

AN EASTER SERMON: RESURRECTION AND THE NEW CREATION

REV. CHARLES R. BIGGS

**THIS EASTER REMEMBER THAT *EVERYTHING* CHANGES BECAUSE OF THE
EMPTY TOMB,
THE TOMB FROM WHICH WOULD COME THE NEW CREATION RULED BY THE
GLORIFIED GOD-MAN!**

Introduction

The tomb was sealed. A huge stone rock covered the opening to the tomb. No one could come in and no one could come out. As Jesus was laid in the tomb, and the sky grew darker, the bright hopes of all the disciples dimmed with each passing moment. Bleak. Despair. Mournful. Blackest darkness. This described the failed hopes and dashed dreams of the disciples of Jesus as he was laid into the tomb.

Three days had been spent with great sorrow as the disciples mourned the loss of their friend and Master. Yet what the disciples did not understand or remember was that Jesus had told them that, in order for the dawn of joyous life to begin, this night of his atrocious death must come. Jesus had told his disciples clearly:

"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

..."Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." (Luke 9:22)

A world characterized by sin, misery and the rule of the deceiver would end in the death of God's Son, in order that a new world characterized by holiness and the awesome presence of God could be fully realized. To think that only three days after the culmination of the old world's wickedness the first day of the new world would begin! On that third day the old creation's doom was sealed as the new creation dawned! *The resurrection of Jesus didn't merely occur on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1), but it was literally the first day of the new creation, a creation characterized by resurrection life!*

Never since the creation of the world had a day dawned with so much power and newness! The third day began the first day of the new creation. Jesus the God-Man is resurrected and humanity is glorified in constant union with the triune God. *What man could not do in living perfectly according to God's commands, God could do in the Person of Jesus. What God could not do in dying perfectly for sinners, man could do in the Person of Jesus. Jesus the God-Man was alive – he had risen from the dead on the first day of the new creation.*

The stone tomb became the womb through which the new creation was born into this world on the third day in the Person of Jesus Christ – the glorified and resurrected God-Man. This new day was filled with fantastic new things and unbelievable new surprises that should encourage us as the people of God today.

In Luke 24, we see the newness of this new day and new creation revealed in (1) a new life, (2) a new understanding, (3) a new man, (4) a new power, and (5) a new worship. *Everything changes because of the empty tomb, from which would come the new creation ruled by the glorified God-Man!*

Luke's Gospel begins in the first chapter of Luke with an angelic announcement of a birth, the birth of one who will prepare the way for the one who will save his people from their sins. Luke's Gospel ends with an angelic announcement of a birth, the birth of a new creation and the One who will prepare a way and a place for his people to live with God for eternity!

We thank God for his mercies that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a young virgin named Mary, and Jesus was born from her womb to keep God's Law and lay down his life for sinners so that he could one day be born from a tomb of death and bring resurrection life to all who believes! Hallelujah to the New Man!

A New Life

Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, ¹¹ but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not

believe them. ¹² But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

Notice first how Luke signifies the end of the old world and the birth of the new with the last verse from chapter 23, "On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment." The Old Covenant time period fully comes to an end in this statement. For this would be the last Sabbath to be observed under the law. The Christian Sabbath of the New Covenant and New Creation would begin in the resurrection. Notice Luke 24:1, "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared."

Luke's Gospel ends at the resurrection account with nothing less than the end of one world and the beginning of a new day and a new creation on the first day of the week. As the people of God, we now celebrate on the first day of the week because we belong to a new world, a new period of time, a new creation, characterized by resurrection life, love and joy! This teaches us about the new life in Jesus.

When the disciples go to the tomb, they find that the stone has been rolled away, the body of Jesus is gone, and two angelic messengers ask them: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." (Luke 24:5-6). The point the angelic messengers are making in their question to the disciples is what the angels have so intently been looking into for ages and trying to understand. As Peter says:

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

These angelic messengers were those who for many ages had been trying to figure out God's mysterious plan with regards to the salvation of his people. Here the angelic messengers are not merely proclaiming the good news that Jesus is born as they do in the beginning of Luke. Rather, these angelic messengers are proclaiming that Jesus is risen, and that a new creation has been born! By God's grace, the angels and soon the disciples will be worshipping God and rejoicing in this new day! The Gospel of Luke begins with a new prophetic announcement from angels sent from God's Heavenly court:

Luke 2:9-14

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Now the angels of the Lord are saying to the disciples that there is a new life because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Lord. He was born in the city of David, a Savior, Christ the Lord, and he glorified God in the highest and offers peace to those with whom God is pleased to offer his grace!

This Jesus has been born, has lived perfectly for his people, has died for sinners, and now is risen – He is alive. Rather than finding a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger as a sign of God's favor and grace, at Jesus' resurrection there were grave clothes left by a resurrected man as a sign of new life! So, the question is: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

Why, indeed! Jesus' resurrection marks a new life for all those who live in him. Jesus IS the Resurrection and the Life, those who believe in Him, though they die, shall live also (cf. John 11:25). Jesus by the power and virtue of his resurrection lives the new life and offers this new life in the new creation to all who will believe in him. Jesus had raised Lazarus, but Lazarus died again. Jesus' resurrection marks a new life where death will never threaten! This new life in Jesus means a new destination: the New Heavens and the New Earth – wherein righteousness dwells – for this present age and old world is passing away, but he who does the will of the LORD abides forever (1 John 2:17; Revelation 22).

A New Understanding

Luke 24:13-27

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us.

They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Because of this new day and new creation dawning in the resurrection of Jesus, we have a new understanding of His Scriptures by His Spirit sent to us. If you remember, when the disciples came to the empty tomb they were concerned -- they were "perplexed" (Luke 24:4), and the angelic messengers reminded them of what Jesus said while he was still in Galilee: "that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." They quoted to them the very words of Jesus.

However, the disciples did not fully understand. In fact, when he told them that he had to go to Jerusalem to die, they started comparing themselves with each other wondering who was the greatest (when they should have been concerned with who was the least) (Luke 9:22; 44-48). Many times the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying to them (cf. John 12:16). In Luke 9:44-45, Jesus says literally: "Let these words sink into your ears: "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." And verse 45 says: "But [the disciples] did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it." As theologian Geerhardus Vos writes:

"We interpret the resurrection in terms of the atoning cross, and easily forget how little the disciples were as yet prepared for doing the same. And so it requires an effort on our part to understand sympathetically the state of mind they brought to the morning of this day. Nevertheless we must try to enter into their thoughts and feelings, if for no other reason, for this, that something of the same fresh marvel and gladness that subsequently came to them may fill our hearts also.

Whether we may be able to explain it or not, the gospel tells us that, notwithstanding the emphatic prediction by the Savior of his death and resurrection, they had but little remembrance of these words, and drew from them no practical support or comfort in the sorrow that overwhelmed them. In part this may have been due to the fact of our Lord's having only predicted and not fully explained these tremendous events." ('Grace and Glory', pg.. 67-68).

Only by God's grace and His Spirit can we fully understand the meaning of the Scriptures.

What this ultimately is that only through God's gracious Spirit can we fully understand the things written in the Word of God. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus catches up with two very sad disciples whose hopes had been dashed in the death of Christ. Christ says to them: "O foolish ones,

and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then Christ gives them ability to see by interpreting the Scriptures for them. "And beginning with Moses and the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27). [Note: the Greek word used in Luke 24:27 for "interpreting" the Scriptures is where we get the word for "hermeneutics" or the science of Biblical interpretation.]

Today, we don't have Jesus physically here walking with us to teach us the Scriptures, but He has sent forth His Spirit so that we might be guided and come to an understanding of the Scriptures by His grace. By His grace and His Spirit we too come to a new understanding of the Scriptures as we rely on the Spirit's work to know the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:6-14). In fact, this is true Biblical spirituality – to learn to think and live as God reveals himself in his Word and to interpret all things in our world through the lens of Scripture.

You see, apart from a divine work of the Spirit, by God's grace, we cannot fully believe and understand "these things" – that is these things having to do with the new day of the new creation because of the resurrection. It is helpful to teach men why we believe rationally that Jesus is alive and why in real space and time no one could have stolen his body under Roman and Jewish guard, resuscitated him, and caused him to make an appearance to over 500 (1 Corinthians 15:1-10).

There is overwhelming evidence in favor of the resurrection of Jesus and plenty of witnesses who can testify to the truth and reality of the resurrection. But this is not enough for faith! We should remember what Jesus says in the story of Lazarus and the rich man. When the rich man found himself in torment in Hades, he requests that Father Abraham send someone back from the dead – a resurrected man – to warn of the terrible torments of hell, yet Jesus teaches us in the story that the Scriptures are a sufficient, clear, and authoritative testimony to this reality: *"If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets [Scripture], neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead."* Reason and evidence alone will not suffice. The problem is a supernatural blindness, an inability to see and hear and believe. Remember, even the Jewish officials who crucified Jesus had seen a resurrected man named Lazarus and they wanted not only to kill Jesus for this, but to kill the resurrected man as well!

John 12:9-11

When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

Unbelief is so bad that even Jesus' closest disciples, when they heard of the resurrection thought it was literally an "idle tale" (Luke 24:11). And the text goes on to say: "And they did not believe [the testimony of the women who saw the empty tomb]." All the evidence and reasonable proof in the world will not change sinful hearts full of unbelief. Only a powerful work of God's Spirit is sufficient to lift the veil and enables us to see and understand. This new understanding comes to God's people because of the finished work of Christ and the new day of His resurrection. This new understanding of Christ-centered Scripture comes only by grace and only as Jesus through His Spirit makes it known to us!

Notice how these disciples on the Road to Emmaus came to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus. They had proof, but they needed an "eye opening" and "heart warming" experience of the Holy Spirit in order to fully understand:

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

This new understanding takes all of us on our own "Road to Emmaus" as we seek to know more about God and ourselves as we study and sit under preaching and teaching of the Word of God. This new understanding in Jesus means a better knowledge of our new and heavenly destination: the New Heavens and the New Earth – wherein righteousness dwells – and we are taught in the Word of God that this present age and old world is passing away, but we are also taught that he who does the will of the LORD abides forever (1 John 2:17; Revelation 22).

A New Man

Luke 24:33-53

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate before them. ⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed

in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." ⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.

But "we ain't seen nothing yet" as the saying goes! Because of the resurrection and the new creation, we truly share in the new life in Christ as well as the new understanding of His Scripture, but what we all anticipate is to be fully rescued and redeemed from this mortal life of pain, misery, death, and suffering! We long for our glorified bodies when we shall be like him – glorified.

Because of the resurrection and the new creation in Jesus, our ultimate destiny and hope is the same as it was for Jesus – the resurrection of our bodies! The Apostle Paul teaches us about this hope:

Romans 8:18-23

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

When Jesus appears to his disciples in Luke's Gospel, he begins to impart to them a new and better understanding of their future hope as well. He says to them: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (Luke 24:39). Now notice that even with Jesus' physical appearance before them – which is sufficient rational and objective observable "proof" – the disciples at first think he is a spooky spirit of some sort! *But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.*

Jesus appears to them not as a spooky spirit, but as a new man! A new and glorified man. It is important for us to understand this. Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection. The term "first fruits" refers to the first part of the whole harvest that will be followed by the remainder of the harvest. Jesus has experienced resurrection-harvest and we who believe shall experience resurrection-harvest! Jesus was the first fruits of the resurrection, we will be the final and remainder fruits of the resurrection by God's grace!

Jesus is the first new man of the new creation if you will. This means that Jesus is the first resurrected and glorified human being! Let this grip you. What sin, suffering, and death do to afflict and destroy our mortal bodies is permanently cured and healed in Jesus the New Man. *For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:53)*

As Jesus appears physically as a new man, resurrected in his body, he is literally communicating as two worlds or creations interact IN HIM! In Jesus, the old world or creation characterized by sin, death, and misery -- which he lived in for over 30 years -- died with him in the tomb, while the new man who is now glorified -- lives to speak to them by a virtue and power located in the new world or new creation! Jesus as the New Man would be complete once he ascends to the new world or new creation permanently to prepare a place for his disciples in just a matter of days! This is heavy -- but worth thinking about.

Jesus is New Man of the New Creation. Those who have new life in him and come to a new understanding in him will one day experience a new manhood. This means that we will one day be glorified in our bodies and the mortal will literally put on immortality! This is what the Apostle Paul teaches us in 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What the Apostle Paul means above in 1 Corinthians 15 is that we are by nature born into this world children of the natural man from the dust whose name was Adam. We are dust and to dust we will return. In other words, we are from the earth, *earthly*, and to the earth we will return. In the New Man, or Last Adam who is Jesus, we are made like him as new men fit for the new Creation.

Because Jesus was a man from heaven, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, he took upon himself a true and real human nature made from dust and descended from Adam (yet the Holy Spirit kept him from being tainted by Adam's sin). Because the divinity and humanity are in eternal union in One Person, the One Person, or One Man from Heaven, Jesus, literally becomes the "Life-Giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45).

What this means is that because God became man, he kept the covenant of works as a true and real man, living obediently unto God where Adam

failed and was subject to sin, misery and death. Jesus the God-Man lived perfectly and obediently unto His Father so that He might be glorified and seated at the right hand of the Father. As Hebrews 2 teaches us:

Hebrews 2:5-13

Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?" ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."

Jesus, the Glorified Man became the "Life-Giving Spirit" or the One Glorified Man in Heaven who could experience eternal glory, the presence of God, and a resurrected body! He offers this same new man-ness to all of us who believe in Him. In Him, we are born again by His Spirit to literally be new creations, those awaiting the ultimate redemptive hope: bodily resurrection and eternal glory! Hallelujah! Praise to the Lamb!

The hope that the new man gives to us by faith is knowing that as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (1 Cor. 15:49). Do you live as though already resurrected as Jesus teaches in John 5:24-29? Do you realize that although you have not received your new and glorified body yet, you are already spiritually seated with Jesus in Heavenly Places (Ephesians 2:4-8)? Are you eagerly awaiting and anticipating the return of your Glorified King so that you might experience the full resurrection of being a New Person?

This new man created in Jesus means new and equipped glorified bodies to dwell in our heavenly destination: the New Heavens and the New Earth, wherein righteousness dwells, and we are taught in the Word of God that this present age and old world is passing away, but he who does the will of the LORD abides forever (1 John 2:17; Revelation 22).

A New Power

In light of the reality of this new life, this new understanding, and becoming new people in Jesus, the disciples are told that they will receive a new and permanent power from God: "*But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*" (Luke 24:49) The reality of the new world and

creation dawning in Jesus' resurrection from the dead would be proclaimed to all the world! This hope to come should be shouted from the rooftops as people turn from their sins and rebellion against God Almighty and place their trust and saving faith in Him!

As John teaches in His gospel there is a movement from the time before Jesus' resurrection and glorification and after concerning the receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit. In John 7:37-39, Jesus says to the people on the last and great day of the Feast of Tabernacles: "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "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, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus speaks of the work of the Spirit, but the Apostle John, writing after the resurrection and glorification of Jesus says that the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. It is important to understand that Jesus truly came down and became man for us and for our salvation as the New Man, the first Man to be glorified. He was very God of very God, begotten, not made being of one substance with the Father, but he came down despite all these things.

As man, Jesus was glorified and received the Holy Spirit and truly became the "Life-Giving Spirit". Jesus' human nature was glorified and he received the Spirit of God. Once Jesus was obedient to the Father, died for sinners who did not deserve the Holy Spirit to indwell them as unclean vessels, was resurrected by the Spirit and glorified in his humanity, Jesus received the Holy Spirit as a gift from God the Father, then Jesus sent the Spirit to dwell in His people.

It is important to remember that in the Old Covenant the Holy Spirit worked in God's people, but in the New Testament this is done in far greater measure. In other words, in the resurrection of Jesus and the birth of the new creation, the Holy Spirit now comes to indwell and build His Holy Temple in the People of God (2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; cf. John 2:11ff). As the Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 2:19-21:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

And how does the Holy Spirit equip us for the new creation as new men and women in the LORD? The Holy Spirit powerfully equips us all with new life and help us to live as resurrected people (Romans 6:3ff; Colossians 3:1-4). The Holy Spirit powerfully equips us with new

understanding of God and ourselves from the Scriptures and gives us the power to declare this truth to the world (John 14-16). The Holy Spirit powerfully equips us to put off the old man and put on the new man who is already even now being conformed into the image of Christ. As Colossians 3:9-10 teaches:

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

The final words of Jesus in Luke's Gospel instructs us of the urgency and necessity of preaching and witnessing by the power of God's Spirit so that we might tell the world the good news that in the resurrection the new creation has begun – flee this world that is passing away and live and look for the world to come.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

The new creation means the time of repentance and forgiveness of sins for all those who would believe and we as well are witnesses to these things! This new power means a purity and holiness that cleanses and gives us the privilege to be clothed in Christ's resurrection power in order that we might persevere to our heavenly destination: the New Heavens and the New Earth – wherein righteousness dwells – and we are taught in the Word of God that this present age and old world is passing away, but he who does the will of the LORD abides forever (1 John 2:17; Revelation 22).

A New Worship

Finally, we have a new worship of the Living God. This is the first worship service of the new creation that takes place on the first day of the week and thus the reason to have our Christian Sabbath on the first day rather than the last day. Worship of God on the last day ended in Jesus' death and it is buried with Jesus in His tomb. As Jesus came forth powerfully out of the tomb on the day of his resurrection, so the worship of God in Spirit and truth took place on the first day reminding us of the new creation and the resurrection we shall experience as well.

After they had been instructed by Jesus, and learning of the hope of the new life, the new understanding, the new man, and the new power, the

disciples began the new creation with new worship: "And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God." (Luke 24:52-53) As Luke's Gospel begins in the Temple of God, so it ends in the temple. The disciples are now worshipping Jesus not through signs and symbols and types as they formerly did in the Temple of God. Now they are worshipping Christ, the one all of the Old Covenant signs and symbols and types pointed to. As they learned earlier on the Road to Emmaus all of the signs and symbols and types taught to the Old Covenant people by Moses and the Prophets now are fulfilled in Jesus. Those Scriptures spoke specifically of Christ. *The disciples' worship is now in Christ and for Christ and Christ-Centered!*

The disciples used the Temple of God now as a place to worship Christ, not merely signs and symbols and types found in sacrifices. The Temple of God was not present in the people of God because of the Spirit of God. The disciples would no longer go to the temple for circumcision of children and to offer bloody sacrifices, but would now practice the worship of the New Creation through preaching, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and they would offer continuous sacrifices of praise for what Jesus has done!

Because this new day of the new creation has dawned in the resurrection, there is literally a "new start" available for all those who believe. For in Christ, we die to ourselves and this world to live unto Christ and live as new creations in HIM! In fact, those who are in Christ ARE new creations – the new has come individually by faith and the old has passed away. As the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

And we remember the great hope of the resurrection of Jesus and how we long as his people to put on imperishable immortality as we reign with Jesus in God's presence for eternity!

***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)***

Soli Deo Gloria!

Pastor Charles R. Biggs
Ketocin Covenant Presbyterian Church
Post Office Box 628
Round Hill, VA 20142-0628
www.kcopc.org
www.APlaceforTruth.org
crbiggsman@adelphia.net
540-338-7170