

## New Creation

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In the closing lines of his letter to the churches in Galatia, Paul wrote, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:14-16).

Paul contended that keeping the Old Law did not matter. What mattered most was becoming a new creation through faith in the cross of Jesus. The rule of new creation is the principle by which we are to live. But, what is new creation? For that matter, what is old creation? What is the meaning and importance of this concept? In this article, we will consider features of the old creation and how they pointed to the new creation.

## Old Creation

Old creation or original creation is documented in the opening chapters of Genesis. There are important features that are highlighted which become the framework of new creation. Consider the following details of the old creation.

**1. Light.** God created the heavens and the earth. In a dark, void, and formless state, God commanded, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3). God’s first recorded words illuminated a dark creation. He made a distinction between light and darkness. He declared that light was good. This may have been the first time light came into the world by the word of God, but it would not be the last.

**2. Humans and the breath of life.** As the pinnacle of Creation, God formed humans. He made man from the dust of the ground. He breathed life into the dust and gave man His image (Gen. 2:7). Later, God made a woman from the rib of a man. Together, Adam and Eve became stewards of God’s creation.

**3. Sin.** Adam and Eve were entrusted with filling the earth with God’s glory. They were to be wise caretakers of God’s good earth. They were to live in harmony with one another and God by obeying God. Sadly, they sinned. They transgressed the clear prohibitions of God. Through their actions, sin, decay and death entered Creation.

**4. Expulsion.** There were consequences for the sin of Adam and Eve. The natural world became cursed. It would become unwieldy. Pain, decay, and death became part of the human experience. In a fallen condition, God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. God feared in their condition they would eat from the Tree of Life and be forever separated from Him (Gen. 3:22-24).

## New Creation

God was not satisfied with the results of the old creation. He desired to have a relationship with humans. However, that relationship was broken by sin. In a fallen state, God planned to redeem mankind through the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15). Through this seed, a new creation would be born. Consider features of the new creation.

**1. Word and Light.** Jesus of Nazareth was the promised seed of woman. John introduced Jesus by using the language of the old creation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:1-5).

Just as God spoke the old creation into existence, the Word came into the world in the flesh and blood form of Jesus. He would communicate words of life to a world dying in sin. Also, Jesus was the light of the world (John 8:12). He would illuminate the path to life and immortality (2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:10). His bright light would not be extinguished by darkness. Anyone who walked in His light would find new life.

**2. Death & Resurrection.** New creation culminated in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus used concepts of creation to convey these unexpected events: "And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit... The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light..." (John 12:23-24, 35-36). Jesus would have to first die to bring new life; new creation.

**3. Garden.** When the resurrected Lord spoke to Mary Magdalene, she thought He was the gardener (John 20:15). We do not typically think of cemeteries as gardens; however, that is what they are. During a summer when I was in college, I worked for the city where I lived. I helped take care of three cemeteries in the city limits. We expect plants to spring up from the ground, not the dead. In this cemetery, new life sprung up from the grave.

**4. The Spirit.** After Jesus was raised from the dead, He revealed Himself to the apostles. Similar to God breathing life in the old creation, Jesus breathed the Spirit into the apostles in the new creation (John 20:22). By the resurrected Lord and through the Spirit, the apostles were given new life. They would devote their new life to preaching the Gospel of new creation.

## Conclusion

The preaching of the apostles was filled with symbolism of new creation. The Gospel of John is the most obvious example of this language. Also, the epistles are also filled with analogies of new creation. The apostle Paul explained how we become new creations by faith in the death

and resurrection of Jesus. By faith, we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus when we are baptized (Rom. 6:1-4).

Afterward, we are new creations. New life brings new expectations. We are to grow and bear the fruit of the Spirit (Rom. 6:13; Gal. 5:22-26). We are to walk in the light of Jesus. We are not live in the darkness of sin or share in the fruit of unrighteousness (Eph. 5:8-14). We live for the dawning of a new heavens and earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:10-14). These common Biblical expressions have their roots in creation.

If we want to be united eternally with the Creator, we must become new creations. This is why Paul told the churches in Galatia that the law of new creation mattered most.