

**Subject: What Time Is It?**

**Scripture: Romans 13:11-14**

In our text you see a reference to sleeping. A Sunday School teacher told her class about Adam and Eve. She said that God did a little surgery on Adam and took out his rib. She asked the class, “How do you think He put Adam to sleep?” One student said, “By preaching a long sermon.”

We are bound by time and we are creatures of the clock. With all the clocks and watches, you would think everybody would know what time it is. The Bible tells us to use our time wisely. We need to know what time it is and what is appropriate for that time. *Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.* What time is it? This Scripture answers that question in three ways.

**1. It is time to WAKE UP (vs. 11)**

A. L. Todd said, “The great task of the church is not only to get sinners into heaven, but also to get saints out of bed.” We must know it is high time to awake out of sleep. This is no time for apathy, indifference, or laziness. It is a terrible feeling when you wake up and realize you have overslept. Maybe the alarm didn’t go off or you didn’t hear it. We need to know what time it is so we can wake up. Sleep has been defined as “a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place.” With that definition in mind we can say that sleep can be a good thing or a bad thing.

Sleep is a good thing. It is a gift from God. *Psalms 127:2 ...he giveth his beloved sleep.* But there are times when sleep is not good. It’s not good to sleep when you should be awake and alert. There are times when sleep is shameful and even criminal. A pilot needs to sleep, but not when he’s flying the plane. A truck driver needs to sleep, but not when he’s behind the wheel. A security guard needs to sleep, but not when he’s at his post. We find some examples of people sleeping in the Bible when they should have been awake, and how they speak to us today.

- The sleep of a disobedient prophet – *Jonah 1:6* *So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.*
- The sleep of careless disciples – *Matthew 26:40* *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*
- The sleep of a lazy son – *Proverbs 10:5* *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. *Proverbs 6:9* *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?**

Too many Christians have hit the snooze button. They want to sleep just a little while longer, but it’s time to wake up and get up.

**2. It is time to LOOK UP (vs. 11)**

“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” This refers to the final chapter of our salvation. We have been justified (saved from the penalty of sin). We are being sanctified (saved from the power of sin). We will be glorified (saved from the presence and possibility of sin). This is when we will see Jesus face to face and enter our heavenly home. This time is nearer than when we first believed. We are getting closer than we’ve ever been. *Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

This is no time to take a spiritual nap. The Lord has warned us to look up and be ready. He's coming back sooner than you think. The words on the side mirror say, "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear." Events in the Bible are closer than they seem. **Hebrews 10:37** *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* Don't get too cozy in this world. This world is not our home. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King.

We have a place prepared in Heaven and in the meantime we have a purpose on earth. Until that last chapter of our salvation takes place, we have the duty and opportunity to witness and work for Jesus. Until then we need to be fully awake and ready. I don't want to be found sleeping. I want to be found working and waiting and looking for Him.

If this life is all there is, then it would be alright to sleep. If we had not been saved by the marvelous grace of God, then we would have a reason to be sleepy. If Jesus hadn't given us an assignment to do, then sleeping would be acceptable. If Jesus had never promised us that one day He would come back and take us with Him, then go ahead and sleep on. But that's not the case. Now is the time to wake up and look up.

### **3. It is time to DRESS UP (vs. 12-14)**

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The night is just about to end and the new day is about to dawn. This speaks of man's night of unbelief, rebellion, and sin. The day speaks of the day of Christ's coming and the day of His glory and judgment of the world. A new day is going to dawn very soon. For that reason we need to dress up.

The Bible describes the process of sanctification in terms of taking off the works of darkness and putting on the armor of light. This describes a well-dressed believer. We can understand that because it's something we do every day. We wake up, get up, clean up, and then dress up.

This image of taking off dirty clothes and putting on good clothes is used elsewhere in the Bible. There is a sense in which it is already true of believers. We have already put on the new clothes of salvation.

- **Colossians 3:9-10**<sup>9</sup> *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;*<sup>10</sup> *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* Notice the past tense ("have put off, have put on").

While this is true of our position, it should also be true of our practice. Practically speaking what does it mean to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light? Darkness represents sin. Light represents holiness. **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5**<sup>4</sup> *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*<sup>5</sup> *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.* **1 John 1:6-7**<sup>6</sup> *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*<sup>7</sup> *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

"Let us walk honestly" means to live properly or decently as a Christian should. Our conduct should be a proper reflection of who we are. It gets more specific. Take off rioting and drunkenness, etc. NASB makes it a bit easier to understand: "carousing and drunkenness, sexual promiscuity and sensuality." This would include all forms of pornography and immoral behavior. Take off strife and envying. These sins are more acceptable, but just as terrible and destructive.

Verse 14 is a powerful summary of how to dress. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on His character, His attitude, His lifestyle. Make no provision (*pronoia*, means to plan ahead, forethought). Make no plans to satisfy your sinful desires, but only have thoughts to live for Christ and put Him first. **Galatians 5:16** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* To walk in the Spirit is to put on Christ and live by His

Word. Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ means He must come before me. Looking over these verses, here is what the Lord is telling us about how to live:

- Live with urgency – We have only a limited time to worship, work, and witness. Wake up. **James 4:14** *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*
- Live with purity – Take off what is sinful and dirty and put on what is holy and right. We are the saints. Robert McCheyne said: “I want to be as much like Jesus as a redeemed sinner can possibly be.”
- Live with consistency – All the words in the text speak of our lifestyle.

One night as a couple laid in bed, their old grandfather clock sounded off: “ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen.” The man was not asleep, so when he heard the clock, he sat up. His wife heard him and asked, “What time is it?” He said, “I’m not sure. I just know it’s later than it’s ever been.”