

Blog 2016

**December 25, 2016**

Christmas Day

Reading the Infancy Narratives of the Gospels

In Christmas season many people, including Dorota and I, often either read or else hear read in church the infancy narratives surrounding the birth of Christ. Undoubtedly, this is an excellent thing to do. One of the most significant things that one sees when reading these accounts in the first few chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is the emphasis on the fact that all that is being recounted is in the light of helping seekers to come to, or else to strengthen current believers', faith in the gospel message – that is, the good news of salvation through faith in Christ. In other words, these accounts are not straight historical accounts in the same way that a historian might recount them. Instead, the events are set forth, arranged and narrated with a greater purpose in mind. The infancy accounts surrounding the birth of Christ set the stage for the fuller presentation of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as presented in each Gospel. They show that all of the events in this story of the life of Christ are part of God's overall plan of salvation that reaches back to before the creation of the world. Thus, the life, death and resurrection of Christ are set forth in the Gospels as the fulfillment of God's overarching plan which was foreknown before the foundation of the world and then foretold and foreshadowed in the pages of the Old Testament. Therefore, the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah or Christ of God, is set forth in fulfillment of God's OT promises to bring forth a Savior for his people. In order to accomplish this God himself intervenes in history to bring about Christ's conception and birth through the power of God's holy Spirit. In each of the two Gospels where this is spoken of there is a strong emphasis on continuity with God's plan and the fulfillment of God's promises to his people. Thus, the infancy narratives are both the opening event in the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation and the setting of the stage for all the events that will subsequently follow in these Gospel narratives.

A few suggestions about reading the Gospels in general and the infancy narratives in particular:

1. Each Gospel account was written by each God-inspired writer separately from the others to an original specific audience. Though they have been preserved through God's providential care for Christian church at large as well, their original purpose and audience should always be kept in mind in order to be faithful to the authors original intent. Previous to the writing of the Gospels in the mid to late first century, the truths that are presented in them were preached, expounded and perhaps even circulated in written form as part of the presentation of the gospel of salvation. The Book of Acts gives examples of this taking place throughout (e.g. Acts 2; 10; 13; etc.). The writers of the Gospel accounts used that information to present the gospel through their Gospels. However, they shaped and narrated their accounts according to their own specific purposes and audiences. Therefore each Gospel should be read and understood within itself, on its own, before comparing it with another Gospel account. It is perilous to try to present a systematized or harmonized account of all the different Gospels without knowing the individual "whys" and "wherefores" behind each of them.
2. Read the infancy accounts in the simplicity with which they are presented apart from the heavy embellishment of extra-biblical Christmas traditions, myths, and definitions that have been added over the centuries. Any good, reliable version of the Bible should be the starting point for this. Then compare other versions.
3. The most reliable way to study these accounts in depth is to use standard study and research materials prepared by first-class scholars who are endeavoring to present the original intent and meaning of the biblical text in an honest and straightforward way. See the "Recommendations" section in The Unity of the Spirit web-site to get started on this and for #2 above as well

In closing, two of my favorite articles relating to the birth of Christ from previous editions of The Unity of the Spirit

are the following:

[The Birth of the Messiah](#)

[The Hopes and Fears of All the Years](#)

May God be with you all as we continue to do our best to live for our God in the light of all that he has done, and will do, for us in and through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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**November 24, 2016**

Thanksgiving Day

Dear Fellow Believers,

Not too long ago our Wednesday night Bible fellowship finished up a study on Colossians. Though this is one of the shorter letters of Paul, it is full of great passages that highlight the thankfulness that should characterize believers' lives. I share these verses with you on this Thanksgiving morning so that you can be reminded of WHY and TO WHOM we, as believers in Christ, give thanks.

*"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints - the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth... For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopping praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." 1:3-14*

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." 2:6-7*

*"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. **And be thankful people.** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." 3:12-17*

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your*

*conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."*

Clearly, giving thanks to God for all he has done through Christ is a hallmark of life lived in Christ!

If you would like to listen to the teachings associated with these passages, they are posted on our website [here](#). I would also like to point out a teaching from a few years ago called "Thanksgiving Is Thanks-living" by David Hahn ([link](#)).

You can find teachings from our recent Sunday morning fellowships [here](#), including last month's teaching by Richie on "Living for God for a Lifetime".

I am thankful to God for all of you and for the life we share in Christ.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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## October 30, 2016

Reformation Sunday

"The Righteousness of (our loving and faithful) God"

Today is Reformation Sunday, the Sunday set aside in the Protestant church to recognize the vital achievements of the Reformation of the 16th century. Though we today live mostly in free societies and in ecumenical times – indeed, I myself have close Christian friends from Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and various Protestant traditions - I am always happy when Reformation Sunday comes around because it is a time of the year to stop and specifically be thankful for the central truths of the new covenant gospel message that were re-established at the time of the Reformation in the 16th century by many courageous men and women including, in particular, Martin Luther, John Calvin and others. Though these men and their followers were far from perfect, they risked their lives to re-establish the central truths of the new covenant gospel message as set forth in the New Testament. First among these truths are those set out in the theme verses of Paul's Letter to the Romans:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God – unleashed – for the salvation of everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The one who is righteous by faith shall live.'" (Rom. 1:16-17).

To see how Martin Luther's own life was changed by his new understanding of Romans 1:16-17 let us quote his own famous words:

"I had greatly longed to understand Paul's letter to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the righteousness of God", because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and acts righteously in punishing the unrighteous ... Night and day I pondered until .... I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before "the righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven."

Luther was exactly right in his understanding of the key term "the righteousness of God" and it led to a change of

his own life and to the liberating message of the gospel that sparked and nourished the Reformation. Though the recent theological movement of the so-called “New Perspective on Paul” has brought this phrase “the righteousness of God” to the forefront again – and with a thorough and fresh re-examination of it – its results have reconfirmed Luther’s understanding, if not all of his understanding of the first century setting of Paul’s words. Fortunately, Paul’s own exposition of the phrase “the righteousness of God” which he sets forth in Romans 3:21-26 removes most all doubt as to what the phrase meant to him:

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation [sacrifice of atonement] by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:21-26 ESV).

These verses expound the “the righteousness of God” in God’s sending his Son, Jesus Christ, for the salvation of mankind. They explain how a righteous God righteously acquits and vindicates his people through the atoning sacrifice of his Son – an atonement then freely received on the basis of faith. This, of course, is the heart of the new covenant “gospel” message as Rom. 1:16-17 had earlier stated.

In fact, this is the culmination of the biblical idea of “the righteousness of God” that had begun in the Old Testament itself with concept of a righteous God who righteously judges his people and continues through the NT, adding important nuances along the way, as the renowned Roman Catholic scholar Joseph A. Fitzmyer explains:

“In the OT God is, of course, often called ... “upright, righteous”. In the early books of the OT [the Hebrew] *sedeq* or *sedaqah* [righteousness] expresses the quality whereby Yahweh, involved in a lawsuit with rebellious Israel, judges it and displays his “uprightness” [righteousness] in doing so (Isa. 3:12; Jer. 12:1; Hos. 4:1-2; 12:3; Mic. 6:20). It is a quality of God manifested in judicial activity; God “judges” with “uprightness” [righteousness] (Psalm 9:9; 96:13; 98:2 ‘Yahweh has made known his salvation; in the sight of the nations he has revealed his uprightness [righteousness],’ from which Paul has probably derived three of the important ideas of Rom. 1:16-17).”

Fitzmyer continues, “In the postexilic period, *sedeq* as a divine attribute acquired an added nuance: the quality whereby God acquits people, manifesting toward them a gracious, salvific power in a just judgment. In Isa. 46:13, “my uprightness” and “my salvation” stand in parallelism; cf. 51:5, 6, 8; 56:1; 61:10; Ps. 40:9-10. In this sense Yahweh is acknowledged to be “upright” (Ezra 9:15; Neh. 9:8) and “righteous” in all that he has done (Dan. 9:14), namely, in all the ways he has treated rebellious Israel.”

“Paul adopts this postexilic understanding of “God’s uprightness” [righteousness] in Romans ... God manifests it toward humanity when through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ he brings about the vindication and acquittal of sinful human beings. It is a manifestation of God’s saving and acquitting power...” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible, Romans*, pp. 106 – 107].

It is this judicial or forensic sense that is paramount in the term “the righteousness of God” which Paul used in Romans and which Luther contemplated. However, it is the judicial or forensic sense coupled with the love, grace and mercy of God on behalf of his people in God acquitting and vindicating his people through the sacrificial death and resurrection of his Son – an acquittal and vindication freely received by humanity on the basis of faith in Christ. It was when Luther finally understood “the righteousness of God” in this way that his heart was set-free and he found himself overwhelmed by the sweetness of God’s “inexpressibly greater love.” On this truth the Protestant reformation was launched and its liberating effects continue to this day.

In sum, Martin Luther through his own study of the Psalms and Paul’s Letter to the Romans “rediscovered” what

Paul and the other apostles of Christ knew and expounded to their first century hearers summarized in the phrase “the righteousness of God”. These truths were not “new”; instead, they had a deep OT background, were preached by the apostles of Christ, and then were preserved in the pages of the New Testament. By the time of Luther; however, many of these truths, however, had been submerged for centuries under the hierarchy and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. Because of this they were barely understood by the average churchgoer during the Middle Ages. Since all of Western Europe was part of the Roman Catholic Christendom during the Middle Ages it was difficult for even faithful believers to see and understand clearly the light of the new covenant gospel message in all of its fullness. As such, it was the goal of the Reformation to reform the Roman Catholic Church of that time and to restore it to its proper faithfulness to its NT roots. Ultimately, the reformers and their followers were only partially successful in doing this. The result, instead, was a major split in the Christendom of that time between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches that has continued ever since. Nevertheless, the Reformation opened up the possibilities for continued renewal of the Christian church generation after generation – according to NT principles – and this has continued through the centuries to this day. In fact, both the historical and personal effects of this movement for millions and millions of people can hardly be over emphasized. The spiritual, religious, political, economic and social repercussions of Luther’s insights and the Reformation that followed began immediately with Luther and have continued ever since. As I often tell my European history students Luther is, very simply, the man who changed the world and that change has, fortunately, been overwhelmingly good.

As I write this, the United State and other parts of the world are immersed in the events surrounding upcoming elections and momentous political events. No doubt, these events are indeed important and I myself teach about such them in my own history classes. However, those who win such elections pale in significance to the liberating impact of those who led the Reformation – not by the ballot box in a populist democratic election but, instead, by putting their lives on the line for the truth of the gospel in the face of the greatest political power of their day that was aligned against them. Let us pause in these days surrounding Reformation Sunday to remember the far greater stakes of those times and to be thankful for all that we are now the heirs of as a result of their dedication and commitment. Today there is far more knowledge and understanding of the Bible available to the world than ever before in the history of the world since the 1st century itself. This is a result of the gradual progress in biblical studies sparked by the Reformation four centuries ago led by Luther and others. Today the results of this manifest themselves in the many excellent Bible translations, research books, and study Bibles that are thus available to the general public. But not only; even the freedom to worship and to study the Bible both personally and with likeminded Christians in various churches and groups throughout the world is a result of the process begun by the Protestant Reformation four centuries ago. Let us never forget the debt that we owe to these courageous men and women of the Reformation and let us continue the Christian renewal begun at that time in rediscovering and living in the light of a proper biblical understanding of “the righteousness of (our loving and faithful) God.”

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**June 15, 2016**

Fellowship with God our Father

Summer vacation begins today for both Dorota and I and we send our best wishes for a wonderful summer for all of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who may be reading this message. Throughout much of my own life summer has been a time to not only find rest and relaxation, but also to deepen my relationship with God and his family. Of course, for all of us the foundation for this at any time of the year is our own personal Bible study and prayer life. Nothing can replace that; however, we all greatly benefit from the help of each other in the various

churches and Christian fellowships we are a part of as well. When I was very young this included various kinds of participation in church affiliated summer camps and activities. In high school one highlight was a week-long Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp in the mountains of North Carolina which included some of the top high school athletes and former Christian sports stars from around the south-east USA. In my late teens and early 20s I was involved in various Christian outreach programs including in Roanoke Rapids, NC and the culmination of a year-long program in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. These last two in particular were times of great learning for me and helped me to grow both as an individual Christian believer and fellow-member of the body of Christ. Many of my own current or former high school students are/have been involved in such programs all over the world this year and in years past. May God bless them in all of their endeavors and may their relationships with God be strengthened.

Most recently, Dorota and I have been very involved in what has become an annual Polish Bible Conference which we helped to start in the summer of 1994 together with our dear Polish brothers and sisters in Christ who have an ongoing Bible fellowship in Krakow, Poland. I suppose one of us has personally been able to attend about two thirds of them over the last twenty-two years, though not recently due primarily to health and other situations. Even though we will not be able to attend this year again, we do look forward to having a joyful fellowship with them a couple of weeks ahead of time in Krakow when we visit Poland for a short visit in late June. My thanks go out to all of these faithful Polish believers who are a part of this fellowship in Krakow and who have continued to provide the leadership (service) in making each summer conference such a joy, blessing and success for all who attend. In addition, thanks so much to all of the other faithful believers from the US and other countries who have participated at times and, thus, helped to build up the worldwide body of Christ in years past as well. This year the conference will take place from July 13 – 17. For those interested in knowing more, you can find much more information including pictures of past conferences on my Facebook page, or better yet, on Irena Razny's Facebook page. May our prayers be with them for another conference in which lives can be blessed and relationships with God and his people be strengthened.

In this light, I think that summers are a great time for all of us to seek to deepen our relationship first and foremost with God and also with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Of course, it is almost axiomatic that to deepen one's relationship to God automatically means a strengthening of the body of Christ as a whole. But, as with the priority of the first and greatest commandment of loving God first – and only then, the second great commandment of loving one's neighbor as oneself, so it must be with focus of our every day Christian walks. Everything in our lives is built on our relationship with God as our Father. The stronger that relationship is the better we will be able to carry out all of the other responsibilities we have in life including loving our neighbor as ourselves. Of course, this to a great degree highlights two of the main reasons why God sent his Son: (1) to make known God as our Father in way that was much fuller than ever before; and, (2) to bring us into personal access and fellowship with God as our Father through Christ's sacrificial death, then resurrection, and, finally, through the giving us of the gift of God's own Spirit so that as our Father he could dwell in us, as his people, through that Spirit. This of course – together with the first of making known God fully - is one of the main themes of the New Testament itself and is the culmination of the entire biblical story. Here are a few scriptural sections that highlight both of these themes:

#### 1. The Gospel of John

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, the light was the light of men ... He came to his own and his own did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of man, but of God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. .... No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (John 1:1-18; cf. John 3:1-21; 14:1-31; 17:1-26; 20:30-31)

#### 2. Paul's Letter to the Romans:

“Therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. .... For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ... But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more will we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Romans 5:1-11)

### 3. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians:

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been made near through the blood of Christ ... For through Christ we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:11-22)

These are surely some of the most beautiful verses of the entire New Testament. Let us focus on the truths that they set forth and build upon them in our lives. And, most importantly, let us as the reconciled people of God who now have access to God as our Father and, indeed, are the temple of the living God who now lives in us via his Spirit, deepen and strengthen our intimate relationship and fellowship with God our Father in this summer ahead – to our own benefit, and, to God's everlasting glory.

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## March 21, 2016

*“Now, but Not Yet”*

Greetings to all of our fellow Christian brothers and sisters who may be reading this message wherever you may be in the world. This is the week that the Christian church celebrates in many ways the defining events of the Christian faith: the sacrificial death and then resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Though Christians should celebrate these events by Christ-like living each and every day, it is certainly welcome to have a time for their special remembrance. That is especially so during this particular year when the temperature of world events seems to be rising faster than usual. Over the last several months all of us – whether in the United States, Europe, or other parts of the world – have been witness to a great increase in the intensity of political problems and rhetoric, the death and destruction brought about by ravaging wars, and the desperate yearnings and attempts of millions of people to find a place where they can live their lives in relative peace. From a political and practical perspective none of these problems have easy solutions and there is a good chance that they will mostly increase in their intensity rather than decrease in the months and, perhaps, years to come before even partial and temporary solutions are found. Let us hope, pray and – to the degree that we can – work towards finding such solutions for the benefit of those involved. However, as Christians we should never think that there are truly permanent worldly solutions to the real and ever present problems of this present evil age in which we live. As we all know, our bodies are mortal, our understanding is limited and fallible, and evil is prevalent in the world. In fact, despite what some Christians seem to think, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, nowhere promises a time of “peace on earth, goodwill towards men” short of the time of God's dramatic intervention in the affairs of the world by way of the glorious second coming of Christ. It is that second

coming, or return, of Christ that the entire New Testament points to as being *the moment* when God's people will finally be saved and vindicated, when evil will finally be vanquished and destroyed, and when God's righteous and loving kingdom will finally reign forever - "on earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10).

Thankfully, however, because of the saving events which we celebrate at this time of year - the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - and then the giving of God's gift of holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost the new covenant era of salvation has *already* begun - even in the midst of this present evil age. Thus, we have already entered into the NOW of the new covenant era of salvation. This is a subject that our adult Bible study fellowship has focused on as we have studied Paul's Letter to the Romans over the last couple of years. I highly recommend the following verses, among others: Romans 3:21ff, 5:1-11, 7:6, 8:1ff, 12:1-2, etc. In new covenant thinking NOW - that is, in the new covenant era of salvation - whenever a person believes in Christ that person is born of God's Spirit and becomes a child forever in God's family. All that God has accomplished through Christ - redemption, salvation, justification, etc. - becomes part of the new inheritance of the new Christian believer as a child in God's family. The Spirit itself - which the new Christian believer receives - is both a witness to these truths and also the first-fruits, or down-payment, of the life of the age to come in God's future kingdom. Thus, even though the Christian believer lives now amidst the various sufferings of this present evil age, the Christian believer is also - even now! - a child in God's family with the sure and certain hope of a glorious future life in the coming age of God's kingdom after the return of Christ. This way of thinking is alluded to by Christ himself in the NT Gospel records - before his sacrificial death and resurrection - and is everywhere present, or else assumed, in the pages of the rest of the New Testament from the Book of Acts through the New Testament Letters. It is this perspective: that is, this way of thinking and living that should always be the focus of our study, thinking and living as Christian believers. Whatever the situations of the world - even when they are dire and may require practical accommodations - the central goals, focus, and activities of Christian believers should never change. What was true for the original NT Christian church after the Day of Pentecost is still true for us today. We all live in the "now" of the new covenant era of salvation. Therefore, no matter how much the world we live in modernizes, industrializes, or changes - for better or worse - through the centuries the same Christian truth embodied in the Christian gospel message is true for all Christian generations and should always be the focus of all Christian lives. In short, it is the liberating message of the Christian faith that was "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3) and remains the same today.

There are many ways to summarize this "now, but, not yet" Christian way of thinking and living. But the New Testament itself does the best job of it so I'll simply let it speak for itself in a couple of the great sections of the entire Bible:

First, the apostle John:

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, NOW we are children of God, and what we will be has NOT YET been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure." (1 John 3:1-3 NIV).

Now, the apostle Paul:

"The Spirit itself testifies with our spirit that we ARE God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in/to us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope



that the creation itself WILL BE liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who HAVE the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we WERE SAVED. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they ALREADY HAVE? But if we hope for what we do NOT YET HAVE, we wait for it patiently.” (Romans 8:16-25 My translation adapted from NIV, etc.).

These two sections of NT scripture describe what is the new covenant perspective throughout the New Testament from the Day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts chapter 2 and onwards. It was the all-encompassing perspective of the original first century NT church. As Christian believers today, it should be our all-encompassing new covenant perspective as well.

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