

2015!

How time flies! Seemingly, it was but a short while ago that 2014 began, and now it has passed. Another chapter in life's book has been written, and sooner or later (if time continues, sooner for some and later for others), the book itself will be concluded. In fact, for multiplied thousands, life's earthly book was abruptly cut short and concluded in 2014. Of course, what really matters was whether or not their names were "written in heaven." cf. Luke 10:20.

Gone forever are many opportunities ungrasped. The hours whittled away in foolish trivialities cannot be recalled. Some of the sick we intended to visit are not here to visit. The Lord's days that some used for things other than serving God have swiftly and silently passed with the passing of time and timely things. Gone are many unused opportunities to teach and save the lost, to do good to others, Gal. 6:10, and to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," 2 Peter 3:18.

All of this should awaken within us a keener realization of the importance of our "redeeming the time," Eph. 5:16. We cannot recall yesterday nor lay claim to tomorrow. Life is biblically described as "even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," James 4:14. Hence, we "ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this, or that," James 4:15. Time, in its present tense, therefore is priceless and it ought not be squandered! Indeed, we are given time that we might prepare for **eternity!**

Time not only passes rapidly; it witnesses rapid changes. In the space of just one year, you, the reader, have experienced many changes in your own body and in your own life. Both physically and spiritually, you are either weaker or stronger. Because "*it is appointed unto man once to die,*" Heb. 9:27, no one can forever forestall the inevitable weakening and physical deterioration which eventually culminates in death. In fact, one is no sooner born than he begins to die!

What really counts, then, is your condition spiritually. Are you a Christian, a child of God, a member of His church? Have you grown in "*grace and knowledge?*" Are you closer to God than when you began the previous year? If you are not, then as far as **your soul** is concerned you have squandered a whole year?

As we now enter 2015, Islam is rapidly spreading. In the name of Allah, schools are being bombed, people are being beheaded, lives are being destroyed, and nations are both internally divided and at war with each other. Increasingly, over recent years the homosexual movement has become more and more tolerated; now in many quarters so-called "gay marriage" is being embraced! We continue to slaughter unborn, innocent children by the thousands on a daily basis. Our federal debt has soared completely out of control. Millions of able-bodied citizens choose not to work, believing the world owes them a living. Countless thousands of unmarried men impregnate women, but who have no intentions of providing for the offspring produced. Many children have no idea as to the identity of their biological fathers — and some of their mothers are not sure either! Our streets are becoming more and more crime-ridden. Immorality and immodesty are so rampant that multitudes have even lost the ability to "*blush,*" Jer. 8:12. To a large

degree, ours is a society that calls “*evil good, and good evil;*” that puts “*darkness for light, and light for darkness;*” that puts “*bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,*” Isaiah 5:20!

However, in spite of the sordid, sinful condition of much of modern society, opportunities to serve the Lord continue to abound. Over the years, multitudes have learned by bitter experience that one reaps what he has sown, Gal. 6:7, and they long for something better. People are often able to see through the unbelief and confusion of both Romanism and Denominationalism, and are disgusted with what they have witnessed. Yes, there are still multiplied thousands who would rejoice to take refuge in the ark of safety and in Christ the Savior of the world, and in God Whom the Psalmist described as being “*my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge...*,” Psalm 62:7. The Gospel has not lost its “*power,*” Rom. 1:16, and “*the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save,*” Isaiah 59:1.

But souls will not be saved and progress will not be made by our waxing fat, cozy, and lifeless in our carpeted, air-conditioned meeting houses. The Great commission still begins with the word “*Go,*” Mark 16:15, and “*go,*” we must! We must stand in the “*old paths,*” Jer. 6:16, condemning error and sin both within and without, and at the same time we must be reaching out by teaching the lost. Let’s quit salving our troubled conscience by passively saying “people are not interested anymore,” and **take** the saving Gospel to them! Certainly they are not going to be “interested” until they know what the gospel will do, and they are not going to obey it until they **learn** it, and they are not likely to learn it until **we teach** it!

With optimism, I believe 2015 will be a good year in which this congregation will grow, both spiritually, and numerically. My optimism is based upon faith in God and in the “*power*” of the Gospel, and my confidence in the brethren here, believing they intend to increase unto godliness, and will strive more diligently to carry the gospel to the lost. **If** this be our attitude and our resolve, and **if** we carry out that resolve, it **will be** a good year!
—Bobby Witherington

What’s Happened?

Well, I’ll tell you just what happened to the Lord’s day. It has become Mother’s Day, Father’s day, Dad’s birthday, Aunt Susie’s birthday, and anybody else’s birthday, whether it came last Wednesday, or will not arrive until next Thursday. Not only that, it is being used for Kid’s Day, Dog Show Day, Hog Calling Day, Fishing Day, and Tour-the-Country Day. It is also Reunion Day, Make an extra buck Day, or a “Day-off day. Put them together with the Sundays that are Picnic Days, Entertain-kin-folk Day, Sports Day, Cold Day, Hot Day, Rainy Day, and My-day-to-rest Day, and it easy to see why there is no more time for Christ on the Lord’s day.

—Author Unknown

Is This Your Bible?

Stashed away, collecting dust

A seldom read, sacred trust,
Highly praised, but hidden away.
Unexamined, day after day?

In full view, seen by all
Resting nicely, in the front hall,
Unsoiled, unused, neatly placed,
Its heavenly message untraced.

Expertly bound, nice family size,
Offering hope, the Christian's prize,
But disregarded, until at last,
A loved one has passed!

Filled with truth, God's word,
Seeking hearts formerly unstirred,
Skillfully revealing God's power,
But unable to cope with TV hour?

Is this your Bible, my friend?
Then your ways, you must amend!
Hasten quickly and repent,
Before your days here are spent!

**** —B. Witherington