

How “Old” Is “Old”?

by Wayne Goff

Helping to care for my aged father these past few weeks has led my mind to think about old age, death, and our hope which is beyond this life. I have listened carefully to my father’s statements about his own life. I have considered the subject from Psalm 71 in our Bible Class. I have pondered the question of my own coming death. Everyone should take the time to consider the question of your own death because your answer will determine your life.

Sadly, too many people ignore the question because they are not comfortable with the answers they might have to give. But ignoring the questions of **when** you will die, and **how prepared** you are to die is like playing spiritual “Russian roulette”! It can only end badly.

The Bible gives relative answers to the question of how “old” is “old.” King David died at 70, yet the Scriptures describe him as “*advanced in years*” (1 Kings 1:1). The same thing was said of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:11, but they were 99 and 90 years old, respectively, when this was said (Gen. 17:1, 17, 24). Zacharias and Elizabeth were “*old*” and “*well-advanced in years*” when they were promised a son, John the Baptist (Luke 1:18)! Maybe there is some truth to the saying that you are only as old as you feel! And we should all lead good, clean, godly lives so that we might live as long as possible, honoring God. But be prepared to die whether or not your live to be “old.”

Okay, here is the question: “At what age are you planning on dying?” The common answer is, “Ooh, ahh, I don’t like that question!” But as uncomfortable as that is, you **need** to think about it! **Why?** Because when you ponder that question, then you will begin seriously to prepare for your demise. Would you rather die unprepared?

The correct answer to the question is: “I don’t know the exact time of my death.” None of us do know these things. But if that is true of you, then you *might* die today. Are you *prepared* to meet your Maker today? If not, then don’t you think you ought to prepare today . . . just in case? (You see how uncomfortable this line of thinking gets? Especially for someone who doesn’t really want to prepare to meet God right now.)

“For man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:12). How terrible is that time when a man dies *unexpectedly*, and *unprepared*? It happens every day! The Ecology Global Network estimates that **151,600 people die each day**. How many of them knew that today would be their day of death? Very few; perhaps only those with chronic illness or disease.

“This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead” (Ecclesiastes 9:3). The “**madness**” of which Solomon speaks, I believe, is the “*delusion*” of thinking they will not die, and therefore dying unprepared. It is indeed an “*evil*” that is done under the *sun* by every generation.

So back to our original question. How “old” is “old”? You are **old** when you are too set in your ways to change! Oh, you may be “alive,” but you are no longer “living.” So why don’t you wake up, consider your end, and do something about it? *“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed”* (Romans 13:11).

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