

# THE NEW CREATION

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

**Divine Nature Given to Jesus.** Before Jesus came to earth he was known as the “Logos” – the “word” of God – and was named “Michael.” (John 1:1, Dan. 10:13, 21, 12:1, Jude 9) He was the first of all God’s creation (Rev. 3:14, Col. 1:15-17), and was the highest of all God’s angelic creation. That is why he was referred to as the “archangel” – the highest, or first angel. (Jude 9)

When in God’s plan the time came for the ransom to be given to redeem mankind from Adamic sin, it was Michael who was favored with the opportunity to be born into the world of men to provide the ransom price. He was born of Mary and named Jesus. He grew to manhood and faithfully laid down his life in sacrifice, demonstrating a loyalty to and trust in God surpassing that of all others of God’s creation. Because of this, he was granted to sit at “the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. 1:3) He was granted “power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing.” (Rev. 5:12)

Further, he was granted the divine nature, the nature which God himself possesses. One chief characteristic of the divine nature is immortality – inherent life – which previously only God himself had possessed. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (John 5:26) Indeed, his exaltation at his resurrection was to a far greater station than he had left as the Logos.

**Divine Nature Promised to the Church.** But God planned to have even others share the divine nature with him, and from the time of Christ onward the call to those of faith has been to sacrifice their lives in God’s service. The promised reward is that they shall share the glory of their Lord – they shall be granted with him the divine nature. “For it became him [God] . . . in bringing many sons to glory, to make the the captain of their salvation [Jesus] perfect through suffering.” (Heb. 2:10)

Thus begins the development of Christ’s “church” class. This class consists of all those who are faithfully obedient to Christ, and have pledged their lives in consecration to God. They have given up earthly hopes. These are referred to as

“them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7)

Those who are members of this class are called “new creatures.” “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away.” (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15) And so we refer to this church class generally as God’s “new creation.”

## NONE BEFORE JESUS

The call to become new creatures in Christ Jesus was not open until the time of Jesus. The faithful ones of the Old Testament were not promised the reward of a spiritual life. Instead, they were promised earthly reward. In the resurrection they will be resurrected to a perfect human life on the earth.

Then God will be able to use them as his chosen ones to teach the rest of the world of mankind to know God. They will teach men the way of obedience so that mankind will be able to walk back to actual perfection in the earthly kingdom. Those “ancient worthies” – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Abel, Enoch, Elijah, David and the prophets, and the other faithful ones of God in Old Testament times – will be the examples and teachers of mankind. They will be appointed as “princes in all the earth.” (Psa. 45:16) This will be in fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel that “I will restore thy judges as at the first.” (Isa. 1:26) The ancient worthies, as the leaders of Israel in the kingdom, will be perfect human beings.

**Spiritual Call Kept Secret Till Jesus Came.** God’s plan to open up a *spiritual* call was kept secret until the time came for Jesus to reveal it unto his disciples. The Apostle Paul in Col. 1:26, 27 said that this call to glory was a “mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now [at the beginning of the Christian era – the Gospel Age] is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the *hope of glory*.” (See also Eph. 3:4-6, Rom. 16:25, 26.)

Yes, Jesus brought “*life and immortality* to light through the gospel.” He brought the

*life* of the Gospel message to light, and also the call to the church to share *immortality* with her Lord, Jesus. (2 Tim. 1:10) Jesus is our “forerunner” – the first to receive the reward of immortality, and enter beyond the “veil” into his reward (Heb. 6:19, 20) – and he invites us to follow in his example.

## OUR VOWS OF CONSECRATION

There are many blessings to be bestowed upon the faithful members of the true church. One of these is the gift of immortality – life inherent. So God will be very sure that these favors are bestowed only upon those whose characters are, like his own, firmly committed to righteous principles. It would be a sad error indeed if immortality were granted to one whose character was not steadfastly loyal to righteousness – for if one were to deviate into sin, as Satan did, it would not be possible to destroy such an one. How glad we are that Satan does not have immortality. Since he does not, he can and will be destroyed for his willful sin and belligerence. (Heb. 2:14, Rom. 16:20) That will be for the good of all.

The present life is the developing and proving place for our obedience. Here our loyalty to God will be deeply engrained upon us if we are properly exercised by the experiences which come to us under God’s supervision. It is true of Jesus, that “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” It was true of him that “in the days of his flesh . . . he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears . . . and was heard.” (Heb. 5:7, 8) So it is with us if we dedicate our lives wholeheartedly to God’s service, and accept of God’s call to be members of the body of Christ. We will need to develop and evidence our obedience and loyalty through trying experiences. And our prayers for strength and divine aid will be heard if faithful. God will give us the moral courage and providentially arrange our circumstances so that we shall be able to overcome the besetments and trials which come to us. And he will shield us from those experiences which would only work harm to us. He will not permit to come to us trials greater than we are able by his

strength to bear. "God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13, Diaglott)

### ***Sacrifice, Obedience, Entire Devotion.***

The call to walk this way of obedience now involves sacrifice and entire devotion. God does not accept any into the way of the high calling until one has made a *full* consecration of himself to do the Father's will. This determination by anyone is a very serious and very important commitment. It should not be taken lightly. The path of complete and zealous devotion to God will be difficult for the old nature, contrary to the fleshly desires of our bodies. The way will seem rough and thorny. So it should be a matter of deep and serious thought.

Jesus gave his disciples a parable to teach them the seriousness of the matter. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and *counteth the cost*, whether he have sufficient to finish it? . . . Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able . . . ? So likewise, whomsoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple . . . He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 14:27-35)

***Blessed Assurances.*** But while we soberly ponder the matter we should not doubt of God's power on our behalf, fully able to make us "overcomers" in the highest sense. And we should remember our Lord's loving assurance, "It is the Father's *good pleasure* to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32) If we hear the call, it is because God desires us to accept the invitation and guarantees that he will be with us in every trial. Paul assures us, "He which hath begun this good work in you will perform it." (Phil. 1:6)

We have the encouraging words of Jesus, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) "Ye shall weep and lament . . . but your sorrow shall be turned into joy . . . and your joy no man taketh from you." (John 16:20-22)

Paul tells us of our period of trial: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: . . . which . . . are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:17, 18)

And blessed rewards are promised. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give

thee a crown of life . . . him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (Rev. 2:10; 3:21)

***A Living Sacrifice.*** Paul's counsel is: "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." (Romans 12:1) Yes — a living sacrifice. Consecrated unto death to do God's will; to live our earthly lives in a path of full submission and obedience — putting to death our old will of the flesh, and accepting the mind of the Lord. Our earthly aims and ambitions are to be dropped in favor of full service to God. It is a consecration to expend our lives as Jesus did — dead to the world and its charms. "Know ye not, that so many of us as are baptized [immersed] into Jesus Christ are baptized [immersed] into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life."

When we consecrate our all to God we present our fleshly beings as a sacrifice to be offered up day by day in God's service. From the time that God accepts that sacrifice, he reckons us as dead to the human nature. From that time until the actual, physical death of our fleshly bodies we are reckoned as being consumed upon the altar — just as the sacrifices of Israel were first slain and then consumed upon the altar. The fire which consumed the typical sacrifices which Israel offered pictured the trials and experiences of life which we encounter in our faithfulness in doing God's service.

### **A NEW LIFE BEGINS — A NEW CREATURE**

But at the same time that God accepts the sacrifice of our human nature, he starts another life within us. It is a new life — a spiritually minded creature — the *new creature*. This new creature develops in character with each experience and trial.

When this new creature is fully developed — fully tested — fully loyal — it will eventually receive a new body. At the time of the resurrection, the new mind — the new creature — is given a glorious spiritual body. It is clothed over with the divine nature. It receives immortality. When that happens, the new mind — the new creature — has been fully brought to birth as a divine being. Then God's new creation will have intimate communion with Jesus and with the Heavenly Father, throughout the ages of

eternity. They will be used as God's agent in all the abundant works of mercy and love which God will manifest to his creation in the ages to come. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ!" (Rom. 8:17) What a prospect! Surely, "the sufferings of this present time are *not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us!" (Romans 8:18)

How blessed that though "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," yet "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." (1 Cor. 2:9, 10)

### **ON TRIAL FOR LIFE**

***Redeemed from Sin and Death.*** Yes, glorious prospects! But how can this be? Since we are by nature sinful, condemned to death in Adam, how is it that God can accept our sacrifice as a holy offering? The answer is that God has provided an atonement for our sin which gives us a release from our condemnation to death.

When we learn of the message of Christ and exercise faith in Jesus as the savior, God deals with us on the basis of that faith in the redeemer. He rewards our faith by reckoning righteousness to us, even as it was with Abraham. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3; Gen. 15:6) We then begin to feel more and more the call to our hearts to offer our all in sacrifice to God. The Scripture may come to our minds, "My son, give me thine heart."

If we respond properly we make a full, unreserved consecration to God. If God sees that our consecration is sincere and fully meant, and he accepts that consecration, his next step in beginning the spiritual life (the new creature) in us is to justify us to a full standing of life in the eyes of God's justice. He does this by applying the merit of Christ's shed blood — that is, the value of Jesus' perfect human life — on our behalf. Since the value of that perfect human life which Jesus gave up on the cross is applied for us, we are redeemed from the condemnation of death which was upon us as members of Adam's fallen and condemned race. Because of this redemption, God can *accept the sacrifice* of our human life as though it were perfect.

Of course, those who lived before Jesus' sacrifice was completed could not have the value of his sacrifice applied for them this way. It wasn't available. So God could not extend the invitation of the high calling to them — since there was no redeeming merit of Christ to make their sacrifice acceptable to Divine Justice. But now

“Christ is . . . entered . . . into heaven itself . . . to appear in the presence of God *for us*.” (Heb. 9:24) Now we can be “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 3:24)

Those who receive this justification in the present life begin also their period of trial and development in the present life. They will not be brought forth to an *earthly* resurrection with the remainder of mankind in the earthly kingdom. Their hope from then on is spiritual.

**Second Death Class.** If such develop faithfully under the experiences God permits to come, and grow to a steadfast character loyal to God and righteousness, they are granted the reward our loving Father intends – a share in the heavenly kingdom, and the divine nature – immortal spiritual life.

But if one were to totally reject his standing with God, and totally reject the ransom price of Jesus, after being redeemed and beginning the walk of the new creature, he would have no future reward. He would have no future at all. Since all who are accepted into the spiritual call have given up their earthly rights, and accepted the agreement to give up in death all their hopes for earthly inheritance, none can claim again an earthly hope. And since a totally unfaithful course would prove one unfit for a spiritual reward, that would leave that one without the hope of a future life at all. Upon death he would remain dead. He would not live again. This is called in the Scriptures the “second death” – a death from which there will never be a redemption or a resurrection.

These are some Scriptures which speak of this “second death” class among those who once were consecrated to God.

Hebrews 6:4-6. “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Hebrews 10:26, 27. “If we sin willfully 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.”

2 Peter 2:17, 20, 21. “These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness [death] is reserved for ever . . .

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

Jude 12, 13. “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness [death] for ever.”

**The Great Company.** There are others, however, and many more in number, who will remain loyal to God at heart, and yet not carry out fully their covenant of consecration to God. These do not exhibit the faithful and zealous character which God seeks to reward with the divine nature, because they hold back from full sacrifice. They do not take care to build their faith and character structure with “gold, silver, precious stones” – representing divine truths, promises, aspirations. Instead they build with “wood, hay, stubble” – representing errors of thought and practice, and attraction to earthly values. And yet, they do not turn aside at heart.

These will not be destroyed, as will the second death class. But neither will they be granted the reward of the divine nature, which they would have received if they had lived up to the terms of their consecration. Both of these points are made clear by the Apostle Paul. “If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward [divine nature. But,] if any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: [and will not gain the divine nature] but he himself shall be saved; [he shall not suffer the second death] yet so as by fire [fiery experiences by which he will be forced to eventually demonstrate his loyalty of heart].” (1 Cor. 3:12-15)

Such ones cannot receive back an earthly life, for they had given that up at their consecration. So God grants them life on the spirit plane of being. Not immortal life as the little flock will receive, but spirit life to do service for God in the heavenly realm. In God’s mercy they are brought forth to life on the spirit plane rather than destroyed.

This class is described in Revelation 7:9-17. Vs. 15 reads, “Therefore are they *before* the throne [not *on* the throne] of God, and serve him day and night *in* his temple [in the heavenly temple]: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”

This “great company” class is also pictured in Ezekiel 44:10, 11 as the “Levites . . . which went astray . . . they shall even bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers [servants] in my sanctuary . . . [after correction in the fiery experiences].”

But the little flock, the fully faithful ones, are pictured as “the priests . . . that kept the charge of my sanctuary . . . they shall stand before me . . . saith the Lord God . . . they shall teach my people . . . they shall stand in judgment . . .” (Ezek. 44:15-24) These will have the full reward. (See 2 John 8.)

## THE WORK OF THE SAINTS IN THE KINGDOM – THE BLESSING OF ALL MANKIND

Mankind has for over 6,000 years been struggling under the burden of sin and death. This experience has been demonstrating to mankind the evil consequences of sin and disobedience.

God also designs to give mankind an experience with the benefits of good and obedience. This will be in the kingdom – God’s kingdom on earth. Mankind will then have the opportunity to walk back to human perfection, out of their imperfect and depraved state. Their mental abilities, their physical health, and their ability to discern moral precepts will be developed and restored to them by a process of education in the ways of righteousness. As they come more and more into harmony with the righteousness of the kingdom, they will grow more and more toward perfection; human perfection, as Adam had when he was created, and as Jesus had as a human being on earth.

This blessed time of education and instruction is spoken of often by the prophets of the Old Testament.

Micah 4:1, 2. “In the last days it shall come to pass . . . many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord . . . he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Jeremiah 31:31, 34, 35. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, . . . they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, . . .

for I will forgive their iniquity.”

Isaiah 11:9. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [kingdom]: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Zechariah 14:8, 9. “In that day living waters [truths, instruction, enlightenment] shall go out from Jerusalem . . . and the Lord shall be king over all the earth.”

Daniel 2:44. “In the days of these kings [Gentile rulers] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: . . . it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Isaiah 26:9. “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

As we have already seen, the earthly representatives of that kingdom will be the ancient worthies – the faithful ones of God who lived before the Gospel Age. But those who will be the spiritual “kings and priests” will be the church, the new creation, the “little flock.” These are given the kingdom. (Luke 12:32; 22:29) These will live and reign with Christ. (Rev. 20:4, 6; Dan. 7:13, 14, 22) These, with Christ, will be the spiritual rulers. They will have

charge of directing the kingdom toward the full instruction of all the willing and obedient of mankind who will turn their hearts to the Lord and righteousness. They will be the judges who will discern the heart sentiments of mankind – and even of angels (1 Cor. 6:3) – to determine who is truly loyal at heart.

Because this elect class, called during the gospel age, will have been tested and tried and developed in a struggle against sin and themselves, they will be very sympathetic to the endeavors of mankind in the kingdom to overcome evil and sin. The little flock in heaven will be eager to assist mankind with a full, loving heart. And, when necessary, they will mete out corrective punishments to help mankind in their upward path back to perfection.

This is the great privilege which God holds out to us . . . the privilege of uplifting mankind from sin and imperfection to righteousness and perfect life. Revelation speaks of the time when “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” God will do this through the anointed class – Christ and his bride.

The call to mankind to be refreshed by the waters of truth and blessing is described also in Isa. 55:1, 2. “Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk [representing the blessed provisions of the kingdom for the nourishment and instruction of man] without money and without price.” Revelation tells us of the same time, and shows that it is the bride of Christ who extends that call. Rev. 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

This great work of blessing will come to pass when the church is completed and gathered to its heavenly reward. So the Apostle Paul says that the whole creation longs for that time when the spiritual sons of God are made manifest in the kingdom, for that will mean the blessing of the poor, groaning creation. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God . . . [then] the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption . . .” (Romans 8:22, 19, 21)