# *A New Creation Colossians 1:3-8 COL-050*

Please open your Bibles once more to Colossians 1:3-8. Our current study is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 28.

Nowhere can the truth of the grace of God, which we have been considering, be better seen than in the Bible plan of free grace salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, by the simple act of believing the gospel. What that means is that a helplessly lost sinner, who can do nothing about going to heaven, can believe the gospel message which says that Christ has died for your sins, and cover the problem once and for all. And all you have to do is accept the gift of eternal life. And having accepted it, it's a gift in which you had no part whatsoever. You didn't have that gift because you promised God to do anything; you promised to behave yourself; or, you promised to do something. It is simply a gift for which you did not pay. Therefore, you cannot contaminate salvation. Anybody who believes that you can be saved one day and lost the next day is blaspheming God, because you are suggesting that the salvation that God has provided is not sufficient to meet your sin, and that God has a certain incompetency in being able to deal with that problem.

So, the grace of God, if it ever is demonstrated anywhere, it's demonstrated there – that the worst of sinners, such as the apostle Paul claimed to be, can be saved instantly by simply trusting in the death of Christ as having paid the penalty for his sin.

## The Truth

Colossians 1:5 has called the gospel of grace "the truth." It is God's one and only way for escaping hell for entering heaven. There is no other gospel really. There are other claims as plans to heaven, but they are not the truth. Since the day of Pentecost, when the church began, the gospel has been bearing the fruit of saving people, and it has been spreading around the world. It rapidly spread through the early New Testament world, and from there. This fruitfulness of the gospel, and the outreach, had been experienced in the city of Colossae since the day the gospel had been proclaimed there. God's grace has, through the gospel, come to be truly understood for what it is: the magnificent power of God to save as a loving gift to believers.

When the gospel comes in, lives are changed from enslavement to the sin nature to freedom to do right under the filling of the Holy Spirit. The most important doctrine for an unbeliever is the doctrine of the grace of God in salvation. The most important doctrine for a Christian is to know how to be rightly related to God the Holy Spirit: first, to be rightly related to Christ through the gospel; and, secondly, to be rightly related to God the Holy Spirit, Who is the power source and the guiding Director in the spiritual life, and the growth, and everything that constitutes the Christian life following salvation. There are no deals, and there are no good intentions to be made with God in exchange for salvation. And there's no need for you to seek assurance that you really are saved by proving yourself to be a worthy person. You do not prove that you are saved just because you act well. Hades, which is a holding station for hell, is full of very highly moral people, but they, by their morality, did not prove that they were saved because they were never spiritually born-again.

Mankind began its existence on earth under the fullness of the grace of God. Once man in Eden, however, rebelled against God's law, eternal death in the lake of fire became everyone's natural destiny from the point of your human birth. God's grace provided a solution through Jesus Christ on the cross to escape the penalty of hell, and to secure the blessings of heaven. It's just that simple. However, Satan seeks to undermine the grace of God in the believer's life with five distinct challenges, which we looked at last time. They are to be found in Romans 8:31-39. And I remind you of those challenges that Satan uses to try to dissuade you that the grace of God is all that the Bible claims it to be. It is very important that you not be tripped up on these five challenges of Satan. And, as always, I am surprised by the impact of the Word of God, which I should not be. But I was surprised by the people who came up to me, some with moistened eyes, who had been deeply moved and reoriented to something in their lives – that they realized these challenges were a point of problem for them, and had now become a point of victory when they realized what Satan was trying to do by using these approaches.

## Satan's Challenges

The first challenge of these five is the opposition which is brought against a believer to shake his confidence in God's grace to carry him to victory over Satan. Romans 8:31 tells us that. No sooner do you become a Christian, and all hell breaks loose in your life – opposition from all directions. This is Satan's way of saying, "Here's what you get for your grace salvation." Do not let Satan whip you with that challenge.

The second challenge is to the capacity that free grace actually has to bring salvation, and to bring one into heaven, to a place of undiminished blessings. Romans 8:32 describes that challenge where the devil challenges. That is just that simple. You can just go to heaven by believing that God is telling you the truth about the death of Christ in your behalf.

The third challenge is a challenge of criticism of the spiritual failures of believers as proving them unworthy of salvation. Romans 8:33 deals with that. There's nothing the devil likes to do more than to throw up to us our frailties and our human sin, and to say to us, "See, you're not really anything different than you were before. You really aren't saved. You really aren't transformed. That's a lie.

Number four is the challenge against our sinful conduct as evidence that we're not really saved, and we're not going to heaven. Romans 8:34 deals with that challenge.

Finally, the fifth challenge, the challenge of experiencing suffering as a sign of divine disapproval and separation from eternal life in heaven (Romans 8:35-39). There's nothing the devil likes to bring up, as to say, "You see, if you were really a good Christian, you wouldn't be suffering like this. If you really were a child of God, you wouldn't experience these sufferings."

A lady yesterday was talking to me about a member of the family. She said that this man is very, very bitter because he's bitter against God for what God has done in his life. And what he's doing is blaming God for the fact that sin has corroded the good life that God created for us, and we're all suffering as a result of that sin. None of us is free of the effects of sin. What we Christians have is a capacity to override it and to survive it.

So, the challenges of Satan fall flat to the Christian who is walking by means of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The supreme achievement of God's grace is to be found in 2 Corinthians 5:17. Please turn to it. I know you brought your Bibles, because we have a new rule here now. People do not bring their Bibles to church have to give twice the offerings that they intended. Uh oh, there is panic all over the place. 2 Corinthians 5:17 is a verse that you know so well. Here's the supreme achievement of the grace of God. Young people and older people, learn this well: "Therefore if any man (anyone) is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Here is the fantastic provision of the grace of God. When a person dies, he leaves the body, and he enters the eternal place of residence in heaven. This verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17, says "Therefore." And as one wise teacher the Word of God said, "Anytime you see the word "therefore" in the Bible, you should look to see what it's there for. And you have to look back in the context. And that's what precedes these verses, in 2 Corinthians 5:1 and following.

2 Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if the earthly tent (that is, your human body), which is our house, is torn down (that means that you die), we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." You have a heavenly body that you enter upon death. And you enter into a marvelous place of blessing when that happens.

Then, in 2 Corinthians 5:5, He says, "The Holy Spirit indwells every believer as a token (or a down payment) of God's promise to take us to heaven when we accept His salvation." Verse 5: "Now he who prepared us for this very purpose (of going into heaven in this super body) is God, Who gave to us the spirit as a pledge. The reason the Holy Spirit indwells in every believer is because it is God's seal (His stamp) that you're not going anywhere except into heaven. Now, you can end up, because of your carnality and your rebellion against God, and drifting away from the Word of God – you can be very sinful, and become a very terrible person, but you're going to heaven. In fact, you could even say, "I don't want to go to Him," but they're going to carry you in kicking and screaming, because God's grace will not be frustrated by anything that man does, once you have committed yourself to what God has given you. So, this pledge of the Spirit is always there.

Then, in 2 Corinthians 5:6, God (by Himself) makes it certain that if we leave our bodies we go to be with the Lord: "Therefore, being always of good courage, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." So, when we are absent from the body, we're at home with the Lord. And I like these two words: "good courage." We should remind ourselves often to be of good courage. That is a very Biblical concept. Sometimes it's expressed as: "Be of good cheer." But "good courage" is a good way to put the fact that we Christians, in the worst of our moments, and in the worst of our defeats, are always victors through Christ. And we're going through the hard times, but we're always going to end up on top.

Well, he goes on through this passage and he gets to 2 Corinthians 5:10, and he says, "There'll be rewards for Christian service, which through the Holy Spirit produces divine good through us. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ". This Judgment Seat of Christ does not deal with whether you're going to heaven or not. That is settled before you die. That is settled before you appear before God. And that is settled on the basis of whether you've accepted Christ or not. This has to do with what you did with your life. You are not born just to go through life like some animal scrounging for food every day. You were born with a specific mission, from the moment of your conception. You had a purpose for which God has brought you into this world, and a purpose which only you can perform. And when He brings you into the body of Christ universal, He puts you into a local body of Christ, as a local church, and you have something there that nobody else can do in just the way you can do it. And if you go AWOL (Absent WithOut Leave) from your mission, we all suffer.

2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "We (Christians) must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed (rewarded) for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Everything you produce from the sin nature is bad – even the human good you produce from the sin nature. The codeword in our society for that human good is "compassion." And everything that is produced by God the Holy Spirit as good is divine good. Your motivation in what you do determines whether it is of God, or it is of your sin nature.

## Unlimited Atonement

Then 2 Corinthians 5:15 says that the provision of salvation by the Holy Spirit is for us all: "And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf:" "And He died for all." Wait a minute. The people who are in the holding pen of Hades right now, before they're emptied into the lake of fire, Christ died and paid for their sins? That's right. That's what's known theologically as unlimited atonement – the concept that salvation has been provided for everyone. There is no sin (past; present; or, future) of any human being that has not already been forgiven by the death of Christ. So, sin is not the issue. It's whether you want to accept the provision made in your behalf by Christ. That's the issue. He died for all. And then those of us who accept the gift – we should live no longer for ourselves, because that's wasting our lives. But we should live for Him Who died for us, and rose again on our behalf. The rising again from the dead is very important because that proves that what Christ offered to God the Father for our sin was accepted.

So here's the orientation that, for those of us who have had these tremendous things done for us that are described in 2 Corinthians 5:1-16, now face a tremendous opportunity on this earth to make your life count, or you can grovel it out like some animal scrounging around in the field just to find something to eat.

Every day that I woke up in Yellowstone, in Rocky Mountain National Park, this summer, and looked out across the fields, and wandered down the trails, and watched the animals, all they were doing was scrounging for something to eat. And then at a certain time of day, they'd go lie down in some place and rest. Come twilight, the meadows would be filled again with the animals scrounging and finding something to eat.

Now, that isn't what you are as a human being. God says that you are His soldier. Therefore, He will provide you with the logistics (the supplies) that you need to serve Him. That's logistical grace. He will give you what you need to perform your service. And for some of you, he'll entrust you with enormous reserves, because He's giving you the opportunity to open enormous doors of Christian service. And that means that the whole team is important. No one can do it alone. And Christ has died for us. If it wasn't for that, what would we have? Living like animals now, and spending eternity in the lake of fire? What kind of a future is that? But we have a future that we build upon that gospel that we already learned as the foundation in our lives through Jesus Christ, and on that we build our Christian service.

The result is that our eternity will be greatly enriched by rewards which I cannot describe to you. I don't know what they're going to be. I do know that part of those rewards are going to be ruling authority over thrones that God will give some of you who are qualified to be that kind of administrator by the way you have lived your life, in His Millennial Kingdom. But there will be rewards that you'll be very happy to have. And we'll all be judged on what we did with what we had. You'll not be judged on the abilities that were greater than yours. You'll not be judged on what somebody else was able to do. You'll only be judged on what God enabled you to do, and on the openings He gave you to do it.

## Therefore, If Anyone

So, now we come to the greatest example and the demonstration of the grace of God in 2 Corinthians 5:17, reached as a conclusion based 2 Corinthians 5:1-16. And so we begin with this word: "Therefore." It means "so that." It indicates a conclusion about grace provisions. "Therefore, if". Those of you who attend Berean Church regularly know that this word "if" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "ei" (i), in this particular place. Sometimes the word "if" looks a little differently. But here, it's the word "if," and its grammatical construction indicates to us that it is what we call a first-class condition, and it should be translated by the word "since." Now, that helps a lot. First-class means that this is true. When we use the word "if" in English, it sort of indicates that it might be true; or, it might not be true. But here in the Greek, you're told exactly what it means. And this is true: "Since any man."

## In Christ

This is the Greek word "tis" (tis), T I S. I tell you that because it's not the Greek word for man: "aner" (an'-ayr). It's not that here. It's a word that means anyone (man or woman). So, this is not a gender word: "If anyone is in Christ." How does a person get to be in Christ? And what does being in Christ mean? That tells us that it's a group that he's talking about.

1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us how you get into Christ: "For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we are all made to drink of one Spirit". We get into Christ at the point of our faith in Christ. That's when you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And that's what water baptism is a symbol and a sign of – that you have been placed into Jesus Christ, and that's why you are eternally secure. You can never be removed from Him. You cannot remove yourself. God cannot remove you. Man cannot remove you. You are in Christ. And it's an expression indicating that one is saved. It is an expression which is particularly used in a New Testament age of the church.

They didn't talk like that in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, it is a word which is commonly understood and used. To be "in Christ" is to be saved. And elsewhere in the book of Romans, the apostle Paul says that he who is not indwelt by Christ is none of His. That is making it very clear that, if Christ does not indwell you, you don't belong to Him; meaning, you're not a Christian. Nobody can be a Christian without first having been baptized into Him by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation.

## A New Creature

So, "In Christ" is referring to a believer. And here, in 2 Corinthians 2:17, you will notice, following the word "Christ," two words in italic letters: *he is*. The reason they do that is that's a sign that this is not in the Greek Bible. And the Greek sentence here doesn't have a verb. It just says, "If any man in Christ, a new creature." And when the Greek wants to make something very strong, and focus your attention on something very specific, it throws the verb out. And that's what happens here. And anybody who reads this sentence in Greek says, "Whoa, that's very important: a new creature." The position of the believer is in Christ. He is in union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 3:27-28, Paul says, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ (at the baptism of the Holy Spirit) have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free man; and, there is neither male nor female, for you all one in Christ Jesus." Once you are in Christ, as a saved person, there is no racial; there is no national; and, there is no gender difference. Everybody is equal in Christ. That means that whether you are male or female; or, whether you are a youth or an adult, there are no limitations of as to how far you can go in rising in your knowledge of the Word of God, and in your capacity to be transformed into the image of Christ.

One of the hardest things we have in Berean Christian Academy, when we interview new parents, which I hope you'll be praying for us, because we're doing quite a few currently now – when we interview new parents, one of the hardest things we have is to convey to them that it is the mission of our school to transform their children into the image of Christ. Some of them are so poorly taught in the Word of God that they don't fully understand what that means, and they don't grasp the importance of that. And in some way, we have to try to get across to them that it's not just reading, writing, and arithmetic here. We are going to transform your child in his thinking; in his choices; and, in his emotions, such that he will be like Christ. Now, when we say that to them, they say, "Boy, that's wonderful."

One lady came in and sat down with us this past week. Our principal said, "Well, what can I tell you?" "Well, she says, "first of all, I had this concern. I hear that this is a very militaristic school." Well, right away, that means that that's bad, doesn't it? If you're told that you're a militaristic school, that means that you're bad. That means all those military cemeteries have all those gravestones of brave men and women who gave their lives to preserve our freedom – they were militaristic. They were military people. That's bad. And I doubt that she could have even interpreted that. And we've heard that before: "This is a very militaristic school."

"Well," our principal said, "here's our parent statement of cooperation, and maybe this is what you're referring to. Generally, that's what people mean." So he goes through those, one thing after another, right down the list. These children must be obedient; they must be respectful to God; to their parents; to the school authorities; to their country; and, even to themselves – and all of the things that are Biblically required of a human being who is operating on Biblical principles.

And when the principal was finished, she said, "I don't understand this. Those are all the things I want." And at that point, he should have said, "Welcome to Berean Military Academy. You have just passed the entrance exam. You are in."

This is nonsense – that, because we don't want to be like the secular schools where we want to corrode people; we want to degrade them with sin; and, we want to surround them with people such that, all of a sudden, you're just so overwhelmed that you're like poor Lot – overwhelmed by these homosexuals and the lesbians that he surrounded himself with in Sodom and Gomorrah, and he became one of their political leaders even. He was just so overwhelmed, because he was a righteous man, that: "He burdened (the Scripture said) his righteous soul."

What do you think that does to a younger person? I was in our office, and one of our parents came in and said, "My son (a kid up in the junior high) tells me that he can wear white socks to school with our uniform, because all the kids are wearing white socks. Furthermore," he says, "he doesn't want to wear the school sweater. He grabs some rag that they caught him putting in his school bag to take, because the kids don't wear the sweater." And I said to the father, "Well I don't know about the socks. I'll have to look into that. But the sweater is wrong. The kids do wear the sweaters. They're all over the place. And the socks – white is not the accepted color." He said, "I didn't think it was. I knew what the code was, and I wanted to find out." And I figured he was conning me. And we checked, and sure enough, it was not really the case. And he happened to be riding the school bus that I'm currently driving. And when he got off my bus the next day, I looked at his feet, and he had nice blue socks on.

However, this incident pointed up to me, and I said to the ladies in the office, "I've always been kind of a weird person myself, even as a kid, which most of you will not find hard to believe. But I have never been, and I have to try to put myself in the place of, a person who wants to be part of the herd. That has just not been my temperament. The crowd is always behind me. I've never grown up where the crowd is in front of me. I'm not following the herd. And that boy is a nice kid, and he was so overwhelmed, he probably saw somebody wearing white socks, and he just had to do it. And even if it were true that all the rest of them were wearing white socks, he did not have the manly courage to say, "Well, this is the rule here, and it's the rule because it really makes us look nice, and it helps our esprit de corps, and I'm going to wear the right socks. I don't want to look like Archie Bunker, and wear the white socks. But your kids want to be like all the other kids instead of saying, "I want to be like Jesus Christ. And if you yo-yos want to come and join me, that's fine – just follow along. But if you don't, then 'adios muchacho.'" I'm going to be loyal to the Lord, and I'm going to do what is right.

So, we are up against this fact that we, who are in Christ, are to have a certain standard that the world simply doesn't understand, and which it ridicules. But we are in a world in which we are clothed with Christ, and we have a common ground of authority, whatever nationality; gender; nation; or, whatever. Now, we have different lines of authority. And we obey those lines of authority. We have different lines of positions for males and females within the body of Christ, and we obey those because that's the way God runs things.

So, the point here is that God sees us as part of His Son – anyone in Christ. Now, this word "creation" is stressed because it has no verb: "a new creature. Actually, the word that means "creation." Being in Christ means to be born-again, making us a new creation. We are not new creatures because of something we do or don't do. This scripture is often misappropriated in that way. New believers, and immature believers, and untaught believers pick up on the idea that "new creature" means giving up something in their way of living. And suddenly, they're given the idea that they have to merit their salvation to keep it. And anytime we have meanings that try to create a closer walk with God by deciding to give up something or someone, those are the attempts to become a new creature by human good works.

I have sat at great organizations which would have campfires for high school and older kids. In days past, I've often sat around what was called a "stick service." They don't have those anymore. . . . But what they would do is build a big fire out there, and they'd say, "Now, those of you who want a closer walk with the Lord, I want you to come up here and pick up one of these sticks. . . . And I want you to come up and throw it onto fire to show the devil that you're going to live for Christ. Make a promise and be a keeper."

Well, pretty soon the pile of sticks would be gone. But how many of them had a basis for being closer to realizing what it meant to be in Christ: the power of living under His righteousness; and, the power of living under His resurrected life. They didn't know anything because they hadn't been taught the doctrinal principles. They could have been gone year after year. Often I have had people 50 years old and older, with indignation, suddenly come into the circle of our ministry, and begin learning the Word of God, say, "Boy, I am so mad of all the years I spent out there in the wilderness spiritually, and only now, at my age, I'm beginning to find the realities that the Bible has that enable me to be victorious in Christ. No matter what's out there in the world; no matter what happens in my life; and, no matter what the temptations are, I go with loyalty to Christ, and it's just as easy as anything for me to do it." Why? "Because I have the power of the Spirit of God free to work through me to do that. I haven't short-circuited the power system.

So, we all, by the nature of our sin nature, love to make sacrifices and human efforts in order to become something special in the Christian life – to become new creatures. So, we decide: "I'm not going to smoke, and I'm not going chew, and I'm not go with girls that do." And we figure out ways of what we do, and what we don't do, to develop our spirituality. No, I'm saved by an act of the Spirit of God. I'm brought to spiritual power and character quality by an act of the Spirit of God. That's what the school should be doing. That's why we're in business at Berean Christian Academy. They may not always believe us, and they may not always obey us, but, by George, they will have known what to do. They will know how important it is to be loyal to Christ, and they will know how to do it. They're on their own to make their choice. But the thing that the sin nature wants to do is undermine that. And when you're surrounded by people who are undermining you all the time, you have to learn to be a very gutsy young person to say, "You're wrong, and Christ is right. I go with Him.

This verse has to do with what God, in His grace, has done for us, not what we do for him, or for ourselves. That's what 2 Corinthians 5:17 is all about: "Therefore, if anyone is born-again (and, therefore, in Christ), he is a new creation." There are two words in the Greek language for "new." One is this Greek word "neos" (neh'-os) (N E O S). That's "new" in reference to time: "I have a new car." But that is not the word here. This word that is here, which you would know from the English (someone has to explain that to you, so you'll understand what the Bible is really saying) – this word is "kainos" (kahee-nos'), K A I N O S. You can remember what this word means by the first part "kain" ("kind"). This means a new kind, or a new species. And what this word is saying is that Christians of the church age, in the age of grace, are a new species of human beings in God's creation. You are actually a new species of human beings in God's creation. And this new species began on the day of Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it joined all believers together into one body called the church. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was delayed until Jesus had ascended into heaven (John 7:39, Acts 1:5). There is no such thing in the Old Testament as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is a distinct ministry of the Spirit of God to bring Christians together into one body under the power of the Spirit of God. This is the greatest of all ages in which to live. This is the supreme age of all the ages of humanity in which to have been born. The Old Testament saints were born-again (Romans 4:3), but they were never joined personally to Jesus Christ as a new species.

The body of Christ is distinct for this age alone. Ephesians 1:22-23 speak of that: "And He put all things in subjection under His (Jesus') feet (the Father did), and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body; the fullness of Him who fills all in all: the body which is being filled with blessings by Christ." So, the Christian is a new creature (a new species). He becomes that automatically at the point of salvation when he is placed into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And that's what this newness is all about. It's not that he's going to behave himself; not that he's going to stop sinning; and, not that he's going to start behaving himself in a proper way as a Christian. All of that is desired, and must be, but that is not what this is talking about.

## Creation

This word "creation" in 2 Corinthians 5:17 actually looks like this. It's the Greek word "ktisis" (ktis'-is), K T I S I S. And this word means "creation" – a new kind in God's order of creation. The Christian is not a new kind because he's achieved some level of victorious living. This has nothing to do with what we do. He is a new kind entirely because of what God has done for him – we, who did not deserve it, but to whom grace gave it. As God's unique new breed of human beings in creation, we become, naturally, the prime target of Satan. He then zeros in on us. He can't strike Christ, but he can strike those of us who are in Christ. So, we become the prime targets of Satan's attacks. There's nothing the devil likes to do more than to shoot down a Christian. Do you want to be shot down? It's very easy. Quit attending church. Quit reading the Word of God. Quit being a student of scripture. Quit listening to the Berean tapes. Quit feeding on the Word of God. And start considering yourself as friends of the world. Start wanting to be socially accepted by the people around you who are of this world system. And pretty soon, you will share their ways. And pretty soon, you'll become a spiritual casualty. And pretty soon, Satan will shoot you down. And believe me, it's not worth it.

## Positional Sanctification

This place in Christ is, of course, our positional place, and that means that we have positional sanctification. Sanctification means you're absolutely perfect in God's sight – as perfect as Jesus Christ. That's one of the great things about being in Christ. It's positional sanctification. You are as perfect as Christ. You cannot be improved. And it is all based upon the grace of God.

Well, what happens here? 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that because of this positional sanctification: "Being in Christ a new creation, the "old things are passed away". These are not the ways and experiences of our unsaved days again, but of our days in spiritual death under enslavement to the old sin nature. This refers to what is archaic. In fact, we get the word "archaic" from the Greek word for "old" here, which is "archaios" (ar-khah'-yos). And it means that it existed from old times – from the beginning. What has existed from the beginning in us? The sin nature. From the moment you were born, the sin nature started operating. And under the old conditions of our spiritual death, there was no relationship with God. There could be no relationship with God.

Now, what has happened? Now you have become a member of His royal family. That's the old things that have passed away – your place of separation from God in the place of spiritual death, in the slave market of sin. All that has passed away. And this word "passed away" in the Greek Bible is "parerchomai" (par-er'-khom-ahee) P A R E R C H O M A I. It is stated in a way that means it came to an abrupt end. It didn't just gradually fade away. It can't be your conduct which gradually might become better. It says that you became a new creature (bing!) – just like that.

The Roman Catholicism said, "No, that's false. Justification is not instantaneous salvation. Justification is a gradually getting better, and better, and better, and the church finally gets you to the point where it gives you extreme unction just before you die, and (zip!) they get you into purgatory on a high level so that you have minimal time to finish paying for your sins. But the Word of God says, the old condemned sin position in Adam comes to an abrupt end. How do we know it? We know it from this word.

## The Permanency of God's Grace

"Passed away" is an abrupt action. And suddenly, spiritual death is neutralized once and for all, and it is impossible for us to die spiritually again. And the result is: "Behold." And when you have this word "behold" in Greek, that means "Pay attention. It's a great dramatic statement:" "New things have come. And that means that what has been in the past is no longer true. This word for "come" is the word "ginomai." And I have to show you something here, "ginomai" (ghin'-om-ahee), G I N O M A I. Actually, this word means "become." But the Greek grammar is in the perfect tense. And the perfect tense, if you remember, means that here at some point in the past, something happens, and the result of that continues forever and never stops. Do you understand? You have become a new creation in Christ Jesus. And because of this tense, it tells us that it starts, and can never stop. There's another evidence that you can never lose your salvation. The Greek grammar is full of this. And it means that once you are saved, that thing that happened goes on forever. The Bible in the English translation doesn't show that, but people who read it in the Greek (bingo!), they see it: "Hey, that's the perfect tense. That means that this goes on forever. You can't stop it. It began there at some point where you've trusted Christ, and from there on, you are in, for good. And this is the permanency of grace.

That's why I say that this verse is a great demonstration of what the grace of God is all about. There is no way that you can make yourself a new creature. There is no way that you can make yourself a member of the royal family of God. It's all the work of God. And grace finds a way for our need. It never fails. Grace will not fail to get you into the family of God through salvation by trusting in Christ. But grace will not fail you when you've stumbled into sin. Please remember the very adequate illustration of the rug weaver who is making this very precious and attractive oriental rug. And as the weaver is very quickly handling his shuttle, and going back and forth, weaving the thread, somebody says, "It is amazing how that pattern evolved." The weaver says, "Yes, it is the threads we put in at a certain point." And the person says, "But what if you make a mistake, and suddenly you look back, and you realize that you've woven in the wrong thing – you've stumbled." And he says, "Oh, then I step in, and I look it over it, and I make a new design based on the mistake. And you'll never know it's there." That's what God does. Grace makes a new design in our lives out of the mistake, and everything is hunky dory all over again.

I hope that you will have a new appreciation for grace beyond our fondest dreams, that we can never really grasp. Grace is Who and What God is, and thus what he is free to do for us. That's grace. It's not who and what you are. It's not who and what I am. It's what God is that enables Him to do these things for us. And for that reason, we are very strong in stressing something. And I hope you'll remember this word. Salvation is an act of "appropriation." Salvation is not an act of commitment. And what that means is that salvation is an acceptance of a gift that's appropriating what God has offered. Salvation is not a promise, such as: "If you save me, God, I'll lay the rug up in the lounge. If you save me, God, I'll crawl on that terrible roof there, and I'll re-shingle the academy building." It's not a commitment such that if He does it, then you'll behave yourself, or that you'll do something for Him. There are powerful voices now that are saying, "If you don't act right as a Christian, that means you're not a Christian." And they're saying that salvation is a commitment, not an appropriation. And if I were to give you the name of one of the leading Bible teachers who says that, you'd look at one another astounded, and think that I was probably joking. Salvation is an act of appropriation. It is not an act of commitment.

How do I know this? Let us close with reading 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 – grace, grace, unmerited grace. "Now all these things are from God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ." Please remember that the word "reconciled" means that God adjusts us to the standard of absolute righteousness. He adjusts us to Himself like you reconcile your watch to the true time: "He reconciled us to Himself (to His standard) through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." It is our business to bring other people to that reconciliation by telling them the gospel: namely, "That God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespass against them. And He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." Instead of suffering for your sin, God placed it upon His Son. And He has given us the opportunity to tell people they can be reconciled to God's standard, and not have to pay the price of death.

Here is the key part of this passage: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." He made Him. Here's the grace. 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God the Father made God the Son, Who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness (the absolute righteousness) of God in Him." That is a magnificent illustration of the grace of God – that Christ took our sins, and we are the product of that grace. He swapped us His absolute righteousness for our sin.

That is what Paul, here in Colossians, means. There's so much in that one word, when Paul, at the end of verse 6, says that these great transformations took place in the lives of the Colossians Christians: "Since the day that they heard the gospel, and understood the grace of God, in truth (in reality). They really understood the grace of God. Some of these people were horribly into sin. They were sex worshipers at the local temple. They were as pagan and corrupt as could be. And suddenly, they're transformed into a trophy of the grace of God. How? Because of the magnificence of the power of grace. And we'll spend our whole lives trying to grasp how great that power is, and how kind and merciful it is, and to grasp it in truth; that is, in reality. I hope that this session has contributed in a major way to your reality grasp of the grace of God. Thank You, Father for this Your Word. We ask You to continue to guide us as we enter into the great things that are revealed to us in the book of Colossians, not the least of which is the grace of God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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