

SCRIPTURAL TERMS DEFINED
Concerning The Two Natures
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"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" - II Cor. 5:17. There are several terms in Scripture language that are sometimes confusing. Some of these words which we are concerned with are: the old creation and the new creation; the old man and the new man; the body of sin and the members of righteousness; the flesh and the Spirit; the natural man and the spiritual man; the natural body and spiritual body. In order to properly understand these terms, we have grouped them in direct contrast.

First, let us consider the new creation as opposed to the old creation. It is evident that to become a new creation one must be born again. When this takes place, the believer becomes separated by birth from the "old things," and experiences the blessings of the new creation life. What makes the old creation old, and new creation new? Each creation has a head or leader. The first man Adam became the head of the first creation which was earthy. He dishonored the place that God gave him, by disobeying God's commandment; and, consequently, he and Eve fell from the lofty place of dominion. They also fell from righteousness to unrighteousness. Sin entered through their disobedience and was passed on to their progeny, as was seen shortly after in the life and act of their son Cain. Thus, the first creation became a fallen creation. God's creatures needed redemption, which He has graciously provided through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The first creation - fallen from God's favor and fellowship - became the old creation when a different creation superseded it. Christ, in performing His Father's will to perfection, brought in a different creation. God raised His Son from the grave and "gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" - Eph. 1:22, 23. In this, Christ became the Head of a new creation, as contrasted with the fallen creation. The two creations are diametrically opposed to each other. The old creation was born through disobedience and transgression; the new creation was born through obedience and righteousness. As far as God's will is concerned, the moment a person is obedient to the call of salvation he is born again (John 3) and becomes a new creation; also, he is immediately separated from the old creation. This separation was made by the Cross of Jesus Christ - Colossians 2:10-12.

However, there remains the work of an actual experience of the separation in a believer's life. He has within himself two natures: the one alive unto God; the other cut off with Christ and, therefore, dead. We are taught in Romans six that - "He that is dead (or, having been crucified with Christ) is freed from sin." We are also admonished to believe that fact and - "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" - Romans 6:7, 11. In verse thirteen, we are told to also yield ourselves "unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." This is a matter of faith taking hold of God's Word and making it a reality. The distinguishing mark of the old creation is that it is dead to God; the sign of the new creation is that it is alive unto God and to His will.

When this truth is grasped with the heart, there is immediately a conflict within the believer. As we have before stated, the two creations are opposed to each other; and, when two opposites clash, there are reverberations felt. Such was the expression of the Apostle Paul, as stated in Romans seven. He sums it up by saying, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man (the new creation life): but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind ..." - Romans 7:21-23. Each creation is battling to gain the supremacy over the other. Our members are the battleground for this warfare. We either yield ourselves to the new creation life and live unto righteousness, or we yield to the old creation desires and fail to live righteously in this life.

The two creations are expressed in other ways. In Ephesians 4:17-5:20 and in Colossians 3:5-17, we read of the old man and the new man. Thus, the creations are identified in their heads. Adam is the head of the old creation; Christ is the Head of the new creation. We say then as Paul, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation THE OLD MAN, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ... And that ye put on THE NEW MAN, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" - Ephesians 4:22-24. In Colossians we read, "Lie not one to another, seeing

that ye have put off THE OLD MAN with his deeds; and have put on THE NEW MAN, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" - Col. 3:9, 10. You will notice, as you read all the verses connected with these which we have quoted, that the character of the two men or the two creations is as absolutely different as night is from day.

These two creations, or the two natures as they are sometimes referred to, are positively separated from each other. The one is corrupt, the other is righteous. The one is death, the other is life. The one is controlled by Satan, the other by God. Also, remember that the old creation will never become the new creation; nor will the new creation become the old creation. They are in no way identified with each other. The old creation was put to death once for all in the death of Jesus Christ. The old creation was not raised from the grave, but remains there corrupted. The new creation was not brought forth until Jesus Christ was raised from the grave. The new creation was provisionally raised from the death in its Head, who lives forevermore. The new creation possesses eternal life, or the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot mix the two natures in any way. You cannot take the traits of the new creation and put them in the old creation - it is impossible and unthinkable!

Who does the Scripture mean, when we read that we are to "put off the old man" and "put on the new man"? We have the power within ourselves to choose between the two creations. We were born into the first family, but we do not need to remain there. Because of redemption we may, by accepting the offer of salvation, become a new creation or born anew. That is when we are actually severed from the old. Having changed our identity and our home, it would be unreasonable to expect us to desire the things of the old life any more. Until one actually understands the two natures, he can neither appropriate the new creation life for his practical use, nor can he disclaim the old life and reckon as God does that it is dead. Until that time, we will surely become confused, trying to put the new man's clothes on the old man; that is, trying to dress up the old nature with holy garments. As Jesus illustrated, new wine cannot be put into old bottles. This brings us to the difference between the NATURAL man, the OLD man, and the SPIRITUAL man. We must never confuse the natural or mortal man, with the old man. We are natural, because we are human beings born of earthly parents. But we do not cease to be human beings when we are born again. We will always be identified with the first Adam, as to creation; but we lose our identity with the fallen or old creation when we are saved. As natural beings we possess spirit, soul, and body, and look upon everything from a natural stand- point. Our whole nature needs to be transformed into the spiritual realm. We read in I Cor. 2:14 - "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The natural mind is limited in its comprehension of spiritual truths. It can only understand natural things - any other truth is foreign and unreasonable. When we try to understand God's Word with the natural mind, we become confused and unbelieving. The next step is that we try to reason out the apparent discrepancies in our findings, and we become more confused and discouraged. Paul teaches further in the same chapter, that the natural man can only understand natural things with his natural mind. That means, of course, that something else is needed in order to understand spiritual truths. We have the secret in the words, "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but (or, except through) the Spirit of God" - I Cor. 2:11. The Apostle quotes from Isaiah when he writes, "Eye (natural) hath not seen, nor ear (natural) heard, neither have entered into the heart (natural or human) of man, the things which God hath prepared for them (the new creation) that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" - I Cor. 2:9, 10. The work of the Holy Spirit is now seen as revealing spiritual truths to natural minds.

We do not become spiritual, until we are absolutely controlled by the Holy Spirit. He is God's Agent to execute His will in the lives of the new creation. The Holy Spirit has the power to quicken God's Word to us, and make us to understand even the deep and hidden mysteries of God. As we lay hold of the divine enabling of the Holy Spirit, we are changed from the natural realm into the spiritual. We begin to see and understand, not from an earthly viewpoint, but from the heavenly realm. Thus, the distinction between the natural and the spiritual realms emerges more clearly than ever. This does not mean that we cease to be human and become, instead, a spiritual whiff of wind. It means our humanity is covered over with divinity. As yet, we look like other humans; but in reality our thoughts, desires, and actions are controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Our natural minds (spirits) are joined with Christ's mind; our desires (souls) are linked with God's desires; and our actions (bodies) are controlled by the will of God.

We still eat food, sleep, rest when tired, laugh when happy, cry when sad, love, hate, like, dislike, work, and live in the world; but all our actions are motivated by the change wrought within. We not only have the new creation life in these earthen vessels; but, when the Holy Spirit moves into our earthly temples, He will take control of us - spirit, soul, and body - as we yield to Him. This brings us to an important phase of this truth. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth (warreth) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" - Galatians 5:16, 17. We come back to the truth concerning the conflict between the two natures, with this exception. The conflict of Romans seven is a hopeless warfare, until the way of victory is known. When the Holy Spirit comes into our temple, we have the power to overcome. What is the flesh then, but the old nature inherited by our first birth? Paul put "sin in the flesh" where it belongs. Sin is never found in the new creation life. The flesh, as spoken of in the above Scriptures and in Romans eight, does not refer to the natural body. Listen to Paul's words, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die (a physical death); but if ye through the Spirit do mortify (reckon dead) the deeds of the body, ye shall live" - Romans 8:12, 13.

As we have said before, the body is the battleground of the Spirit and the flesh. The members of our bodies can be used and controlled by either the Holy Spirit or the flesh. The desires of the flesh are hidden in us, until they try to exhibit themselves. Then we either yield to them or else, by the power of the Spirit, we judge these inclinations as dead and actually silence their workings in our members. The work of the Spirit continues until we are perfected in this respect. The flesh has many guises, both good and bad; but the Spirit is always on the alert and warns us. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" - Romans 8:14.

This leads us to the terms, CARNAL and SPIRITUAL. The word "carnal" means "of the flesh, or fleshly." Thus, to be carnal is to mind the things of the flesh. No one who is carnal is spiritual. There are several characteristics of the carnal saints, shown in I Corinthians three: They are "babes in Christ" (verse 1). They drink only the "milk" of the Word (verse 2). There are "envying, and strife, and divisions" among them (verse 3). The carnal "walk as men" - natural or worldly men (verse 3). The carnal take heads other than Christ (verses 4-6).

The spiritual saints are the ones who are described in I Corinthians two as having the things of God revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. They are also in direct contrast to the carnal saints: They "grow up into Him in all things" - Ephesians 4:14, 15. They are able to digest the "meat" of the Word - Hebrews 5:14. The spiritual endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" - Ephesians 4:3, 4. The spiritual "walk in newness of life" - Romans 6:4, 5. The spiritual hold Christ as their only Head and Lord - Colossians 2:19.

Everyone who is first born into the family of God is a babe; and, as a baby, he has yet to learn to walk. Even though we might have a wonderful experience of salvation, that does not make us spiritual immediately. Spirituality grows as we grow. The full-grown man in Christ is also a spiritual man. A carnal saint is a babe still, and has not grown out of childhood. A babe in Christ is carnal, because he has not learned the way of victory over the flesh. A baby must be fed and cared for from birth; but, as he grows, he learns to crawl and then to walk - after many a stumble and fall. He learns to feed himself. He grows in wisdom as he grows in stature. A full-grown adult is not only able to take care of himself, but is able to take care of others. The spiritual growth follows the same pattern, except that the latter is spiritual while the former is natural. These two terms are applied to our state. As our state is changeable, so is our progress from carnality to spirituality. These two characteristics stem from their main sources - the flesh and the Spirit, we become spiritual. The sinner cannot be said to be carnal, according to the Scriptural usage of the word. It is applied to "babes in Christ."

The next expressions have been explained, but under different titles. These are, "the body of sin" and your members as instruments of righteousness or unrighteousness. "The body of sin" is another expression for the flesh, but seen as a whole. We read that sin is in the flesh, meaning that unrighteousness is found in the flesh and not in the spirit. "The body of sin" would, therefore, speak of sin incorporated in a body; even as righteousness is bound up in the mystical Body of Christ. Romans 6:6 reads, "Knowing this, that OUR OLD MAN is crucified with Him, that THE

BODY OF SIN might be destroyed." "The old man," "the old creation," and "the body of sin," are all terms expressing unrighteousness as a whole. The new creation body is made up of members of righteousness, whose Head is Christ.

Another Scripture which sheds light on this subject is Colossians 2:11 - "In whom (Christ) also ye are circumcised with the circumcision (putting off) made without hands, in putting off THE BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH by the circumcision (cutting off) of Christ." The flesh with its deeds is expressed as an active living body. This body lived and walked and talked through the years, until the coming of Christ; who disguised Himself as this man of sin, and took the body to the Cross where it was put to death and buried in the tomb. When the body of sin was destroyed, of course, the sins or deeds of the flesh were put away too.

The positive result of this crucifixion is that, now that the body of sin is destroyed, we are freed from sin and have become servants of righteousness. We are members of the new creation Body - Christ's Body. We can illustrate this truth by yielding the members of our natural body as instruments of righteousness. But, "the body of sin" is not an individual physical body of flesh and bones, any more than "the Body of Christ" is one Body of flesh and bones. "We are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones" - His mystical Body of which He is the Head - Eph. 5:30. In speaking of bodies, we come to the last couplet - natural body and spiritual body. The natural man is an inhabitant of the natural body. The natural body is what we see with our natural eyes. This body has flesh, bones, and blood. The natural life of the natural body is in the blood. This body is also mortal; that is, it is subject to weakness, limitations, sickness, and death. It may also have great strength. The body has to be fed, cleansed, clothed, and satisfied, because of its necessities. The body can either be a vessel to dishonor or it can glorify God, while it is alive. The natural body is never called "the flesh" in the Scriptures, except as identified with the body as flesh and bones.

In I Corinthians 15:42-54, we have the two bodies contrasted. We are born into this world with a natural body. Our physical body is the last part of us that becomes spiritual. Until we are glorified, we must dwell in bodies that are subject to natural developments. The body becomes old; the organs of the body wear out. However, the Holy Spirit keeps the natural body going, as long as God sees fit. The power of God oftentimes overrules the workings of natural life, and propels the natural body by spiritual power. The natural body will die, as the plants of the field. The natural body "is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" - I Cor. 15:42-44. The natural body is given to us at birth. Our spiritual body comes with the glorification of these bodies, either by resurrection from the grave or by translation. The natural is first; afterward, that which is spiritual takes its place.

What is a spiritual body? It is a glorified body. What is a glorified body like? We have that answered by Jesus' own experience, in John twenty. After Jesus' body was raised from the grave along with many others who had been sleeping (Matthew 27:52, 53), He appeared to the saints for forty days. The evening of His resurrection, He entered the place where the disciples were, even though the doors were shut. We thus learn that His body was no longer subject to material things. He spoke to them in the same voice He had before He died. Only unbelief kept them from recognizing Him. He had the same hands and feet that were nailed to the Cross. Thomas was invited to feel the wounds in His hands and side.

We have further light, by reading Luke twenty-four. Jesus appeared to them, and they were frightened because they thought He was a spirit. Jesus answered, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not FLESH AND BONES, as ye see Me have." To further convince them of the surety of His resurrection He asked, "Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them" - Luke 24:39-43. Thus, we see by these Scriptures, that the spiritual or glorified body is like that natural body in its inherent characteristics; but the great difference is that the natural life is poured out and replaced by spiritual life. That makes that body spiritual. "Mortality" is "swallowed up of life." The natural elements have no affect on the spiritual body. It does not need food; but can digest it. The spiritual body is not regimented by the natural any more in any way. All natural relations will be changed to spiritual relationships. We will certainly know each other, but our relationship with others will be spiritual. Whereas now we are bound by

family ties, then our ties will be the new creation. The glorified body will know no barriers. There will neither be male nor female, bond nor free, white nor black; but a new creation, new entirely - spirit, soul, and body!

The last and important natural force which will be overcome is the law of gravity. When our bodies are changed from natural to spiritual, we will be loosed forever from the force which holds us to this earth. We will soar away to heights unknown - unhampered, unencumbered, with no weights to hold us down. Our spirits and souls are soaring away now; but, we must wait until this natural body is glorified, before we will actually be in the Presence of our Lord whom we long to see face to face.