

## Looking at a New Year

In Philippians 3:7-14 Paul the apostle speaks concerning his past, present and future. A brief explanation of his observations may help us as we look at a new year.

Paul did not dwell on things past (vs. 7, 13), and neither should any Christian. "Forgetting those things which are behind" means that one is no longer burdened, or retarded by them, but it does not mean that things past serve no purpose, for remembrance can be a good teacher. In encouraging the Hebrew Christians to steadfastness, they were commanded to "recall the former days (Heb. 10:32-39)," and 2 Peter 3:1 recalls former teaching regarding false teachers. Things which we should forget (cease to be burdened by) might include past blunders and sins of which we have repented (Acts 2:38; Heb. 8:12); losses, or injuries caused by others (Mat. 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35); past successes and achievements (Heb. 6:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:1-2; Phil. 3:13-14), for we cannot rest on our laurels. We must learn from the past, but we must not dwell there, or we will condemn our future (Lk. 9:62).

Paul unburdened himself of the past and determined to live the present so as to be found in Christ (Phil. 3:9). All would do well to give attention to being in Christ today, forgiven, saved and righteous today (Heb. 3:12-15; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Cor. 6:2). Jesus reminded us that "*Sufficient for the day is its own trouble (Mat. 6:34b).*" Having put off the old man and put on the new (Eph. 4:20-27), let us also determine daily to be the right kind of neighbor (Lk. 10:25-37), do physical and spiritual good (Mat. 25:31-46; Gal. 6: 10), provide a good influence in speech and deed (Rom. 15:2; 14:2 1; Col. 4:6), and have a daily, compelling concern for souls (2 Thes. 1:3-10- 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Jas. 5:19-20).

Paul unburdened himself of the past and faithfully lived the present in view of the greatest goal of all human creation: "*that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead*" and "*the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:10-11, 14).*" Paul wanted to be in heaven with his Savior (Phil. 1:23), and determined to live to that end. The past may be a good teacher, but it cannot be changed, and we must not live there. But, like Paul we can make a difference in our future by living today, and every day, for Christ. With these things in mind each new year will be better than the last.

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