

03-Jan-2013

Should Old Acquaintance be Forgotten!?

Dear Janae,

You wrote with a couple concerns. You expressed one which pertained to the celebration of New Years on December 31st and January first, and you also inquired pertaining to our next visit of fellowship to your city. You said the following in your E-mail transmission:

Hi Derek... I know that a lot of people had celebrated the New Year and welcomed 2013 either with a loved one or by themselves, but something had crossed my attention when I had kindly sent a text message to one of my girl friends a friendly Happy New Year. This link from U-Tube about how January 1st is not the New Year, and how it has been changed based upon the Roman Catholics changing the laws and calendar. And I find that some of the facts that has been proven to back up this information could be in fact true because it had been measured by the bible. The person who had articulated the video had used Bible evidence to support their reasoning about the false celebration of the New Year's Eve/Day. youtube.com/watch?v=Ptxv6p6hzi. Please, Derek if you can provide me with the knowledge and understanding about this I would greatly appreciate it. Ps. Vinnette and myself were talking a few days ago about an appropriate date for another visit this month... we have decided that it would be possible to have the study the week of January 25th, and 26th. As he would work the Friday, but my mom and myself would attend the meeting, and anyone else that we could try to invite, and on the Saturday Jamie would book that day off and would be able to join us in study. So if that works well with you both please let us know —Your E-mail, 9:21PM, EST, 02-Jan-2012.

I will address the former first:

I do not know of a Bible-pronounced day to welcome the new year. If I did, I still would not object to others selecting their own independent day to welcome the anniversary. I would not object unless a principle from the Law or the Testimony, the themes which I am called to seal, expresses the need for such an objection. I am not aware of any Bible law which forbids people from engaging in frivolous or inexact celebrations so long as the celebrations themselves do not violate Bible and Testimony-of-Jesus behavior. Researchers who examine historic, Catholic abuses pertaining to the changing of times and laws should have only one central issue over which to adjust their doctrines: the false theory of Tri-unity which teaches that Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are all One-in-the-Same Being. If the researchers of the Bible and history cannot stoke within themselves any spiritual energy to compel them to change that belief, if the MSA's new revelations of truth there-to pertaining cannot give to them pause, then no other revelations showing Catholic ignorance or abuses can have any value. Perhaps your girlfriend, if she is an Adventist, should be informed accordingly. Such will manifest whether or not she is an old acquaintance which needs to be forgotten or a growing, new friendship to grace the new year.

But, understand the MSA's central point on this question: People are free to look for reasons to be happy and be celebrative without our attempts to blunt their joy —especially should this be so since there is much misery in the land. For example, married couples often celebrate the day of their marriage; sometimes, without my burden to correct them, they get it right; sometimes they do not. In fact this, I am told, is the source of some marriage disputes. I feel no need to correct their anniversary celebrations and no compulsion to force them to cherish some standard of exact, anniversarial accuracy for non-biblical memorials. The time when we, with great fervor and conviction, based our theology merely upon the opposition of pagan or Catholic influence is past.

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There was a time when all one had to argue was that, “The pagans did it...or the Pope installed it,” and such would create an uproar of pious resentment. That friendly formula for righteousness, should indeed be considered an old acquaintance which should be forgotten as we are positive —not negative— in the affirmation of our faith; we celebrate the name of Christ. The *mustard seed* looks for ways to get along and to love people despite their variant levels of education. Perhaps you may want to re-listen to the study, *Tapioca*, on the website for more understanding on this issue. But, as a synopsis, I cannot object to honoring people’s marriage anniversaries, birthday, graduation days, etc. I do not feel called to strain at the proverbial gnat to ensure that they meet all of the appropriate anniversary specifications. Thus, I cannot now find reason to object to their failure to commemorate any Bible-appointed, new-year rituals, assigned to Israel. First, I must educate them about the people, Israel, themselves.

Our goal is not to oppose people and their joys; instead, it is to honor Christ. These two goals are not always inimical or mutually exclusive. Remember, His yoke is easy, and His burden — contrary to what we have been led to believe all these years— is light. Sometimes you can honor God and man. Jesus did for the Bible says, “...*Jesus increased in wisdom... and in favor with God and man*” —Luke 2: 52. For another illustration: Pittsburgh has a tradition called “Light-up Night”. In the early fall, many assemble in the center city, downtown area and turn on the office-building lights to display, like a peacock, the beauty of their night-time skyline, and they have a grand out-door party. This they do, yet, my work is to be the light of the world. Should the *mustard seed* burden itself to countermand their joy and find an appropriate day from the Bible for such an event? Of course it should not so do. Neither am I, personally, a big enthusiast regarding New-Year’s celebrations. Sometimes, the opposite is true: For example, I get mildly annoyed when people, as they part from each other with only days to go before the new year, say “I’ll see you next year!” This usually gets, if not a laugh, a chuckle as they, while playing with the irony that in a few days it will be a new year, are made to seem clever. To me, it just seems banal and trite; it is a bit old and has lost its appeal to irony, but I understand that such is merely my personality, and I do not seek to impose upon others my own —sometimes admittedly— quirkish idiosyncrasies. To me, if the arrival of new time intervals are that exciting and noteworthy, so as to become the incessant focus of everyone’s attention, then why not find hilarity with other time intervals such as months and weeks? Perhaps one day the Lord will give me reason to see things the way others do; or perhaps, they will see things my way; or maybe we will all more fully and maturely appreciate each other for the things that we chose to find reason to celebrate.

Speaking of New-Year’s celebrations, Vinnette purchased some grape Sparkle, non-alcoholic beverage, for a new-year’s midnight toast. I told her that I had no intention to stay up and planned to go to sleep at my, now, normal time, 10:00PM. Because she worked nights during most of the 31 years of our marriage, we are only now cementing a family custom in this regard. Resultantly, we made accommodations, and, after our 5:00PM meal, we gave a toast to anticipate the Lord’s blessings for the upcoming year —a clear violation of custom. But, as one ever seeking congeniality, this I did to placate her and to, without any guilt, add to my meal a not-so-often delight and indulgence, the addition of a soda drink —being on dietary restrictions, such is normally withheld. Hence, I exploited the holiday cheer for my own imaginative joy. Also, Vinnette asked me if I wanted to send a greeting to all in the field expressing to all, “Happy New Year!!” To this, I said, no! As stated already, I did not even stay up to watch the Time-Square-Ball drop; nor did I, at midnight or any time beforehand, sing “Auld Lang Syne”, the Scottish hymn pertaining to the loss of old friendships and/or the establishment of new ones. Come to think of it, this seems like a song that we as MSA can find useful, at least as a current theme, pertaining —not to the new year, but— to the transition that we now experience as we, like as did Peter, break away from the wind-tossed and wave-beaten ship of Zion, to greet and embrace the Lord as He advances towards us. It would be appropriate, I think, to commemorate our new connection to Christ and the departure of our old friends in Zion —may they be forgotten. Let this be the MSA’s New-Years cheer, its toast and admonition to the faithful brethren. Let us meditate upon —indeed, sparkle over— the new friends which the Lord has and will continue to bring to us.

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Even though my answer to Vinnette pertaining to the New-Year greeting to the brethren was negative, I, in retrospect, hope that, because I am not especially jovial at this time, none suffer as a result from dampened enthusiasm pertaining to the Lord's provision for His work and for the brethren in 2013. If not with the world, at least with the brethren, we should have well-placed joy in the promises of the Lord. This we can do while we allow others to celebrate in keeping with their diverging levels of education; fully realizing that if they love truth and light, they will soon have new holidays to correctly celebrate. Therefore, I am not interested in studying someone's critical investigation into the inappropriate celebrations of the world or the church. That gig is up for me. However, I will pass your document attachment along with this release just in case there are some brethren who desire to investigate further.

Once I begin to teach the world about Christ, then these issues of holidays will automatically resolve themselves. As we anticipate that day, we can entertain a discussion about the significance of the beginning of the year to the Lord. He scheduled a major celebration, the Passover, to start — not on the very first day of the year but— 10 to 14 days after the year began. That will likewise be our eternal, celebration focus for the Lord said, **“With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God”** —Luke 22: 15, 16. This yearning for the Passover, being that it is the Lord's desire, should also become our new-year desire. Passover is the first ritual of the year on the Hebrew calendar, the one which will peak our attention, and it comes a couple weeks after the Lord's appointed time to begin the year. I believe that the beginning of the year harmonizes with the Vernal Equinox, the first day of Spring, the time when the length of the daylight is equal to the length of the night time. Such an unchanging time and season is the only consistent geological event that, being unchanging throughout earth's history, could be accurately gauged by the simple time measurements which existed in that day to allow the Lord's people to heed His command and His law. This, I also believe, because it is the time when lambing occurred, and the Passover required a male lamb of the first year. Therefore, if lambs were born within a range of weeks around the Vernal Equinox, then some, if born slightly early, could be used to meet the specifications of the event, and others, born late, would still be available for the Passover table the next spring. By the way and parenthetically, it was also the time when Jacob sang his proverbial, Auld-Lang-Syne song to Esau shortly after he wrestled with the angel. **“And he (Esau) said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. And he (Jacob) said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die”** —Gen 33: 12, 13. According to Middle-Eastern experts, lambing occurred in early to mid-March, but gestation periods could normally have some time variance within the span of the full month. Animals, as well as humans, are not that exactly synchronized. We are further informed by research that shepherds were required to keep watch over the flock by night during lambing seasons; this they did, in anticipation of the ewes (female sheep) giving birth and requiring some assistance. Quite coincidentally, this relates well to the Christmas story and suggests that Jesus was born around the same time, the Hebrew new year, as expressed in the book of Luke with regard to the shepherds who kept watch simultaneously with Jesus' birth. **“⁷And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes...⁸And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night...¹⁰And the angel said unto them, Fear not: ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour ...”** —Luke 2: 7, 8, 10, 11. Men, in this modern age, have altered the lambing process so that it no longer synchronizes with the natural time; however, still, to this day, many sheep and goats, like also the wild deer of the forest, are born to harmonize with the growth of vegetation, and even my experience at Bashan showed that their goats were born in the Spring.

Below is the Lord's very own connection of the New Year and of Passover:

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“¹And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ²this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their father, a lamb for an house...⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats. ⁶And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening...”—Ex 12: 1-6.

Subsequently, we have an eternity to celebrate the new year in the Lord’s way. With desire, I have desired to wait for Him to commission its institution, and I likewise see no reason to unsettle less informed people about their mistakes causing them to have a blunted experience in optimism and celebration. Remember the Lord said, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you...the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy”**—John 16: 20. Let us now do as the MSC has done all these years and begin the countdown, the proverbial dropping of the New-Year’s day, Time-Square ball to usher in the Passover festivities, the day when Jerusalem will be lambded. **“Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children”**—Isa 66: 8. From the above Texts, we may likewise have an added bonus: The Bible may even ordain the date of Jesus’ birth, once it is revealed, as an event for celebration to coincide with the Passover. Yet, though we have no such connection now, we know that Christ, not Jesus, was symbolized by the Pascal lamb.

With regard to your other question, that pertaining to our next visit, we do indeed look forward to our next fellowship with you, and I thank you for your planning of the same. Due to my own shepherding requirements, I intend to meet with you often, and this I have expressed to you already. Speaking of spring, which would probably be a wiser time to visit since we will be driving 300 miles directly north of Pittsburgh, and as we do so, we can anticipate that the weather will get worse, this time of year, the closer that we come to the regions directly to the south of Great Lakes. Buffalo, the city which we must pass through, is one such region, and it is notorious for its lake-effect snow. Such is not measured in inches but in feet. Thus, wisdom dictates that we forestall our next visit, until it is the season for long-distance driving from Pittsburgh to Toronto. I do have an additional concern. You expressed that Jamie may not be able to make it to the first, Friday-evening study. This is no small matter. I am reluctant to have a fellowship that Jamie, the man of the group, cannot attend. It would blunt the spiritual purpose of that gathering. Like the lambs at Passover, he, as well as are you and your mother, is new to the faith and needs encouragement as the events in his life may be warring with him spiritually requiring the Lord’s special guidance. To have him missing for the first night would do dishonor to his appointed station among the disciples.

Sincerely,

Derek