

And Away We Go

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During the Gettysburg Address, President Abraham Lincoln said, “It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” The great experiment of democracy begun “Four score and seven years” prior was in danger of being torn apart by a great civil war. Lincoln took the occasion of dedicating the new cemetery at Gettysburg to call for a greater dedication to the cause of democracy so that the nation would have a “new birth” of freedom. If the war would end, having been won by the Union, the country would have a new, exciting, and refreshing set of circumstances. The figure of something new most often points to changing circumstances. Not surprisingly then, the Bible often uses the idea of “new” to describe such things.

God, through the prophet Isaiah, often spoke of new things. We read, “Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.” (Isaiah 42:9.) In fact, the very next verse speaks of singing to the Lord a new song (42:10.) In 43:19, God said he would do a “new thing.” He spoke of a “new name” (62:2) and a new heaven and earth” (65:17.) Israel had been through a long nightmare of Babylonian captivity but God would bring them out into a new and better set of circumstances by returning them home. God is all about “new.”

Jesus spoke of our birth by water and spirit as being “born again” (John 3:3-5.) That is the same as saying we have a new birth. Upon our faith in the redeeming work of Christ on the cross, we come to Him in spirit to have our sins washed away by baptism (Mark 16:15-16.) Paul described it thus, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) By becoming Christians, God has turned us from the old selfish ways we once lived in, into a new spiritual life in Him. Circumstances changed for the better.

Now, once again, we see God being about the “new.” Today, the Woodford church of Christ gets underway. For the last several years, as members of the Camden Avenue church, we grew in the Lord and dedicated ourselves to being His servants. That is not going to change now that we have moved. We have a new name that honors the Savior who will take us to the Father. We have a new building to meet in far better than the one we left. We have a new location, closer to the side of town that is growing in population. God has given us a new set of circumstances that will bring glory to Him, if we are dedicated to it.

We are grateful to God for giving us this new opportunity to serve and glorify His name. We have a chance to do things that even a month ago we didn’t think possible. But that’s the God we serve and we’ve seen Him in action. Now, will we get involved? The message of salvation in Jesus Christ is 2000 years old but it is still new today to everyone who hears it because not many still preach it. But we can show folks why an old message sounds new.