



## Thoughts for the New Year

“From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you.” Exodus 12:2

“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘Yahweh’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these:’ Leviticus 23:2

### I. PRACTICALLY OBSERVING GOD’S CALENDAR

#### A. It’s a New Year

1. Beginning of Months: The Bible says that it is the beginning of months for us (Exodus 12:2)
2. Past Year Assessment: This can be a time when we assess what has happened these past twelve months.
3. Coming Year Focus and Plans: We can make plans for the new year starting in a couple of weeks.

#### B. Convocations and Meetings

1. New Moon: Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> (Nisan 1) This is the New Moon Observance for the first day of the first month of the year. We will focus on readying our hearts for the new year and the covenant meal at Passover.
2. Passover: Friday night April 19<sup>th</sup> (Nisan 14): [Not a mandated holy convocation] This is not a convocation but a time where we meet together in the homes for our Passover meals together where we celebrate our covenant with God through Yeshua’s sacrifice for us. We will then have an all-night vigil at Mayflower for those who want to join us.
3. Unleavened Bread Day 1: Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup> (Nisan 15): This is a convocation where we corporately will meet together for an unleavened oneg meal at 6pm. We will focus on feasting on Yeshua and getting the leaven out of our lives as a fitting response to our redemption in Him.
4. Firstfruits: Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup> sundown to Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> sundown [Not a mandated holy convocation]. On this day we have a prayer meeting and focus on the resurrection of Yeshua.
5. Unleavened Bread Day 7: Thursday night April 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday night April 26<sup>th</sup>. This is a convocation yet to be announced where we corporately will meet and join together for another unleavened oneg meal followed by our convocation and party together. We will focus on the festival themes and the fifty-day counting of the omer.
6. Counting the Omer: the fifty day count from Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> to Shavuot fifty Days later on Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>.
7. Shavuot: The Fiftieth Day. We will convocate together on Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>.

### II. NEW CREATION: WE ARE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Taken directly from Mike Bickle’s teaching: *The Gospel of Grace* found at: <http://mikebickle.org/resources/series/the-gospel-of-grace>

<sup>17</sup>If anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...<sup>21</sup>that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:17-21

#### A. Old Things (Reign of Sin) Passed Away: Before we were justified by faith we were all under the reign of sin.

1. We were under condemnation before God.
2. We were powerless before sin (at the heart level) and satanic attacks. We had no ability to challenge them. We had no power to resist sinful promptings in our heart (anger, bitterness, lust, pride, etc.).
3. We were in darkness without the ability to understand God or His Word or to receive divine direction for our life.
4. We were destitute and without a lasting purpose or hope of a future in God.

#### B. All Things Have Become New: We are now under the reign of grace. We received a new position, power, nature, insights, and destiny.

1. God’s Acceptance with Affection: The result of receiving this new position is that God enjoys and delights in relating to us as sons of God and the Bride of Messiah. There is no condemnation or rejection from God (Rom. 8:1).
2. Indwelling Spirit: The Spirit gives us new power with new desires and insights that we may know God, His Word, and His will. We received supernatural power to resist sin and Satan. We received a new nature when our spirit was born again and made righteous. The Teacher dwells on the inside of us. We turn our attention inwardly and thank the Spirit for His presence in our spirit.

3. **The Spirit's Fruit**: The fruit of His presence in us is love and peace (Gal. 5:22). We do not have to yield to the promptings of sin. As we thank the Spirit for His peace that is in our spirit by His indwelling presence, then we will experience them in our soul (mind and emotions).

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness... Gal. 5:22*

4. **Authority**: We were given the authority to use Yeshua's name to release the works of God and hinder the works of Satan in our life and circumstances, as well as in others. We are seated in heavenly places with Yeshua with access in prayer to God's presence.

*...raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Messiah... Eph. 2:6*

5. **Divine Destiny**: We have a lasting purpose in God that goes beyond our physical death. We will forever reign with Him. Every day is relevant as we do God's will because He sees our effort and it so moves Him that He gives us eternal rewards for our faithfulness even in small things (Lk. 19:17). Our faithfulness is remembered by God regardless of how small our impact is.

6. **A New Creation in Our Spirit-Man**: The "he" that is a new creation is our spirit man. All things pertaining to our spirit become new. The "real you" is your spirit man, which is alive in Messiah.

**C. The Gospel in Three Tenses**: The gospel is the good news of salvation, about receiving God's righteousness (in three tenses). We experience the fullness of our salvation over three time frames. One third of our salvation is complete—the salvation of our spirit. Our **spirit has been** created anew in holiness (past tense).

1. **Justification**: our legal position—*past tense*, focused on my spirit (I **have been** saved)
2. **Sanctification**: our living condition—*present tense*, focused on my soul (I **am being** saved)
3. **Glorification**: our eternal exaltation—*future tense*, focused on my body (I **will be** saved)

#### **D. Our Spirit, Where God Dwells**

*May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless... 1 Thes. 5:23*

1. **Spirit, Soul, & Body**: Our **spirit** is the place where God dwells—He lives in us. Our **soul** speaks of our personality, consisting of our mind, emotions, and will. Our **body** has five senses, which enable us to receive from the physical world. Many believers do not know **who they are in their spirit**. As we receive training for our body and soul, so we must receive training related to our spirit.
2. **Adam's Sin**: Before Adam sinned, his spirit governed his soul and body. His physical appetites, five senses, and emotions were subject to his spirit. After he sinned, he became spiritually dead and lost his ability to relate to God. Everything was reversed, and his body and soul gained power over his spirit. His spirit lost the place of dominion and became subordinate to his body and soul.
3. **Joined to God's Spirit**: At the new birth, our spirit is joined to the Spirit, and we are filled with His supernatural life.

*But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 1 Cor. 6:17*

4. **Re-Creation**: At the new birth, our spirit man was so radically refashioned that Paul uses the term "created."

*Put on the new man which was created...in true righteousness and holiness. Eph. 4:24*

*Put on the new man who is...according to the image of Him who created him... Col. 3:10*

5. **Spirit-Growth by Faith**: The challenge is that we do not feel or discern our spirit. Our spirit man is "spirit" and therefore, it is invisible and indiscernible, even "hidden" from our five senses. We cannot measure it by our emotions (soul) or our five senses (body). Paul referred to our true life, or our spirit man in this age, as being "hidden" in Messiah. Our born-again spirit is called "the hidden person of the heart."

*<sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is hidden with Messiah in God. <sup>4</sup>When Messiah who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Col. 3:3-4*

*The hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle spirit... 1 Pet. 3:4*

### **III. CONNECTING WITH YESHUA**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. Not only are we to realize what is ours through what Yeshua has done for us and in us, we are to cultivate our relationship with Him.
2. **Parents Childhood Prayer**: That I would grow up to love Jesus

#### **B. He is to Be Our Focus & Our Motivation**

1. **It is Easy to Drift**

*But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:3*

*1Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Hebrews 12:1-3

**C. Focusing On Yeshua:** The challenge is that we have never seen Yeshua and that our relationship is to be cultivated with Him through the descriptions and attributes described in the Scriptures.

1. *Biblical Descriptions Are Given for Our Benefit:* These descriptions are given so we can meditate on these descriptions of Yeshua. As we do this we can benefit

**D. Strengthened by Him**

1. *Changed by Unclear Glimpses:* We are changed from glory to glory by dim (unclear) glimpses of Him. In other words, our consistent weak connections with Him make a difference and change us

17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

2. *He Has Promised to be with Us:* Yeshua has promised to never leave us or forsake us, and we can choose to ignore or “tap into” His presence throughout the day.

*and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Matthew 28:20

3. *He Dwells in Our Heart through Faith*

*16that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;* Ephesians 3:16-17

**E. Longing For Yeshua’s Return:** There is something beneficial that happens in our heart as we grow in our ache to see and be with Yeshua. Just as sometimes happens on a human level where we long to be with someone we love, so too Yeshua wants this lovesickness for Him to grow in our hearts.

#### IV. INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION

**A. Preparation:** Often the time preceding Passover is one in which things get churned up in our life, and we see with greater clarity our sin and need for Yeshua’s sacrifice.

**B. Anticipation & Planning:** Let the Spirit of God build in an anticipation of the coming new year.

**C. Execution:** Part of implementing the new year is in “planting new seeds” in the ground in anticipation of a coming harvest. In that vein don’t worry about doing large and extravagant things, but just be faithful to the small opportunities in front of us.

#### V. CORPORATE APPLICATION

**A. Corporate Biblical Reading Plan:** We will plan to join in with the <https://www.wearechurchreading.com> reading plan at the new year.

1. The basic plan consists of the following:

- a. A thematic plan that “skips around” through the Scriptures
- b. 2 chapters from the Tanakh (Old Testament) each day
- c. 1 chapter from the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) each weekday
- d. 2 chapters from the Wisdom Literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon) on the weekend
- e. a short video (where relevant) linked from the Bible Project gives a good basic overview of the books that we will be reading from.

2. Those who want to participate can start

- on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> with Proverbs 11-12;
- on Sunday April 7, the reading will be Proverbs 13-14 and starting the book of Isaiah
- on Monday April 8, we will start reading with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 in addition to continuing through Isaiah
- For those who want to start at the beginning of Proverbs and Matthew, they can “catch up” in previous days before April 6<sup>th</sup> to do so

3. Helpful features:

- a. There is a pdf file on the website that allows for anyone to see the daily readings throughout the year.
- b. Those participating will be able to not only view the relevant video through the website but also be able to go directly from this site to read the bible passage on their computer or phone.

4. Because of this, we will no longer corporately be doing the torah portion readings or a weekly teaching from them in the Lifeboats.

5. No one “has to” join us for this daily reading. We as a community, however, will link more and more practically with these daily Bible readings in our corporate rhythms so anyone who wants to be more in the heart of what we are doing will be encouraged to join us.

## VI. LIFEBOAT RECONFIGURATION

### A. Important Aspects

1. Resetting/Changing Lifeboat Culture: We will be adding length to these times but also actively seeking to change the culture within these groups.
2. Trained Leaders: We will have the elders/servant team leaders facilitating the Lifeboat time.
3. Application: A key will be message application (not primarily discussion unless the discussion is moving towards application), as well as goal-setting, and prayerful commissioning. Important components to influence group and corporate change are a) consistent accountability for goals set the previous week, b) vision casting, and c) real goal-setting that folks know will be discussed the following week.

### B. Specifics

1. Starting Date: our planned start date is at the new year [Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>]
2. Corporate Convocation: Two aspects to our Sabbath convocation times
  - a. God most high: large group corporate worship & teaching times
  - b. God most nigh: smaller group meeting in the Lifeboats
    - i. Servant Team will be involved in leadership within this context
    - ii. the “one anothers” of Scripture: in this context we are able to more effectively do these “one anothers”
3. Timeframes:
  - a. Shorten the God-most high part (to ~1 hour & 10 minutes)
  - b. More time in the Lifeboats (1 hour) for Life-on-life ministry and interaction; Lord’s Supper, prayer time, Aaronic blessing, ministry teams in these times
4. Lifeboats: plan to have three Lifeboats as we restart—with an elder as a leader and a servant team member as an assistant for each group. The rough geographic designations will be Steve Haines (Aurora); Olsen (Englewood & south and west); Fraziers (north and far east). We as elders have prayed over this and have recommendations that we will communicate with the folks within the congregation.

### C. Lifeboat Rough Break-Down

A. Look Back (~20 mins)	B. Look Up (~20 mins)	C. Look Ahead (~20 mins)
1 <b>Pastoral Care</b> : How are people doing? 2. <b>Loving Accountability</b> : people have the opportunity to report on their Grow & Go assignments 3. <b>Vision Casting</b> : Explain what we are doing and why.	1. <b>New Lesson Interaction</b> : Applying S-P-E-C-K; following & fishing 2. <b>Waiting on the Spirit</b> : Asking God to speak to us and minister through us.	1. <b>Grow &amp; Go Assignments</b> : each person able to share their obedience goals based on the lesson 2. <b>Prayer</b> : Ask for help in godly assignments (following) and for reaching people far from God (fishing)

## VII. CONCLUSION