

24 January 2016: Preached by Rev Joseph Poon

**Topic: What's New in the New Year?**

Scripture Text: Exodus 12:1-2

1. Exodus 12:1-2 were the words spoken by the Lord to Moses and Aaron in the last night before the children of Israel departed from Egypt. They had been in Egypt for 400 years. Why did the Lord instruct Israel to start a new calendar year rather than instruct them about the journey to the Promised Land or tell them about the blessings in the Promised Land?
2. God told the children of Israel their departure from Egypt would be considered the first month of their new calendar. This is called Abib or Nissan which is our current Mar/Apr month. Why did God do it? This is to cause the children of Israel to forget all the former pagan religious celebrations in the Egyptian calendar. Egypt has religious festivals of their different gods in different months in their calendar year.
3. God wants the children of Israel to start anew in their walk with Him who is the true and living God. For 400 years they have been influenced by the Egyptian pagan practices but now they must follow the true and living God. They must have nothing to do with the false gods of Egypt and must never think of relying on them again.
4. The Lord also gave the children of Israel new festivals to observe such as the daily sacrifices at the Tabernacle. Every of these activities is to draw Israel to the Lord so that they would live for Him. It is to make their lives to revolve around the Tabernacle where the presence of God dwells. This is the permanent change that God wants to see in the children of Israel.
5. It is the same for us believers today. After leaving our old life of sin which is our Egypt, we must now have a permanent change to live for the Lord. Our lives ought to revolve around the Church where we serve the Lord and encourage and fellowship with the brethren. We have a new life in Christ with a new purpose and new focus for the Lord. This is the new calendar that every believer ought to have.