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No doubt a whole lot of time has and is being spent in recent days by people of every persuasion, every gender and every station in life, making resolutions. You know it is that time of year again. Everybody wants to loose weight, quit smoking, become more punctual, get more sleep and relax more. We seem to get caught up in this craze every year at this time maybe because it just seems like the right thing to do. If you are one of those people who are engaging this activity right about now there is nothing really wrong with this, until it comes time to actually carrying out these great and noble resolutions and goals of ours. It is precisely at that point that the air seems to quickly seep from our swollen resolves. Most people watchers and life coaches tell

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PASTOR'S *Perspective*

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us that less than 3% of people making resolutions keep them. So for this year rather than making resolutions to do something why not resolve to be called or thought of differently by both yourself and those around you.

The writer of Isaiah 62, which is a part of what theologians call “Third Isaiah,” offers a prophetic commentary on what Jerusalem would become after the Babylonian Exile would end. Jerusalem lay in waste and the people of that once great city had lost their hope. They also thought that the city and their esteem could never be restored. Kings and leaders of other nations now passed by the city and denounced it and their God. There seemed to be no lively prospect of restoration. The prophet comes along and attempts to give some hope to the soon to be returning citizens of Jerusalem. He tells them that they will be known by a new name which Yahweh will give. They had been known as desolate and forsaken.

Name, in Biblical perspective, is more than just a term of identification. Name reveals essence. The Bible is replete with examples of God changing the names of those whom He chose to use so as to give them a new essence. Abram and Sarai became Abraham and Sarah. Jacob became Israel. In reverse the King of Babylon gave new names to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Saul’s name became Paul. The purpose of a new name meant that a new direction and a new calling would come with it.

Maybe that’s it for us. Since we know that only 3% of persons making

resolutions actually keep them, perhaps the first thing to decide upon is what new direction or new calling we want to pursue. In other words what new name would we like to call ourselves and have others also call us? Instead of making resolutions maybe we first should determine purpose and direction and then allow resolve to grow from it. Perhaps resolutions would then better fit and become doable. In the story of Isaiah the writer told them that they would become a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of their God. They would no more be termed as forsaken nor would anybody dare call them desolate for God would have them operate by a new name and the Lord would delight in them. Knowing this it was the prophet’s hope that the people would become different and have a new essence about them. I believe the same is true of us. Knowing what we can become should give us inspiration to gain new essence or being.

What visions have you cast for yourself? In other words where do you see yourself in this New Year? What do you want to become in 2007? Do you just want to make resolutions or do you want to be known differently by yourself as well as those who are around you? At the end of that chapter the word says “and they shall call them, The Holy People, The redeemed of the Lord and you shall be called Sought Out, a city not forsaken.” Indeed with a new name comes a new essence, purpose and resolve. What would you have your new name be in 2007?