

Redeeming the Time

This issue of **Rise Up and Build** is the final issue for the year 2015. In just a few days, if time continues, 2015 will be history, forever gone, never to return again, and the year 2016 will have begun. The passing of an old year and the beginning of a new year invariably makes us mindful of both the swift passing of time and the importance of time.

Properly understood, our earthly lives are very short. It is as Job declared, “*man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue,*” Job 14:1-2. James likened our lives to a “*vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away,*” James 4:14. The bottom line is this: Life on earth, at best, is short. The oldest among us are in agreement that it does not take very long to live a life!

In view of the brevity of life on earth, and the length of eternity, it behooves each person to become more and more aware of the importance of time. And many uninspired men have recognized this fact. Henry David Thoreau said “you cannot kill time without injuring eternity.” Another person said that “one thing you can’t recycle is wasted time.” Benjamin Franklin said “Time lost is never found again.”

In contrast to man, God is “*from everlasting to everlasting,*” Psalm 90:2. He is “*the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity,*” Isa. 57:15. And God, Who created us “*in His Own image,*” Gen. 1:26-27, knows the value of time, and has sought to make us aware of the value of time. And, in His word, He teaches us to be mindful of the value of time. Note these scriptures: “*So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom,*” Psalm 90:12. “*To every thing there is a season, and a **time** to every purpose under the heavens,*” Eccl. 3:1. “*And do this, knowing **the time**, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light,*” Rom. 13:11-12. “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, **Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil,*” Eph. 5:15-16. “*Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, **redeeming the time**,*” Col. 4:5., etc., etc.

God, Who created us, and Who knows the value of time, always does things in a timely manner. To illustrate this point, we observe that from “*before the foundation of the world,*” Eph. 1:4, God conceived the scheme of human redemption, a plan which involved Jesus Christ, the “*seed*” of the woman, bruising the “*head of the serpent,*” Gen. 3:15. And, amazingly, “*when the fullness of the **time** had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*” Gal. 4:4. And Jesus Christ, Who arrived in “*the fullness of the time,*” did everything He intended to do in a timely manner. Hence, He said “*I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day: the night is coming when no one can work,*” John 9:4. And very shortly before He was crucified Jesus prayed to the Father, saying, “*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do,*” John 17:4. Jesus, incidentally, left us “*an example*” that we “*should follow His steps,*” I Peter 2:21. Hence, if we follow His “*example,*” we, too,” will endeavor to “*finish the work*” which He has given us to do. In other words, we will

strive diligently to “redeem the time.”

But what does it mean to “redeem the time?” “*Redeeming*,” Eph. 5:16, is from a Greek work which means “to buy up, ransom, or rescue from loss.” The apostle Paul admonished us to redeem the time “*because the days are evil*,” Eph. 5:16. All one has to do to recognize that the “*days are evil*” is to read, listen to, or watch the daily news. Evil is all around us, and if we are not cautious evil will consume us! Yes, we must “redeem the time,” but what does that involve?

“Redeeming the Time” involves:

1. Remembering “*your Creator in the days of your youth*,” Eccl. 12:1. We are justifiably thrilled when a person, in the sunset years of his life, obeys the gospel. But God Who demanded the “*first fruits*” of Israel’s harvest, Ex. 23:16, rightly demands that we “*remember*” Him in the days of our “*youth*.”

2. Seeking “*first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*,” Matt. 6:33. God must be “*first*” in our lives; He will not accept second place!

3. Making it a point to **attend, and participate in,** every Bible study and worship assembly of the local church, Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25. By so doing, we encourage others in their efforts to serve the Lord; they encourage us, and we are “*strengthened*,” Col. 1:11 in the “*inward man*,” 2 Cor. 4:16.

3. Making time each day for prayer and Bible study. Let us “*pray without ceasing*,” I Thess. 5:17, and let us meditate upon “*the law of the Lord*,” doing so both “*day and night*,” Ps. 1:2. I have yet to meet a person who lamented the fact that he had spent too much time studying his Bible!

4. Sharing the gospel with others, 2 Tim. 2:2; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19. The gospel is God’s “*power*” to save, Rom. 1:16, but it only saves those who obey it, 2 Thess. 1:7-9. However, people cannot rightly obey the gospel until they know what it requires of them, and many will never know unless we tell them!

5. Honoring your family obligations! Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church, Eph. 5:25. Wives should submit to their “*own husbands as to the Lord*,” Eph. 5:22. Parents should bring up their children “*in the training and admonition of the Lord*,” Eph. 6:4. Children should “*obey*” their parents, and honor their “*father and mother*,” Eph. 6:1-2.

Conclusion: More, much more, could be said with regards to the importance of “*redeeming the time*” and what is involved in “*redeeming the time*.” But we have said enough for wise people to get the message, and someone has said that a “hint to the wise is sufficient.”

**** -Bobby Witherington

Is This Your Bible?

Stashed away, collecting dust
A seldom read, sacred trust,
Highly praised, but hidden away
Unseen, day after day.

In full view, seen by all
Resting nicely, in the front Hall,
Unsoiled, unused, neatly placed,
Its heavenly message untraced.

Expertly bound, nice family size,
Offering hope, the Christian's prize,
But disregarded, until at last,
A loved one has passed!

Filled with truth, God's word,
Seeking hearts, formerly unstirred,
Skillfully revealing God's power,
But unable to cope with TV hour!

Is this your Bible, my friend?
Then your ways, you must mend!
Hasten quickly and repent,
Before your days here are spent!

—Bobby Witherington