

The New Creation

Gal. 6:15

Introduction:

1. Circumcision was the mark of Israel's covenant relationship with God. It distinguished them from the uncircumcised Gentiles whom Paul describes elsewhere as "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).
2. But here in this text he says this distinction is no longer a matter of concern. What really matters is "a new creation."
3. What is this new creation that makes circumcision and uncircumcision evaporate into insignificance?
4. In 2 Cor. 5:17 Paul said, "If anyone is in Christ, (he is) a new creature (creation); the old things passed away; behold new things have come."
5. This concept contrasting "old" and "new" permeates Scripture.
6. We are familiar with Isaiah's predictions of a new heaven and new earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22) and the references in Rev. 21:1-2, 5 of the same.

Discussion:

- I. Perhaps to understand "new creation" we need to better understand the "old creation."
 - A. We cannot think of creation without being taken back to the early chapters of Genesis.
 - B. God created and then pronounced it "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Gen. 2 reminds us of one insufficiency that preceded God's pronouncement of things "very good." God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." Only after the creation of woman is the creation described as "very good."
 - C. But in Gen. 3 sin mars the creation. Man's relationship with God is changed, his relationship with his wife is changed and even his relationship with the rest of creation. Death, deterioration and suffering under the pain of sin enters the scene.
 - D. Rom. 8:18ff describes the circumstance.
 1. Sufferings of this present time.
 2. Anxious longing for something better.
 3. Subject to futility.
 4. Slavery to corruption.
 5. Groaning and suffering pain.
 6. Even the children of God groan within themselves.
- II. Scripture looks forward to a reversal of these circumstances, a return to what God intended from the beginning. It is this reversal that is described as the new creation. It is spoken of in various images.
 - A. Being born again (Jn. 3:3); born of God (Jn. 1:13).

- B. After the new birth people “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). The radical nature of the life and death imagery is profound.
- C. A new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 21:1-2, 5).
- D. A new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).
 - 1. There is a sense in which it is very personal. Individuals participate in it as they are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-19).
 - 2. Yet the result reaches beyond individuals. Rom. 8:21 says, “The creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

III. The language of Scripture as to what this looks like stretches our imagination.

- A. Jesus’ resurrection as the beginning of the new creation challenges our thinking.
 - 1. The very idea of resurrection is “unbelievable.” See Acts 4:1-4.
 - 2. Our resurrection is the “second fruits” of the new creation (1 Cor. 15:20-23).
 - 3. Paul uses images in 1 Cor. 15:35-49 to help us comprehend.
- B. Even the descriptions of the new heavens and new earth create wonder (Rev. 21 and 22).
- C. The mystery of it all is described by John. “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when he appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2; Cf. 1 Jn. 2:29 and being “born of Him.”). Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.
- D. But John is quick to bring us back to earth. In 1 Jn. 3:3 he says, “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him (Jesus) purifies himself just as He is pure.” He goes on to talk about sin and the contrasting practice of righteousness.

IV. This brings us back to the new creation in the here and now.

- A. If Jesus’ resurrection is the beginning of the new creation, and this is what the apostles believed, then our baptism is the beginning of our participation in the new creation (Col. 2:12-14).
- B. In our baptism we are raised to walk in newness of life (Col. 3:1ff; Rom. 6:4).
- C. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10).
- D. This takes us back to 1 Jn. 3:3ff. The one who has the hope of participating in the new creation of the future participates in the new creation of the present by purifying himself.
- E. The whole of the new creation theme has to do with dealing with sin and its consequences. It involves the message of reconciliation through Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-19). In this state of reconciliation circumcision and uncircumcision is not the issue but new creation (Gal. 6:15).

Conclusion:

- 1. In the concept of new creation we see the magnificent plan of God unfolding.
- 2. The damage caused by sin is overcome by God as a “recreates” or restores the creation according to His plan.

3. He has accomplished this by means of His actions through the cross.
4. He has furnished proof of His work by raising Jesus from the dead.
5. He invites us to be joined together with Him in the new creation raising us from the dead at the time of our baptism.
6. The new creation reaches its fulfillment when Christ returns and we are raised an imperishable and experience a new heaven and a new earth.