

# THE BIG JOURNEY

from Creation

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to New Creation



## thirteen ► A New Creation in Christ



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Bride's Veil Waterfall, Isle of Skye, Scotland. Water is essential to life. And so water is a symbol of life. That's especially significant in the land of Israel, which has a Mediterranean to semi-arid climate, with seasonal rains and dry summers. Water is one of the Bible symbols of the Spirit, Who brings God's life. Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:37-38). John the Gospel writer then comments, "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, . . ." The Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost. From that moment, God's Spirit came to live in the hearts of believers, giving them new, eternal life. Jesus says to us all: "let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Revelation 22:17).

## Jesus – God's final Sacrifice

On the Day of Pentecost, Jesus released the Holy Spirit into human hearts. What happened on that wonderful day flowed directly from Jesus's sacrificial death, resurrection and exaltation at His Father's right hand in heaven. Let's pause for a moment in our journey to look more closely at what His death and resurrection really accomplished.

To do that, we need to begin in the Old Testament. In Session 7, we looked at the various sacrifices that God commanded Israel to offer. God accepted these sacrifices as a way for Him to live among His people and have fellowship with them - as far as was possible in those days.

But the sacrificial system could never be the final answer for sin, as the writer to the Hebrews says: "*it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*" (Hebrews 10:4). It was Jesus's death, resurrection and exaltation that dealt fully and finally with sin. Only then could God come and live in the hearts of true believers, and have true fellowship with them – something He began to do on the Day of Pentecost.

Jesus's death on the Cross did all that the Old Testament sacrifices could not do. The Law with its sacrificial system was "*a shadow of the good things to come*" (Hebrews 10:1) – the "*good things*" being full salvation through Jesus

Christ. The Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed what Jesus's sacrifice would one day accomplish. Let's see how they did that.

In Session 7 we saw that the five key Levitical sacrifices pictured how God dealt with sin and restored His people to fellowship with Himself and with other people:

sacrifice	meaning
sin offering	pollution caused by sin is dealt with by death
reparation offering	restitution is made for sinful acts
burnt offering	the worshipper offers himself wholly to God
cereal offering	the worshipper gives all that he possesses to God
fellowship offering	the worshipper and everyone who eats the offering with him enjoy fellowship with God and each other

In addition to these five offerings, there were two other major sacrifices - **the great sin offering on the Day of Atonement**, and **the Passover lamb**. Jesus fulfilled all these sacrifices (see Hebrews 10.5-10).



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A life-size replica of the altar in the Tabernacle courtyard, where the various sacrifices were offered.

### The purification offering (sin offering)

Firstly, sin defiled God's people, and God's home - the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple. Sin soils and pollutes - not in a material way, but *spiritually*.

The idea that sin pollutes may seem strange to us at first. But we still recognise it when we apply the words 'unclean' or 'dirty' to something impure. God is utterly holy; He made His creation pure and good. Such pollution had to be dealt with.

God provided a solution. An animal could be sacrificed as a sin offering, although the very poor could offer flour instead (Leviticus 4.1-5.13; 6.24-30; see also Numbers 15.22-31). The focus in this sacrifice is **death**. God graciously accepted the animal's death to cleanse His sanctuary and the sinner from sin's defilement. And so the sinner was forgiven.

**Jesus is our sin offering**; His death cleanses everyone who believes in Him from the defilement of sin, and they are forgiven (see Romans 8.3, 1 John 1.7).

### ❖ The Day of Atonement ❖

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest offered a final great sin offering for all the sins of the nation over the preceding year (Leviticus 16.1-34, Numbers 29.7-11).

The key sacrifice was a pair of goats (regarded as a single sacrifice). One goat was killed and the blood brought right into God's presence. The other (called the scapegoat) had the sins of the entire nation confessed over it. The scapegoat was then led away and released into the wilderness.

God graciously accepted the offerings on this remarkable day to cleanse His home and His people from sin's defilement. God forgave His people; they were now cleansed from all their sins. Now He could continue to live among them in the Tabernacle.

Jesus fulfilled all that took place on that awesome day (as Hebrews 9.7-8,11-12,24-26 describes). As our great High Priest, He entered the Most Holy Place with His own blood and thus secured eternal redemption for us. He fulfils the great purification offering of the Day of Atonement:

► Just as the first goat died on behalf of the nation, Jesus died in our place. His death has cleansed everyone who believes in Him from the defilement of sin. They are forgiven.

► Just as the high priest symbolically loaded the nation's sins onto the scapegoat's head, the Lord *"has laid on him the iniquity of us all"* (Isaiah 53.6). Paul writes: *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5.21).

► Just as the scapegoat was led into the wilderness far from God's sanctuary, so Jesus suffered separation from God's presence. On the Cross, He cried, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27.46).

► And just as the sin-laden goat never returned to the camp, so Jesus's death removed our guilt, to borrow the Psalmist's words, *"as far as the east is from the west"* (Psalm 103.12).



'The Scapegoat' painted in 1854-1856 by William Holman Hunt and held by the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight, England. The goat is depicted near the southern end of the Dead Sea - a desolate, inhospitable wilderness. Utterly abandoned, the beast stands shakily in the mire, soon to be just another of the skeletons embedded in the mud around it. The goat bears a piece of red cloth. Although not prescribed in Leviticus, the High Priest in Jesus's time tied a piece of scarlet cloth to its horn. This identified it as the scapegoat; and red colour, it seems, represented the sin of the people. The painting's frame bears the quotations 'Surely he hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows/Vet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted.' (Isaiah LIII, 4) and 'And the Goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a Land not inhabited.' (Leviticus XVI, 22).



A full-scale replica of the Tabernacle, Timna Park, Israel. For a description of the Tabernacle and its furniture, see 'The Big Journey' session 7, pages 3-5. In the courtyard in front of the Tabernacle tent is the altar of burnt offering; between the altar and the tent is the laver. The tent itself was divided by a veil into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

### The reparation offering

In some cases an offering wasn't enough. There needed to be restitution. So God provided the reparation offering, also called the guilt or trespass offering (Leviticus 5.14-6.7; 7.1-7). This sacrifice focused on **restitution**. The offerer not only sacrificed an animal; he also paid compensation. **Jesus is our reparation offering** (see Isaiah 53.10); He has made restitution for all the consequences of our sins. We explore this a little more on pages 7-8.

### The burnt offering

The key meaning of this sacrifice is **dedication to God**. The sinner had to be cleansed and forgiven. He had to make restitution, too, where appropriate. But he had to do something else, as well. At heart, all sin is rebellion against God. So now the sinner needed reverse his rebellion and rededicate himself to God. He did so by offering a burnt offering (described in Leviticus 1.3-17; 6.8-13; 7.8).

The sacrifice was wholly burnt (apart from its skin or crop); it was wholly offered to God. The burnt offering was a token of the sinner's desire to turn from rebellion, give himself completely to God and obey Him. If this was genuinely what the offerer intended by the sacrifice, then God was pleased and accepted the worshipper. Any barrier that existed between God and the worshipper was removed. As Allen Ross explains, "... there was full atonement. The sweet aroma of this offering would ascend to the heavens, signifying that God was accepting it and the worshipper with pleasure".

**Jesus is our burnt offering** (see Hebrews 10.6-7). Throughout His life and in His death, Jesus gave Himself to God. He did His Father's will perfectly. God accepted Jesus's life and death as a perfect whole burnt offering on our behalf.

### The cereal offering

The cereal offering is described in Leviticus 2.1-16, 6.14-23,

7.9-14, Numbers 15.11-15, 18, 25-26, and 15.1-16. It focused on the **consecration to God of all someone possesses** – the offerer's wealth and possessions. We can also think that this consecration included the offerer's time and energies, and his abilities, gifts and talents, too.

Jesus completely consecrated Himself to God; He dedicated all His abilities, all His energies, and all His time to do God's will (see John 4.34, 6.38, John 8.29). He was a perfect **cereal offering** to His Father.

### The fellowship offering

The final sacrifice is the fellowship (or peace) offering (Leviticus 3.1-17, 7.11-36, 19.5-8, 22.21-24, 29-30). Portions were offered to God and the priests were given their share. The offerer and his friends and family ate the rest. God was their host at this meal; the offerer and those who shared the meal with him ate in His presence.

Eating together is an act of fellowship. This sacrifice celebrated and enacted the fellowship between God and those who ate the meal, and between everyone at the meal, too.

Through His sacrificial death, **Jesus has fulfilled the fellowship offering**. Those who receive Him as their Lord and Saviour enjoy fellowship with God (see Romans 5.1, Ephesians 2.14-18, 1 John 1.3) and with each other.

Our fellowship with God is also celebrated and expressed by a meal - the Lord's Supper. The Israelites ate a meal - the fellowship offering - to mark their covenant fellowship with God and with each other. We eat a meal - the Lord's Supper - to mark *our* covenant fellowship with God and with each other (Matthew 26.26-29, Mark 14.22-25, Luke 22.14-20, and 1 Corinthians 10.15-17, 11.23-26).

That fellowship was purchased by His sacrificial death. So when we eat the Lord's Supper, we eat bread and drink wine to symbolise Jesus's body broken for us and His blood poured out for us in death. His death opened the way to fellowship with God and with each other. We are now part of God's family.

### ❖ Christ our Passover ❖

In the first Passover, each Israelite household or company of neighbours sacrificed a lamb, smeared its blood on the doorposts and lintels, and ate it as part of a meal. The lamb died instead of the firstborn, who collectively represented the whole nation.

But the firstborn of Egypt all died, and then Pharaoh released Israel. God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt – and they became *His* people instead (see Exodus 6.6-7). They now belonged to Him; they were His holy people (Exodus 12.1-13,21-23,28). God's people were to eat a Passover meal annually to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 12.14,24-27,43-49, Leviticus 23.5, Numbers 9.9-14, 28.16, Deuteronomy 16.1-3,4-7).

Eating the lamb was a significant part of the ceremony. It affirmed their covenant relationship with God, and their bond with each other as members together of God's covenant people.

In fact, we can view the Passover as a specialised type of fellowship offering. As we've just seen, most of this sacrifice was eaten as an act of fellowship with God and between all the fellow diners. The Passover meal, too, was an act of fellowship with God and between those who ate it.

The Passover lambs point forward to Jesus. He is our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5.7). There are a number of links between Jesus's death and the Passover sacrifice:

► The Passover lamb had to be *“without blemish”* (Exodus 12.5). At Jesus's trial there were multiple testimonies to His innocence - Pilate (Luke 23.4, 23.14-15, Luke 23.22), Pilate's wife (Matthew 27.19), Herod (Luke 23.15), the repentant criminal (Luke 23.41), even Judas the betrayer (Matthew 27.4). And Peter speaks of *“the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot”* (1 Peter 1.19) – Peter may have had the Passover uppermost in his mind here.

► Secondly, the soldiers broke the legs of the others crucified with Jesus, to hasten their death – but when they saw that Jesus was already dead, they didn't break His legs (John 19.31-33). John comments: *“For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’”* (John 19.36). The most likely Scriptures being referred to here are Exodus 12.46 and Numbers 9.12, which command the people not to break the Passover lamb's bones. John may also have had Psalm 34.20 in mind, which speaks of God delivering the righteous.

► And it seems fairly certain that Jesus died around mid-afternoon on Friday 14th Nisan, around the time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple.

Jesus fulfilled the Passover sacrifice. Through His sacrificial death, those who trust in Him are saved from death and become His people – just as, through the first Passover sacrifice, the firstborn (collectively representing the whole nation) were saved from death, and Israel was set apart as God's people.

Israel's covenant bond with God was celebrated by the Passover meal. Our covenant relationship with God is also celebrated by a meal – the Lord's Supper. Indeed, the Lord's Supper was first instituted at Passover time. We've seen that the fellowship offering points forward to the Lord's Supper. So does the Passover meal.



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Sheep for slaughter at the Samaritan Passover on Mount Gerizim in the year 2007.

### Foot Note Our Priest, Sacrifice and Offering

Jesus's death on the Cross fulfilled the entire sacrificial system:

- **He Himself was a sacrifice.** He didn't offer an animal, as the Old Testament priests did. He offered Himself (Hebrews 7.27, see Hebrews 10.10). He Himself was the flawless Lamb of God (John 1.29,36).
- **Jesus also took the place of the sinner who offered the sacrifices** (clearly, no-one else could offer Jesus as a sacrifice).
- **And He was the officiating High Priest, too** (Hebrews 2.17, 4.14, 7.26-27).

### A sacrifice for all time

Jesus's sacrifice atoned for mankind's sin through *all of human history*, both before and after His death and resurrection.

Of themselves, the sacrifices could do nothing about sin (Hebrews 10.1-4). But God graciously forgave His people when they offered them with repentant hearts. He did so



The Samaritan community still practises the ancient Passover sacrifice every year. This is an early photograph of a Samaritan family eating their Passover meal.

on the basis of Jesus's sacrifice, yet to be enacted in history. God, "*in his divine forbearance . . . had passed over former sins*" (Romans 3.25). He postponed the full penalty for people's sin until Jesus came and bore that penalty for them.

## Revealing sin's penalty

The penalty of sin is death (see Genesis 2.17). Jesus suffered that penalty for us. He died in our place. But how exactly do the Old Testament sacrifices picture Jesus's sacrificial death?

► **Through the death of an innocent animal.** Four of the five key sacrifices (the burnt, purification, reparation and fellowship offerings) involved the death of an animal. A strong, healthy young animal at the threshold of a long and productive life suffered unnatural, untimely death through no fault of its own. God graciously accepted its death instead of the death of the sinner who offered it. There's a clear analogy with Jesus's death here. Jesus suffered death through no fault of His own so we might be forgiven and reconciled to God.

► **Especially through the scapegoat's fate on the Day of Atonement.** One offering foreshadows Jesus's death in a special way. It is the offering of two goats for the nation on the Day of Atonement. We've seen above how Jesus fulfils this offering. But let's explore its symbolism further.

The two goats constituted a *single* purification offering.

The first goat pictured the penalty of death, just as the other animal offerings did.

But the death of the second goat seems to go further – by portraying the *nature* of Jesus's death. It shows us *what death really is*. As we saw in Session 4, death is more than physical death; it is *alienation*. Death severs relationships. When Adam and Eve sinned, their relationship with God was severed, and their relationship with each other was wrecked. Life was now blighted by alienation and loneliness. Unless God stepped in to save them, they would spend eternity in the unutterable agony of total isolation – banished from God's presence and without any meaningful relationships with other people.

That's what the scapegoat symbolically endured. Loaded with the nation's sins, it was banished to the remote, uninhabited wilderness (Leviticus 16.10,22), far from God's presence and far from His people, a place believed by the Jews to be the haunt of demons. In that desolate wasteland, the forsaken beast was to wander, alone and vulnerable, for the rest of its life. It was, for this hapless beast, a living hell.

The scapegoat's fate shows us with brutal realism what death really is – to be utterly forsaken. In Arthur Custance's words, the scapegoat "*does not suffer physical death but the death of absolute isolation*". It cannot but remind us of Jesus made a curse for us as He hung on the cross, forsaken by His Father and suffering the agonies of eternal death for us, all the while mobbed by the forces of darkness.

## What happened on the Cross?



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In Session 4 we catalogued all the terrible effects of that first sin in the Garden of Eden. God dealt with all these consequences through Jesus's death, resurrection and exaltation to His right hand in heaven.

Jesus made, in the words of the old Book of Common Prayer, "*a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world*". He opened the way for people to be reconciled to God and to enjoy eternal life. He provided restitution for our sins. He broke Satan's power over us (Hebrews 2.14), brought all his works to nothing (1 John 3.8), and sentenced him and his hordes of foul spirits to eternal doom.

And Jesus's resurrection was the forerunner of a whole new creation - a new humanity (see Ephesians 2.15) living in God's presence in a new heaven and Earth (Revelation 21.1)!

### The Cross provides reconciliation with God

Sin is not essentially the bad things that we think or say or do - they're the *symptoms* of sin. At its root, sin is a state of *rebellion* against God. Adam and Eve were traitors, guilty of high treason against their Creator and King.

But, as we saw in Session 1, God could not simply forgive and forget mankind's act of revolt against Him. If He were to do so, He would be acting contrary to His nature - His love, His holiness, His righteousness and integrity. And that is something He can never do (see 2 Timothy 2.13). We are unclean; our sin makes us guilty before God.

We need to be cleansed from sin; our guilt needs to be removed. Jesus's death and resurrection has made that possible. Through faith in Him, we may be cleansed and forgiven (see Matthew 26.28, Ephesians 1.7, Colossians 1.14, 2.13-14, 1 John 2.12). Then we can enjoy communion with God.

By His death on the Cross:

► Jesus **quenched God's righteous anger** towards us (Romans 3.25, Hebrews 2.17, 1 John 2.2, 4.10). In other words, (as used in the ESV Bible, the translation used most often in these studies) Jesus made **propitiation** for us. On the Cross Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. He thus fulfilled the requirements of our holy God's perfect justice. Those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour no longer stand under God's wrath; God now takes pleasure in them. We'll explore the idea of *propitiation* more fully on page 15.

► God **justifies** those who receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour (Romans 3.23-24,26, 5.9). Again, we'll explain this word more fully later in this study. But, in essence, it means that God pronounces them 'not guilty' and credits Jesus's perfect righteousness to them.

► God **reconciles** believers to Himself – now they are in fellowship with Him (see Ephesians 2.12-16).

### The Cross brings a new humanity to birth

Whenever God's Old Testament people brought the prescribed sacrifices with repentant hearts, God graciously forgave them and restored them to fellowship with Him. This was no 'legal fiction' - it was real forgiveness, because underlying all these sacrifices was the sacrifice Jesus would one day make to fully and finally deal with sin.

But doubtless many of God's people longed for a completely new kind of life - a life of victory over the sin that constantly dogged their steps.

Why did God's people continually fail to keep His Law? Because they were *sinner*s. Adam and Eve had not only *sinned*; they had *become sinner*s. Mankind's inward disposition had changed; we had become sinful children of Satan (see 1 John 3.10).

Fallen mankind is enslaved to sin. As Jesus said, *"everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin"* (John 8.34, see also Romans 6.16-19, Titus 3.3). So we need much more than forgiveness. Mankind is *"dead in . . . trespasses and sins"* (Ephesians 2.1). We need to be raised from spiritual death! We need *eternal life* – a life in fellowship with God. We need a new disposition that instinctively chooses to obey God.

And this is what Jesus has achieved for us! When He died and rose again, He 'included' in His death and resurrection all those who would repent and trust Him. As a believer:

► **I am crucified with Christ** (Romans 6.6, Galatians 2.20). My *"old self"* was *"crucified with him"* (Romans 6.6, see Galatians 2.20). My *"old self"* isn't just an aspect of my being called my 'old nature'. It's my whole person - body, soul and spirit - as I once was 'in Adam', that is, as a member of the sin-ridden humanity whose head is Adam. I once had a sinful disposition; I was once in bondage to sin. But no longer. The 'old me' died when Christ died.

► **I am raised with Christ** into a new life of freedom from bondage to sin (Colossians 2.12-13, see Romans 6.4). I now have a completely new identity. I'm *"a new creation"* (2 Corinthians 5.17), reborn from above (see John 3.3). I now possess eternal life (see Romans 6.23) – God's uncreated life. I am now a member of God's new humanity, the Church, whose Head is Christ.

Now, by God's grace and enabling, I'm able to do God's will. I'm able to live in a way that's pleasing to Him - just as Jeremiah and Ezekiel foretold (Jeremiah 31.33, Ezekiel 11.19-20, 36.27, 37.24).

And, as I walk in obedience to God, He is transforming me into His image (see 2 Corinthians 3.18 and Colossians 3.10). God made mankind in His image (Genesis 1.26-27). Even after the Fall, human beings – in their essential nature – still bear God's image (see Genesis 9.6, James 3.9); but that image is now distorted and dysfunctional.

Jesus is the second Adam. He is the perfect Man, the perfect image of God (2 Corinthians 4.4, Colossians 1.15).

And so *He* is our Pattern: God is conforming us to Jesus's image (Romans 8.29).

And we're now predestined for glory. Paul writes, *"we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another"* (2 Corinthians 3.18). Gordon Fee comments: *"through Christ and by the Spirit we are being transformed so as to bear the likeness for which we were intended at the beginning"*. God *"will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body"* (Philippians 3.21); *"we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven"* – that is, Jesus (1 Corinthians 15.49). When Jesus appears at His Second Coming, *"we shall be like him"* (1 John 3.2).

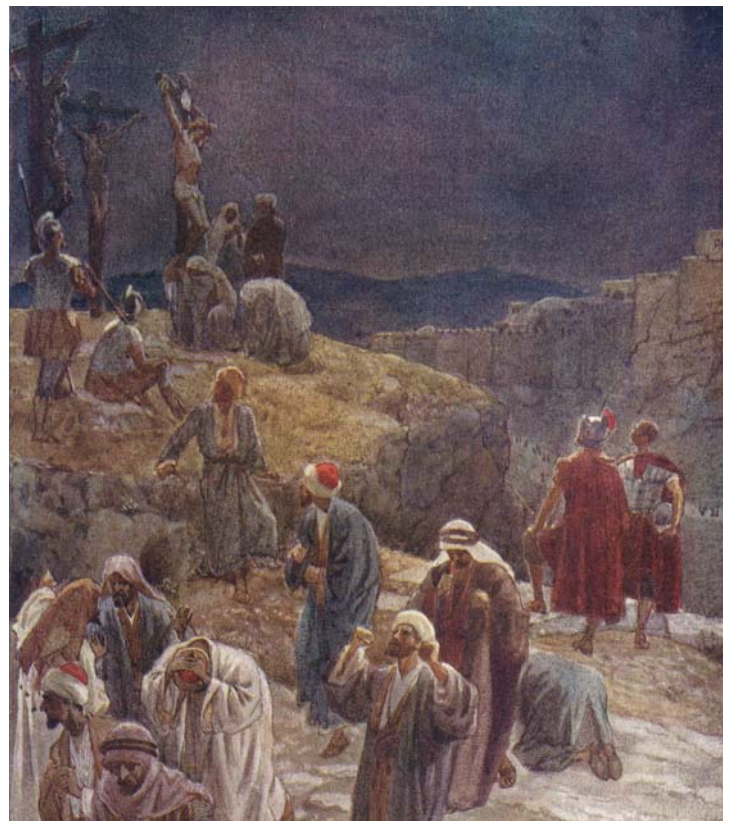


### Foot Note Destined for glory

It's important to realise that God is doing more than simply restoring us to the image that Adam had before he sinned. God had a glorious destiny for Adam and Eve, had they not fallen to temptation. God wanted them to eat from the Tree of Life. If they had, He would have given them eternal life – that is, His own uncreated life. This is far more than unending physical life. God Himself would have come to live within them. They and their descendants would have enjoyed fellowship with Him; He would have been their unceasing source of life and blessing.

And we can be sure that they would not have died physically. Rather, they would have passed into a wider, larger, more glorious created realm – into heaven on Earth, like the world that John the Apostle saw (Revelation 21.1). Their bodies would have been transformed into resplendent, glorious bodies fitted for life in God's immediate presence in His eternal paradise.

That was mankind's destiny had we not sinned. Though we must now pass through death (unless the Lord returns beforehand), that is now our destiny, too, as believers.



The crucifixion scene, shrouded in darkness during the three hours before Jesus's death. Detail from a painting by William Hole R.S.A., R.E.

## ❖ Jesus – humanity’s new Head ❖

How could Jesus’s sacrificial death do all these wonderful things for us? How could His death pay the penalty for *our* sin? How could His resurrection raise *us* into new life? Clearly, there’s some very close connection between Him and us. But what is that connection, and how does it work for us?

It works because of the way God made mankind. Unlike angels, we humans are all related, as we explained in Session 3. God created only one person - Adam – directly, and so God constituted him the head of the human race. Every other human came from Adam; Eve came from Adam’s body, and everyone else (with the exception of Jesus) from Adam and Eve by normal procreation. So everyone apart from Christ is, in some mysterious way ‘in Adam’ (a phrase Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15.22), united under Adam’s headship.

When Adam sinned, all mankind was implicated in that sin. Paul says: *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—”* (Romans 5.12). Everyone except Jesus has committed sins from infancy. But Paul’s phrase *“all sinned”* here in Romans 5.12 isn’t referring to this. What he means is this: when Adam sinned, all humanity - Jesus excepted – was (in some mysterious way we can’t fully explain) *implicated* in that sin. Through Adam’s sin we were *“made sinners”* (Romans 5.19) or, as Young’s Literal Translation puts it *“constituted sinners”*.

After his fall, Adam found himself in bondage to sin; his disposition and character became sinful. And from the moment of their conception, all of Adam’s descendants are in bondage to sin; their disposition and character are sinful (compare Psalm 51.5). Sin became natural for Adam; sin is natural for us. As Leon Morris explains, we *“were born as members of a race already separated from God”*. And so, like Adam, we suffer sin’s consequences - alienation from God, guilt, moral depravity, disease and pain and toil and death.

Our old head, Adam, had failed. And we have all suffered the consequences. The only remedy for humanity was to have a new Head Who would not fail. Jesus became that Head. He became a true Member of the human race; Mary was His true biological mother. Jesus is physically related to you and me, and to every person who has ever lived. But Jesus was conceived *“from the Holy Spirit”* (Matthew 1.20). Though biologically related to all of us through Mary, Jesus was without sin (John 8.46, 2 Corinthians 5.21, 1 Peter 2.22, 1 John 3.5). He united Himself with our sinful humanity, but He was never for a moment tainted with sin (see Romans 8.3).

Jesus is a second Adam, the second Head of the human race (see 1 Corinthians 15.21-22, 45-49 and see also Romans 5.12-19). And as its new Head, Jesus has undone all the devastation wreaked by our first head, Adam. He did this through His death and resurrection:

► **He died for me.** He became the new Head of the human race. And so, as the Head of my human family, He could legitimately have my sin reckoned as His, bear its guilt and suffer its penalty in my place. This was what was specially depicted in the Old Testament sacrifices. And, in turn, I am credited with His perfect righteousness (2 Corinthians 5.21).

► **I died with Him.** When I repented and believed in Jesus, I became **united** with Him and thus united with His death and resurrection (as we saw on the previous page). My *“old self”* was *“crucified with him”* (Romans 6.6, see Galatians 2.20) - the ‘old me’ died when He died. **And I am raised with Him** into new life. I’m *“a new creation”* (2 Corinthians 5.17), reborn from above (see John 3.3).

So Jesus’s death has two aspects. **He died for me** – this is an aspect of His death that Jesus bore **on my behalf**. **And I died with Him**; this is an aspect of His death that **He shares with me**.

## The Cross provides restitution for sins

Adam and Eve were to worship God and serve Him in His garden paradise – a role that would grow as mankind spread across the world and pushed the garden’s boundaries out to the farthest regions of the Earth. The whole Earth was to become His dwelling-place, where He lived with His faithful people.

But sin derailed that plan. Fallen mankind didn’t serve and glorify God; instead, they rebelled against Him. God’s creation – intended to be a paradise - was *“subjected to frustration”* and in *“bondage to decay”* (Romans 8.20,21 NIV). Earth became the scene of sin and destruction.



Image courtesy of Das Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-B0130-0050-004 (CC-BY-SA 3.0 DE)  
Earth is now the scene of sin and destruction. A harrowing image from World War II. Terrified residents flee the burning city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd) after a German aerial bombardment in August 1942 during the infamous battle for that city. Countless millions suffered during the two world wars, caught up in a conflict for which they bore no responsibility. In fact, every person who has ever lived has suffered because of others’ sin. But through His sacrificial death, Jesus compensates us – and all God’s people – for the impact of others’ sin on our life. One day, we’ll discover that - in the end - nothing that anyone has ever done to us has truly harmed us or caused us loss.

Sin has robbed God – just as you and I are robbed when someone else’s crime derails our lives, smashes our hopes and plans, and deprives us of our possessions. Justice demands that we are compensated. So it is with God.

Sin has robbed other people, too. Our sin impacts others’ lives. A single crime can devastate a whole neighbourhood – with consequences that the criminal is utterly unable even to begin to put right. Even a single unkind word can ruin a life (compare James 3.5-10). Never underestimate sin’s potential to harm. Sins are rather like nuclear bombs - one small submolecular collision results in two more, which results in yet more, until you have the destructive power that can destroy the globe. Each sin (however small it may seem to us) can set off a chain of repercussions whose impact grows ever larger as time goes by.

There are many things we can - and must - put right after we sin. We may need to apologise; we may need to make

restoration in some way. But there are countless things we cannot possibly put right - the damage has been done, and there's nothing we can do about it. And conversely, we ourselves suffer because of other people's sin.

Through His sacrificial death, Jesus put all these tangled consequences of sin right – though exactly *how* He did this on the Cross, we can't fully understand.

► **He paid the debt that we owed to God.**

► **He paid the debt that we owed to other people whom we have harmed (whether deliberately or inadvertently) through our sin.**

► **Jesus dealt with all that we ourselves have suffered because of other people's sin.** Jesus died to bear *all* sins – including other people's sins that have impacted us. They themselves may never repent and find God's forgiveness. But Jesus dealt with their sin's effect *on us*. The debt they owe us has already been paid. Christ Jesus paid it on the Cross. We have a wonderful illustration of this principle in the Bible. Paul said to Philemon (about his unfaithful slave Onesimus): *"If [Onesimus] has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. . . . I will repay it . . ."* (Philemon 18-19). Jesus says to us likewise: *"if he or she [insert the names of everyone who has sinned against you here] has wronged you, put that on My account. I will recompense you."* This is an aspect of forgiveness that is highlighted in the reparation offering, which focused on *compensation*. Jesus fulfils the reparation offering; He compensates us for everything we suffer because of others' sins. *And that means we now have no grounds whatever for unforgiveness against anyone.* Jesus has paid their debt to us! We don't know exactly how, but one day we shall discover that - in the end - nothing that anyone has ever done to us has truly harmed us or caused us loss.

### The Cross breaks Satan's dominion over us

When Adam followed Satan's counsel and ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Satan's dark kingdom - once confined to a heavenly realm – gained a bridgehead on Earth through mankind. Humanity was now under his power.

It was our sin that gave Satan a basis for his authority over us. The name 'Satan' is a Hebrew word basically meaning 'adversary'; it can also be translated 'accuser'. Satan is our great accuser (see Revelation 12.10); he's the cosmic counsel for the prosecution. In the heavenly courtroom Satan demanded that God execute His justice against sinful mankind. His case was watertight; mankind was indeed guilty. Mankind had obeyed Satan, so God justly condemned them to obey Satan. Humanity came under Satan's power.

Satan gained power over mankind because of what a man – Adam – did. Accordingly, it was a Man – the second Adam, Christ Jesus – who removed Satan's authority over us. On the Cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. All who truly believe in Jesus are justified (a word we explain more fully later). In brief, it means that their penalty is paid in full, God declares them 'not guilty' and Jesus's perfect righteousness is credited to their account.

That breaks Satan's power over us! He no longer has any legal case against God's people. He can accuse us all he wants, but we're not guilty - *"There is therefore now no*

*condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 8.1)!

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus disarmed and bound Satan and every principality and power under his command (see John 12.31, Colossians 2.15, Hebrews 2.14, 1 John 3.8, Revelation 12.7-10). Many understand Revelation 20.1-2 to refer to this binding of Satan, too (though many others think this binding is during the Millennial age after Jesus's Second Coming).

A Member of the human race now has all authority in heaven and Earth (Matthew 28.18, Ephesians 1.20-23)! Jesus's brothers and sisters - those who together form His Church - share His authority over both heaven and Earth with Him. Even now, we are seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2.6), and share His authority over the evil powers. As one writer put it: *"Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven cause a massive shift in the cosmic balance of power"*. The Kingdom of God is now advancing powerfully over all the Earth.

### The Cross vindicates God

Satan caused mankind to think wrongly about God. When Satan tempted Eve, he insinuated that God's word couldn't be trusted and that God was withholding blessing from her. All mankind has been infected with the same distrustful suspicion of God.

Jesus's life, death and resurrection exposed all these lies. In His life - and supremely in His death - Jesus glorified God (John 12.23, 13.31-32, see 17.1). He proved supremely to all heaven's hosts, to all humanity, and to every foul spirit in hell *that God is love - and loves to the uttermost* (see John 3.16). God has demonstrated to all creation that He is good, that He can be trusted, that all He does is always in purest love. Satan is proved to be a liar (John 8.44).

### The Cross spells Satan's doom

Satan's dominion over mankind is shattered. His lies have been exposed. Now God may justly evict him and all his forces from creation for ever. One day soon, Satan and his foul hordes of evil spirits will be cast into outer darkness. Creation will never be troubled by Satan and evil again.



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A striking image of an eruption of Mount Etna in Italy taken in 2011. It evokes Satan's eternal doom as pictured by the lake of fire and sulphur in Revelation 20.10. Jesus broke Satan's power over us (Hebrews 2.14), brought all his works to nothing (1 John 3.8) and sentenced him and his hordes of foul spirits to eternal doom.



## The Cross will bring a new Heaven and Earth



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Misty morning - "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21.5).

Mankind's God-given powers to govern Earth were weakened at the Fall. Mankind's moral depravity - coupled with our impaired mental and physical powers - made us unable to subdue and rule the Earth as God intended. The natural world lacks its God-given leadership, and disorder and breakdown result. We fight a frustrating and wearisome battle against nature. And Earth faces ecological

disaster as the human race despoils and pollutes land, sea and air. Furthermore, God has removed His blessing on the land (compare Leviticus 26.18-20, Deuteronomy 11.16-17). In Paul's words, "*the creation was subjected to frustration*" (Romans 8.20 NIV); "*the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now*" (Romans 8.22).

Creation waits for God's people to be revealed in their final glory (Romans 8.19). We shall be glorified – sinlessly perfect. And we shall have new bodies, too. One Man already has His resurrection body - Jesus. He was "*the first to rise from the dead*" (Acts 26.23); He is "*the beginning, the firstborn from the dead*" (Colossians 1.18, see also Revelation 1.5). He was the first to rise from the dead, and He's the founder of a new humanity who will also be resurrected. One day, when Jesus returns, all God's people will get new bodies like His (see Philippians 3.20-21). Creation "*will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God*" (Romans 8.21). It will be renewed and transformed into the glorious paradise God has always intended. Then humanity – glorified and perfected - will take their place as Earth's rulers and govern it wisely and well, just as God has always planned. Then God will unleash His richest blessings on the natural world.

## Born into God's new family



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A newborn baby (the photographer's daughter) moments after birth, and before the umbilical cord was cut. Just as the beginnings of our natural life was a birth, the beginnings of our new life as a Christian is a birth.

As we've seen earlier, when Jesus died and rose again, He 'included' in His death and resurrection all those who would repent and trust Him. They are crucified with Him; their 'old self' or 'old person', enslaved to sin, is killed stone dead. And they are raised with Him into a new life of freedom from bondage to sin. God Himself comes to live in them; He gives them His uncreated, eternal life (see Romans 6.23). They are "*born . . . of God*" (John 1.13).

The Bible describes our new birth in a variety of ways: we're "*born again*" (John 3.3,7) - or to use William Barclay's rendering of John 3.7, "*reborn from above*". We're "*born anew*" (1 Peter 1.23, J. Ramsey Michaels' translation), we're "*regenerated*" (Titus 3.5); we're a "*a new creation*" (2 Corinthians 5.17).

Just as the beginning of our natural life was a birth, the beginning of our new life as a Christian is a birth. Our natural conception and birth made us part of the old sinful humanity 'in Adam'. Our new birth makes us part of the new humanity 'in Christ'. Once we were Satan's offspring (see 1 John 3.10 and compare John 8.44). When we are born again, we become God's children instead (John 1.12-13, Romans 8.14-17, Galatians 3.26, 4.4-7, 1 John 3.1-2). God adopts us into His family (Ephesians 1.5, Romans 8.15, Galatians 4.5). As Alister McGrath puts it: "*adoption is about being wanted. It is about belonging. . . . To be adopted is to be invited into a loving and caring environment. It is to be welcomed, wanted and valued.*" We now have the right to call the Father, "*Abba! Father!*" (Romans 8.15, Galatians 4.6).

So when someone becomes a Christian, something profoundly radical occurs. It isn't merely a matter of adopting new beliefs or a new lifestyle. Of course, there *will* be changes in our beliefs and lifestyle. But the changes occur because of a *new birth*. New birth is, in John Stott's words "*a deep, radical, inward transformation*". God's children have a new disposition; they now possess a strong internal inclination to be obedient to God. In Oswald Chambers' words, they bear "*a strong family likeness*" to their Father. They are becoming "*sharers of divine nature*" (2 Peter 1.4 Richard Bauckham's translation).

And it's only when we're born into God's new family, that we really become fully human as God created us to be. Ole Hallesby put it this way: "*. . . if I were to tell you why I became a Christian and were to give my answer quickly and in one short sentence, I think that I would have to state it thus, to be as simple and as clear as possible: I did it to become a man.*" Through the miracle of new birth - greater even than the miracle of natural birth - God is creating a new humanity as He has always intended us to be.

### Foot Note The miracle of new birth

Everything changes when someone is born again:

- ▶ Their **legal status before God** changes – once they were guilty, now they are righteous and enjoy good standing before God. This is **justification**.
- ▶ Their **inner disposition** changes: once they had a sinful disposition; now they have a new disposition free from sin's bondage. Now they naturally love God and want to serve Him. This is new birth from above, or **regeneration**.
- ▶ Their **family** changes. Once they were a child of Satan (see 1 John 3.8,10); now God has made them His child. This is **adoption** into God's family.

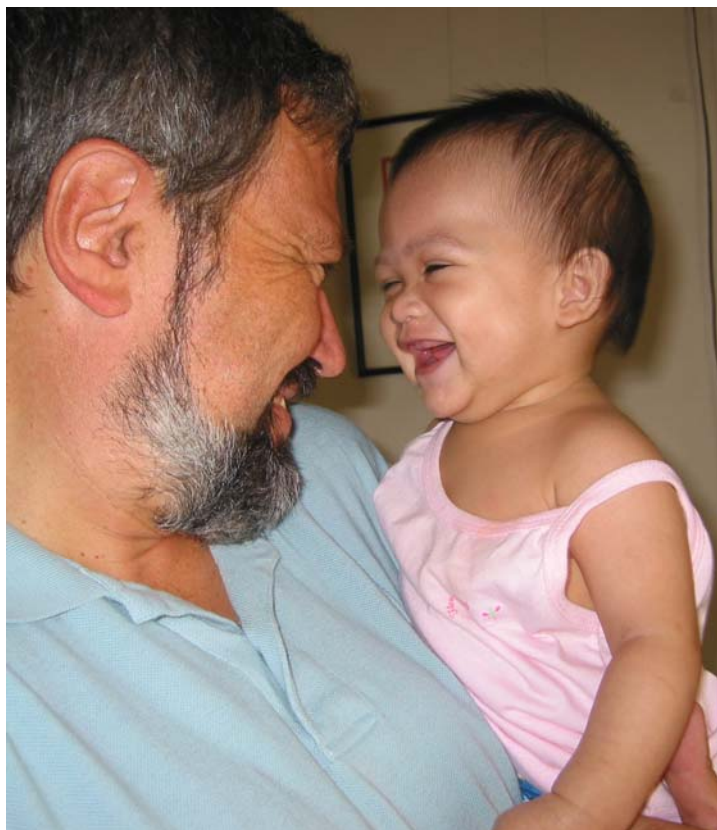


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A father with his infant daughter, who was in the process of being adopted when this photo was taken. An image that beautifully captures the joy of father and child as she enjoys a new life of security and love as a member of his family. God adopts us into His family; we now have the right to call the Father, "Abba! Father!"

### Foot Note The Trinity and fellowship with God

Paul tells us: "For through [Jesus] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2.18). Notice how all Three Persons of the Trinity are named here. Our fellowship with our Father was obtained by Jesus Christ's redemptive work. And the Spirit is (so to speak) the 'executive' Member of the Godhead – in other words, the One Who carries out God's work. We enjoy communion with our Father through the Spirit; He brings us into God's presence.

## A new spirit

What really happens to us when we're born again? To answer that question, let's go back to what we saw in Session 3 when we looked at how God created Adam. From the dust of the ground, He formed a human body. Then He breathed into this body "the breath of life" and created man's spirit (Genesis 2.7). In a wonderful way we can't explain, Adam's spirit blended and united with his physical body and he

became (as the KJV and some other versions translate) "a living soul". Adam's soul came into being - in other words, he began to exist as a living individual personality. His human spirit began to express itself through his body as **soul**.

The soul is a fusion of both spirit and body – in other words, **it's the whole person**. My soul is the 'real me', my 'self', all that I am as a living individual personality. I *have* a body, and I *have* a spirit, but I *am* a soul. In fact, the Hebrew term for 'soul' (*nephesh*) can in some contexts be translated 'person', 'self', or simply the personal pronoun.

Why is all this important? Because when God saves someone, He saves *all of them* - their soul, spirit and body. But it doesn't happen all at once. When someone has been born again, God has renewed their **spirit**. That's a **past** event. But they still have their old **body** – they won't get their new one till the day of resurrection. That's still **future**. And in the meanwhile, in the **present**, by God's grace and as they walk in obedience to Him, their **soul** – their new spirit blended with and expressed through their old body - is being renewed. Salvation is a past, present and future event! That explains why the Bible speaks of salvation as **a past event** - I *have been saved* (Romans 8.24, Ephesians 2.5,8, 2 Timothy 1.9, Titus 3.5); as **a present ongoing process** - I *am being saved* (1 Corinthians 1.18, 15.2); and as **a future destiny** - I *shall be saved* (Romans 5.9-10, 13.11, Hebrews 9.28, 1 Peter 1.5).

### The tenses of salvation

#### ❖ I have been saved ❖

If I am born again, God renewed my spirit at the moment of new birth. My spirit was once dead because it was cut off from God. Now God's indwelling Spirit impregnates my spirit with His divine uncreated life, which the Bible calls 'eternal life' (see John 3.15, 10.28, 17.2-3). Notice that God didn't give me a different spirit. Rather, He brought my old dead spirit to life by coming to live in me by His Holy Spirit. My inner person is now regenerated, and thus renewed and restored.

#### ❖ I will be saved ❖

One day, God will give me a new body (Philippians 3.21). My spirit will be perfected; my body will be new. So my soul (my spirit expressed through my body) will then be perfect and my salvation will be complete.

#### ❖ I am being saved ❖

And I am being saved. I still have my old mortal body, with all its natural capacities and appetites. My renewed spirit - given life by God's indwelling Spirit - now expresses itself through a physical body that I once used to serve self and sin (see Romans 6.19).

I must now serve God in my body (Romans 6.12-13,19, compare 1 Corinthians 6.20). Old actions, reactions, and patterns of thinking have to be put off. New patterns of thinking and new habits have to be formed (see Ephesians 4.22-24, Colossians 3.5-14).

My salvation has to be worked out as I live my daily life in this world. That takes time and discipline. God's indwelling Spirit provides the power; my part is to co-operate with Him and obey Him.



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Snow-covered graveyard at sunset in an English cemetery. God's people who have died will be resurrected at Jesus's return – and those still alive will be transformed. They'll all get new bodies like His (see Philippians 3.20-21). Paul exclaims: "When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15.54-55).

## The baptism of the Holy Spirit

When we're born again, God Himself comes to live inside us. Once He lived among His people in a Tabernacle and then a Temple. Now He lives inside His people (see John 14.17,23, Romans 8.11, Galatians 2.20). *We, God's people*, are now His Temple, both corporately (1 Corinthians 3.16, 2 Corinthians 6.16, Ephesians 2.19-22) and individually (1 Corinthians 6.19). Donald Macleod put it this way: "... the Christian is a quite extraordinary person. If we were to say that he is someone walking about with God inside him we would not be all that far wrong".

The moment that God comes to live in a person – the moment of new birth - is a **baptism**. God baptises them with His Holy Spirit (Acts 1.5, 11.16, and see Matthew 3.11 and parallels in Mark and Luke, John 1.33).

The Bible symbolises this baptism with the Holy Spirit by baptism in water. That's why God ordained this ceremony as a public witness to our new life as a Christian. What does water baptism symbolise?

► **I am cleansed** Water washes away dirt and pollution. Water baptism pictures the deep, thorough, spiritual cleansing of the believer that occurs when they are born again (compare Acts 22.16). This is what Paul calls "*the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*" (Titus 3.5).



### Foot Note Baptism and creation

Throughout the Bible, baptism symbolises a new creation.

► God's six days of creation were preceded by a kind of baptism - the dry land emerged from the water that covered the globe (see Genesis 1.2,9 and 2 Peter 3.5).

► Noah's flood was another baptism (see 1 Peter 3.20-21); waters once again covered the land. Then dry land appeared and Noah found himself in a new, clean world.

► The Exodus was a baptism (see 1 Corinthians 10.2). Israel passed through the sea on their way to a new life in a new land. The bondage of Egypt was behind them; Pharaoh's army lay drowned in the overwhelming waters. Israel began a new life with God.

► And a Christian's baptism pictures their new creation. We are cleansed and made new: "*the old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*" (2 Corinthians 5.17).

► **And how am I cleansed?** By being "*baptised into Christ Jesus*" (Romans 6.3, see Galatians 3.27) at new birth. I am now "*in Christ Jesus*" (for example, Romans 8.1) – in other words, I am *united with Him, incorporated into Him, a member of His Body*. And because I'm in Christ, I've been *included in His death and resurrection* (Colossians 2.12 and see Romans 6.3-4). When Jesus died and was raised again, so was I! **I died with Christ**; my "*old self*" was "*crucified with him*" (Romans 6.6. And **I was raised with Christ** (Ephesians 2.6, Colossians 2.12) into new clean life.



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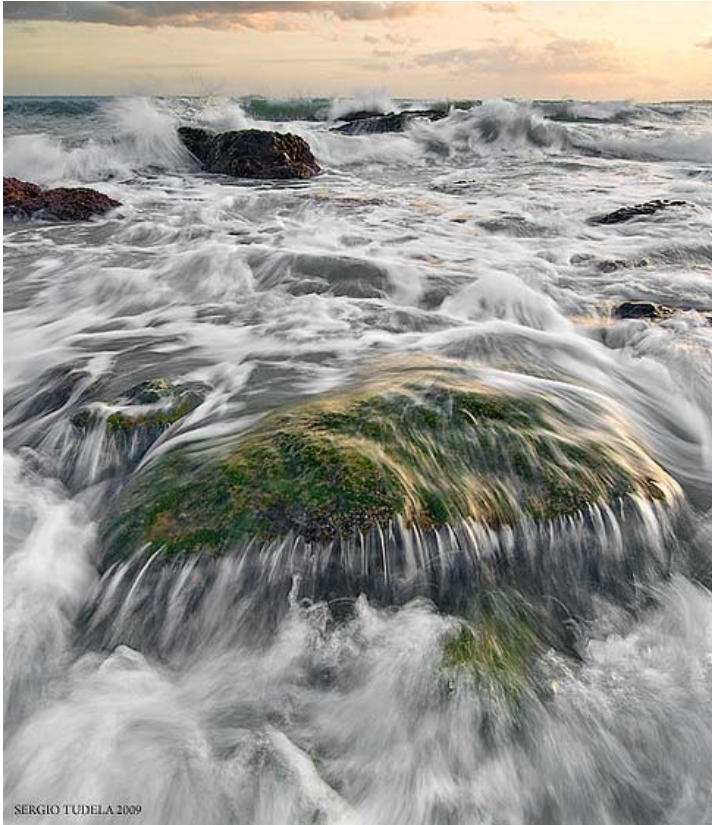
A baptism in the Pacific Ocean.

The Bible also speaks about "*Christ in you*" (Colossians 1.27). Not only are we in Christ, but *Christ is in us*. How can we explain this?



### Foot Note Experiencing Spirit baptism

When someone is baptised with God's Spirit, they may or may not experience something powerful and extraordinary - such as speaking with tongues. But Spirit baptism is always attended by a new joy, an assurance of God's indwelling presence - and a new lifestyle that shuns sin and pursues righteousness. And it is marked by a new love for God and for people.



SERGIO TUDELA 2009

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At new birth, God thoroughly cleanses the believer from sin (compare Acts 22.16) - a cleansing evoked by the powerful surge of water in this shoreline scene.

Here's a very rough analogy that may help. Picture an empty cup plunged deep into a bowl of water. The cup is immersed in water. But at the same time the cup is full of water, too. The cup is immersed in water - **we're in Christ** and part of His body. But the cup is now itself full of water, too - **Christ is in us**. Indeed, all three Members of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - come to live in us, just as Jesus said (see John 14.17,23).

Our union with Christ, and His indwelling in us, is, of course, *spiritual*. So our physical analogy of the cup immersed in water is inadequate. But it does help us to understand something of the reality and intimacy of our relationship with Christ Jesus as believers.

### Foot Note Union with Christ

Our union with Christ is real and living spiritual reality. Jesus pictured it by the bond between the branches of the vine and the main stem (John 15.1-8) and (to quote Robert Reymond) "even the relationship . . . between the persons of the Godhead . . . !" (compare John 17.11,21-23).



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"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15.5). Jesus pictures our union with Him by the bond between the branches of the vine and its main stem.

### ❖ The baptism of the Holy Spirit ❖

So, to summarise. What happens when people experience the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit'?

● Firstly (and in answer to the question, "who does the baptising?"), they're baptised **by** the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is, in T.C Hammond's words, "the Executor of the counsels and purposes of the Godhead". Whatever the Triune God does, He does through the agency of His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit baptises them into Christ. The NIV suggests this when it translates 1 Corinthians 12.13 ". . . we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body . . .".

● Secondly, we've just seen that **Christ is in the believer, and the believer is in Christ**. The Holy Spirit is "*the Spirit of Christ*" (Romans 8.9, compare Galatians 4.6, Philippians 1.19, 1 Peter 1.11). So our relationship with Jesus reflects our relationship with His Spirit. The Spirit is in the believer; the believer, too, is "*in the Spirit*". In fact, in Romans 8.9 we find both truths together in a single verse.

► **The Holy Spirit is in the believer**. The Spirit lives in them, bringing God's presence and spiritual life to them.

► And as those who are "*in Christ*", members of His body, **believers are, so to speak, 'immersed' in His Spirit**. Believers live in the 'realm' of the Spirit. That realm is God's kingdom, where He rules, guides and blesses us through His Spirit.

### One baptism, multiple fillings, constant indwelling

A person is baptised with the Spirit once only. The Bible refers to this as baptism with the Spirit or (on two occasions) as being filled with the Spirit (Acts 2.4, 9.17). From that moment, the Spirit takes up residence in the believer and indwells them. Though sin or sickness or circumstance may sometimes cloud our relationship with God, His Spirit never abandons us.

But there may be times during our Christian life – as we're obedient to Him and in His timing – when we experience a special filling of God's Spirit. These are not new baptisms. Rather, they are seasons when He brings refreshing or imparts special insight or empowerment (see Acts 4.8,31, 13.9,52).

And in one other passage, Paul talks about a continuous filling. He says "*do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5.18). We're continually to allow the Spirit to fill us with all the fullness of God (compare Ephesians 3.19).

### Victory over sin

Paul said: "*sin will have no dominion over you*" (Romans 6.14). That's God's promise to every believer! I don't have to struggle all the time to 'keep the lid' on sin in my life. I don't have two competing natures inside me - an old 'lower nature' battling it out against my new 'higher nature', and constantly frustrating my desires for holiness and purity. If I am born again, my old person – that is, *all of me* - is crucified with Christ (Romans 6.6, Galatians 2.20). John Stott puts it like this: "what was crucified with Christ was not a part of me called my old nature, but the whole of me as I was before I was converted". As Paul explains in Colossians 3.9-10, I have "*put off the old self*" (all that I once was as a member of fallen humanity) and I "*have put on the new self*" (all that I now am as a member of God's new humanity).

But I have to make this decisive break with the past – this ‘putting off’ and ‘putting on’ - *real in my daily life*. I have to remain free from my former way of life. I have to *live* as a member of God’s new humanity. And so, in Paul’s words, I have to “*put off*” my “*old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires*”. I have to “*put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness*” (Ephesians 4.20-24).

While I am still in this world, I can be drawn back by its insidious, ever-present seductions. God has released me from slavery to sin, but I can still be drawn into sin. As Geoffrey Bingham says, I stand: “. . . continually between two choices, ie. a truly godly choice or a fleshly choice”. That’s a choice I have to make; God won’t make it for me.

And that’s where my *will* comes in. I have to *choose* consciously to walk in communion with God. I have to *choose* to obey Him (see Philippians 2.12-13). I have to *choose* to live a life pleasing to God.

How can I do this? Before I was born again I was powerless. But now God’s Holy Spirit lives in me; He now gives me the power to make the right choices. In T.C. Hammond’s words, “. . . sin is no longer inevitable, and the Christian has no legitimate excuse for the habitual practice of sin”. Only God, through the Holy Spirit, can transform us. *But we must choose to allow Him to do this*.

I’m to present my body to God “*as a living sacrifice*” (Romans 12.1). Of course, we’re to serve God with our whole selves. But God has made us as physical beings living a physical existence in our bodies. What we do with our bodies is integral and crucial to our dedication to God. I’m to put to death the sinful practices of the body (see Romans 8.13, Colossians 3.5).

And I’m not to conform to this world’s patterns of thinking and practice – I’m not to allow the world around me to squeeze me into its own mould. Rather, I’m to allow God’s Spirit to transform me by renewing my mind. I’m to allow Him to refashion the way I think so I can come to fully understand what God’s will is, agree with it and do it (Romans 12.2).

## The law of the Spirit

God gave His Old Testament people the Law to show them how to live righteously. The two key commandments were these: “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might*” and “*you shall love your neighbour as yourself*” (Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18 respectively, and see Mark 12.28-34).

But the Law couldn’t lift a finger to help them to obey the Law. It “*made nothing perfect*” (Hebrews 7.19, compare Romans 8.3). It couldn’t keep them from sin. It couldn’t give them *life* (see Galatians 3.21) – spiritual life, a life in right standing before God and in unbroken fellowship with Him (see John 17.3 and compare 2 Corinthians 3.6).

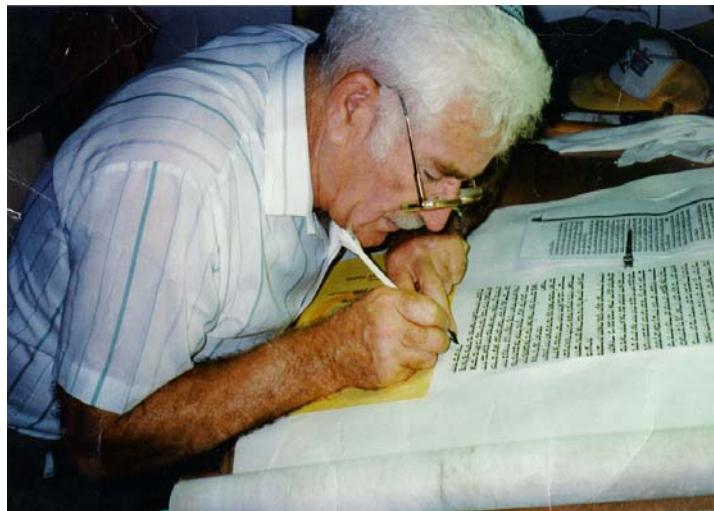


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A scribe writing a Torah scroll.

So what *did* the Law accomplish? Firstly, it defined what sin is. It set boundary lines. Without these boundary lines set by the Law, “*there is no transgression*” (Romans 4.15). Before the Law came, sins (though still evil) were undefined in Law. Now, by crossing the boundary lines defined by the Law, sins became definite ‘transgressions’ or ‘trespasses’.

But the Law did more than this. By their constant failure to keep the Law, the Law brought home to people the fact that they were in bondage to sin, unable to obey God and under His righteous judgment (see Romans 3.20). J.B Phillips puts it this way (in his paraphrase of Romans 3.20): “. . . *it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are*”.

Moreover, the Law even *stimulated* sin. Paul writes, in relation to the law against covetousness (Exodus 20.17, Deuteronomy 5.21): “*sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness*” (Romans 7.8). How did the Law do that? As Charles Cranfield explains in his commentary on this verse, the Law “*can be misinterpreted . . . as a taking away of [someone’s] freedom and an attack on his dignity, and so can be made an occasion of resentment and rebellion against the divine Creator, man’s true Lord*”. To use a modern example: a father may tell a rebellious teenage son to return home by midnight. Without this commandment, the teenager might have returned home early simply because he wanted to. But now the commandment has come. Now he deliberately stays out late – just to show that he doesn’t want to be under authority!

That resentment against God’s Law erupted right at the dawn of history. God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat

### Foot Note A life of faith

Our new life as a Christian is to be a life of faith – trustful reliance on Him (Matthew 6.25-34, Philippians 4.6). Faith is (to borrow a phrase) ‘**Forsaking All, I Trust Him**’. It was exactly how Jesus Himself lived, and how we, too, must live. It was precisely here that Adam and Eve failed. They refused to trust God and chose to live independently of Him.

To live by faith in God lies at the heart of what it is to be human; it’s the way God created us to live. Without faith it’s impossible to please God (Hebrews 11.6). When we have decisions to make, we’re to refer them to God; when we are faced with material needs, we’re to look to God to supply them; if we have burdens, we must lay them at His feet, rather than struggle with them ourselves. God never meant us to bear the ultimate responsibility for our lives. He never created us to cope with life’s perplexities, challenges, crises and sorrows without His sustaining power, provision and guidance.



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Portion of a Torah scroll showing part of Numbers 18.27-30. The word in the third line up from the bottom, in the centre of that line, is **holy** (the Hebrew text is written from right to left). Transliterated into English this is YHWH, God's most common Old Testament name (the ancient Hebrew text omitted vowels; YHWH may well have been pronounced 'Yahweh'). The Jews consider this name unutterably holy. When reading the Scriptures, devout Jews, even today, do not pronounce it, and say 'Adōnāy ('Lord') instead.

from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That prohibition was for their blessing. But Satan tempted them to view it as an attack on their liberty by an oppressive tyrant who didn't want them to live life to the full. They fell for this lie; sin entered the human race and, with it, untold trouble and misery.

At the beginning of their history, God's Old Testament people promised to obey God's Law (Exodus 24.3, 7). But they proved to be inveterate rebels. What was the problem? They were still members of the old rebellious mankind. They rebelled against God's commandment just as Adam and Eve had done. Even godly Israelites, who delighted in the Law of God, found themselves to be slaves of sin (see Romans 7.14-24). They were natural born sinners. They weren't reborn from above and they didn't have God's Spirit living in them.

True, God's Holy Spirit was *upon* and *with* some of God's Old Testament people for special reasons. For example, God "*filled*" Bezalel "*with the Spirit of God*" for expertise and skill in craftsmanship for making the Tabernacle (Exodus 31.3). God's Spirit came upon people to equip them for leadership (Numbers 11.17, Judges 3.10, 1 Samuel 16.13), and to enable them to prophesy (2 Chronicles 15.1). But He wasn't living permanently *inside* them (see John 14.17).

But now the Spirit *does* live inside God's people. If I am a child of God, His Spirit gives me the power to obey God and live a life that pleases Him (compare Ezekiel 36.27, 37.24).

► **God's Spirit teaches me** (see John 14.26, 16.13, 1 John 2.20,27) and guides me day by day (see Acts 8.29, 10.19, 11.12, 16.6-7). Once, God's people had God's written instruction manual - the Law. Now I have the One Who wrote that manual actually living inside me. When I buy a car, I get an 'owner's manual'. But being a Christian is rather like having the maker himself advising me how to drive and maintain it. How much better!

► **God's Spirit enables me to keep the Law!** Staying with our illustration, let's compare this to driving a car. Trying to obey the Law by my own effort is like trying to drive a car without switching on the engine. I'll simply have to get out and push - and end up in a state of utter exhaustion and

frustration! But having God's Spirit inside me is like driving a car using its engine. I don't have to push! God's Spirit now empowers me and sets me free from the power of sin (see Romans 8.2).

But I still have a part to play:

● **I have to stop pushing!** I must stop trying to please God by my own effort. I'll end up in the wretched state of the man of Romans 7.14-24. I can live a life that pleases God *only* through the enabling of God's Spirit (Romans 8.13).

● **I have to drive the car.** It won't drive itself. I have to start the engine, put the car into gear, press the accelerator and engage the clutch. Similarly, I have (so to speak) to 'engage' God's Spirit by obeying Him and avoiding anything that may grieve or offend Him (see Ephesians 4.30). I have to "*walk . . . according to the Spirit*" (Romans 8.4, see Galatians 5.16,25). And if I walk in the Spirit, I will find that I will not gratify "*the desires of the flesh*" (Galatians 5.16).

## The vocabulary of salvation

The Bible uses a number of different words to describe what happens when God saves someone. Four key ones are these:

### Redemption

**Redemption** (for example, Romans 3.24, Galatians 3.13, Ephesians 1.7, Colossians 1.14) and **ransom** (Mark 10.45, 1 Timothy 2.6, 1 Peter 1.18-19, Revelation 5.9) are to do with deliverance or release - from slavery or captivity, or from a death sentence. The idea of paying a ransom or a price is involved.

One of the Old Testament backgrounds is the idea of the 'kinsman-redeemer'. The kinsman-redeemer was obliged by the ties of family to assist a family member in times of need. If one of God's people had to sell his family land or property, or even sell themselves into slavery, one of their close relatives could act as kinsman-redeemer (a relative who redeems) and make a payment to get their property back into family hands, or to release them from slavery (Leviticus 25.25,47-49). Ruth 4.1-12 and Jeremiah 32.6-15 both provide examples of a 'kinsman-redeemer' with respect to land. Jesus is our Kinsman-Redeemer. He became Man, and so became related to every one of us. As our Relative, He acted as our Kinsman-Redeemer and paid the price to liberate us from the dominion of Satan, self and sin and save us from Hell.

Going forward, two New Testament backgrounds specially help us to understand the idea of redemption. The first is paying a ransom to release a prisoner of war. The second is paying a price to purchase something - especially a slave in the slave-market. Jesus paid the price to release us from captivity to Satan and slavery to sin. We have been "*bought with a price*" (1 Corinthians 6.20, 7.23). Jesus paid the price, and now we belong to God!

Of course, when God redeems, He doesn't pay money or goods. For example, God redeemed His people from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 6.6), He didn't pay money to get them out - He executed judgments on the Egyptians and worked a miracle by bringing His people through the Sea of Reeds. And the price that Jesus paid to redeem us from slavery to sin and eternal separation from God was His sacrificial death - He suffered the penalty of our sin in our place.

## Propitiation

The word “*propitiation*” is found in the main translation used in our studies (the ESV) in just four places: Romans 3.25, Hebrews 2.17, 1 John 2.2, and 1 John 4.10. But you may well not find this word in your translation at all. For example, the NIV doesn’t use this word. It replaces it with other terms, such as “*atonement sacrifice*”. It isn’t a word that we use in ordinary speech. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines the verb ‘to propitiate’ as “*To render propitious or favourably inclined; to appease, conciliate (one offended)*”. Most modern translators, understandably, replace ‘propitiation’ with more familiar language. Nevertheless, the idea of propitiation is an important Bible concept. How can we explain it?

Firstly, sin has aroused God’s *wrath* – His deep and abiding displeasure towards sinners (see, for example, Romans 1.18). We need to remember that (as we saw in Session 11) God’s wrath isn’t an outburst of vindictive, resentful, capricious fury. In John Stott’s words, it’s His “*steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil . . .*” God’s wrath is perfectly compatible with His love – indeed, it’s an outworking of His love. Our loving God cannot allow the continuing presence of evil in Creation - evil that violates His perfect Law, slanders His holy character, frustrates His purposes, and destroys people made in His image. So, in His holy love, God must judge evil and banish impenitent humans and evil spiritual beings from heaven and Earth.

And, because of His great love, God doesn’t want us to suffer that fate. So He has found a way for His righteous anger to be quenched and to take pleasure in us sinners – a way that doesn’t violate His righteousness and justice (see Romans 3.26). In other words, He has found a way that He can be *propitiated*.

On the Cross, Jesus suffered the penalty of our sin on our behalf. He thus fulfilled the requirements of our holy God’s perfect justice. And so He removed the cause of God’s righteous displeasure towards us. Those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour no longer stand under God’s wrath; God now takes pleasure in them.

And remember that Jesus was God as well as Man. Through Christ, God *Himself* dealt with the cause of His own wrath towards us.

## Justification

The relevant Greek verb here is *dikaioō*, which means ‘to justify’, ‘to acquit’, ‘to vindicate’, ‘to declare righteous’. The background to this term is the law courts; it denotes a change in someone’s legal status. This verb (in the form “*justified*”) is found, for example, in Romans 3.24,28, 5.1,9, 1 Corinthians 6.11, Galatians 3.24.

When God justifies someone, He pronounces that person ‘not guilty’. God declares them ‘righteous’. What does ‘righteous’ mean here? It means we’re right with God, in right relationship with Him. As Paul says, “. . . *since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God*” (Romans 5.1). Justification isn’t about God making us righteous in an ethical sense (He does want to do this, of course, but that’s not what this particular word means). Neither does justification mean that He is treating us as



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Courtroom in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, USA, across the hall from where the Declaration of Independence was debated. Justification is a term borrowed from the law courts. When God justifies someone, He pronounces that person ‘not guilty’, credits them with Jesus’s perfect righteousness and declares them ‘righteous’.

righteous, even though we really aren’t. To justify someone means to declare them righteous, that is (as Douglas Moo explains), “*to be acquitted by God from all ‘charges’ that could be brought against a person because of his or her sins.*” A person whom God justifies stands in the same relationship to Him as if he had never sinned!

But that’s only part of what God does when He justifies someone. Not only does He pronounce them “*not guilty*”, He credits (or ‘imputes’) Jesus’s perfect righteousness to them. Jesus was wholly and flawlessly righteous. As a Man living out His earthly life, Jesus loved His Father (John 14.31), trusted Him implicitly, depended on Him totally, and obeyed Him perfectly (Matthew 26.39, John 4.34, 6.38, 8.29, see also Hebrews 10.5-7). And it is *this righteousness*, no less, that is credited to us when we believe in Jesus. He considers us to be as righteous as Jesus! How awesome is that!

How are we justified – how is Jesus’s righteousness credited to us? By *faith* (Romans 3.28, 4.1-24, 5.1). In Study 6 we saw how Abram believed God, and God “*credited it to him as righteousness*” (Genesis 15.6, NIV). That phrase resounds through the pages of Scripture; it is quoted in Romans 4.3, Galatians 3.6 and James 2.23 and echoed by Habakkuk when he says “*the righteous shall live by his faith*” (Habakkuk 2.4, quoted in Romans 1.17, Galatians 3.11, and Hebrews 10.38). Abraham – in contrast to Adam and Eve - considered God to be reliable and trustworthy. He believed that God would do what He said, however impossible it might seem. Abraham trusted God. And God responded by justifying Abraham (Romans 4.3) - that is, graciously counting Abraham to be righteous, in other words, in right relationship with Himself.

When someone wholeheartedly believes that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is trustworthy and good, and unreservedly places their life in His hands, trusting Him totally for salvation - then God, in His grace, justifies them. God declares them ‘not guilty’ of all charges against them and credits Jesus’s perfect righteousness to them.

It’s important to note that their faith does not ‘earn’ this justification. Rather, God justifies them *on the ground of Jesus’s sacrifice on the Cross*. Faith is simply (to quote J.I. Packer) “*an empty hand outstretched to receive the free gift of God’s righteousness in Christ*”.

## Sanctification

When God sanctifies someone or something, it means He consecrates the person or thing for a particular purpose or function. In doing this, the person or thing is made 'sacred' or 'holy'. In fact, the words 'holy' and 'to sanctify' (as used in the King James Bible) usually translate derivatives of the same root word – almost always in Hebrew and also usually in Greek. For example:

► God sanctified (or 'made holy') **the seventh day** (Genesis 2.3, Exodus 20.11). That day was set apart from other days; people were freed from toil and had time for fellowship with God and with His people (Exodus 20.8-10, 31.12-17).



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*"And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty". (Exodus 28.2). The priests were to wear holy garments. This man is modelling a replica of the High Priest's robes. Under the outer, multicoloured ephod is the blue robe, and under that, the white tunic. Over the ephod is the breastplate with its jewels. His turban bears a gold plate inscribed with 'Holy to the LORD'.*

► **Aaron and his sons** were sanctified (that is, consecrated) to serve God and His nation as priests (Exodus 28.41, 29.44, 40.13-15, Leviticus 8.12,30). They had to live holy lives so they were in a fit state to serve God.

► **The Tabernacle** (with all its furniture and utensils) was sanctified (that is, consecrated) for use as God's sanctuary (Exodus 29.43-44, Leviticus 8.10-11); God consecrated the Temple that replaced it (2 Chronicles 7.16).

► **God's people** were consecrated to be God's special nation on Earth and were to keep themselves holy (Leviticus 11.44-45, 20.7-8,26).

And we, too, as God's New Testament people, are to be holy (1 Peter 1.15-16). The church is God's temple (1 Corinthians 3.16, 2 Corinthians 6.16, Ephesians 2.19-22); just as the Tabernacle and Temple were sanctified, so must the Church be. We are God's *"holy priesthood"* (1 Peter 2.5, see 1 Peter 2.9, Revelation 1.6, 5.10). Just as the Old Testament priests were holy, so we must be holy.

To be sanctified is to be consecrated for a particular purpose. God has consecrated us **to be a community of people who, walking in fellowship with God, extend His Kingdom across Earth through the power of His Spirit.** In fact, that's why God created mankind in the beginning. What a magnificent vocation! And God has consecrated each one of us for a special role in this great mission. To fulfil this wonderful destiny, we must be holy. So you can see how crucial our own personal holiness is to God's plan for this world.

As believers, God sanctified each of us the moment we became a child of God. We're dedicated to God at the moment of our new birth – we're *"sanctified in Christ Jesus"* (1 Corinthians 1.2, see Acts 20.32, 26.18, 1 Corinthians 6.11, Hebrews 10.10). Yet our sanctification is also a process that continues throughout our lives. As we obey God day by day, as we refuse to allow sin a foothold in our lives, as we meet with His people for mutual edification, as we study His word and pray - then God's Spirit makes our sanctification a living reality in us.

## ► Next Session God's New Humanity

On the Day of Pentecost God begins to build a temple, not of stone, but of people filled with His Spirit - His new humanity, the Church. What is the Church, and what does it mean to be part of it?

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