The New Creation—Created In Christ Jesus

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

“From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is ***a new creation***. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2Cor. 5:14-17 ESV).

“Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but ***a new creation***” (Gal. 6:14-15 CV).

“…the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, ***for in Him is all created***, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible.” “For we are his workmanship, ***created in Christ Jesus*** unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” “Put on the new humanity which, in accord with God, **is being created** in righteousness and benignity of the truth” (Col. 1:15-16; Eph. 2:10; 4:24 CV).

Paul says we are a new creation. This is not a one-time or offhand statement, but we find it to be a substantial teaching spread throughout his letters. We may better understand what he meant by looking at the creation of Genesis 1 in comparison with other workings of God. We would like to consider first the way in which God brought the nation of Israel into covenant relationship with himself, and made them His people. These divine actions were referred to as creation.

Section One: Israel: A Creation of God

In Isaiah 43:1 and 7 we read: “But, now, thus said the LORD who *created* thee, O Jacob, and he who *formed* thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have *redeemed* thee, I have *called thee by thy name*; thou art mine…Even every one who is called by my name; for *I have created him* for my glory; *I have formed him*; yea, *I have made him*.” This passage places several thoughts before us. There is the *creating* and *making* of Gen. 1:27, the *forming*  of Genesis 2:7-8, and the naming which is repeated several times in the creation week sequence.

Now let us look at Genesis 1. In Genesis 1:2 we have the word *form*—“the earth was without *form* and void.” This word is used only twice in the books of Moses. The second use is in Deuteronomy 32:10: “He [Yahweh] found him [Jacob, or Israel] in a desert land, and in the *waste*, howling wilderness.” *Waste,* in this verse is the same Hebrew word as *form* in Genesis 1:2. *Waste* speaks of the situation of Israel in the wilderness, after leaving Egypt, as being comparable to the earth before its forming and filling was completed in Genesis 1. And these corresponding words do not stand alone. Also in Genesis 1:2 we have the word *move*—“the Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters.” This word is also used only twice in the books of Moses. It’s second use is in Deuteronomy 32:11, the verse following the second use of *form*. There we read: “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, *fluttereth* over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the LORD alone did lead him [Israel].” The word *fluttereth* in Deuteronomy 32:11 is the same word as *moved* in Genesis 1:2. We have here the beginning of a comparison which likens God’s liberation of Israel from Egypt to the days of creation in Genesis 1.

And this is only the beginning. The earth was in darkness in Genesis 1:2, and the exodus from Egypt started in darkness. It was at midnight that the death angel passed through the land and struck the firstborn, and right after that Israel began their evacuation. Also on day one, “God divided the light from the darkness” (Gen. 1:4). There were also divisions of light and darkness during the exodus. We read in Exodus 10:21-23: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” This darkness was one of the plagues on Egypt. God divided the light from the darkness here because Egypt was in darkness, but Israel had light. And again, later, on the banks of the Red Sea, God made a division of light and darkness which protected Israel from Egypt while the sea was being parted. Exodus 14:19-20 says: “And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these, so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

On the second day God divided waters from waters, creating the firmament called heaven between them. God also divided waters from waters in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Exodus 14:21-22 says: “And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” In addition to the division of light and darkness and the division of waters, God made other divisions between Israel and the Egyptians during the exodus. Examples of this can be found in Exodus 8:22, 23; 9:4; 33:16; Psalms 4:3.

On the third day of creation God made the dry land appear and created the plant life. We have already seen God make dry land appear in the dividing of the sea. But also in the exodus God worked differently with Egypt’s vegetation and that which would be Israel’s in the promised land. “He smote their [Egypt’s] vines also, and their fig trees, and broke the trees of their borders. He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground” (Ps. 105:33-35). But to Israel He said, “Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers. And he will love thee…he will also bless…the fruit of thy land, thy grain, and thy wine, and thine oil” (Deut. 7:12, 13).

On the fourth day “God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also” (Gen. 1:16). Notice here the correlation with the aspects of day and night. “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Ex. 13:21-22). “The LORD is thy keeper; the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night” (Ps. 121:5-6). “He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night” (Ps. 105:39). The pillar of cloud and fire was a visual representation to the Israelites of the Spirit of God hovering over them as was described in verse 2 as the Spirit moving over the face of the waters.

On the fifth day God created aquatic and avian life. In Psalm 105:29 we have this comment on the plagues of Egypt: “He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.” The fifth day makes special mention of *tannyn*, a Hebrew word which is rendered *whales* in the AV, and *sea monsters* in the NASB and the CV. There are some very curious circumstances around the use of *tannyn* in the Bible, and also considerable uncertainty as to its specific meaning. Some say this term should be rendered *dragon*, others suggest the term relates to *snake charming*, and some say it should be rendered *crocodile.* The importance of this word is that it came to represent Egypt, and that it represents a creature that is either from the sea, or one that can live in an aquatic habitat. In Ezekiel 32:2 Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is referred to as a *tannyn.*  Babylon was also located on a river, and in Jeremiah 51:34 Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, is said to have swallowed up Israel like a *tannyn.*  Definite etymology is scarce for this word, and it is used in a number of contexts with the thought of swallowing up. It might possibly be that the word *tannyn*, is derived from the same root as *tamym*, which means *whole,* or, *complete*. A characteristic of fish, snakes, lizards and other such creatures is that they eat by swallowing their food *whole.* This likens them to descriptions of *sheol*, or *hades.* In Numbers 16:28-35, concerning Korah’s rebellion, we are told how “the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up…and all that appertained to them, went down alive into sheol” (AVNS). Psalm 69:15 says: “Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. (AVNS)”

When Moses approached Yahweh at the burning bush, he was given a sign of his rod turning into a serpent. The Hebrew word for serpent is *nachash*. This is the same word for serpent that is used in Genesis 3. So, in Eden there were 2 people, Adam and Eve, a serpent, and a tree. At Mt. Horeb there was a man, Moses, a serpent, and a tree, the burning bush. This sign, the rod turning into a serpent, was performed for the Israelites, and they agreed to follow Moses, as Yahweh’s representative, and leave Egypt. They may have made a connection between the similarities of Eden and Moses’ experience. The curious thing is, when the sign was performed for Pharaoh, Aaron cast the rod down, and it turned into a *tannyn,* instead of a *nachash*. The AV renders both of these words as serpent, making this distinction undetectable to the English reader, and the CV renders one *serpent*, and the other *snake,* a distinction that might be missed. What we think may be the significance here is that the *tannyn* which Pharaoh saw was an animal that was a sacred symbol associated with the Nile river or the Egyptian kingdom. The *tannyn* was probably a significantly more important figure to Pharaoh than the *nachash.* The plagues upon Egypt were designed to discredit many of their gods. This would explain the difference between the rod’s transformations before different groups of onlookers. The scriptures appear to be pointing out that all of Egypt’s gods were things the God of the Hebrews had created. The God of the Hebrews was much greater than any and all of the gods of Egypt.

We read in Isaiah 51:9-10, “Arm of Yahweh…You…the Hewer of Rahab, The Wounder of the monster…You…the Drainer of the sea, the waters of the abyss, the Placer in the depths of the sea of a way for the redeemed to pass” (CV). Here Rahab is the name of the monster, and monster is the Hebrew word *tannyn.* The name Rahab is also used in other places to designate Egypt. (See Psalms 87:4 and 89:10.) Aaron’s rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians, and death was swallowed up by victory when Christ became the serpent on the pole. Whether it be a serpent, or a crocodile, or whatever, it becomes a rod in the hand of God for His purpose.

On the sixth day God created the land animals and humanity. We read of Egypt’s animals: “Their land brought forth frogs in abundance…He spoke and there came various sorts of flies, and lice in all their borders” (Ps. 105:30-31). “Behold the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous plague. And the LORD shall separate between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt; and there shall nothing die of all that belongs to the children of Israel” (Ex. 9:3-4). In Deuteronomy we read this promise regarding Israel’s animals and her people: “Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye [Israel] hearken to these ordinances, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant of mercy which he swore unto thy fathers. And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee; he will also bless the fruit of thy womb…the increase of thy cattle, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle” (Deut. 7:12-14).

As God’s chosen people, Yahweh took personal interest and responsibility for Israel: “Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn” (Ex. 4:22-23). In Deuteronomy 28:11-13 we read: “And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods…The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath, if thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God.” From these verses we see that Israel’s blessings were meant to improve all aspects of their lives. They were to have freedom and prosperity with the expectation of safety and security. They could expect to be free of disease, and, with full obedience, they could expect that none of their people would fail to have families. And they, as a nation, would lead the nations of the world. The richness of these blessings, when compared with the creation account, corresponds to the blessing of being in God’s image.

In Genesis 1 there are 10 occurrences of the words “And God said…” (vv. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29). The Hebrew word *amar* is the word for *said,* and it is given in the Kal future tense. These are divine fiats, or commands, of creation. This verb also occurs one other time in this text with God: “And God blessed them *saying*” (v. 22). *Saying* is also the verb *amar*, but here it is an infinitive, rather than being in the kal future form. We have been saying that the exodus of Israel from Egypt and their covenant with God at Sinai has been described by the Bible in terms that cast it as a creation event. In keeping with that thought, when God made the covenant with Israel, He gave them the tablets with the *ten* words, or ten commandments that they were to keep. God created with ten commandments, and He covenanted with Israel in their creation with ten commandments. This thought is reiterated in Ezekiel 16:9-12. There ten verbs describe the care of God given to the city of Jerusalem when its’ covenant with God is described as an infant female that had been abandoned in a field. The Concordant Version renders it as follows: “Then I **washed** you with water, I **laved** your blood off you, and I **rubbed** you with oil. I **clothed** you with brocade, and I **sandled** you with azure; I **bound** you up in cambric, and I **covered** you with gossamer, I **ornamented** you with ornaments, and I indeed **put** bracelets on your wrists and a decorative chain about your throat. I **placed** a pendant on your nose and earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.” The association of the covenant relationship with the 10 commandments suggests the thought that God also has placed Himself in covenant relationship with His creation. And His instructions to Adam reveal the same thought.

Furthermore, the number seven is very important in the creation account. The time reference is for seven days. Seven times the creation process was seen by God as *good.* The seventh day, the Sabbath, was a special day in creation, and the Sabbath was a special day to Israel. As God stopped from His work of creation on the Sabbath, so Israel was to stop from their work on each seventh day. Israel was also given seven annual holidays in the calendar year.

Section Two: The Individual As A New Creation

The figure of Israel’s redemption from Egypt has long been recognized as a type of salvation for the believer. The primary difference between Israel’s deliverance and the believer’s is that Israel’s was a physical deliverance, and the believer’s deliverance is spiritual. As we look at the creation week again, with reference to the believer, different things will be brought out that will emphasize the spiritual aspects of our salvation.

The description of the Spirit hovering or brooding over the dark chaos of Genesis 1:2 is the initial picture that is reflected many times through the pages of the Old Testament. Psalm 91 is a popular passage that employs some of these images: “He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day…Because thou has made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation” (Ps. 91:1-2, 4-5, 9 AV). We notice here that in combination with the avian figures is the repeated mention of dwelling in God’s presence. When we reach the New Testament, the avian figures begin to fade away, but we have something more near and dear in their place. Through the work of Christ the Spirit of God comes to dwell in the believer. Indeed, the believer becomes the temple of God! “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:19-22; Rom. 8:5-11; etc.)

The coming of the Spirit of God brings changes to the believer. When the Lord Jesus was speaking to His disciples concerning the coming of the Spirit He said, “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn. 16:8). The Holy Spirit’s initial work is to make the individual realize: that he is a sinner, that he lacks God’s righteousness, and, being in such a condition, he is subject to judgment. In short, the sinner is in a condition that is well represented by the earth in lifeless darkness. The sinner may not have realized that he was in darkness before the Spirit awakens him to that fact. God must turn on a light in our heart and mind so that we can see we are in the dark.

Paul said, “…the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them…for the God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shining, is He Who shines in our hearts, with a view to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4, 6 CV). Paul refers here to God’s acts in creation, making a comparison between the first day and the work of the Spirit of God in bringing the enlightenment for salvation to the sinner. Also, Paul is speaking here in a context where the shining of Moses’ face was just discussed, and now he finishes his statement about creation speaking of “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (Now Christ dwells in inaccessible light, to which no man can approach.) Genesis 1:2 says, “darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The creature is described as having darkness on its face. The face is the home of most of our senses—sight, smell, hearing and tasting are all located in the face. Some of our areas most sensitive to touch are on the face as well. Darkness on the face is suggestive of so many things: insensitivity, death, fear, lostness, despair. And if the face of the deep is in darkness, how much darker is the heart of the deep, nestled down in its depths? The face is the channel by which the heart receives light. Solomon said, “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun” (Eccl. 11:7). Solomon also used the expression, “them who see the sun” as a description of the living (Eccl. 7:11).

The scriptures give us another instructive contrast with verses which speak of the direction in which our faces are turned. Isaiah 53:6 says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.” One translation of this verse reads: “…each man to his own way we face.” (CV 1978 ed.) John gives us the contrast with this when he opens his gospel account by referring back to creation and says, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was *toward* God, and God was the word. This was in the beginning *toward* God” (Jn. 1:1-2). The word *toward* is the preposition *pros*. Most commentators are emphatic that it means more than our English preposition *with*. It definitely carries the idea of direction. *Pros* is part of the compound word *prosopon*, which means *face*. A. T. Robertson suggests that the use and repetition of the word *pros* here suggests the thought that the Word was *face to face* with God. Certainly the focus of all Christ’s goals and purposes was in the direction of the Father. And this is in sharp contrast with Isaiah’s words and in full agreement with Paul’s words. While Moses had a unique experience of communication with God, Christ’s communication and relationship with the Father was far more intimate.

After God commanded the light, he divided the light from the darkness and named them. There is a division that comes in the life of the believer also, beginning with the time when he or she becomes a believer and a new creation. The old life of darkness is over. The new believer is not immediately perfected. There will still be times of darkness. But a real change takes place, and the new life that is beginning is different. It is characterized by light, and it separates itself from darkness. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: “Now you, brethren, are not in darkness…for you are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Consequently, then, we may not be drowsing, even as the rest, but we may be watching and be sober. For those who are drowsing are drowsing at night, and those who are drunk are drunk at night. Yet we, being of the day, may be sober, putting on the cuirass of faith and love, and the helmet, the expectation of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:5-8 CV). The Scriptures make notice of this division in many ways, one of which is speaking of believers as being *in Christ,* the Light of the world, while unbelievers are *in Adam.*

The second day God divided waters from waters by creating a firmament, or expanse, or atmosphere. The waters below became the oceans, and the waters, or vapors above became the clouds and the waters that descended at the time of Noah’s flood. And God named this atmosphere *heavens*. This is not the same heaven of Genesis 1:1. That was the heavens of the spiritual realm. This new heaven was a heaven that belonged to the earth. But since it was named after the original heavens, we should look for a similarity to the original heavens in its function or purpose. This is not far to seek. The spiritual realm rules in the heavens over the creation. The spiritual beings perform God’s bidding in the accomplishment of this rule. Similarly, the elements of the atmosphere exert a rule on the life of the planet. The winds [we would remind you that *wind* and *spirit* are the same word in Hebrew and Greek, the biblical languages] of the atmosphere are a major controlling factor in temperatures, moisture, rainfall, hours of sunlight, storms, erosion and many factors that affect life on the planet. When our moisture is in balance we take it for granted, but how devastated we are when the floods or drought come! We frequently hear the weatherman speak of the jet stream and its relationship to high and low pressure systems and their effect on the weather. These elements have tremendous control over our lives.

But how does this apply to the individual believer? Salvation—the enlightenment of God’s truth in the heart and mind of the believer, creates a seat of rule, or, an arena for movement, for the Spirit of God in the believer’s life. The first day the Spirit of God had been hovering above the darkened, overwhelmed creature. The second day the Spirit of God opens up a place in the creature into which to move and take up residence. “Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. Not according to flesh are they walking, but according to spirit [according to a realm in them in which the Spirit of God is acting] for the spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus frees you from the law of sin and death…Yet you are not in the flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God’s spirit is making its home in you…For you did not get slavery’s spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, Abba, Father! The spirit itself is testifying together with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:1, 2, 9, 15-16). “Greater is He Who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 Jn. 4:4). There is a piece of heaven, a throne room of heaven, in the believer.

The third day God separated the seas from the land and caused the land to bring forth fruit. The land coming out from under its watery grave and new life coming forth on a third day is surely a picture of resurrection! The life that came forth was plant life. It would be food for the life that would come forth on the fifth and sixth days. As we think about the believer, and the new life, or food for life that comes forth by the Spirit’s work, we think of Paul’s letter to the Galatians. “Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23).This fruit is the result of the resurrection life of Christ in the believer. This fruit is that which nourishes the new life in Christ.

The first three days are days of divisions. The first day light and darkness were divided. The second day the waters were divided. The third day the land and waters were divided. For the believer these divisions are judgments. The final three days will be days when rule is set up over the areas that have been divided. This logical progression is like the progression in the believer’s life. The old life and its features are judged, and then the new life in Christ comes forth. Then rule must be exercised in the realms that have been judged. This two fold division is similar to that of law and grace. The first division is that of childhood, when the life is under the rule of an escort. As maturity comes, grace grants the rule that is given to sons.

On the fourth day luminaries, or great lights, came to be in earth’s atmosphere. We said that this atmosphere, or heaven, was part of the creature, or is viewed as part of the earth. It was named heaven because it was a replica or representation of the original heaven.

There are two different kinds of light—or perhaps we should say appearances of light—in Genesis 1. There is the light which came to be in response to God’s command in verse 3, and there is the light of the sun, moon, and stars in verses 14-18 on day four. This difference in manifestations of light has led to considerable argument as to whether the 6 days of creation were literal 24 hour days, or whether they were figurative days of greater duration. And there are people on various sides of the argument who hold the Scriptures in high regard. But let us realize and focus on the thought that there are different kinds of light for a person also. We would like to return to Paul’s words on this subject in 2 Cor. 4:6: “…for the God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shining, is He Who shines in our hearts, with a view to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Notice that Paul says when God shines in our hearts, bringing that initial light, it has a particular goal. It is “with a view toward [or, for the purpose of] the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The initial enlightenment leads to further enlightenment. Through Christ we can come to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God. What does that mean? Paul wrote to the Romans, “Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-2). It is a great change for the sinner to move out of sin into justification, and out of the fear of judgment into peace with God, but the greatness of salvation is not realized until we see that it does more for us than this. Paul speaks here of an expectation of sharing and experiencing God’s glory. Glory is frequently associated with light—brilliant light, and so this glory is a second kind of light believers will possess after the illumination that came to them in their darkness.

In the original creation of Genesis 1:1, the heaven and earth were mentioned. But, in this six-day, deliverance-from-darkness-chaos-and-vacancy-creation, the earth comes to have its own heaven, with its own lights. Paul’s very next words in 2 Corinthians 4:7 are: “Now we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” Let’s put these thoughts together. If we follow our context back to verse 4 we find the description of the One in Whose face we come to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God. It is Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God. Man was created in God’s image, but lost the glory of that image through sin and death. In Christ, the Son of Mankind, we come back to being what man was intended to be. In Christ, we come back to participating in the administration that will establish the rule of God’s kingdom throughout the original heavens and earth. Paul wrote to the Romans: “For I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for [into] us” (8:18). Notice that Paul is speaking of the glory of God that we are expecting, an undeserved glory that will be revealed in us. “For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body. For to expectation were we saved” (8:19-24 CV).

We currently have a treasure in these old clay pots we call our bodies. That treasure is the firstfruit or earnest of the Spirit of God. The expectation we were saved to is participating in the glory of God—having that glory on our face as it is on Christ’s face. We will enter into that glory when we enter our position as sons of God. That will happen when we are glorified—when we are delivered from this corruptible body. And the work we will enter into at that time is the work of delivering creation from corruption’s bondage. Our calling is a glorious calling. And our calling is to be light. “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14) “Let shine your light in front of men, so that they may perceive your ideal acts and should glorify your Father Who is in the heavens” (Matt. 5:16 CV). “Do not become diversely yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness? Or what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14, 15 CV) “For you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord. As children of light be walking (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), testing what is well pleasing to the Lord. And be not joint participants in the unfruitful acts of darkness, yet rather be exposing them…” (Eph. 5:8-11 CV). “Now you, brethren, are not in darkness…for you are all sons of the light and sons of the day” (1 Thess. 5:4-5 CV). So the believer, the new creation, not only receives light, but comes to have light in themselves, and comes to be a luminary, or light, to others.

On the fifth day there is a filling with life of the places divided on the second day. On the second day waters were divided and separated by the atmosphere that was made. The fifth day sees the atmosphere filled with avian life, and the waters below the atmosphere filled with aquatic life. All these forms of life in the creature must come under the rule of light. Every creature reveals something of God. And so all these forms of life can add to the growth and development of the spiritual life that was conceived when God spoke light into our hearts. It is true that there is very little of this fifth day life that is suitable for sacrifice—perhaps a dove. But this new life can soar to spiritual heights and plumb spiritual depths which have been unknown before. This fifth day suggests life similar to some of the things experienced in Corinth. The believers were blessed with many spiritual gifts, but they were ignorant about love, and needed to mature in their use of the gifts they had received.

On the third day the land was separated from the waters, and on the sixth day the land-life and humanity were created. Among the land animals are those that are most productive for service and the most numerous that are suitable for sacrifice. This places the life represented by the sixth day’s creation on a higher plane than the life of the fifth day. The creation of man represents the Man, Christ, Who is the Image of God. Here is human life in its highest form. Here is the new creation in its completion. Paul wrote to the Galatians in disappointment with their immaturity and their fascination with law-keeping and fleshly rituals. “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my tone; for I stand in doubt of you” (Gal. 4:19-20). Believers are the body of Christ. Their goal in growth and maturity is to be like Christ.

In our opening verses of 2 Corinthians 5, which led up to Paul’s statement about the new creation, we read these words: “If One died for the sake of all, consequently all died. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes” (v. 14, 15). Keep these words about living and dying in your mind as we turn to Galatians 2:20: “With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me.” “…no longer I, but living in me is Christ.” How close are you to day six? How close is your life to being the life of Christ lived in your body? We will not reach that goal before our glorification, but we certainly should be progressing in our growth and maturity toward this goal. Can anyone see the glory of God in your face? If not, why not? I hope these thoughts on the new creation will encourage us in our faith and give us insight into God’s workings within us, that we might be supple clay in the hands of the Potter. This completes the first two segments of this study.

Section 3: Created “In Christ Jesus”

“The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God…And He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15-17 NASB). Not only is Christ the Beginning of the creation of God, but, being the Firstborn of creation, the responsibility for redeeming the creation rests upon Him. Because all creation was through Him, He is an Element that all created things have in common. And being the Firstborn of creation, He is the link of all creation to God. Therefore all things have their coherence in Him (Col. 1:17). Our participation in re-creation, or, the new creation, is an ongoing process. Similarly, Christ participates in a re-creation Himself on behalf of the old creation. And so it is that the new creation is in Him, and through Him as well.

In the book of Ephesians Paul tells us that we are *chosen* and blessed *in Christ*, as well as being *created in Him* (1:3, 4; 2:10). These gracious workings of God on our behalf date back into the times of Genesis 1, carry forward into the time of our life on this earth, and anticipate our future life in glorification. Looking into Christ’s life, as the Bible describes it in terms of creation may give us a better understanding of what God means us to understand by the words “created in Christ Jesus.”

Believers are chosen ones. They were chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world (Eph. 1:3 CV, some translations, “foundation of the world”). Similarly, there are many verses that speak of Abraham, Jacob, David, and the nation of Israel at large as being chosen by God (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 1 Kings 3:8; 1 Chron. 16:13; Ps. 105:6; Isa. 45:4; etc.). But Christ especially is God’s Chosen. When Christ was hanging on the cross, “…the rulers also derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the ***chosen*** of God” (Lk. 23:35 AV). The Jews realized that *chosen* was a term of the Scriptures for their Messiah. Psalm 89:3 says, “I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David, my servant” (AV). The Jews could see that the context of this passage went beyond the obvious reference to David. And passages such as Isaiah 42 and 49 speak not only of the servant, Israel, but of the Servant, Christ. Jesus Christ is the preeminent Chosen one of God. And while the covenants between God and His creatures are tarnished by the creatures’ inconsistencies, the covenant between the Father and the Son remains unblemished. And while Christ is the preeminent Chosen One, following in His steps, those who are His are also chosen ones.

Christ was designated Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). Believers were crucified, buried and raised with Christ (Rom. 6:3-10). Correspondingly, God, in love, designates believers for the place of a son of Him through Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:5-6). These are examples of our being re-created in Him and show the close relationship and purpose of our experience to His.

The creation in Genesis 1 begins with the Spirit of God hovering or brooding, bird-like over the chaos. The incarnation and ministry of Christ begin in similar fashion. Gabriel explained to Mary that the Spirit of God would come upon her and overshadow her. The overshadowing in particularreminisces of the creation event and also of the overshadowing of Israel by the pillar of cloud. And the overshadowing is also a covering, which is suggestive of propitiation and covenant relationship. The descending of the Spirit in dove-like form upon Christ at His baptism, and its remaining on Him, are also symbols of the Spirit of God coming upon humanity and completing it into God’s image and equipping it for His service. Baptism itself is a picture of the earth’s condition in Genesis 1:2—coming out of the watery grave to a new life of order and fruitfulness. The flood of Noah paints a re-creation picture by covering the earth again with water. In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit (*ruach*) moved over the face of the waters. In Genesis 8:1, after the flood waters had reached their highest level, God remembered Noah and all the creatures with him in the ark, and God sent a wind (*ruach*) to pass over the waters and cause them to subside. Noah sent forth a dove three times. At first it returned, finding no resting place. Later it returned with an olive leaf pluckt off. The olive tree is a symbol of Israel, and Christ is the leaf pluckt off. The word translated *pluckt off* is later translated *torn in pieces* when it refers to Joseph and his bloody coat when his brothers symbolically killed him. But as the dove *remained on Christ* after His baptism, so the dove *remained* on the earth the third time Noah sent it out. This showed that God’s judgment had been completed.

In Job 38 God questioned Job about the creation of the earth: “Who is this who darkens counsel by declarations without knowledge?...Where were you when I founded the earth?...When the stars of the morning were jubilant together, and all the sons of Elohim raised a joyful shout? Who shut in the sea with double doors when it rushed forth, when it came forth from the womb, when I made the cloud its clothing and murkiness its swaddling band…” (Job. 38:2, 4, 7-9 CV). Notice three things that are said in these verses about the creation of earth. First it was an event that called forth jubilant shouting and praise from the angelic realm. Similarly, when the angels announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds near Bethlehem, “there came to be a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest! And on earth peace, among men, delight! (Lk. 2:13-14 CV). The second thing about the creation of the earth is that it is described as a birth—a coming forth from a womb of water. Christ was born in such fashion, as are we all. The third thing is the mention of swaddling the earth in a dark band of clouds. There are three instances in the Bible where swaddling is mentioned: (1) the swaddling of earth at its creation, here in Job; (2) the swaddling of Christ at His birth in Luke 2:7; and, (3) the unswaddled female infant cast into the field—this was Jerusalem, when God found her and made His covenant with her. And did God swaddle her? God spread the skirt of His robe over her, like Boaz covering Ruth. And He clothed her with brocade, and sandled her with azure, and wrapped her in fine linen, and covered her with gossamer (Ezek. 16:4-10).

Birth is a wonderful, multifaceted description of creation. Birth is a transition out of warm darkness into a more frightening world of light and unmuffled sounds—a world of air and breathing and what we might call spirit-life—a world filled with many kinds of life far different from self. Everyone who has looked into the eyes of a newborn infant—eyes detecting light, but seeing and understanding so little—has perhaps seen something of the light on creation’s day one before sun and moon and stars were discernible.

On the first day, God said, Let there be light! Christ was there in the beginning of creation, and yet His coming in flesh was a coming of light. It was not light as we usually think of it, but His life was light. John the Baptist came witnessing to that light. John was a voice, but Christ was the Word. John was a lamp, but Christ was the Light, the Light of the world that enlightens every man.

On the second day God divided the waters of earth by the atmosphere. We saw in the creation of Israel that God divided the waters to create a path through the sea. The following exerpts from Jonah, Isaiah and the Psalms show a dividing of the waters of death for Christ. “I cried unto Yahweh, and He heard me, out of the belly of the grave cried I…for You had cast me into the deep; in the midst of the seas, and the floods encompassed me; all Your billows and waves passed over me; the deep closed in around me…Your way is in the sea, and Your path is in the great waters, and Your footprints are not known. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron…You…the Placer in the depths of the sea of a way for the redeemed to pass…You will not leave my soul in the grave…You will show me the path of life” (Jonah 2:2-5; Ps. 77:19-20; Isa. 51:9-10; Ps. 16:10-11 CV). Christ, like the earth in Genesis 1, passed under the waters of death. And, like the Israelites trapped against the seashore, Christ was delivered by the Father Who raised Him by parting the waters of death. The quotation of Psalm 16:10-11 by Peter in Acts 2:27-28 verifies that these passages anticipated the resurrection, and Christ’s claim that Jonah was a sign of His death and resurrection merits the use of those verses here. We can see that the symbolism and teaching of baptism did not originate with Israel’s deliverance, as noted in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, nor with the flood of Noah, as noted in 1 Peter 3:20-21, but the symbolism of baptism harks back even to this account of creation.

There is a sense in which Christ’s resurrection to immortality was His birth. Psalm 2:7 says, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” When we see this passage quoted in the New Testament, it is applied to Christ’s resurrection. “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, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Acts 13:33 AV). As we see the Scriptures merging the ideas of birth and resurrection, we can do the same with the picture we see in creation. There the earth was submerged and dead. But God divided the waters, making known to the earth a path of life, and on the third day the land was resurrected out of the waters, and life came forth! What I hope to convey here is that the account of creation was designed and recorded in a manner which reflects Christ and His glories.

As we have already stated, the third day speaks of resurrection. Christ was in the grave—under the typical sea of Jonah—but God made known to Him the path of life by raising Him from the dead. The third day brings in a whole new realm for life which never existed before. Speaking of His death, Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (Jn. 12:31-32). The dividing of the waters represents the judgment on the world system and is the beginning of the abolition of death. The dividing of the Red Sea was the means by which Pharaoh and the army of Egypt were destroyed. Death was the power of the Adversary (Heb. 2:14) who was represented by Pharaoh during the exodus. By dying for the sin of the world—the cause and evidence of death—Christ disarms the Adversary and is exalted to the throne of God. The resurrection of Christ was the beginning of new life on earth, because it was the beginning of new life for believers. The resurrection of Christ is represented in the rising of the land up out of the waters, and the covering of the land with the new life of plants, and the creatures that followed.

The six days of creation divide readily into two groups of 3 days as shown in the following chart. The first and fourth days both deal with light upon the earth. The second and fifth days both deal with the waters and the atmosphere. The third and sixth days both deal with the land and its life forms. The first three days are all concerned with divisions. The last three days are all concerned with rule and filling.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Day # | Division | Day # | Ruling & Filling |
| 1 | Light from Darkness | 4 | Sun, Moon, Stars to Rule the darkness |
| 2 | Waters from Waters by Atmosphere | 5 | Fish and Birds to Fill waters and atmosphere |
| 3 | Land from Waters | 6 | Animals and Mankind to Fill and Rule the land |

Division is an act of judgment. God divides light from darkness in the spiritual sense as well as the natural. We have seen the division of waters representing the judgment of the world system of chaos, especially in the case of the exodus from Egypt. And the resurrection life of Christ and believers must stand apart from the world and its system of sin and death. The book of John reflects the first three creation days in great depth. In correspondence with the brooding of the Spirit over the waters, John gives great detail in Christ’s sending of the Spirit to believers. In correspondence with the division of light from darkness, John presents a theme of light and darkness throughout his account. A sampling of this theme is given in 3:19, “Now this is the judging: that the light has come into the world, and men love the darkness rather than the light, for their acts were wicked” (CV). In correspondence with the division of waters, John presents the crucifixion as a judgment on the world system (16:11, 33). And in correspondence with the rising up of the land from the water John presents the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Paraclete, or Comforter.

The fourth day speaks of the light ruling the earth: “the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night” (v.15). Here we have heavenly rule on earth. Christ is the Light of the world. After His resurrection He ascended to the right hand of God, where He is seated in authority, “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:21-22 AVNS). As these verses indicate, Christ is now Head over all to the church, but the world at large does not see or recognize Him as Head. The kingdom is spread over three ages. The phrase frequently translated *forever and ever* should be corrected to read, *for the ages of the ages*. The Scriptures speak of two future ages in which Christ’s headship will be made known to the world. During the current age the body of Christ is being assembled. In the future ages they will serve in His reign in glory. In common with this are the fifth and sixth days of creation. In the progressive course of these days the life forms become more suitable for service, and with the progression to humanity they reach a peak in understanding and in ability to commune with the Creator and represent Him.

The fifth day: “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind” (Gen. 1:20-21). The aquatic creatures are mentioned first on the fifth day, and the fowls of the air next. Some of both aquatic and avian creatures were considered clean and edible according to the law. But only a very few of the birds (doves and pigeons) were prescribed for sacrifice, and none of the aquatic life were included for sacrifice. This helps us to see a progression in the different forms of life as they are introduced in the creation account. On the sixth day the land animals, among which are the predominant group of creatures that are trainable for service, useful for food, and suitable for sacrifice. The apex of this pyramid of life, of course, is man in the image of God. Christ alone performed perfect service to the Father, and Christ alone was the perfect sacrifice.

As we think about the fifth day of creation in relation to Christ reigning in the kingdom of God, we remember that the dividing of the waters on day two was significant both in the picture of Israel’s emancipation and creation, and also in Christ’s resurrection from death on the path of life God made through the deep waters. Egypt was a kingdom that became a standard figure of oppression for Israel, and it is a figure which is associated with the waters of the Nile. Also, remember that the beast in Revelation 13 comes up out of the sea. That beast is a confederation of kingdoms that war against the saints and the Son of God. Egypt is mentioned in Revelation 11:8 as a spiritual name for Babylon. We suggest that the mention of the *tannyn,* the crocodile or sea monster, in the Genesis account gives a subtle hint to the opposition that Christ’s kingdom will face at the end of this age and during the next age. Also remember that in the next age, Satan and his angels will be evicted from heaven, and locked in the abyss. This too corresponds to the creation of avian and aquatic life on the fifth day.

While it is true that on the fifth day of creation there is no evil associated with *tannyn*, it is also true that this word later became a regular feature in descriptions of desecration and destruction. There are several texts where the desolated Jerusalem of the exile and other cities that were to come under judgment and destruction are referred to as a habitation for *dragons*, or, *tannyn* (Isa. 13:22; 34:13; 35:7; Jer. 9:11; 10:22; 14:6; 49:33; 51:37)*.*  Interestingly, these contexts also mention a wide variety of unclean birds: various kinds of owls, cormorants, ravens, kites, ostriches, etc. And in Revelation 18:2 we read: “…Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of ***every unclean and hateful bird***.” Here is our point. The living creatures of day five are further removed from the final climax of creation on day six, and so they are used to represent life that requires further judgments and ruling before it can come to the likeness of the Son of God.

We have already spoken of the sixth day as the culmination of creation with the image of God ruling the earth. This is the work that Christ will accomplish as God’s designated King. The sixth day is still a day of work. The work of reigning and reconciling will continue throughout the final eon before the Sabbath rest comes in. The woman is mentioned on the sixth day, and she is a symbol of the church. The church has been given the ministry of conciliation, and in her future glorification she will serve in bringing all under the headship of Christ by means of the conciliation made on the cross. The prominence of the nation of Israel preceded the calling of the body of Christ, or Church. In the coming kingdom ages there will be one administration, but that administration will be operating in two realms: the heavens and the earth (Eph. 1:10). In the coming age, Israel will be raised to rule over the nations of the world, and the body of Christ will be seated among the celestials—the place of rule in the heavens. In the age following that, the age of the new heavens and earth, Christ will rule as the Lamb, the reconciling sacrifice, and Israel will be a nation of reigning priests on earth, and, the body of Christ, whose citizenship is inherent in the heavens (Phil. 3:20), will minister from that location in the “gathering together in one all things in Christ” (AV), or, “heading up all in the Christ” (CV Eph. 1:10).

The creation, ordering, and filling of this world in which we live was patterned after Christ. The selection and forming of a nation to bear testimony to God’s truth and purpose was patterned after Christ. The choosing and calling and saving and maturing of every believer is patterned after and fulfilled in Christ. Paul speaks of dying with Christ, being buried with Him baptismally, being raised in Him, etc. In these things we are being created anew in Him. If ever Christ is not our focus and Head, we have missed our goal. Our purpose is to be among the brethren of whom He is Firstborn—to be like Him, and for Him to live in us. This is the new creation. Paul, so frequently, used the words “*in Christ.*” I think the majority of those uses, if not all, are related to the new creation.

Section 4: How Should We View The Creation Account in Genesis One?

Many commentaries on Genesis one show a great concern to harmonize the creation account with scientific explanations of how the earth, solar system, plants, animals and humans came to be. One of the major difficulties in such explanations is the repetition of light on days one and four. Here is part of the issue expressed in a fair and honest question: “If the sun, moon, and stars were not created until the fourth day, then how was there light on day one?” And again, “If there was no sun for the first three days, then how was there day and night without earthly rotation in a solar orbit?” These questions are easily answered. The word *create* is not used on those days for the light and sun. It may have simply been *made visible*—perhaps by a dispersion of the swaddling band of clouds. The heavens and the earth were created in verse one, before the *creative week* began. These questions do not mean that anything stated in the scriptural account is untrue. But they may mean that trying to interpret Genesis one as a scientific explanation of things misses the point the scriptures are making.

The coming of Christ into the world at His birth was a light. We have shown several scriptures that speak of it as such, and there is a further abundance that bear testimony to the same thing. And His resurrection in the early dawning hours of the third day was also a light—a light that is still shining through us. The first segment of Christ’s life as a man was primarily concerned with judgment. This corresponds to the first three days of creation which were concerned with divisions, or judgments. His life was under close scrutiny by the Father, by the Jewish world, by the spiritual realm, and especially under the close scrutiny of Satan. Christ had to live humanity’s life without sin. And His bearing of the sin of humanity on the cross was not judgment upon sin in the flesh alone. It was also judgment upon the world system and judgment upon the head of the world system, Satan, the one to whom the kingdoms of this world had been committed.

After resurrection, Christ was exalted to the throne of God, to exercise authority in the Father’s stead as God’s living Image. This exercise of authority will continue throughout the kingdom eras, which include the remainder of this current eon, following His resurrection, and throughout the two oncoming eons. At the close of the third kingdom eon Christ will hand back to His Father a completed kingdom in which God will be All in all members of the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:20-28). This will include all beings of heaven and earth. They will have come under the headship of Christ—some by faith before the kingdom and many more by the ministry of those who are in Christ during the kingdom (Eph. 1:10). Every knee will bow and every tongue acclaim that Jesus Christ is their Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11). This corresponds to the second half of the creation week. There the emphasis is on ruling and filling all the areas previously judged. The creation week comes to a climax with humanity coming to be in the image of God. After the ruling is completed, all will be at peace with God, and the spaces that were judged and divided will have been filled. Then will come the seventh day in which God rests. Ruling will be completed, and the temporary assignments of authority exercised during the kingdom eons by the believers will be obsolete and be discarded.

The filling of creation with the sons of God is not accomplished by natural reproduction, but by re-creation. The natural growth of humanity provides the people, but the filling of each one with the Spirit of God is what makes them sons. This is emphasized in Christ’s life. Christ did not have the Spirit in partial measure, like other humans, but in fullness (Jn. 3:34). The fullness of godness dwelt in Christ, and, in Him, we also will be filled with the same fullness (Col. 2:9, 10; Eph. 3:19). Christ is the One Who fills, or completes all (Eph. 1:23; 4:10).

We have seen that creation in Genesis one is divided into a two-step process. First there was a creation of areas, then there was a filling and ruling of the areas to complete them. This matches the life of humans, as Paul illustrates with resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44: “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” (AVNS) The two-step process is creation and re-creation. We see this in Christ with His virgin birth and His resurrection birth. And we have seen how this fits the pattern of God’s creation of Israel and of the re-creation of believers. I propose to you that the creation account in Genesis one is patterned after Christ, to glorify Him, and was not intended to satisfy our scientific curiosity. Instead, it supplies an album of portraits that nourish the love of Christ within us. Many have said that Genesis one was not intended as a scientific explanation. We hope that tracing these creation patterns through the scriptures will aid us in realizing the true intention.

In Genesis 1:1 God created the heavens and the earth. The heavens mentioned here are not the heavens, or atmosphere associated with planet earth. Those heavens were created later, on the second day, and were named after the heavens of verse one, because of their similar function. Paul wrote to the Colossians, “…in Him [Christ, the Son of His love] is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible…” (Col. 1:16). These words may be used to construct the following chiasm:

That in the heavens

That on the earth

The visible

The invisible

So we pair together earth and visible, and we pair together heavens and invisible. If we take Paul’s words as inspired commentary on Genesis 1, we understand the first verse to speak of two realms of creation: (1) the invisible realm of spiritual beings referred to as the heavens, and, (2) the tangible, visible realm in which humanity lives and perceives.

When we come to the last two chapters of Revelation, we are coming to the visionary description of the new creation. In the final vision of chapter 20, John perceived the great white throne. Chapter 21 commences with his vision of a new heaven and new earth, and the curious statement, “and the sea is no more” (v. 1 CV). Does this mean there will be no oceans or seas on the new earth? Possibly, but I do not expect God’s creation to lose the whole realm of marine life that is dependent upon the seas. As we compare Revelation 21 with Genesis 1, we see that the role of the waters in Genesis was to depict a scene of desolation and emptiness. And, as we have applied the pictures of Israel, believers and Christ to the creation account, we have seen the oceans playing the role of death. What unfolds before us in the book of Revelation is the opposite of chaos and vacancy. Rather John beholds beautiful visions of life, order and peace. The Old Testament also used the stormy billowing sea as a figure for God’s judgments and to illustrate the overwhelming destruction caused by invading armies. In a context that is paved with O. T. figures, it seems likely that the absence of death and destruction is the primary thought behind the words, “the sea is no more.” This view is corroborated by the verses following.

John’s next perceptions were the sight of the new Jerusalem descending from heaven and the sound of a voice out of the throne. The throne that is referred to here is the great white throne. This is confirmed by the use of the definite article preceding the word throne. If this throne were different from the great white throne, the definite article would have been omitted, or additional information would have been given to identify it. So, what John hears is a decree from the great white throne—that throne’s first recorded decree. It comes to us in chiasmic form:

**LO!** The tabernacle of God is with mankind

**AND** He will be tabernacling with them,

**AND** they will be His peoples,

**AND** God Himself will be with them.

**AND** He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes.

**AND** death will be no more,

**NOR** mourning,

**NOR** clamor,

**NOR** misery; they will be no more, for the former things passed away…

**LO!** New am I making all!” (Rev. 21:3-5 CV).

While there does not seem to be clear and direct correspondence between all the related terms in the chiasm, there is a definite symmetry which we would expect from a decree from the throne. The first and last members begin with the command to look or behold—Lo! The first four of the enclosed elements are all positive statements about humanity’s new position in close relation to God. These are set in contrast to the next four members which are all negative statements about the removal of woeful characteristics that plagued the old creation. The entrance of God and the exit of sorrows bring forth the exclamation that all will be made new. The fact that this proclamation from the throne divides into ten elements, answers to the ten divine fiats of creation in Genesis one.

The account of the old creation in Genesis one was followed by God’s placement of humanity in the Garden of Eden. Here, the vision of the new heaven and new earth is followed by the vision of new Jerusalem descending to the earth. This holy city is the garden of old, but matured, filled, and perfected. The tree of life remains. Mankind has tasted the forbidden fruit and had the eyes of his understanding opened to both good and evil. Now the imparting of immortality to all is the remaining work of the kingdom. Humanity has multiplied to such immensity that what once was a garden must now be a city, but it is a city that retains all the elements of beauty and restfulness found in a garden.

When Adam was placed in the garden, he was instructed to ***serve*** and ***guard*** the garden (Gen. 2:15). He did not serve it long, because he failed to guard against Satan’s deception. The guardianship was given back to the cherubim, the guardians of God’s presence in the heavens. This shows us that the garden of Eden had been a place of God’s presence on earth. When God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, the Levites were commissioned to ***serve*** and ***guard*** the holy places (Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-7). David also passed on this commission of ***serving*** and ***guarding*** to the Levites with regard to the temple and to Solomon with regard to ruling the people (1 Chron. 23:32; 28:8, 9; see also Ezek. 44:14; Mal. 3:14). The presence of cherubim in these holy places portrays these holy places as progressive replacements for Eden and patterns of God’s holy place in the heavens. Humanity failed to guard and serve in the garden and was expelled. The Levites failed to guard and serve in the tabernacle and temple, and Eli’s whole lineage was destroyed. The kings failed their commission of guarding and serving, and the nation went into captivity. But in Revelation 22, God’s servants will ***serve*** Him (v. 3). And they will not need to guard, because the enemies will be put under Christ’s feet, but they will ***reign*** with Him (v. 5).

John’s vision also leads into that seventh day of rest, the Sabbath from working, of which no ending eve is recorded. He tells us there will be no night there (Rev. 21:25). The work of Christ is to make all new. His cross is truly the tree of life. Those who have tasted of the fruit of that tree have had their eyes opened to see themselves, not in nakedness and shame, but dressed in the righteousness and glory of God. In the new creation the barrier between the visible and invisible will be torn down. Man will possess the vision to see those things to which we are now so blind. What was represented in Eden by the unclosing of Adam’s and Eve’s eyes will then be fulfilled.

Section 5: The New Creation in Ephesians

In the Old Testament we have a great deal said about sacrifices, and we understand that those sacrifices were, in different ways and in varying degrees, all typical representations of the sacrifice of Christ. And so we can say that the sacrifices found their fulfillment in Christ. But we do not so often think of creation as being typical and having its fulfillment in the New Testament. And yet, that is exactly the case, and much of the fulfillment of the creation narratives is presented to us in the book of Ephesians. What we find in Ephesians relates more to the second account of creation, given in Genesis 2 and 3, than it does to the account of the seven days in Genesis 1, which we have seen illustrated in the creation of Israel and the creation of the individual believer. When the Scriptures speak of Christ as the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45); and when the Scriptures speak of the church being one with Christ as Adam and Eve were one (Eph. 5:25-32); and when they speak of a new humanity being created in Christ Jesus, they are telling us that the saving message of Jesus Christ is a message of re-creation. And much of that re-creation is patterned after the old creation, or, rather, the old creation was prophetic of the new. Paul used the physical relationship of Adam and Eve to represent the spiritual relationship of the believer to Christ: “For the two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:16-17 AV). The ellipsis here is: *he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit* ***with the Lord***. Paul gives us another expression of this same thought in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (AV). God’s grace and our belief make us one with Christ. The term *body of Christ* appears to be the development of the thought of marital oneness, after that concept has made the leap from the physical to the spiritual. We are one spirit with Christ and are therefore His body. Added to the concept, of course, is the diversity of the members of the body. Allusions to the creation accounts abound in Ephesians, and we hope that by pointing some of them out with brief comments we will show that the new creation is one of the major themes of this letter to the churches.

We will begin with Ephesians 1:4, 5: “…according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus” (CV). Two aspects of our being chosen in Christ call the creation to mind. (1) The phrase, “before the disruption of the world,” is given as, “before the foundation of the world” in the Authorized Version. If we understand the disruption to represent the period of darkness between Genesis one verses one and two, then the choosing precedes the seven days of restoration and creation. If we understand the choosing to be before the foundation of the world, then we push the choosing back to a time associated with the first verse of the Bible. Either choice brings the creation to mind. (2) The phrase, “the place of a son for Him,” is the thought, “the place of a son of God.” For the believer this title shows an imparting of life from God which changes the believer’s identity. It implies a creative act of God. So our identity was tied to the creation accounts before we even existed.

In Ephesians 1:10 Paul speaks of *an administration of the remaining time periods in God’s purpose* (also 3:11), *to bring all in the heavens and earth under the headship of Christ*. The heavens and earth mentioned here are the same realms as in Genesis 1:1. The re-joining of heaven and earth is in view here in Ephesians, because it is a single administration under Christ which incorporates both realms—heaven and earth—the invisible and the visible, into one unified kingdom. They will be joined, much as they were joined in Eden when man was to serve and guard the garden. It is the same joining that was represented by Solomon’s ivory throne in which the footstool (the earth God’s footstool) and the throne (heaven is God’s throne) were bolted together into one unit. It is the same joining we have spoken of in Revelation 22 when the tabernacle of God will be with mankind. This vital union of heaven and earth is one of the primary purposes of the kingdom.

Eden was a place where man and God saw each other and communicated. Eden was a place where heaven and earth met. Eden was a door between heaven and earth—a door between the visible and the invisible—a door between the spiritual and the physical. And when man was ejected from Eden for failing to guard it from Satan, the cherubim, guardians of the presence of God, kept that precious door secure. God gave that door of access to man again, when He gave Israel the tabernacle. It was a model of the true holy place in the heavens. But Israel failed to guard that too, and so also the temple. And the doorway between man and God was lost behind a veil of darkness and ignorance until the dawning of the advent of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Part of the purpose of our being chosen in Christ is to fill the manpower vacancies in the administration that will reunite heaven and earth. We can reflect back to verse 3 now and see that “every spiritual blessing among the celestials,” that we have been blessed with, relates to being graced to participate in that administration.

In 1:18 a special phrase used: “His [God the Father’s] allotment among the saints.” We have been speaking of the saints having an allotment in the future administration, but here is mention of *God’s allotment*. The future administration should not be viewed only as what the believers do under Christ’s headship, but what God does through the believers. Paul is alluding to Deuteronomy 32. That is the same chapter we have quoted from previously to show God’s covenant relationship with Israel figured as a creation. “For the portion of Yahweh is His people; *Jacob is the line of His allotment*” (Deut. 32:9 CV). Just as Israel was the hand of God under the administration of law, the body of Christ is God’s hand during the administration of grace. God provides Himself a new allotment for His new work.

But we are not yet ready for participation in that administration, in fact, we stumble at grasping it and its overwhelming dimensions. So Paul pours out a prayer for the saints, that they would be enabled to perceive three things prepared for them by God, the Father of glory. He prays that they would come to an understanding of: (1) what the expectation of their calling is; (2) what the glorious enjoyment of Christ’s allotment among the saints consists of; (3) and what the transcendent greatness of God’s power is for believers. It requires faith and enlightenment to grasp these things.

As soon as Paul reaches the third item—the greatness of God’s power for believers—he launches into a series of clauses that describe how great this power is. And his example for the display of God’s great power is Christ. But what is so enlightening about this description of God’s power, is that when we come to the first verse of chapter 2 Paul says, “And you”—referring to the believers. Then, for every element of God’s power displayed in Christ, Paul presents a parallel display of God’s power on behalf of the believers. Ephesians 1:19-23 should be studied in parallel with Ephesians 2:1-10. We will briefly present these parallels, and see that they lead up to a very important point about the new creation.

The great power of God operated in Christ raising Him from the dead (1:20). This parallels Paul’s description of the believers in their prior condition of sin and alienation from God (2:1-3). Paul continues, “…yet God…vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together” (vv. 4-6). Paul speaks here of both our future change to immortality—vivification—and the life imparted to us by God’s Spirit when we believe. And both of these are described as happening in and with Christ. It is an act of the great power of God to take people, as good as dead in their sins, and enliven them with His Spirit, and then transform them into immortal celestial beings. Next, in chapter 1, God exercised His great power when He seated Christ at His right hand among the celestials up over sovereignties, authorities, powers, lordships, and every name that is named (1:20, 21). In parallel with this, after God’s power makes us immortal, He will seat us among the celestials also with Christ. And as Christ’s seating is established with the highest authority—over every name that is named—so our seating is “in Christ.” Our seating is with Him Whose name is above every name. It is given to us to share His prestige. Next, in chapter 1, God delegates His power and authority to Christ, over all celestial beings, not only in this age, but also in the age or eon that is impending (1:22). In parallel with this, “in the oncoming eons” God’s will “be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (2:7). Next, in chapter 1, God subjects all under His (Christ’s) feet—this reaches throughout the impending eon, and even into the final eon—and then Paul steps back to the present eon we are living in and says that God gives Christ, as Head over all, to the church, or, ecclesia, which is His body, and which is the complement of the One—Christ—Who is completing the all in all (1:22, 23). There are two areas in this last point. The subject of this point is the Headship of Christ. The Headship of Christ will reach universal proportions through the subjection of all to Him—that is yet future, but currently Christ is given as Head over all to the ecclesia, which is His complement. We pause just a moment to notice this because the same two areas will be mentioned in the parallel, and because the Headship of Christ over the ecclesia is the type of His Headship over all when the work of subjection is completed. In parallel with this—that is, in parallel with the second part we just mentioned—God giving Christ as Head over all to the ecclesia—Paul mentions that the believer’s salvation is of grace through faith, not of us, but God’s approach present. Obviously we have nothing to boast in, but must prostrate ourselves in overwhelming humility and glorify our Savior. Then, in parallel with the subjecting of all that will take place in the coming eons, Paul says we are God’s achievement, “being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them” (2:10). What are these good works? I do not wish to detract from the application of this verse in our present life. I believe there are works here that God is preparing before us. And yet, I do not want to repeat the common mistake of emphasizing the present application to the point of ignoring the obvious insinuation of the parallel—that God has prepared works for us to walk in in the future subjection of the universe to Christ. And the first use of the term *complement* (1:23), to describe believers as the ones who function as His helper, comes in this context of the subjection of all to Him. These expressions about God’s power for believers have brought us back to 1:10 and the administration of the complement of the eras—to head up all in Christ! So allow me to make a feeble attempt at describing the transcendent power of God for us who are believing. God, by His great power, and through His unfathomable love, takes weak, contemptible, dying sinners, glorifies them, and exalts them to be the companions of the King and Darling of the throne room of heaven! Are you ready for that? And He designates them as the helpers of Christ in subjecting the universe to Him!

This parallel description of God’s power comes to a climax in verse 10 with the words, “created in Christ Jesus.” And Paul is just about to introduce a new term for what is being created, but first he must digress to speak of the Jews, so that he can include them in the new term. That new expression is *the new humanity.* The joining of heaven and earth that was mentioned previously, and the implementation of the administration that will accomplish that joining is still future. **Before it can be implemented, the humanity must be created that will be the tenant of the holy place/garden/temple where heaven and earth join.**

In Ephesians 2:10 we see that, in God’s grace, we are being created in Christ Jesus for the good works of being tenants of the new creation. When Paul uses the phrase *new man* in Ephesians (2:15; 4:24), the word for *man* is *anthropos*, which can be translated *mankind,* or, *humanity¸* as well as *man.* And since Paul is addressing the body of male and female believers, *humanity* is certainly a term of preference to express Paul’s thought. Similarly, in the creation accounts, the word used to describe the creation of man is *adm*, or, *Adam*, which means *mankind,* or, *humanity*, and includes both male and female. **The term: *new man,* or, *new humanity,* only occurs in Ephesians, and that term itself declares that the new creation is in view.**

Who made up the old humanity? Originally, it consisted of Adam and his complement Eve. Later is grew to include all of the descendants of Adam and Eve—all of humanity in terms as we think of it today. Who makes up the new humanity? Originally it consists of Christ and his complement, the church, or, ecclesia. Later it will grow to include all who are reconciled to God through the ministry of Christ and His church.

In Ephesians 2:11, 12 Paul speaks of the nations in flesh and of Israel in flesh. Even though Israel had the symbol of the cutting off of the flesh, they could only enter what that represented by faith, not by law-keeping. But in Christ Jesus, people from both of the fleshly groups are being made into ***a new spiritual humanity***, which has access to the Father in one Spirit. Paul then mentions the tangible wall of the Jewish temple which prevented access by people of the nations to the areas closer to the holy places which were accessible only to the Jews. In the making of the new humanity, that barrier wall is torn down, because, in God’s sight, there is no longer a difference between Jews and people of the nations. But Paul is actually referring to more than one barrier wall because the blood of Christ provides *access to the Father*. Those curtain-walls of the temple and tabernacle are also torn down. The veil was torn in two from the top to the bottom when Christ died on the cross. Access to the presence of God had only been allowed to the priest, and only once a year, and only by the blood of sacrifice. Now it is open. The door of heaven is open!

After taking us this far, Paul changes the figure of expression from entering holy places of the temple to ***being*** the temple of God—God entering the believer—God entering the new humanity. Notice the figurative expressions of construction and growth: “being ***built on the foundation*** of the apostles and prophets, ***the capstone of the corner*** being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom the ***entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple*** in the Lord: in Whom you, also ***are being built together for God’s dwelling place***, in spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22 CV). The new humanity and the dwelling place of God are the same thing. During this first age of the kingdom in which we are living, the garden—the holy place—the dwelling place of God, is being constructed. It is being constructed by the calling out of the members of the body of Christ. It is being constructed by the assembling of the members of the church. It is growing through the saving and maturing of believers. It is growing as the new humanity grows in number. The old humanity grows by the birthing of babies, but the new humanity grows by people coming to a realization of God’s love and believing in Christ.

I would like to jump ahead to Ephesians 3:14, 15. There we read: “On this behalf am I bowing my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, after Whom every kindred in the heavens and on earth is being named…” This passage reminds me of Adam naming the animals in the creation narrative in Genesis 2. That was an unusual passage which seemed strange to me for a long time, but I think I have finally come to understand it. It begins with God saying that it was not good for Adam to be alone, and that He would make a suitable helper for him. Then God brought all the animals to Adam for him to name. Then it says that there was no suitable helper found for Adam—almost as if he was looking for one among the animals—and yet God had already said that He would make Adam’s helper. The naming of the animals was a learning process for Adam. As he looked at the animals, Adam could see that a bull and a cow were not identical, but they were the same species, and they belonged together. He could see that a male and female elephant were not identical, but yet they belonged together. And he could see that there was no suitable mate for him. There was no one with whom he could propagate his species. The Hebrew word (*n-g-d neged*)used with *helper,* and which we have given as *suitable,* is said to have the root idea of *stand* (Parkhurst), but when used as a particle, as it is here, it bears the idea of *before, in the presence of,* or, *before the eyes of*. The male and female cow could stand before each other as suitable counterparts. The male and female elephant could stand before each other as suitable counterparts. But there was no creature to stand beside Adam. He had no counterpart.

Jesus Christ, the image of God, became flesh, truly became a man. To us, He looked like us. But to God He was still different from us in that He was righteous and the light of life. We are unrighteous mortals. And now, having died and been raised, Christ is an immortal celestial being, while we are terrestrial beings. *We are not* ***now*** *the same species as Christ—*we are still the old humanity, and Christ is the new. And now through His wounding, and His passing the *deep sleep* of death, we are being built into the body which is a suitable helper for Him. Through the re-creation of redemption, we become the same species as Christ. And from God, we receive the name of a new Fatherhood. This is how the new humanity is being created.

It is interesting that the O. T. views nations as families and descendants of a progenitor. This characteristic of the biblical viewpoint stands out especially in Genesis chapter 10, a passage often called the table of nations, and also the first 10 chapters of 1 Chronicles. The most obvious example is the nation of Israel which takes its name from the name God gave to Jacob. And sometimes the nation is called Jacob. Another example is Caphtorim, a name applied to the Philistines in Deuteronomy 2:23 and 3 or 4 other places. Genesis 10:14 speaks of that family group. Amalek is another example, and sons of Anak is another. Here’s the point. Humanity is made up of kindreds, or, fatherhoods, which take their name from a common ancestor. But as the gospel of Jesus Christ spreads, and people come under His headship, they are receiving a new name which has its source in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Naming was a part of creation which showed the authority of the namer over that which was named. God called the light, *day*, and the darkness, *night*. God brought the animals before Adam, and whatever he called them became their name (Gen. 2:19, 20). Psalm 8 takes up these creative events and presents man’s authority over the animals as his commission from creation. In Hebrews 2:5-11 the 8th Psalm is referred to as representing Christ, the perfect Man, and the subjection of the animals to mankind represents the subjection of all beings to Christ. So while Adam’s naming of creatures relates to the first creation, Christ’s authority and the naming in Paul’s prayer relate to the new creation. Ephesians 3:15 speaks of the name of every *kindred*, or, *fatherhood* in the heavens and on earth having its source in God the Father. The mention of heavens and earth together take us back again to the administration in chapter 1 that will bring all in the heavens and earth under the headship of Christ. This is for the completing of God’s purpose of the ages in the remaining time periods, to re-create all. It is through the exaltation of the Son to the throne of the Father, and by means of the Son’s administration through His body that the re-creation process will be completed. Remember that we have said that the redemption and deliverance from corruption is the re-creation process. This is in agreement with Paul’s statement in Colossians: “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself—by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (1:20).

Paul closes this second prayer with a definite reference to the new creation, and he calls our attention back to his mention in the first prayer of God’s power for believers. Notice verses 20 and 21: Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!” First, the eon of the eons is the final eon in God’s purpose. It is the eon of the new heaven and new earth. God is able to do far above and beyond all that we are requesting, and far beyond all we understand. And this *doing* of God is in accord with the power that operates in us—which is the same power that has been operating and is operating in Christ. And God, the Father of glory, is going to be glorified through the operation of His power in Christ and the church for all the generations of the eon of the eons. This prayer began by speaking of every fatherhood, or kindred in heaven and earth being named from the Father. Who are all the generations of the final eon? They are all those raised to the great white throne. God will be glorified by our labor under Christ’s headship and through the Father’s power for all generations of humanity, and all the generated sons of God in the heavens for their re-creating and renaming in Him.

Terminology

Now let’s get hold of the figures that come into view in Ephesians, before they confuse us. Thus far we have mentioned: *chosen ones, sons of God, administrators in the future eras of the kingdom, the church,* or, *ecclesia—*which means, *out-called ones,* *a new humanity*, or, *mankind*—a *new man* in the AV—*the body of Christ, the complement of Christ, the temple—God’s dwelling place*. All these terms refer to believers*.* And all these terms allude to, if they don’t loudly declare, that God is making a *new humanity*.

One of these terms, *complement* merits a more detailed description because of its own unique allusions and thoughts. The complement is *that which fills up or completes*. The English O. T. term for complement is *meet*, or, *suitable,* and we have also suggested *counterpart*. Eve was Adam’s complement. She was a helper who was *suitable* for him. She completed him. He could not fulfill God’s commission to multiply and fill and rule the earth without her. In Ephesians 1:23 the ecclesia is “the complement of the One completing the all in all. In the third chapter Paul speaks of believers being completed for the entire complement of God (v. 19). In the fourth chapter Paul speaks of the church as the complement of Christ (v. 13). Notice how these terms and the thought of their contexts take us back to creation, if they have not already launched us into the new creation. The complement refers back to Adam and Eve. In chapter 5 Paul wrote: “For this ‘a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.’ This secret is great: yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia” (vv. 31, 32). When God caused the deep sleep to fall upon Adam, He *built* a woman from the rib. He *built* a complement from the rib. The temple of believers in chapter 2, which is God’s dwelling place in spirit, is repeatedly referred to as being built, but also as growing. It is reflecting the terminology of the creation record in Genesis as it does this.

As we continue following the thought of new creation, we see that the prayer of chapter 3 is for inner strengthening for the indwelling of Christ and for grasping the full dimensions of our calling, and the rich blessings of that calling. Our growth in these realizations is necessary for us to be filled, or completed for the entire complement of God. What does it mean to be part of the *entire complement of God,* or, to be filled with *the entire fullness of God?* In Christ the entire complement of godness was dwelling bodily (Col. 2:9). Here in Ephesians it is speaking of believers being filled full with God, as Christ was. While Christ is the Complement of God, we are the complement of Christ. It seems *the entire complement of God* is a term signifying Christ and His complement fully united. Yet this is not solely a filling of individuals, but rather a corporate filling. It is as the new humanity that we will become Christ’s complement and also become God’s image.

There is another expression of this thought in chapter 4: “…for the upbuilding of the body of Christ unto the end that we should all attain to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ” (4:13 CV). Eve was the complement of Adam. But there is a very significant difference between Adam’s complement and Christ’s complement. Adam’s complement was female. Christ’s complement is male. We are to be another Christ. We are to be sons, because then we are represented as ones to whom authority can be delegated. Ephesians 4:13 does not say that we are to attain to the realization of ***a***son of God, but we are to attain to the realization of ***the*** son of God. Again, we are to become another Christ. That is why there must be a re-creation—so that we can become a new humanity—so that we can become the body of Christ—so that we can become the dwelling place of God. The book of Galatians draws a line of demarcation for us that divides the eon in which we live. Under the law, Israel was seen as a child that was under the authority of an escort. When one is designated son—whether male or female—they are seen as having come of age to handle the father’s property with his authority. The era of immaturity is seen as being behind us, with God’s Spirit in us it is time to move on to maturity.

“Now, being true, in love we should be making all grow into Him, Who is the Head—Christ—out of Whom the entire body, being articulated together and united through every assimilation of the supply, in accord with the operation in measure of each one’s part, is making for the growth of the body, for the upbuilding of itself in love” (4:15, 16). Chapters 4 through 6 deal primarily with our conduct. These two verses tell us why. Through love and service to each other, our goal is to make every believer grow and develop into a Christ. We are to mature. We are to become more and more like Him. You may have a great career. Perhaps you spent years in college preparing for it. That is all fine and good. Maybe you have no formal education. That is fine too. I have no criticism of either condition. But in all honesty, your career is something you do along the way. The goal of your life is to come to know God and to become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Nothing else is as important as that. And one of the best ways to do it is the pleasant task of helping others do it—loving them and helping them grow in Christ.

Did you realize there were so many allusions to creation in the book of Ephesians? There is one more we want to mention briefly, and it is very significant. The heartbreak of the first creation is that humanity failed to stand against the Adversary and became mortal through the sin of disobedience. How exhilarating it is then to read Paul’s words in Ephesians 6:10-11: “For the rest, brethren mine, be invigorated in the Lord and in the might of His strength. Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the strategems of the Adversary…” “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said…?” (Gen. 3:1 AV). “Now the serpent, it became more crafty than any other animal of the field that Yahweh Elohim had made. The serpent said to the woman: Indeed did Elohim say…?” (Gen. 3:1 CV). Here we have the craftiness, the subtlety, the wily strategies of the Adversary. And here we have the complement, not the complement of Adam, but the complement of Christ, being exhorted to stand up to those strategies and not be deceived by them.

“Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the strategems of the Adversary, for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh”—there is an ellipsis here; allow me to fill it in—“…it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but ***it is ours to wrestle*** with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials.” And we will win! Christ has already overcome by faith. We are in Him and we will win! Adam and Eve were naked. But we are clothed and armed, and we are exhorted to stand. We are the complement of Christ. We are becoming the new humanity, the mature son of God, and we will reach the full measure and stature of Christ’s complement! And God’s calling to us in Christ is to take a stand. Adam was naked, but we are clothed and armed, and by faith we are standing on the soil of Eden—we have ascended the hill of Eden, and we are taking it back! But we are not taking it back as a garden only, but as a garden city, because our numbers have grown and are continuing to grow. We are not just taking back the garden, but we are taking back the humanity that was born and that died there. And they, with us, are becoming the companions of the King and Darling of heaven! The Spirit of God is within us. We are standing in the place of the veil of the temple, we are guardians of the door between heaven and earth, and under the Headship of Jesus Christ, and by His power, we are taking back the world and all its kingdoms, and we are making them the kingdom of our Lord and His Father. And we are participating in making all things new. This is the message of the new creation in the book of Ephesians. And this is what eonian life is all about.

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