

## What Time Is It?

Joe Slater

*“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”* (Romans 13:11).

Saturdays and Sundays used to be my opportunities to “sleep in.” School was out, and church wasn’t a priority. On school days, however, my parents would say, “It’s time to get up! You don’t want to be late for school.”

Some of the Christians to whom Paul wrote in Romans needed to wake up! Physical sleep wasn’t the problem; Paul used sleep as a metaphor for their spiritual lethargy.

Who knows why they had become sluggish? Being the capital of the empire, the city of Rome contained every vice, every philosophy, and every strange religion you can imagine. Christians might well struggle to stay true to the gospel. How should they interact with different religious groups? What should their relationship to the government be? How should they treat fellow Christians and people in general? Wrestling with such issues can make you tired and sleepy!

Paul exhorts: “Wake up!” Why? Because “now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.” This salvation refers not to our initial cleansing at baptism, but our ultimate salvation when the Lord takes us to Heaven. Paul wasn’t saying that Jesus’ return was imminent, but our departure to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23) draws nearer every day.

Our challenges aren’t identical to those of the Romans, but vice and false religions confront us too. And the same lethargy infects us, especially after we’ve been in Christ several years. Time draws shorter for each of us every day. That being so, may God help us to wake up!

## Drifting

“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away” (Hebrews 2:1).

For the greatest part of my life, I’ve lived near the confluence of two rivers. A short walk brings me to the place where the Obey River empties into the larger Cumberland River. On several occasions, I have watched as large pieces of wood floated along in the current. At times, I’ve seen whole trees in the water. These pieces of wood, driven by the current, take the path of least resistance and often present navigational hazards to watercraft.

In life, the word drift takes on several different meanings. A “drifter” is someone who moves from place to place and typically depends on others to survive. In daily life, “to drift” indicates a trend to gradually move from one location to another. In the book of Hebrews, the inspired writer addresses believers who appear to be slowly drifting away from Jesus and in a direction toward Judaism. The writer appeals from many angles in his effort to stop the drift.

One appeal is Hebrews 2:1, which admonishes believers to *“pay the much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”* Spiritual drifting is an unconscious process that tends to be unrecognizable, so effective teaching is a great way to exercise spiritual muscles and combat the problem. Believers must resolve to mature in faith, move on from “elementary teaching” (Hebrews 6:1), and allow Lord Jesus to be in control.

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

**“To be fervent in spirit is to be boiling in spirit; and to be boiling we must be near the fire.”** (Vance Havner)

## Train The Children To Have:

***Feet that follow.***

***Legs standing for truth.***

***Knees that pray.***

***Hands that serve.***

***Arms that comfort.***

***Shoulders that bear.***

***A head that is sober.***

***Ears that listen.***

***Eyes that see needs.***

***A mind that unites.***

***A heart that forgives.***

***A mouth that thirsts for righteousness.***

***And a voice that praises the Lord.***

--Jon Warnes (via Facebook)

## **Rocks, Crystals, And Spirituality**

People will look anywhere for spirituality... even to rocks. The main attractions in Sedona, Arizona, are crystals, rocks, and hiking! People say that Sedona is one of the most “spiritually alive” places in the US because of these crystals and rock formations. People drive from all over the world just to get some kind of spiritual sensation from the rocks.

Our world is looking for spirituality in all the wrong places! We need to be there to point them towards the true spiritual source: Jesus Christ!

--Kolton Balance (Conifer, CO)