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God's Time Frame for Your Life

By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #8 ~

It was Carroll, Iowa in the late 60’s and early 70’s and I was in high school, and jogging was just becoming popular. A huge city cemetery was right behind my back yard, and 3-4 times a week I would hop over the fence and take a run. Many times I’d stop and look at grave stones, noting a person’s name and his birth year and death year. I thought about how people define life in a physical way, by when they are born and by when they die. A person celebrates his birthdays and sooner, or later, he dies. Then he has a memorial service, and gets one of those grave stones with his name and two dates on it. I thought about how a person has only so many years on this earth, and then he is gone, and in the ground.

It was Ames, Iowa in August of 1971, and I was attending Iowa State

University. It was my first day of classes and I can still remember waking up to my roommate's clock radio playing *"Won't Get Fooled Again."* It was later that year that I thought of that title in a new way, for by God's grace I realized my problem was sin and that Jesus Christ was the only answer – and I believed that He died for me and paid for all my sins. God was merciful to me, for I was born again, and was forgiven of all my sins. I was a child of God in the kingdom of God. I didn't fear death anymore, for death was a good thing, a door from this life to the next, from earth to heaven. This was the gospel message – the best news I had ever heard! Now I had a heavenly Father (my earthly father had passed away 10 years earlier). Life was no longer just a physical life, but more importantly, a spiritual life, a relationship with God Himself. I had eternal life, and I was going to live forever! John 11:25-26

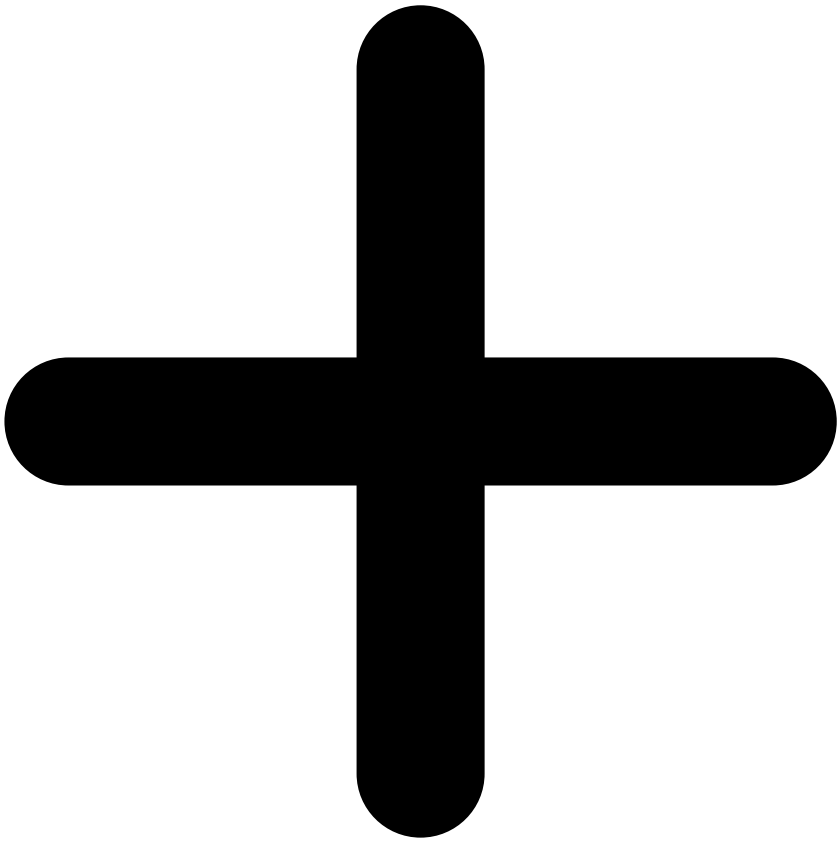
God's Word became my favorite *"school"* book, and God was my teacher. He taught me that my relationship with Him was in three parts. In the past, I was justified, I was born again and had a spiritual birthday. In the present, I am being sanctified, and I am spiritually growing up. In the future, I will be glorified, I will be perfect – body, soul and spirit. These words summed up my life – justified, sanctified and glorified. But I learned that being glorified wouldn't happen when I physically die. Christians who die shed their old body, and go to heaven in a spiritual form, but are not at that time glorified. That doesn't happen until Christ comes back at the end of this age, and then all believers will be given perfect, powerful, spiritual and eternal bodies. A person's salvation is only completed when he is glorified.

This perspective of our life is seen and summed up in many verses. Philippians 1:6 says, *"I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it on the day of Christ Jesus."* 2 Corinthians 1:20 says, *"By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."* My favorite verses are Colossians 3:3-4 – *"For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."*

Shortly after becoming a Christian, I started learning about prophecy, what the Bible said about Christ coming back to this earth, our future, and the future of the world. I realized that my life on earth was converging and coinciding with Christ's return. I saw that I may be here when Christ comes back, and then, at that time, I and all the other believers from all of history will be glorified. It became clear to me that there are two possibilities for my future – either I'll make it to the end of my life and die and go to heaven, or I'll make it to the end of this age, and Christ will come back, and I will be raptured and then go to heaven.

Do you ever think about this? Do you realize that you may not live to be 70, 80 or 90 years old? You may not become a grandparent. You may not have children. You may not even get married. The fact that you live in the end-times means you need to look at life differently, for your *"glory"* days are not that far away. You may be living on earth when Christ returns and raptures all the saints. Thinking about life in this way changes things, and helps you to not be fleshly and worldly, but to be living for God. It affects how you live, the things you do, the places you go, the people you see, and how you use your time and money. Might you see that the time frame of your life is now fitting in with God's time frame for the end times. Knowing this gives you the right perspective on your life! Now, in these days, is our time to live for God!

P.S. I just finished an article on Matthew 24 which I believe is the single most important, most instructive prophecy chapter for Christians in the entire Bible. Take your time in reading it for there is a lot to digest. Please feel free to make copies of it for your own personal use.



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