



Year and Life in Review

This is the time of the year for reflection and review. Most of us have been asking ourselves if the end of the year brought about fulfillment of hopes and dreams envisioned at the beginning of the year. I hope that you weren't disappointed at the evaluation. As we review, we would do well to evaluate from a spiritual frame of mind as well.

As a way of reminder to the children of Israel prior to their entering the Promised Land, God spoke to them through Moses with these words...*"And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt,"*. They were slaves in a strange land and now they were free, entering a land given them by a God who had delivered them from that bondage. Earlier in that same book, Deuteronomy 8:14, we find an admonition for God's children to be careful not to forget the Lord their God when things were going good. All too often it's true we tend to drift from our devotion to God when we have plenty. This is a time when we would do well to remember "from whom all blessings flow".

As we continue a look back let's observe a few things that have a distinct before and after condition. First, we were in darkness, in service to unrighteousness, bowing to self and sin, perhaps not knowing we were without hope (cf. Ephesians 2:12). As we look forward however we see a difference in that we are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). Our look back also reveals another compelling reason to rejoice. That which has entangled us, weighed us down, has been removed, lifted from us! Paul uses 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 to identify to us those who are unrighteous and cannot enter the kingdom of God. Fortunately, for his readers at Corinth, Paul says "and such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." (6:11) How wonderful is that! The stain and guilt of sin is removed upon our repentance (change of heart and mind) and cleansing in baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3-7). Having come to this knowledge we will also realize that in this process we've been delivered from the wrath of God... John 3:36... *"but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* Look back this time of year with confidence and hope.