

**The Wednesday Word, October 16, 2024: The Gospel and the New Creature in Christ –  
Part 1**

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5: 17).

*“A holy man is so far acquainted with the corruption of his own heart that instead of condemning others, he is apt to account them better than himself. The imperfections of a believer's sanctification make him continually depend on Christ for his justification.*

John Mason; 1646 -1694

For years, one of the most puzzling verses in the entire New Testament was 2 Corinthians 5: 17, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold all things are become new.*” At the beginning of my Christian life, however, far from being puzzled by this verse, I thought it was one of the easiest Bible verses to understand. There was nothing complicated about it for it explained the great change which had taken place in my life. I took it to mean what it said. It informed me that now that I was a follower of Jesus, I had a brand-new life. The old life had gone, a new life had come in and everything was new. And it was true; everything was new. Before being saved I would never have read the Bible, but now I loved that book and devoured it. I had hated prayer, except in emergencies, but now I found myself attending all night prayer meetings! I used to love to smoke weed and unlike a former president of the USA I did inhale, but when I became a believer the very smell of the stuff made me ill. I used to despise Christians, but now I loved being around them. Old things had passed away: all things were new!

It would be safe to say that in many ways I had been transformed.

But as the years passed by, I began to be troubled by my life. No, it's not that I wanted to start smoking again. Far from it! What began happening was that I started to get confronted by the horror which was still me. I found that I was still capable of thinking all manner of lust and mischief. I also still had a bad temper...only now it was more imbedded and more controlled. Yes, under control, but still there.

Troubling! Victory over sin was at times very temporary. It was seasonal at best! And by this time, I was preaching and I found that every time I quoted this ‘new creature in Christ’ scripture to my congregation I now felt an unusual sort of hollowness. Quietly I thought, “You are being a hypocrite McKee,” I felt I should be saying, “Some things have passed away and some things have become new, but there's still a lot of the old nonsense remaining!” Then guest ministers would preach at my church, and they would invariably tell us that the old had passed and all things were now new. I would inwardly flinch, but outwardly nod my head with the agreement of the ‘wise and knowing’. And as the ‘New Creature’ line always drew amens of appreciation

from ranks of the hearers, I began to suspect that I was the only one in the church who didn't see this scripture as being true in their lives. Old things passed away and ALL things new? ... Not for me... Yes, some things had passed away and some things were new but not ALL THINGS!

Then I discovered Paul! I don't mean I actually discovered him... I'd been reading him for years, but for the first time, I noticed a progression in his life. Actually, it was more of a regression than a progression. When I followed his writings, I found that in AD 56, he wrote to the Corinthians telling them that he was the **least of the apostles** (1Corinthians 15:9). Then four years later, in AD 60, he told the Ephesians that he was the **least of all the saints** (Ephesians 3:8). Then, four years after that, he told Timothy that he, Paul, was the **chief of sinners** (1 Timothy 1:15). Least of the Apostles! Least of all the saints! Chief of sinners! And this is progress? Indeed, he seems to have everything back to front.

And that's the Gospel Truth!

To Be Continued next week.