

# A Call to Action

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Sunday, December 31, 2023*

The new year lends itself to a time of inward soul-searching and reflection upon our life in light of the days behind us and in needed changes for the days ahead of us.

May we Hear His call everyday to seek Him first in everything, and to take that which He has given us in Christ Jesus through His Holy Spirit and by His word and apply it to our life daily in order that He can entrust us with more of His spiritual blessings from above.

God set the new year for the children of Israel to coincide with their deliverance from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.

**Exodus 12:1–2** Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup> “This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.

**Exodus 13:3–4** Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten. <sup>4</sup> “On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth.

The name of the month of Abib would take on the Babylonian name Nisan in the days following their Babylonian captivity.

In our modern time, the Jewish people celebrate **two new years**': **Nisan and Tishri**. Nisan is the first month of the sacred year and Tishri is the first month of the civil year at which time, the Jewish people celebrate Rosh Hashanah. Nisan corresponds with April in the spring, while Tishri corresponds with September and October.

The Hebrew month of Nisan marked the Israelites Exodus from Egypt symbolizing a new beginning, freedom, and the birth of the Jewish nation.

As we celebrate our new year, let us reflect on the new beginning which God gave to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In Christ, we are given freedom from the bondage of slavery to sin,  
we have received a new birth, old things passed away, all things became new,  
and we have been given citizenship in the eternal kingdom of God!

We have entered a strait gate, and we are traveling a narrow way; and my friend, we're almost home!

**The Mile Marker:** Where are we and what progress have we made on the way that leads to eternal life?

- What God has for us in contrast to what we have from God.

God doesn't want heaven without us. He has gone to great lengths to reconcile us to Himself. However, He does not force Himself upon us.

- He provided the payment for our sins.
- He calls us to Himself:
  - The word / the Holy Spirit / our conscience
- He is longsuffering and full of mercy.
- He desires all to come to repentance.

- God desires to bless us with every spiritual blessing from above.

**Spiritual Blessings:** *Ephesians 1:15–20*

<sup>15</sup> For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. <sup>18</sup> *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be

enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,<sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might<sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

### *Spiritual Blessings from Heaven / Given from God in Christ.*

- A spirit of wisdom
- Revelation In the knowledge of Him
- Enlightened heart
- Know and experience the hope of His calling
- The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
- The surpassing greatness of His power
  - The power that raised Jesus up from the grave

**Use it or Lose it:** *Mark 4:21–25* (in the context of Jesus teaching in parables)

<sup>21</sup> And He was saying to them, “A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not *brought* to be put on the lampstand? <sup>22</sup> “For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has *anything* been secret, but that it would come to light. <sup>23</sup> “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” <sup>24</sup> And He was saying to them, “Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides. <sup>25</sup> “**For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.**”

For God to grant us more, we must first act upon that which He has already given.  
“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear,” let him “act on.”

### **The Unprofitable Servant** (parable of the talents)

**Matthew 25:29** “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”

### **A Call to Action: Rosh Hashanah and the blowing of the Shofar.**

The ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are considered 10 days of penitence. This is a time of reflection as to one’s life – a search of the inward man and a time for repentance.

The blowing of the shofar calls the people to look upward; to offer their lives to God. It is a call to readiness.

The blowing of the shofar reminds the people to have faith in the coming of the Messiah.

May we hear the call today: the call toward God; the call toward heaven; the call to surrender our life completely to Jesus Christ; may we take action to the word of God which we have heard; may we make ready for the coming of our Lord and savior!!!