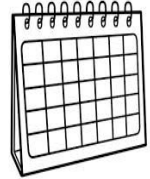


## AN EXTRA DAY

Marc Gibson

This year is a “leap” year, and this coming Thursday is “leap” day. February 29<sup>th</sup> appears on our calendars once every four years. Those born on that day celebrate their actual calendar birthday every four years. Have you ever wondered why there is a “leap” day?

This system began in ancient times in an ongoing effort to construct a calendar that would mark time as accurately as possible. The ancient Egyptians figured out that the *solar year* (the amount of time it takes the earth to revolve around the sun) was very close to 365 days. Egyptian astronomers later came to realize that the solar year was actually  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a day longer than 365 days. In 238 B.C. Ptolemy III ordered a leap-year system by adding an extra day to the calendar every four years. Julius Caesar also reformed the Roman calendar by running a cycle of three 365-day years followed by a “leap” year of 366 days (source: *Calendar* by David Ewing Duncan). This system employing a  $365\frac{1}{4}$ -day year is the basis of our calendar today. The extra day added to the calendar every four years is done to make up for the four  $\frac{1}{4}$  days left over from those four years.



Now that’s the technical explanation for that day’s spot on the calendar, but the fact remains that we have an extra day this year. Though we cannot turn the clock back and regain lost time, we should appreciate *even more* the time we are blessed to have on this earth. What will you do with this “extra” day? Will having 366 days mean you will get more done to improve your life on earth this year and increase your hope for eternity? Or will it be just another 24 hours wasted? As we grow older, time becomes more precious. “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16). Let us be thankful for every opportunity to obey and glorify God. What will you be doing **today**?