

New Beginnings

THESE DEVOTIONALS PROVIDE
ONE LESSON PER WEEK FOR FAMILY
OR PRIVATE DEVOTIONS.

When you hear the words “New Year,” what comes to your mind?

Every December and January, many people make a list of resolutions, setting goals to lose weight, read more books, or spend less money. Others pick a word of the year to bring focus and clarity to their lives. Some people commit the year to the Lord, remembering that Scripture tells us it is God who determines our steps (Proverbs 16:9, 20:24; Jeremiah 10:23).

The New Year can be a good time for a fresh start—the past with its troubles, tears, and triumphs dissipates as our focus shifts to the 365 days about to unfold. Hope reigns in the New Year as it promises new beginnings.

Though the Bible may not say much about the transition from an old year to the next, Scripture is filled with accounts of new beginnings. From the first verse of Genesis to the final chapter of Revelation, the Bible brims with reminders that God lovingly committed to redeem sinful people and to offer hope and new beginnings.

As we enter 2022, let’s look at examples of new beginnings in Scripture and reflect on how God can bring this same hope of creation and renewal into our own lives. ■

In these devotionals, read the Scripture references to understand God’s thoughts on the topics. Discuss what you’ve learned and how you can apply the truths to stand strong on the authority of God’s Word in this confused world. Be sure to pray for discernment before and after each study.



WEEKLY READING

Week 1—Creation: God, the Father of New Beginnings

Genesis 1:1–31; Jeremiah 32:17; Psalm 33:6; Romans 1:20, 11:36; Hebrews 3:4

God made everything out of nothing. Even when we “make” something, we’re simply using ingredients already created by God. Think of some things God has made for which you are thankful.

Week 2—Adam and Eve: The Beginning of the Human Race

Genesis 1:26–27, 2:4–24; Psalm 139:13–14; Ephesians 2:10

Though God spoke the natural world into being, he got “hands on” when he created Adam. Humans are the only creatures made in God’s image. In what ways does being made in God’s image make us unique among his creatios?

Week 3—The Post-Flood World: Provision for God’s Remnant

Genesis 7:9–22, 8:15–9:3; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 34:15; Romans 1:18; 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 5:18

During the global flood, God protected righteous Noah and his family. After the flood, he refashioned the world for their survival, showing us that God honors the faithful. Think of a time when you witnessed God’s protection in your life.

Week 4—Abraham: New Directions

Genesis 12:1–4; Psalm 37:24; Proverbs 3:5–6; Romans 4:3; Hebrews 11:6

God called Abraham to go but didn’t specify where. Abraham chose to follow God into unknown territory. When has God asked you to step out of your comfort zone and into a new place—figuratively or literally?

Week 5—Moses: From Herding Animals to Leading People

Exodus 3:1–11; Colossians 3:23; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 13:7

Moses went from being royalty in the world's most powerful nation, to becoming a lowly shepherd, to leading a nation out of slavery. Has God ever called you to new roles or ministries?

Week 6—Israelites: Starting Over After Slavery

Exodus 13:3 and 17–20, 15:13; Joshua 1:9; Isaiah 43:18–19; John 8:31–36; Galatians 4:1

Imagine being an Israelite: One day you're a slave, and the next you're wandering free in the desert, experiencing God's guidance and miraculous provision. Do you remember a time when you were a slave to sin in some area of your life? How did you find freedom in Christ?

Week 7—Job: Rising from the Ashes

Job 1:1–2:9, 42:1 and 12–16; Psalm 34:18, 40:3, 73:26; Lamentations 3:22–24; 2 Corinthians 4:17–18

Job had it all—and then he lost it all. Although he experienced suffering and loss, he endured because of his faith in God. How has God held you steady and brought you into new life after dire circumstances?

Week 8—New Life, New Name

Isaiah 62:2; Matthew 16:13–19; John 1:35–42; Revelation 2:17

Childless Abram became Abraham, the father of a multitude. Simon the fisherman became Peter the disciple. Can you think of other biblical characters whose name and identity changed? If you received a new name to indicate a spiritual change in your life, what would it be?

Week 9—Nicodemus: A New Birth

John 3:1–7, 3:16–19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:12–15, 6:23

Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be “born again” to have eternal life. Only through Christ can we be born into a new spiritual life. Take a moment to reflect on your own testimony.

Week 10—Zacchaeus: New Beginnings with Others

Micah 6:8; Luke 19:1–10; John 13:34–35; Romans 12:9–21; Ephesians 4:29–32; Philippians 2:4; Colossians 3:9–14

When Zacchaeus met Jesus, his life changed, transforming the way he treated others. How do your everyday actions show that you have met Jesus?

Week 11—Jesus' Resurrection: Birth of the Church

Isaiah 8:8; Luke 2:10–14; Acts 2:14–41, 4:32–35; Romans 5:1–5, 6:1–4, 8:1–4; Ephesians 2:15

Christ's death and resurrection marked the birth of the church. Even under severe persecution, the number of early Christians continued to grow. Has there been a time when you found a new beginning or saw significant growth after a trial in your life?

Week 12—Paul (Previously Known as Saul): Transformation

Acts 8:1–18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1–3; 1 Timothy 1:12–15

Saul once killed Christians. But after an encounter with Christ, he ministered to his fellow believers. How was your life transformed when you came to Christ?

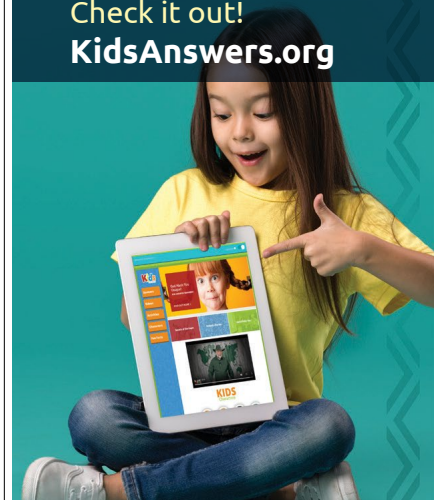
Week 13—Heaven: New Life for Eternity

Isaiah 65:17; John 3:16, 11:25, 14:1–3; Romans 8:22–23; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18, 5:1; Revelation 21:1–5

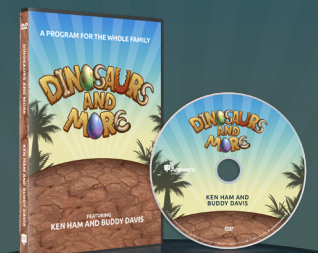
In our fallen world, we all die. But Scripture says that those who believe in Christ will live with him for eternity. What does the hope of a new beginning in heaven mean in your life?

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