

Opposing Pairs

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The Apostle Paul's claim was that God had given to him a revelation of the Gospel not given to others (Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:1-8; and II Corinthians 12:7) and Peter, at least, confirms this. God had kept this revelation hidden in Christ from the foundation of the world, and revealed it through the Apostle Paul. The very heart of his Gospel is expressed in a number of opposing pairs. Let us consider them:

TWO CREATIONS

"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," Romans 1:20

This verse tells us about the first creation. We are, of course, a part of that creation; we are the last act of that creation. We read about God's creating the heavens and the earth and all that in them are in the first two chapters of Genesis. Here, Paul speaks of the first creation (that is, the first in time) being the creation of things visible and tangible that show and explain spiritual things unseen and intangible. Thus Paul speaks of the first creation as the creation of this universe and of the human race.

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation (or creature); old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17

These two verses give us a contrast between the first creation and the new creation. The Greek word translated creature means both creature and a whole order of creation. All unredeemed humanity are in the first creation. All the redeemed are in the New Creation and thus are new creatures.

"For in Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (or creation)." Galatians 6:15

Circumcision had to do with life under the first covenant. So long as we are on this earth, we live and breathe and perform all the activities of living that every other member of the first creation does. But believers are members of a new creation, in which none of the ritual that pertained to the first creation is of any profit whatsoever. Circumcision, as a part of the first covenant, pertained to the first creation, the flesh. In the new creation, of which we are now a part, it avails nothing.

So, there are two creations of God: the natural creation and the New Creation. We are a new order of beings-redeemed ones. We have a new order of existence described as being "in Christ." Just as we were creatures of the first creation, now we are creatures of the new creation in Christ. and allied very closely to this is the next opposing pair:

TWO HEADS

"But as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;.... And so it is written, the first man, Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a life-giving Spirit." I Corinthians 15:22,45

This implies (as also elsewhere in scripture) that death is the result of sin. Death is the result of Adam's sin, and of the sinfulness of humanity. Adam, being our first father, is the head of that first creation (the whole Adamic race). "In Christ shall all (who believe) be made alive." Christ is the Head of the New Creation, brought about by His sacrifice and His resurrection. Verse 45 should read, "the last Adam **is** a Quickening Spirit." Adam was a living soul because into him was breathed the breath of life. Christ is a life-giving Spirit: that is, He gives life to all those who are members of the New Creation. So, there are two heads: Adam, the head of the first creation; and Christ, the Head of the New Creation. Adam is the head of all who are in Adam; Christ is the head of all who are in Christ.

TWO HUSBANDS

"Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to Another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead in which we were held, that we should

serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." Romans 7:1-6

Here Paul varies the figure slightly, for now he is not talking about mankind, but only believers-only those who are the New Creation. And here we see that we believers are said to have two husbands, so to speak, Adam and Christ. In this passage, Paul is not speaking of the Mosaic Law, but he is speaking to those Romans who were the great lawgivers of the world and who knew the principles of law. Paul is saying that when we were in Adam, it was as though we were married to him. Now, by the death of Adam (crucified with Christ on the cross), we are freed to be united to another husband, Christ and we should bring forth fruits unto righteousness. In the news recently there were some ghastly stories of renegade lovers who murdered their estranged wives and then committed suicide. The law is powerless to prosecute them for their crimes, because they are now beyond the realm of the law. The same is true of the woman of whom Paul speaks. Death severs the marriage relationship established by law. So then there are two husbands Adam (who is dead, and we no longer live in his realm) and Christ (in Whose realm we now live and should produce fruit).

TWO REALMS

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Colossians 1:13

The first creation was plunged into darkness by Adam's sin, and the prince of the power of the air became

the god of this world, the prince of darkness, and all humankind are his captives. He became the lord of the first creation. The first creation was intended for Adam's lordship, but his sin forfeited that place to the prince of darkness, the lord of the realm of darkness, which includes all of the first creation and sinful humanity. But there is another realm, the Kingdom of God's Dear Son, because in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. So the first creation is the realm of the power of darkness. The New Creation is the realm of the Kingdom of God's Dear Son.

"Therefore we are buried with Him into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4

Here the subject is baptism. We have been planted with Christ into the likeness of His death (death to the first creation) and we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. We are identified with Him in His death to the first creation and are also identified with Him in His resurrection that we should live a resurrection life by the power of the Spirit that raised Him.

"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Romans 7:5

We see in I Corinthians 15 that He is the Firstfruits of the resurrection and is the Head of the New Creation and this is how we get from one to the other. This verse reads "when we **were** in the flesh." We often hear people say, "he was in the flesh when he did that." He wasn't **in** the flesh if he was a Christian, he was

walking after the flesh. They who are in Adam are in the flesh, the natural man, the first creation. That is the realm of the power of darkness, to be in the flesh.

"So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Romans 8:8-9

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." This is another way of saying the natural man cannot please God. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." So here we have the two realms of existence-the realm of the flesh (for all those who are still in that realm) and the realm of the Spirit (for all believers).

TWO MASTERS

"Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16

There are two masters: Sin, in the realm of the flesh and Righteousness in the realm of the Spirit. But here is a paradox: Though we are no longer in the realm of the flesh, we can voluntarily yield ourselves to obey the master of that realm. That would be treason, wouldn't it? They that are in the flesh have no choice. They can only obey the master of the realm of the flesh, sin. We do have a choice. We are not sinless, but we do not have to obey sin as a slavemaster. He doesn't say we are sinless, as the Wesleyans would say, but he says we have a choice that

those who are in Adam do not have. We can yield our members, our bodies, unto sin if we choose to; but we don't have to, for we have been made free from the tyranny of sin. To be "freed from sin" does not mean to be rid of sin. It means that sin no longer controls our lives. The choice is ours.

TWO MEN

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans 6:6

The first thing that we need to notice about this is that it is **our** old **man** and not my or your old men. This means that the term "Old Man" is a collective singular term. The phrase "is crucified" in the original is in the perfect tense, meaning something that happened in the past, the effects of which continue in the present. That is to say, our Old Man was crucified with Christ on the cross and he is still crucified; he is dead. Some say, "reckon your old man dead." This is not a scriptural statement. We don't reckon the old man dead, we accept the fact that he is dead. What we read in scripture is "reckon **yourselves** to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God." "Yourselves" is a term relating to each of us. "Ourselves" and "our old man" are not in any way synonymous.

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath (He) made us alive together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;...Wherefore, remember that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands...Having abolished in His flesh

the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, to make in Himself of twain **one New Man**, so making peace." Ephesians 2:5,11,15

This is the contrasting member of the pair; "to make in Himself of twain one new man." We read repeatedly throughout this chapter "we", "you" and "us." The "you" is the Gentiles; the "we" is the Jews and "us" is Jews and Gentiles together. So the "New Man" is a Body. We read, "in one body." So it is a Body made up of Jews and Gentiles which Body is the Church-not an organizational church-but the Body of Christ. This is the New Man and it is everything that we are in Christ. Notice, there is only one New Man, made from two disparate groups of persons. Here again, just as the old man is a collective term, so the New Man is a collective term. The old man is what we were in Adam; the New Man is what we are in Christ.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

Here we see that the old man and the new man are likened unto clothing. The old man is the clothing of all those who are in Adam; the new man is the clothing of all those who are in Christ. Sad to say, many Christians are still wearing the clothing of the old man; if that were not the case, Paul would not have told these Christians to put it off. This term, "put off" was a technical term of that day and it meant to "take off, fold up and lay aside." It is

just that simple to take off the old life and its habits and everything pertaining to it and to put on the New Life in Christ and everything pertaining to it. It is just that simple, but the natural man cannot do it. Every person, however, who is in Christ can do it; it is as simple as a decision. We were the slaves of sin and we did sin's bidding. Now we are the slaves of righteousness, and we can do the bidding of righteousness; we no longer have to do the bidding of sin and unrighteousness.

Paul tells us to "put off the former conversation of the old man" and here he defines his terms. The old man is the lifestyle of the world; the new man is the lifestyle of the believer in Christ. Notice that he doesn't say to reckon the old man dead; he says to put him off. We don't have to bring about the new man, we **are** a New Man in Christ; we simply have to put Him on, as to our lifestyle.

This is very simple, but it is not simplistic. It is something that can be simply done, but it is something that must be deliberately done. We must be careful every day of our Christian life not to wear the garb of Adam, but to wear the garb of what we are in Christ. You've heard the saying, "the clothes make the man." That was never more true than with the Christian life. The clothing of the old man is a defeated life. The garb of the new man in Christ is a victorious Christian life. This is not "easy" to do and it does not come naturally, but it is not difficult when we follow God's Word because He has made provision for every one of us to have the strength to do it. It is simply our decision.

"But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your

mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, that is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Colossians 3:8-10

Now Paul gets specific as to what the garb of the old man is: anger, wrath, lying, etc. Again, we do not reckon the old man dead, we put him off, and we put on the New Man. (We do reckon ourselves to be dead to sin; this is another of Paul's key phrases)

TWO NATURES

"Among whom also we all had our manner of life in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Ephesians 2:3

There is a nature that is called "the flesh." There are different uses of the word "flesh" in scripture; one meaning the material life on this earth, particularly our own bodies; there is also a spiritual sense, in which the flesh is the nature of the old man, the nature that we inherited from Adam.

"For that which I do, I understand not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Romans 7:15

Once we were uncomplicated persons, just as the worldling now is, but now we are complex persons. The worldling has but one nature, which he inherited from Adam; but this verse shows a conflict between two different "I's", the I that would do good and the I that would do evil. The "inward man" referred to here is the

nature we received from Christ, which serves the law of God. But the nature of the flesh is controlled and dominated by sin. Within each believer, therefore, there are two natures. We have the flesh, which is sinful, and the inner man, which is holy.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Romans 8:3

In chapter 7, we have the flesh and the inward man; in chapter 8, Paul speaks of the flesh and the Spirit. Notice the word "walk;" this is the New Testament word for "manner of living, or life-style," meaning those who **live** after the flesh and those who **live** after the Spirit. Also, note the word "after." The original meaning of this word in the New Testament Greek is "down" and came to have the meaning of domination, holding down a person or group of people. It here means to control. We could read it thus: "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who live, not controlled by the flesh, but controlled by the Spirit." That is Paul's secret of Christian living and here is where reckoning comes in.

"Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ , our Lord." Romans 6:11

In this verse, we are told to reckon **ourselves** (not the old man) to be dead indeed unto sin. We are told to reckon **ourselves** to be alive to God through Christ, our Lord.

"Let not sin , therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:12

We live a life controlled by the Spirit by reckoning as God said, not having to be controlled by the flesh.

"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." Galatians 2:20

This is the epitome of all this; everything wrapped up in a few words. "I am crucified with Christ!" There are two I's here; both are myself. The one is the old nature and the other is the new nature. So there are two natures; the nature of the old man and the nature of the New Man.

TWO LIVES

"That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:4

To walk after the flesh is one lifestyle; to walk after the Spirit is a completely different lifestyle. To live controlled by the flesh is to live like the worldling; to live controlled by the Spirit is the life a Christian should live. Will we live a life controlled by the flesh or a life controlled by the Spirit? Again this does not mean that we are sinless; there is still sin in the flesh. This is talking

about to whom we yield ourselves. We **do not** control our lives, but we do make the decision as to who will. If we live after the flesh, we are living an unworthy life, and it is possible for Christians to do that. But we **can** live a life controlled by the Spirit, a life of freedom, joy, victory and fellowship with God. There are two lives to live--the choice is given to us of which life we will live.

TWO MINDS

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6

The sinner cannot be anything but carnally minded, for he has only a carnal mind. The Christian, on the other hand, can be either carnally minded or spiritually minded, for we have the Mind of Christ. I Corinthians 2:16 So there are two minds: the carnal mind and the spiritual mind. This is not speaking of intellect, but of the will, the aggregate of our choices, the way we choose to think. They say "you are what you eat." This is certainly true of entertainment of which we choose to partake. People who spend a lot of time in the entertainment of the world, whether television or whatever, sooner or later find themselves thinking like the world. That is why the apostle wrote, "if there be any virtue...think on these things." Proverbs 23:7 reads: "for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

So there are two minds; the carnal and the spiritual mind. We determine whether we will live a life after the flesh or the Spirit; whether we will yield ourselves to the flesh or to the Spirit. "For to be carnally minded is death." Romans 8:6 This does not mean that the carnal Christians

are going to drop dead; it means the carnal mindset is that which pertains to death, while the mind of the Spirit is the mindset of the New Life that is begotten within us. "For to be Spiritually minded is life and peace." Why would any Christian choose anything other than life and peace? Especially when it is as simple as a choice.

IN SUMMATION

There are:

Two creations: The First and the New Creation.

Two heads: Adam (who is dead) And Christ (Who ever liveth),

Two husbands: Adam and Christ

Two realms: The flesh (in which we used to live, but no longer do) and the Spirit (which is the realm of our life now).

Two masters: Sin and righteousness, and we can choose to which one we will yield ourselves.

Two men: The Old Man (all that we were in Adam) and the New Man (all that we are in Christ).

Two natures: These are the natures of these two men and are called the flesh and the Spirit. Both of these natures are within each believer and produce a struggle.

Galatians 2:20

Two lives to be lived: A life controlled by the flesh, or a life controlled by the Spirit.

Two minds: The carnal mind for us to reject and the spiritual mind for us to use.

Each of these contrasts shows in a different way how changed we are now from what we were.

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