

New Creation — Acts 1 and Acts 13, and Revelation 21

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2 Corinthians 5 — There Is New Creation

Second Corinthians 5:17–21 sets the boundary between the old and the new with precision: if any man be in Christ, there is new creation. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. A creation is the bringing into existence of something that was not there before. When God the Holy Spirit came down from heaven on the day of Pentecost, something came into existence in the world that had never been there — the assembly of God. It was not a refurbishment of the old, not a cosmetic updating of Judaism, not simply adding the name of Jesus to what already was. It was new creation.

Reconciliation means men's minds changed, not God's. God always loved. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It was we who needed to be reconciled to God — we who needed to have our minds changed, our souls aligned with what God had done in Christ. The ministry of reconciliation entrusted to Paul was not to change God's attitude toward men but to plead with men: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Acts 1 — The Old Things Still Present

Acts chapter 1 is on this side of the line — before the day of Pentecost, before the Holy Spirit came down, before new creation was a reality in the world. And the old things are visible everywhere in it. Peter stood up in the midst of the

disciples. Peter's characteristic forwardness — always ready to be first, always eager to step up — was one of those old things. And the point is not that Peter was wrong in himself, but that the person who belongs in the midst of the assembly of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Peter in the midst was an old thing.

The number of names was 120. In the new creation, there is only one name that matters — the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one worthy name unto which the Holy Spirit gathers. The old creation loved its lists of names: whole chapters of Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles filled with them. But one name, His name.

The casting of lots in verse 26 was an old thing. The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord — that was how God guided in the old order. After the day of Pentecost, after God the Holy Spirit had come down to be the divine gatherer and sender among His own people, the casting of lots never appears again in the New Testament. It simply vanished, because it was no longer needed. Old things passed away.

If any man be in Christ, there is new creation. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — 2 Corinthians 5:17

Acts 13 — The New Things in Practice

Acts 13:1–4 shows what the new creation looks like when it is functioning. At Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers — not one man running the place, but a plurality of gifted men. And in verse 2, they ministered to the Lord and fasted. The assembly at large was not the centre; the Lord was. They ministered toward Him because He was in the midst. And when it was time to send someone out, there was no casting of lots, no Peter standing up to nominate candidates and count votes. The Holy Ghost said: separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. They were sent forth by the Holy

Ghost. That was new creation — the Holy Spirit present and operative in the assembly, directing what was done, with no man in the midst and no lots cast.

Revelation 21 — All Things New Again

Revelation 21:1–8 looks to the far end: I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. God makes all things new — not the same things improved but genuinely new, as new creation was genuinely new and not Judaism improved. The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The tabernacle of God is with men. God Himself shall be with them and be their God. That is the goal: God all in all.

No more sea — the raging of the nations, the restlessness of this world, entirely removed. No more death, neither sorrow nor crying nor pain. Those things will be old things then. Some who have gone before us already know those things as old things. And verse 5: behold, I make all things new — write, for these words are true and faithful. It is done. As it is finished ushered in the new creation at the cross, it is done ushers in the eternal state. And even there, at the very end, the invitation is still open: to him that is athirst I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely.
