

New Beginnings

Text : **Acts 2L 29-47**

S#1.

S#2.

A. We stand at the end of another calendar years.

1. Wettest year in a 124 year. (*since started records in 1895*)
2. It was a year of political upheaval in the U.S.
3. Social problems continued to worsen. (*Number of policemen killed rising*)

S#3.

B. The New Year is a time of introspection for most people.

1. It has been a good year for some, but not for all. (*Economy booming*)
2. There has been some good and some unpleasantness.
3. It is a time when we evaluate ourselves and vow to do better.
 - a. Many make New Years resolutions but few take them seriously.
 - b. Getting in shape or losing weight is the most common resolution.
 - c. Reduce one's stress level, get more sleep, be more active, watch less TV

S#4.

C. All of us come to the point in life when we stop planning big changes.

1. We reach the point in life when we realize we've pretty much done what we will.
2. When we reach that point we tend to look back and ask ourselves "*What if ...*"
3. Even the young often look back and long for a do-over.
 - a. In life there is no such thing as a do-over.
 - b. In the long run, do-overs don't often bring about significantly different results.

S#5.

D. The bible is replete with stories of second chances.

Let's consider a few of them.

I. The Old Testament is a series of second chances.

S#6.

A. Adam and Eve

S#7.

1. They lived in a perfect world, but lost it due to sin.
2. There is no evidence of them having repented.
3. They did not influence their children to follow God.
 - a. Not record of Adam and Eve sacrificing to God.
 - b. If they had sacrificed, Cain would have known how to do it.
4. The consequence of Adam's unfaithfulness is the corruption of the world.

B. The world was given a second chance in the family of Noah.**S#8.**

1. Noah was faithful to God for 602 years.
2. He got drunk on the wine from his first harvest.
 - a. His drunkenness was a stumbling block for his son, Ham.
 - b. Ham was cursed because of the sin of looking on his Father's nakedness.
3. The descendants of Ham built the tower of babble and were curse for doing so.
 - a. It was an act of rebellion against God.
 - b. They wanted to be high enough to be flood-proof.
 - c. They did not want to be scattered out as God had told them.

Gen. 11: 4 – They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower **S#9.**
 whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a
 name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

C. The Israelites were given their freedom, but rebelled against God's rule. S#10.

1. God rescued them from Egyptian bondage because He loved Abraham.
2. They kept looking back at Egypt longingly.
 - a. They missed the leaks and pomegranates.
 - b. As Moses was receiving God's law they built a golden calf. (*Egyptian idol – Apis*)
3. They refused to take the Promised Land ... fearful because of faithlessness
4. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years ... a whole generation died.

D. Israel was again given the Promised Land. (Took their 2nd chance) Jericho

1. They were told to purge it, **but** they were corrupted by the idols in the land.
2. God made them rich, but they forgot Him as the enjoyed prosperity.
3. Because of their unfaithfulness, God delivered them into the hands of conquerors.
4. They repented and God rescued them, **but** they soon fell way again.

* **This cycle was repeated throughout their history.**

Neh. 9: 27 –Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their oppressors **S#11.**
 who oppressed them, but when they cried to You in the time of their
 distress, You heard from heaven, and according to Your great compassion
 You gave them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their
 oppressors. **28** But as soon as they had rest, they did evil again before
 You; Therefore You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that
 they ruled over them. When they cried again to You, You heard from
 heaven, And many times You rescued them according to Your compassion,

E. God made Israel into a world power, but God took their power away. S#12.

1. Faithful David conquered all of the neighboring kingdoms.
Neh. 9: 8 – You found his heart faithful before You, and made a covenant with him to give him the land of the Canaanite, of the Hittite and the Amorite, of the Perizzite, the Jebusite and the Girgashite — To give it to his descendants. And You have fulfilled Your promise, For You are righteous.
2. His son Solomon expanded far beyond the promised boundaries.
3. Contrary to God’s command, Solomon made covenants with many lands.
 - a. Wealth flowed in like a river of gold.
 - b. Solomon married women from the nation with whom he made covenants.
 - c. These women brought their idols with them and Solomon stumbled.
4. The kingdom and the great wealth were both lost.

F. Many attempts were made at reform.

1. Ezra brought in religious reform.
2. Nehemiah brought in social reform ... applied religion
- * 3. **Israel’s reforms lasted only as long as her suffering.**

II. The same cycle repeated itself in the lives of individuals.

S#13.

A. Consider Gideon. Judges 6-8

S#14.

1. He was called from weakness into a position of strength.
2. From hiding he became a national hero, a conqueror, a liberator.
3. He refused a position of power, but accepted great wealth.
4. He used his wealth to make a golden ephod ... a religious symbol.
 - a. It was a tribute to his glory.
 - b. It became an object to be worshipped. (*a stumbling block*)

B. Samson was a prime example. Judges 13-16

S#15.

1. He was the world’s strongest man. (*He was the hero of Israel.*)
2. Samson became the symbol of Israel’s power.
3. He defeated the Philistines, but he could not defeat his own LUSTS.
4. As a result of his lust, he was enslaved and humiliated.
5. He took advantage of his 2nd chance and destroyed more Philistines in death.

C. The Apostle Paul Acts 9

S16.

1. He was zealous, but was taught incorrectly.
2. Paul wanted to serve God, but was actually His enemy.
3. God gave him a 2nd chance.
4. Paul did great things for God.
 - a. He used his 2nd chance wisely.
 - b. Possibly ... we are here because of the Apostle Paul.

D. Every Christian has been given a new beginning.

1. We were lost, having no hope and without God in the world. **Eph. 2: 12**
2. Each of us needs to ask ourselves how we are using our 2nd chances.

III. This church has been given many chances.

S17.

A. We are an old church. (100 yrs plus)

1. We were once larger and more influential.
2. We never made a decision to become smaller, weaker and less influential.
3. We faded slowly through natural attrition and some amount of apathy.

B. Like Israel, we have had many chances for new beginning.

S18.

1. Elders have come and gone over the years.
2. Preachers have come and gone ... some more zealous than others.
3. Ultimately ... it is the members who decide the future of any church.
 - a. The members choose their elders, their preacher and their level of participation.
 - b. They either add fuel to the flames or act as the fire brigade to put them out.

C. As we look over our shoulders at the year behind us, what do we see ?

S19.

CONCLUSION :

A. Look back at what you have been able to accomplish for God this year.

S20.

1. What would the future of the church be if every year was like this one ?
2. Would you be proud to offer this year as a gift to God ? (*Parable of talents*)

B. In Christ every day is an opportunity for a new beginning.

C. Make today a new beginning .. commit yourself to :

S21.

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| 1. Do one good thing to another every day. | 3. Pray personally every day. |
| 2. Read 4 pages in your bible every day. | 4. Talk about your faith daily. |

S21. ... Communion Slide

Lesson Text :**Acts 2: 29-47**

29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to Him with an oath to seat one of His descendants on his throne, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. 32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, " Be saved from this perverse generation!" 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.