

A NEW CREATION

Our enemy, the prince of the power of the air—Satan is perpetually twisting God’s truth. He continually whispers in our ears, often what we want to hear, encouraging self-direction.

21st century mankind has medical knowledge and scientific plans for renewable avatar bodies that will house your memories and consciousness. We are moving towards a **NEW CREATION** that is independent from decay or disease.

The Apostle Paul said, “what counts is a **NEW CREATION**” (Galatians 6:15b).

What **NEW CREATION** was the Apostle Paul referring to?

It has been a challenge for the two houses of Israel to grasp the concept of a **NEW CREATION**. God gave them His Law, so that they could learn to live loving one another and loving God. In their self-determined manner, they failed over and over again. God gave them His sacrificial system, so that they could feel and understand the consequences of their sinful actions. While they practiced and embraced the sacrificial system as a way to clean themselves of sin, they continued to sin without any thought of change.



Early in ancient Israel’s history, the house of Jacob, which comprised of the ten tribes turned away from God and worshiped the gods of the nations around them. They craved the ways of the nations. They said, “We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone” (Ezekiel 20:32). The gods over the nations demanded worship and obedience in exchange for self-gratification and self-glory, which only the elite obtained. The ordinary people were oppressed and beaten into servitude. The whispers from the prince who has power of the air, lied to the people of the house of Israel promising independence, instead they became more and more enslaved.

The house of Judah took a different path. While early in their history, they followed the ten tribes into the sinful ways of the nations, but after their captivity, they repented and over time many returned to their original homeland. They became the protectors of the oracles of God. But, that deceitful prince who has power of the air, had plans for these people. If he can’t destroy them, like he did their brothers who departed from God and became godless and unrighteous, he would destroy them another way. He would praise them for their faithfulness, remind them that they are now the only chosen people left, and feed their pride, until they became self-righteous and puffed up. He would encourage the elders to add to God’s Law through their expertise, formulate their own traditions that would eventually replace the Law

of God. These elders preached a law now filled with their traditions that trapped the people into believing that salvation can only be achieved through human effort—works that were a result of nothing more than self-directed, self-reliant, and self-driven effort. The Apostle Paul confronted the Apostle Peter on a critical issue that has confused Christians into the 21st century, “How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?” (Galatians 2:14b).



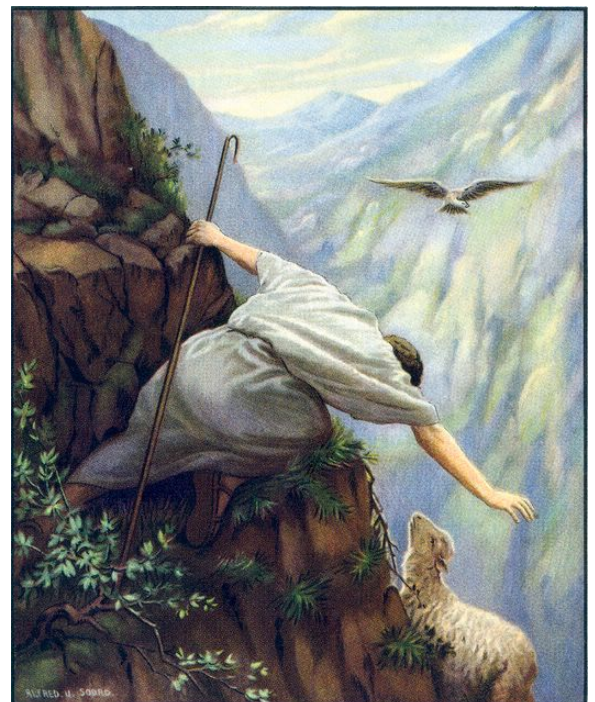
The Jewish customs had been added, as if they were the Law of God.

God promised Abraham, the father of these people, that He would be a God to him and his descendants forever. God fore-knew the journey they would take that is why he did not intervene when Abraham accepted Hagar, the slave girl to be a mother and birth Ishmael. The first child born represents the people born without the promise of salvation; they are born as slaves to sin destined for death. All people initially live as a slave to sin, destined for death. **We are all children of Hagar until we repent.**

Isaac was **promised** to both Sarah and Abraham when Sarah could not conceive. Isaac’s conception required intervention by God Almighty. Isaac represents the people who repent, accept God’s grace through Christ’s sacrifice and experience a miraculous re-birth through the free woman who is the faithful church and receive God’s Holy Spirit where now, eternal life will become their reality upon Christ’s return (Galatians 4). They are not subject to death; they are Abraham’s children—the children of promise. It is ever so simple, but not for those who hold onto traditions and people blinded by God for their transgressions.

So many traditions introduced by the religious leaders interfere with the truth. That wily Satan is continually at work. The Jewish leaders did not want to let go of their traditions; they enjoyed the spotlight from their front row, the people humbling themselves before them, and the ostentatious clothing and head dressing as they performed their traditions.

Two matters that Jesus and Apostle Paul addressed were: the ceremonial washing-of-hands tradition of the elders and circumcision. These deserve an explanation.



The matter of Ceremonial Washing-of-Hands

“Then some Pharisees and teachers of the Law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ‘Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!’” (Matthew 15:1-2)

Jesus replied that they have a **fine way of setting aside the commandments of God in order to observe their own traditions** (Mark 7:9). He responded, “God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death’” (Matthew 15:1-4).

The Jews knew the commandments of God and when they were inconvenienced by any one of the commandments, they created a way to justify themselves by adding a by-law. Christ was bringing to their attention all of the by-laws their elders had introduced and incorporated, which were enforced as if they were God’s commanded laws.

“Jesus called the crowd to him and said, ‘Listen and understand. What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean’” (Matthew 15:10-11).

Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them.

We are all still so very dull when it comes to understanding spiritual matters.

Christ added, “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean’” (Matthew 15:17-20).

The washing of hands before a meal or touching contaminated items is an excellent hygienic practice, but it does not remove sinful thoughts that lead to breaking God’s commandments. It maybe wise to consider, while washing your hands before a meal, getting down on your knees and asking God for a spiritually rich meal that will be full of knowledge and a heart to take it in. A wicked and sin-driven person with clean hands will never enter into the kingdom of God.

The matter of Circumcision

“This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and **it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you**” (Genesis 17:10-11).

God wants the descendants of Abraham to be circumcised; it shall be a sign between God and these people. But, what sign?

Abraham was circumcised at the age of 99 years old, thirteen years after Ishmael was born. Ismael was a result of Abraham and Sarah **relying on themselves, and their own logic and effort** to force the promise given to Abraham by God of a son (Genesis 13 and Genesis 15).

The circumcision covenant was an ever-lasting agreement that the people of Israel would no longer rely on themselves, but rely and trust on God for His knowledge, understanding and wisdom. The instrument Abraham used to produce Ishmael was cut to show this compliance to relying on and trusting in God. Removing the desire of self: reliance, direction and glory is a painful experience. Abraham was willing to do that, in addition, Sarah too obeyed God, so Isaac was conceived and born from a free woman, a church believing and trusting in God (Galatians 4).

While physical circumcision is an outward sign of a humble, repentant God-fearing and God-serving believer, it is not the ticket into salvation. The circumcision group in Apostle Paul's time taught only the physical view of this spiritual matter. These misguided Jews were forcing Gentiles back onto the physical path instead of the spiritual walk taught by Paul. "Those who want to make a good impression **outwardly** are trying to compel you to be circumcised" (Galatians 6:12). Circumcision was both a physical and spiritual sign; evidence that a believer was reborn and growing into a NEW CREATION, one that God so longs to see in us.



For the Jewish religious leaders and the Pharisees in Jesus' day, and all teachers then and today, Christ has very strong words against those who teach anything that is not in the Bible.

Woe to the teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! (Matthew 23)

1. You shut the kingdom of heaven to men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.
2. You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.
3. Blind guides! You say, "If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath. You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?"
4. You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.
5. You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

6. You are like the whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.
7. You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, "If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets." You testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

You will not see Christ again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39).

Our very existence on this earth is all about coming to see who we really are in the grand plan. We are all fragile, mortal beings who drink iniquity like it is water (Job 15:16). Of ourselves, we can do nothing (II Corinthians 3:5), so why seek self-determination, self-reliance and self-glory.

The matter of humility.

"The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So, you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for **they do not practice what they preach**. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move



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them. **Everything they do is done for men to see:** They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their prayer shawls long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them Rabbi. **But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. THE GREATEST AMONG YOU WILL BE YOUR SERVANT. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted"** (Matthew 23:1-12).

A God-fearing and God-serving believer will research the traditions of their religion and test them. The Jewish traditions are not the only ones that should be evaluated and tested, Christians have their own: Christmas, Easter and Sunday worship.

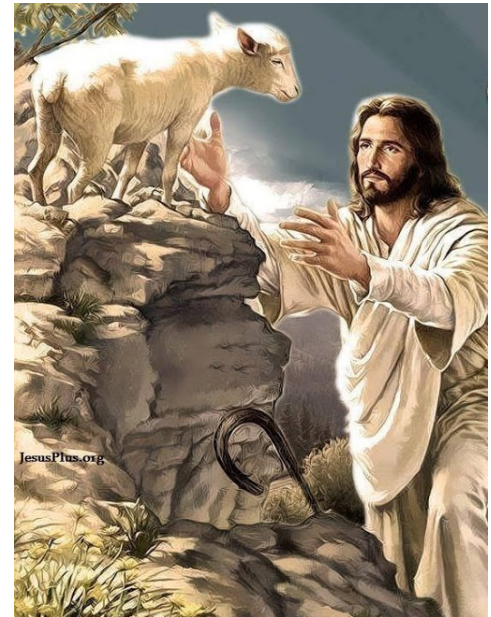
God has looked far into our future and He knows **all** of us. He opened that Book of Life before the creation of the world and began writing. He saw a **NEW CREATION** forming: beautiful people, holy and blameless. "In love **HE PREDESTINED US TO BE ADOPTED AS HIS SONS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST...** to the glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding" (Ephesians 1:4-8).

“Predestined before the creation of the world” is a fascinating statement. The Jews in the 21st century believe they remain the only “chosen” people. The Apostle Paul teaches that salvation was given to the Gentiles. These Gentiles are comprised of two groups: the brothers of the Jews—the ten tribes of Israel and all of the nations of the world. In addition, to the saving of the whole world, God is going to choose as His people, the twelve—all twelve tribes of Israel **AGAIN**.

“The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; **once again he will choose Israel** and will settle them in their own land. **Foreigners will join them and unite with the descendants of Jacob**” (Isaiah 14:1).

The forgotten ten tribes of Israel are foremost on God’s mind; they are not rejected or totally destroyed. If they are forgotten, it is only to the Jews and to themselves.

The ten tribes of the house of Israel was at one time far away from God, but during their wanderings among the nations, they repented and cried out to God and He heard them. Jesus was given the green light from God. Among the many things that Jesus accomplished on earth, he brought this lost house of Israel back into the family and fed them with spiritual food, the way of God. **“I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel,”** he said to the Canaanite woman who begged for the healing of her possessed daughter. The great faith of this woman was revealed in her humility to take but mere crumbs from Jesus, as he fed his lost sheep. He marveled at that woman’s faith and healed her daughter that very hour.



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The ten tribes were equally grateful for the grace they received. Jesus revealed to the woman at the well who was from the people of the ten tribes of Israel that he was the Messiah. She told the leaders of her community and they said, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and **WE KNOW THAT THIS MAN REALLY IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD**’ (John 4:42).

The Apostle Paul turned to the Gentiles so that the knowledge of salvation may be taught to the ends of the earth. “When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord, and all who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 14:48). You see, **ALL OF ISRAEL—ALL 12 TRIBES will be saved** (Romans 11:25b). The Jews will remain blinded until the full number of the Gentiles (their brothers from the ten tribes) have come into repentance, because it is written “The deliverer will come from Zion, **he will turn godlessness away from Jacob (the ten tribes will repent from godlessness)** and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins” (Isaiah 59:20).

The Apostle Paul explained, “As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as the election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable” (Romans 11:28).

The brothers of the Jews, the ten tribes, were treated as outcasts for hundreds of years. Accepting them back into the family was difficult for the Jews. The ten tribes were like the prodigal son and the Jews were like the eldest son who became angry and refused to celebrate the return of his brother (Luke 15:27-28). The Jews forget, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

The ten tribes accepted God’s grace and with that, they were given the task of taking the gospel to the whole world. Romans 11:28 identifies two matters the Jews have difficulty understanding.



- 1. In regard to the matter of the gospel of salvation** (Romans 11:28), these repentant brothers are the enemy of their brothers, the Jews, for God has given the Jews a spirit of stupor because they rejected Christ as their Messiah and God has given favor to their brothers that the Jews may see, become envious, repent and accept Christ (Romans 11:11).
- 2. In regard to the matter of election** (Romans 11:28), these repentant brothers are loved on account of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God will not break His vow with them. “**God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable**” (Romans 11:29).

This remains a mystery to many well into the 21st century. The religious tension between these two houses will come to an end, during the upcoming Great Tribulation. Both houses need to clean themselves up and both houses will!

“In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the **people of Israel** and the **people of Judah** shall come **TOGETHER, weeping** as they come, and **they shall seek the LORD their God**” (Jeremiah 50:4).

For the first time in over 3,500 years, they will come **TOGETHER**, that is—at the **SAME TIME**, they will come weeping as they return to their God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The responsibility of being a “chosen” people is not a matter of being superior to the nations of the world, but a **matter of serving** the nations of the world. It is a **matter of humility** before God and man.

Remember: “**He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. THIS GRACE WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF TIME**” (II Timothy 1:9).

The grand plan was strategized before the beginning of time. God is restoring things to how they were before iniquity was found and He has a **NEW CREATION** that will be part of His **GRAND NEW PLAN**.

Who is mortal man that the eternal Great God—the Creator, the Ancient of Days—the All Powerful is mindful of him?

It boils down to a matter of what you choose. If you choose life, you will become—a **NEW CREATION**.



Compiled by Janette Andrejowich