

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Beginning The New Year In Christ

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A new year has dawned bringing sunshine hopefully to all our lives. Regardless of what one has experienced or endured in 2007, there is something invigorating to spread the curtains and look out and anticipate 2008. As we try to train our hand to write the correct year on our checks and papers, let us remind our hearts of what a blessing it is to begin a new year in Christ.

In Christ We Have True Forgiveness. Thanksgiving fills our hearts when we realize the drastic change God has provided for us in Christ. He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has placed us in the kingdom of his Son (Col. 1:13). And it is in God's Son “*in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins*” (Col. 1:14).

When God forgives, no part of our transgression is ever held against us again. Under the covenant of Christ the prophecy of Jeremiah is realized. God says, “*For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more*” (Heb. 8:12). How complete is His forgiveness? “*As far as the east is from the west, So far hath he removed our*

transgressions from us (Psm. 103:12).

In Christ We Have A Spiritual Outlook. Paul writes, “*Wherefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new*” (2 Cor. 5:17). By looking at the prior verse, we can see the point of Paul's “Wherefore.” He is emphasizing how the new man in Christ looks at others as seen from this statement: “*Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more*” (2 Cor. 5:16).

Outside of Christ, our view of man would be as to what race he is, or his or her social position Jesus may have been viewed as a Jew, and to many the Jewish leader who was to redeem His people from Roman dominance in a secular world. But Paul says, after Jesus' death and resurrection he viewed Jesus from a fleshly point of view no more. Our redemption is spiritual, and our insight into things is from a spiritual perspective.

Such insight is instructive

in times of suffering. Paul saw his afflictions as “*light*” because he looked “*not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*” He focused on the more glorious “*eternal*” realities that helped him overcome the “*temporal*” setbacks (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

In Christ We Have Room For Growth. Regardless of our spiritual maturity as we end a year, we always can begin a new year in Christ realizing areas where growth and improvement is needed. We should look at the new year as an opportunity to be “*increasing in the knowledge of God*” (Col. 1:10). Our faith in Christ has room to add “*virtue*”, “*knowledge*”, “*self-control*”, “*patience*”, “*godliness*”, “*brotherly kindness*” and “*love*” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Peter says regardless of who we are, we have room to grow or “*abound*” in these characteristics towards spiritual maturity. Make 2008 the year you see yourself actually grow in these essential spiritual qualities.

Christ is “*our hope*” (1 Tim. 1:2). Hope through forgiveness unto the expectation of Heaven is a wonderful way to begin any year. Are you in Christ?