

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

Revelation 1:8,17

Introduction:

- 1. The month of January is named for the Roman god “Janus.”**
 - a. Janus had two faces - one looking forward and one backward.**
 - b. January is the first month of a new year - we look back to the old year and forward to the new.**

- 2. Life itself is a series of beginnings and endings.**
 - a. One is born and eventually dies.**
 - b. One begins school and eventually graduates.**
 - c. One begins dating and eventually marries.**
 - d. Children are born but eventually grow up and leave the home.**
 - e. One begins a career and eventually retires.**

- 3. Beginnings are optimistic for they are filled with hope and promise.**

- 4. Endings are often times of mixed emotions.**
 - a. There is happiness for things accomplished.**
 - b. There is sadness that an aspect of our life is coming to an end.**

- 5. Let us notice some important beginnings and endings in a Christian’s life.**

Discussion:

- I. OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL IS THE END OF A LIFE OF SIN AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.**
 - A. Many are baptized but never grow beyond this.**
 - 1. They neither live nor give like Christ.**
 - 2. They are like an infant that is stillborn.**
 - 3. When one is born again, he must begin to grow:**

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18).

 - B. Becoming a Christian must be the beginning of a new way of living.**

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

II. OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL MEANS AN END OF SELF AND A BEGINNING OF SERVICE.

A. Jesus taught that one must actually deny self.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” (Mt. 16:24-27).

B. Most of us do not deny ourselves anything we desire.

- 1. If we want a certain kind of food we simply buy or prepare it.**
- 2. If we want a particular article of clothing, we purchase it.**
- 3. If we want a car or house, we buy it even if we have to finance.**

C. How does one deny himself?

- 1. He must “seek first the kingdom of God” (Mt. 6:33).**
- 2. He must “present his body as a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1).**
- 3. He must remember that he belongs to Christ for Christ bought him with His blood (1 Cor. 6:19,20).**

D. The apostle Paul best illustrated what it means to deny self.

- 1. He gave up everything to serve Christ (Phil. 3:4-11).**
- 2. He truly denied self and put it to death (Gal. 2:20).**

III. OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL MEANS AN END OF WORRY AND A BEGINNING OF TRUST.

A. Worry is a major health problem in the USA.

1. It contributes to many mental and psychological diseases.
2. It also contributes to many physical illnesses.

B. Worry is a useless waste of time.

1. “Worry is like a rocking chair; it will give you something to do but won’t get you anywhere.”
2. Paul Southern told of a woman who worried her child would be hit by a car while playing in the street, but she had no child.

C. Worry is a basic lack of trust in God (Mt. 6:25-34).

D. The Lord reminds us that “He is at hand” (Phil. 4:4-7).

IV. OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL MEANS ONE WILL COME TO AN END OF EARTHLY LIFE BUT BEGIN A NEW LIFE IN ETERNITY.

A. In nature one season gives way to another.

1. Spring rains bring the growth of summer which results in the harvest of autumn, which gives way to the cold of winter as the earth rests in preparation for the return of spring.
2. Childhood gives way to youth; youth to middle age and middle age to old age.
3. Life is but a journey from birth to the grave.
4. A teacher wrote 25,550 on the board and explained this is the number of days in the life of one who lives to be 70.

B. When a Christian dies, it is the end of life on earth but the beginning of eternal life.

1. Paul wrote: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).
2. A man met an aged Christian and exclaimed, “I’m surprised you are still in the land of the living.” The aged Christian replied, “No, I’m still in the land of the dying, but I hope shortly to go to the land of the living.”

Conclusion:

1. Everything has both a beginning and an ending except eternity which has no end.
2. Have you begun the Christian life so that you can live on in eternity?
3. There is no better way to begin a new year than by obedience to the Gospel (Rom. 6:4,5).

