

**GOOD NEWS**  
for the unsaved  
WORLD!

(#192)  
The plight of the unsaved... vs. becoming  
a "new creation."

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## Last time:

### WE SAW:

- ⇒ The seriousness of our sin – all of us are hopelessly guilty.
- ⇒ Different types of sin (including good works done with sinful motives).
- ⇒ The fact that we need to know these things, in order to understand what salvation is all about.
- ⇒ God tells us these things – **in the Bible** – because of his love for us.

### WITHOUT KNOWING THESE THINGS:

- We cannot appreciate the wonders of God's salvation, and the changes it brings to us.
  - We cannot appreciate the goodness of the Good News.
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## Today:

### OUR GOAL:

- ⇒ **The plight of the unsaved** – the consequences of their sin (the emphasis being on their evil works/deeds):
  - ✓ Their *condition* because of their sinning (now and in the future).
  - ✓ Ways that God *restrains* their sinning.

★ (At one time, this included all of us.) ★

- ⇒ **The changes that occur at salvation** – the reason these horrible consequences *don't apply* to saved people.
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## The plight of the unsaved.

### THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THOSE WHO DO EVIL.

- **Hatred for the light.** ("Light" = a symbolic reference to *Jesus*, who reveals the truth and exposes sin. God's people *rejoice* in the light.)

"God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."  
John 3:19–21 (NLT)

- ↳ The world hates Jesus, because he testifies that what it does is evil – John 7:7.
  - ↳ Those who do *evil* hate those who do *what is righteous*. Example: Cain hated (and killed) Abel – 1 John 3:12.
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### [Their condition NOW (continued).]

- **Denying the true God** by their actions, even though they may *claim* to know him – Titus 1:16.
- **Prone to hypocrisy**, condemning others for sins that they also commit.

When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things.

Romans 2:1b (NLT)

- ↳ EXAMPLE: The religious leaders condemned their ancestors for killing the prophets... yet like their ancestors, they refused to pay attention to the prophets' message – Luke 11:47-48.

- **Corrupt in their thinking.** They often *rejoice* in their evil works – like Israel did when they made the golden calf – Acts 7:41.
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### THE FUTURE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO DO EVIL.

- **They will be punished by God.**

- ↳ Jesus came to destroy their works (since their works originate with the devil) – 1 John 3:8.
- ↳ The "fruit" (result) of their conduct is eternal death – Romans 7:5.
- ↳ Those who are "church-goers" will not escape God's judgment. Consider God's warnings in Revelation 2:6, 22; 3:1-2, 15. *He knows your deeds.*

"See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Jude 1:14b-15 (NIV)

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## God graciously restrains people's sin.

(He also did this with us who are now saved.)

It is people's *nature* to sin... and to deserve God's wrath.

... gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. ... **by nature** deserving of wrath.

Ephesians 2:3b (NIV)

Even so, God *restrains* their sin... and they should view this restraint as an act of God's *love* for them.

- *Even though, as sinners, people hate the true God, they should be thanking him for this restraint!* NONE of us live up to our "potential" for sinning. There are always influences that prevent us from doing so.
- God restrains people: through circumstances, and through law (an awareness of the difference between good and evil).

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**GOD RESTRAINS SIN ⇨ BY MEANS OF CIRCUMSTANCES.**

(This is one aspect of what is often called the "providence" of God.)

> This is why the entire human race hasn't self-destructed by now! <

I WOULD SURE LIKE TO KILL THAT GUY! HE IS CONSTANTLY CAUSING ME PROBLEMS!

THERE'S JUST NO WAY I COULD DO IT WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT!

I'D STEAL THAT JEWELRY IF I COULD...

THE GUARD IS WATCHING ME! AND THERE ARE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS EVERYWHERE.

I WANT THAT WOMAN!

SHE WON'T LET ME GET NEAR HER.

8

**GOD RESTRAINS SIN ⇨ BY MEANS OF LAW.**

(Even though, being an *external* restraint, people often go against it.)

He embeds his law in people's *consciences*.

[People] demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.

Romans 2:15 (NLT)

↳ People tend to go against conscience... often to the point that it becomes *corrupted* (Titus 1:15) or *seared* (1 Timothy 4:2).

He restrains sin through laws created by *people*.

- ↳ He uses government (Romans 13:1-7) – though people's natural tendency is to go against this restraint. (Corrupt governments may do the opposite ... and may persecute *righteous* conduct.)
- ↳ He may use the influences of society, or even false religion, to restrain sin. [The false religion won't *save* them, though.]

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He uses the moral Law (part of the Law of Moses) to restrain sin.

↳ When it comes to "restraint," the Law is not intended to restrain *righteous* conduct, but *sinful* conduct.

We know that the law is good if someone uses it right. We also know that the law is not made for those who do what is right. It is made for those who are against the law and refuse to follow it.

The law is for sinners who are against God and all that is pleasing to him. It is for those who have no interest in spiritual things and for those who kill their fathers or mothers or anyone else. It is for those who commit sexual sins, homosexuals, those who sell slaves, those who tell lies, those who don't tell the truth under oath, and those who are against the true teaching of God.

1 Timothy 1:8-10 (ERV)

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↳ Our sinful selves *fight back* against God's law. So when our sin is successfully restrained by the law, it's not a *willing* submission.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Romans 8:7 (NIV)

↳ Since the law makes us *aware* of what sin is, our sinful selves use this awareness as an opportunity to *intensify the desire to sin*.

Example (based on Romans 7:7-13+):

1. As sinners, it is *natural* for us to covet (even if we don't realize it is wrong).
2. We learn from the law that coveting is sin, and that we should not do it. **Our response?** Sin uses that awareness of the law to *intensify* our desire to covet.
3. The problem isn't the law (which is good), but sin.

The law has this weakness, because, for unsaved people, it's an external restraint. (It becomes internal, for saved people.)

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I WANT TO DO IT!

IT'S SIN... DON'T DO IT!

I WANT TO DO IT!

IT'S SIN... DON'T DO IT!

I WANT TO DO IT!

IT'S SIN... DON'T DO IT!

I WANT TO DO IT!

IT'S SIN... DON'T DO IT!

I DON'T CARE. I'M GOING TO DO IT ANYWAY!

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## Followers of Jesus do not share the plight of the unsaved.

### GOD HAS RE-CREATED US; WE ARE A NEW CREATION!

The change has already taken place in our *soul/spirit*. Our *bodies* will experience the change when Jesus returns.

#### What happened?

- **MADE ALIVE:** God *originally* created us "in his image" – so that we could live for him and reflect his glory in all that we did.
- **CHOOSING DEATH:** Instead of fulfilling our calling, we chose to rebel against God. The "image of God" in us was marred and distorted (though not totally gone); so we can no longer fulfill the purpose for which we were created. We *died* to God, and to holiness and righteousness.
- **RE-MADE ALIVE:** God has offered to create us anew, to enable us to once again be *alive*, and able to fulfill our original calling.

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## OUR NEW CREATION IS FOUNDED ON THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

[Christ] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ...

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the **new creation** has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

All this is from God ...

2 Corinthians 5:15, 17-18a (NIV)

### Change is available... but only on God's terms.

- This new life is *connected* with Christ's life. We are *in Christ* – united with him. As such, becoming a new creation means our *purpose for living has changed*.
- God offers people this new life... but *only those willing to accept this change* will be made new. Those who choose to stay in the "old" way haven't been made "new."

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### The "great exchange" results in a "great change."

- This new life is *enabled* by "the great exchange." Jesus took *our* sin, in exchange for *his* righteousness.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the **righteousness** of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

- Because of this, the *new* nature results in a pursuit of righteousness (as well as a desire to see *other* people experience this change – vs. 19-20).

### This new creation is more important than whether or not we do religious practices.

(Those things are *not* what save us.)

It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been **transformed into a new creation**.

Galatians 6:15 (NET)

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A NEW CREATION?

**We have a new nature.** This includes a *changed* heart/mind, and *new* values. These come with the New Covenant.

- These are changes that occur as we *submit* to the teachings of Scripture.

"I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

Hebrews 10:16b (NLT)

... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2b (BSB)

### This means:

**We don't have to do what the old nature wants us to do!**

Don't forget what this verse says!

... that those who live should **no longer live for themselves but for him** who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:15b (NIV)

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A good fact to repeat repeat repeat to yourself!

... that those who live should **no longer live for themselves but for him** who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:15b (NIV)

### Again, we must emphasize:

- This *doesn't* refer to constantly doing "religious" or "church-related" activities.
- It refers to living the way God originally created us to live!
- That's why we find verses such as this:

So, whether you eat or drink, or **whatever you do**, do **everything** for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (CSB)

There are also some Scripture passages that explain to us the *specific significance* of being a "new creation."

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## IF YOU ARE A NEW CREATION ...

- ★ **You were created for a specific purpose: To do good works.**

(In fact, God even created the good works for you to do.)

For we are God's workmanship, **created** in Christ Jesus **to do good works**, which God **prepared in advance** as our way of life.

Ephesians 2:10 (BSB)

- ★ **This includes the pursuit of righteousness and holiness.**

(We were *originally* created to be like this, before we rebelled against God and destroyed ourselves. Now God restores us to that original calling.)

... the new self, **created** to be **like God in true righteousness and holiness**.

Ephesians 4:24b (BSB)

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★ **This includes the pursuit of a renewed mind.**

This is the focus of Romans 12:2. It isn't merely a *suggestion*, but an *obligation* – and it will be a *reality* for those who have become new creations. (In the following passage, the emphasis is that it *is happening*.)

... since you have taken off the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is **being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.**

Colossians 3:9b-10 (BSB)

**THIS RENEWING:** ✓ It's the means God uses to enable us to reflect his image in the way we were originally created to do.

**THIS RENEWING:** ✓ It's a *process*. We are *being* renewed as we pursue the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

Some of these passages mention the "old" vs. "new" self. This is connected to our being "old" vs. "new" creations. Next time, we plan to look more at this "self" concept.

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**IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE A NEW CREATION, YOU MAY ASK...**

**"Then why do I keep feeling a pull to do evil?"**

We have no obligation to obey the "old self"; but it still tries to attack us through our physical bodies (which aren't renewed until the resurrection). [We plan to look more at this next time.] Also, if we aren't *pursuing* holiness, we can't expect to overcome sin.

**"Do we have a choice? Can we choose to remain in sin?"** Do we *have* to do good things (good works, pursuit of holiness, righteousness, a renewed mind)?

It's probably better to ask, "Do we want to do these things?" If our lives are characterized by *not* wanting to be righteous, then there is no evidence that we have yet become *new* creations. We're still living as *old* ones!

We do have a choice... but *that choice is made at the cross*. Once we *choose* to follow Jesus, it becomes a *commitment*, not a *choice*.

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**"What about Christians who abandon the faith?"**

This is the issue of "fake" vs. "genuine." On the surface, there are some who appear to follow Jesus... but who then turn back to their old ways. Scripture says that they were *never* changed in the first place. They are just returning to expressing their *real* selves.

It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud."

2 Peter 2:21-22 (NIV)

Those who are new creations will respond in a different way.

We don't belong with those who turn back and are destroyed. Instead, we belong with those who have faith and are saved.

Hebrews 10:39 (GW)

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**"If I'm not *sinless*, does that mean I'm not saved?"**

We who are new creations *know* that we are not sinless. But we are growing, and have Paul's example of how to respond to whatever may have occurred in the past.

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13b-14 (NIV)

**"I was always taught that *any* stress on 'good works' means I'm trying to *earn* my salvation! How should I respond?"**

Keep reminding yourself of the *Bible's* emphasis, instead. If you were raised in a church that taught such a view, it may take time for Scripture to make its full impact on you. But every step of the way can be considered a *victory* in the pursuit of the Kingdom of God. Adopt Paul's attitude (see question 4), for when you fail.

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**YOUR (OUR) MISSION!**

✚ If you claim to be saved...  
... then pursue the life  
of a saved person!

**After all, that's what *NEW CREATIONS* are made for!**

⇒ Jesus Christ *changed* you, so that you no longer have to experience the plight of the unsaved!

⇒ SO LIVE "CHANGED"!

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Credits

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