

THE BIG JOURNEY

from Creation to New Creation



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Albion Falls, Ontario, Canada. Water is one of the Biblical 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.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, . . ." (John 7.37-39).

thirteen ► A New Creation in Christ

Introduction and Questions

Jesus – God's perfect 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 death, resurrection and exaltation at His Father's right hand in heaven. Only then could God give people His Holy Spirit. Only then could God live in the hearts of true believers, and have true fellowship with them.

Jesus achieved everything 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. In Session 7 we looked at the five key Levitical sacrifices and how they dealt with sin and restored the sinner to fellowship with God and with other people:

SACRIFICE	SIGNIFICANCE
sin offering	the pollution caused by sin is dealt with
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 with him, enjoys fellowship with God and with each other

Jesus fulfilled the entire sacrificial system. He didn't offer an animal, as the Old Testament priests did. He offered *Himself*. ● Jesus is our **sin offering**; His death cleanses everyone who believes in Him from the defilement of sin, and they are forgiven. ● He is our **reparation offering**; He has made restitution for all our sins. ● He is our **burnt offering**; God accepted Jesus's perfect life and His sacrificial death as a perfect whole burnt offering on our behalf. ● He is our **cereal offering**. On our behalf, He dedicated all that He had - His abilities, His energies, and His time to do God's will. ● And Jesus is the perfect **fellowship offering**. Those who receive Him as their Lord and Saviour enjoy fellowship with God and each other.



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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. 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. Jesus fulfilled all the sacrifices that the priests offered there.

In addition to these five offerings, there were two other major sacrifices:

- **The Day of Atonement.** Once a year, the high priest offered a final great sin offering for all the sins of the nation over the preceding year. The key sacrifice was a pair of goats. 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. It was then led away and released into the wilderness. Jesus fulfilled all that took place on that awesome day.
- **The Passover** Through the first Passover sacrifice, Israel's firstborn (collectively representing the whole nation) were saved from death. Jesus is our Passover lamb, Who was slain for us. Those who believe in Him are saved from death. And 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.

Full salvation

In Session 4 we listed all the terrible effects of the first human sin. Jesus dealt with all of them. Through His death, resurrection and exaltation to His Father's right hand in heaven:

- He **quenched God's righteous anger** towards us. On the Cross, our sin was reckoned as His. He bore its guilt and suffered its penalty in our place. So He satisfied God's perfect justice. Those who repent and believe in Jesus – who acknowledge Him as their Lord and trust Him for salvation – no longer stand under God's wrath. God now takes pleasure in them.
- He **provided restitution for sins.** He paid the debt that we owed to God, and to everyone whom we have harmed (deliberately or inadvertently). And Jesus dealt with all that we ourselves have suffered because of other people.
- He **redeems** those that believe in Him. His sacrificial death was the price He paid to release them from captivity to Satan and slavery to sin.
- **The believer's old self** is **crucified and buried with Him**; they **rise with Him** into a new life and are **exalted with Him** into heavenly places. And so they are **born again**, born of God. **God now lives in them.**
- God **justifies** the believer. God pronounces them 'not guilty' and credits Jesus's perfect righteousness to them. They stand in the same relationship to God as if they had never sinned!
- Jesus **reconciles** believers to God – now they are in fellowship with Him.
- God **sanctifies** the believer. In other words, He **makes them holy** – that is, He cleanses them and dedicates them to Himself. Now they belong to God. He has set them apart to serve Him. This sanctification is a once-for-all act that occurred when they were born again. But it's also a process. That sanctification, or holiness, is to be worked out in them, as we'll see below.
- He **broke Satan' power over mankind**, and **sentenced him and every evil spiritual being to eternal doom.**
- Jesus **received all authority in heaven and Earth.** He already had this authority, of course, as the Son of God. Now He received it as a Man. And all

those who believe in Him share His authority. We are seated with Him in heavenly places, and share His authority over the evil powers.

- He became the forerunner of **a whole new creation** - a new humanity living in God's presence in a new heaven and Earth!
- He **demonstrated God's goodness and love** to all heaven's hosts, to all humanity. Satan, God's accuser, is exposed as a liar.

A new creation



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A newborn baby (the photographer's daughter) moments after birth, before the umbilical cord was cut. The beginning of our natural life was a natural birth; the beginning of our new life as a Christian is a spiritual birth – we are *"born . . . of God"* (John 1.13).

When someone repents and acknowledges Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, they are *"born . . . of God"* (John 1.13). God comes to live within them and gives them His divine uncreated life, which the Bible calls 'eternal life'. Their natural conception and birth made them part of the old sinful humanity 'in Adam'. Their new birth makes them part of the new humanity 'in Christ'. God adopts them into His family. They now have the right to call the Father, *"Abba! Father!"* (Romans 8.15, Galatians 4.6).

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**, 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.

Baptism

The Bible symbolises our new birth by baptism in water. What does water baptism symbolise?

- Water **washes away dirt**. Water baptism pictures the deep, thorough, spiritual cleansing of the believer that occurs when they are born again.
- **How does that washing happen? By being "baptised into Christ Jesus"** (Romans 6.3). When Jesus died and was raised again, so was every believer – including me! ● My *"old self"* was *"crucified with him"* (Romans 6.6). All that I once was, as a member of sin-ridden humanity, **died with Christ**. I once had a sinful disposition; I was in bondage to sin. But no longer. That 'old me' died when Christ died. ● And I'm **raised with Christ** (Colossians 2.12). I'm now *"in Christ Jesus"* (for example, Romans 8.1). In other words, I am *united with Him*; I'm a member of God's new humanity of which He is the Head. I am now freed from bondage to sin. Now, by God's grace and enabling, I can live in a way that's pleasing to God - just as Jeremiah and Ezekiel foretold (Jeremiah 31.33, Ezekiel 11.19-20, 36.27, 37.24).



A new man in Christ Jesus © kahunapulej / Kahunapule Michael Johnson · Flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Water baptism pictures the deep, thorough, spiritual cleansing of the believer that occurs when they are born again. And that washing happens when we are *"baptised into Christ Jesus"* (Romans 6.3).

Living out our salvation

My *"old self"* was *"crucified with him"* (Romans 6.6). But now 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). I have to choose to live a life pleasing to God. Old actions, reactions, and patterns of thinking have to be put off. New patterns of thinking and new habits have to be formed. But God's Holy Spirit lives in me. He gives me power to make the right choices. My part is to co-operate with Him and obey Him. If I *"walk . . . according to the Spirit"* (Romans 8.4), I will not gratify *"the desires of the flesh"* (Galatians 5.16).

We said before that God sanctified us when we believed in Jesus. He cleansed us and dedicated us to Himself. In this sense, our sanctification is a once-for-all act. But, as we saw before, it's also a process. As we walk in obedience to God day by day, as we put off *"old self"* and put on the *"new self"*, God's Spirit sanctifies us. He purifies and transforms us, so that we reflect God's character more and more truly, and serve Him more perfectly.

Bible passages and questions

Most of the New Testament (with a few prophetic passages from the Old Testament, too) deals with salvation and the Christian life! As well as the passages specific to each question, read the following passages if you have time (it will take between 1 and 2 hours): Jeremiah 31.31-34; Ezekiel 36.24-28; Matthew 3.11, John 3.3-8, 14.16-17,26, 16.12-14, 17.20-23; Romans 3.20-31, 5.1-6.14, 8.1-17,29-30, 10.9-10, 12.1-2,9-13; 1 Corinthians 3.16-17, 6.11,17-20, 12.12-13,27; 2 Corinthians 5.17,21, 6.16-7.1; Galatians 2.20, 3.27, 4.4-7, 5.16-25; Ephesians 1.3-7,13-14, 2.1-22, 4.20-24; Colossians 1.13-14,19-22, 2.11-15, 3.5-17; 1 Thessalonians 5.23-24; Titus 3.4-7; Hebrews 2.14-15, 9.24-26, 10.11-22; 1 Peter 1.3-5,18-19, 2.24.

- ❗ Read Isaiah 53.6, Matthew 27.46, 2 Corinthians 5.21, Hebrews 9.7-8,11-12,24-26. How did Jesus fulfil the Day of Atonement?
- ❗ Read Romans 5.8, 6.8. Paul says that Christ died for us, and that we died with Christ. How can both be true?
- ❗ Read John 1.12-13, 3.3-8, 1 Peter 1.3,23, Titus 3.4-6. What happens when someone is born again?
- ❗ Read Romans 3.20-26, 5.1,8-9, 8.33; Galatians 2.16. What is justification?
- ❗ Read Matthew 12.22-29, John 12.31-33, Ephesians 1.20-23, 6.10-18, Colossians 2.15, Hebrews 2.14-15, 1 John 3.8, Revelation 12.7-12, 20.1-3. What did Jesus's death, resurrection and ascension do to Satan and his kingdom?
- ❗ Read Romans 6.19, 1 Corinthians 6.11, 1 Thessalonians 4.3-5, 5.23, Hebrews 10.10. What is sanctification?