

James 4:13-16 (NIV),

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59-04-01-Where Did Time Go?

New Year's, time, decisions, trust, eternity

James 4:13-16

The best use of time is trusting the Time-Keeper.

INTRODUCTION:

–**Where Did Time Go?** is a good question to ponder as we welcome the *New Year*. It stimulates us to reflect on life... [When as a babe I slept– Time crept; / When as a lad I talked– Time walked; / When I became a man– Time ran; / And as I older grew– Time flew; / Soon I'll be passing on– Time gone!]
 –Perceptions of time aren't just relative to age but to mental states: *we can be bored or busy with time*; or to states of activity: time can find us *relaxed or rushed*; or to emotional states: our time can be *happy or sad*.
 –Time also relates to movement [It's in common expressions: “*time slips away ... time flies... time stands still*.” – there are time/motion studies in work places.].
 –**Where Did Time Go?** is more a *lament* than a real *question!* Better questions can lead to better answers that support a better principal, which is **HOM.idea**. *To start with...*

I. Where Did Time Come From?

- A. But first, *Is time real?* [**When I was a teenager**, I won a set of *GBofWW* with my *question* to Mortimer J. Adler's newspaper column, *Questions from the Great Books*: “*Dear Dr. Adler, The average man goes through his life using the notion called ‘time,’ but he never gives much consideration to its definition. What do some of the great philosophers say about the phenomenon of time? – Mr. David Hatton, Hayward, CA*” On New Year's Eve, 1967, his reply was published nation-wide. He summarized Augustine's idea: “*All past time no longer exists; it has been, but is no longer. And all future time by definition does not yet exist; it will be, but is not yet. The only time that exists, then, is the present. But as soon as we concentrate on the present, it, too, escapes us.*”]
- B. Newton argued for the real existence of *past, present and future time*. Later, Einstein proved it so, when using the speed of light in the famous $E = mc^2$ equation from his “*theory of relativity*.”
- C. The Bible agrees with Newton & Einstein– **Gen 1:14-15**, And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. (*Time is related to light and movement; both parts of creation.*)

TRANS: God *created* time, therefore time is real and it's moving. We

measure it by comparing our movements in life with the movements of heavenly bodies. Earth is **not** the basic time standard: we have to look for days to the Sun; for months, to the moon; for years to the stars. When asking “Where did time go?” our thoughts were meant to be directed upward to the heavens and to the heavenly Time-Maker and Time-Keeper. So, **our best use of time is trusting the Time-Keeper**. *Another essential question is...*

II. Why Did God Create Time?

- A. Time is a teacher we were meant to listen to— **Psa 90:9-12**, 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. Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Time tells us to live wisely and with godly fear.)
- B. But we can treat time’s instruction foolishly...
1. by ignoring it: “*Time doesn’t matter.*” [I had **a good friend** who, by not watching her time, lost a great job by continually being late for work.]
 2. or by presumption: “*Time is mine to do with as I please.*”—**James 4:13-16**, ¹³Now listen, you who say, “*Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.*” ¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, “*If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.*” ¹⁶As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.
- C. God uses time to allow us to make the right choices.
1. When we make wrong ones, the logic of human thinking says, “*Too bad! What’s done is done!*” (This rule is illustrated by Islamic fatalism [**Omar Khayyam’s Rubáiyát**, “The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, / Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit / Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, / Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.”])
 2. Fatalism is countered by God’s grace in the Christian Gospel, offering forgiveness for past sins and healing for past hurts...

TRANS: “*What’s done is done*” makes us long to be able to go back and undo some things, but the Cross does something better: it reaches back to undo us from the past! It allows us to lift our eyes from the sad lamentation of “Where Did Time Go?” to a healthier perspective, which is the answer to another question...

III. Where Is Time Taking Us?

- A. Scientifically and relatively speaking, not very far yet...
1. Really, we’re just going in circles [**Earth** spins in a global circle *daily*, circles the **Sun** *yearly*, revolves in a galactic spiral *every 230 million years*, but we are barely moving compared with the distance to our closest galaxy.)
 2. Do any of us really live very long? [The **Hubble space telescope** took shots in a spot, the size of a dime held 75 ft away, and found 1500 galaxies, some of them 10 billion light years away / My voice reaches across this room in 2/100ths of a second. You can hear Paul’s Epistles read after almost 2000 years. But both those lengths of time are nearly identical when compared to the time it took for light from those galaxies to reach us.]
- B. Our legacy of time is not length of age, distance traveled, events experienced, but its our divine opportunity to make right choices:
1. If we just go with the flow of time, we’ll go in circles. (We must make each new day a step forward in our walk with God.
 2. If we let time rob us of remembering that we have eternal souls, we can miss enjoying communion with our Eternal God.
- C. Our hope is in the Time-Keeper Who visited us in earthly time:
1. He knows how fast 33 years can go by, and also what can be accomplished by investing that small portion of time.
 2. He knows how to lead us to the right place at the right pace. (He won’t go too fast for us to follow, and He’s taking His time to prepare the place He’s taking us to.)

CONCLUSION:

When as a babe I slept – Time crept; / When as a lad I talked – Time walked; /
When I became a man – Time ran; / And as I older grew – Time flew; /
Soon I’ll be passing on – Time gone!

—A hundred years from now, we won’t be asking, “*Where did time go?*” Time won’t matter, but what will matter is how we used time— how we used this New Year before us. Let’s not pity ourselves for wasted time in the past. Let’s use the time we have left on earth to trust the Time-Maker for our plans and projects and progress within each and every new day, all year long!