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Date : 12/31/2018 9:41:04 AM EST, Letter ID: 529473870
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We get the word January from the name of the roman god Janus. In their mythology, he is the god of "gates and new beginnings." In art, he is often drawn with two faces, one face looking back at the past, the other looking ahead to the future. I guess you could say that's a good reason to name the month that begins our "new year" January.

But no matter what name you put on the calendar, or what you call that first month, when the ball falls at midnight, in cities all around the world, we will be celebrating a new "Year of Our Lord!" The birth of our Savior split time into before and after.... B.C., of course, meaning "Before Christ," but A.D. is a Latin abbreviation for *Anno Domini*, which means, "the year of our Lord." He's not some stone god looking back to the past and ahead to the future. He is the Alpha and Omega. He IS the beginning and the end. Hallelujah!

While some people around the world are glued to their T.V. sets, raising toasts in revelry, or watching the ball drop in places like Australia, Paris and New York City. Many of us will bring in the new year with the words from Acts 1:8 ringing in our ears, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Hallelujah! When the sun rises on New Years Day, satellite images from all around the world will allow us to be "witnesses" as the whole world ushers in 2019 A.D., and the New "Year of the Lord" is proclaimed in countless languages.

When the sun rises on this New Year, of course I HOPE that you will be "Happy," but I PRAY that you may be filled with the "Joy" of the Lord. You see, where there is Happiness, there can also be un-Happiness where there is Pleasure, there can be dis-Pleasure where there is Gratitude, there can be in-Gratitude. However, there is no un-Joy, dis-Joy, or in-Joy. :-) Happiness and such are feelings, and feelings can change with our circumstances, but the "Joy of the Lord is your strength." and "no man can steal your Joy." Amen?

So let us celebrate this New Year of our Lord, this time of "New Beginnings," by dwelling in the Shekinah Glory of His Presence, since "In His presence is fullness of Joy." I pray that He continues to make His face to shine down upon you, the man of God, and your family as He pours out an abundance of His blessings into your lives.

Yours in Christ,
Gary