

**TRUTH FOR TODAY**

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## **HOW SHORT MY TIME IS #2**

Well, it's happened again - we've come to that time of year where we received an extra hour on the weekend. Most people set their clocks back one hour before going to bed last Saturday evening, preferring not to get up at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday morning to adjust the time when Daylight Saving Time officially ended. We were given an extra sixty minutes to either sleep, to recreate, or to work. For some, it was a much needed extra hour of study. As a preacher, I wish we could somehow build in an extra hour every Saturday night, for no matter how much I work during the week, I never feel adequately prepared for Sunday!

What's this all about - falling back in the fall and springing forward in the spring? The thrust of Daylight Saving Time was to have more daylight in the afternoon and less in the morning. As the time has now changed again, it will be lighter in the mornings, which is an advantage to school children going to school, but darker in the evenings. In a few days, it will be dark at 5:00 p.m. That's the downside to gaining an extra hour on the weekend.

Our country began observing Daylight Saving Time - moving clocks forward one hour in the spring - in the year 1918. The concept was first proposed by the New Zealand scientist George Vernon Hudson in 1895, followed by the English builder William Willett in 1905; it was used for the first time in Thunder Bay, Canada, in 1908.<sup>1</sup> Many European countries began the observance in 1916. The idea was that most could get more done in the evenings during spring and summer with an extra hour of daylight. Plus, you could decrease the use of electricity - with an extra hour of daylight in the evenings, that's one less hour you would have to use lights.

Some countries have never used Daylight Saving Time; many of the African nations never have. Other countries, such as those in South America and Asia, have used it, but have

since stopped observing the time change. Most countries in North America and Europe still follow the practice.

In our nation, it is not a federal law that each state has to observe Daylight Saving Time. Hawaii does not observe the time change at all, and most of Arizona has followed suit. Indiana did not adjust their clocks until April 2005. Florida is considering implementing Daylight Saving Time year-round, but has yet to obtain the approval of the U.S. Congress.<sup>2</sup>

The federal law is that if you do observe DST that you must begin and end at the same time each spring and fall. Prior law was that the first Sunday in April began DST and the last Sunday in October ended it. The law now (as of 2007) states DST will begin the second Sunday in March and end the first Sunday in November. Of course, we never gain an hour, as we'll lose it in 18 weeks when we will move our clocks forward again - it all balances out.

Speaking of time, that's what we're currently considering in these articles - reminding ourselves of the limited amount of time we actually have. Having noted how we view and treat time, and that such is often a matter of perspective, consider next:

### **BIBLICAL CHARACTERS WHO REMEMBERED THE BREVIDITY OF TIME**

**Ethan**, the inspired penman of Psalm 89. While we normally think of David as the "psalmist," he actually wrote only about half of the 150. The superscription to Psalm 89 gives us not only the author's name, but also informs us this is **Maskil**, a psalm of instruction. While little is known of Ethan, some tell us he was a musician in David's day, and was noted for his wisdom in Solomon's reign. He may have lived through part of the reign of Rehoboam. If so, he is most likely an aged man when he pens this psalm.

As of his writing, troubles had come to the Jews for their sins; he implored God to

intervene, and quickly, for time was running out: *“Remember how short my time is” (Psalm 89:47).*

**Moses**, the inspired penman of Psalm 90. During the patriarchal dispensation of time, beginning with Adam and ending with Moses at Mt. Sinai, men lived lengthy lives, well into their hundreds. Genesis chapter 5 records the genealogy of Adam through Noah, and the life span of those men was quite impressive. As far as the record goes, Methuselah was the world’s oldest man, topping out at 969 years. Coming in a close second was Jared, who lived to be 962, followed by Noah (950), Adam (930), and Seth (912).

However, by Moses’ time, men did not live nearly as long:

*The days of our years are threescore and ten (70); and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years (80), yet is their strength labor and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away (Psalm 90:10).*

Of course, ages 70 and 80 were/are not absolute certainties, but generalities. My own father is now fourscore and twelve (92), and Moses himself was sixscore (120) when he died. Moses observed that even when life is lived at its longest, whether 969 or 90 or 9 - it is *“soon cut off.”* Moses wanted us to know that at the end of the day, when it’s all said and done, life is short!

**Job**, dubbed by some as the “magnificent man of misery,” knew how short life was. This suffering patriarch spoke of the brevity of life, and in his suffering longed for life to be over! He compared the short span of life to several things:

A **weaver’s shuttle**, rapidly going back and forth: *“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle...” (Job 7:6).* The weaver made clothing on the loom, with the shuttle tossed back and

forth, moving rapidly with the thread running out.<sup>3</sup> We might use the analogy today of a needle on a sewing machine going up and down so fast representing the brevity of life.

Job likened the shortness of life to a **shadow**, here and then just as quickly gone. Of man, Job said he “*fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not*” (*Job 14:2*). A shadow is indeed a fleeting thing. All it takes for a shadow to disappear is for the sun to go down in just a few hours, or for a cloud to cover the sun in just a few minutes. As a kid, I spend a lot of time entertaining myself on my grandparents’ farm. Playing in the fields, I would look at the ground and watch the shadows of the clouds move. I found that they moved fast - especially if you tried to run and keep up with the cloud’s shadow!

Job said the brevity of life was like a **post**, or swift runner: “*Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away...*” (*Job 9:25*). A post in ancient times was a courier who often carried royal commands - the “pony express” of the day. These were men chosen for their speed, quickly running with news from town to town.<sup>4</sup> Job felt his life was passing by as quickly as those runners were running!

Job said his life was as fleeting as the **swift ships** (*Job 9:26*), which were usually made of lightweight papyrus.<sup>5</sup> These would have been the ancient “speed boats” of the day. Also, he used the **eagle** swooping down on its prey (*Job 9:26*) to describe life’s brevity. It is said that bald eagles can dive up to 100 miles per hour, that golden eagles can “*hasten to the prey*” at 150 miles per hour<sup>6</sup> - the prey doesn’t stand a chance! But for Job, this was but another illustration of how short his time was.

**Jesus**, the King of kings and Lord of lords, though eternal as God knew that in the flesh He had only a narrow window of time to accomplish His Father’s will:

*I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work (John 9:4).*

The Lord's earthly work was limited to only a little over three years in length. In fact, as of this text in John 9, He only had about six months left before His death. For Him, the "day" was drawing to a close and "the night" was on its way. He too reminds us how short our time is!

In next month's article, we'll consider some Biblical characters, just like many today, who ignored the brevity of time.

Wayne Cox

#### ENDNOTES

1. [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com).
2. [orlandosentinel.com](http://orlandosentinel.com).
3. Holman O.T. Commentary, Vol. 10, "Job," Steven J. Lawson, pp. 68-69.
4. It was said of some such messengers in more modern times that they could cover 150 miles in less than 24 hours by running. Barnes Notes on Job, p. 221. One wonders if such is not a bit of an exaggeration, as a runner would have to average a little over 6 miles an hour over 24 hours to do that!
5. Holman, p. 87.
6. [nationaleaglecenter.org](http://nationaleaglecenter.org).

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#### GOSPEL MEETING

*November 11 - 14, 2018*

*Different speakers*

**NETTLETON CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**GOSPEL MEETING**

*November 11 - 14, 2018*

*Phillip D. Sanders, speaker*

**WEST MAIN CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**GOSPEL MEETING**

*June 28 - 30, 2019*

*Mel Futrell, speaker*

**VERONA CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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