

Preached on 2/4/24 at GBC – Ruston

"The NEW Creation"

II Cor.5:17

I don't know of many other passages in the Word of God that have been so blatantly and heretically used by those in false religion to garner their desired results, i.e., to create and foster little carbon copies of themselves and their religious efforts and energy – “*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*”(Matt.23:15) Just like all of them, when I was deeply entrenched in false religion, doing my dead level best to avoid every possible sin, as well as doing my dead level best to do every possible good (**which the Scriptures describe in this manner** – “*being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS*”), this verse was my personal CAT OF NINE TAILS that I used to try and beat my flesh into submission. False preachers use it – **OUT OF ITS PROPER CONTEXT** – to frighten people into obedience in order to avoid being found ultimately a reprobate. They use phrases like this: “If you aren't living **IT (whatever “IT” is to them)**, and you aren't something different now, more holy now, **MORE CHRIST LIKE** than when you first believed, you better **EXAMINE YOURSELVES**, because you probably are still in unbelief.” You **CANNOT** lift **2 Cor.5:17** out of the context of the **RECONCILIATION OF THE UNGODLY BY GOD THROUGH CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE UNTO DEATH** as set forth in this whole section and build an entire theology on it. The **MAN I** “surrendered to the ministry” under back in 1981 regularly quoted this verse in this way: “If any man be **IN CHRIST**, he is a new creature. **OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY** and **ARE IN THE PROCESS OF PASSING AWAY**, and **ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW** and **ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING NEW.**” **Listen to me:** That statement contradicts itself, actually denying what Paul declared of those who are “*in Christ*” as having become “**NEW CREATURES**”, seeing according to this line of thinking, they aren't in reality new creatures, but will actually one day be new creatures. What then is the Holy Spirit teaching us by this declaration of Paul? Let's see if we can find out **FROM THE SCRIPTURES**.

Let's read **Vs.17a**. Let me read you a literal translation of this same verse – “So that if any one [is] in Christ — [he is] a new creature.”(YLT) These words have to be interpreted and understood in light of what Paul had just set forth – “*For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we [him] no more.*”(Vss.14-16) After these words Paul states dogmatically – “*Therefore if any man [be] **IN CHRIST**, [he is] **A NEW CREATURE.***” Paul started this declaration with the word “**THEREFORE**”, which means ‘so that, inasmuch that, so then’. It is a reference back to what he has previously written. The original word translated “**a new**” means ‘of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of’. The original word translated “*creature*” means ‘the act of creating, **creation**’. Paul told them and us that any sinner that is “*in Christ*”, they are a new kind, unprecedented, unheard of **CREATION**. This “**new creation**” is the **EFFECT or RESULT** of what Paul has been teaching concerning God's sovereign plan and purpose in the salvation of His people through the accomplished death of His

Son. Paul told those at Ephesus – “*For we are **his workmanship, CREATED** (same word in our text) **in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**”(Eph.2:10) The word translated “**workmanship**” means ‘that which **HAS BEEN MADE**, or a work of God as Creator’. Look at this verse – “**And that ye put on the new man, which after God is **created** in righteousness and true holiness.**”(Eph.4:24) That phrase “**that ye put on**” is one word in the original which means ‘to sink into, as clothing’. What is the justified saint to **SINK INTO** – “*the new man, which after God is **CREATED** in righteousness and true holiness.*” This work of **CREATION** is entirely God’s work. Listen to John Gill’s words on these words we’re looking at – “**They are** a new “creation,” as the words may be rendered: “a new creation,” is a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors, and is applied by the apostle to converted persons; and **designs not an outward reformation of life and manners, but an inward principle of grace**, which is a creature, a creation work, and so not man’s, but God’s; and in which man is purely passive, as he was in his first creation; and this is a new creature, or a new man, in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, the corruption of nature; and because it is something anew implanted in the soul, which never was there before; it is not a working upon, and an improvement of the old principles of nature, but an implantation of **new principles of grace and holiness**; here is a new heart, and a new spirit, and in them new light and life, new affections and desires, new delights and joys; here are new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk, and new hands to work and act with.” To summarize Mr.Gill’s words – “**The JUST shall live by faith**”, which literally translated is: ‘And the **righteous one** by faith shall live’. This “**new creation**” which Paul is declaring and describing by these words is the work of God the Holy Spirit in regeneration and conversion, where He brings the elect sinner from spiritual death to spiritual life, working in them all the gifts of the Spirit by which they come to rest in Christ and His accomplished death at Calvary, His righteousness imputed, as their **ONLY HOPE** and **CAUSE** of salvation. **Listen to Paul’s words to the Roman believers** – “*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine **which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**”(Rom.6:14-18) **HERE’S WHAT SO IMPORTANT:** This is a **ONE TIME WORK BY GOD**, and once the elect sinner is regenerated by God the Holy Spirit through the declaration of God’s Gospel, they **SEE** and they **ENTER** the kingdom of God, and there’s no possibility of them ever being lost – “*Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] **draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.**”(Heb.10:38,39) That’s why we read **John 3** in the “**Call To Worship**” – **Turn back over there** – **Jn.3:3-8**. In this work of creation, the elect sinner is as **totally passive** as mankind was in God’s creation of this present world. This work of creation doesn’t depend on the sinner’s faith, repentance, or perseverance, but is a sovereign work of God where He puts in them a new heart and a new spirit, which is “**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” **The Scriptures state it simply:** Eternal life is **TO KNOW GOD**, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent – **Jn.17:3**. The **ONLY WAY** a sinner can “**know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent**” is by being made alive, being made a “**new creature**” – “**But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**”(Jn.1:12,13) We see the darkness of the unregenerate mind concerning this truth in***

Nicodemus, a master of Israel, who was told by Christ He must be born again in order to see or enter the kingdom of God, who was **IGNORANT** of this creation work of God that was clearly set forth in the Scriptures he supposedly studied – “*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them].*”(Ezek.36:25-27) I love the way Mr.Hawker wrote of this “**new creation**” - “So that it is a new creature, not a new name; a new principle altogether, not a new opinion. And indeed, the very name implies as much. For a new creature can only be produced by the same Creator which gave the being at the first. Creation work can only be from GOD; **and that without any other pre-disposing cause.**” I’ve said it for years now: **WHAT CAN A DEAD MAN DO? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!** But those “**born of God**”, those who have been quickened, made alive by the Spirit, even though they are still sinners, they are **RIGHT NOW “NEW CREATURES”** as they are found “**in Christ**”, made righteous by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to them. The old state of condemnation and alienation in Adam has totally passed away. The believer is justified in Christ and can never be brought back under the state of wrath and condemnation. But we cannot see this by looking on outward appearance, i.e., character and conduct. What are the evidences of this change of state?

Paul tells us the evidence that those Christ redeemed are “**new creatures**” – “**old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**” Let me read this to you from YLT – “the old things did pass away, lo, become new have the all thing.” I know they used to beat us to death with this in false religion, but they were always looking for and demanding some continual change or improvement in what they called practical godliness or holiness. Paul makes it clear by these words that the change in those who are “**new creatures**” isn’t something gradual or progressive. Paul declares that “**old things ARE PASSED AWAY.**” The original word translated by the English phrase “are passed away is a verb that is in the Greek aorist tense, which is the same as our **PAST TENSE**. That being the case, whatever these “**old things**” are, they **HAVE PASSED AWAY**. They aren’t in the process of passing away. The same goes for the last part of this verse concerning the **FACT** that “**all things ARE BECOME new.**” The original word translated “are become” are in the Greek perfect tense, which is the same as the English perfect tense, ‘which describes an action which is viewed as **having been completed** in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.’ Here’s the **BEST EXAMPLE** of the **PERFECT TENSE** – “**IT IS FINISHED.**”(Jn.19:30) Let’s quickly consider both of these **ABSOLUTES** Paul set forth concerning those who are “**new creatures**”. **FIRST**, What are the “**OLD THINGS**” that have passed away? To put it as simply as I can, the “old things” that have passed away for those who are “**new creatures**” is the guilt, penalty, and condemnation of sin, all those things which motivate the unregenerate sinner to seek to establish a righteousness of their own, seeing they are ignorant of the righteousness of God – **Quote Roman 10:1-3**. We’ll see this more clearly displayed when we examine what is the **CAUSE** of this great change in the verses that follow. **SECONDLY**, what are the “**all things**” that have become new? **Pastor Mahan stated about as simply as it can be stated** – “The new man thinks and acts from new principles, new rules, with new goals and objectives and in a new fellowship. He has a new commandment of love, a new name, a new song in his mouth, even praise to God, a new and living way opened by the blood of Christ, and an inheritance in the new heavens and new earth. In the new creation absolutely nothing of the flesh

is needed, used, nor continued. Our Lord said, '*Behold, I make all things new.*' Let's look at three passages that describe this great change and we'll close – **Rom.6:4-7; Rom.7:4-6; Phil.3:3-11**.

Today, we've looked at the elect sinner's new birth, which is the **EFFECT** of reconciliation. Next time we'll examine the **CAUSE** of the elect sinner's reconciliation.

That begs this question: HOW IS A MAN “*IN CHRIST*”? Is it something they do? Is it their faith; their repentance, or their perseverance that puts them in Christ or keeps them in Christ? What do the Scriptures say on this subject? Listen to Paul’s words concerning this same “new creature” in his epistle to those at Galatia – “*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*”(Gal.6:14,15) Circumcision or uncircumcision are things **MEN DO**, and Paul tells us that our participation or non-participation in any of these things don’t accomplish, maintain, or add to our salvation. The **only thing** that matters is this “**NEW CREATION**” – “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*”