

A New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

What a wonderful way to describe a new life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We do not just change from some former state — we are completely new. The old desires, dreams, motives, thoughts, actions, etc. are gone! We should have new desires, dreams, motives, thoughts, actions, etc. as a “new creation.” Let’s examine the two Greek words for “new creation”

καινός, **kainos** — new, latest, anew; in some contexts new is superior to old
κτίσις, **ktisis** — creation, created thing, creature; governmental institution¹

This “new creation” is superior to the old one — our life without Christ! To understand what this means we need to study the passages before the “therefore” in this particular verse.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

According to these verses, what is the ultimate reason we are able to be a new creation? *Jesus died for us. It is the result of his “love” for us. Jesus’ death and resurrection led to the potential for everyone (“all died”) to also be raised again.*

What is the immediate purpose of being a “new creation” that is stated in this text? *We should no longer live for ourselves (“old has gone”), but instead to live for Jesus (“new has come”).*

There are two consequences of Christ’s death that Paul addresses:

1. “we regard no one from a worldly point of view”

Paul is confessing that he is no longer making superficial personal judgments based on external appearances (as he did with Jesus). It was now his custom to view others, not in terms of nationality, but in terms of spiritual status.

2. “he is a new creation”

One set of conditions or relationships has passed out of existence, and another set has come to stay. However he may have treated people in the past, he would now treat them as something new in Christ.

In this study we will attempt to answer the who, how, what and why of being a “new creation” in Christ.

¹ Greek to English Dictionary, Zondervan, Accordance Software, ©1999

Who?

John 1:10-13

Who is able to be a new creation? *Anyone who is in Christ.*

What part do we play in this? *We believe in Jesus. This provides an initial definition of “believe” by equating it with “receive.” When we receive a gift, we demonstrate our confidence in its reality and then make it our own; but we accept the fact that we did not earn it (“he gave the right”).*

What is this gift we receive? *We receive the right to “become” children of God. “Become” indicates clearly that people are not the spiritual children of God by natural birth, for we cannot become what we already are. The verb “become” implies a complete change of nature (“new creation”).*

1. “not of natural descent” — excludes a purely physical process
2. “nor of human decision” — rules out any biological desire or urge
3. “or a husband’s will” — shows that it is not merely the outcome of a legal marriage.²

This new relationship with God is a spiritual one. Just as the original creation was brought about only by the power of God, so too this “new creation” that we can receive is brought about only by the power of God.

How?

Galatians 6:15

This is the only other verse in the New Testament where the phrase “new creation” is used. Neither circumcision nor circumcision counts for anything as a means for salvation. The only thing that matter is to be born again.

Now the question may arise, how are we born again? How do we become this “new creation?”

John 3:1-8

How did Jesus explain being “born again” to Nicodemus? *That it would not be a physical or biological process. It would only be possible through the power of God: water and spirit. This “new creation” is the result of being “born again” in baptism as a disciple of Jesus.*

Romans 6:1-14

How do we receive the right to become children of God? *By participating in Jesus death, burial, and resurrection through baptism.*

² Matthew Henry Commentary, NIV, Zonderan, ©1992

What does God want us to do with this “new life?” *We are to count ourselves dead to sin, for we are not under the law (circumcision) but under grace.*

[Cross reference with the “Light & Darkness” study for more on baptism]

What?

1 Peter 1:3-9

What blessings (through His grace) do we receive as a “new creation” in Christ?

1. a living hope (a continual process)
2. an eternal inheritance (kept in heaven)
3. shielded by God (divine protection)
4. genuine faith (refined through trials)
5. an inexpressible joy (result of our love and faith in Him)
6. the salvation of our souls. (goal of our faith)

Have you truly “received” these blessings and made them your own?

What is the purpose of giving this right to be children of God? Let us return to the original text in 2 Corinthians.

Why?

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

“All this” of verse 18 points back to the new attitude (vs. 16) and the “new creation” (vs. 17) which Paul shared earlier.

What is the purpose of “all this” according to the text? *It is to be reconciled to God. Through this message and fulfillment of reconciliation, we return to Eden — a new creation. We are restored to a proper relationship with God!*

Why did God make us, as He did Paul, a “new creation?” *His love and grace compels us to be ambassadors for Christ. Others desperately need to be reconciled to God by becoming a “new creation.” It is our duty and proper response to share this message of reconciliation with others.*

“As Christ, who knew no sin of His own, was made sin for us, so we, who have no righteousness of our own, are made the righteousness of God in Him.”³

**Make a decision to truly “receive” this “new creation.”
Let it compel you to share the message of reconciliation with others.**

³ Matthew Henry Commentary, NIV, Zonderan, ©1992