

# **Easter Changes Everything**

*A Theological Devotional*



**I**n his introduction to the great theological tract by Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “I believe that many who find that ‘nothing happens’ when they sit down, or kneel down, to a book of devotion, would find that the heart sings unbidden while they are working their way through a tough bit of theology with a pipe in their teeth and a pencil in their hand.”<sup>1</sup>

I’m with Lewis. Good theology books make my heart sing more often than devotional works, and no season in the church calendar makes my heart sing more than Easter. So in anticipation of the celebration, I set aside time each year to work through a tough bit of theology. My aim is to rivet my heart on one of the most glorious implications of Christ’s resurrection from the dead: the dawning of the long awaited New Creation.

This bold new reality is found all over the New Testament (once you know what to look for).<sup>2</sup> In Christ, we have *become* new creation, Paul says, a profound reality shaping every dimension of our life and ethics. Even more importantly, Christ’s resurrection inaugurates a cosmic re-creation. It changes history—it marks new history. The dominant saga of sin in the world has come to a decisive end. Or as N.T. Wright eloquently puts it, “with the resurrec-

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis in Athanasius, *On the Incarnation: The Treatise De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1996), 8.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Cor. 5:15-17; Gal. 6:14-15; Eph. 2:10, 15; Col. 1:18; Rev. 3:14.

tion itself a shockwave has gone through the entire cosmos: the New Creation has been born.”<sup>3</sup> And the reverberations of this shockwave can be felt throughout the cosmos and deep into our bones. Easter reminds us of the cataclysmic moment in history when Christ broke us free from death’s grip. The resurrection proves the New Creation has been born.

Easter changed everything—it really did. And for the past six years I have reviewed a collection of my favorite quotes on this theme, quotes from the writings of some of the most respected and articulate theologians who get this point right.<sup>4</sup> I first pulled these quotes together in the spring of 2009 to feed my own heart and mind, and a year later I posted the quotes online for others to use.

Recently, a friend encouraged me to return to this document and expand it with selections I have read during in the intervening years (G. K. Beale’s titanic work on this theme, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, was released in 2011). I eagerly took the advice and revised and expand my collection. In the process, I also reformatted the document and expanded the footnotes. Most importantly, I tripled the content in the original document.

This small book moves from comments on particular biblical texts, then to broader theological synthesis, and then finally to a conclusion of summary statements. Working on this update has reminded me of the voluminous implications charged into the resurrection of Christ, and the ongoing need for a book-length treat-

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<sup>3</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers; 2003), 239.

<sup>4</sup> I should note here, the inclusion of a theologian in this project is not wholesale approval of everything he believes or has written.

ment on Easter and inaugurated re-creation for the many Christians who have never been introduced to the theme.

If I am to write this book, it will have to wait. But the message is urgently needed today. As I write, a particularly violent form of Islamic extremism is ravaging the Middle East, haunting the Internet with videos of brutal murders and beheadings, all in an attempt to inaugurate the apocalypse with blood. But as Easter approaches, this glorious holiday reminds us how Jesus beat ISIS to the punch, and inaugurated the end of all things through his resurrection.

To show how I arrive at this conclusion from Scripture I offer you this small book. It is meant to be studied unhurriedly, with an open Bible, a pen in hand, a pipe in mouth (optional), and an unbidden heart, worship-ready, and eager for a fresh look into the unsearchable riches of Christ.

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## **OUTLINE**

- 1. Firstborn from the Grave (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:20-23)**
- 2. A New Genesis (1 Cor. 15:35-49)**
- 3. A Story of Two Adams (1 Cor. 15:20-23, 42-49)**
- 4. The Power Plant of New Creation (Eph. 1:15-23)**
- 5. A King Over New Creation (Col. 1:15-20)**
- 6. The Beginner of Creation at the End of History (Rev. 3:14)**
- 7. The Final Chapter in a Long Story (Rev. 21)**
- 8. Easter, New Creation, and Sunday Worship**
- 9. Easter, New Creation, and My Life (2 Cor. 5:17)**
- 10. Summary Quotes**

## 1. **Firstborn from the Grave (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:20–23).**

- 1.1. **Beale:** “The new creation has begun physically in the form of Christ’s resurrection body, which is the first re-created body of the new creation. Christ is the first one, according to 1 Cor. 15, who has already experienced the consummate resurrection and individual consummate new creation. As such, he is the ‘first fruits’ of all God’s people who will be raised at the end of the age. Thus, believers’ present identification with Christ’s resurrection is identification with new creation, since his resurrection was the very inception of the eschatological new creation.”<sup>5</sup>
- 1.2. **Ridderbos:** “As the Firstborn among the many . . . Christ not only occupies a special place and dignity, but he also goes before them, he opens up the way for them, he joins their future to his own. . . . In him the resurrection of the dead dawns, his resurrection represents the commencement of the new world of God.”<sup>6</sup>
- 1.3. **Beale:** “‘The firstborn’ refers to Christ’s high, privileged position as a result of the resurrection from the dead (i.e., a position with respect to the OT idea of primogeniture, especially in the context of royal succession [Ps. 89:27–37 is developing this idea from 2 Sam. 7:13–16; Ps. 2:7–8]). Christ has gained such a sovereign position over the cosmos, not

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<sup>5</sup> G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 2011), 302.

<sup>6</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 56.

in the sense that he is recognized as the first-created being of all creation or as the origin of creation, but rather as the inaugurator of the new creation via his resurrection (cf. Col. 1:18)."<sup>7</sup>

- 1.4. **Beale** (on Colossians): “[Paul] sees new Colossian converts as newly born children of God through their identification with Jesus Christ, the last, new Adam. When they place their faith in the Messiah, they become identified with who he is and what he has accomplished as the last Adam, who has regained the image of God for fallen humanity (cf. 1:15) and established the kingdom that the first Adam should have set up (1:13). Since Christ is the ‘firstborn’ of the new creation, those who identify with him also become subsequently born into the beginning of the new creation. They have been born through being raised from spiritual death to spiritual life by means of being identified with Christ’s own resurrection (2:12–13). In 3:9–10 Paul explains that this means that they have ‘laid aside the old man.’ . . . Consequently, as ‘new men,’ they are progressively ‘being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created’ them (a direct allusion to Gen. 1:27 in 3:10). Therefore, believers are the created progeny of the last Adam, who are beginning to fulfill in him the mandate given to the first Adam. The Gen. 1:28 language applied by Paul to them in 1:6, 9–10 indicates that they are a part of the

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<sup>7</sup> G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 2011), 336.

inaugurated new creation and are beginning to fulfill in Christ what has been left unfulfilled in the primordial mandate throughout the ages.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 845.



**2. A New Genesis (1 Cor. 15:35–49).** Note how Paul connects the resurrection of Christ to the creation account of Genesis 1–2.

2.1. **Thiselton:** “If creation itself is God’s gift, the new creation which begins with Christ’s resurrection and promises the resurrection of believers is no less so.”<sup>9</sup>

2.2. **Wright:** “A glance through Genesis 1–2 reveals how many of its major themes are alluded to in Paul’s present argument. The creator God made the heavens and the earth, and filled both with his creatures; Paul mentions these two categories in verse 40, and uses a discussion of them to distinguish the first Adam from the final one. The powerful divine wind, or spirit, moved over the waters, and the divine breath or spirit also animated Adam and Eve; the life-giving activity of both the creator and Jesus is seen by Paul in terms of the *pneuma*, the spirit, wind or breath (verses 44–46). The creator made the lights in heaven, which Paul mentions in verse 41. He created plants bearing fruit containing seed, so that more plants could be produced; Paul makes this a major theme in verses 36–38, and then draws on the language of ‘sowing’ in verses 42–44. The creator made every kind of bird, animal and fish; Paul brings them, too, into his argument (verses 39–40). At the climax of Genesis 1, the creator made human beings in his own image, to have dominion over the rest of creation, and in Genesis 2

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1195.

he entrusted Adam in particular with responsibility for naming the animals; for Paul, too, the climax of the story is the recreation of humankind through the life-giving activity of the final Adam, whose image will be borne by all who belong to him. This is indeed a deliberate and careful theology of new Genesis, of creation renewed. . . . The Messiah, as the final Adam, the start of the renewed human race (compare Colossians 1:18b), is not only the model for the new type of humanity. He possesses the authority to bring it into being. The power through which he exercises that authority is, as we should by now expect, the Spirit.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers; 2003), 341–342.

### 3. A Story of Two Adams (1 Cor. 15:20–23, 42–49).

- 3.1. **Ridderbos:** “Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15:45ff of Adam as ‘the first man,’ and of Christ as ‘the last Adam,’ the ‘second man.’ The expression ‘the last Adam’ is again highly typical of the eschatological character of Paul’s preaching: Christ is thereby designated as the Inaugurator of the new humanity.”<sup>11</sup>
- 3.2. **Oepke:** “The first and the second Adam are progenitors initiating two races of men. Each implies a whole world, an order of life or death. Each includes his adherents in and under himself. The NT view is distinguished from oriental speculations about the first man, even in their Jewish form, by the two facts, first, that it never equates the first Adam and the Redeemer, but sees them as two opposite poles, and secondly, that it thinks of the Author of the second creation as historically present, so that this new creation has already been inaugurated.”<sup>12</sup>
- 3.3. **Silva:** “When Paul speaks of Jesus as Adam’s antitype, he uses such terms as ‘the last Adam’ and ‘the second man’ (1 Cor 15:45–49). This description suggests the true, original man who came into the world to impart the saving truth by which he himself lived. Whatever personalities Judaism may have expected in the last days, Jesus as the risen one

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<sup>11</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 56–57.

<sup>12</sup> Albrecht Oepke in Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, editors, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 542.

exceeded all expectations, for in his individual person he represented the general resurrection, and with it the advent of the kingdom of God, the new creation, and the forgiveness of sins (1 Cor 15:24; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 1:14). We should note also that Paul corrects pagan dualism by insisting on the corporeal nature of the resurrection. To be sure, the corporeality given to Adam and humanity at the creation is not identical to that given at the resurrection. The risen one grants us a new existence with God. Hence the new creation is more than a mere restoration of the original: the last Adam brings into being something new and until now unknown.”<sup>13</sup>

- 3.4. **Gaffin:** “In 1 Cor. 15 Adam is the great counterpart to the resurrected Christ: as death has come through the man, Adam, in whom all die, so resurrection-life has come through the man, Christ, in whom all (believers) will be made alive (vv. 21–22). As the reversal of the death brought by Adam at the beginning of history, Christ’s resurrection is not merely an isolated event in the past but has a profound corporate significance for the future: he is the ‘firstfruits’ of the great resurrection-harvest, in which believers will have a place, at the end of history (v. 20). The carefully developed antithetical parallelism of verses 42–49, starting with the differences between the dead (‘sown’) body and the believer’s resurrection body (vv. 42–44a), broadens in verses 45–

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<sup>13</sup> Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 1:148.

49 to include Adam and Christ. Not only do they exemplify these bodies, respectively, but also they are key, representative figures, heads over contrasting orders of existence. Adam is 'first' (vv. 45, 47), there is no one before him; Christ is 'second' (v. 47), there is no-one between Adam and him; Christ is 'last' (v. 45), there is no-one after him. By virtue of creation (not because of the fall, note the use of Gn. 2:7 in v. 45b), Adam became 'a living being' and so represents the 'natural' (vv. 44, 46) or 'earthly' (vv. 47-49) order, subject now, since his fall, to death. By resurrection (*cf.* vv. 20, 21b, 22b), Christ, 'the last Adam', became (economically, not ontologically) 'life-giving Spirit' (v. 45c); as such he represents the corresponding 'spiritual' (vv. 44, 46), 'heavenly' (vv. 47-49) order of eschatological life. In view ultimately are two creations, the original become 'perishable', contrasted with the final and 'imperishable' (v. 42), each with an Adam of its own. The resurrected Christ, in the power of the Spirit, is the head of nothing less than a new creation (*cf.* 2 Cor. 5:17). Yet this antithesis is not an ultimate dualism. In Christ's resurrection God's original purposes for creation have been attained. Where Adam failed, the last Adam has succeeded. The consummation intended for the 'natural' order has been realized in the 'spiritual', resurrection order. The image of God, distorted by Adam's sin, has been restored in Christ; in fact, as resurrected, he is the eschatological image of God (see 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). As believers now bear 'the likeness of the earthly man' (Adam), so when they are

raised bodily they will bear ‘the likeness of the man from heaven’ (v. 49), the image of the exalted Christ (*cf.* Phil. 3:20). Conformity to this image is the goal of their predestination (Rom. 8:29), a conformity which presently is already being realized in them (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23–24).<sup>14</sup>

- 3.5. **Rushdoony:** “Jesus Christ came as the new Adam, as Adam II. Like Adam, He was a special creation of Almighty God. Like Adam I, He was sinless, and had to face temptation. Whereas Adam I was tempted in paradise (Gen. 2:1–35), Adam II was tempted in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11), for Adam I’s sin had turned the world into a wilderness. Adam I was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–28); Adam II, in His humanity, was also made in God’s image, but, in His deity, was very God (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4; etc.). The two natures of Adam II were in perfect union, but without confusion. As Adam II, Jesus Christ resisted temptation, kept God’s law faithfully and totally, made atonement for the sins of His people, and destroyed the power of sin and death in His resurrection. Whereas Adam I gave to his seed or humanity sin and death as an inheritance, Adam II gave to His humanity righteousness and life, and membership or citizenship in the Kingdom of God. We have thus two Adams, two humanities, and two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God. The victory of Jesus Christ thus means our victory, and His resurrection

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Gaffin in Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 4–5.

means our resurrection, for ‘since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (1 Cor. 15:21–22). . . . We cannot lose in Jesus Christ. As members of His glorious new humanity and new creation, we live in God’s world of total meaning and total victory. Jesus Christ as Adam II makes us partakers of God’s victory.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Rousas John Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology in Two Volumes* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 1:254–256.

**4. The Power Plant of New Creation (Eph. 1:15–23).** Note especially verse 20.

- 4.1. **Beale:** “Paul understands Jesus’ resurrection as bringing about a ‘new creation’ (cf. Eph. 1:20–23; 2:5–6, 10).”<sup>16</sup>
- 4.2. **O’Brien:** “The verb ‘exert’, already used in v. 11, is cognate with the noun that appears in v. 19 and describes God’s powerful operation in Christ. His mighty strength was *exerted* first in Jesus’ resurrection. Elsewhere in Paul’s letters, notably at Colossians 2:12 where the same noun appears, God’s power is said to have been at work in the resurrection of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:14; Rom. 1:4; Phil. 3:10). His power is life-giving. By it he raised Jesus from the dead, and now it functions as the source of the risen Jesus’ life. Christ’s resurrection from the dead is determinative for the believer’s life, and later the apostle will discuss the relevance of this life-giving power to those who have been raised and seated with Christ (cf. 1:20 with 2:5, 6). J. A. Fitzmyer appropriately remarks that this resurrection power ‘emanates from the Father, raises Jesus from the dead at the resurrection, endows him with a new vitality, and finally proceeds from him as the life-giving, vitalizing force of the ‘new creation’

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<sup>16</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 298.



and of the new life that Christians in union with Christ experience and live.”<sup>17</sup>

4.3. **Bavinck:** “It is the crucified but also the resurrected and exalted Christ whom the apostles proclaim. From that vantage point of the exaltation of Christ, they view and describe his earthly life, suffering, and death. For the work he now carries out as the exalted mediator, he laid the foundations in his cross. In his battle with sin, the world, and Satan, the cross has been his only weapon. By the cross he triumphed in the sphere of justice over all powers that are hostile to God. But in the state of exaltation, consequently, he has also been given the divine right, the divine appointment, the royal power and prerogatives to carry out the work of re-creation in full, to conquer all his enemies, to save all those who have been given him, and to perfect the entire kingdom of God.”<sup>18</sup>

4.4. **Gentry:** “In the first half of Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus, all of his readers, the ancient Ephesians as well as us today, are called by the Triune God to a destiny beyond our imagination. This destiny is revealed in the Father’s love for us before he made the world, the death and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ to free us from the destructive broken relationship between Creator and creation

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 139.

<sup>18</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 473–474.

caused by human rebellion, and the gift of the Spirit as his guarantee that he has not only started but will finish his work in us. He has begun a new creation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Jesus burst from the tomb on that first Easter, he was the first man in the new creation. By believing in Jesus we are joined to him. We become part of the new creation. We form the new humanity (2:15) that God is creating. Unlike the first creation where God began by making the world and afterwards made creatures to live in his world, in the new creation he has begun by creating the new humanity and later will renew the world in which they are to live.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Peter J. Gentry, “Speaking the Truth in Love (Eph 4:15): Life in the New Covenant Community,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10/2 (2006): 66.

**5. A King Over New Creation (Col. 1:15-20).** *Note again the connection between creation (v. 15) and resurrection (v. 18).*

5.1. **Moo:** “Because God in all ‘his fullness’ is present in Christ (v. 19), his death (v. 20) and resurrection (v. 18) have the power to initiate (‘beginning,’ ‘firstborn’ in v. 18) a new creation (‘the body, the church,’ v. 18). This new creation work rests on the universal reconciling, or ‘peacemaking’ power of the cross of Christ. It is God’s intention to bring ‘peace’ to his fallen and fractured universe, to bring all things again into subjection to his sovereignty, to bring all his enemies into subjection. This intention will be finally accomplished only when Christ returns in glory to establish the kingdom in its final form (cf. 1:22b; 3:4).”<sup>20</sup>

5.2. **Ridderbos:** “What we meet with in this ‘double’ Adamitic significance of Christ (as the Firstborn of every creature and as the last Adam) is not the conjoining of two interpretations of Genesis 1-3 that do not go together, but rather Paul’s vision of the all-encompassing significance of the salvation that has appeared in Christ. One is disposed to think here of the describing of ever greater circles around one center and starting point. This latter is situated in the all-controlling fact of Christ’s death and resurrection. It is there that the new creation comes to light, Christ appears as the Firstborn from the dead and the Inaugurator of the

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<sup>20</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 138.

new humanity. It is from thence that the redemptive significance of Christ's advent and work is made transparent, first in his human existence before and after the resurrection (flesh and Spirit); then even in his pre-existence as the Son of God sent for this task of second man; and finally in his significance as encompassing the whole of creation and history. The ultimate objective of God's redemptive work brings us back to the Beginning. What was lost in the first Adam is regained in the second in a much more glorious way. For the second Adam is the Son of God. And the glory that Adam as the Image of God and Firstborn of every creature was permitted to possess was only a reflection of Christ's being in the form of God. Thus Christ's exaltation as the second Adam refers back to the beginning of all things, makes him known as the one who from the very outset, in a much more glorious sense than the first Adam, was the Image of God and the Firstborn of every creature. So the fundamental structures and implications of Paul's eschatological preaching of Christ are exposed to view. The new creation that has broken through with Christ's resurrection takes the place of the first creation of which Adam was the representative. It is, however, as much more glorious than the first as the second man, both in virtue of his origin and of his destiny, was superior to the first. In the description of this superiority of the second man in the categories that have been derived from the significance of the first man Paul comes to the full explication of the salvation

that has appeared in Christ. In that sense one could call Colossians 1:15–20 the keystone of Paul’s Christology; with the explicit addition, however, that it was not theological speculation, but pastoral care for the church and the warding off of what was alleged against the all-embracing significance of the salvation that has been manifested in Christ, that brought the apostle to this confession.”<sup>21</sup>

- 5.3. **Beale:** “As is widely recognized, while [Colossians] 1:15–17 refers to Christ’s sovereignty over the first creation, 1:18–20 affirms his sovereign position in the second, new creation that has been launched. In this respect, the identical title of ‘firstborn’ is reapplied in order again to indicate Christ’s rule over the new order by virtue of his resurrection from the dead (1:18c). His priority in the new creation entails his kingship over it (for a relevant parallel, see Heb. 1:2–5; 2:5–9). In 1:19–20 Paul states the reasons for Christ’s position of rule in the new age: (1) he is the full expression of deity (amplified in 2:9 as ‘the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form’); (2) he has inaugurated the process of bringing creation back into harmonious relation to itself and to God (i.e., ‘reconciling’). Paul portrays Christ as God and end-time Adam in the flesh in order to affirm that ‘Jesus fulfills the purposes which God had marked out *both* for himself *and* for humanity.’ The design for humanity originally reaches its completion in the last Adam. The first Adam’s failure

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<sup>21</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 85–86.

left a gap of needed obedience for humanity to reach its eschatological completion, so that even the first Adam's disobedience typologically pointed to another Adam's obedience."<sup>22</sup>

5.4. **Wright:** "The basis of this sequence of thought is the unveiling of the Messiah as the image of the creator God, the 'firstborn' both of creation and then of the new creation. Colossians 1:15–20, a spectacular early Christian poem, places Jesus' resurrection (1:18) in parallel with the creation of the world (1:15), seeing it as the ground and origin of what the creator has now accomplished and is now implementing, namely the reconciliation of all things to him. The very shape of the poem insists that Jesus' resurrection, as a one-off event, is an act not of the abolition of the original creation but of its fulfillment: the same Messiah and lord is the one through whom all things were made in the first place, the one in whom all things cohere, the one in and through whom all things are now brought into a new relationship with the creator God and with one another."<sup>23</sup>

5.5. **Wright:** "With Jesus' resurrection, the new age has dawned. The new man has emerged from among the old humanity, whose life he had shared, whose pain and sin he had borne.

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<sup>22</sup> G. K. Beale on Colossians in G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 854–855.

<sup>23</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers; 2003), 239.

For Paul, as throughout the Bible, sin and death were inextricably linked, so that Christ's victory over the latter signaled his defeat of the former (see Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:12–28). 'Firstborn' here, particularly when taken closely with *archē* in the sense of 'beginning', implies that Christ's resurrection, though presently unique, will be acted out by a great company of others. Those Jews who expected a resurrection from the dead (certainly the Pharisees, and quite possibly many others) had seen it as a large-scale, single event at the end of time. Paul, however, believed that God brought forward the inauguration of the 'age to come', the age of resurrection, into the midst of the 'present age', in order that the power of the new age might be unleashed upon the world while there was still time for the world to be saved."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 78–79.

## 6. The Beginner of Creation at the End of History (Rev. 3:14).

6.1. **Beale:** “Despite what most commentators think, the titles in 3:14 do not link Jesus to the original creation, but are an interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection drawn from 1:5. His resurrection is viewed as the beginning of the *new creation*, which is parallel with Col. 1:15b, 18b; cf. ‘first-born of all creation’ in Col. 1:15b, which may refer to the original creation in Genesis, and ‘the beginning, the firstborn from the dead’ in v 18b. The latter phrase refers to the resurrection as a new cosmic beginning (as evident from the link not only with Col. 1:15–17 but also with 1:19–20, 23). This is parallel with 2 Cor. 5:15, 17, where Paul understands Jesus’ resurrection as bringing about a ‘new creation’ (cf. the linking ὥστε [‘so that’]; so also Eph. 1:20–23; 2:5–6, 10). . . . Christ as ‘firstborn from the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth’ in 1:5 is interpreted in 3:14 as designating Christ as the sovereign inaugurator of the new creation. Consequently, the title ‘beginning of the creation of God’ refers not to Jesus’ sovereignty over the original creation but to his resurrection as demonstrating that he is the *inauguration* of and *sovereign* over the new creation.”<sup>25</sup>

6.2. **Beale:** “The first parallel in Rev 1:5, Christ as ‘a faithful witness,’ is directly followed by his being ‘first-born from the

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<sup>25</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 298.



dead,' just as in 3:14 Christ as 'a faithful witness' is directly followed by 'beginning of the creation of God.' Hence, this parallel shows that the 'beginning of the (new) creation of God' is begun in Jesus' resurrection. This parallel is demonstrated further by recalling that every one of Christ's self-introductions in each of the other letters in Rev 2-3 is either a restatement or development of something in chapter 1. It is unlikely that the phrase 'the beginning of the creation of God' is the only part of Christ's seven self-introductions that is not derived from chapter 1. It is probable that this phrase 'the beginning of the creation of God' is not alluding to the first creation in the book of Genesis but is an interpretative paraphrase of Jesus as 'the firstborn of the dead' in 1:5. In this light, Rev 3:14 has developed Rev 1:5 through understanding it as a beginning fulfillment of Isa 65:16-17."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> G. K. Beale, "Can the Bible Be Completely Inspired by God and Yet Still Contain Errors? A Response to Some Recent 'Evangelical' Proposals," *Westminster Theological Journal* 73 (2011): 13.

## 7. The Final Chapter in a Long Story (Rev. 21).

7.1. **Beale:** “God says, ‘Behold, I am making all things new,’ which repeats for a third time the Isaiah prophecies of the coming new creation. Verse 1 has already appealed to Isa. 65:17 and 66:22, v 4b alluded to Isa. 65:17 and 43:18, and v 5 now draws on Isa. 43:19: ‘Behold, I make new things’ (perhaps also Isa. 66:22: ‘the new heaven and the new earth that I make’). In 2 Cor. 5:17 Paul sees the same Isaiah prophecy (Isa. 43:18–19 and 65:17) beginning to be fulfilled through Christ’s death and resurrection. Here, though, John portrays the complete fulfillment of Isaiah’s new creation prophecies. To highlight the consummate redemptive-historical fulfillment he adds ‘all’ to Isaiah’s words. The insertion suggests not thoroughgoing universal salvation but the culmination of the new creation previously begun only in part. All the people of God *together with* the heavens and earth will be transformed into a new creation. The present tense (‘I am making’) does not refer to the present time of the church age but enforces the certainty that the future new creation will occur. It is a ‘prophetic present,’ like the Hebrew prophetic perfect, foreseeing the time when God will be creating all things new.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1052–1053.

7.2. **Wright:** “The judgment scene of chapter 20 gives way to the majestic and moving vision of the heavenly city, coming down out of heaven as a bride ready for her husband, the Messiah himself. Prominent among the descriptions of the city and its life are these: that death will be no more (21:4), and that everything less than the full, rich human life intended by the creator is banished, cast into the lake of fire (21:8). These two final chapters are, in fact, full of indications of new creation. The key symbols are taken from biblical images of the renewed Jerusalem, which already carried the ‘new creation’ theme, retaining the outline of earlier pictures though developing many details in fresh ways. The river which flows from the city, like that from Eden only now life-giving in a new sense, supports the tree of life, not now a single tree in the garden, but growing plentifully along both banks of the river. It bears fruit every month, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Here and elsewhere we glimpse, not a static picture of bliss, but a new creation bursting with new projects, new goals and new possibilities. The long story of God and the world, of God and Israel, of God and the Messiah, has arrived at its goal. Death always was the ultimate denial of the good creation; now, with its abolition, the creator’s new world can proceed.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers; 2003), 475–476.

**8. Easter, New Creation, and Sunday Worship.** *Evidence that the resurrection as the dawn of the new creation influenced the placement and priority of the Lord's Day in church history.*

8.1. **Vos:** "We do not sufficiently realize the profound sense the early Church had of the epoch-making significance of the appearance, and especially of the resurrection of the Messiah. The latter was to them nothing less than the bringing in of a new, the second, creation. And they felt that this ought to find expression in the placing of the Sabbath with reference to the other days of the week. Believers knew themselves, in measure, partakers of the Sabbath-fulfillment. If the one creation required one sequence, then the other required another. It has been strikingly observed, that our Lord died on the eve of that Jewish Sabbath, at the end of one of these typical weeks of labor by which His work and its consummation were prefigured. And Christ entered upon His rest, the rest of His new, eternal life on the first day of the week, so that the Jewish Sabbath comes to lie between, was, as it were, disposed of, buried in his grave."<sup>29</sup>

8.2. **Wright:** "Where did resurrection show up in what the early Christians habitually did? Briefly and broadly, they behaved as if they were in some important senses already living in God's new creation. They lived as if the covenant had been renewed, as if the kingdom were in a sense already

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<sup>29</sup> Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 158.

present, though, to be sure, future as well; often their present-kingdom behaviour (for instance, readiness to forgive persecutors rather than call down curses on them) comes to the fore precisely in contexts where it is all too obvious that the kingdom has not yet been fully realized. The other elements of early Christian praxis, not least baptism, eucharist and martyrdom, point in the same direction.<sup>86</sup> If challenged about their lifestyle, or their existence as a community, the early Christians responded by telling stories of Jesus, particularly of his triumph over death. . . . ‘The Lord’s Day’, John the seer called it; and there is very early evidence of the Christians meeting on the first day of the week. This is hardly to be explained simply on the grounds that they wanted to distinguish themselves from their Jewish neighbours, or that they believed the new creation had begun; or at least, if either of those explanations is offered, they press us quickly back to the question of why they wanted to do the former, or why they believed the latter. The early writers face these questions, and give the obvious answers: Ignatius draws attention to the resurrection as the rationale of the new practice, and Justin connects it with the first day of the new creation. Nor should we minimize the significance of the change. The seventh-day sabbath was so firmly rooted in Judaism as a major social, cultural, religious and political landmark that to make any adjustment in it was not like a modern western person deciding to play tennis on Tuesdays instead of Wednesdays, but like persuading

the most devout medieval Roman Catholic to fast on Thursdays instead of Fridays, or the most devout member of the Free Church of Scotland to organize worship on Mondays instead of Sundays. It takes a conscious, deliberate and sustained effort to change or adapt one of the most powerful elements of symbolic praxis within a worldview—not least when the sabbath was one of the three things, along with circumcision and the food laws, that marked out Jews from their pagan neighbours. By far the easiest explanation for all this is that all the early Christians believed that something had *happened* on that first Sunday morning.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg: Fortress Publishers; 2003), 578–580.

## 9. Easter, New Creation, and My Life (2 Cor. 5:17).

9.1. **Beasley-Murray**: “In the resurrection of Jesus we are conscious of standing before God’s eschatological secret, the mystery of the new creation. Paul assumes this understanding in his well known utterance of 2 Corinthians 5:17. This appears to mean that to enter into the *koinonia* [fellowship] of Christ is to step into the new creation that came into being in the Easter of the Son of God. Before any creature could proclaim, ‘Christ is risen,’ there was the new creation in the person of the risen Lord. This point needs to be emphasized, for I think it is insufficiently appreciated.”<sup>31</sup>

9.2. **Ridderbos** (on 2 Cor. 5:17; 6:2): “When he speaks here of ‘new creation’ this is not meant merely in an individual sense (‘a new creature’), but one is to think of the new world of the re-creation that God has made to dawn in Christ, and in which everyone who is in Christ is included. . . . The ‘old things’ stand for the unredeemed world in its distress and sin, the ‘new things’ for the time of salvation and the re-creation that have dawned with Christ’s resurrection. He who is in Christ, therefore, is new creation: he participates in, belongs to, this new world of God.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, “Resurrection And Parousia Of The Son Of Man,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 42/1 (1991): 300–301.

<sup>32</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 45–46.

9.3. **Fee:** “The resurrection of Christ marked the beginning of the End, the turning of the ages. However, the End had only *begun*; they still awaited the final event, the (now second) coming of their Messiah Jesus, at which time they too would experience the resurrection/transformation of the body. They lived ‘between the times’; *already* the future had begun, *not yet* had it been consummated. From the New Testament perspective the whole Christian existence—and theology—has this eschatological ‘tension’ as its basic framework. . . . The resurrection of the dead is for Paul the final event on God’s eschatological calendar, the unmistakable evidence that the End has fully arrived. For Paul *the* resurrection has already taken place when Christ was raised from the dead, this setting in motion the final doom of death and thereby guaranteeing our resurrection. Christ’s resurrection makes ours both inevitable and necessary—inevitable, because his is the first fruits which sets the whole process in motion; necessary, because death is God’s enemy as well as ours, and our resurrection spells the end to the final enemy of the living God who gives life to all who live (1 Cor 15:20–28). Believers therefore live ‘between the times’ with regard to the two resurrections. We have *already* been ‘raised with Christ,’ which guarantees our *future* bodily resurrection (Rom 6:4–5; 8:10–11).”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Hendrickson, 1994), 803–805.



9.4. **Schreiner** (on Galatians): “The resurrection in Jewish thought signals the end of the old evil age and the coming of the new age of peace and plenty (cf. Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1–14; Dan 12:2–3). The resurrection is not a prominent theme in Galatians, and yet it appears in the first verse of the letter (1:1), signifying that the age to come has invaded the present age. The old evil cosmos has lost its hold over believers through the cross of Jesus Christ (6:14). Therefore, believers now belong to the new creation (6:15). The new creation has not been consummated (Isa 65:17; 66:22), but it has been inaugurated through the work of Jesus Christ. The gift of the Holy Spirit represents the arrival of the new creation (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 11:18–19; 36:26–27; Joel 2:28). The Spirit is a gift of the last days, and his presence and indwelling among the Galatians shows that the final days have begun. Eschatological contrasts dominate Galatians, so that we have a contrast between the old age of the flesh and the new age of the Spirit. The flesh in Paul represents the old age and who human beings are in Adam, whereas the Spirit signifies the inbreaking of the age to come.”<sup>34</sup>

9.5. **Clowney**: “Christian hope is not allegiance to the possible in a random universe. It is longing for the completion of God’s work of restoration and renewal, longing for the new

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 394–395.

creation that is as real as Christ's resurrection body, which is its center and beginning."<sup>35</sup>

9.6. **Moore** (on pro-life issues): "Evangelicals do not have biblical warrant to disengage from the life-and-death issues of the public square in order to pursue an 'other-worldly' and 'wholly spiritual' endeavor of rescuing souls from the created order. The Christian doctrine of salvation is rooted in the creation purposes of God, as well as in the eschatological *telos* of creation in the restoration of the image of God (Rom 8:29) and the regeneration of the entire cosmos (Eph 1:10). The two come together in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the decisive act of redemptive history that confirms the Kingdom purposes of God for the whole of humanity, body and soul, as well as for the whole of the created order. The resurrection of Jesus, as the righteous human firstborn of the new creation (Col 1:18; Heb 5:7-9) along with the future resurrection of the Messiah's joint-heirs is a resounding confirmation that God still deems His cosmos—including His justified image-bearers—as 'good' (Rom 8:19-23). This informs evangelical engagement on issues such as abortion because, as ethicist Oliver O'Donovan observes, the resurrection does away with any notion that Christian theology mandates a negation of the bodily and material aspects of created reality. A creational understanding of the gospel as revealed in the new creation be-

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<sup>35</sup> Edmund P. Clowney, "The Politics Of The Kingdom," *Westminster Theological Journal* 41/2 (1978): 298-299.

gun in the resurrection, therefore, demands that Christians embrace a holistic concern for humanity. By refusing to bifurcate the body from the soul, a Kingdom-oriented soteriology might have well served an evangelical theology taken off-guard by *Roe [v. Wade]*. By envisioning the mission of the Kingdom as encompassing concern for both body and soul, and by seeing Kingdom priorities as including both the justification of the wicked and justice for the innocent, evangelical theology might have been better prepared for the cultural upheaval that led to the debate over abortion rights. This holistic interrelationship between creation and salvation would also serve as an impetus for evangelical theology to engage vigorously other matters of human dignity, which are mounting as reproductive and human cloning technologies proliferate.”<sup>36</sup>

9.7. **Horton:** “Christ is already a king with his kingdom, but for now this realm is visible chiefly in the public ministry of Word, sacrament, and discipline, and also in the fellowship of the saints as they share their spiritual and material gifts in the body of Christ. Thus, in all times and places since Pentecost, the Spirit is opening up worldly reality to the new creation that has dawned with Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Through the waters of baptism, the breaking of bread, the hearing of the Word, the guidance of pastors and elders, the priestly service of deacons, and the witness

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<sup>36</sup> Russell D. Moore, “The Gospel According to Jane Roe: Abortion Rights and the Reshaping of Evangelical Theology,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7/2 (2003): 44–45.

of all believers to Christ in the world, the powers of the age to come begin to penetrate this fading evil age. The church is not yet identical with the kingdom that Christ will consummate at his return, but it is the down payment on ‘the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago’ (Ac 3:21). As Paul confirms, the resurrection of Christ is not distinct from the resurrection of believers, but the ‘firstfruits’ of the whole harvest (1 Co 15:21–26, 45, 49).”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 525–526.

## 10. Summary Quotes.

- 10.1. **Carson** (on John 16:22): “Once the disciples rejoice, after the resurrection, *no-one will take away [their] joy*, because the resurrection of Jesus is not merely a discrete event but the onset of the eschatological age, the dawning of the new creation.”<sup>38</sup>
- 10.2. **Wright**: “The story that Paul tells frequently, not least in Romans, is the story of creation and new creation. This is the Jewish story of a good creator God bringing to birth a good creation, and then, when creation has been spoiled by the rebellion of humankind, accomplishing its rescue not by abandoning the old and starting afresh, but as an act of new creation out of the old. The resurrection of Jesus is, for Paul, the prototype of the new creation; the Spirit is the agent, already at work. Paul applies to the creation itself the motif of the exodus, of redemption from slavery.”<sup>39</sup>
- 10.3. **Schreiner**: “How do we know that the new creation is present? In the OT the new creation arrives on the day of resurrection. The resurrection is the day when Israel will be delivered (Dan. 12:1–2), and it will occur at the time of the end (Dan. 12:9). Isaiah 24–27 teaches that the resur-

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<sup>38</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 544.

<sup>39</sup> N. T. Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978–2013* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 245.

rection will mean the demise of the city of man and the exaltation of the city of God. The Lord will reign on Mount Zion (24:23) on that day, and hence the day of resurrection is the day of God's redemptive rule over the world. On the Lord's mountain there will be an eschatological feast, and death will be swallowed up forever (25:6-8), and the righteous will be raised from the dead (26:19). Leviathan will be defeated (27:1), and Israel's sin will be atoned for (27:9) when they return from exile (27:12-13). According to Ezek. 37, Israel will be unified on the day of resurrection, for the Spirit will breathe on them and give them life. In that day a new David will rule over them (37:24-25), their sins will be cleansed (37:23), Yahweh will be their sanctuary forever (37:27-28), and they will enjoy a covenant of peace in their land (37:25-26). Paul was convinced that the new creation and the time of the end had arrived in Christ, for Jesus was risen from the dead. The OT texts cited above demonstrate that the day of resurrection is inseparable from the coming of the new David, the cleansing of sins at the cross, the defeat of Satan (Leviathan), the outpouring of the Spirit, and the unification of the people of God in Christ. Hence, the kingdom of God has dawned with the coming of Jesus and his resurrection (cf. Rom. 1:4). Now that Jesus has conquered death, death has been defeated forever (Rom. 6:9). The age to come has invaded history in Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-28), though there is an 'already and not yet' di-

mension to the resurrection. Jesus has been raised from the dead, but the resurrection of believers is a future event. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates, however, that the age to come has arrived, that the new creation is here."<sup>40</sup>

- 10.4. **Ridderbos:** "Paul has been viewed as a Hegelian idealist (Tübingen school), as a preacher of the superiority of the human spirit (the liberals); as a mystic of the Hellenistic mystery-religions (Bousset); as a gnostic, par excellence (Reitzenstein). And as a result the 'religion' of Paul was placed at such a great distance from that of Jesus that the cleft was apparently unbridgeable. What was forgotten, however, in all these changing conceptions and interpretations of Paul, was the awareness that Paul's preaching was not formed by a new idea, or by a new ethos, or a new religious vital feeling or a *Seinsverständnis* [sense of existence], but before everything else, he was the *proclaimer of a new time*, the great turning point in the history of redemption, the intrusion of a new world aeon. Such was the dominating perspective and foundation of Paul's entire preaching. It alone can illuminate the many facets and interrelations of his preaching, e.g., justification, being-in-Christ, suffering, dying, and rising again with

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 548–549.

Christ, the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, the cosmic drama.”<sup>41</sup>

10.5. **Ridderbos:** “Paul’s kerygma [message] of the great time of salvation that has dawned in Christ is above all determined by Christ’s death and resurrection. It is in them that the present aeon has lost its power and hold on the children of Adam and that the new things have come. For this reason, too, the entire unfolding of the salvation that has dawned with Christ again and again harks back to his death and resurrection, because all the facets in which this salvation appears and all the names by which it is described are ultimately nothing other than the unfolding of what this all-important breakthrough of life in death, of the kingdom of God in this present world, contains within itself. Here all lines come together, and from hence the whole Pauline proclamation of redemption can be described in its unity and coherence. Paul’s preaching, so we have seen, is ‘eschatology,’ because it is preaching of the fulfilling redemptive work of God in Christ. We might be able to delimit this further, to a certain extent schematically. By speaking of Paul’s ‘resurrection-eschatology.’ For it is in Christ’s death and subsequent resurrection that the mystery of the redemptive plan of

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<sup>41</sup>Herman Ridderbos, *Paul and Jesus: Origin and General Character of Paul’s Preaching of Christ*, trans. David H. Freeman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 64–65.



God has manifested itself in its true character and that the new creation has come to light."<sup>42</sup>

10.6. **Wright:** "The early Christian understanding of Easter was not that this sort of thing was always likely to happen sooner or later, and finally it did. It was not that a particular human being happened to possess even more unusual powers than anyone had imagined before. Nor did they suppose it was a random freak, like a monkey sitting at a typewriter and finally producing *All's Well that Ends Well* (after, we must suppose, several near-misses). When they said that Jesus had been raised from the dead the early Christians were not saying, as many critics have supposed, that the god in whom they believed had simply decided to perform a rather more spectacular miracle, an even greater display of 'supernatural' power, than they had expected. This was not a special favour performed for Jesus because his god liked him more than anyone else. *The fact that dead people do not ordinarily rise is itself part of early Christian belief*, not an objection to it. The early Christians insisted that what had happened to Jesus was precisely something new; was, indeed, the start of a whole new mode of existence, a new creation. The fact that Jesus' resurrection was, and remains, without analogy is not an

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<sup>42</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 57.

objection to the early Christian claim. It is part of the claim itself."<sup>43</sup>

10.7. **Beale:** "We must think of Christ's death and resurrection as the central event that launched the latter days. This pivotal event of death and resurrection is eschatological because it launched the beginning of the new creation. Of course, the OT prophesied that the destruction of the first creation and the re-creation of a new heavens and earth were to happen at the very end of time. Christ's work reveals that the end of the world and the coming new creation have already begun in his death and resurrection. According to 2 Corinthians 5:15, 17, Christ 'died [and was raised]. . . . Therefore, if any are in Christ, they are a new creation, the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.' Revelation 1:5 refers to Christ as 'the firstborn of the dead,' and then Revelation 3:14 defines 'firstborn' as 'he beginning of God's [new] creation.' Likewise, Colossians 1:18 says that Christ is 'the firstborn from the dead' and 'the beginning,' so that 'in everything he might be preeminent.' In Galatians 6:14-15 Paul says that his identification with Christ's death means that he is a 'new creation.' While Christ says that he 'will raise up' true believers in the future, 'at the last day' (Jn 6:39, 40, 44,

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<sup>43</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers; 2003), 711-712.

54), he also says that the time of resurrection has been inaugurated: 'I am the resurrection and the life' (Jn 11:25)."<sup>44</sup>

10.8. **Williams:** "In God's mighty act of raising Jesus bodily from the grave we are right to glimpse the final chapter of the drama of redemption. Indeed, an understanding of redemption that fails to take its moorings from Christ's victory over sin and death via bodily resurrection, and the promise of ultimate restoration of all things declared by the empty tomb, is not a biblical understanding of redemption at all. . . . The resurrection is something of a foretaste, a movie trailer or commercial for God's ultimate future, for in Christ's resurrection we have a picture of the future given before its arrival. The end is seen ahead of time. As the beginning and foretaste of the future, the resurrection is the firstfruits or the first stage of the coming redemption. The bodily resurrection of Christ not only signifies God's victory over sin and death but also declares the nature of that victory. It is total, comprehensive; so comprehensive that it claims that history is moving toward nothing less than a fully restored and glorified universe. Those who are in Christ, along with the entirety of creation, will receive his resurrection life upon his appearing (Rom. 8:21–25)."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> G. K. Beale in Scott J. Hafemann, editor, *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 163.

<sup>45</sup> Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), 12.

10.9. **Leithart:** “The gospel of the resurrection means not only that dead Jesus came back to life (though it means that) but also that Jesus has entered the realm of life, of the new creation and of the Spirit. In him, the new creation has already begun and the kingdom has been established, though the creation is not yet fully renewed, restored, or transfigured into a new heavens and a new earth. Only by faith does the believer know that, through his death and resurrection, Jesus fundamentally renovated the world but his resurrection and ascension guarantee that he will in the end bring the world to its destined fulfillment.”<sup>46</sup>

10.10. **Allberry:** “‘Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead’ [1 Pet 1:3]. In the resurrection of Jesus this hope has begun to be realized. Its scope includes not just our bodies, but the whole of this world. Jesus anticipated this in his miracles, both in healing the sick and in putting nature around him right. The one who raised the dead also calmed the storm. These are miracles that point ahead, a foretaste of what the new creation and redeemed humanity will be like. In his teaching, so with the events of his life: we look back to Jesus to look forward to our destiny. In his resurrection we are reborn into a new hope, and it lives and breathes with this unshakable certainty:

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<sup>46</sup> Peter J. Leithart, “The Way Things Really Ought to Be: Eucharist, Eschatology, and Culture,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 59/2 (1997): 165.

God began the resurrection project, and he will surely finish it."<sup>47</sup>

10.11. **Jackson:** "The ideology created during the time of Augustus was employed by successive emperors. Under the new 'new age' brought by Nero, the hopes of humanity were to be met in the continuation of Roman peace and prosperity. During the period various emperors were said to have brought Rome into a golden age and were spoken of as father of the country, savior of humanity and guarantor of peace, concord and prosperity, Paul wrote about the 'peace . . . from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father' (Gal 1:3b-4). . . . It seems reasonable to postulate at least that Paul's auditors could have been struck by the challenge which his new age presented to ideology of the purportedly eternal city of Rome. Into an atmosphere where the empire was supposed to offer a new era of history upon which no improvement could be imagined, Paul preached about a new age, inaugurated by the cross and resurrection of Christ that was spoken of in terms of a new creation."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Sam Allberry, *Lifted: Experiencing the Resurrection Life* (P&R, 2012), 111-112.

<sup>48</sup> T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* (Mohr Siebeck; 2010), 75.

10.12. **Chesterton:** “They took the body down from the cross and one of the few rich men among the first Christians obtained permission to bury it in a rock tomb in his garden; the Romans setting a military guard lest there should be some riot and attempt to recover the body. There was once more a natural symbolism in these natural proceedings; it was well that the tomb should be sealed with all the secrecy of ancient eastern sepulture and guarded by the authority of the Caesars. For in that second cavern the whole of that great and glorious humanity which we call antiquity was gathered up and covered over; and in that place it was buried. It was the end of a very great thing called human history; the history that was merely human. The mythologies and the philosophies were buried there, the gods and the heroes and the sages. In the great Roman phrase, they had lived. But as they could only live, so they could only die; and they were dead. On the third day the friends of Christ coming at daybreak to the place found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways they realized the new wonder; but even they hardly realized that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation, with a new heaven and a new earth; and in a semblance of the gardener God walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton (Ignatius; 1986),

10.13. **Moore:** “Part of the curse Jesus would bear for us on Golgotha was the taunting and testing by God’s enemies. As he drowned in his own blood, the spectators yelled words quite similar to those of Satan in the desert: ‘Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe’ (Mark 15:32). But he didn’t jump down. He didn’t ascend to the skies. He just writhed there. And, after it all, the bloated corpse of Jesus hit the ground as he was pulled off the stake, spattering warm blood and water on the faces of the crowd. That night the religious leaders probably read Deuteronomy 21 to their families, warning them about the curse of God on those who are ‘hanged on a tree.’ Fathers probably told their sons, ‘Watch out that you don’t ever wind up like him.’ Those Roman soldiers probably went home and washed the blood of Jesus from under their fingernails and played with their children in front of the fire before dozing off. This was just one more insurrectionist they had pulled off a cross, one in a line of them dotting the roadside. And this one (what was his name? Joshua?) was just decaying meat now, no threat to the empire at all. That corpse of Jesus just lay there in the silences of that cave. By all appearances it had been tested and tried, and found wanting. If you’d been there to pull open his bruised eyelids, matted together with mottled blood, you would have looked into blank holes. If you’d lifted his arm, you would

have felt no resistance. You would have heard only the thud as it hit the table when you let it go. You might have walked away from that morbid scene muttering to yourself, 'The wages of sin is death.' But sometime before dawn on a Sunday morning, a spike-torn hand twitched. A blood-crust ed eyelid opened. The breath of God came blowing into that cave, and a new creation flashed into reality."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Russell Moore, *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 124–125.