

WHAT DOES THE NEW YEAR MEAN TO THE GRACE BELIEVER?

Sunday Sermon

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INTRODUCTION:

As human beings in a society, there are certain observances that bring expectations of what should and should not be done. Certain traditions are created and carried on throughout time. Holidays are such occasions. There has come to be an expectation in the world system that on Easter there is an Easter bunny and baskets are brought around to children. Easter egg hunts are conducted for children and maybe for some it is a time to remember Christ's resurrection from the dead. On Thanksgiving, food is consumed by families and friends as remembrance is given to the tradition began by the pilgrims and Native Americans at Plymouth. Some choose to give observance to the things that God has done for them during this time. At Christmas, there are feeling expressed of caring and sharing. There are families and friends that gather together to be with one another and express their love through the giving of gifts and sharing of time. Some choose to at that time, observe the birth of Christ.

Each of these holiday observances over time have changed in one way or another. Some American holidays began as pagan holidays and were converted into more religious observances. Such is the case with Easter and Christmas. Thanksgiving, of course, began as a religious holiday. When dealing with unsaved men, it cannot be expected that they will have the same observances that true Believers have. We have seen in America's culture these holidays come full circle back to paganism. Whereas at a point in time they were opportunities to make remembrance of God, they now are all celebrations of things unsaved men deem important mostly. It is up to the Believer to make remembrance of what he/ she deems important during these holiday times as well as every other day.

New Year's is no different. For the unsaved world, New Year's Eve is a time to party, light fireworks, shoot off guns, drink champagne and celebrate another year coming. The new year is a time for the making of personal promises and goals for individual that will be different from the previous year. The Jews celebrate Rosh Hashana (Head of the Year), which is a religious observance of the new year, but from the mandates of the law. Scripture, as with the other American holidays, give no suggestion for a remembrance on the new year for Grace Believers. So, like with other holidays, how can the Believer find productivity in a world system observance? Well, though not mandated, the new year does represent a beginning. For the Believer, it can be an opportunity to push the reset button in our Christian Life and start over. It can also be the place where we decide to expand on where God has brought us maturity wise. It can be the place where we identify and isolate those things that tripped us up in the year prior and attempt to overcome them in the year coming. Most importantly, it is the time to remember

that these things can only be accomplished by living in our position in Christ. Today, we hope to examine what the new year should mean to the Grace Believer.

I. NEW YEAR'S IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE BELIEVER TO REMEMBER NEW KIND¹ OF POTENTIAL AND POSSESSIONS IN CHRIST

- A. The Believer Should Be Reminded in the New Year of the New Covenant from Christ
 - 1. The New Covenant Represented by the Cup of Communion – 1 Cor. 11:25
 - 2. The New Covenant Is Ministered by Grace Believers – 2 Cor. 3:6
 - 3. The New Covenant Is Mediated by Christ – Heb. 9:15
- B. The Believer Should Be Reminded in the New Year of the New Commandment
 - 1. The New Commandment² Given by Christ in the Upper Room – Jn. 13:34, 35, 15:12, 17
 - 2. The New Commandment Was Reiterated by John – 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 2 Jn. 1:5
- C. The Believer Should Be Reminded in the New Year of the New Man and Creation
 - 1. The New Creation³
 - a) The New Creation Places the Believer in Christ – 2 Cor. 5:17
 - b) The New Creation Is the Place Where the Believer Finds Meaning Facing God – Gal. 6:15
 - 2. The New Man⁴
 - a) The New Man Was Created from Two – Eph. 2:15
 - b) The New Man Clothes the Believer – Eph. 4:24

II. NEW YEAR'S IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FORGET THOSE THINGS THAT HAVE ENCUMBERED THEM

- A. The New Year Is an Opportunity for the Believer Forget All Things from the Past – (cf. Phil. 3:14)
 - 1. Negative Things Can Be an Encumbrance to the Believer's Christian Life
 - 2. Positive Things Can Be an Encumbrance to the Believer's Christian Life
- B. The New Year Is an Opportunity for the Believer to Lay Aside What Hindered Them in the Previous Year – (cf. Heb. 12:1)
 - 1. The Sin Nature Can Separate the Believer from Doing God's Will
 - 2. The Believer Can Have Individual Sin Unique to Them

¹ Καινός (Kai-nos) – Green's Lexicon – new, recently made; new in species, character, or mode; novel, strange; new to the possessor; unheard of, unusual; renovated; of higher excellence. CDJ – New in that the kind, type or model has not been seen before.

² The New Commandment "To Love One Another" – The New Commandment Is a Moral Obligation to Other Believers, Rom. 13:8; The New Commandment Allows the Believer to Serve the Brethren – Gal. 5:13; The New Commandment Allows the Believer to Put up with the Brethren – Eph. 4:2; The New Commandment calls for the Believer to Abound in Love toward the Brethren – 1 Thess. 3:12; The New Commandment Is Taught to the Believer from God – 1 Thess. 4:9; The New Commandment Is from a Pure Heart – 1 Pet. 1:22; The New Commandment Allows the Believer to Have the Proper Empathy toward Other Believers – 1 Pet. 3:8; The New Commandment Is Encouraged by John – 1 Jn. 4:7, 11, 12.

³ The work done for Believers collectively to place them in Christ and give a new reality for living.

⁴ The Believer's new potential for activity in Christ. It is opposed with the "old man" (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) which was akin to the Believer's former reality because of being born to Adam. The old man was subject to the sin nature, whereas the in the new man, the Believer has been regenerated and has a new mind. Thusly, the Believer can act in accordance with the mind of Christ and be glorifying to God.

- C. The New Year Is an Opportunity for the Believer to Restart from the Launching Point
– Rev. 2:1
 - 1. The Believer Can Reset from His Starting Position
 - 2. The Believer Must Go Back to Living in Christ

III. NEW YEAR'S IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE IN MATURITY

- A. The Believer Can Remember to Be Bourne to Maturity by the Holy Spirit – Heb. 6:1
- B. The Believer Can Be Reminded That Full Maturity Is Not Reached in This Life –
Phil. 3:12