

NEW YEAR, NEW START

Genesis 8:13-22; 9:20-25

INTRODUCTION

- With the approach of the new year, comes the recognition that though the 1st of January is just another day, the turning of the calendar gives the sense of new opportunities and the chance to make a new start in some areas of our lives that we may have failed in during the last year.
- The world understands this and many people will use the new year to try to make themselves better people, whether it be in terms of physical health, or their character.
- But any resolution for the new year that neglects our spiritual needs, and that leaves out God, is ultimately useless.
- There are at least six significant events that took place on the date designated “the first day of the first month”:
 - ✓ The appearance of dry land after the flood (Genesis 8:13)
 - ✓ The rearing of the tabernacle by Moses (Exodus 40:2)
 - ✓ The sanctifying of the temple under Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:17)
 - ✓ The going up of Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:9)
 - ✓ The putting away of strange wives (Ezra 10:17)
 - ✓ The cleansing of the millennial temple (Ezekiel 45:18)
- Today we will look at a man in the Bible who was able to make a fresh start for the New Year like few others have ever been able to.
- Noah not only had a new year to work with, he had a new *world* to work with.
- And as we step out of 2018 and into 2019 there are some things that we can take from the example of Noah, as he stepped out of that ark that will help us to start the new year right.

How may I start the new year right?

I. GUIDED AND LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD (8:13-18)

A. Noah is a pattern of obedience to God

1. Before the flood, Noah carefully followed God's commands (Genesis 6:22)
2. On the ark Noah still adhered to God's instructions

B. Wait for the will of God

1. Though Noah could see that the waters had gone, he stayed on the ark nearly two more months until God spoke to him
2. God is wanting us to wait on Him (Lamentations 3:25-26; Luke 2:25)
3. Waiting times ought not be wasted times.
4. God's delays are not God's denials
5. The times of waiting for God to work are tests of our patience and trust in God (Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Peter 4:19)

C. Walk in the word of God

1. Noah didn't act until he had God's word on in, but once he had that word, he obeyed.
2. We must be not only *hearers* of the word, but *doers* also (James 1:22-25)

II. GLORIFY THE LORD IN SACRIFICE (20-22)

A. The right priority

1. There were many things to be done, but Noah would do nothing until he had worshipped the Lord
2. God must have first place in the believer's life (Matthew 6:31-33)

3. Too often we allow other things, including people, to come before God (Haggai 1:9; Luke 14:26)

B. The altar

1. This is the first mention of the word “altar” in the Bible
2. It is a place of commemoration, acknowledging all that God has done
3. It is a place of communion, where man meets with God
4. It is a place of sacrifice, where we render our offerings to God (Romans 12:1)

C. Family worship

1. Noah took his responsibility as the head of his house seriously
2. The father’s primary role is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 13:24)
3. The regular observance of the “family altar” is essential to training children to love and serve the Lord

D. A sweet smelling savour

1. God was pleased with Noah’s sacrifice and blessed him for it (Genesis 9:1)
2. When God’s people give to the Lord, it is as “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.” (Philippians 4:18)

III. GUARD AGAINST THE LURE OF SIN (9:20-25)

A. The devil’s prime targets

1. Satan cares little for the Christian professor who lives like the world and is no threat to his kingdom

2. It is the God-fearing, obedient Christian he targets (Job 1:9-12)
- B. None are immune from falling (1 Corinthians 10:12)
1. Don't allow the vineyard to replace the altar
 2. Beware of complacency
 - a. A complacent, unthankful spirit can make manna seem like loathsome "light bread" (Numbers 21:5)
 - b. Like Demas, many who started out with a zeal for God, end with a love of this present world (2 Timothy 4:10)
- C. Others will follow our footsteps
1. Noah's sin led to Ham's sin which brought a curse on his descendants, the Canaanites
 2. What parents allow in moderation, the children commit in excess

CONCLUSION

Questions to meditate upon for the new year:

1. What is guiding my choices this new year, my flawed human wisdom, or the word of God?
2. Am I patiently waiting on the Lord's counsel?
3. What is my first priority – God or self?
4. Do I have a daily altar to commune with God in worship?
5. Am I on constant guard against the enemy of my soul, equipped with the whole armour of God?
6. What example will I be setting for others to follow?