

New Promises for a New Year

As we move into a new year it is important to look at the subject of “New” as found in the Bible and see how some of the verses declaring something will be new can encourage and challenge us in the new year.

I used the concordance on my computer to search for verses that contain the word “New.” In the NIV I found the word “**new**” used in 174 verses. Of them, 41 are in the context of **new** wine including the teaching of Jesus on putting new wine in old wine skins. 17 verses deal with the time of the new moon and 5 are specific references to new grains. Some uses of the word in Scripture are for things like a new set of clothes, a new king. The account of Samson makes note of the fact that he told his lover that if he were bound in a **new** rope, he would lose his strength. In the New Testament we read that Jesus was buried in a **new** tomb.

A word related to **new** is the word “**renew**,” which is used 8 times in the Bible. Two of those verses are familiar. Read Isaiah 40:31 and Psalm 51:10.

The most comprehensive verse on **new** is found in Revelation 21:5. Read that verse. Another comprehensive verse that stands in contrast to **new** is found in Ecclesiastes 1:9. Read that verse. Those two verses present a truth that can enrich our lives in the New Year. 2020 can simply be a copy in one way or another of 2019 if we live it by ourselves, doing our own thing the way we always have, or we can seek to live in 2020 in accordance to God’s plan. The year ahead can be uniquely different and better than 2019 if we allow God to move us forward in our walk with Him, applying in our lives the promises of that which God has said can be new for us.

One of the key “**new**” things promised by God is a “*New Covenant*.” We will not experience the newness God has for us in 2020 unless we have first experienced the new covenant. The Bible describes our relationship with God in terms of a new covenant because that was terminology that was understood in biblical times. A covenant was a treaty that established a relationship between various groups of people. The covenant relationship was strong, in fact it was seen as all but unbreakable. God said to the people of Israel that He would make a binding covenant with them, that He would be their God forever. Unfortunately, there was a hitch in the covenant, and it was not a problem on God’s part but on man’s part. While God has always remained faithful to His commitment to the covenant, men have failed it over and over. So God found a way to change us so we can be seen as keeping our half of the covenant. God knew that with our sinful nature we were doomed to failure, but He made a way so that our half of the covenant relationship was kept, not by us but by His Son whose birth we recently celebrated. When we trust in Jesus, He transforms us into new creatures that allows God to see not our sin but His son’s righteousness.

The New covenant was promised by Jesus when He instituted the communion service. Read Luke 22:20.

Earlier, through the prophet Jeremiah, God made a promise of a new covenant. Read Jeremiah 31:31-33.

The Apostle Paul described the impact of that new covenant when he wrote to the church in Corinth. Read II Corinthians 5:17.

The writer of Hebrews detailed how this new covenant was made possible because of the provision of Jesus on the Cross. Read Hebrews 9:15.

There is no comprehensive picture of some of the implications of being in a new covenant with God than is described in Hebrews 10:19-25. Read those verses which describes what is both possible because of the new covenant and what is expected of all who name the name of Jesus. It is a challenge for 2020.

With the new covenant we have God's Promise to always be with us. Listen to these promises of newness for a New Year. Read Lamentations 3:22, 23 and Ezekiel 11:19, 20.

That new covenant gives us a *new name*. Read Revelation 3:11-13.

Because we have been given a new covenant and a new name, we have a **New Commandment** to follow. Read John 13:34-35 and II John 1:5-6.

The new covenant expects us to live differently that we did before we made a commitment to Jesus. Read how Paul described the new way to live in Ephesians 4:22-24.

With the new covenant we are given a **New Song**: Many of the verses in Scripture that talk of something becoming "**new**" refer to a "**new song**" that we will be able to sing as those who belong to God. Music is the joy of the soul and the medium of praise. The concept of a new song is that of having a new reason to praise God and a new joy and peace within. Listen to some of the verses in Scripture that speak of a new song. Read Psalm 33:3; Psalm 96:1 and Revelation 5:9.

Ultimately, we look forward to a new home in heaven with God forever. Read I Peter 1:3-5 and Revelation 21:1-4.

As we move into a new year, we can live 2020 simply as a repeat of 2019 or we can live as those who have a new covenant with God, which means God will be with us each step of 2020. We don't have to live the new year alone but with the promise of God that no matter what comes our way in the year ahead He will be with us. All of the promises that He will be our strength and peace can be true. Under the new covenant we can rest assured that our God will supply all our needs. The new covenant means we have a new name, a new commandment to follow, and a new

song to sing. It means we can live 2020 looking forward to the day when Jesus will return and establish a new heaven in which we will live eternally.