

Lesson for August 30, 2009

Review of Our Spiritual Assets

New Creation and Royal Family of God

A New Creation in Christ

A verse that is often quoted with regard to this doctrine of being a “new creation” in Christ (but one that is not very well understood) is II Corinthians 5:17-21. The content of II Corinthians 5 is the results of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the placing of the believer into union with Christ. It is our union with Christ that gives us the potential for a personal sense of destiny, knowing that we have a place prepared for us in Heaven. It is in light of this doctrinal truth Paul tells us in verse 17 that we are “new creations in Christ and that old things have passed away and behold all things have become new.”

Contrary to popular belief, “all things becoming new,” is not a reference to a person’s lifestyle or “bad habits.” We know this from the original language and from many other passages of Scripture. Once a person accepts Christ as Savior, his lifestyle does not automatically change. If there needs to be change, then the only legitimate change must come from spiritual growth based on the Word of God, not on some religious taboo. As a matter of fact, this passage refers to what God does for us, not what we do for God. Becoming a new creation is a matter of God’s grace. Therefore, all human effort is eliminated. The reason a person becomes a new creation is that he is in union with Christ. This union means that the believer shares Christ’s destiny and His inheritance.

A New Spiritual Classification

The first word of I Corinthians 17 in the King James Version of the Bible is *therefore*. In Greek the word for *therefore* is “hoste” and can be better translated “conclusion.” Paul looks back at the context of the passage and draws a conclusion based on previous doctrinal information. The conclusion is “if (first class condition meaning if and it is true) any person is in Christ (baptism of the Holy Spirit) that person is a new creation.” *Creation* (“creature” in the King James) is the Greek word “ktisis” and refers primarily to the creative act in process. It is the believer who is being acted upon by God. This act of creation is when God, at salvation, creates a human spirit in the believer. In order to better understand what Paul is teaching we will use the term “a new spiritual classification” since this describes more precisely what occurs at salvation. This creative act by God creates something in the believer that previously did not exist. It is “new” and it is “spiritual” in nature and the believer becomes a different “classification” (Royal Family of God). (I Corinthians 2:9-14; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19)

Page 2, New Creation and Royal Family

Prior to salvation a person is merely God's creation, but not a part of God's family. Becoming a part of God's family is a matter of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior. This act of faith places the person into union with Christ and he instantaneously becomes a child of God. No longer is this person merely a creation of God, he is now a "new" creation of God, which is a different classification spiritually. Before salvation a person is spiritually dead (separated from God). However, after salvation a person is spiritually alive (reconciled to God). (John 1:12)

Old Things Are Passed Away

Old things is actually one word in Greek. It is the word "archaios." "Archaios" literally means, "that which existed in the beginning." It is a reference to something that is ancient (really old), something in the past. IT DOES NOT, THEREFORE, REFER TO THE BELIEVER'S BAD HABITS OR LIFESTYLE. It refers to something that is thousands of years old.

What exactly passes away at salvation that would fit into the meaning of the Greek word? The context makes the meaning very clear. It is a reference to an old condition – spiritual death. Thousands of years ago our original parents, Adam and Eve, sinned and the result was spiritual death. Spiritual death passed to every member of the human race as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience. It is spiritual death that Paul has in view when he uses the word "archaios."

Passed away in Greek is "parerchomai" and means to go, to pass, to come to an end, to disappear or to neutralize. In our passage it means that spiritual death has gone, passed away or come to an end. At salvation, spiritual death comes to an abrupt end. Once you are placed into union with Christ, spiritual death disappears forever from you. Never again will you be spiritually dead. You can reject the Christian Way of Life and turn your back on God and His Word, but you can never be spiritually dead again. This is grace! (Romans 6:23)

All Things Have Become New

Once again, let's go to the original language to get a precise meaning. For example, "all things" is not in the original Greek. The truth is that at salvation all things do not become new for the believer. After years of spiritual growth and application of Bible doctrine some things become new, but certainly not at salvation.

Again, we get the proper meaning when we get a proper translation. "Behold, they have become new" is the proper translation. *They* refers to those who are "in Christ." Even the word *new* in Greek gives us further insight on this phrase.

Page 3, New Creation and Royal Family

There are two words in Greek for *new*. The first is “neos” and means new in time, young or that which is recent. The second word is “kainos” and means new in form, new in quality or different in nature. It is this second word, “kainos,” that Paul uses to describe the new creation. The believer receives a new nature (a human spirit). This nature is from God and is spiritual. Receiving this nature is not a matter of reformation of a particular lifestyle or behavior. Receiving this nature is strictly a matter of God’s grace provision. The transforming power of God the Holy Spirit places you into union with Christ and sets you apart to God for all eternity upon faith in Christ.

In case there is any doubt about the true meaning of this passage, II Corinthians 5:18 clarifies it: “All things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” The *all things* are from God, not man and it is God that reconciles mankind to Himself by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. This eliminates any thought of religious “tabooism” or asceticism. You do not give up anything to become a new creation in Christ nor do you start doing something. You are a new creation because you are “in Christ” and for no other reason. Salvation is a matter of faith alone in Christ alone and has absolutely nothing to do with good works or human merit. Jesus Christ has already done all the work on behalf of us all. His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross paid the penalty for sin and set up the potential of everlasting life for every member of the human race.

Royal Family of God

At salvation, the believer becomes part of the most unique family in history – the Royal Family of God. No longer merely God’s creation, the believer is a new creation and a child of God. God’s Word has a lot to say about the subject of the Royal Family and there are several terms used throughout the Bible to indicate this new relationship. Let’s take a look at a couple of these terms.

Children of God

A term used in the Bible to describe this family relationship is “child of God.” Essentially, it has the same meaning as “son of God.” We must look to the Greek language to see the slight (but significant) difference in the two terms. Looking at both words also helps us get a complete meaning of our relationship with God as believers. “Huios,” the Greek word for “son” emphasizes *position* and *function*, but the word in Greek for *child*, “teknon,” emphasizes our *family relationship*. As I said, a slight difference, but one that helps us to understand that not only are we *related* to God through the new birth, we are to *function* as Royal Family after salvation. (John 1:12; Galatians 4:1-7)

Page 4, New Creation and Royal Family

As children of God, the Bible tells us that we are now related to Jesus Christ as joint-heirs. This means that we share in His inheritance, which we know is going to be fantastic. Because of this unique relationship with our Savior, every believer will enjoy an inheritance beyond his imagination. However, for those who reach spiritual maturity, the rewards will be based on sonship (function) not merely being a child of God (relationship). What do I mean by that?

Galatians 4 gives us the answer. Verse one tells us that we are children of God, that we have an eternal inheritance and that we immediately become Royal Family of God at salvation. This is the relationship of the child to God. In function, however, the child must be cared for by servants and is unable to *function* as a son or daughter. When the child becomes of age and is able to care for himself, he has the potential of functioning as a son or daughter. It is much like the Jewish ritual of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah when the child “becomes of age.” In other words, at salvation a person is *born a child* of God, but *placed* (adopted) as a *son* of God in union with Christ. It is his union with Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit that provides the supernatural power to function as a son or daughter.

A Son of God

The unique thing about becoming a son of God is that the believer has actually been adopted by God into His family. This adoption is a result of the new birth (regeneration). No one is born into this world as a believer in Christ. Therefore, we have no family relationship with God at physical birth. What we have is spiritual death, which is separation from God without the human ability to do anything about it. God in His grace, however, has made a way for us to enter into a family relationship with Him. Of course, this way is through faith in *His Son*, Jesus Christ. Once we become a child of God, the potential exists to function as a son/daughter of God. (Romans 8:14-17)

Adoption means to be placed as a son or daughter. It is the Greek word “*huiothesia*” and carries with it the meaning of being placed as an adult son. This means that the believer has the potential for much more than what the term “child of God” implies. All “children of God” will spend eternity with God, but not all will fulfill the responsibilities of royalty as a “son of God.” Therefore, not all believers will receive equal rewards in the eternal state. As a son of God, the believer has royal responsibilities, but he also has privileges that never before existed in history.