

ARE YOU REDEEMING THE TIME? : PART ONE

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J. R. R. Tolkien And Fiction Novels, Redeem The Time, Do All To The Glory Of God, Building On The Right Foundation, Lives Built Upon Christ, Treasures In Heaven, Work With All Your Might, Priority Of My Writing Ministry, Personal Work Habits, Seek First The Kingdom Of God, Exciting Life Of The Spirit, Sword Of The Spirit, There Are None Righteous, My Lost Wasted Years Of Compromise, We Are Not Of This World, No Fellowship With Darkness, Heavenly Vision, We Can Be Shining Lights Or We Can Be Ashamed At Jesus' Coming, Becoming One To Win Some, Overcome By The World And Backslidden, Israelites Backslide, False Gods And Ancient Idol Worship, Our Modern Golden Calves

Some time ago, while engaged in an online conversation with a Christian friend, he remarked how he occasionally enjoys reading works of fiction in which good overcomes evil. As an example of such books, he mentioned J. R. R. Tolkien's much loved and widely-read novels "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. Upon expressing my personal disapproval of Christians reading such questionable tomes, my friend then responded further by stating that, being as such novels are merely works of fiction, they are not meant to be taken seriously by anyone. He explained that he reads such books simply for the enjoyment with which they provide him as a good story.

From my perspective, this is really a double-sided issue. It involves personal priorities, as well as guarding ourselves from contamination from spiritually unhealthy "foods". Going by my friend's comments, it appears that he and I value our time differently. I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's words of advice which he gave to the Church at Ephesus. He wrote:

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
Ephesians 5:16, KJV

It is my firm belief, that being as time is so short, and being as we are the children and the servants of the King, we are each under obligation to the Lord, to use any free time that we may possess, as wisely, as effectively, and as efficiently as possible for His Glory. As the Apostle Paul also informs us:

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
1 Corinthians 10:31, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
2 Corinthians 10:17, KJV

In other words, we each need to make sure that we are wisely following the Biblical counsel, by building our lives upon

the right foundation. That foundation, of course, is none other than Jesus Christ, who the Scriptures inform us is the chief Cornerstone of our worldwide spiritual temple, as we see by the following verses:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 3:11, KJV

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."
1 Peter 2:5-6, KJV

Only by spending our time wisely, building our lives upon this Foundation, and upon His Holy Word, and obeying the mandates of His Word, will we each reap sure and lasting rewards in Heaven. If any of us fail to do this, then we will suffer loss; for as Jesus and the Apostle Paul also tell us:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
Matthew 6:19-21, KJV

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
1 Corinthians 3:14-15, KJV

For these reasons, by God's Grace, I have chosen to dedicate the remainder of my mortal life, to doing the Lord's Work to the best of my ability. I am reminded of the following words which were written by the wise writer of the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes:

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."
Ecclesiastes 9:10, KJV

At this current time, I am convinced that the most important work which the Lord has given me to do is this instructive writing ministry, which I strive to perform on a daily basis. Sometimes my age and health slow me down, but by God's Grace I continue to pump out new and updated material every year, as I have been doing for the past eighteen years. As some of my regular readers will already know, all of my articles are freely available in various formats on the Endtime Prophecy Net website. This ministry is my top priority in life. I take it very seriously; and the majority of my waking hours are dedicated to it. It is a lot of work, but I do it joyfully as unto the Lord.

Perhaps you may be wondering exactly how devoted I am to this writing ministry. Well, it may interest some of you to know that I never go to the movie theater. I do not watch television. I do not listen to the radio, except when there is a power outage and a storm is passing through our area. I never indulge in any kind of time-wasting game such as board games, card games, or the multitude of other silly and quite often evil and violent games which have become so popular in our modern day, particularly with the younger generation.

Furthermore, I never attend any kinds of sports events. Nor do I spend my weekends engaged in the customary routine of sitting relaxed in a lounge chair with a beer in my hand, as I watch football, basketball, baseball, or whatever weekend sport event may be airing. I have not read a book in ages, and most of the reading which I do outside of the KJV Bible -- such as reading the daily news or Wikipedia articles -- is related to online research work for my articles, so that I can write more intelligently. Sometimes I also read other Christian writer's commentaries -- although not often -- or watch YouTube videos which may in some way be related to our Christian faith, Endtime prophecy or other areas of interest.

My social life is nonexistent, as I really do not have time for women and personal relationships. I am simply too busy for the Lord. I am focused on my mission, and I just strive to seek first the Kingdom of God, as the Lord commanded us to do in the following verse:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
Matthew 6:33, KJV

For a more in-depth look at this topic, you may want to read my article entitled "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God".

No doubt, some people who read the previous paragraphs will say to themselves, "Wow, what a boring life you must lead!" To those of you who may possibly think this way, allow me to inform you that my life is anything but boring. However, if you do not possess God's Spirit, it may be difficult for you to understand this. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

While I do live a rather quiet, private life, I also live an exciting life in God's Spirit. I am happy. I feel fulfilled. I believe that I am accomplishing God's current Will for my life. Believe me; it gives me no greater pleasure than to sit here, inspired by God's Spirit, writing these articles which feed, inspire, encourage, convict and motivate God's hungry sheep around the world. It thrills me when the Lord reveals a new mystery to me in His Word through a Scriptural link which I have never seen before. It amazes me, and I am happy when I am able to share it with everyone through my articles!

Please do not think that I am sharing any of these things in

order to condemn anyone. My intention is not to condemn, but rather to convict the hearts of my Christian brethren who may be reading this; and to cause them to stop and consider how wisely they spend their free time. I would like to ask each one of you to honestly ask yourselves these questions:

"How much of my time do I truly dedicate to glorifying and serving the Lord, as opposed to simply satisfying the worldly needs and desires of my flesh? How much time do I waste each day doing things which do not contribute to the furtherance of the Gospel, or to my Eternal Destiny?"

If the previous questions make you feel uneasy and convict your heart, then I have accomplished my purpose; for as the Apostle Paul also wrote:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12, KJV

In like manner, neither are my words intended to impress any of my readers with how righteousness, spiritual or holy I am. Be it far from me to ever make such a proud, foolish boast. I readily admit that just like everyone else, I am an imperfect and lowly sinner who desperately needs the Savior. I have no righteousness of my own. My righteousness only comes through the Blood of Jesus Christ; for as the Apostle Paul wrote:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Romans 3:10, 21-23, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

I will be the first person to confess, that before the Lord sobered me up a number of years ago, I too dedicated a lot of my time to doing foolish and wasteful things which were meaningless and of no value from a spiritual perspective. I was backslidden. I was becoming very worldly. At my place of work, I was trying my best to blend in with all of the other children of the world, by acting and talking just like them. I no longer wanted to be different; I wanted to fit in; but God obviously had other plans for my life; so He began to shake up my comfortable little world.

I look back now, and I can honestly say that I feel ashamed

of some of the things that I said and did back then. I know that I could have been a better Christian example to my boss and coworkers. Even though I have believed in the Lord since I was a young boy, at that particular time in my life several decades ago, I was building upon the wrong foundation. I was in a state of compromise with the world, and acting just like a child of the world.

It may surprise some of you to know that even though a person believes in Jesus Christ, he can still be building upon the wrong foundation. He can still be a part of the world, and he may still be fellowshiping with the children of darkness. As I point out in other articles such as "The Children of Light: Are You One of Us?", God's children are to have no fellowship with the children of the world, and we are not to desire the things of the world as they do. We are the Children of Light; therefore, we must not walk in darkness. These truths become quite evident by the following verses:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
Matthew 6:24, KJV

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
John 15:19, KJV

"And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."
1 Corinthians 7:31, KJV

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."
2 Corinthians 4:18, KJV

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"
2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."
Colossians 3:1-2, KJV

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:"
1 Timothy 6:13-14, KJV

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
2 Timothy 2:4, KJV

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

2 Peter 3:14, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:15-16, KJV

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

1 John 4:4, KJV

"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."

Romans 13:12, KJV

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Ephesians 5:8, 11, KJV

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

Colossians 1:13, KJV

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5, KJV

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

1 Peter 2:9, KJV

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:"

1 John 1:6, KJV

In short, rather than act like the children of the world who walk in spiritual darkness, and who waste so much of their time engaging in foolish, worldly things, we Christians must keep the Heavenly Vision, and we must walk as true Children of Light. That Heavenly Vision is revealed in the following verses:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
Hebrews 11:13-16, KJV

Rather than compromise our lifestyle and blend in with the children of the world, we are supposed to stand out from them as shining lights in this world, and as beacons of truth. But tell me; how can we possibly do that when we spend so much of our time talking just like them, dressing just like them, and doing the same things that they like to do? As I point out in other articles, if we are ashamed of Jesus, if we are so weak in our faith that we are even afraid to let others know that we are the Lord's children, if we are ashamed to stand up and contend for our faith, then He will likewise be ashamed of us at His Coming. Consider the following verses:

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"
Philippians 2:15, KJV

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
Matthew 5:14-16, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
Mark 8:38, KJV

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
Romans 1:16, KJV

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
2 Timothy 1:12, KJV

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,"
Hebrews 2:11, KJV

To add a degree of balance to my previous statements, allow me to say that the Apostle Paul also writes about becoming one with non-believing people, in order that we might have a

better opportunity of winning some of them to Jesus Christ. In other words, sometimes we have to be willing to do a bit of "undercover work" for the Lord. We aren't really becoming a part of them, we are merely giving the appearance of doing so, in order to win their confidence, so that we might gain an opportunity to witness to them. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul discusses this issue in the following verses:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

1 Corinthians 9:19-22, KJV

Unless we are strong Christians who are grounded in the Word, using the "become one" approach can be dangerous. The problem occurs when rather than assimilate ourselves into the world in order to win more souls to Jesus Christ, we do it because we are ashamed of our faith, and because we are backslidden in our hearts. We allow ourselves to be overcome by the world instead of overcoming the world through Christ. Consider the following verses:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

1 John 4:4, KJV

So because of our backslidden condition, we bow to political correctness and peer pressure. We hide our spiritual light under a bushel. We abandon talking about Jesus. We begin to act just like the children of the world, and waste our time on foolish, worldly things, instead of wisely redeeming our time for the Lord's Service. We must not forget that Jesus said that we are in the world, but we are not of the world. Let me share that verse with you again:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

John 15:19, KJV

As I explain in a few other articles, such as "The Children of God and Politics" and "The Fruits of Disobedience", the ancient Israelites made the same foolish mistake. When they backslid from the Lord, they backslid with full abandon. In fact, the Old Testament inform us that they adopted some of the very same wicked practices as the pagan cultures which surrounded them. One way in which the Jews manifested their backslidden condition was by desiring to have a king rule

over them just like the heathen nations, instead of honoring the Lord as their one true King in Heaven. As the Scriptures inform us, God eventually granted them their desire, when He gave them rebellious King Saul.

In fact, the Bible tells us that the children of Israel were so backslidden in heart, that they worshipped the false gods while still in Egypt. Is it any wonder then that Moses had a serious problem with the Golden Calf only a few short months after their liberation from Egyptian bondage? Or is it any wonder that several hundred years after they had wandered in the wilderness for forty years, the children of Israel were still idolizing the serpent of brass called Nehushtan, which Moses had ordered them to make, so that King Hezekiah had it destroyed? Or is it any wonder that when King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem hundreds of years later, some of the Jews fled into Egypt where they once again began to worship the Egyptian gods? Consider the following verses which verify these points:

"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD."

Joshua 24:14, KJV

"And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger."

Judges 2:12, KJV

"And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil."

1 Kings 9:9, KJV

"And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

1 Kings 12:26-28, KJV

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Numbers 21:9, KJV

"He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan."

2 Kings 18:4, KJV

So you see, there is a very big difference between becoming one with non-believers in order to win them to Christ, and being so totally backslidden in our heart, that we act and think and behave just like the children of the world. While we may self-righteously convince ourselves that we no longer worship idols in our modern day, in my view, this is a lie and a devilish deception, which is fostered in part by our own unwillingness to recognize our spiritually-backslidden condition.

The truth of the matter is that anything in our lives which we place before our time with the Lord, and our study of His Word, is an idol. If that football game is more important to you than spending time with the Lord, then it is your idol. If reading that fiction novel is more important to you than studying your Bible, it is your idol. If you prefer cruising around with your friends in your brand new car acting "cool" instead of witnessing to others, that is your idol. If you waste hours of your time downloading porn from the Internet, that is your idol. If you spend hours of your time each day online playing games and engaging in Social Networks, that can be your idol as well. Concerning the latter, it really depends on why you are doing it.

Idols can simply be our uncontrollable addictions. So you see, we may have a lot of idols in our lives which we don't even recognize as such. Those time-wasters which steal our time away from our fellowship with the Lord, and our study of His Word, may very well be our modern Golden Calves.

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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ARE YOU REDEEMING THE TIME? : PART TWO

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Gods Hates The Backslider Yet He Is Merciful, False God Of This World, Resist Satan's Worldly Temptations, Distractions And Being Too Busy, Rich And Unhappy, The Snare And Vanity Of Riches, Temporal Or Eternal Riches, Is It The Lord's Day Or Is It Your Day?, Room For Improvement, Fight To Win Back Your Time, Proper Time Management, Are You Equally Dedicated To The Lord?, Faith Without Works, Vulnerability Of Writing Ministry, My Personal Vision And Goals, Rewarded According To Our Works, Brevity Of Life, Reward Or Shame And Contempt, A Good Story Or The Good Book, Importance Of The Word, Depth Of God's Word, Diligently Study The Word Daily Like Bereans

One thing which the Scriptures make very clear is that while God absolutely abhors -- or detests -- the backslider, at the same time, He will also extend great mercy to such a person, if that person demonstrates true repentance, and amends his ways. In fact, the Lord tells us that He is married to the backslider. Consider the following verses which verify these points:

"And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you."
Leviticus 26:30, KJV

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
2 Peter 2:20-22, KJV

"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself."
Proverbs 14:14, KJV

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:"
Jeremiah 3:14, KJV

"Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return."
Jeremiah 8:5, KJV

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."
John 10:28, KJV

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
John 6:37, KJV

". . . for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
Hebrews 13:5b, KJV

"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."
2 Timothy 2:13, KJV

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."
Lamentations 3:22-23, KJV

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth

that we are dust."
Psalms 103:13-14, KJV

As I pointed out in part one, how we choose to spend our time each day is a clear indication of what we consider to be the most important priorities in our lives. The way we use our time demonstrates if we are truly serving the Lord our God, or the false god of this present world; that is, Satan. As Jesus plainly stated in the Gospel of Matthew, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

What we need to recognize is that all of the enticing Golden Calves which clutter our modern world are devised by Satan himself. That foul fiend purposely offers them to us in the devilish hope that we will succumb to them, waste our time on them, and thus ruin our effectiveness for the Lord. But, we also need to remember that God's Word promises us that the Lord will make a way for us to escape the Devil's carnal temptations, if we let Him. The Lord will give us both the strength and the Grace to resist that demon of darkness. We simply have to yield ourselves to God's Spirit. Consider the following verses:

"And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it."
Luke 4:6, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
1 John 2:15,16, KJV

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
James 4:7, KJV

"Neither give place to the devil."
Ephesians 4:27, KJV

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV

Most of us have our share of pressures in this life. Satan has certainly made sure of that; although to be honest, by some of our own poor decisions, mistakes and compromises, we may have helped to aggravate the situation further. As we have seen, Satan will do everything within his power to keep our minds and hearts distracted from the Lord. His evil goal is to keep us all so busy just working and surviving, and in such a state of mental, emotional and physical turmoil, that

we don't have much time left to even think about the Lord, much less serve Him; and if we do have any time left, Satan will entice us with his recreational Golden Calves, so that we foolishly waste our time, instead of dedicating it to the Lord's Service.

On the other hand, even if one is well-off financially, and is enjoying the so-called "abundant life" as some misguided Christians like to call it, Satan still has that person in a snare and under bondage; because in some cases, due to their own selfish nature, such people are always looking for a way to obtain even more than they already have. Not only that, but they must also worry about paying higher taxes, and they must worry about protecting the assets they already possess, lest someone wiser than them, or perhaps more corrupt than them, steal it from them. In spite of their riches, some of the wealthy class are the saddest and the most unfulfilled people in the world. It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, tells us that such well-to-do people are "pierced through with many sorrows", as we see by these verses:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
1 Timothy 6:6-10, KJV

In the Gospels, Jesus Himself exposed the subtle snare of riches, which can rob a man of his Heavenly Inheritance, when He taught such things as the following:

". . . Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."
Matthew 19:23-24, KJV

". . . Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"
Mark 10:24b, KJV

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
Mark 8:36-37, KJV

In his Epistle, the Apostle James clearly exposes the sins of the wealthy, and explains to us how their very wealth will be a testimony against them, when they someday stand empty-handed before the Judgment Seat of Christ:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have

heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

James 5:1-7, KJV

So you see, the central issue here is how do we manage our lives and our time? Due to our ignorance, selfishness, or perhaps even due to our spiritual laziness, are we laying up temporal treasures upon Earth which will soon vanish away, or are we wisely storing up Eternal Riches in the Kingdom of Heaven? As the Apostle Paul wisely tells us:

"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

1 Timothy 6:7, KJV

Are we foolishly devoting most of our time and energy to the Devil and his worldly enticements, or as wise children of the King, are we redeeming the time, and spending as much of our time as we possibly can with the Master, faithfully studying His Holy Word, and sharing it with others? Yes, being as we are currently still in the world, we have obligations to our families which must be met; and we also have to satisfy the requirements of our boss at work as well. These activities can most certainly be very demanding of our time; yet, the question still remains: What do we do with our remaining time when we do not find ourselves engaged in attending to such responsibilities? Do we indulge in the worthless activities I mentioned earlier, or do we give the Lord His due?

In the Book of Psalms we find the following inspiring verse which I like to quote often. It is an excellent verse to quote in the morning as your day begins:

"This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Psalms 118:24, KJV

As Christians, if we truly believe that each and every day -- and not just Sunday -- belongs to the Lord, isn't it only right and proper that we should dedicate at least a small portion of each day to the Lord, to prayer, and to the study of His Word? Wouldn't this be much more pleasing to Him than our dedication to meaningless books of fiction which do not really feed our souls? Wouldn't the Lord be more honoured by our attempts to reach out to others concerning our faith, than by time wasted watching violent, sex-filled videos, or a football game? Isn't the Lord and His Word more important than going out drinking or playing cards "with the boys"? Isn't our time better spent in communion with Him, than in cruising around town in order to proudly show off our new car? Isn't being filled with His Light through His Word more important than playing "Dungeons And Dragons"? Aren't God's true heavenly visions in the Bible much better than going

out to see the latest "Star Wars" epic which is nothing but silliness and fantasy?

Obviously, I can provide many more examples, but it really comes down to one central question: Whose day is it really? Is it our day, or is it the Lord's day? If it is truly the Lord's day, then why aren't we giving Him at the very least a small portion of it? If we each take the time to honestly examine our personal lifestyle closely, I do not doubt that we will find at least a few areas which require improvement. If Satan is going to fight so hard to steal our time from us, then we must fight even harder to win it back; and one way in which we can do this is by adopting good spiritual habits. We need to guard our free time, and use it wisely; because once this life is past, only what is done for Jesus Christ will truly last.

Proper time management has become an important concept in the modern business world. Over the past several decades, the owners and managers of many companies have become very keen on how their employees spend their time, being as it is directly related to how productive they are for the company profit-wise. Any employee which does not meet a certain level of productivity can easily be dismissed from his job, as many people have sadly found out.

If the children of the world place so much importance on time management, even if their only motivation is to earn more money, shouldn't we as Christians do the same? Should not we be willing to give as much time as possible to our true Employer in Heaven, as we do to our Earthly bosses, or even to our own selfish pleasures? All of these other things are merely time-wasters in which worldly people indulge themselves. Are we of the world, or are we of the Lord? As the old saying goes, let me see how you live your life, and then I will tell you what you believe, and what you consider to be most important; because your life is an open book. As the Apostle James wrote:

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works . . . But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
James 2:17-18, 20, 26, KJV

So then, it is very important that we all take Paul's words very seriously when he tells us "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil". We need to demonstrate our faith through our works -- that is, through our service to the Lord -- and we need to strive to dedicate some part of each day to the Lord, as much as lies within us. We need to watch out for the Devil's temptations and distractions, which are indeed many, as we all know.

Time is indeed short, and the days are truly evil. Regarding this writing ministry, it could come to a complete halt at any moment due to a variety of reasons. If it weren't for the Lord's protection and blessing, and my and your prayers, the Devil could easily have found a way to destroy this ministry at any moment without any advance warning.

It is because I realize these things, that I work so hard to share as much information with you as I can, while there is still time. And believe me, I still have a great quantity of articles which I have already started, which you have never seen before. As I mention in the article "Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?", by God's Grace, I will continue to burn brightly at both ends as long as He will allow me to. I have no intentions on giving up. I plan to stay focused on the task which He has set before me. I hope to run the rest of the race to the finish line. I hope to redeem the time, and to spend the rest of my life wisely in service to Him and others.

What about you? Are you doing the same; or will you someday stand before the Lord empty-handed? Will all of your works be burned because you devoted your time on Earth foolishly building upon the wrong foundation? Our works in this life will surely follow us to the Judgement Seat of Christ, and then He will determine which ones were truly done for Him, and which ones were only done for ourselves. Consider the following verses:

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
2 Corinthians 5:10, KJV

"If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"
Proverbs 24:12, KJV

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."
Matthew 16:27, KJV

". . . I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."
Revelation 2:23b, KJV

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
Revelation 14:13, KJV

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."
Revelation 20:12-13, KJV

As the Apostle Paul also informs us in his Epistle to the Romans, now is the time to awake out of sleep, and to begin doing our works for the Lord, because the imminent Day of our Salvation, and our graduation into the Next Life, may be

much nearer than we think. Consider the following verses:

"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."
Romans 13:11, KJV

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."
James 4:14, KJV

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"
Hebrews 9:27, KJV

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"
Luke 12:20, KJV

So as you can plainly see, even if Jesus were not to return for another twenty or fifty years, that does not necessarily mean that you personally have that long. You could be dead tomorrow due to an illness, or an accident, or due to any number of unforeseen reasons. God forbid that such a thing should happen to you; but if it were to occur, would you be forced to shamefully look back at all of the precious time you wasted doing foolish things in your life which would ultimately have a negative effect on your Eternal Destiny, such as reading fictitious novels simply because they have a good storyline? The choice is really up to you. I'm reminded of the following verse that is found in the Book of Daniel:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."
Daniel 12:2, KJV

Personally, rather than waste my time reading a fictitious novel -- no matter how good it may be -- I prefer to read the Good News in the Good Book; and I prefer to share the Good News -- that is, the Gospel -- with those people who need to hear it. As the Apostle Paul wrote, I prefer to set my mind and heart on things above, in the Heavenly Realm, and not on the things of this Earth, particularly when such things are not even true.

As you may know, Jesus said that the Words that He speaks to us are Spirit, and they are Life; and He also said that it is only His Word which washes us clean. Can the same be said of worldly books and novels which are written by men who do not even possess the Spirit of God? The Apostle Paul reminds us to think on the things which are true, honest and pure. King David also informs us that God magnifies -- or esteems -- His Word above His name. Should we not do likewise by spending our time wisely reading and studying it diligently, instead of wasting our time reading the fictitious and often erroneous works of worldly men? The Apostle Paul, in fact, warns us against such things. Consider the following verses:

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth

nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

John 6:63, KJV

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

John 15:3, KJV

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8, KJV

"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

Psalms 138:2, KJV

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Colossians 2:8, KJV

That certainly leaves out fictitious novels which are of no real spiritual value. In conclusion, there is so much to be learned from God's Holy Word, that I don't believe that any of us can truly grasp it all in one lifetime. I have been studying the Scriptures for over forty years now, and I still don't fully comprehend them; and I probably never will until the day that I go to be with the Lord, and perhaps not even then. I am reminded of these verses:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."

Job 9:10, KJV

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Romans 11:33, KJV

In the meantime, similar to the Bereans of the Book of Acts, I will continue to search the Scriptures daily, and to study to show myself approved unto God, so that I will not be ashamed. I will continue to hide the Lord's Word in my heart, because "You are what you eat"; and this principle applies to our lives spiritually, as well as physically. Please consider the wisdom that is found in these final verses:

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether

those things were so."
Acts 17:10-11, KJV

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
Psalms 119:11, KJV

I truly hope that you are redeeming the time wisely, and that your spiritual diet is a healthy one. I pray that this article has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life.

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