

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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## **IN CHRIST, A NEW CREATION #2**

The previous issue was the introduction to the new creation in Christ, but I have one more, so to speak, housekeeping matter that needs to be cleaned up. Peter referred to *heavens* in the plural, and both John and Paul referred to *heaven* in the singular. This may not mean anything, but then again, it may be an indication of a spiritual truth. In my opinion, since the third heaven that John and Paul saw is an entirely new heaven, it follows that one aspect of the new is that there are no longer heavens or different levels of heaven but only one level. If we consider heaven to be the spirit realm, then it would appear that the third heaven in chronology or sequence (as opposed to spatially) represents the spirit realm in which God is all in all, and this heaven or spirit realm envelopes the physical realm in a new way. Actually, God is spirit and His entire creation is spirit, and the physical realm came forth from the spirit realm. I believe a day will come when the two will no longer appear separate, as they are today. This is an interesting topic in itself that, Lord willing, I will address in a later issue.

**Therefore, if anyone [is] in Christ, [he is] a new creation; the old [things] passed away, look!, all [things] have become new.** (2 Corinthians 5.17 ALT)

**For in Christ Jesus neither does circumcision have any power [or, avail anything] nor uncircumcision, but a new creation!** (Galatians 6.15 ALT)

Now, Paul uniquely uses the phrase ***in Christ, a new creation***. You will note that the phrase *he is* is not in the original Greek but is added by the translators. I prefer to leave it as ***in Christ, a new creation***, for this has much greater implications in God achieving His purpose of becoming **all in all in all new**. After all, all things in the heavens and on the earth will be summed up or headed up in Christ as He subjects all to Himself to bring the eons (ages) to their rightful conclusion, for the eons are made through the Son (Hebrews 1.2b [ALT/CV/REB/WNT/YLT]). When the One sitting on the throne declared to John, ***Behold, I am making all new***, He was referring to all things being new, which is a new creation. Thus, we read of the new heaven, the new earth, and New Jerusalem. We should add that this new creation is based on a new covenant as well; one whereby God has sworn by Himself (Hebrews 6.13) and that is not contingent on man's oath, as with the old covenant that has been made obsolete.

***In Christ, a new creation*** encompasses all of creation in heaven and on earth; otherwise, Christ cannot become all in all or, as Paul wrote, **Christ is all, and in all** (Colossians 3.11). I stress this point, for I do not want us to lose sight of this glorious truth as we look at the phrase in the narrower framework presented by Paul to the Corinthians.

Simply, Paul referred to the new creation in Christ as those who are in Christ, that is, those who believe and trust in Christ Jesus. This must be understood as a spiritual truth and not one based on physical evidence, bloodline, lineage, or genealogy. Paul declared: **Therefore, from now on we know no one according to [the] flesh; and even if we have known Christ according to [the] flesh, but now no longer do we know [Him thus]** (2 Corinthians 5.16 ALT). For Paul, the old things that he had so dearly held to as a Pharisee were no longer valid. The old had passed away and the new had come.

But notice that Paul did not state that the new things will come at some future time but that they had come. Further, he did not state that those who believe in this day will become a new creation in the future, but that they are a new creation. For Paul, the new creation in Christ is presented as a present-day reality. If you are in Christ, then you are a new creation, not based on any rights of the flesh but

based solely on the fact that, when one believes, one is placed in Christ, and, by the way, Christ is placed in the person. A believer is a new creation. As Paul declared: **For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory** (Colossians 3.3-4 NASB). This new creation is a new life in Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life; the one who conquered sin and death. **It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me** (Galatians 2.20 NASB).

I trust that most who read what I have written know these truths, but there is something even greater that most of us have either never been taught or have lost sight of with all the emphasis within the body of believers of our day on the here and now and God's purpose for our lives while we occupy corruptible bodies of death. There truly is good news for the new creation in Christ.

Here it is: If you are *in* Christ, you are already a part of the all new that John and Paul saw in spirit. You are already part of the new heaven and earth, and, especially, New Jerusalem. Oh, we don't see it with our natural eyes today, and, most of the time, we don't feel like we are part of this new creation, but this is where faith kicks in. You are a new creation; you are part of all the new that the One sitting on the throne is making. Yes; you even have become a new creation. But let us face the facts; faith says we are there, but in reality we are not there and cannot be there as long we occupy mortal bodies. Faith says that we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Today, we can taste this new creation, but with transfiguration, we will be it and live it endlessly.

According to Scripture, the new creation comes into view with the last eon of the five eons or *the eon of the eons*. Paul saw a truth that has been lost among the countless teachings of Christendom; the body of Christ is joined with the last of the eons when there is a new heaven and a new earth. As glorious as the next eon will be, the millennial kingdom on earth will pale in comparison to the glory of the last eon when God makes all new. Paul saw the destiny of all the saints, and although he could not speak what he heard, he could nevertheless proclaim that he saw the new creation, which is in Christ. Ultimately, this new creation will extend to all mankind, to the praise and glory of God.

But until then, there will be a privileged company of believers that, I believe, are the *conquerors* (overcomers) of Christ or *the firstfruit anointed* that will rise in the *first resurrection* or, as Paul called it, the *out-resurrection*, that will be the first to truly taste what it means to be the new creation. They will take on glorified, spiritual, celestial bodies in the image of the Son of God as they are adopted as sons of God. It is as if they will leap-frog over the next millennial age and enter onto the sacred ground of the new creation in God's day. This does not mean that they will miss the kingdom of Christ on this earth for the next 1,000 years. Quite the contrary; they will be major players in the next eon as they are the complement of Christ and reign on earth to bring the rule of Christ to the nations, so that all mankind will begin to learn righteousness and live under the throne of righteousness, justice, and peace. The conquerors will reign with Christ, and they will move in and out of the spiritual and the physical realms. They will be unlike any man that, apart from Christ Himself after His resurrection, has ever lived on earth, including the first Adam. They are a new creation; all the former things will have passed away for them. Their corruptible, mortal bodies will have given way to glorified, immortal bodies that are indestructible. They will be enjoyers of immortal and eonian life in the eons to come.

Eventually, all mankind will move onto the ground of the new creation, but the conquerors of Christ will be the first to move onto this ground in the next eon, for, I might add, the sole purpose of leading the rest of the "church" and all mankind onto the same ground in Christ. Not everyone in this day who says they believe will be counted worthy of this on-high calling in the next eon; many will have to wait for the great white throne judgment and God's day. For this reason, Paul forgot what was behind him and reached forward to what lies ahead. He pressed on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3.13-14 NASB).

Let us press on!