

CHRISTIAN WORKER

“We are workers together with Him...” (2 Corinthians 6:1)

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A NEW COVENANT!

Kevin Cauley

Jeremiah 31:31 is one of the most transformative prophecies of the Old Testament: God promised that the covenant with Moses would end. In its place, He would establish a New Covenant.

Much of Jeremiah is very bad news: Judah is going into slavery to be punished for their sins! However, Jeremiah's message is tempered with the good news that a remnant will return. Jeremiah chapter thirty-one prophesies the restoration of God's people from their captivity. In verse two God says, “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness.” In verse four, God says, “Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt.” In verse 10, Jeremiah writes, “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Isarel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’” It is in this context that God reveals that things are going to change. Jeremiah 31:31-34 says:

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,

says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

God promised that He would create a New Covenant with the houses of Isarael and Judah. This covenant would not be like the covenant that He gave to Moses. It would not be a covenant for the administration and government of an earthly, physical nation. It would be a spiritual covenant that would exist in the heart and mind of each person who desired a covenant relationship with Him.

Why would God make a change? Moses' earthly, national covenant had a problem: it did not give them a choice! If one was born an Israelite, then he was in a covenant relationship

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FROM THE EDITOR:

NEW EVERY MORNING

Cody Westbrook

Thomas Chisolm was born in Franklin, Kentucky on July 29, 1866. At 16 he became a teacher and editor of a local newspaper. Poor health would force him to move and change jobs several times over the years. It also caused him to struggle financially. He was, however, a talented writer and wrote some 1,200 poems. In 1925 he wrote “Great is thy faithfulness.” There was no single event that prompted him to write it. He simply reflected upon the faithfulness of God seen even in a difficult life. Near the end of his life he said,

“My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.”

Mr. Chisolm was certainly not the first to contemplate the goodness of God and be overwhelmed by its immensity. At a time of great anguish, the prophet Jeremiah looked to Jehovah and proclaimed, “Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” (Lam. 3:22-24).

If Jeremiah could ponder the newness of the mercies and compassions of God each day while the smoke of his burning homeland clouded the sky, how much more should we be able to rejoice in His goodness each day? As we look forward to a new year and to each new day, setting goals and making plans to capitalize the opportunities which God presents us, let us always be mindful of His goodness. Even in life’s most difficult hour the goodness and mercy of God is present.

CW



A NEW CREATION

Troy Spradlin

When someone rises out of the precious waters of baptism, is there something different about them? Based solely upon appearance, no changes are discernible. Yet, from a spiritual perspective, everything about them has changed! We know this because the Bible reveals that a remarkable transformation has taken place. It describes the conversion with some rather peculiar verbiage. For example, when a penitent believer is immersed into water, they are said to have “died and been buried” (Rom. 6:1-4). It is also called being “born again” (John 3:3-7). Other passages describe it as “putting on Christ” (Gal. 3:27); becoming a “babe in Christ” (1 Cor. 3:1); being a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17); or even “putting on the new man” (Eph. 4:24). So which is it? Have they died? Are they re-born? Have they become a new man, or are they now a babe? The answer is, all of those things!

While the exterior aspect of the individual shows no variation, nor was anything “magical” happening during the physical act of baptism - after all, it’s just water -

there is, indeed, much happening within the spiritual realm that our physical eyes simply cannot see. The Apostle Peter explains it in this manner, “There is also an anti-type which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” (1 Pet. 3:21). Thus, the act of baptism is part of a process, or what is also known as “the plan of salvation,” that God ordained (cf. Rom. 6:17). Paul provides a little further insight, “... you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11). These verses clearly indicate that something very special happens when one is baptized.

Since we cannot actually see what is taking place, the Bible uses several metaphors and phrases of figurative language that we can relate to in order to help us understand what this act of obedience truly fulfills. Essentially, what happens is that while our flesh is just getting wet, our soul is being translated into the kingdom of the Son (Col. 1:13), or added to the church, as depicted in Acts 2:47. These two phrases both mean the same thing. In other words, the soul of the individual is being conveyed from one state of being (that which was lost) to a different state of being (that which is saved). The result of the transformation means that the individual who comes up out of the water is no longer the same person that entered the water. How do you describe such a change? You do it with all those many descriptors given in Scripture ... and oh, what beautiful descriptions they are!

Notice that each depiction of the Christian has one thing in common: a new beginning at life. It is not just a better life on this earth, but eternal life, a life that extends far beyond this present world (John 10:10; 1 John 2:25). Just as a newborn child has the blessing of a brand-new life laying before them, so does the born again disciple. We can call it a gift of second chance. This is because on our own, we are doomed to eternal condemnation due to the sin in our lives (Rom. 3:23; 6:23), but God provided away of escape, another trajectory that has a far better destination (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Therefore, one has to make a choice, they must rid themselves of their old ways, and submit to the will of God, so they too can have the free gift that He offers to all mankind (Rom. 5:18).

So, how about you? Does this sound like something worth pursuing? Isn't eternal life worth more than all the world? After all, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26) I pray this has encouraged you to see the true impact baptism has on one's

life. It is a metamorphosis of the soul to a new life that gains “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). I pray that YOU do have that life God offers to all, or you will seek it out today!

CW

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

Allen Webster

At the invitation of the City of Jacksonville, Alabama, I led the invocation at a city council meeting. It was both enlightening and encouraging to see the wisdom and plans of the mayor and council members. They discussed such future decisions as where to build city fire and police departments and their training/correctional facilities, how to enforce community ordinances regarding noise and rental properties, city finance and senior citizen activities, and the promotion of city employees. They listened to citizen concerns, explained past decisions in light of ongoing benefits, enlisted the expert opinion of fire and police chiefs, and disagreed with each other without being disagreeable. Their city planning made progress toward a better tomorrow.

Heaven had a city planner long before the citizens of earth saw the value in it. Scripture says that Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). Matthew Henry says the latter phrase means that God “contrived the model” of heaven. That is, He was its city planner. Adam Clark expounded further on “builder and maker”:

The word *τεχνιτης* signifies an architect, one who plans, calculates, and constructs a building. The word *δημιουργος* signifies the governor of a people; one who forms them by institutions and laws; the framer of a political constitution. God is here represented the Maker or Father of all the heavenly inhabitants, and the planner of their citizenship in that heavenly country.

While we do not know a great deal about heaven from the Scriptures, it is inspiring to contemplate the things that are revealed about the new heavens and new earth. What kind of city did God plan for His children?

God's city is a gated community with an open-door policy. Gated communities are popular because they provide an extra layer of protection and privacy. None are allowed passed the front entrance who do not have property within or permission to visit. This is not an altogether modern idea. Ancient cities had walls to protect citizens from invaders. These were often closed at night to allow citizens to rest easy knowing that no enemy could get to them without warning.

Taken literally, John's description of heaven's "wall great and high" was seventy-two yards high. This seems short compared to a fifteen-hundred-mile-high city (Rev. 21:16-17), but that wall served its purpose of limiting access and protecting its citizens. When we finally enter God's city, we will forever be rid of the nemesis that has hounded humanity since Eden's fruit was fresh and man's work was fun (1 Pet. 5:8). By the time we pass through the gates of pearl, Satan will be finally and forever cast down (Rev. 12:10). Angels are posted at each entrance to the city (21:12), perhaps as sentries to restrict entrance only to those who belong to God (21:27).

Heaven's wall has twelve foundation stones. Each has the name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14). Each apostle's stone is garnished with various kinds of precious stones, similar to the twelve stones of the high priest's breastplate (Ex. 28:17-20). Each precious jewel is a different color:

- Jasper—clear crystal
- Sapphire—blue
- Chalcedony—greenish blue
- Emerald—deep green
- Sardonyx—white with brown streaks
- Sardius—blood red
- Chrysolite—yellow quartz
- Beryl—green
- Topaz—yellowish green
- Chrysoprasus—apple green
- Jacinth—blue
- Amethyst—purple

How beautiful and colorful heaven must be!

Heaven's walls have twelve gates, each made of a single pearl (Rev. 21:12, 21). Each wall thus has three gates, and each gate bears the name of an Israeli tribe. It seems logical that they will be in the same order as when they were encamped around the tabernacle (Num. 2:1-34; 3:21-38), which enables us to know the names on each wall:

- North—Naptali, Asher, Dan;
- South—Reuben, Simeon, Gad;
- East—Zebulun, Issachar, Judah;
- West—Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin.

The three gates on each wall face all four directions (21:13) perhaps illustrates that the gospel is for all and that a person can go to heaven from any place on earth (Mark 16:15-16).

Heaven's gates are ever open (Rev. 21:25; cf. 4:1) showing that until Jesus comes opportunities for earth's citizens to become citizens of heaven are unlimited. When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them (John 14:1-3), He was not suggesting that He needed two thousand years to build all those houses. He made an entire universe in six days so He would not need six minutes to add some rooms to heaven's facilities. The time lapse can better be attributed to the need to fill heaven's census roles (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). That filling of the "Lamb's Book of Life" roll book continues today, but it will not last forever. Enrollment will one day close, and once it is, not another person can enter. Jesus' invitation stands open until the final trumpet (Matt. 11:28-30; 1 Thess. 4:13-18) but then closes forever (Matt. 25:10).

God's city has plenty of room and will never run down. The dimensions are given as a cube: 1500 miles square (21:16). If we take that 1500-mile figure literally, heaven would be composed of 396,000 stories (at 20 feet per story) each having an area as big as half the United States! Divide that up into separate living quarters, and each redeemed person will have plenty of room. Jesus communicated this idea when He explained His Father's house has many mansions (dwelling places) (John 14:2).

God planned for sustainability. One can build a doghouse on dirt, a storage shed with a wooden floor, but if he is going build a house to last a hundred years, he must start with a good foundation. Heaven's foundations speak of permanence. When we sing of "When we have been there ten thousand years" we are only speaking of a blink of the eye in heaven. John R. Clements wrote,

*In the land of fadeless day
Lies the city foursquare;
It shall never pass away,
And there is no night there.*

God's city is pollution-free and crime-free. City planning involves problem-solving and security of its citizens. The more thoughtful city fathers are, the less trouble their government's descendants will have to face later.

We live in a wicked society. Every night the news tells us about those who were robbed, raped, beaten, and killed the night before. We rush to fasten our windows, bolt our doors, and secure our homes. There will be no bad news in heaven. The doors on those mansions have no dead bolts; the windows have no locks; and the houses have no burglar alarms.

- Heaven has exclusions, restrictions, and policies: “There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). “For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 22:15). The wedding feast is by “invitation only” and nobody crashes the party. For this reason, there is no need for a jail in heaven.

- Looked at another way, only one person is forbidden entrance to heaven: a sinner. An unknown preacher once observed, “You can die in a car accident and still go to heaven. You can die in a hospital and go to heaven. You can die in your bed and go to heaven. You can die in a plane crash and go to heaven. You can die in the ocean and go to heaven. You can die in rags and go to heaven. But you cannot die in sin and go to heaven.” Heaven is for registered guests only. John tells us, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).

In heaven we will have only good neighbors. Angels are citizens of heaven (Luke 15:7, 10). The great men and women of faith spoken of in Scripture will be active there (Matt. 8:11; cf. Heb. 11:16). All faithful Christians will be there. The salt of the earth will be sprinkled around the throne of God. Those who lighted this world will graduate to the eternal city of light.

God’s city has a river running through it and a tree that changes fruit changes monthly. A good city planner would not forget the landscaping, and God certainly did not. John wrote,

He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1-2).

The beautiful River of Life flowing with pure water indicates the satisfaction and plenty of heaven. Streets made of pure, transparent gold suggest the unimagined wealth

and extravagance of the place. They use the most precious substance on earth just to pave its streets!

The Tree of Life has been transplanted there from the Garden of Eden. The last we knew of it, an angel had been posted at the Eden’s gate with a revolving sword (Gen. 3:24), to keep man away from this tree lest they should eat its fruit and live forever in his fallen state. We might assume that the tree was destroyed in the great flood, but perhaps it was salvaged (or recreated). It is also possible that earth’s variety was only a seedling of the original in Heaven’s eternal garden. Either way, on this tree grows twelve different fruits each month. The leaves are for the healing of the nations. It will take care of any lingering hunger or hurts we have.

God’s city has a great white throne with a glorious King (Rev. 4:3-5; 20:11). The psalmist observed, “The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Ps. 11:4). John saw this “saw a great white throne” in heaven, and the One who sat on the throne (Rev. 4:1-6; 20:11).

The most wonderful aspect of heaven will be the presence of the divine Godhead (Rev. 1:4-5). God is what makes heaven glorious. God’s glory filled the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 40:34), the temple erected by Solomon (1 Kings 8:11), and the church (Eph. 2:22; 3:21), but only in heaven will man see its fullness.

During the time of British Prime Minister William E. Gladstone, people were said to have traveled across the Atlantic Ocean just to look on his face. Imagine how much more thrilling it will be to look upon the face of the One who redeemed us from sins (Rev. 22:3-4).

William M. Dyke became blind at ten. Despite his handicap, he was an intelligent, witty, and handsome young man. While attending graduate school in England, he met the daughter of an English admiral. The two became engaged. Though he had never seen her, they were deeply in love. Shortly before the wedding, at the insistence of the admiral, William underwent a surgery in hope of regaining his sight. He asked that the gauze covering his eyes be removed during the wedding so, if it worked, the first thing he saw would be his wife’s face. As she came down the aisle, William’s father unwound the bandages—no one knew if the operation had been a success. When the final layer was removed, William opened his eyes and looked into the face of his new bride. He said: “You are more beautiful than I ever imagined.” When we at last see Jesus, He will be more beautiful than we ever imagined. It will be worth the years of waiting to one day “see Him as He is” (1 John 3:1-2).

God’s city is at the end of a single road, and that road’s sign reads “Christ.” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and

the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). A man may go to heaven

- without health, without wealth,
- without fame, without name,
- without learning, without earnings,
- without culture, without beauty,
- without friends, and without a thousand other things,
- but he cannot go to Heaven without Christ!

One little girl was walking with her daddy under a starlit sky. After several moments of silence, she remarked, “Father, I’ve been thinking. If the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, just imagine what the right side will be!”

Heaven is spoken of as a country, a city, and a house. The great Old Testament patriarchs were looking for a country or homeland (Heb. 11:13-16). Abraham was looking for a city with foundations whose builder and maker is God (Rev. 21:1; Heb. 11:10). But most of all heaven is described as a home. It is God’s home, and He wants us to move in with Him.

Will you take Him up on His offer?

CW

A NEW SONG

John Haffner

Together with the many images presented in Revelation, we see songs of praise detailing the power of Jesus, the Lamb of God (Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3-4). Such songs have always accompanied the salvation which God brings to His people (Ex. 15:1-21; Judges 5:1-31). The term “new song” is used multiple times in the Psalms, especially in relation to a time of deliverance (Ps. 33:3; 40:1-3; 96:1; 144:9-11; 149:1). Each fresh victory called for a song adapted to the occasion. Isaiah also used the term “new song” to speak concerning God’s Servant, the Promised Messiah, and what He would accomplish (Isa. 42:8-10). It’s a fitting title because, in a sense, salvation through the blood of the cross is the newest thing in all creation (Acts 2:22-24; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Focusing on Revelation 5:9, the new song first highlights the Lamb’s worthiness. Only He possesses the right to take the scroll and open its seals. The word for “worthy” means having a weight comparable to the thing measured. So, who measures up to this standard? Who deserves titles such as Immaculate, High Priest, and Redeemer? Emperors and various other strong men throughout history have tried to fill a divine position and have taken inappropriate religious titles for themselves, but this song declares the eternal truth. There exists only one possible answer to the question, “Who is worthy?” (Rev. 5:2). Jesus, the Lion of Judah, the Root of David is worthy (Rev. 5:5). False teachers claim that Jesus should not be worshipped. Some today even suggest that Christ refused man’s worship. This is not the case. Jesus accepted worship both before and after His resurrection (Matt. 8:2; 14:33; 28:9; John 9:38; 20:28).

The continuation of the song shows the Lamb’s chief accomplishment. His worth is seen in more than just His identity. Christ was slain and has redeemed the faithful by His blood (Rev. 5:9). This sacrifice has long been told in prophecy. He is the Seed of woman whose heel was to be bruised by the serpent, though He would bruise the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). He is the Man of sorrows, whose hands and feet were pierced (Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Zech. 12:10). He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8) and our perfect, once-and-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:25-26; 10:12). This sacrificial death served to purchase a new and everlasting kingdom, the church (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:4). We are “bought at a price” (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 8:9). God has plainly shown redemption can only be found in His Son (Acts 4:12; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 3:18).

The final, crucially important, piece of this song describes the scope of the Lamb’s salvation. The redeemed come from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). No family, language, social, or ethnic group is excluded. This also is the fulfillment of prophecy (Gen. 22:18; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 3:17; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16). As Peter learned, “...God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:34-35). Gentiles, as well as Jews, have access to repentance unto life through the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:17-18; Rom. 3:29). Why then do we read that the new song can only be sung by the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth (Rev. 14:3)? This symbolic number for the redeemed, first mentioned in Revelation 7:4, is made up of twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. These are physical pictures used to illustrate a greater spiritual truth—not a literal number of

male Jewish virgins (Rev. 14:4). I believe the point is that the new song can only be learned and sung by those who have truly been washed in the Lamb's blood and have experienced the victory firsthand. While time remains in this life, anyone may be added to the redeemed if they will only come to Him in submissive obedience. "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life... Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:14, 17).

Perhaps you have heard how the book of Revelation can be summed up in two words, "We win!" It is certainly true that through Christ the faithful will overcome Satan and the darkness of sin. This writing comforted Christians under trials and persecutions at the close of the first century, letting them know that Christ's church will have the final victory over all the forces of evil. The supremacy of Christ and the ultimate victory of those loyal to Him has been revealed for us as well, so let us all be bold to serve and praise Him.

CW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with God whether he wanted to be or not! Someone had to teach him to "know the LORD" because he did not know Him from birth, and many did not want to know Him! So, many broke their covenant with God.

Under the New Covenant, however, everyone enters a relationship with God when he is "born again" (John 3:5-6). The covenant isn't forced on anyone; everyone chooses to enter this relationship with God knowingly and willingly. They are not told to "know the LORD," because they already know Him.

How do they know Him? God says, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Forgiveness is the key to understanding the prophecy! Forgiveness and the New Covenant are forever connected. Forgiveness means that God will remember their sin no more. What does that mean? Why is it significant?

In Leviticus 16, God spoke to Moses and Aaron about the priesthood's sins. What did they need to do to expiate those sins? God's solution was the Day of Atonement. He did not stop at just the priests' sins. He made provision

for all the sins of all the people. At the end of the chapter, God said, "This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year" (Lev. 16:34). They needed sacrifices every year because they sinned every year. The Day of Atonement was a yearly reminder that they were sinners, but the prophecy of Jeremiah said, "their sin I will remember no more." How could God continue the day of atonement (where sins are remembered every year) yet fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy? The book of Hebrews answers this question for us.

Hebrews 10:3 says, "But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year" because it was "not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). While animal sacrifices continued, sins were remembered! The only way that sins would be forgiven and forgotten was for an ultimate (last and final) sacrifice to be made that ended the yearly offerings. Then and only then could sins be ultimately forgiven and forgotten, Jeremiah's prophecy be fulfilled, and the New Covenant begin. Did that happen? If so, when?

When Jesus was communing with His disciples on the eve of His betrayal, arrest, trial, and crucifixion, He created a new memorial. It was not a memorial of sin, but of forgiveness. We know this memorial as the Lord's Supper. As He was explaining the significance of the fruit of the vine, he said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Jesus' connecting the "New Covenant" with "remission of sins" is intentional. He drew on Exodus 24:8 and Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jesus was changing the covenant! He superseded the blood of the covenant that Moses offered with His own blood. This blood would be shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins once and for all time. Jesus fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy and brought in the New Covenant of forgiveness.

Today, God's covenant with His people is through His Son, Jesus Christ. No other covenant will grant forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The only way to know the terms and conditions of that covenant is to read the New Testament. It contains everything that one needs to know to enter and sustain a covenant relationship with God through Jesus. It is a covenant of the heart and mind, and when one enters it, his sins are forgiven and forgotten for good. Such is the power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

CW



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From the Director's desk



Steven Lloyd
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The Apostle Paul affirms that God is not the author of “confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33, NKJV). The footnote suggests the word “disorder.” God is the author of order. Due to the misuse of spiritual gifts at Corinth their worship to God was chaotic.

That God is the author of order is made clear from the beginning. The earth from the beginning is characterized as “without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep” (Gen. 1:2); but God brought “light” and order to bear on what was formerly “without form, and void” and dark.

There is a sense in which God does the same thing with our lives. John even uses the word “darkness” to characterize life in the world: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:4, 5). Paul characterizes our conversion from life in the world to life in Him by writing that God “delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Col. 1:13 ASV).

So, Paul can write, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:16, 17 NKJV). We continue to become this new creation by the renewing of our mind. This is a part of the process by which we are transformed (Rom. 12:1,2; Eph. 4:17-24).

When we cooperate with God, though our lives may have been characterized by chaos and darkness, they may be “translated” and “transformed.” Consider what role this might play in our mental health.

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