



THE EXHORTER'S CALL

Vol. 1 Ed. 2

FEBRUARY 2006

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KNOWING GOD

We are all busy with the various activities of our lives and our days quickly become weeks, weeks months, and months years. Soon our lives slip away. In this fast-paced cycle, it is important to TAKE time to stop and fellowship with the Lord.

I've always been fascinated with physics. I believe that the structure of the universe, from the very small to the very large, can be used to mirror spiritual principles found in the Word of God. In fact, the Bible declares that Creation, the handiwork of God, bears witness in testimony of Him. The relativistic physics of Einstein tells us that at the speed of light, time ceases to exist; it literally stops. First John Chapter 1:5 states: *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."*

We know that God is eternal; everlasting, outside the boundaries of time. Yet, He desires to fellowship with us because He loves us. Should we expect Him to change His nature to fit our schedules, or should we change ours to meet with Him? Malachi 3:6 tells us that God never changes, so that leaves only one option! This is good news; for if perfection were to change, it would no longer be perfect!

So what to do? Have you ever wished you could stop time in order to prolong a vacation or a weekend? Perhaps you've dreamed of stopping time in order to pursue an activity or interest that you never seem to find time for. I've heard many people say that they simply do not have time for God, church attendance, prayer, bible study, etc. in their hectic daily lives.

Are we missing the obvious?

Rather than trying to budget our time in order to fit God into our busy schedule, perhaps we should simply step into Him and, in so doing, step outside of "time" altogether. We are limited by the finite in our daily lives, but our spirit is eternal. By making God our priority, we simply slip outside the boundaries of "time" by merging with the light of His Glory.

In John 8:12 we find: *"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*

Psalm 46:10 gives us this admonishment: *"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."*

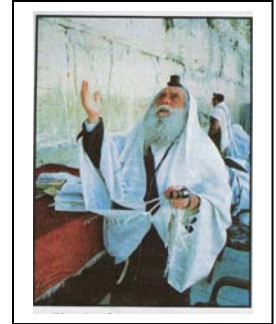
Bottom Line: You will never find time for God. However, by TAKING time to spend with Him and making that your first priority, you will find that time will seem to stop; leaving you with all the time you need for everything else. Then you can face the rest of your day with the energy and sense of well-being that you've been lacking.

Are you willing to "be still and know" that He is God? Why not give it a try and "stop" time today?



שְׁאֵלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

Yē-rū-sha-lī'im ←--- Shalom ←--- Sha-ālū



HAMAS AND ISRAEL

The drama of the end of the age continues to unfold before our very eyes. The election of HAMAS is an extremely serious and dangerous development for Israel. HAMAS has been listed as a terrorist organization by the United States and the United Nations since the late 1980's.

HAMAS is the acronym for Harakut al Muqawamah al Islamiya: "The Islamic Resistance Movement." In a play on words, hamas also means courage or bravery in Arabic; but interestingly, the word hamas means "wrongful violence" in Hebrew. In what may be prophetic references, hamas in Hebraic spelling is consistently translated throughout the books of 2 Samuel, Psalms, and Proverbs as "the violent man." (See Strongs#2554/2555)

HAMAS formed in 1987 in the so-called West Bank as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood dedicated to the overthrow of Israel and the destruction of the Jewish race. They are guided by the violent theological teachings of Sayyid Qutb who proclaimed that the entire world must be placed under Sharia (Islamic law) and that both the unbeliever and "impure" Muslim must be slain.

HAMAS promotes violence through Dawas (militant sermons) and public uprisings. They have worked closely with Hezbollah to develop and improve tactics and methodologies for suicide bombers and have openly opposed the former Palestinian Liberation Organization aka, Palestinian Authority for power since their inception.

Despite their opposition to the PA, it appears that HAMAS may attempt a similar subterfuge. Many in America are unaware that the Palestinian Liberation Organization, officially listed as a terrorist organization, was given a swift, respectable name change in a misguided and desperate attempt to negotiate peace in the Middle East. By becoming the Palestinian Authority, the West could obscure the PA's true identity and legally recognize the PLO/PA as a legitimate political party. It was thought that the pressures of government would force the PLO to moderate its stance and secure peaceful relations with Israel. Worked swimmingly, wouldn't you say?

Many analysts were shocked and clearly unprepared for a HAMAS electoral victory. I was not. When President Bush announced his initiative to bring democracy to Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., I was taken to task for proclaiming that such a concept would not yield the desired result over the long term. As politically reprehensible as it may be, I believe that the concepts of freedom and democracy, as we understand them in America, are incompatible with the tenets of true Islam. Despite assurances that Islam is a "religion of peace, hijacked by a few terrorists," note the violent riots over Danish cartoons being conducted **world-wide** by average, common Muslims.

Isaiah 5:20 states "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" I would hope that the world would not be beguiled into repeating the same mistakes with HAMAS as made with the PLO/PA. I am not, however, optimistic.

Fortunately, the LORD himself offers this encouragement in Matthew 24:6: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet..."

Psalm 122:6 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."



2 Corinthians 3:17

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.”

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

You may know people who have said that they did not want to give up their current lifestyle to follow God. Perhaps, you've said it yourself. Christianity is often ridiculed and/or held in contempt by the world in which we live, but the power of the cross truly changes lives. I know. It changed mine. I, too, once lived a lifestyle that pursued partying and “fun” only to discover that deep within, none of these things ever lived up to my expectations. You see, the Christians of today were once as you may be now, living it up and keeping God at a distance so He didn't spoil our “fun.” So what changed?

Simply put: true freedom, true joy...true pleasure.

Psalm 16:11 declares: *“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”*

The Creator knew man would fall and that His beloved creation would be lost. Yet, He already had the plan in place to restore our fellowship with Him; the sacrifice for sin through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since God created man in his own image, being separated from Him leaves something missing in our lives. Although we may or may not like to admit it, there is a sense of emptiness deep within the heart of every man that can manifest itself as loneliness, despair, depression, fear, or even anger. Often, man tries to fill this void with something “fun” to combat these feelings. He quickly becomes a slave to this “fun-fix” despite repeated disappointments.

Other individuals may recognize this void as a spiritual one and explore all manner of spiritual beliefs in search of completion. There are numerous religious systems and new age beliefs in the world to give testimony to man's various attempts to achieve that “inner peace.” Sadly, many chase counterfeit placebos in place of the cure.

Only Jesus Christ can regenerate the human spirit; you must be “born-again.” We couldn't find our way back to God, but He found His way to us. Ask Him to restore what you're seeking: true freedom, true joy...true pleasure.

Rick Wagon is a born-again, Spirit-filled, firm believer in Christ who was saved eternally and securely by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus. His father is a former Baptist minister who became Spirit-filled and received ordination from Rhema Bible Church bringing Rick up with a solid foundation of faith and knowledge of God's Word. Rick is married to a beautiful, loving wife of faith and blessed with two fine sons that love the LORD. Rick currently serves as the Bioterrorism Training and Education Coordinator for the State of Oklahoma and operates as the Intelligence Officer and Security Liaison in emergency capacities after a life-long commitment to public service in law enforcement and protective security. Rick is available for special services within your church or fellowship and loves to worship the LORD.

