

# New

As a new year begins, the old must pass away. Scripture says much about things old. Some good things about old age, old ways, old commandments, and old times. Some bad things about the old man, old wives' tales, old leaven, and getting old. Strikingly, Scripture has even more to say about things new. And, contrary to a supposed principle of biblical conservatism, little it says about things new is bad. Rather, Scripture sets forth new as a word pregnant with good hope, possibility, development, blessing, and life.

Nothing is completely new. God is never new. His mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:23). He does new things (Is. 43:19). He declares new things (Is. 42:9). But from everlasting to everlasting He is the same, even while the creation waxes old (Ps. 102:36). And the preacher assures us there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9). By grace, however, things can be new in terms of quality, experience, growth, or goodness. More astounding is that almost every good new thing proceeds from the old. Such is God's grace, life, and the blessings of life by that grace.

Scripture mentions favorably many new things. New offerings, new bottles, new houses, new garments, new fruit, are a few. But some new things are outstanding. One regards singing. While told to walk in old paths, retain old landmarks, and honor old men, when it comes to singing, Scripture recommends new songs. Frequently. Sing a new song unto the LORD (Is. 42:11), skillfully with loud noise (Ps. 33:3), on instruments (Ps. 144:9), with all the earth (Ps. 96:1), and in the congregation of the saints (Ps. 149:1). And to do so because He has done marvelous things (Ps. 98:1) and puts such a new song in our mouth (Ps. 40:3). Not entirely new songs, of course. But the same old psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs of truth, praise, and honor to God as we experience Him new every day, in every place, and in every way.

Also exalted are the new glories of the new covenant. The old promise of God was to make a new covenant with His church (Jer. 31:31). Not entirely new, but

the same old God, promises, maintenance, essence, and fulfillment by a new administration—not now by earthly picture, sacrifice, and ordinance, but directly by Jesus as Mediator of this new testament (Heb. 9:15). New because it is not of the letter, but Spirit (II Cor. 3:6). New because it also includes the whole world of Gentiles, for, abolishing in His flesh the old ordinances, He made from two peoples one new man in Himself (Eph. 2:15). And new because by shedding His new covenant blood, He made for us a new and living way through the veil of His flesh into the holiest place of God (Heb. 10:2).

A feature of this new covenant is God's work sanctifying us by His Spirit so that we produce new works of righteousness. Anyone in Christ becomes a new creature whereby old things pass away and all things become new (II Cor. 5:17). He gives us a new heart and puts a new spirit within us (Ezek. 11:19). He instructs us so that as a householder we bring forth things old and things new (Matt. 13:52). He teaches and makes us to purge out the old leaven, that we may be a new lump (I Cor. 5:7), to put off the old man and put on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness, and renewed in knowledge after His image (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). He gives us a new commandment, that we love one another as He loves us (John 13:34)—again, a commandment not entirely new, but given from the beginning, only now with new power and meaning (II John 1:5).

The blessedness of things new is perfected in the new creation. Truly, the blessedness of that creation will be that it is all new. A new form of heavens and earth from the old, a new quality of life that remains forever (Is. 66:22), wherein dwells righteousness (II Pet. 3:13), and mountains drop new wine (Joel 3:18). There is a new Jerusalem, the church living with her husband (Rev. 21:2). We will have new fellowship with God face to face (I Cor. 13:12), each be given a new name (Is. 62:2), live in new bodies, have new strength, learn new things (Rev. 14:3), and sing new songs with the whole new creation (Rev. 5:9; 14:3). No new creature in Christ should ever disparage things only, or even partly, because they are new. Behold, the Lord promises, old things are passed away and forgotten; all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17). ☺

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