let us turn to Romans chapter 6 and begin reading selectively from verse one (these words are from the Goodspeed translation):

Are we to continue to sin to increase the spread of mercy? Certainly not! When we have died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into union with Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? Through baptism we have been buried with him in death ... [vs. 7] **For when a man is dead he is free from the claims of sin.** ... [vs. 11] So you also must think of yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God, through union with Christ Jesus.

When John [in 1 John 1:8] says “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,” he is speaking from the standpoint of our sinful flesh. Our sinful flesh is like a millstone hung around our new creature's neck all the days of our human life. From the moment we become new creatures, we must fight against the flesh—as well as the world and the devil—to show we are not in harmony with its sinful cravings. We must confess our sins and then we will be cleansed from them. This is illustrated by the wearing of a beautiful “wedding garment” over one's filthy “street clothing,” a wedding garment provided by the “king” (see Matt. 22:11,12).

The new creature does not sin, the flesh does. And if the flesh gains the ascendancy to the point where it chronically, habitually, and enthusiastically practices sin, one can only conclude that the new creature is dead.

Hebrews 10:26-29 If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

What is a “sorer punishment” than death? Answer: Death without the possibility of a resurrection, the “second death.” And that is what happens when the new creature dies.

The “Closing of the Door”

The opportunity to present ourselves as “living sacrifices” and become “new creatures” is for the express purpose of being joined with Jesus Christ to bring blessings to all the families of the earth in the kingdom. Thus there is a specific start time and stop time for the creating of this new creation. The first member of this new creation was our Lord:

Col. 1:18 He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

When will the opportunity for anyone to become a “new creature” cease? In 1909 someone asked Bro. Russell about this. The question was framed in the context of the closing of the door so foolish virgins could not enter and specifically whether that door would close soon. This was Brother Russell’s reply:

“In the parable of the “Wise and Foolish Virgins,” the Wise Virgins followed Him and then went in with Him and the door was closed; then followed the Foolish Virgins and knocked at the door, saying, “Lord, Lord, open unto us,” but the door was shut. That is the door through which the Bride-class will enter, and when it is shut, it will never open again. That door the King will close when the last member of the Body of Christ shall have finished his sacrifice, and gone beyond the vail, the complete number will be gathered and enter into glory. When that will be, I do not know.”—Q74

Two years earlier in 1907 someone asked, “Is it not reasonable to suppose that we may expect in due time an announcement through the TOWER that the door of opportunity for consecration is closed?” His reply: “I think not.” Yet after his death, others thought they knew what he did not. Those with the Layman’s Home Missionary Movement share our beliefs on almost everything except this one doctrine: they believe there is no more opportunity to become new creatures and receive a heavenly reward if faithful. They teach that only life on earth is available to those who present themselves in consecration to God now. That is also the view of the Jehovah’s

Witnesses. How, then, can **we** be so sure the door to the high calling remains open? Brother Russell wrote this in the third volume in 1890:

“There are three ways in which the closing of this door might be indicated: 1) by a definite Bible statement of the exact date; 2) by such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the truth, that fidelity and zeal in its service would no longer meet with opposition, and when suffering with Christ for the truth’s sake would be no longer possible; or 3) by such a condition of affairs obtaining in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work and to develop and prove their love and faithfulness by their activity and endurance. Though we are definitely informed that the door will be shut sometime within this harvest period or end of the age, the Bible does not give the exact date; and, although after the great time of trouble there will be a grand reversal of public sentiment in favor of truth and justice, we have no intimation whatever that such a condition of affairs will obtain until after the harvest period is fully ended. But we have a clear intimation that the door will be shut in the manner last named; for, before the Millennial day breaks, we are forewarned of a dark night wherein no man can labor.”—C207,208

Since we still have every opportunity available to us to witness to the truth worldwide, let us continue to do so with enthusiasm.

“The opportunity to walk in this narrow way of self-sacrifice for the truth’s sake is the grandest privilege that was ever offered to any creature. The privilege of suffering with Christ and in his cause, after first recognizing him as our Redeemer, is therefore the door, and the only door of opportunity, by which the glory to follow, as the bride and joint-heir of Christ, can be reached.”—C207

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

May the Lord help us all to make our calling and election sure so that we may participate in that great work of blessing all the families of the earth in the kingdom.

Closing Hymn: #58 — Zion’s Glorious Hope

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"ARE YE ABLE?"

Are ye able to walk in the narrow, strait way,

With no friend by your side, and no arm for your stay?
 Can ye bravely go on through the darkening night?
 Can ye patiently wait till the Lord sends the Light?
 Are ye able to crush your soul's longing for Love,
 Will ye seek for no friendship save that from above?
 Can ye pass through this world, lone, unnoticed, unknown,
 While your faith faintly whispers, "He knoweth His own?"
 Where the feet of the Blessed One stood, can ye stand?
 Can ye follow His steps to a wilderness land?
 Are ye able to cast aside pleasure and fame?
 Can ye live but to glorify His precious name?
 Can ye smile as His dear voice says tenderly "No,"
 When "the field is so white," and your heart yearns to go?
 Can ye rest then in silence, contented and still,
 Till your Lord, the Chief Reaper, revealeth His will?
 Are ye able to lay on the "Altar's pure flame"
 That most treasured possession, your priceless good name?
 Can ye ask of your Father a blessing for those,
 Who see naught in your life but to scorn and oppose?
 When the conflict twixt Error and Truth fiercer grows,
 Can ye wield the strong "Sword" against unnumbered foes?
 Can ye lift up the "Standard" e'en higher and higher,
 While His praises ye sing in the midst of the fire?
 When ye see the Lord's cause going down to defeat,
 Will your courage endure in the seven-fold heat?
 Will your faith keep you steadfast, though heart and flesh fail,
 As the **New Creature** passes beneath the last "Veil?"
 Ah, if thus ye can drink of the Cup He shall pour,
 And if never the Banner of Truth ye would lower,
 His Beloved ye are, and His crown ye shall wear,
 In His Throne ye shall sit, and His Glory shall share!