

“Behold, I Will Do A New Thing”

I started thinking the other day about how unique and special this new year really is. It is the start not only of a new day, but a new month and a new year. There is something special about things that are new; they are fresher, cleaner, brighter and shinier. They are not old, rusted, decayed, bent, broken, dusty, dingy or damaged. Politicians have recognized the deep desire that people have for new things. That is why Franklin Roosevelt brought us the “New Deal;” John Kennedy talked about facing the “New Frontier” and Bill Clinton promised us a “New Covenant.” Perhaps this yearning for the fresh and new is why God in His word promised His people new things (Isaiah 43:18-21). What are the new things God promised and brought forth? Let’s consider several in this article.

We Have A New Covenant

God entered into a covenant with His people at Mt. Sinai, which is commonly referred as the Law of Moses. But the Israelites did not obey that covenant and constantly broke it (Jeremiah 11:7-10). For this reason He allowed them to be taken away by their enemies (Jeremiah 11:11-14). Even so, He did not leave them without some hope, for through the prophet Jeremiah He made a promise. God promised a new covenant to His people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Hebrews tells us that Christ established this new and better covenant or testament (Hebrews 8:6-13; 12:24).

How is the new covenant better? In the passage from Jeremiah and its subsequent fulfillment in Hebrews, four points stand out. First, God’s promised covenant is new and better because it is inward and spiritual. Second, God’s promised covenant is new because it provides a closer relationship to God. Third, God’s promised covenant is new and better because all in it know the Lord. Fourth, God’s promised covenant is new and better because it provides complete forgiveness of sin. How grateful we should be for all the benefits of this New Covenant!

We Have A New Commandment

Jesus brought not just a new covenant, but a new law. In Romans 8:2, it is called the “*law of the Spirit of life.*” In Romans 3:27, it is called the “*law of faith.*” In Galatians 6:2, it is called the “*law of Christ.*” Jesus explained that He taught a new doctrine (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36-39). The Jews recognized that Jesus taught a new doctrine (Mark 1:27). This new law and new doctrine teaches a new commandment (1 John 2:7-11). John 13:34-35 says, “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love*

one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Why is this new law, doctrine and commandment better? This new law means a new king, a new doctrine means a new teacher and a new commandment means a new Lord and Master. Furthermore, it means freedom from the yoke of the Law of Moses (Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1), the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2, 34-36) and the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). It also means a rest, an easy yoke and a light burden. This freedom is not freedom from responsibility to duty or obedience to law, but the taking on of an easy yoke and lighter burden (Matthew 11:28-30). The burden is lighter because His commandments are not grievous and by His commandment of love, we share one another burdens (1 John 5:3; Galatians 6:2).

We Have A New Name

God through the prophet Isaiah promised his people a new name (Isaiah 62:1-5). God's people had been so rebellious and wicked that Jerusalem's name was, so to speak, "Mud." The city was named "*Forsaken*" and the land was called "*Desolate*." But God promised a new name for the city and the land: "*The Lord delighteth in thee*" and "*Married*." But in this promise there was also a new name for God's people. Isaiah 65:15 says, "*And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.*"

That new name is the name of "Christian." Acts 11:26 says, "*And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*" This is the name of Christ. This name was given by God as indicated by the verb "*called*" which shows divine action. In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare wrote, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet?" In 1911, Hubert Humphrey answered him: "In real life, unlike in Shakespeare, the sweetness of the rose depends upon the name it bears. Things are not only what they are. They are, in very important respects, what they seem to be." The scriptures tell us a "*good name*" is worth more than "*great riches*" and "*better than precious ointment*" (Proverbs 22:1; Ecclesiastes 7:1). What better name could there be than the name of Christ (Acts 4:12; Isaiah 62:12)?

We Have A New Life

What would you give to be able to start all over again in life? What would

you give to have your perspective of life changed so that everything is beautiful and wonderful and new? Can life really be that way? Paul said, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). No one would know better than the apostle Paul, whose life went from a persecutor of the church to its greatest promoter and defender.

How can someone have this new life? They can have it by entering into the New Covenant. Baptism puts one into Christ and into His New Covenant (Romans 6:3-4). In this new life, old things are passed away. Old things are rotten, corrupt, decaying, dead and useless. Paul here is speaking of sin. Our old thoughts, pleasures and actions give way to God and His holiness. Paul speaks of this dramatic change in Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:8-10. I now have a new outlook on life, people and circumstances (Galatians 6:14-15; Philippians 4:12-13).

We Have A New Heavens And A New Earth

God promises us the best is yet to come: a new heavens and a new earth. Of all the things new God promises His people, the best of the new things are the things yet to come. God promised through his prophet Isaiah a new place to live forever, a place filled with gladness and rejoicing (Isaiah 65:17-18).

This new place will always remain new and those in it shall last forever (Isaiah 66:22-23; Revelation 21:1-5). Now there is damage, decay and deterioration, yet in the new heavens and new earth there will be none of these. No sin or wickedness will enter into and dwell in the new home God has prepared for His people.

Have you made yourself ready for the new heavens and the new earth? You must first enter into the new covenant by submitting to the new doctrine and commandment, put on the new life in Christ by baptism, take on the new name of Christ, have God renew in you a new heart and a new spirit so that you can sing a new song. Make this truly not just a new year, but a new eternity!

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