

## Starting Now

### Isaiah 43:18-19

1. We get January from the Roman god **Janus**. He was their god of beginnings, transition, passages, and endings. He is depicted with a face looking forward and a face looking back.
2. New Year Customs
  - The Italians, have a tradition: As midnight on New Year's Eve approaches, the streets clear of traffic and pedestrians; even the police take cover. At the stroke of midnight, the windows of the houses fly open and each family member pitches a whole collection of personal possessions that remind them of something they are determined to wipe out of their minds from the past year.
  - We make annual Resolutions hoping for change. "A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other."
  - The **Top Ten Most Popular Resolutions:** (2 Slides)
    1. Exercise more
    2. Lose weight
    3. Get Organized
    4. Learn a New Skill or Hobby
    5. Live Life to the Fullest
    6. Save Money/Spend Less
    7. Quit Smoking
    8. Spend More Time with Family
    9. Travel More
    10. Read More
  - None are specifically spiritual. What if we resolve to walk more closely with God?
3. The Bible gives us much "New":  
**Creatures; Hearts; Beginnings; Insights; Relationships; Bodies; Heaven and Earth; Song; Life; Covenant; Name; Birth;**
4. This time of the year challenges the Newness of the year before us. **CS Lewis: "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."**
5. God loves new starts and better endings. **Isaiah 43:18-19** (ESV, emphasis added)  
**<sup>18</sup> "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. <sup>19</sup> Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.**

#### I. There is a Place for the Old in Our Lives (Isaiah 43:18)

##### A. The Old is Our Rudder to Guide Us

1. It is the purpose of learning – **Romans 15:4** **<sup>4</sup>For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**
  - a. We learn from mistakes and successes – ours and others'
  - b. "**All I really need to know in life I learned in Kindergarten**" Robert Fulghum
    1. Share everything.
    2. Play fair.
    3. Don't hit people.
    4. Put things back where you found them.
    5. CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS.
2. It is why we study the scriptures – and history

##### B. The Old is Our Foundation Upon Which We Build – 1 Corinthians 3:11

- <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**
1. "We can build a country without our Constitution, but it won't be America." (or w/o God)
  2. We can build a life based on something other than the Bible, but we won't be of God

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**Isaiah 43:18-19**

**C. The Old is NOT Our Home – Don't Dwell in the Past**

1. "Remember" – call to mind; make a memorial – can be an obsession
2. So God warns us about looking back:
  - Lot's wife – **Genesis 19:26; Luke 17:32**
  - "Plowing" – **Luke 9:62** **"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."**
  - **Ecclesiastes 7:10** **Say not, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this. ["These are the Good Old Days"]**

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**II. There is a Place of the New in Our Lives (Isaiah 43:19 <sup>19</sup> Behold, I am doing a new thing;)**

**A. God Majors in the NEW**

1. He is constantly creating (cycle of seasons, etc.)
2. God called Abram to a new land with a new beginning and continues calling us to the new

**Colossians 3.1-4 [2 Slides] If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

**B. How do We Embrace God's New? **Philippians 3:10-14 [2 Slides]****

**<sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

1. Get to know Jesus better – **Philippians 3:10**
2. Admit our brokenness – **Philippians 3:12**
3. "Forget" the old – **Philippians 3.13**
  - Anger/remorse/regret/ won't change the past
  - **"Cut it down and forget it."** Robert E. Lee
  - Even the Past Successes
4. Go for the New thing God is doing – **Philippians 3:14; Isaiah 43:19**

**<sup>19</sup> Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.**

- a. God made a way for His people through the deserts – Abram; Hebrews; John the Baptist; Jesus; Paul; US and our "desert" time right now
  - b. God is greater than the desert – rivers, roads, and all manner of provisions
- **Let's make ONE resolution this year: To let Jesus be Lord of my whole life starting now.**
  - How?
    - Learn from the old and lean into the new – God is there.
    - Based on a faith that embraces the same power that raised Jesus from the dead,
    - And reaches forth to the things before.
    - God will make all things new (**Revelation 21:5**)