

# “2010 And Your Future”

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II Peter 3:1-15*

I begin this New Year’s sermon with a quote from one of Shakespeare’s finest – Hamlet.

Some say that ever ‘against that season comes  
Wherein our Savior’s birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;  
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow’d and so gracious is the time.

“The bird of dawning singeth all night long...  
So hallow’d and so gracious is the time.”

Some so say – new beginnings.

How about you? Is there music in the air? Any birds singing in your head? Is your time-hallowed and gracious?

Shakespeare was a master of human nature, and foundationally he had a Christian view of the world – with all its tragedy and its comedy. And yet... Near the (our) Saviors birth – “The bird of dawning singeth...”

A realist just read Hamlet, McBeth, Romeo ad Juliet, and more... And yet... “So hallow’d and so gracious is the time.”

Hope, the future – is embedded. We’ve started a New Year, a new decade. We are time keepers, all the while time embraces us, and moves on. What is our part? This time for introspection – this new year, this new decade – as usual calls out to reflect on the recent year and decade, and muse on the new year and decade.

My friends, (you already know this, but a reminder) beware what you take into the Beautiful mind of yours – for that information will impact and impel your way of viewing your life. Of course, be challenged, dialog, argue, be eclectic – but beware.

How about Time Magazine’s cover story on December 7, 2009 – It pictures a baby in a diaper with a red new years’ cap, crying amid balloons and colorful spent streamers. The cover story?

“The Decade From Hell” in large bold type. The small subtitle – “And why the next one will be better.” Thank God for the subtitle, at least we can go on! This jeremiad would make Jeremiah blush. The author dubs the past decade as the “worst”. He recollects the negatives and they are many – but in terms of history – let’s be real! Let’s get perspective! It’s been rough, but not the worst. How about the 30’s and the Great Depression, the rise of Hitler, Stalin, and WWII? And how about the Great Plague? But – This is our existential time!

We have much to do, by all means. How careful we must be in diagnosing and predicting our human future. What is your constraining worldview – in the face of conflicts, troubles, breakdowns, and shocks – Global, national and personal?

As you enter into this new year, decade – what foundation undergirds your mindset, your view of life? Has the decade been hellish? Is time hellish? Without redemption? Hope? Or, is there another way of viewing life?

Yes, it is our time! Right now! But, we have markers, guidance from earlier sojourners. One such reflector is the writer of II Peter, a late First Century or early Second Century Christian writing. Both he and his community were concerned about their present and their future. Their hope in redemption – the arrival of Jesus Christ the second time – was being questioned. After all I had been 70+ years that the Christians had been proclaiming his return. Detractors were busy ridiculing them and their hope, their worldview, and God's purpose and time having meaning.

Peter reminds them of a great psalm. Time may be slow, but it has a trajectory. “For God a day is as a 1,000 years, and a 1,000 years is as a day.”

Now there is a new perspective! God's time isn't necessarily, our time. Don't lose faith! Hold fast! Generations come and go – but God is faithful! Peter continues – “alright, God will do what needs to be done, what about you?” “...how then should you be living?” “...what sort of person ought you to be...?”

Once again the Christian faith gets to the heart of it all – ethics, morality! God's timing isn't off. What about yours? How are you spending your time?

Peter is declaring that God's timing is such that it allows for more inclusion into God's ways, more time for repentance, change, redemption!

So here we are – time bound children of God. As we mark time we have begun a new year, and a new decade.

If you believe that God is involved in this time, and purpose and intention are essential to the fabric of all time and space – then this worldview will interpret and guide your thoughts and actions into this new year and decade. It will!

As we enter and wait let's follow Peter's advice, “Therefore beloved, since you wait..., be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.”

This is my prayer for each one of you.

“So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.”

Amen.