

LESSON THREE

THE TWO CREATED INTO ONE NEW MAN & PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN

Scripture Reading:

Eph. 2:11 Therefore remember that once you, the Gentiles in the flesh, those who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands,

Eph. 2:12 That you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Eph. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near in the blood of Christ.

Eph. 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,

Eph. 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace

Eph. 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

Eph. 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

Eph. 4:23 And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Eph. 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Col. 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Col. 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

Questions:

Section 1

1. What are the things Christ dealt with on the cross?
2. What is the highest aspect of the church? Why?
3. Use the verse references to show that God's intention is to have a corporate man and has never changed.

Section 2

1. What are the 6 things that were crucified on the cross of Christ? What should the change in our living be if we realise these things?
2. How did Christ create the one new man today? In what realm are we the one new man?

Section 3

1. How do we put off the old man and put on the new man?
2. What is the correct understanding of "our spirit"?
3. How can the new man be both created, which has nothing to do with anything old, and renewed, which is related to something old?

Section 4

1. What is our "former manner of life" and how do we deal with it?
2. What is the issue with believers bringing their ways of living and worship to the church?

[Section 1]

THE ABOLISHING OF THE ORDINANCES

When Christ died on the cross, not only did He deal with sins, the old man, Satan, and the world; He also dealt with the ordinances. On the cross Christ abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances. Therefore, by His death on the cross, Christ dealt with five categories of things: sins, the old man, Satan, the world, and the ordinances. It seems that very few Christians today talk about Christ's dealing with the ordinances, and I doubt that any books have been written on this subject. Most Christians think that all our problems concern sins, the old man, Satan, and the world. Many think that we are all right as long as these four things are dealt with. But not all the problems are solved, and we cannot be all right until the ordinances have been dealt with. The ordinances, the different ways of living and worshipping, had to be abolished by Christ on the cross so that He could create in Himself the one new man.

We have heard repeatedly that on the cross Christ accomplished redemption, destroyed the Devil, judged the world, and crucified the self. But perhaps you have never heard that Christ's death on the cross was also for the creation of the one new man. In order to create the one new man, it was necessary for Christ to abolish the ordinances. By abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances and by creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, Christ has made peace among all believers. The Jews and Gentiles were separated to the uttermost by the ordinances. But both peoples were created in Christ with the divine essence into one new entity, which is a corporate man, the church. Because no other Christians speak about the abolishing of the ordinances and the creating of the new man, we are very burdened to give a word concerning these things.

THE HIGHEST ASPECT OF THE CHURCH

Most believers recognize that the church is the *ekklesia*, the gathering or assembling of God's called people. The Brethren emphasized this aspect of the church and even translated the Greek word *ekklesia* into "assembly," which is an accurate rendering. This, however, is an even less than elementary understanding of the church. A somewhat more advanced concept of the church is that the church is God's household or family. An even higher understanding of the church is to see that the church is the Body of Christ. The

highest understanding of the church is that the church is the one new man. These four concepts of the church are like four levels in the educational system: kindergarten, elementary, high school, and college. We need to advance from the kindergarten level of the church, that of the assembly, to the college level, that of the one new man.

The relationship among Christians in an assembly, a gathering, is not very close. It is much closer and more intimate among those in the family, the household. However, we are not only members of God's family but also members of the Body of Christ, where the relationship among the members is still closer. Those in the assembly and the members of a family may be separated from one another, but the members of the Body cannot be separated from the Body unless they are amputated. Wherever the Body goes, the members must go also; they have no choice. However, in the one new man the fellowship is even more intimate than in the Body. The new man is corporate and universal. There are many believers, but there is only one new man in the universe. All the believers are components of this one corporate and universal new man. May the Lord show us more light concerning the new man! We must admit that as yet we have not seen very much of this aspect of the church. The aspect of the church as the new man is a new discovery opened up in recent years. I believe that in the days to come the Lord will reveal more concerning the one new man.

The family is more intimate than the assembly, the Body is much higher than the family, and the new man is higher than the Body. Thus, with the new man we come to the highest aspect of the church. Although Christian teachers have spoken a great deal about the assembly, the family, and the Body, hardly any have touched the matter of the one new man. W. E. Vine, however, had some understanding of this matter. In his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, he says that the new man in 4:24 is the church because it is the very new man mentioned in 2:15. Because the new man is created of two peoples, the Jewish and Gentile believers, it must be a corporate entity.

The Lord has no way to accomplish His purpose until He has this new man on earth. The situation among today's Christians is far short of God's goal. Although there is much talk about the Body, not many have a proper understanding of the Body. Furthermore, Christians rarely even speak of the one new man. How crucial it is that this aspect of the church be fully recovered!

GOD'S INTENTION TO HAVE A CORPORATE MAN

In order to see the one new man, we need to have a proper understanding of the old man. Before exhorting us to put on the new man, Paul tells us to put off the old man (4:22). After creating heaven and earth, God created man, not merely as an individual but as a collective entity. Genesis 1:26 speaks of man both in the singular and in the plural: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...." This reveals that God's intention has always been to have one collective man. The corporate man created by God was damaged through the fall, and there is now the need for God to have a new man. In order to produce this new man, Christ had to deal not only with sin, the fallen nature of the old man, Satan, and the world, but as we have pointed out, He also had to abolish the ordinances. What most frustrates God from gaining the new man is ordinances. When Christ was crucified on the cross, our sins, our old man, Satan, and the world were not the only things crucified; all the ordinances were crucified also. The crucifixion of the ordinances was not for forgiveness, holiness, victory over Satan, or the imparting of life; rather, it was absolutely for the creation of the one new man.

We are familiar with such verses as John 1:1 and 3:16, but we are not familiar with Ephesians 2:15. This verse says, "Having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace." When Christ's flesh was nailed to the cross, He abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances so that He might create the two, the Jews and Gentiles, in Himself into one new man. When verse 15 is read along with verse 16, we see clearly that Christ abolished the ordinances through the cross and slew the enmity by the cross, not for the purpose of accomplishing redemption or of imparting life but for creating the Jews and the Gentiles into one new man.

[Section 2]

CHRIST'S DEATH INVOLVING ALL OF CREATION

When Christ was nailed to the cross in the flesh, the entire old creation was involved, for all of creation was related to His flesh. According to Hebrews 10, Christ's flesh was typified by the veil in the temple on which were embroidered cherubim, signifying the living creatures. Therefore, when Christ was nailed to the cross, the entire creation was nailed there with Him.

Furthermore, when the veil in the temple was rent, the cherubim were rent also. This signifies that when the flesh of Christ was crucified on the cross, all the creatures were crucified. This is the biblical understanding of the crucifixion.

If you ask an unbelieving Jew who it was that was crucified on the cross, he will answer, "The man Jesus of Nazareth." If you asked this question of a new believer, he would probably say that his Savior, Jesus Christ, died there. A more advanced Christian would reply that both he and the Savior were crucified on the cross. An even more advanced Christian would respond that the Savior, he himself, and the Devil were all crucified on the cross. Other Christians, those even further advanced than these, would say that on the cross the Savior, the self, the Devil, and the world were crucified. If we went on to inquire of a mature and enlightened Christian concerning who died on the cross, he would say that the Savior, the self, Satan, the world, and all the creatures were crucified there. If this question is addressed to us, we should include in our answer not only the five items already mentioned but also the ordinances. Christ's death terminated all of the old creation; every negative thing in the universe was terminated.

THE NEW MAN CREATED IN CHRIST

Christ abolished in His flesh the law of commandments in ordinances; but He did not create the new man in His flesh. No, in the flesh He terminated the negative things so that He might create the two, the Jews and the Gentiles, into one new man in Himself. The negative things were terminated in Christ's flesh, whereas the new man, which, of course, is positive, was germinated in Christ Himself. We need to pay careful attention to two phrases in verse 15: "in His flesh" and "in Himself." If I were to ask you where you are today, you should say, "Firstly, I was in Christ's flesh; now I am in Christ Himself. In His flesh I was terminated on the cross, but in Christ Himself I was created as part of the one new man."

Christ did not stop with the termination of the negative things. As we have pointed out again and again, death is the threshold of resurrection; it ushers us into resurrection. Although Christ in the flesh was crucified on the cross, this death brought Him into resurrection. In resurrection He is no longer in the flesh; rather, He is the wonderful Spirit. It was in His flesh that we, the old man, were terminated, but it is in the wonderful Spirit that we have been created into the one new man. When our old man and our old nature were crucified, the ordinances related to

our fallen nature were slain. Then in Christ's resurrection and in His wonderful Spirit, we were created into one new man. It does not seem reasonable to say that we were crucified before we were born. Nevertheless, it is a marvelous fact that we were terminated in the flesh of Christ on the cross. Moreover, before we were born, we were also created in the wonderful Spirit to be the one new man.

CHRIST AS THE ESSENCE OF THE NEW MAN

The phrase "in Himself" is very significant. It indicates that Christ was not only the Creator of the one new man, the church, but also the sphere in which and the essence with which the one new man was created. He is the very element of the new man. After we were terminated, in Him we received the new essence. Christ Himself became this new element to us. Nothing of our old man was good for the creation of the new man, for our former essence was sinful. But in Him there is a wonderful essence, in which the one new man has been created.

Christ created the one new man, the church, with God's nature wrought into humanity. This divine work was something new. In the old creation God did not work His nature into any of His creatures, not even into man. In the creation of the one new man, however, God's nature has been wrought into man to make His divine nature one entity with humanity.

THE BATTLE FOR THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE NEW MAN

The demons and evil angels know that the one new man has been created in the divine essence. This fact terrifies them. For this reason, the demonic powers would try to keep Christians from seeing the fact of the creation of the one new man. Hence, we must fight the battle for this truth. We need to pray for a clear and sober mind to perceive that not only have we been terminated on the cross but that by means of this termination we have been transferred into Christ. In Christ, with His divine essence, we have been created into the one new man.

It is essential to believe that before we were born we were created into the one new man and that a new essence has been wrought into our being. If you believe that Christ died on the cross to take away your sins, then you must also believe that through His death you have been put into Him and that in Him you have been created, with His divine essence, into the new man. Have you ever heard before that in His crucifixion Christ

terminated you in His flesh and then in His resurrection put you into Himself in order to create you, with the divine essence, into the new man? This concept is beyond our natural understanding. Nevertheless, according to the Word, it is a fact. If we read 2:15 carefully and with prayer, the light will come in. We shall see that we and all the creatures, signified by the cherubim on the veil, were crucified in the flesh of Christ on the cross. Since death ushers us into resurrection, in His resurrection Christ put us into Himself. Then with His divine essence He created us in Himself into the one new man.

Ephesians 2:15 does not say, "That He might create the two into one new man." Do not ignore the phrase "in Himself." Apart from being in Him, we could not have been created into the new man, because in ourselves we do not have the divine essence, which is the element of the new man. Only in the divine essence and with the divine essence were we created into the new man. It is possible to have this essence only in Christ. In fact, Christ Himself is this essence, this element. Hence, in Himself Christ created the two into one new man. We all need to be profoundly impressed with the fact that we, the believers, have been created into one new man in Christ.

[Section 3]

PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN

As those who have been saved and regenerated, we now must put off the old man and put on the new man. Although the new man has already been created, we still need to put him on. Hardly any Christians know how to put off the old man, much less how to put on the new man. Most Christians think that to put off the old man is to put off the old nature or the old self and that to put on the new man is to put on the new nature. Those who hold this concept are utterly mistaken. Since the new man in 2:15 is a corporate man, the new man in 4:24 must also be corporate. According to 4:24, we need to put on the very new man that has already been created in Christ.

The way to put on the new man is found in 4:23: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." This word indicates that to be renewed in the spirit of our mind is to put on the new man. Now we must see what it means to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Admittedly, this is a strange expression. If I had been the writer of this Epistle, I would have said "the mind of the spirit" instead of "the spirit of the mind." To me, that would have been more logical. Nevertheless, Paul spoke here of the spirit of the mind.

OUR SPIRIT

The phrase “in spirit” is found in every chapter of Ephesians, except chapter one. Do you realize what is in our spirit? You may say that the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of God are in our spirit. This, of course, is correct. But now we need to see that the new man is also in our spirit. God’s habitation, His dwelling place, is in our spirit (2:22). In type, the ancient city of Jerusalem was God’s dwelling place, but today God’s dwelling place is in our spirit. Our regenerated spirit is today’s Jerusalem. You may think that there is no comparison between the city of Jerusalem and our spirit. Jerusalem was a large city, and our spirit is very small. But if you know the Bible, you will realize that our spirit today is much larger than Jerusalem. Our spirit is universally spacious. The problem is that we are too individualistic and think only of our individual spirit. But when the Bible speaks of “your spirit,” it includes the spirits of all the saints.

For too long our mind has been preoccupied by natural concepts, religious thoughts, and traditional teachings. In considering the matter of our spirit, we need to drop all this and see that our spirit is universally spacious. We know that God dwells in the third heaven, but He also dwells in our spirit. This makes our spirit today’s Jerusalem. Hallelujah for that wonderful entity in the universe called our spirit! The Spirit witnesses with our spirit (Rom. 8:16). The words “our spirit” include Paul’s spirit, Martin Luther’s spirit, John Wesley’s spirit, Brother Nee’s spirit, your spirit, and my spirit. How spacious our spirit is! The Bible reveals that God is the God of our spirit (Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9). Where is God today? In our spirit. Where is God’s dwelling place today? In our spirit. Where is the one new man? Also in our spirit.

THE SPIRIT DIRECTING OUR BEING

The way to put on the new man is for our spirit (which is mingled with the Spirit), in which are found God, God’s dwelling place, and the new man, to become the spirit of our mind. Our mind dominates and directs our whole being. For the spirit to become the spirit of our mind means that the spirit directs, controls, dominates, and possesses our mind. Instead of our mind being the mind of our spirit, our spirit should be the spirit of our mind. If the mind is the mind of our spirit, it means that our mind dominates, controls, and directs our spirit. But if our spirit is the spirit of our mind, it means that our spirit dominates, controls, and directs our mind. When the spirit directs our mind, it governs our whole being. When this is the case, our being is under the control of our spirit, in which are found God, the

dwelling place of God, and the new man. It is in this spirit of our mind that we are renewed. By means of this spirit we put on the new man.

How much we put on the new man depends on how much our spirit directs our being. When our spirit dominates and directs us, there is no ground for opinions or ordinances. There is no room for our way, because our whole being is dominated, controlled, governed, and directed by our spirit.

A GRADUAL PROCESS

Putting on the new man does not take place once for all. On the contrary, it is a lifelong matter, a gradual process that goes on throughout our Christian life. We have pointed out again and again that the new man has been created in Christ and with Christ. In 2:15, the Greek word rendered “in” has an instrumental significance; it also means “with.” Thus, in Himself actually means with Himself. The new man has already been created with Christ as the divine essence. When we were regenerated, this new man was put into our spirit. Now day by day we need to put on this new man by permitting the spirit to control our being and renew our mind. Every time part of our being is renewed, we put on a little more of the new man. Hence, the more we are renewed through the spirit controlling our mind, the more of the new man we put on. Eventually, this process of putting on the new man will be completed.

CHRIST IS ALL

In the one new man there are none of the national and cultural distinctions between the peoples. Here there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bondman nor freeman, cultured nor uncultured (Col. 3:10-11). Likewise, there is no American, nor British, nor Japanese, nor Chinese, nor German, nor French. In this new man Christ is all because He is the very essence with which the new man is created. Hence, the new man is just Christ.

CREATED ACCORDING TO GOD

Because the new man has been created in Christ and with Christ according to God, the new man bears the image of God. In contrast to Genesis 1:26, which says that man was made in the image of God, Ephesians 4:24 says that the new man is created directly according to God. Eventually, the new man will bear the image of God in holiness and righteousness of the reality. By being renewed in the governing spirit of our mind, we put on this new man that has been created in Christ Jesus

CREATED AND RENEWED

The way that the New Testament speaks of the new man may sound strange to our natural mind. According to Ephesians 4:24, the new man was created in righteousness and holiness of the reality, but according to Colossians 3:10, the new man is being renewed. How can the new man be both created, which has nothing to do with anything old, and renewed, which is related to something old? The creation of the new man is one thing, but the experience of the new man is another. From Christ's side, the new man has already been created. But from our side, our experience, the new man is being renewed. According to the new creation, the new man has been completed by the work of Christ. But according to our experience, the new man is in the process of being renewed daily. My burden in this message is to point out how the new man is being renewed. This renewing is actually the putting on of the new man. As we pointed out... the new man has been created, but now our need is to put him on in our experience.

[Section 4]

AN INWARD, SUBJECTIVE RENEWING

The Greek word rendered "put on" is used with respect to clothing. Suppose a brother has a suit of clothes tailor-made for him. We may say that the suit has been completed. Now the brother must put on this suit in a proper way. He cannot put it on all at once; rather, it is a gradual, step-by-step procedure.

The putting on of a suit of clothes, however, is not a fully accurate picture of the putting on of the new man. The putting on of a suit is objective, whereas the putting on of the new man involves an inward renewing. We do not put on the new man in an outward, objective way. On the contrary, the putting on of the new man begins from within; it is related to an inward, subjective renewing.

At the time of our regeneration, the new man was put into, or born into, our spirit. Now this new man must spread into every part of our being. This spreading of the new man is the putting on of the new man. It is also the renewing. By this we see that the putting on of the new man is not an outward, objective matter but an inward, subjective experience.

We have pointed out that on the cross Christ has slain the ordinances in order to produce the one new man in resurrection. Hence, in the resurrection of Christ, the new man was created and brought forth. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, the life-giving Spirit came into our spirit, bringing with Him the new man as a finished

product. In this way the new man was born into our spirit. Therefore, since the time of our regeneration, the new man has been in our spirit. Now the new man must saturate every part of us. This spreading is both the putting on of the new man and the renewing. As Colossians 3:10 says, we need to put on the new man, which is being renewed. How much of the new man we put on depends on how much we are renewed.

PUTTING OFF THE FORMER MANNER OF LIFE

Both Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 indicate that in order to put on the new man, we first need to put off the old man. Ephesians 4:22 says, "Put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man." The words manner of life imply a great deal. Before you were saved, you had a certain manner of life. Perhaps you worked five days a week and then in the evenings or on the weekends amused yourself with certain worldly entertainments. To some, the manner of life may be gambling. To others, it may be going to certain places or eating certain foods. These are all part of the manner of life. In every country of the world and among every people, there is a characteristic manner of life.

If we truly desire to be renewed, we need to put off the former manner of life. By putting off our manner of life, we put off the old man in a practical way. To bury the former manner of life is virtually the same as burying the old man. Therefore, my burden in this message is not simply to encourage you to put off the old man; it is specifically to encourage you to put off your former manner of life.

NO DISTINCTIONS

Speaking of the new man, Colossians 3:11 says, "Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all." In his Word Studies of the New Testament Vincent says that in the Greek language the words rendered "cannot be" are very strong and mean that there is no possibility. In the new man there is no possibility for Greek and Jew, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man to exist, because the former manner of life found among these peoples has been put away. No doubt, in the church in Colossae there were people from all these backgrounds. Nevertheless, according to Paul's word in Ephesians 4:22, they all had to put away their former manner of life. By doing this, they were renewed.

When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians, there were Jews in virtually every city in the

Mediterranean area. When the Jews and the Greeks in a particular city were saved, they came together as the church in that locality. In many localities there must have been not only Jews and Greeks but also barbarians (northern Europeans) and Scythians, who, as some Bible teachers believe, were the most uncultured and barbarous of people. Therefore, in some cities it was possible for the church to include cultured Greeks, religious Jews, barbarians, and uncultured Scythians. Furthermore, there were also slaves, those who had been sold into slavery, and masters, those who owned slaves. What would happen if all these different peoples came together for the Lord's table? In order for them to have the church life, they had to put off the old man embodied in their former manner of life. The Greeks had to put off their philosophy; the Jews, their religious observances and dietary regulations; the Scythians, their barbarous living; the masters, their attitude toward slaves; and the slaves, the manner of life peculiar to them. In the church life there is no room for such distinctions. There cannot be Jews and Gentiles, barbarians and Scythians, slaves and free men. In the church life there is room only for Christ.

PUTTING OFF OUR HERITAGE FROM BABEL

After Babel there began to be the differences among the peoples. But on the cross Christ slew all these differences in order to produce the one new man. Through regeneration the one new man has been put into us, those who formerly had been under the influence of the differences caused by Babel. Except for the Jewish ordinances, all the various manners of life are the heritage of Babel. What should we do about this heritage? We should bury it. This means that we must put off the former manner of life. Do not justify your manner of life or glory in it. The issue is not which manner of life is right and which is wrong. Every way of life involves ordinances and must be put off.

PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN BY THE SPIRIT OF THE MIND

We all need to have a clear vision of the new man. Our former manner of life, our heritage from Babel, and even the Jewish ordinances have been abolished in the flesh of Christ by His death on the cross. Instead of treasuring our heritage, we should disown it. On the positive side, we need to see that the new man has already been created and, by regeneration, has been put into our spirit. The need now is for our spirit to become the dominant part of our being. This means that our spirit mingled with the Spirit of God must

become the spirit of our mind (Eph. 4:23). If our spirit is the spirit of our mind, then all our living will be by the spirit. Whatever we do will be according to the spirit. This spirit of our mind will then become the renewing spirit. As we are renewed by this spirit, we put on the new man.

References:

Life-Study of Ephesians msg. 24 & 25