

Accepting the Blessings and Challenges of a New Year

Deuteronomy 33:24-25

New Year's Day: What Is Its Impact?

- It is an arbitrary line marking the count of years
 - It has moved about the calendar over the years of human history.
 - It has no external moral, spiritual, astronomical, or physical impact at any level.
- The only purpose of such a day is emotional
 - It is a time to review our past choices and endeavors.
 - It is a time to consider what changes for the better one can make and choose resolutions to facilitate those changes.
 - Like a birthday or anniversary, it is a time to celebrate and be thankful with others for the span of life we have enjoyed.

New Year's Day: What Is Its Impact?

- It can impact our moral and spiritual lives, but only if we do the aforementioned.
 - We can increase our joy in life if we are thankful for the past.
 - We can better know ourselves if we remember the past and our choices and actions.
 - We can connect with one another if we share in the celebration of the day.
 - We can look forward to bettering our lives and the lives of others around us if we keep our resolves for the future.
- Let us spend the present moment rejoicing in the blessings God gave us in the past and accepting the challenges of the future.

Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

- Deut. 33:24-25 - “And of Asher he said: ‘Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and bronze; As your days, so shall your strength be.’”
- Gen. 49:20 - “Bread from Asher shall be rich, And he shall yield royal dainties.”

Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

- And yet historically, Asher fared little better than his brothers, and his tribe was no better off than any other tribe. What did the blessing mean?
 - His shoes, a metaphor for his journey through life, would be tough enough to handle whatever path he took.
 - Therefore, God said whatever a day brought him, he would have what he needed to handle it.

Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

- It is about deciding what is truly important and being content with that alone.
- All other circumstances are changeable and do not add to or take from that contentment.

Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

- Matt. 5:3-12 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

- Beatitudes: these things are important to contentment.
- All other things do not have the power to add to or take away from peace of mind and happiness.

Accepting the Challenges of a New Year

- Joshua 3:1-17
- They had to face a challenge before they could face the challenge; obstacles in the way of overcoming obstacles.
- Sometimes it feels as if someone is complicating our lives unfairly.
- How do we handle the challenges of the new year when we are still dealing with issues from last year?

Take Immediate Action

- Joshua 3:1 - “Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.”

Follow The Counsel Of Wise Leaders

- Joshua 3:2-3 - “So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; 3 and they commanded the people, saying, ‘When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.’”

Follow The Counsel Of Wise Leaders

- God appointed leadership in the church, the home, and the government for a reason. Disobeying their authority is rebellion against God
 - Rom. 13:1-4 - “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”

Wait On The Lord

- Joshua 3:4 - “Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.”
- Psalm 27:14 - “Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!”

Wait On The Lord

- Psalm 37:9, 34 - “For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. 34 Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.”
- Isa. 40:31 - “But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”

Pursue Sanctification Daily

- Joshua 3:5 - “And Joshua said to the people, ‘Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.’”
- 1John 1:7-9 - “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Trust God's Promises

- Joshua 3:9-13 - "So Joshua said to the children of Israel, 'Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.' 10 And Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11 "ehold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.'"

Trust God's Promises

- What has He promised us? It is less important than He Who did the promising
 - Heb. 6:17-19 - “Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil”

Work Your Faith

- Joshua 3:14-17 - “So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), 16 that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.”

Work Your Faith

- James 2:14-18 - “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

Work Your Faith

- Psalms 103:1-9 - “Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed. 7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever.”

Work Your Faith

- Psalms 103:10-18 - “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, 18 To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.”