

2021 Is . . .

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The year 2021 is a brand new candle, barely lit, that will burn itself out in twelve fleet months, another volume in our own book of life, full of blank pages upon which we shall write with our words and deeds, a fresh garment without wrinkle, soil, or tear, an open door, behind which many paths will beckon before the door is closed, a new plant freshly pushing through the earth's crust, destined to bear fruit, either good or evil, a piece of soft clay over which each one of us exercises the power of a potter, to mold it into a shape of one's own choosing, and a race to be run that many will fail to finish to its end.

Worldlings will live out this new year in a Monday to Saturday context. The Lord's people will live ours from Lord's day to Lord's day, looking forward to each appointed time when we can assemble with our brethren to worship God and study His Word. While those outside try to fight the battles and face the trials of life on their own, we can draw from the inexhaustible source of spiritual strength, found only by those who submit to mankind's only infallible, rightful Ruler.

The beginning of a year is a good time to review the past year. How many times did I choose to be away from the assembly of the saints last year? How many times did I reject the spiritual feast of my Bible classes? How many weeks did I neglect to contribute financially to the spreading of the Gospel? How many times did I deprive myself of the strength to be found in meeting with fellow saints? How many times did I "freeze up" when I had an opportunity to say something to a friend or fellow worker about the Lord and His church? How many times did I compromise the moral standard of the Gospel to keep from being different from "the crowd"? How many days did I let go by without reading God's Word and praying? How many times did I say, "No," when the call went out for workers? If you can say, "None," to these, that is wonderful, indeed. You certainly moved to higher ground last year. If your record was not so good, do you understand that, just as many times as you placed something ahead of serving God, you proclaimed that He was not in control of your life?

Now, let us look at this new year again. Only you and I can determine what sort of flame its candle will burn. Only you and I can decide what sort of lines will be written upon its blank pages. You and I alone are responsible for how free of soil and damage our garments of life will remain. The choice is ours as to how we will walk the paths – yea, which paths – that open before us. The fruit we produce and the vessel we mold are largely in our control. May we

determine to make this the best year of our lives in God's service here, pressing on to that realm where time no longer exists (Phi. 3:14; Rev. 22:5).

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it appeared in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Denton, TX, January 2, 2014. Because of its timeliness, I have since updated and republished it annually in various media.]

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