



## The Epistle to the Romans

### Lesson Number 42



**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version; NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes and Identification -----

# PUTTING ON CHRIST

13:11 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. <sup>NKJV</sup> (Romans 13:11-14)

## INTRODUCTION

Justification by faith is not a cold and calculating doctrine. **It is not possible for a Living God to issue a lifeless doctrine, intended only for the intellect, and having no impact upon practical life.** The thought of such a possibility must be thrust from us as poison that will anaesthetize the soul. Neither, indeed, is justification by faith, or the imputation of righteousness, to be viewed as a subject for theologians, or those with specialized academic credentials. This is not a doctrine for the “doctors of the law” (Lk 5:17), although it is often so viewed.

This section of Romans (chapters 12-

16) is **the logical exposition of the effects of justification.** The imputation of righteousness is declared to have a calculated impact upon the way we live, as well as upon our attitudes.

### JUSTIFICATION – THE THEME

Justification, or the imputation of righteousness, is the theme of the book of Romans. Justification involves the remission of sin as well as the imputation of righteousness. These are the two means whereby salvation is made effectual. Remission is in order that the righteousness of God may be imputed, or credited, to us. Ponder the undeniable

emphasis on this matter. The use of the following words in the book of Romans, confirm this to be the case.

- ‘ “Justify” (3:30).
- ‘ “Justified” (2:13; 3:4,20,24,28; 4:2; 5:1,9; 8:30).
- ‘ “Justification” (4:25; 5:16,18).
- ‘ “Justifier” (3:26).
- ‘ “Justifieth” (4:5; 8:33).
- ‘ “Righteous” (2:5; 3:10; 5:7,19).
- ‘ “Righteousness” (1:17; 2:26; 3:5,21,22, 25, 26; 4:3,5,6,9,11,13,22; 5:17,18,21; 6:13,16,18,19,20; 8:4,10; 9:28,30,31; 10:3,4,5,6,10; 14:17).
- ‘ “Impute” (4:6).

*The nature of spiritual life, and the environment in which we live, demand that we put on Christ.--by Given O. Blakely*

## OUTLINE

- < KNOWING THE TIME (13:11a)
- < HIGH TIME TO AWAKE (13:11b)
- < OUR SALVATION IS NEARER (13:11c)
- < THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT (13:12a)
- < THE DAY IS AT HAND (13:12b)
- < CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS (13:12c)
- < OUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT (13:12d)
- < WALK PROPERLY (13:13)
- < PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (13:14a)
- < MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH (13:14b)

- ' "Imputed" (4:11,22,23,24; 5:13).
- ' "Imputeth" (4:6).

### ERRONEOUS TEACHING

Some of the phrases used in Romans are unusually strong, driving home the point that our righteousness depends upon Divine intervention.

- ' "His faith **is counted** for righteousness" (4:5)
- ' "**God imputeth** righteousness without works" (4:6).
- ' "**Faith reckoned** to Abraham for righteousness" (4:9).
- ' "The righteousness **of faith**" (4:11,13).
- ' "It was **imputed to him** for righteousness" (4:22).
- ' "The **gift** of righteousness" (5:17).
- ' "By the obedience of One shall many be **made righteous**" (5:19).
- ' "The righteousness which is **of faith**" (10:6).
- ' "Man **believeth unto** righteousness" (10:10).

These, and similar, phrases have led some to believe there is little or no involvement of the individual in justification. Thus doctrines such as "once in grace always in grace," or "eternal security," have arisen to the confusion of many. Since, it is reasoned, God makes us righteous, and that righteousness is based

upon our faith in Christ, it is not possible for our works to interfere with the culmination of salvation. The fact that God begins salvation is considered to be proof enough that He will finish it, whether He has the cooperation of the one being saved or not. This is a completely erroneous view of the situation. It wholly misrepresents God, Christ, the grace of God, and salvation.

### JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH

Justification is "by faith," and the justified ones "shall live by faith," and "stand by faith" (1:17; 3:22,28,30; 5:1,2; 9:32; 11:20). Remove faith from the equation, and there is no justification. What is more, even though faith comes from God (Eph 6:23), it becomes active in the one receiving it. They are the ones who believe. They are the ones who trust. God gives them faith, but does not believe for them. The life that is given to us in justification is maintained by faith, for "the just shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38).

### Faith Is Never Taken for Granted

This is not an incidental matter. Faith is never taken for granted in the believer. There is a fight associated with keeping the faith. We are admonished, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim 6:12). Rather than faith being automatic, those who believe are reminded, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb 10:38). They are also admonished, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12).

Men have made "shipwreck" of faith, putting away a good conscience (1 Tim 1:19). Jesus spoke of those who "for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Lk 8:13). The Holy Spirit "expressly" spoke of some who "shall depart from the faith" (1 Tim 4:1).

Faith, which is the appointed means through which grace comes to us (Eph 2:8), is not to be taken for granted. We are to "continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22), be "established in the faith" (Acts 16:5), and "stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor 16:13). We who are in Christ are admonished, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith"

<sup>NASB</sup> (2 Cor 13:5). Categorically we are told we will be presented to the Lord "holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: **IF** ye continue in the faith grounded and settled" (Col 1:23). The only way to overcome the devil is to resist him by being "steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet 5:8-9).

### Faith Is Not Passive

Faith is never represented as a passive possession, maintained without any effort on the part of the one possessing it. Faith is much like a tender living treasure. It must be cared for with diligence. It must be fed, nourished, and caused to grow and increase. If this does not happen, faith will die. It cannot exist without nourishment, but "lives by every word of God" (Lk 4:4). This is the appointed means through which the child of God is justified and sustained. It simply is not possible to be cleared from guilt and receive God's righteousness apart from faith. Neither can those conditions be maintained apart from faith. **What you have from God, you have by your faith.** Thus it is written, "The just shall LIVE by faith" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). Habakkuk says the just one lives by "HIS faith" (Hab 2:14).

Salvation is always promised to those who are believing, and never to those who are not believing. There is such a consistency in this throughout Scripture that it requires obstinance and spiritual blindness to fail to perceive it.

### THE RELEVANCE OF THIS

All of this is germane to the exposition of this passage. **The exhortation that is placed before us is a summons to holy involvement in matter of our own justification.** That involvement is not the basis, or foundation, of our acceptance. It is, however, the outworking of it. It provides us with evidence that what we profess is true.

The point being made in the latter chapters of Romans is this: **justification from all things and the imputation of righteousness have an effect upon the believer.** Spiritual life has certain characteristics. Being "made righteous" is not a mere technicality where we remain fundamentally the same, yet are accepted by God anyway.

There is an alarming prevalence of this kind of thinking in the professed

*Christian* world. There is a general perception that *Christians* are basically like all other men, except they are forgiven. In fact, the statement is often made, "Christians are sinners, but they are forgiven." Others are wont to draw frequent parallels between those in Christ and the wayward Israelites. Still others compare those in Christ with the pre-Pentecostal disciples, who often were rebuked for their unbelief and obtuseness.

Because of the general deadness of the professed church, these views are taught and received as though they were true. Such persuasions deny the reality of the "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17), being "begotten again" (1 Pet 1:3), and receiving a "new heart" and "new spirit" (Ezek 36:26). They deny we have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom" of God's "dear Son" (Col 1:13). These erroneous views contradict the proclamation that a fundamental change occurs in those who are justified, and to whom the righteousness of God is imputed.

There is a process going on within the believer. He is being changed "from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of our God" (2 Cor 3:18). By means of God's "exceeding great and precious promises," we are participating in the "Divine

*nature*" (2 Pet 1:4). To liken those involved in such a transformation to the stiff-necked Israelites is a betrayal of gross ignorance and thoughtlessness. In the context of such fallacious views, doctrines such as eternal security flourish. However, such views cannot be espoused when consciously standing before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will vanish like scum in the brightness of His glory. One

and awake from spiritual sleep. The Spirit will call us to consider the nearness of the culmination of our salvation. All of this is utterly superfluous if there is no lurking danger. If it is not possible for us to draw back from God, warnings are absolutely out of order.

Our text calls for the greatest sobriety and honesty on our part. Yet, faith will

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must be aloof from Jesus to espouse them. Faith will not allow such views to be embraced or proclaimed. They are products of unbelief.

#### TOO DIFFICULT

Is such a view too difficult to receive? Does it appear too harsh? If anything, it is understated. Our text will confirm this to be the case. We will be warned, admonished, and urged to more thorough involvement with God. We will be asked to uproot our affections from this world,

flood the heart with confidence while we are in the process of giving heed to the words of the Spirit. **Faith is not intimidated by the demands of the Lord, for it knows Divine strength will undergird all conscientious effort to please Him.** In fact, faith longs to hear what the Lord requires, for it has a longing to please Him and be with Him. It abhors all that competes with God. Faith cries out, "What do You want me to do?" It cries our heartily, with sincerity, and with a readiness to obey.

## KNOW THE TIME

<sup>13:11a</sup> **And do this, knowing the time . . .** "In Christ, the performance of duty is elevated. Under the Law, the reasonableness of obedience was not clearly seen. There were great temporal blessings held out to the people, as well as dreadful curses in the world (Deut 28:1-68). But this is not the manner of life in the Son! Within the framework of the New Covenant God does not call upon us to follow Him in order to temporal benefits. Search the Scriptures and see if this is not the case. When Jesus spoke to the seven churches of Asia, He held before them benefits that extended beyond "this present evil world" (Rev 2-3).

' "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (2:7).  
' "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (2:11).  
' "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (3:17).  
' "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (2:26-28).  
' "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of

the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (3:5).  
' "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (3:12).  
' "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (3:21).  
' "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (21:7).

Tell me, you that know the glory of the New Covenant, how do those promises compare with those of Deuteronomy 28?

Are they not of another and superior order? Do they not have a stronger pull upon your heart?

Already, the twelfth chapter of Romans has mentioned the reasonableness of giving our bodies as a *“living sacrifice unto God.”* Now, the Spirit will continue that same approach to living in a godly manner. He will not hold the wrath of God before us as a primary incentive. Nor, indeed, will He promise us that all will be well with us if we knuckle down and keep the commandments of God. Rather, He gently elevates us into the heavenlies, showing us the utter insanity of being ungodly. For those with *“the mind of Christ”* (1 Cor 2:16), this is the strongest way to move us to a life that honors God and prepares us to stand before Him with joy.

**DO THIS**

*“And do this . . . .”* Other versions read, *“And that,”* <sup>KJV</sup> *“And this do,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“Besides this,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> and *“This also.”* <sup>DARBY</sup> What is it that is to be done? As exceedingly practical as it may appear, this refers first to the exhortation in verses seven and eight. *“Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”* Second, it refers to the admonition that will follow in verses twelve through fourteen.

The Spirit does not say *“Try and do this,”* or *“Do your best to do this.”* His words and like piercing arrows that provide us no alternative. **“DO this!”** Valid obedience is always preceded by determination – godly determination. When the convicted sinners on Pentecost cried out, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* they were ready to respond. The only thing they lacked was direction, and that was provided to them (Acts 2:37-38). When the Philippian jailor cried out, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* he was ready to DO whatever was required of him. **Resolution and determination are twins that must visit the heart before true obedience can be**

**rendered to God.**

Here is an area in which the contemporary church could improve: a determination to do what the Lord commands. This is an attitude that responds like Abraham to the angel of God: *“Here am I”* (Gen 22:11). This is the same response Moses had when the Lord called to him from the middle of the burning bush: *“Here am I!”* The idea is, *“Here I am, ready to listen to your voice, and ready to do what you command!”*

It is the attitude conveyed in Eli’s instruction to young Samuel, who did not yet know the Lord. When the Lord called to Samuel, Eli instructed him to respond, *“Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth”* (1 Sam 3:9). Samuel was to listen with a

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mind to yield to whatever direction was given to him.

This is the same spirit Isaiah had when he saw the Lord *“sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.”* When a sense of forgiveness had gripped his heart, he heard the Godhead talking among themselves: *“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* At once Isaiah spoke up: *“Here am I; send me”* (Isa 6:1-8).

That is the kind of spirit that is reflected in this words, **“This DO!”** Such an attitude was exceedingly rare prior to Jesus Christ. There were a few notables who were noted for their response to God: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, the holy Prophets,

and a few others. But this was not at all common.

In Christ, however, this posture of soul is assumed. The Spirit speaks as though there was a readiness on the part of believers to obey God. He appeals to the *“inward parts,”* where God desires that truth be found (Psa 51:6). He speaks to the *“inner man”* (Eph 3:16), the *“new man”* (Col 3:10), and the *“new creation”* (2 Cor 5:17). When we are moved by this part of our being, we always do what is right, for the Holy Spirit is granting strength to the inner man.

Now, the Spirit will show us how reasonable it is to love our neighbor as ourselves. He will show us that this is much more than *“the second”* greatest commandment. This is how new life from God lives in this world. He will also show us WHY new life responds in this manner.

**KNOWING THE TIME**

*“. . . knowing the time.”* Other versions read, *“understanding the present time,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“you know what time it is,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> *“you know what hour it is,”* <sup>RSV</sup> *“knowing the season,”* <sup>ASV</sup> *“you know how late it is,”* <sup>NLT</sup> and *“you know the time has come.”* <sup>NJB</sup>

You can see from these various renderings of the text that a certain awareness is taken for granted. He does not say you OUGHT to know the time, but that we know, or are aware, of it. From the standpoint of a **segment of history**, it is *“the time.”* Seen as an **appropriate period**, when certain benefits can be reaped by the soul, it is *“the season.”* Viewed as a **time we must not allow to pass us by**, it is *“the hour.”* Considered as a **Divine appointment**, *“the time has come.”*

**God Is Associated with Times**

Throughout history, God has hinged His dealings with men upon appropriate times, or periods. There came a time for Noah to build an ark (Heb 11:7). There also came a time when he had to enter into the ark (Gen 7:1). The time came when Abraham had to leave Ur, and begin a journey to the promised land (Gen 12:1-

3). A time arrived when Moses had to confront Pharaoh, demanding that he release the people of God (Ex 7:1-2). The time came when the Israelites had to leave Egypt (Ex 12:51). Again, the time came when they were to enter into Canaan (Josh 1:2). In God's time, the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist, came on the scene (John 1:6-7). In "the fulness of time," Jesus was "made of a woman, made under the Law" (Gal 4:4). Even the day of Pentecost is said to have "fully come" (Acts 2:1). A time has been appointed when the Lord will return (Matt 24:36). The day of judgment is set for a certain time (Acts 17:31). God has always worked within "times" and "seasons" which are in His power, and are

as "men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron 12:32). By way of contrast, Jesus rebuked His generation for being ignorant of "the times." "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but **can ye not discern the signs of the times?**" (Matt 16:2-3).

When Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3), there were those who, cognizant of the times, "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38). There were others who were "in a state of

God does not precede epochs with indicators that can be read by sensitive hearts. This word, however, did not come from God, and is at variance with the entire revelation of God. Daniel "understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." He was able to decipher the times, and thus set his "face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (Dan 9:1-2). The book of Hebrews was written to a people who were informed sufficient time has elapsed for them to have grown up in Christ and obtain mature understanding (Heb 5:21). Peter reminded the saints, "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet 4:17).

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The Spirit of God will now call us into account for knowing the time in which we are living. We are to be able to assess where we are, and how to respond appropriately to things confronting us, knowing the Lord is in them. It is not acceptable to remain ignorant of the Divinely orchestrated circumstances that surround us.

used at His discretion (Acts 1:7).

However, the point of our text is KNOWING the time: i.e., being aware of the period in which we are living. The men of Issachar distinguished themselves

expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ" <sup>NASB</sup> (Lk 3:15). They sensed the times!

Some have been taught that we can have no real knowledge of the times – that

If God is driven by His own agenda, it is certainly out of order for us to be motivated by the temporal agendas of this world, whether they be our own, or those established by our peers.

## HIGH TIME TO AWAKE

<sup>43:11b</sup> . . . **that now it is high time to awake out of sleep . . .** "See what a sense of urgency attends this text! It has a spirit that calls for our attention. The Word of the Living God not only contains facts, it also has a spirit or tone. If you will hear it in an acceptable manner, the WAY God speaks will call for your immediate attention. Too often this perspective is missing in professed Christian circles. There is altogether too much casualness in the average church. **Judging from the manner in which preachers preach, teachers teach, and listeners listen, you would conclude nothing of any**

**consequence is imminent.** It appears as though men think they have a lot of time – time to correct any flaws, time to make more plans, and time to do their own will. But this may not be the case at all, and woe to the person who proceeds in life as though such a view was true.

### NOW

" . . . now . . . " One of the particular benefits of faith and spiritual understanding is that they put God in the "NOW." Response to God is associated with "now." Obedience is connected to "now." The time to serve God becomes "now." There are things available to us

"now" that have not always been known.

- ' **"Now"** we know why the Law was given (Rom 3:19).
- ' **"Now"** the righteous of God is made known "without the Law" (Rom 3:21).
- ' **"Now"** we are justified (Rom 5:9).
- ' **"Now"** we have "received the atonement" (Rom 5:11).
- ' **"Now"** is the time to "yield" our capacities to the Lord (Rom 6:19).
- ' **"Now"** we are "ashamed" of our former way of living (Rom 6:21).
- ' **"Now"** we are "free from sin" (Rom 6:22).
- ' **"Now"** we are "delivered from the

Law” (Rom 7:6).

- ‘ **“Now”** there is *“no condemnation”* to those who are in Christ (Rom 8:1).
- ‘ **“Now”** the God of all peace can fill us with *“all joy and peace in believing”* (Rom 15:13).
- ‘ **“Now”** the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world has been *“manifested”* (Rom 16:26).
- ‘ **“Now”** we have received *“the Spirit that is from God”* (1 Cor 2:12).
- ‘ **“Now”** we no longer *“know Christ after the flesh”* (2 Cor 5:16).
- ‘ **“Now”** is the *“acceptable time,”* when God is receiving us (2 Cor 6:2a).
- ‘ **“Now”** is the *“day of salvation,”* when deliverance can be realized (2 Cor 6:2b).
- ‘ **“Now”** in Christ Jesus we have been *“made nigh”* (Eph 2:13).
- ‘ **“Now”** we are *“fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God”* (Eph 2:19).
- ‘ **“Now”** we are *“light in the Lord”* (Eph 5:8).
- ‘ **“Now”** we are *“the sons of God”* (1 John 3:2).

It should be apparent to us that faith makes God and the things of God **contemporary** – NOW! While faith does reach back to the death of Christ and His resurrection, **its power is found in the “NOW,” not the then!** Faith brings the *“wonderful works of God”* from the past into the present, making them vibrant to our souls, and imparting resources to us. Men may speak of “historic faith,” but God does not. Faith cannot live in the past. It lives in the present, with the future in view.

Our text reads **“NOW.”** It demands immediate attention. It assumes there is an awareness that must both dominate and motivate us. The word *“now”* will not let us sit down, but moves us forward to action. It denotes urgency and immediacy.

### HIGH TIME

*“ . . . it is high time.”* Other versions read, *“it is already the hour,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“The hour has come for you,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“it is now the moment,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“it is full time now,”*<sup>RSV</sup> *“it is already time,”*<sup>DARBY</sup> , and *“time is running out.”*<sup>NLT</sup>

The words translated *“high time”*<sup>KJV</sup> come from the Greek word, ὥρα, which

means “the moment, instant, occasion, or hour of the day.” We often use the expression in this manner. When a favorable reaction is finally realized, we will say, “Well it is high time . . .”

The obvious meaning is that this is the time to do what is admonished. For the last 2,000 years, believers have heard these words, urging them to immediate and resolute action. If it was *“high time,”* or precisely the right moment, for the Roman believers in the first century, it is even more so for us. The Spirit will make that very point in the next phrase.

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What we are now urged to do is critical. There is no guarantee that we will have another opportunity to do what is exhorted. Right now, when we hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, is the appropriate time to react to the word of the King. If this is true, and our text affirms this is the case, then to fail to do what is urged is wrong, and cannot be justified. These are matters concerning which no delay is in order.

If we are going to love our neighbors as ourselves, this is the time to do it. If we are going to render to every person their due, this is the time to do it. If we are going to love one another, this is the time to do it. There will not be a better time than right now! You see with what urgency the Spirit speaks. He makes no allowance for slothfulness.

### AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP

*“ . . . to awake out of sleep.”* Other versions read, *“to wake up from your slumber,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“to rise from sleep,”*<sup>DRA</sup> *“be aroused out of sleep,”*<sup>YLT</sup> and *“stop sleeping and wake up.”*<sup>NJB</sup>

I do not understand this to be *“the sleep of death”* that characterizes those

who are alienated from God (Psa 13:3), although it can lead to that if not arrested. Rather, **this is the sleep of indifference that can settle upon the people of God** – a sort of spiritual drowsiness in which the soul becomes insensitive to God and unaware of His will, or even of impending judgment. This frame of mind is a constant liability.

Like a mighty clap of thunder, the Spirit shouts to lethargic churches, *“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light”* (Eph 5:14). The context of the exhortation

to the Ephesians is much the same as it is in Romans. In our text, our conduct in society is considered, and the necessity of living for God’s glory in every association with mankind. In Ephesians the Spirit follows the exhortation to wake up with these words, *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil”* (Eph 5:15-16).

**Those who conduct their lives in purely self-interest, and with no regard for the glory of God, are asleep!** They must awaken, for they are sinking into a pit from which they might not be able to recover. The seriousness of such a condition cannot be overstated.

*“Sleep”* is a Scriptural word denoting the antonym of *“sober.”* *“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober”* (1 Thess 5:6). Those who are *“asleep”* are conducting their lives as though God had guaranteed they will live for many more years. As a result, they have become insensitive to His direction. They also are no longer aware of the advances of the wicked one. Such must be awakened from their slumber, else they will fall into *“the sleep of death.”*

## OUR SALVATION IS NEARER!

<sup>13:11c</sup> . . . **for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.**"

Here the Spirit confirms why slumbering souls are in such danger. Something is fast approaching that requires our readiness. This is no time to be lacking in spiritual alertness and awareness!

### NOW

There are approaches to *Christianity* that tend to lull the soul into a state of complacency.

At one extreme, a strictly **historical view** of the faith can be embraced. In this

words of Jesus. *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matt 10:28).

Amidst these varying emphases, the Spirit fairly shouts to us, **"NOW!"** He is calling us to a consideration of where we stand in relation to Divine appointments. He is making a strong appeal to our hearts. Those who correctly assess the **"now"** have learned from the past. **They know what God has accomplished for them in the past, and their faith**

**pulls those realities into the "now," making them relevant, profitable, and precious to the soul. Living in the power of the "now" factor, also reaches forward to things God has appointed for the future, bringing them into current consideration.**

Thus the soul is moved to live in the prospect of the future because of the effective work of God in the past. **Those living in the "now" build upon the past and prepare for the future.**

### OUR SALVATION

Here, the word *"salvation"* is used in the fullest sense. It presumes the individual is presently enjoying the *"firstfruits of the Spirit"* (Rom 8:23), is being *"changed from glory unto glory"* (2 Cor 3:18), and is waiting for God's Son to return from heaven (1 Thess 1:9).

While those so characterized are in the process of being conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom 8:29), the process is far from being complete. The most immediate proof of this is our body. Because it remains under the curse of death, it is called a *"vile body"* (Phil 3:21), and *"the body of this death"* (Rom 7:24). Because

salvation includes the reclamation and renewal of the body, we are said to be *"waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"* (Rom 8:24). That redemption is not experienced in healing, for a healed body is still a *"vile"* one, and still must die. This *"redemption"* will occur at the resurrection of the dead, when we will *"we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is"* (1 John 3:2).

Salvation is frequently viewed from this perspective – namely, to be completed in the future.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians telling them his afflictions and distress were actually for their salvation – even though they were already in Christ. *"Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation"* (2 Cor 1:6).

One of the pieces of our protective armor is the prospect of being saved. *"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thess 5:8-9).

Paul's ministry was with a view to the people of God obtaining salvation. *"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"* (2 Tim 2:10).

The holy angels minister to "those who will **inherit salvation**" (Heb 1:13-14). God has begotten us again to a living hope, *"to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"* (1 Pet 1:3-5).

Currently, we are being *"saved"* by Christ's life, in which He ever lives to make intercession for us (Rom 5:10; Heb 7:25).

Believers will yet stand before the

**While those so characterized are in the process of being conformed to the image of God's Son, the process is far from being complete. The most immediate proof of this is our body. Because it remains under the curse of death, it is called a "vile body," and "the body of this death."**

perspective, the emphasis is placed upon "2,000 years ago." This approach demands, and vaunts, theological positions above faith, and tends to a legalistic approach to the church at its responsibilities.

At the other extreme, souls are led to major on, what they call, "prophesy." In this case, little is learned from the past, the present is relatively unimportant, and what is coming becomes the emphasis. This approach depersonalizes religion, and encourages a view of prophesy that is confined to temporal things. Men become more afraid of coming temporal judgments or a tyrannical global ruler, that they are of being cast into hell. Their minds are thus drawn away from the

judgment seat of Christ, to give an account for their deeds, whether they are good or bad. In prospect of that time, the Spirit declares, *“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire”* (1 Cor 3:15).

There is such a thing as being **“saved in the day of the Lord”** (1 Cor 5:5).

“Our salvation” is complete from the standpoint of provision and Divine determination. It is, however, in the process of being brought to completion in us. We are not in heaven yet, and ought not allow thoughts to take hold of our minds that approach life as though we were. Here, “our salvation” speaks of the absence of all conflict and deficiency, and the appropriation of the inheritance that is presently “reserved in heaven” for us (1 Pet 1:4).

It is most unfortunate that this perspective is rarely emphasized in the modern pulpit. In fact, “salvation” itself is rarely mentioned among believers, except in relation to those who are lost, or “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1-3). However, “salvation” is a principle subject in the Spirit’s words to the churches. The day in which we are living is “the day of salvation.” This is more than the time sinners can be saved. Salvation also includes the nourishment, or succor, of the saints. As it is written, *“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (1 Cor 6:1-2).

As already indicated, “salvation” is also viewed from the standpoint of its culmination, or completion. This is when we will receive our new bodies, currently kept “in heaven” for us (2 Cor 5:1-5). It is also the time when we will be divested of all deficiencies and removed from all conflict. The “salvation” that is “nearer” is salvation in its completeness.

**NEARER**

“ . . . now our salvation is nearer.” Other versions read, “our salvation is nearer now,”<sup>NIV</sup> “For salvation is nearer to us now,”<sup>NRSV</sup> and “for the coming of our salvation is nearer now.”<sup>NLT</sup>

The way in which the Spirit has chosen to say this is most edifying. He might well have said the following, all of which are true.

**“Our salvation” is complete from the standpoint of provision and Divine determination. It is, however, in the process of being brought to completion in us. We are not in heaven yet, and ought not allow thoughts to take hold of our minds that approach life as though we were.**

- ‘ Our race is almost completed.
- ‘ The good fight of faith will soon end.
- ‘ The devil’s time is running out.
- ‘ Our troubles will soon be over.
- ‘ The wicked will soon cease from troubling us.
- ‘ The time is nearing when we will no more have another law within our members, warring against the law of our mind.
- ‘ Soon we will cease to wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- ‘ The time of testing will soon end.
- ‘ The time of temptation is fast coming to a close.
- ‘ Soon we will no longer have this treasure in an earthen vessel.
- ‘ It will not be long and we will no longer see through a glass darkly.
- ‘ The time is approaching when we will not know in part.
- ‘ Persecutions will soon come to an end.

All of these are true, and are blessed to consider. But that is not the perspective of this text. It is not what is coming to an end, but what is up ahead that is the focus

of this passage. **“Our salvation” accentuates what God has determined we will appropriate. This is the destiny to which we are appointed in Christ Jesus.** Among other things, this includes the following.

- ‘ We will be conformed to the image of God’s Son (Rom 8:29).
- ‘ We will be like Christ (1 John 3:2).
- ‘ We will shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father (Matt 13:43).
- ‘ We will judge the world (1 Cor 6:2).
- ‘ We will judge angels (1 Cor 6:3).
- ‘ We will reign with Jesus (2 Tim 2:12).
- ‘ We will experience “glorious liberty” (Rom 8:21).
- ‘ We will be changed, putting on an incorruptible body (1 Cor 15:52).

**These are only introductory to the magnitude of what is drawing closer and closer to the people of God!** The time is fast approaching when *“the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever”* (Dan 7:18). From our point of view, we are rapidly moving toward the glorious inheritance to which we have been appointed. From the heavenly point of view, the time is fast approaching when the Lamb will be presented with His spotless bride.

These words lack significance to the person enslaved to academics. They seem too apparent to such an one. Of course time is progressing toward a Divinely appointed role! “Why,” the intellect reasons, “is it necessary to remind us of something so obvious?” But here is where the absolute inferiority of a cerebral approach to the faith becomes apparent. It may very well appear that it is obvious the day of “our salvation” is “nearer.” **But it is not at all obvious! That is precisely why this statement is made!** If it was conspicuous, or apparent, there would be no need to “awake out of sleep!” Exhortations to sobriety and vigilance would be pointless if everyone was living in an awareness of the

approaching apogee of “our salvation.”

**Time and circumstance tend to throw a veil over this truth, so that it is not clearly seen.** Scarcely an hour will pass without the reality of a fast approaching new heavens and new earth beginning to fade from our view. The “cares of this world” aggressively attempt to “choke the word” (Mark 4:18). Trouble stirs up a dust storm in an attempt to obscure the coming glory. **We are not in a moral vacuum!** Rather, we are in a fiercely competitive arena of conflict. All of this is used by Satan to pull us off the wall of Divine appointment into the valley of the “here and now.” Many a soul, deluded by the wicked one, has forgotten what is coming for the righteous, as well as what is closing in upon the wicked.

This is why we must hear these words spoken often and with power: “for now is our salvation nearer!” We are progressing toward the objective of our hope, and that objective is quickly moving toward us.

**This is not the language of time, and ought not to be so viewed. A salvation that is rooted in eternity cannot be opened up to us within an overriding consideration of time.** This is language for the heart, and is to be comprehended by faith. It may appear as though time and circumstance are dominating, and that we are slaves to both. But that is not the case: “for now is our salvation nearer!”

It is “nearer” because God has been working His salvation in the earth! Everything is progressing to His appointed conclusion. It is “nearer” because we are making advancement in the Spirit, being changed “from glory unto glory” (2 Cor 3:18). We are closer to what we will be! The inheritance God has appointed for us is drawing closer to us. What a blessed consideration! Hope thrives on such a circumstance, while faith makes us more determined to obtain the prize that awaits us.

**FIRST BELIEVED**

“ . . . than when we first believed.” Other versions read, “than when we believed,”<sup>KJV,NASB</sup> “than when we became believers,”<sup>NRSV</sup> and “than when we first began to believe.”<sup>NJB</sup>

**A Line of Demarcation**

The time “when we first believed” is the line of demarcation between condemnation and justification. It is when we passed from darkness to light, death to life, and the power of darkness into the

**Trouble stirs up a dust storm in an attempt to obscure the coming glory. We are not in a moral vacuum! Rather, we are in a fiercely competitive arena of conflict. All of this is used by Satan to pull us off the wall of Divine appointment into the valley of the “here and now.”**

kingdom of God’s dear Son. This is the language of the Spirit, and we should not be ashamed to use it. Churchmen are fond of asking when we were “saved,” or “born again,” or become a “member of the church.” It is certainly not that any of these are unlawful. However, there remains an unfortunate suspicion among institutionalized Christians that believing somehow falls short of what is required to save a person.

The point at which we believed was the point when Jesus gave us “power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). That believing is what compelled us to obey the Lord, and the Holy Spirit enabled us to follow through by obeying the truth we believed (1 Pet 1:22).

**Primarily WHOM We Believe**

Further, when we “first believed” does not accentuate WHAT we believed, but WHOM we believed. As it is written, “I know whom I have believed” (2 Tim 1:12). Believing the Gospel is thus described in

these words. “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thess 2:13). The Word of God, which is the “Seed of the kingdom” (Luke 8:11), begins to work in men when they believe it is, in truth, God’s own Word!

**A Modern Day Misconception**

Often, those who wear the name of Christ associate fervency, sincerity, and progress, with when men “first believe.” It is not unusual to find zealous believers to be the youngest, or most recent, ones. It is generally thought that spiritual zeal abates with age. But this is a total misconception. From the perspective of our text, this would mean the new believer would be more keenly aware of the fast-approaching salvation than others. They would tend to live with more of an awareness of Divine appointments than others. And, indeed, this does appear to be the norm in the average church.

This is, however, a fleshly “norm,” not a spiritual one. It is a total misrepresentation of the case. Faith causes the individual to **increase** in a longing for, and anticipation of, the fulness of salvation and the fruition of hope. **There is nothing about salvation itself, or the effects of it, that diminishes, lessens, or erodes.** The “glory” into which we are being “changed” only increases, it never fades. A fading glory and a diminishing persuasion, at the very best, belong to the Old Covenant order (2 Cor 3:10-14). Such has no place in “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10).

A backward posture causes “our salvation” to seem further, not “nearer.” In such a case, the glorious appearing of Christ will bring a time of condemnation, not salvation. Should this sleepy posture be upon any soul, the word of our text is sharp and to the point. “The moment is here for you to stop sleeping and wake up,

because by now our salvation is nearer than when we first began to believe.”<sup>NJB</sup>

This time is not the time to “sleep.” It is not the time to be unaware of what is

ahead, or the time to be caught up in the transitory things of this world.

## THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT

<sup>12a</sup> **The night is far spent . . .**”The Spirit will not let this matter go. It is too critical to treat it as though He was only providing interesting information. This is a matter where our souls are at stake. We must be brought to behold our troubles as temporary, and our salvation as everlasting. The hardships of life must be perceived as only for a while, while the inheritance reserved for us is eternal.

### THE NIGHT

“*The night . . .*” This is a synonym for time itself. **When sin entered into the world, a long moral and spiritual night began that will be finally terminated when the Lord appears in all of His glory.** “*The night*” also speaks of the time of obscurity, or ignorance, when things are not seen plainly (2 Pet 3:10). It is also used to denote the time of sleeping, when souls are not alert, and are unaware of impending danger or blessing (1 Thess 5:5). Jesus spoke of “*the night*” as the time when men stumble, not knowing where they are going (John 11:10).

Briefly summarized, “*the night*” is a time of jeopardy and danger. It is the time allotted to the devil, in which he walks about as a roaring lion, “*seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet 5:7-8). This is when “*the powers of darkness*” can do their work (Luke 22:53). It refers to times when we are tested and tried, and when the Lord hides His face from us (Psa 143:7). It is a time when we are subject to perplexity and fears (2 Cor 4:8; 7:5). There are “*night seasons*,” when only the Lord can effectively instruct us (Psa 16:7). The “*night season*” is also a time when we cry out to the Lord, yet sense no answer from Him (Psa 22:2). Troubles can so beset us during such seasons that it is written, “*In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my soul refused to be comforted*” (Psa 77:2). It is a good word, indeed, when our Lord speaks to us about “*the night*” drawing to a close.

### FAR SPENT

And what does our blessed Lord tell us about “*the night*” – the time of trial and testing, of ignorance and obscurity, and of the working and deceit of the wicked one?

“*The night is far spent!*” Other versions read, “*The night is almost gone,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*The night is nearly over,*”<sup>NIV</sup> and “*the night is far gone.*”<sup>NRSV</sup>

Flesh can go to sleep, hoping for something good when it awakens. However, it cannot sustain that hope from day to day. It soon throws hope away, frustrated by delay.

But faith is not so. It can retire in the evening believing that in the morning trouble and sorrow will be gone, and there will be no more night. If that blessing

**But faith is not so. It can retire in the evening believing that in the morning trouble and sorrow will be gone, and there will be no more night. If that blessing does not occur, faith can make it through another day, still “rejoicing in hope of the glory of God”**

**Again, this is not calendar language, but the language of faith, addressed to the heart.** The time of our trials is almost over! The time when we see through a glass darkly is about to conclude. The devil’s time is running out, and soon he will be violently and suddenly removed from the presence of the saints of God. All of the liabilities of being in the body are about to come to a close. It is just around the corner, and we are to live in expectancy of the removal of everything that is evil, limiting, and incomplete!

For the person living by faith, everything caused by sin is about to conclude. This is not to be viewed as those in the flesh, but as those who are walking in the Spirit and living by faith. From a practical viewpoint, this can take place at any moment. **However, only faith can live with constant expectation.** The flesh cannot stand to wait, and therefore becomes disappointed when the anticipation is not realized immediately.

does not occur, faith can make it through another day, still “*rejoicing in hope of the glory of God*” (Rom 5:2).

**When the Spirit declares, “the night is far spent,” He means it has been assigned a limited duration.** It is not intended to be eternal – not for those who have believed. Only the longsuffering of God accounts for the presence of “*the night.*” And, it is only here until the children have all been gathered in and prepared for the coming glory.

**Mark it well, just as surely as the day of salvation is marching forward to fruition and glory, the night is moving forward to frustration and termination.** Whether in our death or Christ’s return, “*the night*” is fast advancing to its conclusion. We will not long have to contend with darkness and things that attend it. Soon the night of suffering, trial, and battle will end. You can believe that!

## THE DAY IS AT HAND

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<sup>12b</sup> . . . **the day is at hand** . . . ”

Other versions read, “*the day is almost here,*” NIV “*the day is near,*” NRSV and “*daylight is on the way.*” NJB

### THE DAY

This is the ultimate day. From the standpoint of the wicked, it is “*the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*” (Rom 2:5). Considered as a time of unveiling, it is “*the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*” (Rom 2:16). Viewed as the time when Jesus will be fully seen, it is “*the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 1:8). Regarded as the time when the nature of every persons work will be made known, “*Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it*” (1 Cor 3:13). Considered from the standpoint of the resurrection of the dead, it is “*the day of redemption*” (Eph 4:30). It is also the time when “*the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*” (2 Pet 3:10).

“*The day*” is the time when everything will be made plain. At that time, the Father will unveil the Son in all of His glory (1 Tim 6:15). He will then be seen, and acknowledged to be, everything God revealed in the record He has given of His Son (1 John 5:10-11). Nothing about Jesus will be obscure. Thus, it is said of that day, “*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil 2:10-11).

### Children of the Day

This is of particular interest to those who are in Christ Jesus, for they “*are all the children of light, and the children of the day*” (1 Thess 5:5). That is, in Jesus we are being oriented for “*the great and notable day of the Lord*” (Acts 2:20). We are being prepared to not only survive that day, but to blend in with it. Our ultimate advantages and blessings will be brought to us on the wings of light! Just as we began our journey to glory in the light of the Gospel of Christ, so we will conclude our journey at the dawning of an eternal day, after which we will never again be exposed to the night!

### AT HAND

Those with a penchant for word studies are fond of telling us “*at hand*” is a term related to time. They tell us it is a phrase meaning “it is just about to happen.” But their professed scholarship has not been able to decipher the meaning of the Holy Spirit. The “*day*” of which our text speaks will not appear until time has run its course and is no more.

Again, this is the language of faith. By saying “*the day is at hand,*” the Spirit means we are living with an enlivened prospect of that day. **Faith enables us to live just as though, in time, “the day” was going to occur in the very next moment.** And, indeed, that is quite possible. However, faith does not live in the prospect of possibilities, but of appointed verities. Faith does not grow in the soil of vagueness and uncertainty.

The phrase “*the day is at hand*” speaks of the same reality as is declared in

Philippians 4:5: “*The Lord is at hand.*” It speaks of the time declared by Peter, “*But the end of all things is at hand*” (1 Pet 4:7). It is the appointed time of Christ’s unveiling. His glory is what will make it “*the day.*”

Faith maintains a certain perspective that enables a proper and productive life in “*this present evil world.*” Because it is not anchored to time, it must have a point of reference – an objective for which to live, and a goal for which to strive. In a Person, those requirements are met in God Himself, for faith believes “*He is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who seek Him*” (Heb 11:6). Stated as an objective, “*the Lord is at hand!*” Faith longs for that day, and brings it so close to the heart that it dominates the individual. That is the perspective of this text.

### The 70 A.D. Folly

Although they are totally unworthy of mention, there are those who believe that the epoch of the ending of the night and the coming of the day speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem. The theology of such people is to be discarded as filthy and contaminating rags. Those who imagine that “*the day*” occurred when Jerusalem was leveled as an act of Divine judgment betray a level of ignorance that is astounding. Rather than a day beginning, a spiritual night settled over the ancient people that has been unparalleled. For believers in Christ, 70 A.D. is not the pivotal consideration, and is nowhere so proclaimed in Scripture. It is enough to say that such a theology is too close the earth, and thus too far from heaven. It has, therefore, no real value for the soul.

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## CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

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<sup>12c</sup> **Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness** . . . ” The Spirit consistently takes the things revealed and moves us to act upon them. It is not enough to merely know these things intellectually. They must be translated into living, else they will hold no benefit for us. **The truth**

**of God that is held within the confines of a creed or theological position brings no advantage, for faith cannot work in such constricted surroundings.** Therefore the Spirit arouses us to an appropriate response to the truth. Remember, only when the truth is

known does it bring us freedom. Knowing the truth takes place when we embrace it and act upon it.

### THEREFORE

The admonition before us is required by the compelling facts that have been

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*The nature of spiritual life, and the environment in which we live, demand that we put on Christ.--by Given O. Blakely*

affirmed. First, it is high time to awake out of sleep. Second, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Third, the night is almost gone. Fourth day is at hand. No person persuaded of these realities will continue to live close to the world, for it will appear foolish to do so. However, because of the enormous influence of the flesh, we must be stirred up to action, for it is easier to fall asleep in this evil world than to stay awake.

The word “therefore” also means that no other response than the one specified is acceptable to God. Those refusing to do this cannot be pleasing to God, profession notwithstanding. Those who leap forward to respond in faith will be given the grace necessary to fulfill this word.

### “us”

We must never allow the world to rob us of the “us” perception. This is the family of God, the sanctified ones, or those who have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light. The greatest obligation is laid upon the saints because the greatest benefits have been given to them. The inheritance belongs to them alone, and thus they must live in such a manner as to be ready to obtain it.

Let it be clear, this is not a denominational “us,” but a family-of-God “us.” These are the ones who have “received the atonement,” or reconciliation (Rom 5:11). This is the church, which is Christ’s “body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph 1:23). There are certain responsibilities that are placed upon the people of God, and they need to hear them. It is altogether too common for sectarian requirements to be placed upon believers, while Divine essentials are withheld from them.

The text before us is a case in point. You will find that very few believers are admonished in this area. The very words will sound strange to those whose religious contacts are largely limited to the organized church. This is, however, the way in which the Spirit speaks to the church.

### CAST OFF

“ . . . **cast off** the works of darkness.” Other versions read, “**lay aside** the deeds of darkness,”<sup>NASB</sup> “**put aside** the deeds of

darkness,”<sup>NIV</sup> “let us **put off** the works of the dark,”<sup>BBE</sup> “**throw off** the works of darkness,”<sup>NAB</sup> “**So don’t live** in darkness. Get rid of your evil deeds. Shed them like dirty clothes,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “**throw off everything that belongs to the darkness.**”<sup>NJB</sup>

The strength of these words is apparent. Yet, you will be hard pressed to find a religious environment where they are taken as seriously as the language demands. It is not unusual to find “works of darkness” flaunted in religious gatherings, musical concerts, and even congregational board meetings. However,

Him. These are “works” that allow a person to remain aloof from God – in fact, they can only be done apart from a consciousness of Him.

These are “works,” or human expressions, that primarily relate to this world, and in which no place is made for faith. They can only be done when one is NOT living by faith. They blend easily with the world and all that is in it, which has been summarily cursed by God.

The “works of darkness” are tainted by the flesh. They call for the activity of the

These are “works,” or human expressions, that primarily relate to this world, and in which no place is made for faith. They can only be done when one is NOT living by faith.

they are out of place anywhere – on the job, in the home, or in places of business.

The words “cast off” are aggressive. They mean to get rid of, not merely lay aside to be put on at some other time. There is nothing casual about these words. Imagine, if you will, that your clothes were on fire. Would you not cast them off with zeal and speed? So it is with “the works of darkness.” We are to rid ourselves of them with dispatch, not allowing them to linger in our lives. Some, in removing themselves from the Lord, have “cast off their first faith” (1 Tim 5:12). They should have rather “cast off the works of darkness” in order that they might be saved.

### What Are “Works of Darkness”

“Works of darkness” are activities that result from NOT knowing the Lord. They are both developed and expressed without an awareness of God, or a desire to please Him. They do not spring from the knowledge of God, and have nothing whatsoever to do with fellowship with

“old man,” or “the flesh,” which has no place in the life of faith. These are works that can only be done prior to the coming of the Lord, who will usher in eternal light, thus removing the environment in which these works are done. “The works of darkness” belong to our former lives, when we walked in the darkness. There is no place for them now.

The reasoning of this verse is as follows. The time is coming when works of darkness will have no environment in which to be expressed. That will be the time of “the day,” which is moving in fast upon us. The “night,” in which these works are done, is “far spent,” and will soon be gone. **In view of this, let us rid ourselves of all works that will not survive the blazing light of Christ’s glory!** Let us do it with zeal. Let it be done now, before it is too late!

If we dare to postpone the doing of this, we must remember how time is moving along with great rapidity. The night is passing, day is coming.

## PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

<sup>12d</sup> . . . **let us put on the armor of light.**” In spiritual life, things are always abandoned in order that we might appropriate something better. In the text before us, things are put off in order that better things may be put on. Contrary to common perceptions, light cannot blend with darkness. Good cannot merge with evil. Righteousness cannot intermingle with unrighteousness. Scripture says it this way. *“For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”* (2 Cor 6:14-16).

It is not possible to do *“the works of unrighteousness”* with one hand, and put on *“the armor of light”* with the other. A person cannot serve two masters. Two conflicting purposes cannot be served at the same time. *“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”* (Matt 6:24).

This is a Kingdom principle that is virtually unknown among professed Christians. All manner of activity is being expended that requires the adoption of worldly wisdom and manners within a supposed religious setting. It is found in the world of education, church organization, professional religious careers, and supposed Christian music. Devoted efforts are made to mingle the flesh with the Spirit in order to attract people to Christ. It is all foolhardy, and no good will come from it. **Before a person can appropriate the things of God, he must let go of the things of the world.** In keeping with this principle, we *“cast off the works of darkness”* in order that we may be able to *“put on the armor of light.”*

### PUT ON

*“ . . . put on . . . ”* This is something we

do – an assignment from heaven that is not to be ignored. Frequently these words are used in Scripture.

### Under the Law

Under the Law, the service of God required the putting on of certain attire. The priest had to *“put on his linen garment”* (Lev 6:10). Aaron was required to *“put on the holy linen coat”* (Lev 16:4). When he went into the holy place, he had to *“put on”* his linen garments (Lev 16:23). Kings *“put on their robes”* before sitting upon their thrones (1 Kgs 22:10). Divinely appointed activities often required the putting on of certain attire. Priests *“put on”* priests clothing. Kings *“put on”* kings clothing. Soldiers *“put on”* armor, or military overdress.

### Under the New Covenant

**Many a soul never obtains the “armor” that can protect the soul because they are rarely, if ever, “in the light.” You will learn by experience that Divine resources are not to be found in dark places. If you desire to have what the Lord longs to give, you must come into the light!**

Life in Christ is also attended with certain requirements – things that are to be *“put on.”*

Those who are justified have *“put on Christ”* (Gal 3:27). They are also *“put on the new man”* (Eph 4:24), and *“the whole armor of God”* (Eph 6:11). As *“the elect of God,”* they are to *“put on . . . bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering”* (Col 3:12). And, as a covering over all of these, they are to *“put on charity”* (Col 3:14).

These are not mere suggestions, or

goals toward which we are to strive. They represent absolute Divine requirements. There is no acceptable alternative action. In keeping with this manner of the Kingdom, we are to *“put on the armor of light.”* God has provided it, we are to put it on. He will not put it on us, but enable us to put it on.

### THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

Our spiritual *“armor”* is referred to in different ways. From the standpoint of the nature of this protection, it is called *“the armor of righteousness”* (2 Cor 6:7). Viewed as a thorough means of security, it is called *“the whole armor of God”* (Eph 6:11,13). Here, it is called *“the armor of light.”*

### Appropriated in the Light

This is *“armor,”* or an array of protection or weaponry, that is appropriated in the *“light”* of God’s *“countenance”* (Psa 4:6). That is, it is obtained while we are in fellowship with the Lord, walking in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). From a practical point of view, this is when we are acutely conscious of God, sensing His approval and blessing. It is when we are living by faith, motivated by the unseen realities He has revealed through the Gospel of Christ. It is when we are preferring the things of God so strongly that nothing else appeals to us. In that environment, we procure the armor that will protect us from all the devil can hurl at us.

Many a soul never obtains the *“armor”* that can protect the soul because they are rarely, if ever, *“in the light.”* You will learn by experience that Divine resources are not to be found in dark places. If you desire to have what the Lord longs to give, you must come into the light! This armor is *appropriated “in the light,”* and thus is called *“the armor of light.”*

In this sense, we *“put on the armor of light”* by walking in the realm where the armor can be appropriated. It is *“in the light”* that we become aware of what the

Lord has provided, and “put on” manners and traits that cannot be penetrated by the fiery darts of the wicked one.

### **The Light Itself Is Armor**

There is a sense in which the light of God protects us. In this view, the light itself is the armor. **The Psalmist knew that if God would but shine His light upon him, all would be well.** “For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light” (Psa 36:9). “O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles” (Psa 43:3). “Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant: save me for Thy mercies’ sake” (Psa 31:16). “Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved” (Psa 80:3).

Satan has been cast out of the presence of the Lord. Thus, those who walk in that presence will experience victory over him and all of his devices. Satan’s hierarchy includes the “rulers of the darkness of this world” (Eph 6:12). His entire domain is “the power of darkness” (Col 1:13). His angels are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). There is no better way to neutralize his power than to be “in the light.” That is what exposes him, and even repels him.

### **Related to Understanding**

“The armor of light” is related to “spiritual understanding.” It has to do with seeing things properly, and knowing what is really happening. **Ignorant disciples are never ones that triumph!**

If you are to be protected from the devices of the wicked one and the eroding influences of this world, you must have some grasp of the truth of God.

It is **knowing** the truth that makes you free (John 8:32). When the truth is known, the soul becomes aware of the blessings of God and the snares of the devil. When we are “illuminated” (Heb 10:32), we can perceive what is to be gained, and what is to be shunned. That perception contributes to our protection. It is not the whole of it, for holy angels are working for us as well (Heb 1:13-14). However, putting on “the armor light” is our role in the matter of survival, and cannot be neglected with impunity. God will give us strength to put it on, and keep it on.

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## **WALK PROPERLY!**

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**“<sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”** The association between being made righteous by God and living in this world is again made very apparent. One’s theology cannot be divorced from life, as some are wont to do. A significant number of debates have raged through the centuries over whether or not the believer is secure while living in an unacceptable manner. I am sure you are familiar with some of the positions that are being perpetrated among the churches. Flesh has a strong propensity toward the exploitation of the grace of God. As soon as it hears of “grace,” or of being “made righteous,” it begins to excuse involvement in iniquity. The “natural man” considers the grace of God to be a loving mantel that is thrown over the professed believer, moving God to ignore the thoughts, words, and deeds of the individual, as though they did not even exist. However, this is a total misrepresentation. The grace of God rids us of the guilt of sin, gives us a nature that is not prone to sin, and teaches us “that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior

Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:12-13).

The Spirit’s admonitions to us are all given with this reality in mind – the effective teaching of the grace of God. When we comprehend the loving favor of God, lavished upon us because of Christ Jesus, an effective teaching process begins. The Spirit exhorts us in view of that tutelage. What He requires is not only necessary, it is well within the range of possibility. Unlike the Law, the exhortations of the Spirit are not “weak through the flesh” (Rom 8:3). That is because they are not addressed to the flesh, but to man’s renewed spirit, which has the dominion over the flesh.

### **WALKING PROPERLY**

“Let us walk properly . . .” Other versions read, “Let us walk **honestly**,” <sup>KJV</sup> “Let us behave **properly**,” <sup>NASB</sup> “Let us behave **decently**,” <sup>NIV</sup> “let us live **honorably**,” <sup>NRSV</sup> and “let us conduct ourselves **becomingly**.” <sup>RSV</sup>

The word “walk” is a Scriptural synonym for living. Notice, the various translations confirm the breadth of this word: “behave,” “live,” and “conduct ourselves.” The New Living Translation uses a paraphrase for the word: “in everything we do.” Our “walk,” has to do

with the entirety of our lives – what we do, the way we do it, and the reason for doing it. Our “walk” speaks of the direction of life, as well as its activities.

### **There is a proper way to live!**

The manner in which we live is not inconsequential. This is a weighty consideration in a hedonistic society that aggressively seeks personal and fleshly gratification. We are living in a time that directly contradicts the revealed manner in which Jesus Himself lived. At His most critical hour He cried out, “**NOT my will, but Thine, be done**” (Lk 22:42). During His ministry, Jesus confessed, “**I seek NOT Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me**” (John 5:30).

**Let it be clear, any other motive for life is totally unacceptable!** Self gratification and a dominating quest for objectives unrelated to God’s great salvation are completely out of order. Life must be lived “properly.”

The word from which “properly,” or “honestly,” <sup>KJV</sup> is translated is εὐσχημόνας, which, from the standpoint of language, means “honest and orderly behavior, decently, properly, and with propriety.” <sup>Friberg Analytical Lexicon</sup> I prefer the word “honesty,” for it accentuates the dominance of faith.

Before persons who have received Christ can walk in an unbecoming manner, they must become dishonest, insincere, and corrupt in their thinking. The truth must be thrust from them, Jesus must be forgotten, and eternity violently pushed into the background of their thinking. It simply is not possible to live unbecomingly while acknowledging the truth. One cannot walk after the flesh while beholding *“the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus”* (2 Cor 4:6).

**To “walk honestly,” therefore, is to live within a prevailing persuasion of the truth and Person of Jesus Christ.** Let it be clear, this is not a requirement of institutionalized Christianity. That is precisely why it is not common to find professed Christians living in this manner. However, this is a Divine essentiality.

#### AS IN THE DAY

*“... as in the day...”* This is a significant expression: **“IN the day.”** This is *“the day”* created by the light of God’s presence. It is living with an acute consciousness that it is the God of heaven *“with whom we have to do”* (Heb 4:13). Whether we know and recognize it or not, *“all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him”* (Heb 4:13). The Lord is looking upon the hearts of men (1 Sam 16:7), searching their hearts and knowing their thoughts (1 Chron 28:9). Jesus reveals to the churches that He *“searches the minds and hearts”*<sup>NKJV</sup> (Rev 2:23). **Walking “as in the day” is living with those things in mind.**

Here are some expressions that unveil what it means to walk *“as in the day.”*

- ‘ *“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, **be acceptable** in Thy sight, O LORD, my Strength, and my Redeemer”* (Psa 19:14).
- ‘ *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and **see if there be any wicked way in me**, and lead me in the way everlasting”* (Psa 139:23-24).
- ‘ *“Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss** for the excellency of the*

*knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him**, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: **that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead”*** (Phil 3:8-11).

*“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: **but I follow after**, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus”* (Phil 3:12).

*“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: **but this one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are*

*not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”* The KJV reads, *“... not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.”* It is not enough to know how we **should** live. The flesh, which is ever with us, is so corrupt, that we must also be reminded how **not** to live. How we ought to thank God for this manner of instruction. There are promises and warnings, blessings and curses, instruction concerning doing and not doing. The promises, blessings, and instruction in doing good draw upon our hearts. They are the superior incentives – but they are not the only ones. The warnings, curses, and admonitions about what not to do are like trumpets that arouse us from spiritual slumber. Thus we have two good reasons to move forward toward the prize. First, to obtain glory. Second, to avoid hell.

The Spirit provides three categories of reprehensible conduct. All of them are to be avoided. None of them are acceptable before God. In each category, the sinful expression is mentioned, as well the cause of it.

#### EXCESSES Revelry (rioting) and Drunkenness

*“... not in revelry and drunkenness.”* Other versions read, *“not in rioting and drunkenness,”*<sup>KJV</sup> *“not in carousing and drunkenness,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“not in orgies and drunkenness,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“not in pleasure-making and drinking,”*<sup>BBE</sup> and *“Don’t participate in wild parties and getting drunk.”*<sup>NLT</sup>

Revelry, rioting, carousing, and wild parties, are the expression. Drunkenness, or sinful indulgence, is the cause for it. These are sins of excessiveness or overabundance. In these people indulge themselves in external involvements that distort the mind, and cause beastliness to surface. Such transgressions cause men to be unreasonable and foolish, even in the sight of the world. Their minds become incapable of reason, and they degenerate to the moral level of the beasts of the earth. Carousing, revelry, and excessive feasting are involved.

Some few years ago, such sins were

**The Spirit provides three categories of reprehensible conduct. All of them are to be avoided. None of them are acceptable before God. In each category, the sinful expression is mentioned, as well the cause of it.**

*behind, and **reaching forth** unto those things which are before, **I press toward the mark** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 3:13-14).

Living *“as in the day”* does not suggest pretension, or propose that we are not really *“in the day.”* Rather, it declares we are to walk with a dominating awareness of where we are in Christ Jesus. This is living with the knowledge that all of our deeds, and even the counsels of our heart, are fully known by the Lord. Your heart will confirm to you that it is not possible to so live and be dominated by sin.

#### NOT IN . . .

*“... not in revelry and drunkenness,*

largely in the history books, or the heathen cultures of the world. Now, however, they have entered like a moral hurricane into the Western world. Such things are characterized by a lack of control and intemperance. Thus, those created in the image of God are carried along by indulgence to such a degree as to destroy every semblance of reason.

Peter also referred to these activities, identifying them with the past lives of many believers. *“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in . . . excess of wine, reveling, banquetings . . .”* (1 Pet 4:3). Other versions read, *“drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> and *“drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties.”*<sup>NASB</sup>

There are some within the Christian community who speak of being “drunk in the Spirit.” In such a state, they conduct themselves just as unreasonably and foolishly as those who are drunk with wine. Others, generally among the younger generation, seek to sanctify intemperate conduct with, what they call, “Christian music.” In their activities some actually conduct themselves unreasonably, intemperately, and without any lasting awareness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let every believer be diligent to avoid any activity that causes them to lose control of their mind and affections. Such is not a proper activity.

**UNCLEANNES**

**Lewdness (chambering) and Lust (wantonness)**

*“ . . . not in lewdness and lust.”* Other versions read, *“not in chambering and wantonness,”*<sup>KJV</sup> *“not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“not in sexual immorality and debauchery,”*<sup>NIV</sup> and *“not in debauchery and licentiousness.”*<sup>NRSV</sup>

Lewdness, chambering, sexual promiscuity, and debauchery, are the expression. Lust, or wantonness, is the cause of it. These are sins of indulgence, deeds in which the cravings of the flesh are sought to be satisfied by unlawful means. They are also sought with aggression and determination.

*“Not in . . . lewdness,”* or *“chambering.”* This is immoral conduct. The meaning of the term is “the defiled bed.” It is intimacy outside of the bounds of marriage, referring to adultery and illicit affairs. *“Lust,”* or *“wantonness,”* is unbridled and unrestrained lust. This is what leads to *“chambering,”* and is also

**There is something these categories of sin have in common. They all center in self, not Christ. They have to do with satisfying earthly desires, not appropriating heavenly benefits.**

called *“licentiousness,”* and is indecent and outrageous behavior.

The remarkable increase of this sort of sin within the professed church is staggering. Unwed mothers, teenage pregnancies, and illicit affairs among church leaders are a blotch upon our times. They all fall into the category or *“lewdness and lust,”* or *“chambering and wantonness,”* which are not to be once named among the people of God (Eph 5:3). The inflow of counselors and psychologists have led people into a sort of sympathy for those caught in such conduct. Specialists in moral recovery have become quite popular in the larger churches of the land. Time will be better spent declaring the words of our text to the church. Nothing about salvation allows for such moral defilement. Those who insist upon stepping over moral boundaries that have been established by God must know they have entered into an area for which nothing good is promised.

**CONTENTION  
Strife and Envy**

*“Not in . . . strife and envy.”* Other versions read, *“strife and jealousy,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“dissension and jealousy,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“quarreling and jealousy,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“fighting and envy,”*<sup>BEBE</sup> *“rivalry and jealousy,”*<sup>NAB</sup>

and *“wrangling or jealousy.”*<sup>NJB</sup>

Strife, dissension, quarreling, fighting, and wrangling, are the expression. Envy, or jealousy, is the cause.

Here are sins that men consider more respectable. They are quite common among professed believers as well as unbelievers. They are one of the primary reasons for division in the body of Christ, and play a key role in maintaining sectarianism, or denominationalism.

However, there is no dignity to these sins. They are classed along with *“rioting and drunkenness,”* and *“chambering and wantonness.”* The flesh begets all such sins, and fosters them as well. Elsewhere, the Holy Spirit identifies such actions with *“the works of the flesh.”* *“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: . . . enmities,*

*strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions . . . of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal 5:19-21).

**SOMETHING COMMON**

There is something these categories of sin have in common. **They all center in self, not Christ.** They have to do with satisfying earthly desires, not appropriating heavenly benefits. All of them are anchored not only in time, but are riveted to the immediate moment. They all require a mind-set that is totally oblivious of God, Christ, salvation, the coming of the Lord, the end of the world, and the day of judgment.

New life **cannot** indulge in such things. It is not that *“newness of life”* ought not to engage in such expressions, it **cannot** do so, for it has no capacity for transgression. The *“new man”* must be ignored, *“the old man”* preferred, and the Son of God crucified *“afresh”* by the individual before these can be committed.

All of them are condemned by God, and exclude one from heaven (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5-6; Col 3:5-6). It is not possible to do these things in such a

manner as to make them acceptable. They are corrupt at the core, and there is no way to make them right.

No amount of religious activity can cause them to be good. An imagined *Christian* environment cannot sanctify them, or provide a just cause for them to

be found in us. They are to be shunned like poison, which, indeed, they are. If they are allowed expression in our lives, they will pull us into the bottomless pit. There is no natural force that can stop this from happening. They will become the cause for condemnation and the reason for Divine rejection.

There is, praise the Lord, grace to keep us from indulging in such reprehensible conduct! If you wonder where mercy can be found, and grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:16), **it is at the point where sin becomes repulsive, and righteousness becomes the quest of preference.**

## PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Not only does the Holy inform us of what NOT to do, He directs us in the proper manner of life. Not only is there grace to avoid what is wrong, that same grace will lead us in what is right.

### BUT

*“But . . .”* Other versions read, *“Rather,”* <sup>NIV</sup> and *“Instead.”* <sup>NRSV</sup> Linguistically speaking, this is an adversative expression. It declares the antithesis, or opposite, circumstance or contrast. It is to morality what white is to black, or day is to night. It is not something that is different, but what is the opposite. It is what is diametrically opposed to indulging in sin.

While this may appear a very elementary point, more is here than meets the casual eye. **Those in Christ are not to merely refrain from the sins mentioned, they are engage in the activities here admonished.** It is not enough to merely abstain from *“rioting and drunkenness . . . chambering and wantonness . . . strife and envying.”* There is no virtue in abstinence alone. **Unless refraining from sinful expressions is matched by indulgence in the things of the Spirit, the effort is vain.** This is particularly noteworthy in view of the remarkable lack of appetite in the average church for the things of God.

### PUTTING ON CHRIST

<sup>14a</sup> *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ . . .”* Other versions read, *“Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> *“But let the Lord*

*Jesus Christ take control of you,”* <sup>NLT</sup> and *“Let your armor be the Lord Jesus Christ.”* <sup>NJB</sup>

This is the second admonition of this sort. The first was *“let us **put on the armor of light**”* (verse 12). Elsewhere, as I have already indicated (comments on verse 12), we are admonished, *“**put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness**”* (Eph

done for us. If the required activity is not found in us, it is reasoned, it is because God has not done it yet. If we will simply wait in a state of inactivity, the Lord will eventually come through for us. The effects of this doctrine are reason enough to reject it. However, this text will afford us the opportunity of opening up the real nature of life in Christ Jesus.

### A Brief Exposition

Allow me to focus on two aspects of life in Christ that speak of us putting on something. The first is our text: *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”* The other has already been mentioned, and is found in Ephesians 4:24. *“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”* In both cases, the language is quite clear. We are admonished to do something. It may appear as though this is something that has not, in any sense, been done before. Yet, the Spirit declares elsewhere that both have already been done.

**There is nothing passive about living by faith. This is something that will not be done unless we do it. It is in the process of doing it that grace is received for its accomplishment.**

4:24), and *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Eph 6:11).

There is nothing passive about living by faith. **This is something that will not be done unless we do it. It is in the process of doing it that grace is received for its accomplishment.**

Right here we come to grips with some serious misconceptions of spiritual life. Satan, through demonic doctrines, has spread throughout the Christian community that in salvation everything is

**First**, regarding putting on Christ, it is written, *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ **HAVE put on Christ**”* (Gal 3:27). Other versions read, *“have clothed yourselves with Christ”* <sup>NASB,NIV,NRSV</sup> The book of Romans has also affirmed we have been *“baptized into Christ”* (6:3). Yet, those affirmed to have already put on Christ, are admonished in our text, *“put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”* are these texts in conflict with one another?

**Second**, regarding putting on the *“new man,”* it is written, *“And **HAVE put on the new man, which is renewed**”*

in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col 3:10). Yet, those in Christ are admonished, "And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24). Once again, are these texts in conflict with one another?

### Reconciling the Texts

There is a sense in which we have put on Christ, and one in which we have not. We have put Him on by faith, becoming identified with Him through faith, and accepted in Him by grace. We are no longer separate from Him, but have been "joined" to Him (1 Cor 6:17). Yet, this is all by faith. The treasure we have is in "earthen vessels" (2 Cor 4:7). We are occupying a war zone, hounded by foes within and without. There are influences all about us that deplete our strength, erode our energies, and compete for our attention.

When we began our new life, we did so having "put on Christ." But this was not a once-for-all transaction. We also believed on Him, and that was not a one-time event either. Because we are not yet in our native habitat, we must continue to believe, and continue to "put on Christ." It is as though we begin each day afresh, by faith clothing ourselves with the Son of God, hearing Him anew, and following Him wherever He leads.

The justified ones "shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11), not by a once-for-all decision! When we were baptized into Christ, we became "alive unto God" (Rom 6:11). We stay alive by our faith. When we began our new life by putting on Christ. We maintain that life by continuing to put Him on. There is a sense in which new life begins every day. That is because we face new challenges, and expand our spiritual life into new frontiers. As we grow in Christ Jesus, we put Him on, covering the expanded areas.

We are not only saved by the "washing of regeneration," but by the "renewing of the Holy Spirit" as well (Tit 3:5). Putting on Christ, as admonished in our text, relates to the renewing of the Holy Spirit – that continual work, whereby we are being changed from glory unto glory, and conformed to the image of God's Son. The putting on of Christ of Galatians 3:27

relates to the washing of regeneration, or the beginnings of our new life in Christ.

This is matter that requires a great deal of proclamation and exposition in the modern church. It is evident from the condition of multitudes of professing Christians that this is not known. Spiritual staleness has settled upon many souls. There is no freshness in their spirits. They are not living by "every Word of God" (Lk 4:4), and do not enjoy the "communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:14). They are not "filled with all

faith? Putting Him on is appropriating His character and life. And how is that done? It is by means of the promises – by believing them, meditating upon them, and making it our aim to experience them. They are the appointed means to obtaining Christ's nature, which is, from the viewpoint of our text, putting Him on.

**The particular thrust of this text is that we are to prepare for eternity.** The night is far spent, and the great and notable day of the Lord is fast approaching. Our only hope is to be found

**This is matter that requires a great deal of proclamation and exposition in the modern church. It is evident from the condition of multitudes of professing Christians that this is not known. Spiritual staleness has settled upon many souls.**

joy and peace in believing," nor are they "abounding in hope" (Rom 15:13). Why does this condition exist?

Our text provides the answer. It is because they are not putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. They have too much of themselves showing, and too little of Christ Jesus. **Simply put, they are not living by faith.** They are not depending on the Lord Jesus to lead and feed them. They have taken matters into their own hands, and are actually living as though Christ did not even exist.

While we have been "made partakers of Christ" (Heb 3:14), it remains a work in progress. We have received "of His fulness," but not the whole of it (John 1:16). There remains vast portions of the "Divine nature" that is yet to be experienced. We have been given "exceeding great and precious promises" that by means of them, we "might be partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). That process is precisely what is meant by the admonition, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

How can Christ be "put on" apart from

like Christ Jesus when His glory is unveiled – to be as He is "in the world" (1 John 4:17). It is to be found with faith when He comes (Luke 18:8). All of the effort and activity required for that preparation is summarized in these words: "put on Christ."

The Spirit is calling us into a fuller realization of the life we experienced when we were raised from the waters of baptism "by the glory of the Father." Putting on Christ is nothing less than walking "in the newness of life" (Rom 6:4).

Many with whom I am acquainted have placed a great emphasis upon our baptism into Christ. In fact, among several of them, this is nearly all they talk about. It is the dominating theme of their religious conversations. Our text lays a solemn obligation upon all such people – those who have seen the relevance of baptism, and its relationship to salvation. They are now to move forward, laying hold of the fulness of the life that began at their baptism. They must not linger on the banks of the Jordan, but launch our into the deep, letting down their nets, so to speak, for a great catch of life.

## MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH

<sup>414b</sup> . . . and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” You see with what care the Spirit speaks to us of managing our lives. We are stewards of life from God, and that stewardship is to be handled with the greatest care. What is required of us necessitates diligence, hope and zeal. We will not be able to do this without the Lord, but we are well able to do it while walking with Him in the light. It is imperative that we see the essentiality of this word.

### NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH

“Make **NO** provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” Other versions read, “and make **NO** provision for the flesh **in regard to its lusts**,”<sup>NASB</sup> “and **DO NOT think about** how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature,”<sup>NIV</sup> “and make **NO** provision for the flesh, **to gratify its desires**,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “and **DO NOT take forethought for the flesh to {fulfill its} lusts**,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “and **DO NOT give thought to** the flesh to do its desires,”<sup>BBE</sup> “and **DON’T think of ways to indulge** your evil desires,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “and **STOP** worrying about **how your disordered natural inclinations may**

reads “or the flesh” “evil desires,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “disordered natural inclinations.”<sup>NJB</sup> The words translated “the flesh” are *τῆς σαρκός* (tas sar-kos). That expression (“*THE flesh*”) is found at least nineteen times in the New Covenant writings (John 3:6; Rom 6:19; 8:3,5,6,7; 9:8; 13:14; 1 Cor 5:5; Gal 5:17,19; 6:8; Eph 2:3; Col 2:11,13,18,23; 1 John 2:16; Jude 23). It cannot be defined etymologically. Lexically, the word means “the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood (of both man and beasts).”<sup>Friberg Greek Lexicon</sup> The Spirit, however, expounds the expression doctrinally, so that when we hear the words “the flesh” we will have a proper frame of reference outside of the wisdom of men. The following references show how the Spirit uses this expression, “the flesh.” Taken seriously, they will develop a certain abhorrence within the sensitive soul. Sometimes the words are translated “carnal.”

### Scriptural Representations

- Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh (John 3:6).
- It brings with it infirmity (Rom 6:19).

someone to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the last day (1 Cor 5:5).

The flesh lusts against the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:17).

The works of the flesh lead to condemnation (Gal 5:19-21).

Those sowing to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption (Gal 6:8).

Prior to our new life, we lived in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling its desires (Eph 2:32).

In our baptism, we were circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh (Col 2:11).

Prior to being in Christ, we were dead in our sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh (Col 2:13).

The mind of the flesh puffs one up (Col 2:18).

External rules cannot remove the lusts of the flesh (Col 2:23).

The lust of the flesh belongs to the world order, and is not of the Father (1 John 2:16).

Believers are to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 23).

“The flesh” is the part of us that is not born again. While it includes our bodies, it is not confined to them. “The flesh” includes a certain mind set (“mind of the flesh”), and has strong desires (“desires of the flesh”). As to its origin, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” It is traced back to Adam, not Christ. It is what is “natural,” or without the Divine nature, about us (1 Cor 2:13). “The flesh” is nothing less than “the old man,” which is to be “put off” (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9).

### The Meaning

**Therefore, the admonition to make no provision for the flesh means we are not to give the advantage to the natural, or unregenerate part of us.** There are desires resident in the flesh that pull us away from God and Christ. They dull the appetite for glory, and make the present world seem primary.

While “the flesh” speaks of natural part of us, it has more regard to Adam, than to mere life in the body. The Spirit does not mean we are not to provide for

**There are desires resident in the flesh that pull us away from God and Christ. They dull the appetite for glory, and make the present world seem primary.**

be fulfilled.”<sup>NJB</sup>

### What is “the flesh?”

The strength of the prohibition is evident. It is imperative that we know what “the flesh” means, for too much depends on our response to this admonition. Most versions translate the word “flesh” (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, NAS, NAU, NRS, WEBSTER, DRA, DARBY, BBE, YLT, NAB). Some of the modern paraphrased translations read “sinful nature,”<sup>NIV, footnote</sup>

- The holy Law of God was “weak through the flesh” (Rom 8:3).
- Those living according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh (Rom 8:5).
- The mind of the flesh is death (Rom 8:6).
- The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, is not subject to the Law of God, nor can it be (Rom 8:7)
- The children of the flesh are not the children of God (Rom 9:8).
- We are to make no provision to fulfill the desires of the flesh (Rom 13:14).
- There is such a thing a delivering

food, clothing, and shelter. A father, for example, must make such provisions for his family, or he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim 5:8). Also, parents are to “lay up” provisions for their children (2 Cor 12:14). These are not the desires of which He speaks. However, in this matter of life-sustaining provisions, we are not to be consumed with care for them, as though we had no heavenly Father (Matt 6:25).

“*The flesh*,” however, is not content with food and raiment. It cries out like the blood-sucking leech, “Give, give” (Prov 30:15). It competes against the Holy Spirit, seeking to nail us down to this world, and thus thrust us out into eternity unprepared and subject to condemnation. In his delineation of things that never have enough, Solomon made no mention of “*the flesh*” (Prov 30:15). That is something that was not revealed to the wise man. The truth of “*the flesh*” could not be revealed until Jesus took away the sins of the world.

“*The flesh*” is everything about us that is rooted in the temporal, or connected with death. It is the entirety of what cannot enter into glory, and the whole of what has been contaminated by sin. It has a mind that is focused on the earth, and desires that strongly crave only what is temporary, with no eternal value.

### What Are We To Do?

We are not to give “*the flesh*” the upper hand. Making “*no provision*” for it is never giving it the advantage, or making it easy for its desires to be

fulfilled. When Satan throws the “*fiery darts*” of allurements at us, tempting us to plot out what we can do for our flesh, we are to resist him, “*steadfast in the faith*” (1 Pet 5:8-9). When looking toward the future, our dominant consideration is to be ready to die, ready for the end of the world, and ready for the return of Christ.

16:11).

Our commission is clear. We are not to live in such a manner as to make sin easy to erupt. Our path must not lead us into an area where the lusts of the flesh awaken. Our associates are not to be such as cause our “*old man*” to become vibrant

**Our commission is clear. We are not to live in such a manner as to make sin easy to erupt. Our path must not lead us into an area where the lusts of the flesh awaken. Our associates are not to be such as cause our “old man” to become vibrant and alert.**

Our labors are devoted to being ready to leave the world, ready to reign with Jesus, and ready to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We are determined to be ready for the grave and ready for glory.

The “*desires*” of the flesh are distracting ones. They throw up a distracting cloud between us and the will of the Lord. They move us to forget what God has prepared for those who love Him, and provoke us to think of what we can do for ourselves in this present evil world. “*The flesh*” desires the pleasures that last only for “*a season*” (Heb 11:25), and shuns those which are at the Father’s right hand, and last “*forevermore*” (Psa

and alert. It is possible to have “*the flesh*” awakened by what we hear, and given the advantage by what we see. In our thinking, as our minds survey certain bastions of thought, we can give the advantage to our flesh. The summons from the Throne is, “*make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*”<sup>NASB</sup>

May you, dear child of God, be given grace to see the seriousness of the exhortation, and be persuaded of the availability of all the heavenly resources you require to fulfill it. Your faith is fully capable of doing these things. Not only that, your life depends upon your involvement in what God has given you.

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## CONCLUSION

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It is at once apparent that life in Christ requires the consistent involvement of the child of God. One cannot be passive and obtain the victory. It is not possible to be indolent, of a slow heart, or conveyed about with the cares of this world, and live pleasingly to the Lord. The blessings and benefits you require can only be obtained in close proximity to God – when your faith is strong, and you are engaged in a fervent quest to obtain the prize set before you.

Putting on Christ requires a hearty effort, but that effort will not be in vain. The necessity for putting on Christ has been produced by the effects of sin. Our entire person was impacted by Adam’s transgression, into which we fully and heartily entered. There are still patches of carnality that are upon our persons, even though we have been washed, sanctified, and justified. They are the remnants of the old man that have remained for us to drive out, like Israel drove the heathen

out of the promised land. If we fail to do this, those Adamic remnants will prove to be our undoing.

Concerning the enemies that remained in the promised land, it was said to Israel, “*But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the*

land in which you live. And it shall come about that as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you" (Num 33:55-56). Just as surely as Israel needed to heed those words, we do well to take heed to what our text has declared.

The reason for mortifying the deeds of the body is so that we may obtain the benefits Jesus procured for us and distributes to us. The reason for putting off the old man, is in order that we might put on the new man. The reason for

making no provision for the flesh, is that we might make a place in which the Holy Spirit of God may work. In all of this effort, we will be sustained by Divine power and upheld by the grace of God. We will not be disappointed.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/7/2001. Continuing in our overview of the book of Romans, we will be covering verses 1-13 of the fourteenth chapter. The theme will be, **"LIBERTY AND JUDGMENT."** How are believers to conduct themselves around those who are less advanced in the faith? What of those who entertain inferior views of spiritual things because they are immature? How about those whose conscience will not allow them to do things that God has actually freed them to do? These are questions that have perplexed believers throughout the ages. They have been the occasion for division and hurt among the saints. In our text, the Spirit takes these things up, teaching us more perfectly the ways of the Lord. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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