

Seeking What is New (Slide 1)

“Make Faith Your Priority this New Year!”

Reading: Revelation 21:1-8

It might be challenging for folks to read just the book of Revelation and have a complete understanding of its message. However, with the complete story as foretold and told by the entire Bible, the Revelation letter can offer Christians peace, assurance and hope.

Our text describes what John witnessed in a prophetic vision and those images are what he wrote about in (Slide 2) Revelation 21. *“A New Heaven and a New Earth.”*

This is the capstone that is; the completion of The Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry, His death, burial and resurrection. The *New Heaven and New Earth* awaits those who have obeyed the Gospel. The Old, as Peter states, has been burnt up and thus the *“New!”*

Just about everyone looks forward to having something *“New!”* Perhaps a new car or a new house. But in this earthly life, what we may purchase or have that is new, quickly becomes used or old. Soon our car and our house need repairs.

Depending on how we drive, we may, in a short order, have to get another car. You might say that *“newness”* in earthly terms is a continuous cycle.

(Slide 3) Take for example computers. I have always been pleased to get the latest that is; newest computer, either a desktop or laptop. The newest software with the latest operating system. Though sometimes, *“new”* updates and improvements seem to hinder a computer's performance.

Notwithstanding, in short order that new computer is quickly outdated. Almost right after you purchase it. It’s as if it’s planned that way.

(Slide 4) Cell phones are the same way. That miniature computer that is the latest model is quickly replaced with a new and improved one. It is the way these things seem to work.

(Slide 5) The *New Year* is at our doorstep and so many folks look forward to the *New Year*. In their mind it brings *New* hope, *New* beginnings. Many make New Year's Resolutions. Many feel it is a chance to have a fresh start.

However, as we know there aren’t any do overs. What’s done is done! You simply move forward and try to improve in one way or another.

Nevertheless, a *New Year* brings *New Year's* resolutions. It isn’t long before many of those things become old and discarded. I know that to be true because I once fell into that cycle of **resolution and abandonment!**

(Slide 6) So often you see the *New Year* depicted as a newborn baby at the beginning of the year, then around the first of July as a middle aged man, then toward the end of December as a very old man. That seems to be a very good analogy of the passing of time for a year and even the lifespan of human beings.

Paul explains to Timothy that many will go throughout their lives as if there will always be a tomorrow (as do many seemingly today). But he encourages us through his letter to Timothy to recognize that a new day is not guaranteed.

James 4:14 (Slide 7)

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Putting in perspective the length of one's life the Psalmist writes in:

Psalm 90:10 (Slide 8)

As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,

Or if due to strength, eighty years

Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; ("Threescore and ten"-KJV)

These are challenging years at best! So it is important for us that throughout the days, weeks and years that we set our priorities upon something that is lasting.

So often we as human beings are just looking for something *new*. We don't care what it is. We just want it to be new. We often end up with a lemon because we tend to look in all the wrong places, not doing our research and simply not seeking what is lasting and *renewed* everyday. I'm not talking physical but spiritual!

Contrast physical and spiritual this way!

If everyone could simply understand that the human body simply isn't made to last and that trying the new and improved method of preserving it profits very little.

Pauls says in:

2 Corinthians 4:13-18 (Slide 9)

13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, 14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, so (Slide 10) that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (Slide 11) 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which

are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't exercise our body in the coming year but we would be better served to exercise our faith!

What we can only see by faith will most certainly one day bring something gloriously *new, eternally!* It is that *hope* that refreshes and renews us year after year. Not only that, we don't need the coming new year to experience this renewal. We simply need faith day by day.

I think making a resolution to get your body into better shape is a worthy endeavor. Yet, often hard to stick with. Paul however says that there is another form of exercise that is much more valuable and necessary.

1 Timothy 4:7b-10 (Slide 12)

7b On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (Slide 13) 9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

I'm sure most of us recognize this verse but do we also consider the completeness of Paul's statement regarding this spiritual exercise?

My uncle, who is now elderly and plagued with dementia, once was a man of vigor and vitality. He was a *weight lifter* for much of his life and it was reflected in his well built, muscular physique.

Now, of course, he is only a shadow of the man he once was. But praise be to God that he exercised "*in faith*" throughout his life.

(Slide 14) "*discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*"

This is a *lasting hope* in which for every *New Year* and more importantly for everyday we should *seek* to maintain.

My students often greet me with a common Salutation and that is; (Slide 15) "*What's up?*" Of course being the ever so shrewd instructor that I am, I usually reply in this vein:

"The Sky-The Clouds-The Moon-The Sun-The Stars-The Birds-Airplanes and Helicopters!"

And when I realize they have had enough they will come back with another common greeting:

Okay then; (Slide 16) "*What's New?*"

In which I can reply, "*New Hope everyday, peace, assurance, endurance of which can only be explained in a Spiritual way. Would you like to hear more?*"

The coming New Year, just like everyday life, needs us to be committed. There will be hard times, contrary and even evil people that we may encounter, yet, setting our priorities toward the Heavenly realm will make all the difference.

The Psalmist writes in:

Psalm 37:1-6 (Slide 17)

1 Do not fret because of evildoers,

Be not envious toward wrongdoers.

2 For they will wither quickly like the grass

And fade like the green herb.

(Slide 18) *3 Trust in the LORD and do good;*

Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.

**4 Delight yourself in the LORD;
And He will give you the desires of your heart.**

(Slide 19) **5 Commit your way to the LORD,**

Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

**6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light
And your judgment as the noonday.**

And I would encourage you to read the entirety of the Psalm.

Solomon writes:

Proverbs 16:3 (Slide 20)

Commit your works to the LORD And your plans will be established.

Today, this Lord's Day, the last for this year, may I encourage each one of us to press forward and prioritize all of our activities and pursuits with "faith" as our guide.

Proverbs 119:105 (Slide 21)

Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

May His word truly be our guide.

Invitation

I invite each one of us to consider the days gone by, not with a heart that would seek to change what transpired, but as a tool for our learning. Meditating on what good things God has done for us this past year and by looking to Him, having the same expectation for good things to come.

The Psalmist writes:

Psalms 143:5 (Slide 22)

I remember the days of old;

I meditate on all Your doings;

I muse on the work of Your hands.

Our expectation is to one day be with the Lord for eternity. However, those outside of Christ will not be there. Turned away to outer darkness and despair. This does not have to be!!! Have you taken the steps to place your eternal life in the hands of our God?

Believe, repent, confess and be baptized and become a child of God. We can help you start your journey toward the promised eternal home today by assisting you to be immersed into that watery grave coming in contact with the blood that will wash you clean.

If you have once walked with God being baptized into the blood of His Son, but have fallen off track, may we help you restore your way so that you can begin the *New Year* in the good graces of our Lord. We will pray for you and with you.

Please let us know how we can help you today.

Reading:

Revelation 21:1-8

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the

spring of the water of life without cost. 7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

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