



Ron & Cheryl Myers

GOD'S WORD FOR ISAN NEWSLETTER

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A Faith-based Ministry Sustained Through the Prayers and Partnership of God's People

When is New Year's Day, Anyway?

Out with the Old - In with the New

By Ron Myers

Belated New Year's Greetings in Jesus' Name,

I trust that your Christmas and New Years holidays went well. I wished you *belated* New Year's greetings, but for Asia, I'm right on time. The traditional Chinese New Year, based on the lunar calendar, will begin on 25 January this year. It is associated with many myths, customs and traditional festivities where deities and ancestors are honored. It's also an occasion for families to gather for an annual reunion dinner – not unlike our Thanksgiving or Christmas. One notable tradition is for every family to thoroughly clean their house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for incoming good luck. In short, New Year's celebrations in Asian cultures are very important occasions, that of transitioning from the old and welcoming the new.

Thailand's New Year celebration is called *Songkran* – this year it's April 13-15. All Thai go into the streets to splash each other with water, which gives a blessing and promotes good fortune. Baby powder is typically mixed with the water, which, when dry, marks the recipient as have been dowsed, and fills the air with a sweet aroma. If you're there, you'll get a blessed soaking. All done in good fun, of course. Buddhist idols also receive an annual sacred washing. I have a Thai-Chinese friend whose family took all their furniture from their home, dusted everything off from stem to stern, and even swept and hosed down the cement floors. This surprised me so I asked him what was happening, whereupon, my friend explained that it was being done to get rid of the bad and welcome the good of the upcoming year. Cambodia, Laos, Burma (Myanmar), Sri Lanka, as well as parts of China, Vietnam and India have similar out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new cleansing traditions.

If you are a *born-again* Christian – which I hope and trust that you are – you too have received an *Out-with-the-old, In-with-the-new* experience. However, as Christians, ours doesn't need to be repeated every year, because it's good for eternity. Also, because we have been purchased by the Blood of Christ and are being kept by the Power of God and not by our own keeping of any tradition. Nor is any earthly washing necessary, because you have been sanctified and washed by cleansing the of the Word of God.

So, for us, *all things are New*"

- Our Great and Faithful God shows **New** Mercies towards us every morning. (Lamentations 3:23)
- We are **New** creations (creatures) in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17 a)
- All things have become **New** for us, who are in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17b)
- We can now approach God by a **New** and living way, by the Blood of Christ. (Hebrews 10:19-20)
- We are to walk in **Newness** of life. (Romans 6:4)
- We are re-**Newed** in our minds as we put off the *Old* and put on the **New** Christ-like person. (Ephesians 4:23-24)
- We look for God's promise of a **New** Heaven and **New** Earth where righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1)
- There, we will receive Christ's **New** Name written upon our persons. (Revelation 3:12)
- We will receive a **New** name on a white pebble – token of our overcoming victory in Christ. (Romans 8:37; Revelation 2:17)
- Therefore: The Apostle Peter poses the question: "*how ought we then live?*" – In this coming **New** Year? (2 Peter 3:11b)

By God's Grace and for His Glory,

Ron & Cheryl Myers

God's Word for Isan: IsanBible.org

Along that same theme, I have a **New** positive update concerning my Thai-Isan coworker's stubbornly high blood pressure. Praise the Lord, Baaw Ter is now on a new regimen of medication and exercise which has brought it down into acceptable levels. He remains faithful, yet sad over his wife, Joo's, leaving due to his faith. Please continue to pray for her salvation. Pray also for our growing work in Thailand. I'll be returning as soon as possible this new year.

Thank you for your prayerful support. We trust you will enjoy a blessed and prosperous 2020.