

Words of

Truth & Reason

Acts 26:25

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“The end of a thing is better than its beginning” (Eccl. 7:8)

Are you benefitting from the end of 2014? Here’s how---

Is the end of a year better than its beginning? God says it is. Since New Year’s Day, what thought have you given to 2014? It is good to make wise plans for 2015, but you can benefit more by seriously thinking about 2014.

If you are not a Christian, review 2014 and identify what hindered you from believing Jesus is God, repenting of sin, confessing Jesus as Lord, or being baptized into His death (Jn. 1:1; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:9-10; 6:3). What was more important than the salvation God offered you all year long?

If you have doubts or questions about God, the Bible, or some specific subject, you aren’t the first. Jesus’

apostles did not always immediately understand what Jesus said or did, so they asked questions (Mt. 13:10, 36; 18:1, 21). We offer these articles each month so you know that we are interested in you. Can we help you find the answers Jesus has given to your questions? Don’t wait another year to seek the answer!

2014 holds many lessons waiting to be learned by people who see the value of “the end of a thing.” Do not repeat last year’s mistakes but seek and serve God today, and the end of 2015 will be better than its beginning!

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Author & Editor: David Halbrook

The Good ‘Ole Days

Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this... In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider (Eccl. 7:10, 14). Each year will have its “ups and downs”—2014 did and 2015 will. When we compare the past to the present and complain about “how bad things have gotten and how good it used to be,” what does that accomplish?

When days are good, *be joyful*. Seasons of laughter and peace ought to remind us that every good gift is from God (Eccl. 3:4, 8; James 1:17). If you are not a Christian, your good days will end at death. Learn the fear of the Lord and find *the fullness of joy* He offers (Psalms 16:11; 115:11).

When days are bad (adversity), Solomon says to *consider*. Don’t complain but learn from the problem, notice that sin is often the source of problems, and seek the solution Jesus offers in the gospel (Acts 2:37-38). He will not make all problems disappear, but without sin (drunkenness, revenge, or lying) causing constant chaos, your list of problems will quickly shrink! By faith, repent and be baptized. Thus saved by Christ, begin the newness of life available only in Him.

Despising the Goodness of God

What are you doing with the good things God offers?

Man often despises the things by which God offers great blessings, such as His goodness. Consider the goodness of God by considering His words and deeds (Rom. 4:2; 11:22).

Many Americans say God is not needed to identify good because they view “good” as they do “delicious”—a matter of personal preference. Is evil like that too? Was Hitler evil or did he just have different preferences than most? Those who do what is right in their own eyes instead of learning what God calls good, despise His goodness (Prov. 12:15).

Many churches present Easter as the main “holy day” for Christians, but the first day of the week is the only day God set aside for Christians (Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7). By placing more emphasis on a day man declares holy than the day God set aside, religious people despise the goodness of God. This may sound strange to you, but why have men created annual holy days for the church, when the apostles created none? Isn’t the apostles’ doctrine sufficient?

God is patiently allowing you time to learn His word and change your life. Value God’s goodness--start today! Can we help? (Contact us for a free CD to further study this topic)

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God... (Rom. 11:22)

You are invited to:
Sunday AM Bible classes:
10:00AM
Sunday AM Worship:
10:45AM
Sunday PM Worship:
5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes
& Worship: 7:00 PM

Despising the Severity of God

The goodness of God is far more pleasant to consider than His severity, but we must accept both (Rom. 11:22).

God has shown glimpses of His severity when He sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden for eating *that* fruit, burned Nadab and Abihu for doing what He had not commanded, and did not permit Moses to enter Canaan for striking a rock with his rod (Gen. 3:24; Lev. 10:1; Num. 20:12). Do those things seem minor to you? God does not view sin the way we often do. He sees the dangers we do not see.

Paul warned about *doctrines of demons*. What are those doctrines—sorcery or human sacrifice? Paul said they include *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received* (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Those don’t sound so bad until we realize the problem of man creating his own commandments. Jesus has all authority so no man or church may create “vows of celibacy” or command people to fast on certain days or avoid certain foods. Is this being done today? (see Colossians 2:20-23)

The severity of God warns against excusing or minimizing sin. He will forgive, but you must turn. How may we help?

Questions from this issue’s articles:

1. What is a possible benefit of looking to the past?
2. What is a possible danger of looking to the past?
3. What does Proverbs 12:14 say about learning what is good (right)?
4. What do we learn from God’s severity against Nadab and Abihu?

* Mail your answers to the church of Christ in Quail Valley 4104 E. Harrison St, Batesville, AR 72501
OR, e-mail your answers to **TruthAndReason@suddenlink.net**

* If you have a comment or question, call (793-6700; 569-4491) or visit our website **WWW.QVCOC.COM**

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