**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*The New Year in The Lord ~ 2020*

*2 Peter 3:2*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

December 29th In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

 This is the last Sunday, the last Lord’s Day of 2019. By the time we meet again next Sunday, it will be the 5th day of the new year of our Lord. We use the Gregorian Calendar with January being the first month. Almost the entire world uses the Gregorian Calendar due to the reality of God incarnating Himself about 2000 years ago. This is a monumental “once-in-a-earth-time-event.” It will not happen again. What we know will happen again is that this world, as we know, will end.

**Reflection upon the Past**

God tells us through the promise of the rainbow (Genesis 9:15) that this world will not be destroyed by water. In 2 Peter 3:10, we are told the world will be destroyed by fire. With this destruction, a new world will be established. This will be a purely spiritual world, one that is divided by a spiritual darkness and light. We remember that in the beginning of this creation in which we currently live, God came forth over the darkness and established the light and separated the light from the darkness.

Genesis **1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

**2** The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

**3** Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

**4** God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Formless: Strong’s **08414** תֹּהוּ *tohu* )1062c(

**Meaning:** *formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness*

**Origin:** from an unused word

**Usage:** chaos(1), confusion(1), desolation(1), emptiness(1), empty space(1), formless(2), futile(2), futile things(1), meaningless(2), meaningless arguments(1), nothing(2), waste(3), waste place(2).

**Notes:** 1 Or *a waste and emptiness* 2 Lit *face of* 3 Or *hovering /* Jeremiah 4:23;

Job 38:9; Psalm 104:30; Isaiah 31:5, 40:13, 4; Deuteronomy 32:11;

Void**: Strong’s 0922** בֹּהוּ *bohu* )96a(

**Meaning:** *emptiness* **Origin:** from an unused word

**Usage:** emptiness, void

**Notes:** 1 Or *a waste and emptiness* 2 Lit *face of* 3 Or *hovering*

Jeremiah 4:23;Job 38:9; Psalm 104:30; Isa 31:5, 40:13,14

Deuteronomy 32:11

Darkness**: Strong’s <02822>** חשֶׁךְ *choshek* )365a(

**Meaning:** *darkness, obscurity* **Origin:** from 2821

**Usage:** dark(5), darkness(73), obscurity(2).



 It is of note that science tells us today that water needs to be present for life to form. We see water was first before the land in the Genesis account. We see that before God moved over the earth being formless and void, there wasn’t any life. God moved; no one else moved. God moved over what was here. Two things happened when God moved over the water: He said, “Let there be light”, and the second was to separate the light from the darkness. God called the light “good.” God did not call the darkness good. We see that there is not only a physical characteristic to the light but there is a spiritual component. Here we see that God established what is good (John 1:4,5).

This is in contrast to what is not good, meaning the darkness. For God to bring forth light in the formless and void creation, He had to create light. We also know through science that light shining on water creates life. Take note that before the age of modern science, the Bible told us this scientific fact first.

 We shall take note that it is the Spirit of God moving on the surface of the waters. There wasn’t any land. God wants us to know that His Spirit is present in this creation. It is God’s Spirit that interacts with people and indwells their being. Remember that David called to the Lord not to remove His Holy Spirit from him as he confessed his sin with Bathsheba (Psalm 51). God’s Spirit is the “Heart-interacting” force. It is God as Jesus Christ makes all things that have been brought into being (John 1).

**John 1:1-5**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**2** He was in the beginning with God.

**3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

**4** In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

**5** The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

 Scripture provides us with a complete account of God’s triune nature: God the all-powerful (omnipotent) with all-present (omnipresence) and all-knowing (omniscient). We see “God as the Creator” in Jesus Christ, and “God the Spirit” as the indweller and overseer of people. It is God and His power, presence and knowledge who brought forth the light. There would not have been light brought into the world unless God acted. Satan did not bring the light into the world. Satan did not create anything.

So, here we are at the beginning of another year that God has brought into being.

 It is commonly known that the first month of the new year was named after the Roman god, Janus. Janus was represented as having one face looking forward and one face looking backwards. Thus, Janus could look into the past and the future. The Romans believed he was the god of origins and the guardian of gates who controlled the coming and going of other gods. Romans believed Janus was the guardian of the gates of heaven.

 Our calendar represents a mixture of pantheistic ideas combined with the observation of the incarnation when God became one of us. The months are named after pagan and secular sources, but year one is noted as the “year of our Lord”.

 We have discussed previously that in the early 500’s or 6th century A.D. that the western world changed from a calendar based on the founding of the city of Rome to the birth of Christ.

 It is obvious that calendars directly reflect what people believe. Today, Christians around the world number approximately two billion. There is an estimated 7.8 billion people in the world.

Countries that use their own calendar for religious and traditional observations but use the Gregorian calendar for international business would include Saudi Arabia and China. Below is a list of counties that use their own calendars more exclusively.

1. Solar Hijri Calendar Afghanistan, Iran

2 Bangla Calendar Bangladesh

3 Ethiopian Calendar Ethiopia

4 Indian National Calendar India

5 Hebrew Calendar Israel

6 Japanese Calendar Japan

7 Vikram Samvat Calendar Nepal

8 North Korea Calendar North Korea

9 Minguo Calendar Taiwan

10 Thai Solar Calendar Thailand

Wanza, Serah. "Countries That Use Their Own Calendar." WorldAtlas, May. 29, 2018, worldatlas.com/articles/countries-that-use-their-own-calendar.html.

 When we look at our calendar, considering the historical event of the incarnation, we see the observation that God loved us to the point of becoming one of us. I preached just a few days ago, on Christmas Eve, that 1 John 4:8 declares that God is love, and the greatest of all gifts is love (1 Corinthians 13). That God so loved the world that He sent his son to die on a cross for our sins and whoever will believe (surrender) to Him will have eternal life (John 3:16). God created His creation in order for us, a people created in His image, to experience love. Repeating, God is love and the greatest gift is love; therefore, we are God’s expression of love. We are designed to possess and experience God’s love. The fullness of love will not be experienced until we live in God’s heaven. This is the state of glorification.

**Fulfillment of the Present**

 Each year, we have the opportunity to dedicate ourselves to become more impowered with God’s love. This enables us to manage our lives in relationship with God and our neighbor. There are many New Year’s Eve resolutions. These include the obvious like losing weight, changing our lifestyle to be healthier, eliminating debt, or taking more time with family. These are all good goals about which we should be thinking all the time.

 As Christians, the whole world is considered to be our mission field. As each sun sets and a new day dawns, we have great opportunities to witness God in our lives. The new year is monumental, but it is just another day. We do not have to wait until New Year’s Day to start something. When I was a teenager, I was once asked if I was closer to God than I was last year. I would hope to think that I was. Then there is the reality. As a growing person, I was reflecting upon many things. The world presents many life lessons that are to be learned, and I was learning. I was somewhat taken by the question as a challenge to my value as a person. What was I doing with my life? Was I wasting time and talent? Was I being foolish; was I prudent with my life concerning the Lord? The question stays with me to this day.

**The Parable of the Talents** in Matthew 25 is preceded by the account of the **Ten Bridesmaids**. Those of us who know God’s Word know the outcome of the story. Five of the bridesmaids had **not** prepared to wait at night for the bridegroom and had to go get more oil to burn in their lamps to keep them lit. When the bridegroom came, those that had to leave for more oil were left-out because they had gone to buy more oil. They had not used their time and talents to prepare for the Lord’s coming. They knew He would come, but they were not prepared. They, like so many today, are vicariously in a relationship with God. Many rely upon another’s faith; when in actuality God approaches each of us as an individual. We cannot borrow someone else’s faith (oil) to be accepted by God. We must stand ready on our own two spiritual feet.

Matthew 25:8-13

"The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

 9 "But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the dealers and buy *some* for yourselves.'

 10 "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

 11 "Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'

 12 "But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

 13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

 The Parable of the Talents follows Jesus’ teaching about the ten maidens. (Again, a well-known teaching of Jesus.) The bottom line is that the one servant who hid his talent in the ground came to know and feel the wrong he committed. This servant suffered the weeping and gnashing of teeth, a sign of eternal regret that burned in his heart.

Life is on-the-job-training. We can say that as each day comes that we have never been there. Drawing closer to God and His Word prepares us for what each day brings to our lives. As Believers in the Lord, as people of faith, as saints who seek the Lord’s teaching in our daily lives, we anticipate growing in truth and knowledge of the Lord. This way, we are prepared for life’s challenges when they come, and they will come.

**Preparation for The Future is Now**

**2 Timothy 3:1-7**

**1** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,

 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:1-18

1This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which

I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

New Year’s Resolutions

2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

 3 Know this first of all,

that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking,

following after their own lusts,

 4 and saying,

"Where is the promise of His coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep,

all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

 5 For when they maintain this,

it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,

 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed,

being flooded with water.

 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

 8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved,

 that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years,

and a thousand years like one day.

 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness,

 but is patient toward you,

not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,

in which the heavens will pass away with a roar

and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat,

and the earth and its works will be burned up.

 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way,

what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,

because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning,

and the elements will melt with intense heat!

 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things,

be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation;

 just as also our beloved brother Paul,

according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things,

in which are some things hard to understand,

which the untaught and unstable distort,

as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand,

be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him be the glory,

both now and to the day of eternity.

**Amen.**