



# NEW TESTAMENT SALVATION

WEEK 1  
03.05.17

## FOCUS VERSE

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### **II Corinthians 5:17**

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

## LESSON TEXT

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### **Psalm 40:1-4**

1 I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

### **II Corinthians 5:17-21**

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

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.



## FOCUS THOUGHT

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Jesus came with the purpose of seeking and saving lost humanity.



# CULTURE CONNECTION

## A Brand New Heart!

In his article “Scott Hetsko talks about his new heart,” Brian Sharp conversed with a Rochester, New York, area meteorologist about his experience of receiving a heart transplant ([www.democratandchronicle.com](http://www.democratandchronicle.com), September 28, 2015, accessed November 9, 2015). Hetsko spoke of his critical health battle in which he desperately needed a transplant. He spoke with gratitude of the noticeable difference he detected in his new heartbeat.

Sharp writes, “The prognosis for heart transplant recipients is good. . . . the survival rate . . . in the United States is 88 percent after one year, 75 percent after five years.”

The advancement of medical technology over the past half century has been amazing,

especially in the area of performing organ transplants, but God has been successfully conducting heart transplants for hundreds of years! Through His Old Testament prophets, God promised the people of Israel a day when He would “take away the stony heart out of your flesh,” and He would give them “an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

From the time of the birth of His church on the Day of Pentecost, God has been giving new hearts to those who will receive His Holy Spirit. Further, the survival rate is 100 percent for those who embrace and desire the change and who continue following God’s spiritual regimen.

### OUTLINE

#### I. A NEW HEART

- A. New Spirit
- B. New Desire
- C. New Song

#### II. A NEW FREEDOM

- A. Freedom from the Past
- B. Freedom to Become Children of God

#### III. A NEW HOPE

- A. New Hope
- B. Hope for Today
- C. Hope for Tomorrow

### CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

From the beginning, God created human beings with an inborn longing for relationship with Him. Often individuals have felt something was lacking in their lives, but they could not understand what it was. They only knew they longed for something or someone that reached beyond this mundane plane of mere existence. In whatever terms they could comprehend, they began to seek to fulfill the spiritual aspect of their nature, looking for the Creator, the sovereign giver of life—God, the Almighty. Simply stated, they were trying to fill

the void in their lives that can be filled and satisfied only by the Almighty.

Not far into history, the serpent deceived Eve into partaking of the forbidden fruit; she then offered the fruit to her husband, Adam, who also succumbed to temptation. (See Genesis 3.) They fell off the precipice of innocence into a lifelong spiral toward death and judgment, forever changing the face of the human experience on earth.

From their first taste of guilt and condemnation and their meager efforts to cover their nakedness with fig leaves, Adam and Eve and every descendant thereafter have unsuccessfully grappled with sin and lost. Consequently, all individuals have sought relief from condemnation. All have sought for ways to escape the pangs of guilt and torment caused by their sinful nature and lifestyles. All have longed, hoped, and looked for a better day—a day of redemption and salvation from sin.

Throughout the Old Testament and God’s progressive dealings with His creation, He has given glimpses of hope—indications of a better day to come and hope of release from the bondage of sin. His first promise of a better future came immediately following mankind’s plunge into sinful disobedience. God judged

the serpent and promised ultimately to crush his head.

*“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).*

Adam and Eve could not have begun to comprehend the prophetic nuances of God’s words to the serpent, but God had already begun to lay out a pathway to lead human beings out of sin and into a vibrant and living relationship with Him. That long-term plan involved the Incarnation, which would lead to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God “slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). With His ultimate plan in view, God gradually revealed and fulfilled His plan. Over the course of hundreds of years, God spoke to His people through the prophets and periodically gave them prophetic glimpses of and hope for a Messiah—hope for future redemption.

*“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you” (1 Peter 1:10).*

The salvation experience we enjoy today has been a progressive work over many centuries as God laid its framework over time. Finally, when the time was right, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4–5). Further, the redemptive work God performs in the lives of believers today is a progressive work. It begins with an initial redemptive experience, which we call conversion or the new birth. People repent of their sins and turn toward God for deliverance, they are baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they receive the Holy Ghost and speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance. As wonderful an experience as this initial encounter with God may be, it is only the beginning, not the capstone, of redemption.

Believers advance in their relationships with God by progressively growing and maturing

spiritually. God is working in believers’ lives to sanctify and disciple them and bring them to a full state of maturity in Christ Jesus. Ultimately, believers experience complete redemption, or salvation, when they victoriously enter an eternal state at the end of life on earth. (See Matthew 10:22.)

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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### I. A NEW HEART

Throughout Israel’s interactions with God over the centuries, the people struggled to do right. Despite the nation’s relationship with God, the people often wandered from the righteous precepts God had given them and ventured into sin and idolatry. After a season of rebellious departure and national losses and setbacks, a prophet would arise and preach fervently to the people, prompting national revival and a restoration to righteousness. Sadly, their restoration never seemed to last for long before they wandered again from God’s will and purpose for them as a people. Thus was the story time and again.

If ever there was to be a fundamental change within the people of God, there would have to be a genuine change of spiritual heart and soul. Such was the promise God gave to the people through His prophets as they predicted the future days of a new thing (Isaiah 43:18–19)—a new work—that would involve a new-birth experience. God promised to give them a new heart and a new spirit.

*“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26–27).*

### A. New Spirit

How would God spiritually transplant within His people new hearts, removing their “stony” hearts that were hardened and desensitized by sin? Would it really be possible for such a change of heart within unregenerate individuals?

Not only was it possible for humans to experience a complete change of heart spiritually, but also it would involve regeneration. God had a plan that would bring new life and new hearts to those to whom He would bring redemption and salvation from sin. It would begin with their repentance, water baptism, and reception of the Holy Spirit, regenerating them and empowering them with new life! The Spirit would lead and guide believers into all truth and empower them to turn from their sinful pasts toward a transformed life of spiritual joy and victory through Christ.

## B. New Desire

Because of sin, humanity had a heart problem, for their evil hearts sought after that which was contrary to the nature of God. The primary thing that moved God to judge the earth through a great flood was the condition of human hearts, which caused the desires of individuals to be “evil continually.”

*“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5).*

Consequently, individuals need a complete change of heart in order to effect positive change in their basic desires. While a good heart produces goodness, an evil heart produces wickedness. Jesus said, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

*“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:18).*

God had a plan to change the hearts of individuals, thereby causing them to have new, wholesome, and godly desires instead of their formerly corrupt and ungodly passions.

## C. New Song

God would do more than change the heart and desire of an individual; He would give that person a new song.

*“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:3).*

A person’s heart affects whether he speaks evil or good (Matthew 12:34), but it also affects his worship. A person with a new, regenerated heart has a new, rejuvenated desire to worship God from the heart. Receiving the Holy Ghost works an amazing spiritual regeneration within an individual.

By the Holy Spirit, God gives us an awesome new life in Christ Jesus, which fills our lives with joy and produces a new song within our hearts. An overflowing heart of joy loves to express that joy by singing songs of worship to the Lord.

*“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). (See also Colossians 3:16.)*

## II. A NEW FREEDOM



**“A criminal record can create difficult downstream consequences. . . . For example, employers and landlords commonly ask job applicants and apartment seekers whether they have ever been convicted of . . . a criminal offense. . . . The good news is that, in some cases, you may be able to get an arrest or conviction expunged from your record. . . . Expungement refers to the process of sealing arrest and conviction records” (“Expunging or Sealing an Adult Criminal Record,” [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com), accessed November 17, 2014).**

In the US legal system, sometimes individuals can have past criminal records sealed or expunged, hiding the existence of certain former arrests or convictions. Whether or not it is a good or fair aspect of legal practices, some convicted criminals have been able to utilize this procedure. However, the best possible practice of expunging past records is available only through justification—when

God clears our record of a sinful past. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines *justification* as “the act, process, or state of being justified by God.” The same resource defines *justify* as “to prove or show to be just, right, or reasonable.” Justification is a complex theological concept, but perhaps we can understand it best by the simple idea someone once offered: “justification is ‘just as if I never sinned.’” It is as if God has expunged the record of all our sins.

## A. Freedom from the Past

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

The new life available through Jesus Christ first of all frees us from our sinful past. The old life has passed away and “all things are become new.” The first order of business for new believers is that God deals with their past sins, forgives them, and banishes all their sins; in human terms, God forgets their sins. (See Micah 7:19.)

## B. Freedom to Become Children of God

*“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:31–36).*

After freeing us from our past lives of sinful guilt and shame, God makes us His sons and daughters and frees us to inherit and enjoy the full benefits of being His children. The truth sets us free through Jesus Christ by His redemptive work in our lives.

When Jesus made this declaration to the Jews in John 8, they were puzzled; they did not consider themselves servants at all, and they did not think they needed to be freed from servitude. Jesus’ response to them is both telling and instructive for all today who desire salvation. Jesus said, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” Individuals who live in sin are living in bondage; they are servants to sin and the carnality of their sinful nature. They need freedom from sin before they can ascend to being sons or daughters of God.

Many people struggle under the bondage of sin. Perhaps spiritual servitude is stronger today than ever before with individuals struggling under the influence of habits, idolatrous behaviors, and physical addictions. The only hope for those bound by sin is to be delivered by the power of Jesus Christ. He will free individuals from sin’s servitude and make them true “sons of God.”

*“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).*

*“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. . . . Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:1–13).*

### III. A NEW HOPE

#### A. New Hope

People through the ages have recognized both the power of hope and our human need for hope in life. Hopelessness causes individuals to do things they ordinarily would not do. The absence of hope has even led some desperate souls to suicide and the throwing away of God's precious gift of life. On the other hand, hope is the fuel or energy that keeps most people moving forward through lives that often are imperfect and filled with challenging circumstances, determinedly believing life has for them better opportunities ahead.



**A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, "Eighteen to nothing—we're behind."**

**"Boy," said the spectator, "I'll bet you're discouraged."**

**"Why should I be discouraged?" replied the little boy. "We haven't even gotten up to bat yet!"**

**—Source Unknown**

Salvation through Jesus Christ brings new hope into every believer's heart. Without salvation we all were without hope, but through His redemptive work within us, He has given us great hope. We who had no hope have been given new hope through Jesus Christ.

*"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:12–13).*

The hope we have in Christ strengthens us for our present needs, and it keeps us secure in our anticipation of the future.

#### B. Hope for Today

First, Jesus Christ gives us hope for today. People who come to salvation in Christ often

bring lives that consist of broken dreams, hopes, and desires. Some of them even bring broken bodies and broken health. When they hear the life-changing message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they often are infused with new hope they have not experienced for a long time, if ever. Suddenly they have a renewed sense that life is worth living—that there is a better life above and beyond their hopeless and mundane existence.



**"There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them."**

**—Clare Boothe Luce**

In his letter to the believers in Rome, Paul wrote of the hope we receive through salvation: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13). Further, Paul's language indicated that through the power of the Spirit believers can "abound in hope"—experiencing hope in abundance!

Salvation does not inoculate believers from suffering the hurts, pains, and trials of life. Believers sometimes lose their jobs, bury their loved ones, struggle with wayward children, and suffer sickness, disease, and death. But the hope Jesus Christ gives to us through redemption bolsters our faith, comforts our hurts and disappointments, and eases our sense of suffering. Hope gives us purpose, strength, and power for our daily Christian lives.

#### C. Hope for Tomorrow

*"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19).*

Paul also observed the vital role Christian hope plays in a believer's future. He acknowledged it is possible to have hope in Christ that is anchored to and limited to only this present life, but such a measure of hope is inadequate. If our Christian hope is centered only on this life and human activities, we will be miserable. Paul was recognizing the value of a hope that is anchored in our future and eternal destiny in

## INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

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Christ. We have a future worthy of life and sacrifice—an eternity with Jesus Christ in Heaven.

There is a danger in becoming too attached to this present life. Before Christians were blessed with much in the way of material wealth and possessions, the worship songs they sang typically focused on Heaven and the glory of eternity with Christ. However, now it seems there are few songs that focus on Heaven. Is it possible to become so comfortable with life on earth that our hope is not focused on our future in Heaven?

The Lord warned about the possible effect of materialism on the people of God:

*“And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deuteronomy 6:10–12).*

Whether we as believers have much of this world’s goods or little, we can keep our hope securely anchored in our relationship with Jesus Christ. That hope can give us faith for the unseen and unknown challenges we will encounter in life, but it also can encourage us about the glorious future in eternity we are destined to enjoy with Jesus Christ in Heaven.

## REFLECTIONS

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- The sin problem demonstrates mankind’s need of a new, regenerated heart. What is God’s solution for mankind’s regeneration? Discuss.
- Discuss why it is needful for a person first to experience freedom from his or her past life of sin.
  - What is the result of an individual’s having no hope? How can one experience new and renewed hope in life?
  - Discuss the dangers of having an undue focus on materialistic concerns.
  - How can a person overcome insecurity and instead experience security and confidence in Jesus Christ?

When individuals repent of their sins, are baptized in Jesus’ name for the remission of sins, and receive the Holy Spirit, they receive a brand new life and relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a life of many new things and experiences, but most of all it is a secure life of hope and certainty as children of God.

*“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16–17).*

It is a comforting and encouraging feeling to experience absolute certainty in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Some people are insecure by nature, even with regard to their spiritual experiences. However, even insecure individuals can experience the certainty of redemption when they receive the Holy Ghost. There is something supernatural about receiving the Spirit that translates into a bold confidence about one’s salvation in Christ.

Many years ago some Christians sang a confident song about their relationship with Jesus Christ, written by Arthur L. Clanton. The chorus to the old hymn began with the words “I know I’m saved, and I’m so glad about it.” We do not have to experience uncertainty or insecurity about our salvation and new life in Christ Jesus. We can know for certain we are saved in Him, and we can have a great hope for this life and for eternity. ■