
SO WHAT'S NEW?

Many persons tend to use the first part of each New Year to reflect on the year that has just passed. These reflections tend to bring on negative emotions because most people have failed to accomplish all they had resolved to do the previous year. Most of these failures have occurred for one reason - the flesh.

We either failed to hear God at all, hear God correctly or reasoned things out for ourselves! We failed because our souls were ruling and not the Holy Spirit.

In other cases, the enemy attacked and because of our weakness or failure to adhere to the Word of God, sickness and death (of family or friend) or some other form of calamity came upon us. These things are never God's fault, or God's doing! God is The Blessor – *the blessings of Lord, it maketh rich and He addeth no sorrow with it* (Proverbs 10:22). After giving His Son to bring restoration of all things on our behalf, why would He bring them back upon us? He does not “giveth and taketh what He giveth.” For us as His children, we are chastened and grown by the Word and the Spirit! - Not horrible experiences! He never uses the devil to teach us!

That was an aside - back to the subject - the "New Year" has come but what is so new about it? In my opinion the only thing that has changed is the date in the calendar and our perception! We look at each New Year as a fresh page in a book waiting to be written upon, and we vow that what we write will be only things that are for our good. The same exercise is repeated year after year and ten years later we are no better off. Truthfully, our perception should indeed be changed, or for want of a better word, new. God makes reference to the word 'new' all over the Bible – new creation, new mercies, fresh anointing, putting on the new man, renewed strength, rebirth/ new birth, and these and more should be the 'new' that charts our yearly resolves. If we do that, then we are bound to let the Author of newness, drive our lives, year after year, day after day. No longer will we create those futile expectations at the beginning of each year that will not come unless they come from within, and the guidance comes from above!

In Psalm 127 1-2 (AMP) King Solomon wrote:

“EXCEPT THE Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; except the Lord keeps the city, the watchman wakes but in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to take rest late, to eat the bread of [anxious] toil, for He gives [blessings] to His beloved in sleep.”

Today, many are back to work, looking at the bottom line, running hither and thither to find work - in short, back to the same old routine we left in last year!

On the "religious" front, we hear Preachers giving 'prophetic' words, telling us what to expect in this New Year - all that we heard the same time last year! We are so busy listening to men, we have no time to listen to God!

WAKE UP! Paul said in Philippians 3:12-15 (CEV) *12 I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize. 13 My friends, I don't feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. 14 I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven. This is the prize that God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done. 15 All of us who are mature should think in this same way. And if any of you think differently, God will make it clear to you.*

Too many of us lose focus - Jesus told us to watch and pray, to be alert and cognisant of the times and seasons in which we live. However, we must not get so caught up that we lose focus and stray from the purpose He has given us personally and collectively as the Body of Christ. We must never lose focus of our Call.

As the Body of Christ we are to be His hands, His feet, and His mouth. We are to show forth His love, be lights in a world that is in darkness (and that darkness is deepening daily). We are to be examples of integrity. We are to fulfill the commission in

Mark 16:15-18 (CEV) - *"Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world. 16 Anyone who believes me and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe me will be condemned. 17 Everyone who believes me will be able to do wonderful things. By using my name they will force out demons, and they will speak new languages. 18 They will handle snakes and will drink poison and not be hurt. They will also heal sick people by placing their hands on them." Also, in*

Matthew 28:18-20 (CEV) - *"Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."*

Those of us who watch and, like the Sons of Issachar, discern the times and the seasons, have no doubt that the end of the age is near. All the prophetic signs are coming to pass at a rapid pace!

Again I say WAKE UP, CHURCH OF CHRIST - BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH!

Are you prepared? Have you shifted? Are you delaying His appearing through prayerlessness, Wordlessness, through inertia - failing to fulfill your commission? Are you so focused on gaining a platform, getting on television, or growing your ministry that your focus has shifted?

Are you entertaining demon spirits in the church through worldly rhythms and beats, worldly dress, worldly habits and inappropriate relationships? Are you too scared to stick to God's word and so have become "seeker friendly"?

Have you strayed from the Truth and denied the power of the Holy Spirit? Have you quenched His move in your services because you must get on with "your program" in your time frame? Whose church is it anyway?

When last did you stop in the middle of your sermon to minister to someone because He said to? When last did you give an altar call at the time He said to do so? How many souls have gone back through the door because of your pride and your disobedience as a servant of God?

When last as a layperson have you ministered to anyone? When last have you led a soul to Christ? When last have you stood up for what is right instead of going with the flow because you were afraid to get on the wrong side of the boss? When last have you lifted up your Church leaders in prayer instead of giving them a tongue-lashing? When last have you refused to entertain gossip about someone and prayed or ministered to that person?

When last have you acted like Jesus? When last did you let Jesus be Lord and Master?

This is a new year and the judgement of God will be coming fast and furious on the world, but remember - it begins in the house of God! 1 Peter 12-19 (The Message) *12-13 Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.*

14-16 If you're abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It's the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others. If they're on you because you broke the law or disturbed the peace, that's a different matter. But if it's because you're a Christian, don't give it a second thought. Be proud of the distinguished status reflected in that name! 17-19 It's judgment time for God's own family. We're first in line. If it starts with us, think what it's going to be like for those who refuse God's Message! If good people barely make it, what's in store for the bad?

Instead of making a list of fleshly - planned New Year things to do, commit to being in the word and being led by the Spirit of God. You can never fail there.

If you find life challenging because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust Him! He knows what He's doing, and He'll keep on doing it – God who has begun a good work in you, will complete it. So, what's new? – God's living in and through me!!

