

**Christian Students @ SAC  
Bible Study - Spring 2022  
Week 1**

**THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE  
Chapter 5**

**THE DIVIDE OF THE CROSS**

**Scripture Reading:** Col. 1:12-13; 16-17; John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:50; 2 Cor. 5:17

**Col. 1:12-13** Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light; Who **delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**

**Col. 1:16-17** Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; **all things have been created through Him and unto Him.** And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;

**John. 3:16** For **God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, **that every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.**

**1 Cor 15:50** Now this I say, brothers, **that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption.**

**2 Cor. 5:17** So then **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.** The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

The kingdom of this world is not this kingdom of God. God had in His heart set upon a world-system, a universe of His creating, which should be headed up in Christ His Son (Col. 1:16-17). But Satan, working through man's flesh, has set up instead a rival system known in Scripture as "this world" – a system in which we are involved and which he himself dominates. He has in fact become "the prince of this world" (John 12:31).

## TWO CREATIONS

Thus, in Satan's hands, the first creation has become the old creation, and God's primary concern is now no longer with that but with a second and new creation. He is bringing in a new creation, a new kingdom and a new world, and nothing of the old creation, the old kingdom or the old world can be transferred to the new. It is a question now of these two rival realms, and of which realm we belong to.

The apostle Paul, of course, leaves us in no doubt as to which of these two realms is now in fact ours. He tells us that God, in redemption, "delivered us out of the power of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:12-13). Our citizenship henceforth is *there*.

But in order to bring us into His new kingdom, God must do something new in us. He must make of us new creatures. Unless we are created anew we can never fit into the new realm. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; and, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption" (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:50). However educated, however cultured, however improved it be, flesh is still flesh. Our fitness for the new kingdom is determined by the creation to which we belong. Do we belong to the old creation or the new? Are we born of the flesh or of the Spirit? Our ultimate suitability for the new realm hinges on the question of origin. The question is not "good or bad?" but "flesh or Spirit?" "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and it will never be anything else. That which is of the old creation can never pass over into the new.

Once we really understand what God is seeking, namely, something altogether new for Himself, then we shall see clearly that we can never bring any contribution from the old realm into that new thing. God wanted to have us for Himself, but He could not bring us as we were into that which He had purposed; so He first did away with us by the Cross of Christ, and then by resurrection provided a new life for us. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [mg. "there is a new creation"]: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Being now new creatures with a new nature and a new set of faculties, we can enter the new kingdom and the new world.

The Cross was the means God used to bring to an end "the old things" by setting aside altogether our "old man," and the resurrection was the means He employed to impart to us all

that was necessary for our life in that new world. “We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

The greatest negative in the universe is the Cross, for with it God wiped out everything that was not of Himself: the greatest positive in the universe is the resurrection, for through it God brought into being all He will have in the new sphere. So the resurrection stands at the threshold of the new creation. It is a blessed thing to see that the Cross ends all that belongs to the first regime, and that the resurrection introduces all that pertains to the second. Everything that had its beginning before resurrection must be wiped out. Resurrection is God's new starting-point.

We have now two worlds before us, the old and the new. In the old, Satan has absolute dominion. You may be a good man in the old creation, but as long as you belong to the old you are under sentence of death, because nothing of the old can go over to the new. The Cross is God's declaration that all that is of the old creation must die. Nothing of the first Adam can pass beyond the Cross; it all ends there. The sooner we see that, the better, for it is by the Cross that God has made a way of escape for us from that old creation. God gathered up in the Person of His Son all that was of Adam and crucified Him; so in Him all that was of Adam was done away. Then God made, as it were, a proclamation throughout the universe saying: “Through the Cross I have set aside all that is not of Me; you who belong to the old creation are all included in that; you too have been crucified with Christ!” None of us can escape that verdict.

This brings us to the subject of baptism. “Are we ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death” (Rom. 6:3,4). What is the significance of these words?

Baptism in Scripture is associated with salvation. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). We cannot speak scripturally of “baptismal regeneration” but we may speak of “baptismal salvation.” What is salvation? It relates not to our sins nor to the power of sin, but to the cosmos or world-system. We are involved in Satan's world- system. To be saved is to make our exit from his world-system into God's.

In the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, says Paul, “the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14). This is the figure developed by Peter when he writes of the eight souls who were "saved through water" (1 Peter 3:20). Entering into the ark, Noah and those with him stepped by faith out of that old corrupt world into a new one. It was not so much that they were personally not drowned, but that they were out of that corrupt system. That is salvation.

Then Peter goes on: “Which also after a true likeness [mg. “in the antitype”] does now save you, even baptism” (verse 21). In other words, by that aspect of the Cross which is figured in baptism you are delivered from this present evil world, and, by your baptism in water, you confirm this. It is baptism “into his death,” ending one creation ; but it is also baptism “into Christ Jesus,” having in view a new one (Rom. 6:3). You go down into the water and your world, in figure, goes down with you. You come up in Christ, but your world is drowned.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved,” said Paul at Philippi, and “spoke the word of the Lord” to the jailer and his household. And he “was baptized, he and all his, immediately” (Acts 16:31-34). In doing so, he and those with him testified before God, His people and the spiritual powers that they were indeed saved from a world under judgment. As a result, we read, they rejoiced greatly, “having believed in God.”

Thus it is clear that baptism is no mere question of a cup of water, nor of a baptistry of water. It is a tremendous thing, relating as it does both to the death and to the resurrection of our Lord, and having in view two worlds. Anyone who has seen men turn to Christ in a pagan country knows what tremendous issues are raised by baptism.

### **Questions**

1. Explain what you understand about the two creations—old creation and the new creation
2. What is salvation? (According to what we read)