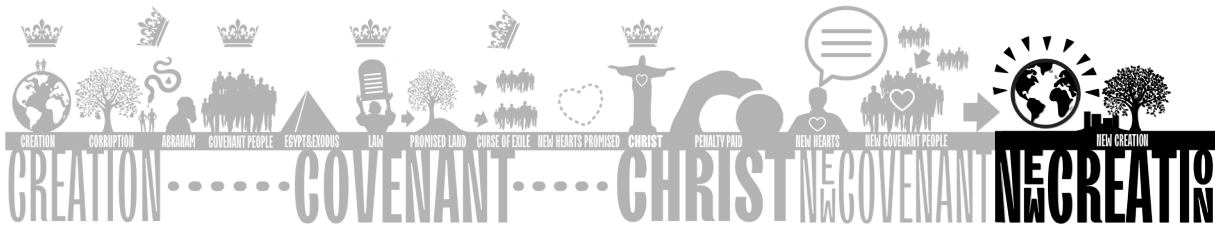
A person stands on the peak of a mountain, silhouetted against a bright, low sun. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and a thick layer of white clouds fills the valley below, creating a sea of clouds effect. The overall color palette is warm, with oranges, yellows, and soft blues.

# **EPISODE 5**

**NEW CREATION  
(COMPLETION)**





**1. Where are we up to in God's Story? Summarise what's happened over the last four weeks...**

**2. If God's intent was to turn the hearts of humanity back to him, to find ultimate and fulfilling goodness in him, how are those things still unresolved in our world today?**



As we saw over the last two weeks, Jesus provides a solution to our heart problem and ushers in a whole new way to relate to God. In the last episode we saw the Spirit at work changing hearts and allowing people to start obeying God and trusting His goodness - as was originally intended. With humanity now putting God's goodness on display by the Spirit, there's finally real hope for God's creation project with new hearts under a new covenant. But we're still not quite in the new creation..

*Read Revelation 21:1-8 & 22:1-5 in the sidebar to get a glimpse of what God intends for his world and his people.*

**3. What images are used to describe the new creation?**

**4. How does the imagery reflect the garden of Eden? What's different?**

**5. How will people enjoy the goodness of God and life in the new creation?**

Revelation gives us a sneak peek at the epic finale of God's

**REVELATION 21**

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.<sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."<sup>4</sup> 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.<sup>7</sup> Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children."<sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

**REVELATION 22**

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb<sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.<sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any

curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.<sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.<sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.<sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;<sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.<sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.<sup>11</sup> For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.<sup>12</sup> So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

...Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.<sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.<sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

story... and it's awesome! In the new creation, all sin and its effects will be removed - sadness, pain and death will be no more, and God's goodness is displayed in its fullness. But sadly that's not how we see the world today. Though Jesus is ruling as King over the whole world, we don't yet see the blessings and goodness associated with his rule in their completeness. In fact, sometimes it's hard to see any evidence of a new creation in the world at all. People are still stained by sin. There's hardship and pain. Death is unavoidable. We still feel the curses of Genesis. So where is this new creation project Jesus promised? Where's the evidence that anything's changed?

These are the same questions that Paul answers in his second letter to the church in Corinth. Though the new creation may not be that obvious, Paul says the new creation is already at work in those who follow Jesus.

*Read 2 Corinthians 4:6-18 (sidebar).*

**6. Why does Paul start by referencing the creation story from Genesis 1 (v. 6) to describe what's happening in the hearts of those who follow Jesus?**

**7. What's the treasure spoken of in verse 7?**

**8. Clay jars were the common household containers of Paul's day (think plastic take-away containers). They were used to hold almost anything and when they got chipped and broken, they were thrown away and replaced with another. What point is Paul making by describing our current bodies as 'jars of clay'?**

**9. Why is Paul so unashamed of our bodily weakness and fragility? What does it force Paul to look to instead (16b-18)?**

**10. How is that an encouragement to you in the midst of your brokenness and fragility?**

 E5V2

For our bodies are slowly but surely decaying; a one way express ticket to the grave. But it's in our weakness and mortality that God reveals himself to us in Jesus. What a privilege - weak people like us have come to know 'the glory of God in the face of Christ!' It's all God's doing - not our own efforts; our weakness shows it's all God's power at work in us - changing us; transforming us; recreating us - starting with the heart where it's most needed.

The new creation is already at work in the hearts of those who follow Jesus. But this new creation project is yet to extend to the physical world. So we still live in this tension of being re-created, while still living in the old decaying creation. It's into this tension and frustration that Paul turns next to explain our role in the re-creation project.

*Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 & 5:16-21 (sidebar).*

### **11. What guarantee do we have of being part of this new creation? And what does this motivate Paul to do?**

Though the new creation has begun, the new creation building project won't be completed until Jesus returns. How does this internal reality of our hearts being re-created motivate how we view and live in the world now/ What our priorities are in the following areas:

- **Work**
- **Family**
- **Study**
- **Leisure**
- **Friends**

## **2 CORINTHIANS 5**

1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.