

Choosing The New Man (Part Three)

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We have seen that God initially installs the new man and that it is our responsibility to nourish him. We have also seen that he is manifested in our conduct, that he is reconciled to God and man, that he is circumcised of heart, that he is connected with the New Covenant, and finally, that adopting him is a matter of choice on our part.

But, what or who is the new man?

The best way to answer this is to answer yet another question: When does God create the new man in us? Paul answers the question in Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." He again uses the verb *enduo*, "to put on." Remember, its literal meaning is "to sink into." We *sink into* Christ when we are baptized. That is when we first clothe ourselves with the new man, or to put it a little bit more accurately, that is when God first establishes him within us.

Paul is clearly describing the new man in Galatians 3:27, and he connects the putting on of Christ with reconciliation. The new man, remember, is by definition reconciled with God and with man. Paul immediately follows his statement that the baptized person has put on Christ (verse 27) with a statement about reconciliation (verse 28): "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Note the similarity of Paul's terminology and approach with Colossians 3:9-11, where he admonishes us "to put on the new man." Paul also immediately follows this statement with a discussion of reconciliation: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, . . . slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Now we can see how Galatians 3:27 answers these two questions:

1. We put on—sink into—the new man when we are baptized.
2. We put on Christ.

This means *Jesus Christ is the new man*.

We saw how the new man conducts himself according to God's Word, walking according to His law. With this in mind, notice Romans 13:12-14, where Paul tells us how we should walk—we who have put on Christ, the new man: "Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, . . . not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

This only emphasizes our conclusion: The new man "is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)! "The second Man, . . . the Lord from heaven" (I Corinthians 15:47) is the new man!

However, in concluding this, we uncover an interesting paradox.

A Tale of Two Water Buckets

Recall that in Galatians 3:27 Paul says we "put on" Christ at our baptism. If we sink into water, it surrounds us. If we put on a coat, it surrounds us. We are *in* the water or *in* the coat. If we put on Christ, *we are in Christ*.

Yet, in Colossians 1:27, Paul says *Christ is in us*. God reiterates this truth several times in the New Testament.

» **John 17:23**: Christ Himself prays to His Father: "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one."

» **Romans 8:10**: Paul tells us, "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin."

» **Galatians 2:20**: Paul speaks of himself and all true Christians: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."

» **Ephesians 3:17-18**: Referring to the "inner man," Paul mentions that he prays "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."

» **I John 3:24**: John writes: "Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us."

Is this contradictory? Is it impossible? Can Christ be *in* us and we *in* Christ at the same time?

God's Word—His very *Logos*—answers those questions for us in John 14:20. He tells His disciples that, at His resurrection, they "will know that I am in My Father, and you *in* Me, and I *in* you." Christ is not describing an impossible situation. He is describing perfect, total **unity**!

To understand this type of unity, a couple of analogies will help.

1. We can say two bricks are united when they are attached one to another with mortar, but this is not the kind of unity of which Christ speaks. Bricks "united" in this way are distinguishable from each other even by a child. True, we could say they are united, but it is better to say they are connected, attached, or adjacent.

2. Christ speaks of a more thoroughgoing unity. Picture water from bucket A being poured into water in bucket B. The waters completely intermingle; one cannot distinguish water from bucket A from that of bucket B after they are mixed.

While no analogy is perfect, these two do serve to point out the sort of unity that exists between God and the true Christian. It is a thorough commingling of minds. Ideally—and none of us is there yet—it should be impossible to distinguish our mind from Christ's. They should be that much alike! Paul urges us toward the ideal: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

When we put on the new man, we put on Christ. We are in Him and He in us. Our goal should be to nourish that new man by renewing our minds through submission to Him, until our mind and His are indistinguishable. Now, that is unity!

Patches and Wine

Through all this talk about new versus old and about clothing, two of Christ's parables may have come to mind.

The Parable of the New Cloth on the Old Garment

(Matthew 9:16; Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36).

"No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old" (Luke 5:36). Mark's version of the same parable stresses that the "tear is made worse" when the new patch eventually "pulls away from the old" garment (Mark 2:21). Christ's message is clear: When it comes to doffing the old man and donning the new one, we cannot "mix and match." Successfully mixing them—combining them—is as impossible as serving two masters. We just cannot do it (Matthew 6:24)! The two men represent intrinsically and irreversibly opposing ways of life.

The Parable of the New Wine in Old Wineskins

(Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-39).

Christ makes the same point in Luke 5:37: "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined." The new wine spills to the ground, lost forever; the old wineskins rupture, becoming useless. Mixing the old and new men produces the same results as putting new wine in old wineskins: Destruction is the end of both.

Therefore, the old man and the new are utterly incompatible. We cannot mix them. God compels us to choose one and eschew the other. Which is the better choice?

The New Man Is Better

The "beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee" (John 2:11) tells us something of God's creative effort. In Cana, Christ turned water to wine. Mankind had an essential part of this miracle, for, at His command, those at the wedding feast "[f]ill[ed] the waterpots with water" (verse 7). Nevertheless, the miracle was God's, who works through Christ (John 5:19). Tasting the new wine, the master of the feast tells the bridegroom, "You have kept the good wine until now" (verse 10). The wine God created—with man's help—is *better* than the wine made by man alone.

The writer of Hebrews is emphatic: The new is better than the old! Comparing the Melchizedek with the Aaronic priesthood, he points out, "Jesus has become a surety of a *better* covenant" (Hebrews 7:22). Christ, he continues in Hebrews 8:6, "has obtained a *more excellent* ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a *better* covenant, which was established on better promises." Those promises are of a "*better . . . country*" (Hebrews 11:16) reached through "*a better* resurrection" (verse 35). Christ warns us never to lose sight of that better country.

Concluding His parable of new wine in old wineskins, Jesus laments what might be human nature's most perverse paradox: "No one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better'" (Luke 5:39). When it comes to *physical* matters, human nature is all too ready to accept the new. However, in *spiritual* matters, like Peter's dog returning to its vomit (II Peter 2:22), it all too readily turns away from the new. Rather than accept the plain truth of the gospel of God's Kingdom upon hearing it preached, all too many return to the false doctrines Satan taught the first man, Adam

(I Corinthians 15:45-48). Adam and his family have believed those same old lies ever since. Human nature deceives too many into believing, "The old is better."

Earlier, we saw that the Greek verb *enduo* means "to put on," "to invest with clothing," and "to sink into." Many probably wondered why its most obvious meaning was not included. *Enduo*, of course, is a cognate of the English verb "endue." Both mean "to put on" or "to don."

The KJV translators rendered *enduo* as *endue* only once, in Luke 24:49. Christ, about to return to His Father, encourages and instructs His disciples: "I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are *endued* with power from on high." Although *we* are to "put on" the new man, clothing ourselves with Christ's mind, *it is Christ who clothes us with His Father's own promise, the Holy Spirit.*

With that "power from on high," we are able to recognize—and to overcome—Satan's deceptions. God empowers us with the ability to overcome our reticence to change ourselves. As true Christians, we have tasted the old wine as well as the new and have opted for the new. We have walked the walk of the old man and rejected it in favor of the new man's walk—a way of life that is better than, different from, and totally incompatible with the old ways. Preferring the new, we have changed! We are in the process of making for ourselves a new heart.

In fervent prayer to the God who works with us to form the new man, let us ask for strength to walk steadfastly in that new way, always true to the "better covenant" we have made. Let us ask for endurance, lest, becoming discouraged, we succumb to the deception of Satan and return to the walk of the old man. What a tragedy it would be if we, having tasted the new wine, ever came to believe, "The old is better."