

## 073 This Is Your Wake Up Call!

**Romans 13:11-13**

Message by Dr R Bruce Montgomery  
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### Introduction

Before days of phones with alarms on them, when staying in a hotel, would often ask for a “wake up call” at a certain hour.

If you were ever in the military, you will recognize this sound **[ALBERTO PLAYING REVEILLE ON TRUMPET]**.

Reveille is the word for the trumpet or bugle call used to wake military personnel at sunrise (also prisoners). Various lyrics have been added, the most common being variations on:

*I can't get 'em up  
I can't get 'em up  
I can't get 'em up this morning;  
I can't get 'em up  
I can't get 'em up  
I can't get 'em up at all!  
And tho' the sun starts peeping,  
And dawn has started creeping,  
Those lazy bums keep sleeping,  
They never hear my call!*

(repeat top six lines)<sup>i</sup>

The name comes from *réveille* (or *réveil*), the French word for “wake up”.

I asked Alberto play it not just because it seemed fitting on memorial day, but because it is a good introduction to today’s text and message.

**Romans 13:11** *And do this,<sup>1</sup> understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from*

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<sup>1</sup> What does “**And do this**” refer to?” What immediately preceded in vs. 9,10 *The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as*

*your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*

Paul describes our “time” as one in which “salvation” is closer to arriving than ever before. Not referring here to our personal salvation – that has already been accomplished on the cross and appropriated by faith if you’re a believer. Paul is referring to the overarching master plan of salvation – the return of Jesus Christ and the restoration of God’s righteousness.

**Hebrews 9:28** *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

It is this completion of the salvation process that is said to be nearer than when we first believed.

Because it is closer than ever before we can’t afford to be sleeping now.

Our bodies all require long periods of sleep in order to restore and rejuvenate, to grow muscle, repair tissue, and synthesize hormones.

Sleep is involved in healing and repair of your heart and blood vessels. Ongoing sleep deficiency is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke.

Researchers have also shown that after people sleep, they tend to retain information and perform better on memory tasks.

You feel better, look better, think better and function better when you’ve had adequate sleep.

I discovered a couple of years ago that I have sleep apnea, and now sleep with a mask over my nose attached to a CPAP machine each night.

Interestingly enough, too much sleep, oversleeping, also has health hazards – including an increased risk of developing dementia.

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*yourself.”<sup>10</sup> Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Miss out on a lot when you are asleep. E.g. *Rip Van Winkle* (short story by Washington Irving published 1819), who fell asleep for twenty years. When he awoke he discovered shocking changes. His beard is a foot long, his musket has rusted, he doesn't recognize anyone in his village. He returns just after an election, and people are asking how he voted. Never having cast a ballot in his life, Van Winkle proclaims himself a faithful subject of King George II, unaware that the American Revolution has taken place.

He learns the unfortunate fact that most of his friends were killed fighting in the war. He is disturbed to find someone else has taken his name – until he discovers it is his son. He also discovers his wife died some time ago, but isn't saddened by the news.

**Romans 13:12** *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.*

The “*day of the Lord*” was a familiar Old Testament concept with which his hearers were familiar. *Yom Adonai*. (Joel 2:31, 32; Amos 5:18; Malachi 4:1-3). Dual themes of judgment and salvation.

It will be a day when God (1) vindicates his cause and his people; and (2) judges the world in righteousness. His enemies will be overthrown.

**I Thessalonians 5:4-9** *But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.*

*<sup>6</sup> So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.*

*<sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. <sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Important to know what time it is. It's time to wake up, be alert, to get smart about life because **the return of Christ is**

## **Imminent.**

As Paul writes in **I Corinthians 7:29** *The time is short.* New Living Translation: ***The time that remains is very short.***

Imminent is not a calendar term – as if we might be saying that Jesus' return is going to take place next week, or on some particular day (people have tried to set a date, but only made fools of themselves and their followers).

But imminent doesn't mean the same thing as immediate. It means it could be at any moment – there's nothing standing in the way to prevent it. Jesus could wrap up this age and usher in the final judgment at any moment, so it is urgent that you are ready to meet him – whoever you are and whenever he may come.

**II Peter 3:8**, talking about the day of the Lord and those who would scoff at the fact he hasn't returned yet, reminds us that ***with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*** Then a very important verse: **II Peter 3:9** ***The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.***

In the timeline of God's redemptive purpose, the next epochal event following the death of Jesus, his resurrection and ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is Jesus' return in glory. It's what's next on God's agenda.

Imagine you're attending a great theatrical production in a famous symphony hall. Before the play begins, you can hear noise, bustle (and some confusion) from behind the curtains. In the orchestra pit the instruments are warming up. Ushers are seating last minute arrivals, friends are greeting one another, others are studying the program.

Then the lights flicker off and on. The time is at hand! Before long, the house lights go down, a hush falls over the audience, the conductor raises his baton, the overture begins and the curtain slowly rises.

In the course of history, where are we in this sequence? The curtain is still down, the music hasn't started, people are still coming in, but it's only a matter of time before the play will begin.

As believers and students of God's Word, we know the time we're in. Jesus is about to return. His return is imminent.

We have God's word on that. Granted, 20 centuries have come and gone since our Lord gave the promise of his return. While he hasn't returned yet, it doesn't mean that God doesn't keep his promises. It simply means God does not follow our calendar.

We know he's coming back, we just don't know the exact time the curtain will rise.

We're told that his return will be like a thief in the night – meaning it will be sudden and with surprise (thieves don't announce themselves before breaking into your house.) The thief arrives when you least expect it. Likewise, God alone knows when Jesus will return.

What do we do while we're waiting, so we won't be caught unawares or unready? We make preparations.

Some don't make any preparation.

But some do. They are spiritually alert, not living sleepily. They won't be caught napping. Since they don't now when the Lord will return for his people, they live in a constant attitude of watching and waiting, working and witnessing.

They live soberly, controlled by the Spirit. They don't live "smashed" or "hammered" out of their skull.

They are spiritually alive! They don't live sloppily.. They understand the importance of staying alert – just like when you're driving, or if you're a sentry on guard duty.

Unlike a slumbering world, they live each day as if it were the one in which Christ will return.

**Romans 13:12** *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.*

Yes, we look forward to Messiah's return, but what relevance does that have today? Paul isn't here concerned about some future time when Christ appears, but the present time. He is concerned that we understand it and use it wisely. When Jesus comes back this present time and its opportunities will be gone forever.

**Ephesians 5:15, 16** *Be very careful then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every*

*opportunity, because the days are evil.* <sup>2</sup>

KJV renders the last verse: ***Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.***

Because we belong to a different "realm" we should act differently. Christians don't believe, "***anything goes.***" Don't adopt the same lifestyle as those who will be caught unawares, asleep.

We recognize that we are in a spiritual battle. There is an enemy out there, and he is real!<sup>3</sup> This world is hostile to God, and hell bent on opposing any desires of godliness on the part of God's followers.<sup>4</sup>

**As children of the day, in light of imminence of Christ's return, how then should we live?**

Paul gives us some advice – both negative – what not to do and positive – what to do.

**Romans 13:12 b** *So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

**Romans 13:13** *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*

**Romans 13:14** *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

One of first things you do after waking up and getting out of bed is to get dressed. More than just clothing, the prepared Christian doesn't live unprotected, but knows the importance of strapping on the defensive and offensive equipment God has provided (cf. **Eph. 6** and his discussion of the "armor" of God).

**INVITATION**

**II Corinthians 6:2** *"I tell you, now is the time of God's*

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<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere he describes the time in which we live as ***the present evil age.*** (**Galatians 1:4**).

<sup>3</sup> **I Peter 5:8** *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

<sup>4</sup> Too many people don't act like they truly believe it is an age of evil. They act like it is really rather nice, something to be enjoyed as much as possible.

***favor, now is the day of salvation.***

This is the time to repent and believe.

A week before Jesus was put to death, as he approached Jerusalem, he began to weep, saying **Luke 19:41-44** ***“If you, even you, had known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”***

What Jesus meant was that the people had been given time to repent of their sins and turn to him and be saved. Some had, of course, but the majority did not. They refused to do it, and as a result the time of their opportunity was drawing to an end.

The destruction of Jerusalem overtook the people of that city just as Jesus warned within a generation of his death and resurrection.

That is exactly the condition of people in our world today. Judgment will fall on you, if you are not trusting Jesus Christ for your salvation. He himself will be your judge.

But here’s the good news. Today is still the day of God’s grace. Judgment has not yet come. So turn from your sin and believe on Jesus. This may be the very moment of God’s coming to you personally.

**So what are you going to do with the time you have left?**

***Joshua 24:15 choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve , whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”***

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<sup>i</sup> An alternate rendition to words of Reveille is:

*I can't get 'em up,  
I can't get 'em up,  
I can't get 'em up this morning;  
I can't get 'em up,  
I can't get 'em up,  
I can't get 'em up at all!  
The corporal's worse than the privates,  
The sergeant's worse than the corporals,  
Lieutenant's worse than the sergeants,  
And the captain's worst of all!*