



AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:1-8)

When I was growing up, my family placed a high premium on anything we acquired that was 'brand new.' I suppose that term meant the manufacturer's brand was still visible on the item whether a baseball glove, a ring, or an automobile which was THAT new! There was always an emphasis on the word BRAND, and less on the new. If I received a brand-new bicycle, what an improvement it was over the old bent-up and rusty bike that I was ashamed to ride in public. There are also some old friends with whom I would, today, be ashamed to be seen in public. It was a discredit to me and my Lord to have called some friends in times past for no one is our friend or brother except those who are in Christ. Of course, I, too, was unworthy of the friendship of a committed Christian in my prodigal days of youth. To what do I attribute my changed outlook on social, moral, and family values? It is simply the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost over which we have no control.

The Holy Spirit is able to amend and make new the most depraved soul among us. In and of ourselves, we are incapable of any righteousness or improvement in character. This is the saving and ameliorating power of God working through the Holy Spirit. What of the imaginations and desires of men – are they not all oriented to greater and greater evil?

AND GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.⁶ And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. ⁷ And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:5-8)

Since NONE are righteous, and since the wages of sin is death - *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23 & *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Romans 6:23) what solution could be proffered to save us from our desperate hopelessness? Please note our salvation is a GIFT of God and nothing which we earn or merit in any form. In our state of lostness and unrepented sin we cannot come to Christ. But we can be drawn to the Throne of Grace before our Lord by the Holy Ghost. Even if we try to escape, He will follow hard on and nip our heels at every turn until we fall prey to His beckoning. The old man must die, and the new man must be born a changed being in Christ.

Those sins that we formerly believed to be of a necessary part of our daily lives become unthinkable as our desires change and are replaced by the Mind of Christ. *"2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* (Romans 12:2). Note the active verb, transformed! It is a new thing that happens to us – not something we do. We are transformed by the Mind and Power of God. Our desires and actions are no longer ruled by the old man, but by the new in Christ. *"3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* (Titus 3:3-5) Not our wills, but God takes sovereign control of our hearts. *"17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Just as a new bicycle has the manufacturers seal or brand proudly displayed up front, so does the Christian possess that Seal of God in their foreheads and in their hearts – a seal that grants the authority of the believer to the possessor.

FOR in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. ¹⁶ And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." (Galatians 6:15-17) *"24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* (Ephesians 4:24)

In most of my devotions, I plagiarize the Bible more than any other source – whether another commentator or my own personal opinion – because God's Word settles the matter in fewer words and greater clarity than any man is able to utter. Rather than simply giving the book, chapter and verse, I print the whole out. I do that because I realize that some will simply accept my word and go on with their reading; however, the reading of the very Word of God has great power. It sinks into the hearty and kindles a fire. My words and thoughts cannot do that.

When we surrender our old self-wills, which we jealously hold tightly as free wills, we are taking on the Mind that was in Christ and His Holy Will. The self-will of man can imagine nothing good. It must be surrendered to the Will of God and we are thereby made free!

Key Verse

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(Ephesians 4:24)