

April 16, 2006 AM

THE NEW CREATION IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST
ROMANS 8:9-27

Words like “redemption” and “salvation” are not only applied to individuals or a group of individuals but also the whole creation. God had a purpose for non-human creation from the beginning. The sin that came into the world through Adam has not, is not and will not defeat God’s purpose for that creation. God will not concede defeat.

1. THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION AND RENEWAL IN CREATION

Must begin with original creation and its purpose. From there we see how God fulfilled his purpose in Christ.

Two creation themes to trace: (a) man is to have dominion over the world; and (b) creation is good (i.e., the material world as God made it).

(a) Man created in the image of God was placed *under God* and *over creation* as God’s vice-regent (i.e., one who exercises authority in a region/colony on behalf of a sovereign). Cf. Gen 1.28 It will be through the dominion of man that the creation will be brought to God’s full and final purpose.

(b) **Genesis 1:31** “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” This proclamation concerning creation included everything that God had made, from man, who was the zenith of God’s creative activity, down through the animals, plants, the earth, etc. Creation is good.

Sin enters the world when Adam, creation’s king, disobeys God and eats of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The entrance of sin distorts and twists everything in creation. Everything over which man is placed in dominion suffers the effects of man’s own rebellion against God.

The results of the fall involve (a) man’s perverted dominion over creation in which he will not and does not exert proper dominion for God’s glory; and (b) the bondage of creation because of the curse (cf. Ge 3.17-19; cp. Rom 8.21).

Man’s twisted position of dominion in the world in relationship to the creation is revealed in his abuse of creation by either worshipping the creation, or treating it like an expendable resource.

Concerning worship cf. Rom 1.23. Man created in God’s image was to be a worshiper of God and lord over creation. But in sin the order is reversed. The creation becomes lord over man. Because of this, creation cannot reach its intended purpose.

There are others who abuse the creation, acting as if we don’t need to be good stewards of it. Note the reason for the exile of Israel: cf. Lev 25:2-5; 26:34-43; 2 Chron 36:20-21. God’s purpose in original creation was effected by sin. But that purpose was to be accomplished in the “seed” that God would raise up to defeat sin. So, what is typified in Israel must be understood as God’s intention for the redemption of the whole world.

Redemption or salvation is from sin and *all* of its horrible effects. That is, redemption (which is a freedom from slavery term) is from the bondage of sin.

What was/is affected by the fall into sin? And whatever suffers from the bondage of sin needs redemption or freedom.

Redemption in terms of the two creational themes: (a) man being restored as creation’s lord and taking proper dominion of it for God’s glory, and (b) the liberation, restoration, renewal and transformation of creation.

(a) The promise in the OC: When God was pronouncing the curse upon the serpent, he promised a seed that would come who would bruise the head of the serpent, defeating him (cf. Gen 3.15). The history of God’s people throughout the Scriptures is the history of that seed.

Adam had handed over his position to the serpent. The serpent, then, assumed the place of man in the world. He was the prince of the world, holding the entire world in bondage. Defeating the serpent would mean taking back the dominion given to him by Adam. This happens as God preserves his seed through history.

(b) Now, when man is put back in proper relationship to God, he will be put back into proper relationship to the creation. When this happens, creation will be freed from its bondage to the curse of sin. Cf. esp. Isa 55:12-13; also 35:1ff; 41:18-20; 43:18ff.; 51:3

2. JESUS' RESURRECTION AS THE BEGINNING AND EMBODIMENT OF NEW CREATION

In Christ Jesus, Paul says, all of the promises of God are “Yes” and “Amen” (2 Cor 1:20). If this is true (and it is), that would mean that the promises concerning restored dominion and new creation are fulfilled in Christ.

Note the language of the “last days”: Isa 2, Micah 4; see Heb 1:1-2; Ac 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 Cor 10.11:: All of history “hinges” on Christ and his work.

Note language/imagery of creation/new creation: Language that speaks of darkness turning to light, the NC people of God being children of the day and not of the night, etc. all point to the fact that God’s new day, God’s new creation has dawned. The events and order of Jesus’ death and resurrection: sixth day (Friday) - “Behold the man” and “it is finished.” Eighth day or first day of the week Jesus is raised from the dead.

How does the resurrection begin the new creation? Many things look just like they did before the resurrection. Jesus is one man in history who has been raised from the dead? Other people in history have been raised from the dead. What makes his resurrection bring in the new creation? The answers to these questions lie in God’s promises concerning the (a) the restored rule of man and (b) the restored/transformed creation (i.e., new creation).

(a) Man’s rule under God and over creation is restored in Christ.

A “new Adam,” or more specifically, a last Adam was needed. This would be the “seed of the woman.” Dominion would be regained by another *man*. The “seed” that is to come must also be a part of the creation. He must be a man because God’s original purposes for creation are fulfilled through man. To do anything less is to concede defeat in his original purpose ... something which the God who made the heavens and the earth can never do.

God’s preservation of the seed: Seth -> Noah -> Shem -> Abraham -> Isaac -> Jacob -> Judah -> David -> Great David’s greater Son (cf. 2 Sam 7:14), Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 1:1-4).

The promised seed was to be the true man, the Adam, the one who would properly bear God’s image. As God’s true image-bearer, his faithful Son, this man would do what Adam was commissioned to do: rule the world as God’s vice-regent. He is the last Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15.45). Declared to be the world’s true Lord in his resurrection (Phil 2.9-11). He will reign until all things are put under his feet (1 Cor 15.20-28). All authority has been given to him in heaven and on earth (Mt 28.18).

Hebrews 2:5-9: Jesus is the fulfillment of what God says about man in Psa 8.

(b) Creation is transformed and, thus, liberated in Christ.

The importance of the bodily resurrection: creation (of which the body is a part) is *renewed* and *transformed* not annihilated.

Affirms the radical and horrible nature of sin as well as the goodness of creation: sin must be dealt with in the most extreme measure: through death. But creation is not abandoned. It cannot be embraced as it is, but it must be transformed. Nevertheless it is transformed in Christ.

Jesus is the firstfruits from the dead, Paul says in 1 Cor 15. He is the guarantee of God’s promise for a full harvest. Our final resurrection will be the final stage in the renewal process. This is that of which Paul is speaking in Romans 8 when he says that the creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

When this happens, creation will be liberated completely from its bondage to decay. God’s future has invaded the present in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And now we look and groan, as Paul says, with confident hope for our own resurrection and the renewal of all of creation.

Application: (1) As Christians we anticipate the transformation of the world.

Application: (2) We groan with and for the transformation of creation while we wait for final redemption.

Application: (3) Our labor in the present has meaning in God’s final purpose.

Application: (4) Any man in Christ is new creation.