

## Covenant Theology – Week 12

### The Resurrection and the Structure of the New Creation

Christ's resurrection is as foundational to Paul's thinking as his life and death. And Paul is clear that without the resurrection, there is no gospel. (See 1 Cor. 15 above). We will discuss the importance and nature of the resurrection under these two headings:

the resurrection and the forgiveness of sins, the end of sin and death  
the resurrection and the new creation

#### 1. The resurrection/forgiveness of sins, the end of sin and death

(See justification)

Paul states that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is a clear indication that the curse of Adam, sin, and death have been conquered.

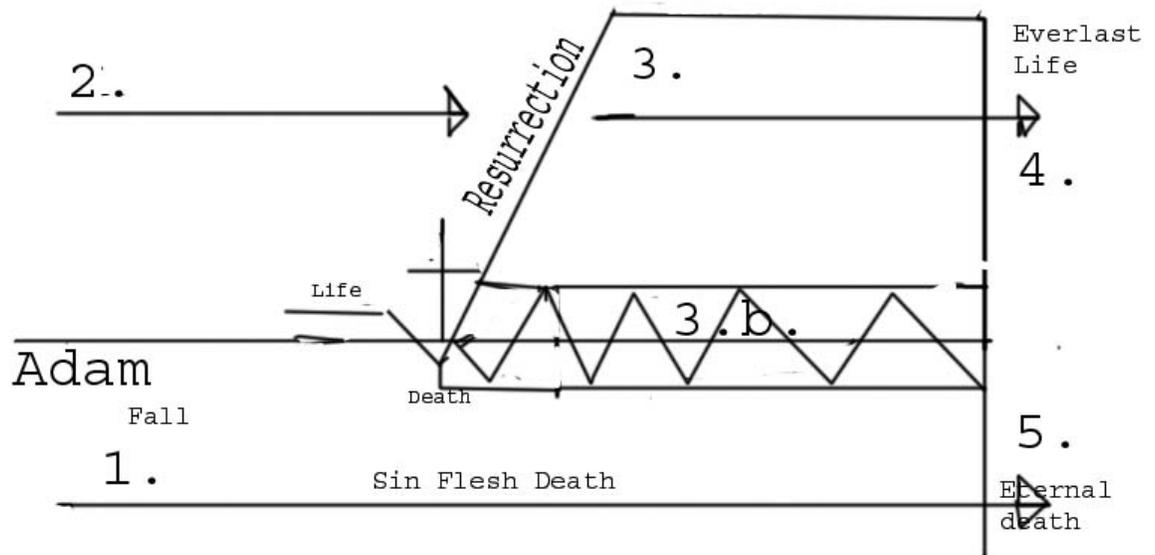
In the old creation, due to Adam's fall, sin and death entered and reined, Romans 5:12. Sin and death were the consequences and the proof of Adam's disobedience. The fact that God's law in the garden was broken, that Adam as representative failed, is evidenced by the ongoing and universal reign of death. In contrast, Jesus' resurrection from the dead to life, eternal life, shows that a legal and judicial end to sin has been accomplished. Christ resurrection is evidence that he has accomplished the work as the second Adam and that now life and righteousness are being brought in.

Paul develops the idea of sin as paid, and evidenced by the resurrection in **Romans 8:33**- Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.<sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died- more than that, who was raised- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Paul also links the resurrection with forgiveness of trespasses and justification in Romans 4:24.

**Romans 4:24** but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,<sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Christ resurrection is tied in with the end of condemnation, sin, trespasses, and death, and linked to righteousness, the end of charges that can be brought. **1 Corinthians 15:17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.



1. the period no 1. shows that adam brought all of creation under sin and death, this lasts until the end of the old creation.

2. the period 2. shows that for a time the only creation in existence was the old creation.

3. shows that Christ brought the reign of sin and death to an end by his Life, Death and then Resurrection. In his resurrection he brought in a new period.

this shaded area 3.b shows that both creations coexist together for a period. Since the death and resurrection

4. the new creation which has already been brought in will continue forever. the second coming of Christ will bring it to completion and it will remain eternally.

5. The old creation will finally pas away through the judgment of God at the second coming,

## 2. The resurrection and beginning of a new period/order of existence

Paul sees the resurrection of Christ as the beginning of a new order, or period, of a new creation. Romans 1:3,4 emphasizes the key aspects of this new life. **Romans 1:3** concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh<sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

First, in the resurrection of Christ, Christ himself was transferred from the flesh to a new period, that of the Spirit. This focus is stressing the change in his humanity, not his divinity. Second, the resurrection life is related to Sonship, and Sonship is one of the key definitions of the new age. Third, the resurrection and Sonship are linked to the powerful work of the Spirit. Last, the resurrection is related to the kingship, Lordship of Jesus Christ as Messiah, Christ.

## **The Resurrection of Christ, New Man, and New Creation**

### **New man, from the Flesh to the Spirit**

In Romans 1:3,4, Paul contrasts Christ's initial coming according to the flesh and his resurrection into Sonship by the Spirit of God. In this two fold mode of existence, it is important to realize that Paul is speaking of Christ's humanity, not his divinity. Christ's divinity did not change; but his humanity has existed in both modes, according to Adam in its weakness and temporary nature, and now according to resurrection life. Following his death, Christ was raised with a glorified humanity, one filled with the Spirit of God. This is still a human physical body, but one which is of another spiritual order, it being from heaven and Spirit-filled. The Spirit raised him from the dead and creates and indwells a new resurrection body. Paul develops this idea in Romans 8:11

**Romans 8:11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Following Paul's major division of flesh and spirit already mentioned.)

Paul develops the nature of this new humanity in 1 Cor.15:21,22, 48,49

**1 Corinthians 15:21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive? ...What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.<sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.<sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.<sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.<sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.<sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.<sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.<sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.<sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

The resurrection body is a spiritual body, fully corporeal; but at the same time, remade by the power of the Spirit and having the traits of spiritual beings. Paul teaches about the

spiritual body through contrast. The new is spiritual, spirit-filled, and controlled by the Spirit. It is from heaven and so imperishable. In contrast, our present bodies are flesh and blood, weak, natural, from the dust, perishable.

### **Christ Resurrection, the New man, and the New Creation**

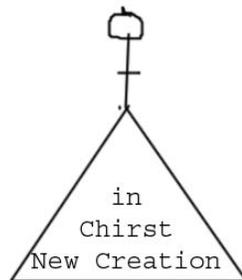
The resurrection of Christ is not to be seen as an isolated event, rather Paul links Christ's resurrection with the changing of men into son, the church, of which he is head, and the coming of the new creation itself.

First, Christ's resurrection begins the new creation. This is evident from Romans 1:3,4, and 2 Cor. 5:15-17, where Paul stresses the link between Christ's resurrection and the new creation. Although the new creation is not yet fully here, the new creation has already come.

#### **2 Cor. 5:15-17**

**2 Corinthians 5:15** and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Further, these passages show the link between the resurrection and the new creation. Paul does not think of Christ's resurrection as an isolated event, rather Christ resurrection is tied into the whole of the new creation. The resurrection begins the new creation and the new creation currently exists in Christ and in his resurrection state. (We will discuss this more fully under the heading of the tension of the new creation).

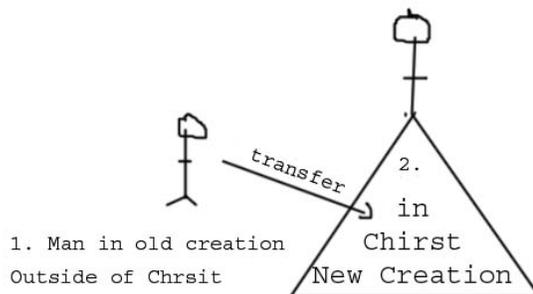


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Old Creation - Material/spiritual

Returning to 2 Cor. 5 above, Christ was seen as coming according to the flesh, paralleling Rom 1:3; and then **through His resurrection, He brings in the new creation of God.** One only enters the new creation by being linked to Christ's own death and resurrection through union. (see xxx) ? All those in him, also die to the old creation and are raised in him, by union with him, into the new creation. Romans 6:4, Col 2:11,12

It is not that they become a new creation individually, so tht we have a number of persons who are individual, new creation; rather the thrust is that as they are in Christ and through him enter into the new creation that Christ brought about through his own resurrection. It should be noted, the Greek in verse 17 is better read, *if any man is in Christ, new creation, not he is a new creation*, stressing the location of the new creation in Christ first. The new creation finds its reality in Christ first, then us second.




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Old Creation - Material/spiritual

Paul reaffirms this idea that the resurrection begins in Christ's resurrection, and we only enter the new creation by union with him in Galatians. (see also Paul's doctrine of the church xxx).

**Galatians 3:27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave<sup>1</sup> nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus... **Galatians 6: 15** For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Here Paul has shown that being baptized into Christ, having put on Christ, means the distinctions of the old creation, mainly Jew and gentile, have passed away (this means that circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing). All the old creation distinctions have now been replaced by a greater category, being in Christ, and so being in the new creation.

Christ brought in the new creation at the time of the resurrection, and if one is in Christ, then one is already in the new creation. Paul says the same thing in 2 Cor. 5:15.

**2 Corinthians 5:15** and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer

### **The Application of the New Creation to those in Christ**

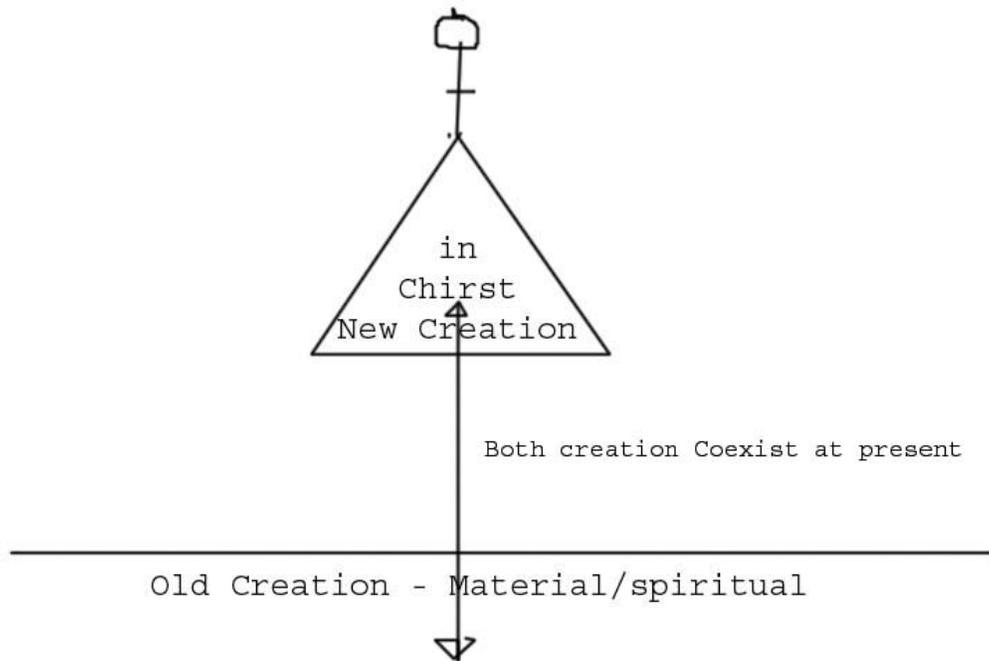
As to the coming of the creation in its power, Paul speaks of it already being here, since we are already raised in Christ, Rom 6:4 and Col 2:11-13; and yet Paul also speaks of the saints being transformed, 2 Cor 3,4. As such, Paul sees the work of Christ in the soul as already being done, and still being done, as we are being transformed in the inner man from glory unto glory. At the same time, the body is united to Christ, but the resurrection work of Christ is not yet being applied, 2 Cor.4:16- 5:8. The resurrection and the transformation of the body will only occur in the second coming.

It is important to stress that our union with Christ is with both the soul and the body; and yet, Christ's work is applied differently in both. It is applied to the soul now, it is already united to Christ's resurrection, Romans 6:4, Col. 2:11-13; but it will only be applied to the bodily resurrection at the second coming.

### **The Relationship between Christ's Resurrection and the Old Creation**

The fact that at present the new creation is only in Christ has two implications. First, at present the new and old creations coexist. Second, the new creation is already here, but not yet fully here. These tension points are related to what has often been called the tension of the already and the not yet. This tension is best explained due to the coexisting of both creations, and the fact that Christ in his resurrection began the new creation that will only be completed in his second coming and the regeneration of the heavens and the earth, Matthew 12xxx Romans 8:18-22

Since the new creation is only in Christ and Christ has not yet come a second time to finish his work, this means that both creations coexist for the present time.



Related to the idea of the overlapping periods is the idea that the new creation is currently hidden. As already seen, the new creation is currently found in Christ, and at present Christ is hidden from the world. Paul stresses the hidden nature of Christ and our new lives in him **Colossians 3:3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.<sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

This means that at present, the two creations coexist. The new creation is here, hidden in Christ; and it will continue to be hidden until the full coming of Christ. When Christ returns, he will no longer be hidden; and his works, the new creation, will come in power. At this time, the old creation will be done away with.

It is important to make a distinction between Christ's relationship to the church, as part of the new creation, and Christ's relationship to the material world. At present the new creation is only found in Christ by union. Christ is only united to his church.

In contrast, Christ is not united to the material, new creation that he will bring in his second coming. Christ is the beginning of the new creation because they are in him. He is the beginning of the new material creation, the new heavens and the earth, not by union, but by the recreation and regeneration of them. They are not and never will be united to Him. Paul makes this distinction in **Colossians 1:18**- And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Here Paul shows union with Christ and his church by showing that he is the head of the body, the church. In contrast, while Paul does use the word firstborn in relationship to both the church and the creation; he never says that Christ is in a head-body relationship to the creation. The head-body relationship is limited to the church alone, for they alone are in Him.

At the second coming, three things will occur--the revelation of Christ will reveal the new creation to all, it will lose its hiddenness; second, the revelation of Christ and his work in its fullness result in judgment and the passing away of the old creation in the final judgment, and so the two will no longer coexist; finally, the full revelation of Christ and all the sons of God with him will mean that he will now recreate the heavens and the earth, bring in the new creation, one fit for his glorified humanity and the glorified humanity of all in him. Paul develops this thought in **Romans 8:19**- For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.<sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

It is only with the second coming that Christ will be revealed, and so the new creation will be revealed in glory; and the old creation in its bondage and decay will be set free to enter into the same mode of existence as the sons of God.