



her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:25-27). The church has been cleansed, washed, and set apart so that Christ can present it to Himself one day in heaven.

Peter wrote, “The heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:12-13). Peter is not teaching that this present world will be recreated, but that there will be a

new dwelling place for the saved. It will be a place unlike this world because in that abode, “the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them” (Revelation 21:3). We have been given an exceptional goal; we have been given an unparalleled hope. Let the thought of new beginnings motivate you to serve the Lord in this new year.



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

17.3

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

January 18,
2015



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

New Beginnings

By Andrew Dow

A great deal of excitement generally follows the turn of a new year. Many people remove holiday decor and hang new wall calendars. Some people, due to hardship and struggles, are glad to see the previous year fade into the distance. Nearly everyone, though, looks forward to the possibilities of a new year. Therefore, we create *New Year's Resolutions* and attempt to accomplish them. We enjoy the coming of a new year because, in many ways, it's a new beginning. The new year feels like a clean slate with which we can start fresh. While the new year may be a good opportunity to regroup and set goals, the Bible speaks of new beginnings that are far greater than simply flipping a page on the calendar.

New Beginnings in the Old Testament

The Old Testament is full of “new beginnings” that seem to foreshadow certain things that will take place in the New Testament. First, consider the story of Noah and the worldwide flood. We are well aware of God’s creation of “the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1) in six days. However, it wasn’t long before God “saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth” and He “was sorry that He had made man on the

earth” (Genesis 6:5-6). God determined to **“blot out”** all of His creation, **“but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord”** (Genesis 6:7-8). You know the rest of the story: Noah built an ark to save his family as well as a great deal of animal life and God sent a flood to destroy His creation. After the flood subsides and Noah leaves the ark, he is commanded by God to **“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”** (Genesis 9:1). What seems like a simple statement is magnified when we consider it’s parallel in

Genesis 1:28. God issued the same command after He created Adam and Eve. You see, Noah and his family became a sort of *new beginning* for all of mankind.

Another example that readily comes to my mind is that of Israel in the wilderness. After leaving Egypt by power of God, Israel quickly became discontent. Regardless, God cared for them on their way to the Promised Land. In Numbers 13-14 the Israelites were on the brink of conquering Canaan’s land. Moses sent twelve spies into the land to check it out. After ten of the spies caused the people to lose faith, God said, **“Surely all the men who have...put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers...”** (Numbers 14:21-23). God led the people through the wilderness until all of that generation (except Joshua and Caleb) died. In a sense, God started over with a new group of Israelites who would conquer the land.

Other examples can be found in the Old Testament. For instance, had it not been for King Saul’s disobedience to God, his dynasty would have reigned over Israel. Instead, because of Saul’s sin, David was selected to become a new dynasty over Israel. Consider as well the unfaithful Israelites

who went away to captivity. When the remnant returned it was a new beginning for God’s people. New beginnings abound in the Old Testament, but the new beginnings in the New Testament are far greater than these.

New Beginnings in Christ

We are in an extremely unsettling situation. John wrote, **“If we say we have no sin, we are**

deceiving ourselves” (1 John 1:8). Similarly, Paul explained, **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23). To make matters worse, God’s Word consistently teaches that, **“the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23). Each one of us finds ourselves in a situation where a new beginning is not only desirable, but a new beginning is necessary!

Consider what Paul wrote the Christians in Corinth: **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God”** (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Do you see what happened? These people were sinners deserving death. However, something had changed. They had been cleansed. They had been given a new beginning, a clean slate with which to serve the Lord!

God’s word tells us, **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”** (2 Corinthians 5:17). To become a new creature and receive a new beginning, one must be IN Christ. Scripture further explains what this means: **“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions”** (Colossians

2:13). **“It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”** (Galatians 2:20). Paul stated that the new creatures are those who are IN Christ. How does one get INTO Christ? Paul wrote elsewhere, **“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”** (Galatians 3:27). Submission and obedience to Christ is the only way to receive a new beginning and become a new creation.

New Beginnings in Heaven

Allow me to mention just one more “new beginning” that we can take part in: *Heaven*. Heaven is a place prepared for God’s recreated people. Jesus said, **“I go to prepare a place for you”** (John 14:2). But in the same way, God’s people have been prepared for heaven: **“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify**

