

A New Beginning

Life is full of new beginnings. Each child is born to a new beginning. Each marriage is a new beginning. Each New Year is a new beginning with new purposes and new resolutions. Jesus Christ holds out to everyone the offer of a new life through the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with him. Do you need a new beginning?

Christianity is the revelation of God through Jesus Christ that makes possible a new spiritual life. Paul spoke of this in 2 Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." What must we do to be a new creature? The Bible answers this question so clearly that no one should misunderstand.

Becoming a new creature requires a new birth. Jesus said, "I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5)." Jesus spoke of both the water and the Spirit having a part in the new birth. Paul describes the part of water in the new birth, "We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4-5)." Peter spoke to the part of the Spirit in the new birth, "For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter 1:23)." It is this abiding word of God that is the sword of the Spirit, "And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph 6:17)." The Spirit is present in the new birth through God's word.

Becoming a new creature requires being in Christ. Paul said, "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new (2 Cor 5:17)." How does a penitent believer enter into Christ? Again in Rom. 6:3, Paul said, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" The result of this baptism in Christ is that we "might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). A person cannot be a new creature without being in Christ, and Paul says in Gal. 3:27 that one is baptized into Christ: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

Baptism, the final act of obedience, generates the new birth, the end of which leaves us new creatures walking in newness of life. Peter describes this condition, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Will you not seize this new beginning?