

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

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## When It's All Over

Our existence on this earth is entirely linear. That is just a fancy way to say that throughout our lives, everything we know and do is a series of beginnings, middles, and ends. Life begins; we are born, we live for some length of time, and then ultimately we all die, even though we continue to exist, we live on as spirits, and not as we did before. To measure our lives and draw differences between one moment and the next, we have the concept of time. Time ticks away and in so many ways we get closer to one thing (for example, there are only four more days until the New Year) while we also get further away from something else (can you believe it's been sixteen years since the Y2K scare?). Since we thus understand the concept of one thing ending and another beginning, you would think that the notion of this world coming to an end and something entirely new starting, but oddly enough the opposite seems to be true: we cannot

fathom our lives here coming to an end. It is hard to even imagine an existence that is eternal rather than linear. As we draw to the end of another year, I find it appropriate to talk about when everything will finally be wrapped up at the return of Jesus.

"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." (1 Pet. 4:7-9)

"But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power." (1 Cor. 15:23-24)

Usually when something that we waited for for a very long time

(whether with anticipation, such as a graduation or birth of a child, or with dread, like with surgery or the death of a loved one who had a terminal illness) is all over, the biggest question we are faced with is: what now? In seeing that it is finally done, we may feel relief, but also confusion. Since it is over, what has changed? Do we have to go about our lives differently?

Most of the time in this life the changes we face do not really affect us so much that our whole lives differ. Sure, there are monumental events like children being born or parents dying that do kind of set everything we know on its head, but by and large one day is the same as another. Take the new year for example; it's a new page in our calendars and a new number, but it will contain the same spring, summer, fall, and winter that we have always seen. We will all, Lord willing, grow older. New skills will be learned and old things may be forgotten. "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." (Eccl. 1:9)

Please understand that I am not trying to be pessimistic about the new year, nor am I lamenting that this year is coming to a close. Just trying to put things in perspective, to say that yes, while this year is ending, it does not mean that what we had in it ends with it. So, what should our attitude be regarding this year? A quick reaction might be to forget the bad times altogether; it can definitely be said that we must not allow past failings to rule over us

now in the present, and there is scripture to support such: "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14)

As tempting as that prospect can be, we know we ought to be careful not to completely overlook the problems of the past year, no matter how painful they are, because we cannot forget the past if we are to learn from it. Failing to learn from history dooms us to repeat it. The apostle Paul made the future his aim & focus, but he knew full well what lay behind him. Like Paul, look back on your life (whether just this past year or even further back) and resolve to do better, to be better! "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another." (Titus 3:3)

The parallel that can be made between that sinful state and becoming a Christian and the old vs. the new year is interesting. While, as I mentioned already, the change from one year to the next is usually not drastic, there are similarities. Mainly, the attitude of one having to end. I mean, you cannot have a new year if the old one is not over; similarly, you cannot be a new creature if the old man of sin has not been put to death by repentance and buried in

baptism. "We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin." (Rom. 6:6-7)

No wonder becoming a Christian is described as being born again! It is literally a new lease on life, starting over as a reconciled child of God. That is why it is so important for us to have the attitude that it is over, that our previous life is done, so we can embrace the new life in Christ. If one thought, "Well, it's not *really* over..." where is the commitment to change? To be different? We are creatures of habit, and by and large we resist change, both good and bad, but we had better get used to the idea of things we knew ending. Just as much as this year will not last forever, this earth will not either!

At least there is comfort in that thought for those that belong to Jesus. When it's all over, this physical life, the question of "what now?" is easily answered. God has told us what awaits the faithful after judgment. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" (Matt. 25:34)

This past year, have you been obedient to the Lord? Were you born again? If not, why not? Now is another opportunity for you to start over!

Jarred Currence

Happy Moments,  
*Praise God.*

Difficult Moments,  
*Seek God.*

Quiet Moments,  
*Worship God.*

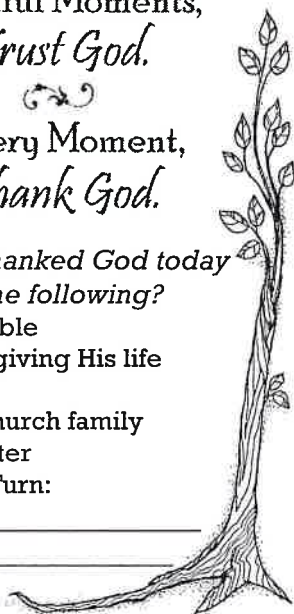
Painful Moments,  
*Trust God.*

Every Moment,  
*Thank God.*

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life  
for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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# BIBLE Trivia!

**DIRECTIONS:** After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

**1. What king despaired in the face of battle and offered his oldest son, the heir to the throne, as a sacrifice?**

- a) The king of Moab
- b) Ahab
- c) The king of Edom
- d) Jeroboam

**2. According to John's gospel, Satan was from the very beginning both a liar and a \_\_\_\_\_?**

- a) Enemy
- b) Killer
- c) Murderer
- d) Deceiver

**3. What Persian king exempted the priests and Levites from paying taxes?**

- a) Xerxes
- b) Artaxerxes
- c) Ahasuerus
- d) Cyrus

**4. Who acknowledged the innocence of Jesus but allowed him to be crucified anyway?**

- a) Caiaphas
- b) Joseph of Arimathea
- c) Herod
- d) Pontius Pilate

**5. This man, who traveled to Antioch with Paul, Silas, and Barnabas, was considered a prophet.**

- a) Luke
- b) Judas Barsabas
- c) John Mark
- d) Timothy

## **LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:**

- 1) B, Reference: Daniel 8:15-26; 9:21-27
- 2) D, Reference: Acts 7:60
- 3) C, Reference: Hebrews 3:7
- 4) C, Reference: Esther 9:20-21
- 5) A, Reference: Luke 24:25-27

**6. Who told Hagar to name her son Ishmael?**

- a) Abraham
- b) Sarah
- c) An angel
- d) Lot

**7. What epistle mentions believers being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord?**

- a) 1 Thessalonians
- b) 2 Corinthians
- c) Philippians
- d) Colossians

**8. What rebel against David was beheaded, with his head thrown over the wall of Abel to Joab?**

- a) Absalom
- b) Amnon
- c) Uriah
- d) Sheba

**9. What did Mary and Joseph sacrifice in the temple when they took the young Jesus there?**

- a) A ram
- b) A young calf
- c) A pair of doves
- d) A young lamb

**10. What prophet mentions a gift of ebony wood sent to Tyre?**

- a) Habakkuk
- b) Ezekiel
- c) Jeremiah
- d) Micah

- 6) D, Reference: 2 Kings 9:31
- 7) B, Reference: Matthew 28:2
- 8) A, Reference: John 6:1
- 9) C, Reference: Exodus 17:6
- 10) A, Reference: 2 Chronicles 14:9