

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Planning for the End

(Jerry Fite)

**A** new year on the calendar has appeared. Anticipating what the new year will bring has probably crossed your mind. But time doesn't bring anything, but an opportunity for your action in matters you can control, or reaction to consequences, some of which you cannot control.

As Christians, we confess that the Lord is in control of whether we will live to see another day, or not (*James 4:15*). As disciples, we know Jesus as Lord of our lives, and strive to magnify and glorify Him each day we live (*Luke 6:46, Philippians 1:20, I Corinthians 6:20*). As believers, we know we will stand before the Lord in judgment to give answer for what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad (*2 Corinthians 5:10*). These facts should move us to wisely prepare for the end, at the beginning of the new year.

The servant of the Lord could not hear more welcomed words from his Master than the following: “*Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*”

(*Matthew 25:21*). Before these cherished words are heard, the Lord's servant has engaged in diligent action.

In Jesus' parabolic story, the Lord's servant has been entrusted with money, valued by weight. The first servant is given money weighing five talents, another servant receives two, and to a third servant, one. The Lord has distributed different amounts of money, “*to each according to his several ability*” (*Matthew 25:15*). Each servant has ability to determine how the money will be used, and therefore has responsibility before the Lord for each respective action.

After “*a long time*,” the Lord returns for “*a reckoning*” with His servants (*Matthew 25:19*). What have these servants been doing with the entrusted money, in the time allotted, according to their respective abilities? The first two servants had doubled the money entrusted to them, while the third servant returns the original weight of money, having buried it, instead of investing it for gain. This servant, despite his excuses, is condemned by his Lord and characterized as “*wicked and slothful*”

(*Matthew 25:26*). The two productive servants hear their Lord characterize each one personally as “*good and faithful*” in work “*well done*” (*Matthew 25:21, 23*).

The point of the story is two-fold. When the Lord returns in judgment, we will stand before our Lord as he “settles our account”. What have we done with our ability in the time allotted us, regarding the Gospel? Did we use our opportunities to produce even more opportunities for the spreading of the Gospel, or did we just keep the treasured Gospel hidden? If we were slothful, we will be cast out into the outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. If productive in increasing the word, we will enter into the joy the Lord.

Jesus's certain return can occur anytime. Knowing the day of reckoning is coming, we should plan our year accordingly. Let us promote the Word in our immediate family, by continually implanting the word in our children's hearts. Let us use our influence in seeking opportunities to teach the lost the saving Gospel. Let us work backwards from the end, wanting to hear “well done,” to use our time wisely as we begin a new year.