

# THE NEW CREATION

God the Creator has produced an absolutely magnificent creation. Thousands, millions of books have been written to describe the intricate and spectacular marvels of things like the stars, constellations and galaxies of outer space, the beautiful birds, animals and fishes of the earth, life under the sea and up in the mountains, the awesome components and structure of the human body, and so on.

This is the type of thing that usually comes to mind when we think about the creation. Yet God is involved right now in forming a new creation, a creation totally different from that of the world around us! Did you know that? Do you know much about the new and different world that God is actively involved in creating at this present time?

Paul talks of this creation in 1 Cor.15:40-41 <sup>40</sup>“There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendour of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendour of the earthly bodies is another. <sup>41</sup>The sun has one kind of splendour, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendour.” <sup>42</sup>“So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup>it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;”

Verse 45 “So it is written: ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.”

There was a first Adam – the physical, fleshly man God created when He created the physical creation we’ve been talking about. And there is a last, or a second Adam – a spiritual man.

Verse 47 “The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.”

So we see that God has first created a magnificent physical creation, but now He is involved in producing a new creation, a spiritual creation! Notice more about this new creation in Galatians 6:15 (NIV) “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.”

Circumcision or uncircumcision, it doesn’t really matter – the important thing is this new creation.

What is this new creation? Who does it affect? We see from verse 16 that it has to do with us! We are the new creation!

Gal. 6:16 “Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule and to the Israel of God.”

We have the privilege and the blessing of being the ones God is working with in the production of His new Spiritual Creation. He is currently engaged in creating perfect righteous spiritual character. That is the marvellous new, spiritual creation He is perfecting. In order to create perfect, righteous, holy character, He needs beings, to create that character in. And so He has selected a certain group of people to work with, and we are greatly blessed to be among that group!

We have the incredible opportunity to be involved in God’s new creation, His Spiritual creation, which is far more important than the physical creation. And it’s taking a lot longer than the physical creation – that was done in 7 days. It takes longer than that to complete a spiritual creation of perfect, righteous character, I’m sure we all agree. There’s a reason for that. It’s impossible for God

to create perfect character in us instantaneously, because that would be a total contradiction in terms. Because by definition, character is the sum total of all the decisions we make. It is the quality we develop by exercising the choices available to us as we, of our own free moral agency, look at a series of alternatives and decide which way we will go – all of those experiences work together to form our character.

It is something that takes time to grow and develop and mature. That's the way God has designed things – a living law He has put into motion. To develop or create someone with perfect, holy character instantaneously is impossible to God, because it would mean breaking His own law – and that's something He won't do. So the process of the new spiritual creation does take time, and we've got to grow and develop in it.

Quite often in the Bible, physical things are used as types of spiritual things. For instance, Egypt is referred to as a type of sin (Hebrews 11:25-26). The flood of Noah represented, or was a type of baptism (1 Peter 3:20-21). The objects in the Old Testament tabernacle were pictures, or types of things to come. (Hebrews 9:9,11,24). Similarly, the first creation is a type of the new spiritual creation.

To explain this, let's turn back to the account of the first creation, in Genesis 1, and notice some interesting parallels with the new spiritual creation we're involved in. Let's see what we can learn here in Genesis 1 that applies to us in our spiritual growth today!

Genesis 1:1-2 <sup>1</sup>"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

In the case of the physical creation, GOD moved FIRST, through His Spirit. With the spiritual creation it's the same. Jesus said in John 6:44 "No man can come unto me except the FATHER draw him." We don't find God's Spirit by searching for it – He makes the first move.

"The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on it." (NKJV).

So it is exactly, in the case of the spiritual creation!! The physical creation already existed, but it had been destroyed and ruined by Satan, and brought to a stage of 'tohu and bohu.' So is every one of us before God begins to work with us. We have been deluded and deceived by Satan to the stage where our lives really are spiritual 'tohu and bohu' – waste and emptiness, and darkness is upon us, like it was upon the face of the deep.

Ephesians 2:1-3 shows this situation very well:

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup>All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath."

This is how the earth was, and this is how we were. But God began to work on the earth to make something out of it, and so He does with us.

Eph. 2:10,22 <sup>10</sup>"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

<sup>22</sup> “And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.” We are His workmanship – He is working with us, making a spiritual creation out of us, making us into a dwelling of His Spirit.

Back in Genesis 1:3 God said “Let there be LIGHT” – and that is the same way the spiritual creation begins!

2 Corinthians 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Satan has caused spiritual ‘tohu and bohu’ and darkness.

2 Cor. 4:6 “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”

Paul here refers directly to Genesis 1:3, as a physical type of this spiritual fulfillment. The first step in the SPIRITUAL creation of each of us as a NEW MAN, or NEW CREATURE, is that God gives us spiritual light – wakes us up out of the spiritual darkness and confusion that envelops us. At the beginning He said “Let there be light” for the physical creation. And on many occasions since then, He has said “Let there be light” for certain selected people He has chosen to draw and call to be part of a new spiritual creation!

Acts 26:18 “to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

We have been turned from darkness to light, and should be so grateful to God for doing this for us!

Ephesians 5:8 “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”

This puts a duty on us – to walk as children of light ought to!

### **Back to Genesis 1:**

Gen.1:4 “God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness.”

God said it was good – even though as yet nothing had changed. Water was still everywhere, and ruins everywhere. But the light had broken in. So it is with us – at first we haven’t changed our lives at all, but God sheds light on us, so we begin to see what needs to be done. It’s a progressive process which takes a lot of time.

God could’ve created everything in one day, simultaneously. But He chose to develop and perfect it in a 6-day period. He has chosen to establish the whole creation on a system of steady growth. First we have the seedling, then the plant, then the fruit. And it’s the same with the spiritual creation – it’s a process of gradual growth and change – we don’t become perfect immediately! But it’s still good in God’s eyes.

Just as at the end of each day in Genesis 1, He said “behold it is good.” He feels the same about each stage of our spiritual growth as He watches us develop. He doesn’t expect us to be perfect immediately. But He does expect us to work progressively towards that end.

### Gen. 1:6-8 – **The second day.**

God formed heaven to divide the waters above from the waters below. Order began to emerge out of chaos. At the beginning of our spiritual renewal, we are totally drowned and buried in the waters of sin and our own carnal lusts. First, light is shed on us, and then we begin to discern heaven, i.e. an understanding of heavenly things – that God does have a wonderful Way of Life for us to live, and we begin to understand that we are covered in the waters of sin and we need to change our lives and seek heavenly things.

Colossians 3:2 “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

In our spiritual creation, after God shines the first light in on us, the next thing is that heaven is formed for us – we begin to understand that there is a new and different world out there, a spiritual dimension our lives must follow and reach for – there is a goal and purpose in life.

### Gen.1:9-10 **The third day.**

Up until now, there has been water everywhere. But now, the firm earth appears. Things begin to change – quite dramatically. We have now seen ourselves spiritually, and now we begin to get onto a solid basis, to change the things that readily need to be changed, and to build a spiritual foundation to our lives.

This doesn't happen gently – the land must heave and convulse before the waters are gathered into one place, the mountains were formed at this time.

David described this very well in Psalms 104:5-9 <sup>5</sup>“He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. <sup>6</sup>You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. <sup>7</sup>But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; <sup>8</sup>they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. <sup>9</sup>You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.”

This happens spiritually too – our lives are initially rocked by the change in lifestyle.

And seas remain, still – and at times they roar against the land, but eventually in the future will come the time when there is no more sea – physically and spiritually (the sea of sin and trouble.)

But this isn't all that happens on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

Gen.1:11 “Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.”

Once we're on this solid basis, we begin to bring forth fruit.

Romans 6:22 “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”

Just as there are many different kinds of physical fruits, so there are many different spiritual fruits – (Galatians 5:22) love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

An interesting point in Genesis 1:11 is that “whose seed is in itself, after his kind.” God's fruits all multiply themselves: this is the way He made them! Every physical fruit produces more – and so

does every spiritual fruit! Every act of love has in it the seed of other acts. As every lie breeds another, so one truth produces more. Giving is contagious – so are joy and peace.

### **Now we go on to the 4<sup>th</sup> day.**

It's interesting that the work of the first 3 days consists of BOUNDING AND DIVIDING – God gave names to things as He produced them.

The next 4 days consist of FURNISHING AND ADORNING – perfecting things. Similarly in our Christian lives, we establish the bounds and divisions of our program (or God establishes them for us), and then we grow in grace and knowledge to gradually become perfect.

Once we gain an understanding of God's way of life and start bringing forth fruit, we may tend to think the work is done – we are a perfect spiritual creation – but no, that's only the start – that's only 3 days out of 7. That's when the perfecting process begins, and it doesn't end until Christ returns.

Gen.1:14 “And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years”

There was already light, on the first day – the sun and moon were already there then. But this was an undefined light. Now it is made clear and defined – two special lights, the sun and moon, are appointed (not created) or “had made” to provide certain services for mankind.

So it is spiritually; we have been given the light of the understanding of God's Way to a certain depth, but now this light is much more clearly defined – Jesus Christ shines out like the sun in glory and splendour, and we understand more and more the meaning of His sacrifice for us, and His relationship to us. And the Church shines as the moon.

There's nothing in the Bible that explains these types, i.e. that the sun of the 4<sup>th</sup> day is Jesus, and the moon represents the Church. This is only speculation, but it's my guess that this is the typology involved. And there are several good reasons.

Christ is “the SUN of righteousness” – Malachi 4:2

“The LORD God is a sun and a shield” – Psalm 84:11

– A very great light! Revelation 12:1; 22:5,16.

The Church is compared to the moon in Song of Solomon 6:10: “She is fair as the moon.”

The moon receives all its light from the sun, and reflects this to the earth. The Church reflects God's way to the members. Sometimes the moon is full, sometimes on the wane – yet it is still the same moon. Interesting comparisons with the various phases of the Church through history – sometimes God's work went out in strength and power, then the light was eclipsed for a few years as persecution took its toll, and so on.

In Gen. 1:14 it shows that these lights are for signs, seasons, days and years. And so spiritually, Jesus Christ has given us the laws, commandments and principles we live by, and the Church is the governing body by which also various traditions and guiding administrations are defined. We need these 2 great lights to guide us in our spiritual life.

Rev. 22:16 – Jesus says “I am the bright morning star”

Rev. 22:5 – No need of sun (or moon) because Christ and the Church there.

Rev. 12:1 – “Woman clothed with sun and moon” fits in here too, if the sun is Jesus Christ and the moon, the Church.

Gen.1:16 The stars could refer to the angels.

### **We come to the 5<sup>th</sup> day.**

Gen.1:20-22 “And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” <sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”

Animate life is now added to inanimate. New, higher forms of life appear everywhere. This represents the Christian, in the course of his becoming a new creation, beginning to grow and mature in the new Way of Life. Higher blessings and understandings and deeper experiences, forms of life unknown before, are met.

Just as there are countless varieties of physical creatures – birds, animals, fish of all types, so there are many different gifts of God’s Spirit, a whole new world of understanding opens up more and more as the Christian matures.

Phil. 3:15-16 <sup>15</sup>“All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”

And just as the fruits formed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, whose “seed is in themselves,” reproduce themselves and grow rapidly, so these graces, blessings, gifts and understandings multiply themselves and spread wondrously. (Verse 22.)

This is the way our spiritual lives should be. Not just “ho-hum; wishy-washy; boring; lackadaisical” monotony – but each day should be full of spiritual challenge and excitement as we learn new things, approach our daily physical experiences with deeper understanding, enjoy better relationships with our fellow Christians, grow in our closeness to God through prayer and Bible Study, and overall we are maturing as a Christian, growing in faith, joy, peace, humility and the other fruits of God’s Holy Spirit, and being continually blessed spiritually by our Great God!

### **The beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> day.**

Gen.1:24-25 <sup>24</sup>“And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.”

This continues the development of higher forms of animate life, representing spiritual growth as I have outlined. Then we come to a most important event, in Gen 1:26.

“Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

Eph. 4:22 Put off the old ‘tohu and bohu’ corrupt creation.

Eph. 4:23 Just as God renewed the face of the physical earth, so we need to be renewed spiritually – in our minds.

Psalms 51:10 “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

The spiritual creation takes place in our minds.

Eph 4:24 Just as God fashioned all the accoutrements of a new earth and creation, so we need to put on all the attributes of a new spiritual creation, in our minds.

The NIV says here “put on the new self, **created to be like God** in true righteousness and holiness.”

In Genesis 1:26, God said “let us make man in our image, in our likeness” – in other words, man was created to be like God in form and shape. But now we’re seeing that the full meaning of this is that we are to be like God SPIRITUALLY too – in the new spiritual creation!

The RSV and GNB of Ephesians 4:24 both say “put on the new self which is created in God’s likeness” or “after the likeness of God.”

Notice the way it is put in Colossians 3:8-10 <sup>8</sup>“But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Verse 10 – renewed in knowledge, after the image of the Creator. God made man physically in His image instantaneously. But the end purpose was that man should be spiritually in His image too. That takes longer. It involves our help, our participation in yielding ourselves to God so that we do grow more and more like Him, more and more after His very image and likeness, spiritually, i.e. in our minds and thinking!

Romans 8:29 “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

We are to become like Christ (GNB) – conformed to His image or likeness. This is the Greek equivalent word of the Hebrew in Genesis 1:26.

2 Cor. 3:18 “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

As we model ourselves on Jesus Christ, studying the Bible (that is the mirror in the context), we gradually, step by step, take on Christ’s image or likeness – become more and more like Him! Eventually, as it says in 1 John 3:2, “we will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

But meanwhile, we are in the process of gradually developing that image and likeness, as we are renewed, recreated – a SPIRITUAL creation!

Phil. 2:5 “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

This is so important. This is what the Christian life is all about! When that mind is in us, we will be SPIRITUALLY after God’s own image, and we will have completed day 6 of the spiritual creation!

Gen.1:26 Then we will be given dominion! Much greater than the physical dominion given to Adam.

Verse 31 The other days, God said it was “good”. This time, He says it is “very good”.

### **There’s one more day left! The 7<sup>th</sup> day.**

Gen. 2:23 <sup>2</sup>“By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup>Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”

God rested. And He blessed the day. And sanctified it. Put His presence in it.

In Hebrew 3 and 4, Paul refers to this Sabbath rest, being a type of the rest the Israelites laboured for, i.e. the coming into the Promised Land, and Paul goes on and shows that we also are promised a rest we can enter into. Of course this refers to the promise of the Kingdom of God and all the joys of eternal life.

Gen. 2:8 Man was put in the Garden of Eden. Eden means “pleasure” or “delight”, which brings to mind Psalm 16:11, describing our future destiny in our day of rest: “pleasures forevermore.”

We could spend much time comparing the paradise of the Garden of Eden with its sparkling rivers, to the future paradise we’ve been promised, with its sparkling water of life etc. After coming to the completion of our spiritual creation we will be placed in a spiritual Garden of Eden and given a fantastic spiritual Sabbath, something so glorious we can’t yet fully take it all in.

Romans 8:19-22 <sup>19</sup>“For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”

The whole physical creation of Genesis 1 is groaning and creaking and heaving and bursting, WAITING for this stupendous spiritual creation we’ve been talking about!

2 Cor. 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

We are a new spiritual creation – our minds are renewed. All the old garbage, the old state of spiritual ‘tohu and bohu’ is removed and a new creation formed.

The last part of the verse is quoted in Revelation, pointing forward to the time of the New Jerusalem, when this will be true, not just for a selected group of people as now, but for the entire world!

Phil1:6 “being confident of this; that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

When God starts working on a creation, He doesn’t just give up and start on something else. He will finish it – He will do His part in perfecting us all. But of course, it’s up to us to do our part. So let’s be sure to continually do our part, which is simply to yield to God and allow Him to make out of each one of us a brand new SPIRITUAL CREATION!