



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. Going on a Journey Together

1. The chief task of pastoral ministry is to arrange the contingencies for an encounter with the Divine. Dietrich Bonhoeffer
2. “Miracles are not an interruption of the natural order but the restoration of the natural order.” We are so used to a fallen world that sickness, disease, pain, and death seem natural. In fact *they* are the interruption. Jurgen Moltmann/Dane Ortland

C. Tips for the Journey

1. Love & Mercy: We’re to grow in our love towards YHWH and towards each other. In light of this, He has called us to be merciful towards each other.
2. Obey the Little Nudges: 99% of our journey in God is obeying the small godly impulses that we think to do.
3. Examine Ourselves

31But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. 32Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:31-32

- a. Then come boldly

15This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. Hebrews 4:15-16

4. See What He is Doing & Come Join Him

Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. John 5:19

5. Encourage Others

6. We’re Going Somewhere Together

C. Convocations and Meetings

1. New Moon: Saturday March 13 sundown to Sunday March 14 sundown (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: Saturday night March 27th (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 prayer vigil in our homes for those who want to join us.
3. Unleavened Bread Day 1: Sunday March 28th (Nisan 15): This is a convocation where we corporately will meet together for a meeting from 3:30-5pm. 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. Unleavened Bread Day 7: Saturday April 3rd. This is a convocation. We will focus on the festival themes and the fifty-day counting of the omer.

5. Firstfruits: Saturday April 3rd sundown to Sunday April 4th sundown [Not a mandated holy convocation]. On this day we have a prayer meeting and focus on the resurrection of Yeshua.
6. Counting the Omer: the fifty day count from Sunday April 4th to Shavuot fifty Days later on Sunday May 23rd.
7. Shavuot: The Fiftieth Day. We will convocate together on Sunday May 23rd.

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>

¹⁷If anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...²¹that 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."

³*For you died, and your life is hidden with Messiah in God.* ⁴*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 with helps 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 chronologically goes through the Scriptures
 - b. 5 day/week reading plan—allows one to get caught up on the weekend or read something different
 - c. ~3 chapters from the Tanakh every day
 - c. 1 chapter from the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) each day
 - d. ~3 chapters each week from the Wisdom Literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon)
 - 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 at Passover
 - on Sunday March 28th;
 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.