



December 27, 2024

Is “New Year’s” the Beginning of the Year?

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Part of my calling I’ve always enjoyed is when my wife and I are able to travel on pastoral visits to be with scattered members of the body of Christ. What’s so encouraging is how the many parts of the body are connected to Christ, (the head of His church) through the indwelling of His Spirit and each other. This same Spirit unites us with God the Father.

Since my subsequent surgeries I’ve had a few more hours to think and ponder...and felt it would be beneficial to discuss what is coming up in less than a week. A few years ago we posted an article to our CGM website that is still both timely and incisive. Since my wife, Gayle penned it originally, here it is below as written. https://cogministries.org/pastors_letter/dropping-the-ball-on-new-year-celebrations-december-27-2019/

“Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to Times Square in New York City where I was able to see the famous “ball of Times Square.” It was there, lit up, and ready for the widely known celebration on New Year’s Eve. One million are expected to travel to Times Square this year to welcome the New Year. Another one billion will watch the dropping of the ball on TV as they welcome in the New Year in their own home and cities. (Mark Johanson, “New Years Eve By The Numbers,” The International Business Times at IBTimes.com, December 31, 2012).

Should we be partaking in these celebrations to “bring in the New Year?”

Is New Year’s the beginning of the year? On the calendar, we start the year over with a new month, January, and add one to the past year--2019 becomes 2020.

That is with our common use of the Gregorian calendar. We have not always used this calendar. While the Gregorian calendar was introduced 1582, the previous Julian calendar was used in much of the world. New Year's Day was moved to several different days depending on the locale, such as March 1, March 25, Easter, September 1, and December 25. As late as 1751, the New Year in the United States was celebrated on March 25 ("Calendar (New Style) Act 1750," at Legislation.gov.uk).

With all this changing of dates, do we really know when the New Year actually begins?

God's New Year begins in the spring. From ancient times, God's calendar has been in use and the beginning of the year has continuously been at the same time. In Genesis 1:14-18, God said that the lights in the heavens should be used to mark the times and seasons. In Exodus 12:2, God speaks to Moses and tells him when the beginning of the year was to be. The Hebrew calendar uses a lunar/solar calendar with months beginning at the new moon. The first month is typically in March/April. This is used primarily to determine when to observe God's Holy Days.

Yet, even the Jews do not celebrate the New Year in the spring. They use Rosh Hashanah on 1 Tishri as the start of a new year. On this day, the counting of years is observed. It is a new year for people, animals and legal contracts. It is called the civil New Year.

OK, so we know that January 1 is not really the beginning of the year, but what is wrong with getting together with a few friends and have a small party? Well, in reality, nothing, as long as you are just gathering to enjoy one another's company. But what often happens during New Year's celebrations?

First of all, the celebration is for a new day or New Year beginning at midnight. God tells us way back in Genesis 1:5 that a new day starts with the beginning of darkness, or at sunset. So if you are celebrating the start of a new day that would take place long before midnight.

In addition, noisemaking and fireworks on New Year's Eve are common. It is believed that this originated in ancient times when noise and fire was used to

ward off evil spirits and bring good luck. We should instead be looking to God in faith for daily protection and blessings.

Many New Year's parties include the drinking of alcohol to excess. This is clearly not a Godly example, which would be to encourage moderation. Excess drinking leads to many problems. Such problems could be the lowering of social barriers, which can lead to sexual promiscuity; and accidents due to lack of control, such as falling or driving while intoxicated.

Many celebrate by making New Year resolutions. This practice dates back to ancient Babylon when people made good behavior promises to the gods. Of those that make resolutions, less than half keep them six months later. Wouldn't it be better to live by good Godly principles everyday of your life?

It is clear that New Year's is not the time for someone who thinks in a spiritual manner to be celebrating. It is not when God says a new year begins, and the parties often contain elements that are not Godly. Instead of letting the ball drop, what could you do on that night? Well, you could go to bed early and get some extra rest; play Monopoly or Scrabble (my personal favorite); or you could read a good book or an online magazine. Spend your time wisely and avoid partying."

*-Gayle L. Hoefker lives in Spanish Fort, Alabama, where she and her husband serve scattered members of the spiritual Body of Christ both nationally and internationally as a pastor and wife team with **Church of God Ministries**. She runs year 'round, staying physically and spiritually fit. - glhoefker@coqministries.org*

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



T. Scott Hoefker

Senior Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)/(Minister iOS de la Iglesias de Dios)

tshoefker@coqministries.org / www.coqministries.org

P.O. Box 983, Daphne, AL, 36526-0983 / 251-930-1797 Offices