

1-1-12

Reflections

It's
2012!

A New Year
In a Troubled
World.



Reflections

Millions of people around the world have, in one way or another, welcomed or acknowledged that 2011 is gone and 2012 has begun. Some partied, some prayed, others celebrated or merely went to sleep to wake up to the New Year's Day of January 1, 2012. When a new year begins, many declare that this year "I will...." and then they fill in the various resolutions that they intend to incorporate into their lives during this fresh new year. Getting in shape, losing weight, being nicer, working harder, starting a new business, and many other promises are made regarding how we intend to spend the new year ahead of us. Most of these are forgotten before the month of January has expired.

When we consider the potential of each new year, we often make declarations about where we will go and what we will do and many times we do not take God's plan for us into consideration. James, in his epistle, reminds us... *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";¹⁴ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."* (James 4:13-15 NKJ) Following this admonition causes us to be reminded that our entire life is in God's hands and when we honor Him as God in our lives we know that He will meet our every need.

2012 will be a very critical year in our world. Political leadership is at stake in the year's election cycle and with many nations engaged in "saber-rattling" threats that could ignite wars on many fronts, we could easily be looking at a particularly difficult political climate on a global scale. The Church always experiences increased pressures and persecution in unsettled times and 2012 could very well be such a time for many around the world, or perhaps even for us in the USA. We must consider the possibility of events spiraling into a major challenge to the Church and, at the same time, find ourselves praying diligently for courage and spiritual peace in the face of turmoil. Pray for the persecuted Church in the many countries where it is not only a mere interference with worship, but rather for many it is a matter of life and death. Let's be resolved to keep these brothers and sisters in our prayers in this new year. Even on the local and state political scene, we see the

leaders ready to embrace many "causes" and to blindly follow the "politically correct" themes of the day. They seem to find value in that which the Bible has declared to be sinful and when the issue of life is considered, they are willing to free Barabbas and instead destroy the unborn who are the innocent victims of our increasingly decadent society. Let us resolve to pray for our city and county governments that their often misguided leadership can be turned around on these key issues. The Word declares that - *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, (Psalm 33:12 NKJ)* May our nation become one that embraces God instead of the foolishness of the day.

For our congregation, 2012 will be a time of change and preparing for it and will include the task of searching for a new pastor. The process may, or may not, be completed within this coming year, but it will mean that we must be prayerfully faithful to seek God's best and to remain in unity as time goes by and the search for God's choice continues. Let's resolve to pray daily for the pulpit committee as they work to discover who God has to lead us over the years ahead. When we begin to search for a new servant let's be reminded of Israel's search for a king to follow Saul. When Samuel went to the house of Jesse as God directed him, he looked first at the oldest, strongest, and best looking brothers, but God directed him to David who was tending sheep. David was the youngest and least of his brothers, yet God empowered him to be Israel's greatest king. God's choice is always the best choice. Let's be patient and wait on the Lord.

Many of us will resolve to read the Bible through again this year and I hope that it's a resolution we all keep. Spending a few minutes a day, reading about three chapters, will carry us through God's Word in a year. Christian book stores usually have a reading calendar and the internet can also be a source for a daily calendar to guide your time in order to know how much to read each day to accomplish this worthy resolution. What will you choose to do with this new year that awaits? What will you resolve to accomplish? What changes have you been wanting to make but haven't quite gotten to in the past? Perhaps 2012 will find you being successful in making new resolutions for the new year, and in actually keeping them. Above all else, let's remember that it is God who we must acknowledge in our resolving and living. Life is short and only what's done for Jesus will last for eternity. **Pastor Doug**