

Series: Hidden Life

February 18, 2018

## **Title: New World**

### **[Slide 1]**

**Text: Colossians 3:5-11**

## **Which Way Forward?**

### **A Red Roadster:**

#### **[Slide 2]**

Somewhere out in space 2,000,000 miles from Earth is a Tesla Red Roadster with a manikin named Starman behind the wheel. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, Starman and his hot ride blasted off on top of The Falcon Heavy Rocket. The Falcon Heavy Rocket is “the most powerful operational rocket in the world by a factor of two,” according to SpaceX, the company that built it. It is able to lift into orbit a payload weighing more than a fully loaded 737 jetliner!

The rocket – and its Roadster – are the brainchild of a man who is out to reinvent the world: Elon Musk. Elon Musk is passionate about a lot of things, but most of all about colonizing the Red Planet Mars. Thus the *red* roadster that will zoom past the Red Planet. He sees the many challenges facing the human race, from the asteroids to nuclear war, climate change to artificial intelligence. The safest way forward for Musk is to establish a human presence somewhere else.

#### **[Slide 3]**

Hence his obsession with Mars. Musk sees the Red Planet as a “fixer upper.” All of his inventions, in one way or another, are designed with this goal in mind. Some of them will fund the venture. Others will be applied to building a living space on Mars. Mars will be the human race’s chance to *start over*. It will be a secular version of New Creation.

### **A Fresh start?**

We’ve all no doubt had the urge to make a “fresh start” at one time or another. Maybe we were bored with our job; perhaps we made a mess of our marriage or discovered that we married the wrong person. Maybe we

were just plain bored with life and wanted to try something new. Time to pack up the red roadster and head off to a new life!

#### **[Slide 4]**

Except for one troubling detail: the person who jumps in the proverbial red roadster and zooms off into the sunset is the very same person you're trying to leave behind! And that, of course, is the fatal flaw in utopian aspirations for the Red Planet: People are people, whether they live on Planet Earth or Planet Mars. Tucked away in the hearts and souls of those brave explorer/colonists will be the very troubles, doubts, fears, resentments, greed and passions that were present when they lived on Earth.

#### **Which way forward?**

God's plan for His Creation is the exact opposite of Elon Musk's. Whereas Musk wants to save the human race by *leaving* earth and traveling into the heavens, God's rescue of His Creation happens by *Heaven coming to Earth*. This is God's way forward.

And the rescue mission is *now*. No waiting for new technologies to be invented and brought on line. The real *Starman* already came to our darkened world to set us free from all of the ravages of sin and death.

And the new world He creates is right here:

#### **[Slide 5]**

*Colossians 3:4 NIV*

*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

#### **Old World**

##### **Death to the old ways:**

In order for Heaven to come to Earth in our lives, we must confront the brokenness and sin in our lives. Paul writes:

#### **[Slide 6]**

*Colossians 3:5a NIV*

*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature:*

Here is the command to *face our brokenness*.

- No running away from our problems
- No denial or minimizing our sin
- No blaming others for our failures
- No resigning ourselves to our present condition

Instead, we're called to *put those things to death on the Cross*. This means being willing to accept just how broken and sinful we actually are. It means letting God's Spirit show us, convict us, of our sin. It means recognizing that on our own, we can never make things right. Only Jesus the King can make us brand new!

### **The old world's ways:**

Paul describes the brokenness and sin of humanity in stark terms. He begins with the corruption of God's gift of sexuality and desire:

#### **[Slide 7]**

*Colossians 3:5b NIV*

*...sexual immorality, impurity, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

Sin has entered into our relationships with each other in ways that pervert and distort the very basis of God's Creation mandate that we "be fruitful and multiply." Sex has become a god that enslaves both people and their cultures.

He goes on to say:

#### **[Slide 8]**

*Colossians 3:6-8 NIV*

*Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

Here are sins of hatred and resentment, unforgiveness and gossip. As Paul reminds us, these are part and parcel of our fallen world. From politics to the

business world, from the sandbox to the school cafeteria, people wound each other with their words and actions. Dog eat dog.

### **Good riddance!**

The only way to deal with these corruptions of God's good Creation is to put them to death, to get rid of them. There's no place for "just a little" greed or immorality. There's no place for "just a little" slander or filthy language, "just a little" anger and rage. They must be rooted out and put to death.

How serious is this command? Paul says: "Because of these, the wrath of God is coming"! This doesn't mean that a vengeful God is out to get you. It means that God is fiercely opposed to everything that destroys His good world and the people He created. He cares so much about you and me that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on our behalf.

In response, we are called to make Jesus' death *our* death. No compromise.

### **New World!**

#### **Putting on the new self:**

When we make that break with the old world, we become a part of God's New Creation. Paul writes:

#### **[Slide 9]**

*Colossians 3:9-11 NIV*

*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

#### **[Slide 10]**

*Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

Right here in the middle of a world still broken and ruled by sin and death, we become New Creation people. No trip to Mars required. God comes down into the middle of the mess and makes us brand new! It doesn't happen all at once. We are *being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator*.

Jesus is the prototype. We are renewed to look like and be like Him. This new creation is nothing short of a New Humanity – one not bounded by racial or cultural categories.

### **New ways for a new world:**

I wonder what kind of rule book will go to Mars with the first colonists? How will they decide how to act and get along with each other? It's one thing to design spaceships and Martian habitats. It's another thing all together to reprogram the human heart!

Paul reminds the Colossian Christians that with their new life come new ways:

#### **[Slide 11]**

*Colossians 3:12-14 NIV*

*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 one another if any of you has a grievance against anyone.*

#### **[Slide 12]**

*Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

Instead of anger, rage, malice and slander, New Creation people live a life of compassion, kindness, humility. Instead of getting even, they show gentleness, patience and forgiveness. Instead of lust and greed, they show love – the same kind of self-giving love that Jesus showed to us when He died for us on the Cross.

This is what New Creation looks like – right here in the middle of an old, broken world. No escaping to another planet. No blaming others for our mistakes. No despairing resignation. This is God's Life being lived out in the here and now. Heaven coming to Earth.

This is the new you.

### **New World:**

Elon Musk's Starman is sitting serenely behind the wheel of his Tesla red roadster. On the dashboard screen in front of him are the words: "Don't panic." Starman may stand for an elegant dream, but Starman isn't coming back. Musk's vision is that one day living human beings follow Starman's trail to a new world.

God's plan is the exact reverse: His plan is to establish colonies of New Creation people who follow Jesus all over this world. And one day, our Starman will return to finish the renewal of our world. Jesus says:

**[Slide 13]**

*Revelation 22:12a, 16 NIV*

*"Look, I am coming soon!"*

*"I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."*

Until then, we have our work cut out for us: Put to death every vestige of the old self, whenever and wherever it appears. And put on the new self each day, while we're being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator.