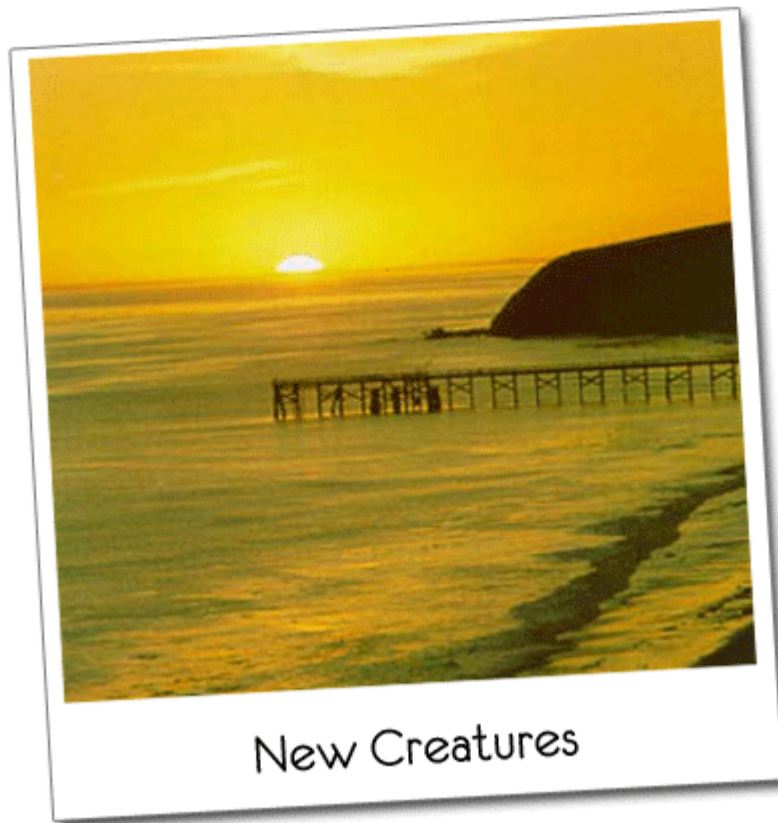


New Creatures



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So what does happen when a sinner trusts Christ?

The answer is, the most radical and far-reaching change of state and condition that is possible on this earth.

God's purpose of election concerning you is fulfilled

“He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

It is wrong for any man to try to discover if he is one of God's elect before coming to Christ. Like every other spiritual blessing, election is “in Christ.” Every sinner should obey the gospel and come to Christ. Once you come, you will realize that sovereign grace alone chose you, called you, and brought you in faith to the Saviour: “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (II Thessalonians 2:13).

You are legally acquitted of all guilt before God

This is what the Bible calls “justification.” It is a legal term that simply means that God pardons all your sin and places all the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ to your account. Just as He imputed our sin to Christ, He imputes His righteousness to us. As Christ bore the penalty of our sin, we receive the reward of His righteousness.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

Christ did not morally become a sinner when He was made sin for us. He was legally treated as guilty because He stood as our substitute before God. The law of God looked on Him and His people as one and therefore exacted our punishment from Him. Similarly, justification describes, not a moral change in us, but a legal change in our status before God. Because in the eyes of the law Christ and His people are one, we receive the full reward of His obedience. God treats us as He does Christ. Christ’s obedience is the basis of all God’s favour to us.

Recognizing this legal oneness with Christ is the key to enjoying all the other blessings of salvation. We do not have to perform in order to impress God or gain His love and favour. Christ has done all that needs to be done to gain acceptance with God for us. He is our righteousness.

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ... righteousness” (I Corinthians 1:30).

“The Lord [is] our righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6).

We cannot improve on that righteousness. Since God accepts us as perfect in Christ, and we do not have to work to gain acceptance with Him, we are free to serve the Lord with gladness out of hearts of love and gratitude. We can also honestly recognize and bemoan our own imperfections and yet strive to be holy, not to establish a right standing with God, but because our Saviour has done that for us.

Living in the light of this great truth will enable us to grow in grace and enter into all the fulness of our new life in Christ.

You are reconciled to God

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

“When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10).

By His atoning death the Lord Jesus Christ has turned away the wrath of God from you and has turned you away from your former enmity to God.

Being brought into this friendship and acceptance with God, you now have freedom to enter His presence — indeed to live in His presence — and enjoy real fellowship with Him.

“Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ ... If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:3,7).



You are adopted into God's family

God “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Ephesians 1:5).

This is the legal act of taking us into His family, giving us a right to the name and all the privileges of the sons of God. Paul explains something of what that means:

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:15-17).

You are made a new creature

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthian 5:17).

Peter tells us how this happens. He says that the Lord has given unto us “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Peter 1:4).

Here is what will give you the power to live a holy life. It does not mean that you will be sinless (I John 1:8,10). It does mean that you will have a new attitude toward sin. You will no longer acknowledge its mastery over you but will treat it as a usurping tyrant. You will oppose it and delight to be holy and Christ-like.

You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it

seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16,17).

He fulfils this in the case of every Christian: “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God” (I Corinthians 6:19).



You are vitally united to Christ

As a Christian you are made a member of Christ’s body, the church (I Corinthians 12:12,13).

You are also made a living stone in the temple, or spiritual house, the Lord is building (I Peter 2:5).

These metaphors mean that as a Christian you have the very closest possible union with Christ. Paul frequently uses the phrase “in Christ,” especially in Ephesians and Colossians, to drive home the same message. Christ and His people cannot be separated. God will never deal with a Christian apart from Christ and His merits. Nor will He ever deal with Christ apart from His people.

What assurance this gives believers. In Christ every Christian has eternal life. Nothing can ever cut him off from his Saviour:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35,37-39).

“Think on these things” (Philippain 4:8). These are the things that make for peace of heart and full assurance of faith.

