

Thursday, December 31, 2009

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by
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December 31st is a very important day. The day after, January 1st, is the beginning of a new year. Inevitably and understandably, this has special meaning to all of us.

But I don't say nothing new when I say that our Calendar is but conventional and a recent invention, if we consider the long history of mankind.

Our Calendar is called Gregorian, after the name of the Pope who officially sanctioned it. It was created by a monk, Dionysius Exiguus around the year AD 532.

It contains some simple obvious mistakes.

The year BC 1 is followed by AD 1. No year 0 was contemplated. Also, the presumed day of the birth of Christ, with which the years AD - *Anno Domini* - should start, was not calculated correctly. So the result was the paradox that very probably Jesus was born in the year BC 4.

Today's worldwide acceptance makes the Gregorian the most widely adopted calendar in the history of mankind.

But for thousands of years there was no universal calendar.

Usually, for the events recorded in the Old Testament, the time reference is connected to the rise of a king. Such was the common way of counting the years in the ancient world.

In Daniel 1:1 for example, when the inspired author wants to give the reader a time indication he writes: "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim."

And when Daniel is in Babylon, he counts the days according to the Babylonian calendar, saying: "In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar", Daniel 2:1.

God commanded *Nisan* to be the first month of the Jewish calendar. See Exodus 12:2. It corresponds to March-April of our calendar.

Though in Israel, for the sake of commercial and political international relationships, the Gregorian Calendar is used, the traditional calendar is still the religious. According to that we are more than 5750 years after the Day of Creation.

Also the beginning of the year, even to this day, is not January 1st for everyone on the planet.

China will celebrate the new year, the year 4707 of their calendar, on February 14, 2010 of our calendar. They celebrated the year 4706 on January 26, 2009.

Muharram is the first month of the Muslim tradition. The first day of its new year, the year 1431, has been on our December 18, 2009.

In England, up to AD 1752, March 25 was New Year's Day.

But no matter what calendar we use, there is a threefold natural and universal division for time, **past**, **present** and **future**.

We may call the days or months whatever we want to. We may count the years however we want to, though the effort of a Christ-centered calendar system is something that we, as Christian, support. But the simple truth is that we still have to deal with the memory of the **past**, the weight of the **present** and the expectancy of the **future**.

Past

We learn from the past, but we are not trapped in it. We cannot let our past failures stop us from trying again and succeed. Also, our past success cannot let us feel so comfortable with ourselves and become lazy and live of memories alone.

Some people say that in life they want to try everything. But there is a better and more secure way than that and it is learning from other people's experiences.

Romans 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

One of the key of authenticity of the Pentateuch is the way it speaks about Israel's Patriarchs. All their weaknesses are exposed. Think of Abraham lying about his wife when he was in Egypt. Think of the story of Joseph, sold by his brothers. If these stories were not authentic, why say such things of Patriarchs and kings.

But God let all their misdeed be recorded, that we might learn that they were men like you and I, but, because of their special relationship with God, He could work great miracles and wonders through them. We also learn that God can redeem us from our past, forgive and bless a repenting heart.

Many mistakes in life can be avoided simply by learning from other people's mistakes.

Success may be obtained not only trying and trying, but also emulating those who succeeded. This is true also in the spiritual realm.

Christ set the perfect example for us. Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 11:1, "Be imitators of me, just as I also *am* of Christ." as translated by the EMTV, here more literal than the KJV, which reads: "followers".

Present

Ephesians 2:1-5

"And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)."

We live the present, with joy, in Christ. Knowing where God brought us out from.

Some people are trapped in the past. Some others keep dreaming for the future. But think about it: the Present, the Now, is all we really have.

Hebrews 3:7-8a, "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts..."

2Corinthians 6:2, “(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)”

James 4:14 “Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

We must be very mindful of how we deal with the present, because it will determine our future. Tomorrow is not promised to anyone. You can be the richest man on heart, but still you won't be able to buy a single day to your life.

Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

The belief of a reincarnation is one of the greatest lies of the devil. We have but one chance of making it right and it's this one life on earth God has granted us.

Our eternal destiny will depend on how we deal with the present.

Future

The world lives in fear of the future. Some people are conditioned by the horoscope predictions they read daily.

We, as Christians live our present aware of God's promises for the future.

Philippians 3:20-21, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

Titus 2:11-13, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

There's one thing we need to point out concerning God's Calendar.

2 Peter 3:8-10, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”

Many live as they will never have to give an account of their deeds. The entire world economically and politically, goes on with its plans with pride, without taking into any consideration God and his plans.

Every man will give an account of their deeds before God individually. We already read Hebrews 9:27. Also the world corporately will be judged by God at the return of Jesus Christ. See Matthew 24 and 25.

It is wise then, to make the right choice in the present time, so that we can really hope for the future in Jesus Christ.

John 10:27-30, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.”

This is why we Christians can be so confident about the future, because we know Who is in control.

Conclusion

We can conclude our discussion saying that as Christians we learn from the **past**, as recorded in the Word and as we build up our experience, so that we can best live our **present** and may be ready for the **future**.

Happy New Year