

New Beginnings

It is too bad New Year's Day comes in the dead of winter. It seems it should come on the first day of spring, because each day suggests a new beginning. This is mostly psychological though-nothing in our lives really changes because a new year or season begins, but nevertheless we like to think it does. So we make New Year's resolutions and springtime brings the resurrection of life reviving our spirits. On second thought, it is probably better the two days do not coincide; the first day of Spring offers new hope-a second chance-to those demoralized spirits who fail to keep their New Year's commitments.

New beginnings are not only refreshing; they are often necessary. Jesus spoke of a new birth "of water and spirit" that is the beginning of a new life with God (John 3). Paul wrote of a "washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" bringing salvation and "the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3). Peter wrote of a "new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1). Each is addressing the very real sin problem resolved in the person of Christ and the believer's response to him in his or her new birth.

The new birth: a new beginning out of the barrenness of the winter of our alienation from God into the fullness of the springtime of our reconciliation to him. Have you begun yet?