



REMEMBER now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;² While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:³ In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,⁴ And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;⁵ Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:⁶ Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.⁷ Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7)

My friend, do you have time to read this devotion today, or to study your Bible regularly on a daily basis, or time to devote to some oppressed stranger along your way? The answer to that question is 'yes' and 'no'.. You see, time is a limited commodity. It is a resource whose value is beyond measure, but it cannot be purchased or sold. When the world was an empty morass of mud and confused waters in eternity past, there seemed to be an unlimited amount of time when the Lord God divided the waters and made the dry land appear. But the time allotted for the earth to stand as it was on the completion of the sixth day is known only to God, and not something we must concern ourselves so much about because time, for us, is limited in years and not centuries.

Time is three dimensional reflecting the character of the Triune Godhead. There is time past, present and future. Time past is relative to the perspective of the one who measures it. World history would rightly begin eastward in Eden and continue to the

present. American history, however, would begin with the voyage of Christopher Columbus, Admiral of the Ocean Seas, who discovered our continent. But history is always capable of further divisions into childhood, puberty, adulthood, and maturity. These are not guaranteed, mind you, but they are commonly accepted indicators of the lifespan of man and woman. We do not control the length of our years, that is reserved to the One who has numbered the very hairs of our heads and established a planned pattern for who we will become in the DNA at conception. The present time is really all we can lay claim to since time past has already been spent, and time future is not assured.

In the normal life expectancy of man, we may live to a rich old age of 100 years. Some may even exceed that age by only a few years; but the average is closer to seventy. *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.* (Psalm 90:10)

God Almighty, on the other hand is TIMELESS. He is forever the I AM of the Past, of the Present, and of the Future. We can measure earthly time and the lives of creatures in the three-dimensional sense, but God is not subject to our scale of measurement. Certainly, He is past, present and future; but, in reality, He transcends those measurements. You may ask, How? God is measured in time past in eternity. He has always existed. He is measured in the eternal present as well. He is ALWAYS present in the NOW which, to God, is Eternally present. God was I AM yesterday. He is I AM today; and He is I AM tomorrow. The Three Time Dimensions of God are not measured in units of time, but in the three Eternities which, like the Godhead, are truly one MEASURE (Eternity).

There are Christian writers of questionable sincerity who make a fortune in selling error-filled books predicting the exact time of our Lord's return. When their calculations fail, they simply change the color of the cover and sell a new one with different outcomes – always in the near future to draw the highest degree of attention. Why not plan for the Lord's return today. If, like the five virgins who were always prepared for the Bridegroom, we are always watchful, alert, and ready to receive His coming, we shall not be surprised and left out of the marriage feast. In other words, live each day of our lives as if it were the last. Then priorities become crystal clear.

A few years back, I wrote a short poem to describe our understanding of time as relates to the ancient hour-glass:

Time in a Glass

The sands of time are passing fine,
each grain a matchless treasure.
But doleful man can ne'er opine
to make a useful measure.

How sadly do the hours fly on,
with golden blessings laden,
At last to wing their ways beyond
and find their ancient haven.

A speck of dust on Time's far shore
is all that mortals merit.
But human souls may find the Door
and Heaven's gold inherit.

The shining glass conceals the score
of sand left in the balance,
And man nor beast can yet discern

the cost of Time in Talents.

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And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

(John 8:32)

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Indeed, we know not how many grains of time remain in the upper chamber of the glass. That is an act of mercy and grace on the part of our Creator. How tremendously sad and stressful would life be if we knew from birth precisely the allotted time of our death. If I judge human nature properly, I would say that the youthful person, knowing he would live to an age of eighty, would probably waste his early years in riotous living and, as the latter years approached, spend the remaining years in dread and foreboding. But God has kept that secret from our ears. He will take us to Himself at the time of His own discretion, and God does all things well – so it will be the very best time for us.

As Autumn has begun to manifest itself in my hometown, I love to sit in the shade of the trees and reflect on my life from early childhood to the present. Amazingly, though I felt like I was harshly challenged many times, I cannot remember any sorrowful moments that have not been used by God for my betterment. I remember the beautiful colors of mountain flora of Tennessee and North Georgia; I recall friends long parted; I remember my mother teaching me on her knee about our Lord; and my father working long hours to feed and clothe a family of seven children. But these all are precious memories of my allotted time that God has granted me. Time is valuable. A dying man of great wealth has been heard to offer his fortune just for one more day of life. But such time cannot be purchased. When the thunder calls from Heaven, we must answer the call.

How much time do you have? Do you know? The time to follow in the tracks of the Lord is NOW. At the beginning of this devotion, I asked if you had time to read it? That question was rhetorical because, if you have reached this point, of course, you had time to read it. Our allotted time is used according to our priorities and our discretion as to what things in life upon which to place our emphasis. Since eternity is so long, and life on earth so short, why not invest your time wisely in learning of the Way, the Truth, and the Life so eternity is our return.