

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Last year, 2007, was a difficult year for many of us and for the world. The most significant event of the year was the international financial crisis and the near meltdown and collapse of the international banking system. That grim event will have repercussions this year in the form of unemployment, a reduction in savings, a rise in debt, and falling house prices.

For me, seeing the terrible bloodshed and terrorism in the city of my birth, Bombay, was a particularly grim moment in 2007. In the area where I grew up we witnessed Islamic terrorists murder innocent people and spread fear around the globe. Perhaps the most disturbing part of the events in Bombay was the deliberate targeting, torture, and murder of Jews.

All of us will have our personal memories, good, bad, and indifferent, of 2008. We all will hope that this New Year will be a year of joy and peace for ourselves, our families and friends, and our world. In particular many will hope that this new year of 2009 will bring the change promised by Barak Obama who takes office on the 20th January. Many will hope that he will be able to end the international financial crisis and take steps towards world peace this year. Yet one man, however gifted, cannot solve our problems or the problems of our world. To whom then can we turn for hope and a truly happy New Year?

The answer lies in the event from which our calendar comes. We measure time and the years from the birth of the coming into the world of the only Saviour, Jesus Christ. This year is 2009 A.D.; that is, 2009 years (approximately) since Jesus Christ began to rule the world. Jesus Christ, who is God, came to earth as man in order to

change everything in our disordered world of suffering and death. Christ has changed everything by dealing with humanity biggest problem: our rebellion against God and God's anger against our rebellion. By dying on the cross Jesus takes upon himself the punishment that God's people deserve. Christ now offers a new beginning to all peoples everywhere. In God's sight, a Christian is someone new and pleasing to Him, and therefore the Christian has a real and true hope of knowing God *now* and of knowing true peace and happiness in the *future* when Jesus returns. Jesus will return to remake the world as it ought to be – a world without suffering, pain, and death and a world full of joy, peace, and happiness in the glory of God. Thus, one of Jesus' earliest followers, Paul, can write, "therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" A very Happy New Year to you all!

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