

Have You Learned To Number Your Days?

The Christian Bible has many scriptures that tell us how short this physical life is.

Job 14:1-2 [NIV] *“Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.”*

We all know how quickly our shadow can fade.

Psalms 78:39 [NIV] *“He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.”*

God knows how limited we are, the frail life within human flesh. But also that we are locked into time that is for ever passing us and we can never go back to relive anything in the past.

1 Chronicles 29:15 [King James] *“For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.”*

No day lasts more than the 24 hours of time dictated by the spinning of the earth.

Life is but a short pilgrimage on this earth, that will continue to spin each twenty-four hours after we leave it.

In spite of the fact that each day is one day less that we have on earth, do we continue to live life as though there is no limit to the amount of time we have?

On the other hand, there are some who have contemplated the subject at least enough that they spend enormous amounts of time and money in a desperate effort to preserve and prolong this life with rejuvenation treatments, diet and super-vitamin concoctions.

Alas, at best such measures only postpone, without avoiding, the inevitable.

One day soon our physical life on earth will end.

Our Creator God, the One who lives for ever, who alone has eternal life to give, wants each of us to think about this subject often. Even every day.

Why?

So that we never forget how much we depend on Him for life.

The more independent and self-reliant a person is, the greater their talents, the better their health and living standard, the less likely they are concerned about their relationship with the Creator God.

When things are going right our human nature will tell us *“who needs God?”*

King David had plenty of reasons to feel physically self-confident.

This is no doubt why he asked God to help him realise how mortal he was.

Psalms 39:4-5 [NIV] *“Show me, O LORD, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath. Selah.”*

Breathe out the air from your lungs then try to capture it to put it back in your lungs.

This is how successful you will be trying to capture the last moments of your life.

What should we be doing?

Our life span can be compared with a special hourglass.

Not an ordinary hourglass that allows you to see the sand in the top section as well as the bottom.

The top half of this hourglass is opaque; you cannot see how much sand is left. All you can see is how much sand has already gone through.

Look closely and watch for a few moments the trickle of sand actually flowing through the narrow middle part.

This is your life that is passing.

You do **not** know if there remains in the top half a lot of sand or if, before your very eyes, are falling the last precious grains of your life!

Just to impress this lesson, find a quiet place where you can spend a few undisturbed minutes. Take with you a clock that makes an audible tick.

In this silence that is broken only by the seconds ticking away, think, this is my life I'm listening to.

What is ticking away is my opportunity to get in harmony with my Creator God's Will that He will then give me the gift of eternal life that will **not** be governed by a ticking clock.

If we are to live after this short physical life, we must receive eternal life as a special gift from our Creator God.

Today few people realise this, if they do consider life after death at all, they believe they have "*immortal souls.*"

But this is **not** the case.

Ezekiel 18:4 [King James] "*Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"

The soul can die, there is **no** guarantee of eternal life outside of God's Will for us to receive it as a gift.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

Because of past sins there is **nothing** we can do to receive eternal life, except by something that Jesus Christ has done for us, in our stead. All we can earn by living a "*good*" life is death.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 [King James] "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*"

This statement by Solomon comes at the end of the wisdom books [**Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes**].

What is the wise Solomon telling us?

Since the mortal life is fast slipping away, the wise, sensible and logical way to use what time we have left is to prepare for the time when the Creator God will judge our life to see if He wants to have us around for eternity.

How logical, yet how many of us make this the major goal in our lives?

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 [NIV] *“As God’s fellow-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, ‘In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation.”*

What is this grace that Paul is talking about, that can lead to our salvation, from death to being given eternal life by the Creator God?

John 3:13-18 [NIV] *“No-one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven, the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.’”*

Heaven has never been the reward offered by God to His people.

Eternal life, our salvation from eternal death, that **only** comes to us through belief in what God has done for all humanity through the birth, life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

What is involved in this belief in Jesus Christ?

Acts 2:37 [NIV] *“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’”*

Peter had just told these people that they had murdered the very Messiah [Saviour] that they were looking for.

Acts 2:38-41 [NIV] *“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.’ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

Let us examine exactly what the apostle Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to tell these people and through the record of this event in the Christian Bible, all humanity.

Repent – This means our taking a totally different direction in our lives.

For a full explanation see our article on this website under the main heading ‘*Repentance*,’ named ‘*What Is Repentance?*’

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

To show our gratitude towards God for His mercy, that is allowing His Son Jesus Christ’s death on the cross be a substitute for our deserved death that our sins have earned us.

We should offer our bodies [Greek “*soma*” meaning body, mind and human spirit] to God as a living sacrifice.

What does this mean by “*living sacrifice*”?

Romans 6:3-4 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

This is the baptism that Peter mentioned, by total immersion so that it is like our death and being placed in our grave.

As Jesus Christ was resurrected from death we also are raised out of our baptismal grave to a new life.

Romans 6:5-13 [NIV] *“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

This is the new life as a “living sacrifice.”

We sacrifice our will, our desires, to live out God’s Will in our lives.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ‘You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

The new life we live will bring glory and honour to our Creator God.

How is this accomplished?

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

We have to allow the Holy Spirit to transform our thought patterns and actions.

The receiving of the Holy Spirit is the promise of God, that Peter mentioned in **Acts 2:38-39** after repentance and baptism.

Acts 5:32 [NIV] *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”*

The Holy Spirit only comes to those who obey their Creator God.

John 16:13-14 [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

The Holy Spirit will open up our minds to God’s truth, the Christian Bible [**John 17:17**] and remind us that there will be a day of judgement for all humanity.

John 16:5-11 [NIV] *“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

The work of the Holy Spirit.

Place within us the desire to repent.

Show us that true righteousness only comes through faith in Jesus Christ, that allows His righteousness to be credited to us. [**Romans 4:13-25**]

Prepare us for the judgement of Jesus Christ. [**2 Corinthians 5:10**]

How is this preparation for judgement made by Holy Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-25 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

Our close relationship with the Holy Spirit will allow these God-like qualities “*rub off*” on us as He works in and through us out to others in acts of love and compassion. [read **John 14:15-18; John 7:38-39**]

The prayer of Moses as recorded in **Psalms 90** is especially fitting in conjunction with this study.

Psalms 90:1-2 [NIV] *“Lord, you have been our dwelling-place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”*

Moses opens this prayer by lauding the timelessness of the Eternal God.

Psalms 90:3, 5, 8-10 [NIV] *“You turn men back to dust, saying, ‘Return to dust, O sons of men.’” ... “You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning,” ... “You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. The length of our days is seventy years, or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.”*

In contrast Moses directs our attention to the brief mortality of sinful human beings who lack a right relationship with their Creator God.

Psalms 90:12 [NIV] *“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”*

Unless we are wise enough to realise the importance of each day.

Unless we use the time that our Creator God has allowed us to perfect our relationship with Him, we lack wisdom.

Psalms 90:15-17 [NIV] *“Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children. May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us, yes, establish the work of our hands.”*

Moses prays that the disciplines and the trials that God allows in our short lives may cause our lives to reflect the love, compassion and the other fruits of the Holy Spirit that the Creator God desires in the new nature that He is creating in us.