



The
**Tyrant
Time**

THE TYRANT TIME

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Romans 13:11-14,

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

TIME is a tyrant – domineering, unfeeling, unyielding. Time controls people and events. To the “star-struck” gentry, the time of birth is fraught with ominous portent. Superstitious parents (and grand-parents especially) require obstetricians to deliver their babies at times predetermined by the horoscope. Intelligent people such as politicians and business tycoons - masters in their spheres - are nevertheless slaves to time. Astrologers determine for them the opportune time for travel and critical transactions.

Time the “mysterious dimension” holds us in rather like gold-fish in a bowl or birds in

a cage. We are completely helpless within its grasp: we have no means of manipulating or controlling time. Men boast all sorts of power - money power, people power, nuclear power. Against time, however, men have no power. We cannot tamper with time. We cannot rush it or slow it down. Time operates independently: men can only measure it.

Even as you ponder these words, time marches relentlessly on. Its moments fly by like the restless ticking of a clock. Time once passed is forever beyond recall. Good times of yesteryear cannot be relived, to be enjoyed again. Bad times cannot be recalled, to be improved. Time past is a spent check. The present is the only currency at our disposal.

In the realm of nature, time means change, and that for the worse. Time has strange and irresistible powers to cause rundown and decay. New things age and fall apart. In time, a new car breaks down, a new watch stops, a new house leaks. Men have made notable conquests in every field, except in the area of ageing. Time and ageing go together.

We grow old without exception. From the moment of birth a newborn babe is swept into the sad stream of life, and its fresh pink

form begins to age like the rest of us. The whole human race marches with time on its fateful journey to the grave. Ponder the words of hymn writer Isaac Watts:

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.*

LIFE: ONLY A SHORT DAY

Who can escape the ravages of time? The obvious answer is, no one. Yet masses of time-drunk mortals stagger dizzily onward, oblivious of the time of day. This is the tragedy. Be wise, then, my friend. Be not time-drunk! Our lifetime is but a short day, a mere 24 hours. Considering that the average lifespan is 70 - 80 years, more or less, then

*for those in their teens, it is breakfast time,
for the 30 - 40 year-olds, it is lunch time,
and for those near 60, it is dinner or supper time!*

This homely illustration puts into perspective the stage of life which you are in. Nevertheless, your "midnight of life" may be nearer than you think. "*For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a*

little time, and then vanisheth away.” (James 4:14) The fact is, we cannot be sure even of tomorrow! It is therefore a measure of wisdom to assume that “time’s up” for us could be any time, youth and vigour notwithstanding.

Let the words of Henry Francis Lyte speak to us:

*Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day,
Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see -
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!*

Change and decay are heartless allies of time. Who can resist them? Time plays strange games. Children long to grow up, “dying to be adults.” Adults loathe to grow old - who wants to die? They wage a losing battle against the onslaught of time: sagging skin, falling hair, dropping teeth. Vain men and women resort vainly to plastic surgeons, hair clinics and health farms. Their efforts leave them poorer, wiser and older! On earth, time reigns supreme, claiming victims with effortless ease.

*The toll of time strikes a melancholy note,
like the tolling of a cemetery bell -
Tang... tang... tang... tang.*

TIME: PRELUDE TO ETERNITY

The Wise King of old wrote: *“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die...”* (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2) At birth our clock of life is fully wound. Each day its spring unwinds a little. When the spring runs out, our clock of life will stop. Then time gives way to eternity.

The winding and unwinding of our clock of life is not for us to determine. The Giver of Life has it under His control. *“my times are in thy hand... Thou art my God.”* (Psalms 31:15,14)

When He calls we cannot refuse. He holds undisputed sovereignty over our lives. What really matters is eternity. Time is only the prelude. In time, then, we must prepare for eternity; in life prepare for death. We are not being morbid, only wise. He is no fool who turns his back on what will not last and sets his face to gain what he cannot lose.

What will it be like when time gives way to eternity? Some may believe otherwise, but it will be a conscious experience. At the last breath, as the light of time switches off, the light of eternity switches on. Suddenly the

things hitherto invisible come into view. We see the things that really matter, the changeless things of eternity.

“One little step from time, one great leap into eternity!” It will be a stupendous step of no return, whatever the outcome. The soul which finds its new abode intolerable has no way of re-entry into the domain of time. It is a “ONE WAY STREET.” When your turn comes to take that final step, will it be with shock and regret, or with joy unspeakable?

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.
- Tennyson*

BE MASTERS,
NOT SLAVES, OF TIME!

Time is but a little drop in the ocean of eternity and our sojourn here will shortly be over. Therefore, let us not be slaves of time but rather masters of it. Time must not be allowed to manipulate us. Rather, we must always be in control and utilize time to the full. As mentioned earlier, the present time only is at our disposal. How are you using it?

Every day God's TIME BANK hands out 24 hours or 1440 minutes to each of us. This is our "trading credit." It is like currency, but with a difference: you cannot sell it or give it away. You cannot hoard it or carry over to another day. All 1440 "dollars" must be spent by you personally. At day's end whatever is unspent is cancelled; whatever is misspent accrues for future reckoning.

The question is: how are you spending your time? Is it in wise investments for eternity? Time is freely given to us, but we are not free to do what we like with it. One day, the President of the Time Bank will require us to render an account. The day of opportunity will soon be over and the day of reckoning will come. How you have spent your day, eternity will reveal it. Our "killing time," wasted hours, squandered opportunities, latecoming to church, "clock watching" - all these will be burnt up in the fires of judgment like "wood, hay, (and) stubble." (1 Corinthians 3:12-15) We will be the poorer for it.

KNOWING THE TIME, AWAKE!

Having considered the meaning of time and how it relates to our earthly sojourn, let us heed the Apostle's warning call in Romans

13:11, know the time! "...it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Our salvation will be consummated at our Lord's return, and all signs point to His soon appearing. Know the time! It is the end time - no ordinary time! The Judge stands at the door. Eternity is at hand. There is gravest peril in spiritual slumber.

THE CLOCK OF LIFE

*The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the pow'r
To say just when the hands will stop -
At late or early hour!
Now is the only time we have
To do the Master's will;
Do not delay another day -
Your clock may then be still!*

But that is the adversary's master weapon, his bait and snare to put us out of action. If he can entice us to slip into indolence and apathy, then we can do nothing worthwhile for God. Inaction at this time is utter folly. Dear reader, are you asleep? Are you not concerned with your spiritual well-being, bogged down with the trivialities of time, forgetting the vital issues of eternity?

O the tragedy of men and women caught

up with the hollow pleasures and seductive lifestyle of the world! A young lady, receiving a priceless diamond ring exclaimed to her young man, “Dearest, thank you for the lovely box! I promise to look after it with utmost care and attention so that no harm or loss will ever come to it!” Ridiculous! So we all agree. Yet it is a picture of time-bound people lavishing everything on their bodies, forgetting their priceless souls within. Soon the day of judgment will dawn. Therefore awake!

The night of our earthly sojourn is far spent. Our exposure to this sinful perishing world will shortly be over. The Judge of all the earth is at hand. The time is later than you think. In the race of life we are already in the final lap. The warning bell has sounded. The finishing line is almost in sight. Our great God and Saviour waits at the winning post. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” Awake! Run on with renewed vigour and urgency!

CAST OFF, PUT ON, WALK!

“Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day...” So exhorts the Apostle Paul.

These are things we all do naturally on waking in the morning: we cast off our night clothes, put on our day clothes, and move on into the day's activities. In the spiritual realm, we should do like-wise. The day of end time action has dawned. The King is on His way. Awake! To action! Away with deadly slumber!

- a. Cast off the works of darkness. No more should believers indulge in foolish thoughts, vain imaginations, unprofitable pastimes. Those who name the name of Christ should never be guilty of "rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying." Like night clothes, these "works of darkness" should be cast off, once for all.

- b. Put on the armour of light. In Ephesians 6:10-18, the Apostle lists six vital pieces of the Christian's whole armour of God:

*Belt of truth
Breastplate of righteousness
Shoes of the gospel of peace
Shield of faith
Helmet of salvation
Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God*

Then, "praying always with all prayer and

supplication” we shall obtain necessary power for the conflict, with victory assured, “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

- c. Let us walk honestly, as in the day. Having known the vital doctrines, let us henceforth apply them in our daily living. Our “walk” of conduct and lifestyle must reflect our beliefs. Our outward actions must reflect our inward convictions. Let us “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Think like Him, speak like Him and act like Him! This we must do while we await His return!

BEHOLD, HE COMES!

Time, thou heartless tyrant, soon thy dominion shall be no more! Shortly, eternity’s door will fling open and we shall fly away, for ever set free from thy cold embrace. Believers in the Lord shall enter eternity’s glorious day and the unspeakable joy of the Lord. In a moment the trivia of time and sense will crumble into dust and ashes - like burnt out toys.

The things of eternity which earth-bound eyes have not seen will appear - brilliant,

dazzling, marvellous, beyond words. The invisible “other world” will flash into view, magnificent and splendid. That’s our priceless diamond. Put off, then, the futile “polishing of the box.”

We recall with joy Paul’s words in Romans 8:18, *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* What are the sufferings of time, even a whole lifetime, when compared with the eternal glories of God’s Kingdom? Time will forever be left behind us as we are ushered into God’s eternal day. It will be worth it all!

Finally, while the Lord tarries, let us arouse others from their sleep of death. Warn them of the imminent destruction to those without Christ. The Judge is coming! Awake, prepare to meet thy God!

*“Behold, now is the accepted time;
Behold, now is the day of salvation.”*
(2 Corinthians 6:2)

Now is Gospel time. Salvation’s open door beckons. Soon it will be forever shut. Time must give way to eternity. Until then, while time lasts, go labour on!



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Mandarin 8.00am - 9.30am

English 10.30am - 12.15pm

Sunset Gospel Hour 6.00pm - 7.30pm