

The Gospel of Luke (#108); The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Today we arrive at the last chapter of Luke's Gospel, which addresses the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus and His appearance to His disciples. This passage has been a long time in coming, as we first began to address Luke's Gospel three years ago next month. Our first Sunday in Luke's Gospel was September 11, 2022.

We recently stressed that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ should be regarded as the center, even the climax of history. We now arrive to Luke's account of the resurrection of Jesus, which of course we would never subordinate to the importance of the cross. We may best view the crucifixion and the resurrection, though separated by three days, to be as a single event. And yet, we can view these two happenings as accomplishing two primary ends. The death of Jesus on the cross secured the redemption of God's people of all ages from their condition of spiritual death and their sentence of physical death. The resurrection of Jesus Christ secured new life for all of God's people, as Jesus was the first fruit of all those that would one day rise similarly to their Lord. But the death and resurrection of our Lord signaled other important matters as well. One theme that may not be that immediately evident as we casually read the account before us, but it is very significant, is that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead signaled and inaugurated the onset of the new creation, an age and event that is the realization of God's purpose in history, one that had been foretold and anticipated by the Old Testament people of faith.

But there is another prominent emphasis of truth in our resurrection account. There is no emphasis given to what we normally associate with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in that it secured the forgiveness of our sins and guaranteed our own future resurrection with our Lord. Those lessons and implications are set forth by the apostles in their later preaching and writing of the books of the New Testament. Rather, one of the major emphases of the Synoptic record of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is His vindication by God the Father. Whereas the fallen world rejected Jesus and treated Him with shame and contempt, regarding and treating Him in His death as the worst of persons, God repudiated their sentence with His own sentence, even the declaration of the righteousness of His Son by raising Him from the dead. The wicked Jewish leaders of Israel along with the complicity of the Roman (Gentile) leaders, crucified Jesus Christ, *but* God raised Him from the dead. This message is repeated in several speeches of the apostles that are recorded in the book of Acts.

By the way, after we conclude Luke's Gospel in a few weeks, we will probably continue into the book of Acts for a few chapters. Let us remember that Luke's Gospel is but volume one of his historic record. We are only halfway through Luke's story which he had initially dedicated to Theophilus. The book of Acts is volume 2, the continuation of God working through Jesus Christ to establish and expand His kingdom, bringing salvation to the world.

Now our last time in this Gospel study, we concluded our consideration of the women disciples of Jesus witnessing the burial of our Lord Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Luke 23:55 and 56 record,

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Luke 24 opens with the women returning to the tomb early in the morning of the first day of the week, after having rested on the Sabbath Day. Their intention was to embalm the body of Jesus. What they discovered, however, was the empty tomb and the testimony of two heavenly witnesses that Jesus had risen from the dead. These women then became the first Christian witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here is Luke 24:1-12:

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ²But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’”

⁸And they remembered His words. ⁹Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

I. Considering Luke’s record of the resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-12)

We may examine this passage under three headings. First, we read of what these women witnessed when they arrived at the tomb of Jesus (24:1-8). Second, then we read of the women’s witness that they bore to the eleven apostles and the rest of the disciples (24:9-11). Third, we read of Peter’s reaction and response to the witness of the women (24:12).

A. What these women witnessed (24:1-8).

We read that the women returned to the tomb early on Sunday morning, “the first day of the week” (24:1). John’s Gospel stated that the women began their journey to the tomb while it was yet dark (John 20:1). They were desirous to perform this act of mercy and kindness to their Master whom they assumed was dead and entombed.

Luke records in verse 2 that the women “found the stone rolled away from the tomb.” Mark’s record included the thoughts of the women enroute to the tomb. They had questioned among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” (Mark 12:3). But then they arrived at the tomb they found the stone was no longer in place. This was the first hint that the body of Jesus may no longer be there.

The women entered the tomb and saw that it was empty; the body of Jesus was not there. But while the women were within the tomb, two “men” appeared suddenly to them. They were “men” dressed in “in shining garments.” Clearly they were angels who had appeared as men on this occasion. We know this for certain in the way that they are described later in this chapter in verse 23, when two disciples recounted what had happened earlier that day. Luke wrote of what these two disciples had heard from the women: “Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that *they had also seen a vision of angels* who said He was alive.” These two men in glistening garments were angels.

Now it may seem unnecessary to say so, but angels are not men or women who have previously died and then had become angels of the Lord. Angels are spiritual beings created by God who are distinct from human beings. They are a different order of creatures than humans. We read in the Scriptures that there are holy angels who “all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14). But there are also fallen angels, who serve as satan’s emissaries in the fallen world, if and when in God’s providence He permits them to do so. We should understand the demons of the Bible to be fallen angels who serve the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of the devil. By the way, the Greek nouns and pronouns that are used to depict angels and demons are all masculine in gender. There are no angels or demons referred to with the feminine gender. They are depicted as males, or better, masculine.

The reaction of the women to these two “men” is understandable. They were startled and frightened. Verse 5a reads, “Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth.” It was then that the two angelic witnesses posed the question to the women,

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” (vs. 5b-7)

It was initially a veiled rebuke of their desire and intentions to come to the tomb. “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

Mark and Matthew record that there was but one angel at this time. Perhaps Luke emphasizes the two that were present to validate their witness, in that it is by the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word is established (as true)” (Deut. 19:15).

Interestingly, Matthew’s Gospel gives more detail than either Mark or Luke. Here is Matthew 28:1-8:

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

⁵But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.”

⁸So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. (Matt. 28:1-8)

Matthew does not say that the women had themselves witnessed the angel of the Lord removing the stone blocking the tomb, but the two Roman soldiers certainly did so. They must have fled the scene upon becoming greatly terrified.

Now if we were to set all for Gospel accounts side-by-side we might find it difficult to harmonize the details, for they seem to diverge on a number of points. **William Hendriksen** (1900-1982) identified some of these distinguishing details:

Suddenly *two men*, dressed in robes that were absolutely dazzling, were standing beside the women. Matthew mentions *one angel* (28:3, 5); Mark, *a young man* dressed in a white robe (16:5); and John *two angels* (20:12). Sometimes those addressing the women are represented as *standing*, then again as *sitting*. Sometimes they are reported as saying one thing; then as saying something else.

Hendriksen then wrote of these divergent details:

Though we do not know exactly how all these facts dovetail, this should not be a hinderance to faith. Rather the opposite. The variation indicates that one evangelist was not simply copying what another had said or written. There were different sources, but all were reliable. It should also be borne in mind that if one angel was spokesman for both, a reporter could truthfully use either the singular or the plural in referring to the speaker(s). Again, as to *angel* or *young man*, this is not the only instance in Scripture in which angels appear in the form of men (and see Hebrews 13:2). As to sitting or standing, is it impossible that at one moment these heavenly visitors were sitting, at another moment standing? And as to difference in the messages that were spoken, why should it be regarded as impossible that the messengers spoke more than once?¹

¹ William Hendriksen, **New Testament Commentary, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke** (Baker Academic, 1978), 1053.

And so, the divergence of details should not undercut our confidence in the inerrancy and authority of the Holy record. **Alexander Maclaren** (1826-1900) explained it well:

The divergences of the Evangelists (i.e. Gospel writers) reach their maximum in the accounts of the Resurrection, as is natural if we realize the fragmentary character of all the versions, the severely condensed style of Matthew's, the incompleteness of the genuine² Mark's, the evidently selective purpose in Luke's, and the supplementary design of John's. If we add the perturbed state of the disciples, their separation from each other, and the number of distinct incidents embraced in the records, we shall not wonder at the differences, but see in them confirmation of the good faith of the witnesses, and a reflection of the hurry and wonderfulness of that momentous day. Differences there are; contradictions there are not, except between the doubtful verses added to Mark and the other accounts. We cannot put all the pieces together, when we have only them to guide us. If we had a complete and independent narrative to go by, we could, no doubt, arrange our fragments. But the great certainties are unaffected by the small divergences, and the points of agreement are vital. They are, for example, that none saw the Resurrection, that the first to know of it were the women, that angels appeared to them in the tomb, that Jesus showed Himself first to Mary Magdelene, that the reports of the Resurrection were not believed.³

Now all four Gospels testify clearly and directly that the resurrection of Christ took place on the first day of the week, the day following the Sabbath Day⁴. Over the decades of the first century Christians gathered to worship God through Jesus Christ on the first day. We read in Acts 20 that when Paul and his entourage arrived to Troas, they gathered to worship on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 recounts, "Now *on the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." We read in 1 Corinthians 16:1 that the first day of the week the church was to gather together, presumably to worship, and they were to take the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul wrote, "*On the first day of the week* let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2). Elsewhere, we read that the first day of the week came to be known and regarded as "the Lord's Day." John saw the risen Lord while on the island of Patmos on the Lord's Day. John wrote, "I was in the Spirit *on the Lord's Day*, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet" (Rev. 1:10). And so, throughout the record of the New Testament Christians commonly gathered to worship God through Jesus Christ on the first day of the week. Now the early Jewish Christians continued to keep Saturday as the weekly Sabbath Day in obedient observance of the fourth commandment. But as time passed the early church came to regard and treat the Lord's day as the Christian Sabbath Day. Whereas the Old Testament seventh day Sabbath observance celebrated and commemorated the Lord's old creation of the physical world, the first Day of the week, that is, the Lord's Day, celebrates the onset of the new creation. Sometimes you may see the first day of the week referred to as the Eighth Day, to give more direct allusion to the new creation brought to pass through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Here are a few words from the early church writing of the second century, *The Epistle of Barnabas* (a. 130 A.D.). This was a writing attributed falsely to Barnabus; nevertheless, it reflects the belief and practice of some who professed to be Christian who observed Sunday as the Christian Sabbath day.

Finally, He says to them: "I cannot bear your new moons and Sabbaths." You see what He means: it is not the present Sabbaths that are acceptable to Me, but the one that I have made; on that Sabbath, after I have set everything at rest, *I will create the beginning of an eighth day, which is the beginning of another world. This is why we spend the eighth day in celebration, the day on which Jesus both arose from the dead and, after appearing again, ascended into heaven.*"

² By using the words, "genuine Mark", he is setting aside the longer ending of Mark that is in later manuscripts that was probably not penned by the original Gospel writer.

³ Alexander Maclaren, **Exposition of Holy Scriptures; St. Luke, chapters 1 to 12** (Baker Book House, n.d.) 319.

⁴ Cf. Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:2; John 20:1.

As another side note, we may say something about the day of the week on which Jesus was crucified. Some believe quite strongly that Jesus did not die on Friday, but that He had to have died on Thursday, and some even say it was on Wednesday of that last week. They base this largely on their need to explain Matthew 12:40: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." But if that were so, one might wonder why the women would wait from Thursday evening until Sunday morning to come and anoint the body of Jesus. Traditionally it has been held that the Lord died on Friday, the first day of the three days, then His body remained in the tomb on the second day, His body at rest on the Sabbath Day, and then He rose from the dead on Sunday, the third day. When the Jews counted days, any portion of a day which was regarded as beginning at sundown, could be regarded as a separate day.

It might seem quite surprising that in Luke's record of the morning of the resurrection, Luke did not record anyone seeing the risen Jesus in person. We read of the empty tomb. We read of the witness of the two men, who were no doubt angels. But we do not read of Jesus appearing to anyone in this initial account.

The women found the tomb empty, having had its heavy stone barring its entrance rolled out of the way. They were perplexed at this, especially after they entered the tomb and found it to be empty. They would have remained confused had it not been for the appearance of "two men in clothes that gleamed like lightening." These "men" explained to the women why they found the tomb in this fashion (24:5-7). Jesus Christ was risen from the dead.

Now the Lord Jesus had told His disciples that He would rise from the dead. They should have believed His Words. But they had forgotten what He had taught them. But upon the witness of the two "men", the women then "remembered His words." The suggestion is that had they and the other disciples

"remembered the words of Jesus they would not have been perplexed and troubled over the events that had transpired. They would have recognized that these events, though difficult and grievous, were necessary. It might be suggested that much of the difficulty Christians encounter in this life that results in their being perplexed and troubled is because they had failed to remember the Words of Scripture."

One once wrote, "It is not sufficiently considered how much more we need recollection than information."

What was it that Jesus had told them while in Galilee?

"Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

Although Jesus had told His disciples beforehand that He would suffer and die, but that He would be rise from the dead on the third day, no one had taken His words to heart or had remembered them. They did not conceive of a Messiah who would suffer and die before being enthroned as Lord, although He had forthrightly told them in advance on several occasions that this is what would happen to Him in Jerusalem.

We may read our Lord's words of instruction to His disciples in Galilee in Luke 9:18ff

And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

¹⁹So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again."

²⁰He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

²¹And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²²saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

B. The witness of the women (24:9-11)

After reading of what the women had witnessed, we then read that they became witnesses of what they had witnessed.

Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. (24:9-11)

We do not read in Luke's account of the angels' departure. He simply tells of the women rushing to give the news to the eleven remaining disciples (apostles) as well as the "rest" of the disciples (24:9ff). But the men do not believe the women. Why is it that men tend to question the true testimony of women, but they seem to be all too willing to accept the false testimony of men without question? A woman's witness was not regarded as reliable in the first century; besides, such a thing seemed like nonsense. The dullness and insensitivity of the apostles is set before the readers. They should have believed the women's testimony.

It is interesting and of note that the Lord determined that women would be the first witnesses of His resurrection. For one thing, the testimony of women was not highly regarded in the culture of the day. But our Lord showed particular favor to these special women who had traveled with Him and had supported Him through His ministry in having them to be the first witnesses of His resurrection. Luke identified them by name, women who were faithful and enduring disciples of Jesus throughout His ministry.

To the disciples, these women were relating "idle tales." Although the women were convinced and quite forthright about what they saw and heard, the eleven apostles and the other disciples did not believe the women's testimony. This is an important point that can be made in defense of the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Though the women are convinced, the rest are not. They come to belief slowly. Many of the disciples are originally skeptics about the resurrection. At first they regard the women as hysterical, telling an idle. *Leros* (Grk), used here for "idle tale." Was used in everyday Greek to refer to the delirious stories told by the very sick as they suffer great pain or to idle tales told by those who fail to perceive reality (4 Maccabees 5:11; Josephus *Jewish Wars* 3.8.9 ~405). The other disciples think these women are dreaming. Luke notes most of them do not believe their story, except one or two present.⁵

Augustine (354-430 AD) wrote this regarding God's providence in the choosing of these women to be His witnesses.

How very unhappy is the human condition! When Eve related what the serpent had said, she listened straightaway. A lying woman was believed, so we all died. But the disciples did not believe women telling the truth so that we may live. So in this fact we have to reflect on the goodness of the Lord's arrangements, because this, of course, was the doing of the Lord Jesus Christ that it should be the female sex that would be the first to report that He had risen again. Humanity fell through the female sex; mankind was restored through the female sex.

C. Peter's reaction to the witness of the women (24:12)

We should understand that Peter also did not believe the women's witness. But perhaps they had moved Peter to ponder whether or not what they were saying was true. Perhaps as he considered his betrayal and defection from Jesus two nights before, and the miserable state of mind and soul that must have characterized his thinking, Peter chose to run to the tomb to see for himself. "Something stirs him to check out the story when others are incredulous. In addition his recent experience with his denials has surely taught him to trust in what Jesus says."⁶

⁵ Darrell L. Bock, **Luke** (Intervarsity Press, 1994), 381.

⁶ Ibid., 382.

Now John's Gospel records that John also ran with Peter, arriving first to the tomb ahead of Peter, but John did not go in at first, but followed Peter into the tomb upon his arrival (cf. John 20:2-10). But Luke records only Peter going to the tomb. And so, Peter had decided to check out the women's testimony. He found the tomb empty, except for "the strips of linen lying by themselves." Obviously the body was not just stolen away, for the linen that had wrapped the body would not have been left behind.⁷ But Peter is himself perplexed, still not knowing or believing what the women had told him. It would seem that shortly after this that the Lord Himself appeared to Peter, but the details are not recorded for us (cf. 24:34).

II. Considering a few implications of Luke's record of the resurrection of Jesus

We could mention numerous lessons based on Christ's death and resurrection, but we will mention only these at this time:

(1) Because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, *the child of God knows his/her sins have been forgiven by the Father*. God gave His "Amen" to Christ's sacrifice on our behalf when He raised Him from the dead.

(2) Because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, *we have a risen Saviour who oversees us and intercedes on our behalf*. He is the Lord who has been given all authority in heaven and earth, and He is directing us to glory where we will dwell eternally with Him.

(3) Because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, as disciples of Jesus Christ *we may be assured our own future resurrection from the dead*. Because He lives we live, because He arose, we are certain of our resurrection.

(4) Because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead., *we may now know that we have entered through Him the new creation promised in the Holy Scriptures*.

There are several ways in which we can demonstrate this to be biblical teaching. There is suggestion of the new creation in the immediate context of Luke 24. *First*, the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead on *the first day of the week*. It was the first day of the week that our God began to create the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, *the first day*. (Gen. 1:1)

God began the first creation on the first Sunday, the first day of the creation week. Jesus Christ was raised on the first day of the week, signifying the onset of a new creation.

Second, the fact that our Lord was raised on the first day of the week, yet described in each of the Gospels as "*after the Sabbath*, toward the dawn of the first day of the week", signifies that it was a *new creation*. The Old Testament Sabbath day was observed as a day of rest, commemorating the seventh day in which God rested after He initially created the heavens and the earth. The fourth commandment as rehearsed in **Exodus 20:8-11** states this clearly:

⁷ By the way, forget the Shroud of Turin. It has only served as one more idol for people to focus their concern and affection, diverting them from the Lord Jesus who is risen. It is the making of but another idol for people to adore in place of the risen and enthroned Lord Jesus.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

The Sabbath day was a weekly commemoration and celebration of God’s work in the first creation. The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead after the Sabbath on the first day of the week *after* the Sabbath, which signaled a *new creation*.

Third, in addition to the rather subtle hints in Luke and the other Gospels that Jesus rose from the dead signaling the onset of a new creation, *the apostles expressed the matter forthrightly*. The apostle Paul wrote of how the new creation that Jesus Christ resulted in how we are to view all Christians. Christians are no longer as they were formerly, but they are new creatures in Christ’s new creation.

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and 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. ¹⁶From 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. ¹⁷**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:14-19)

Paul wrote in his epistle to the Galatians how the new creation in Jesus Christ is to be the basis of our accepting others who are sharing in that new creation.

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. ¹⁵For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but **a new creation.** ¹⁶And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (Gal. 6:14-16)

Here Paul states that the new creation brought about by Jesus Christ was the new reality for him and his understanding of the world, indeed, it should be for all who are in Jesus Christ. The cross of Jesus Christ had changed all things. He saw himself dead to the world and the world dead to him through the death of Jesus Christ. This suggests that there is nothing any longer of this world that governs his thinking or shapes his values or goals. Formerly, his world view had formerly had this conception: the world is comprised of (1) the people of God, being those who were circumcised, those who were citizens of Israel, and (2) all others, those who were uncircumcised. But now circumcision or uncircumcision was no longer a factor. Now, with the new creation brought into realization through Jesus Christ, he calls the people of God “the Israel of God.” “True Israel” is a holy nation are those who are participants and beneficiaries of the new creation. Here, therefore, we see that the former ways of distinguishing the people of God are no longer valid. The new creation brought about by the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord resulted in a new world and new order of things. The new creation is to shape our world view of God and His work in history.

There are other places in the New Testament that speak to this idea. When we came to salvation in Jesus Christ, it was as though God were performing in us an act of creation.

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶For God, who said, “Let light shine out of

darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:3-6)

Just as God commanded light to shine in the presence of darkness in the first creation, so God brought forth light to those who were in spiritual darkness. Here light is a metaphor for knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which brings forth new life in us. We are a part of the new creation.

(5) Our union with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection presses upon us to live consistent with, and in accordance with, the new creation in Christ.

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi that our inclusion in the new creation should govern how we think and how we are to aspire and purpose to live.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

⁵Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

⁸But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

¹²Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
