

Our Days are Getting Shorter

12/13/13

As I write, the winter solstice for this year is only about a week away. The winter solstice is the day of the year with the least amount of sunlight in the northern hemisphere. It occurs each year when the earth's tilt relative to the sun reaches its sharpest angle so that the northern hemisphere has a minimum exposure to sunlight. It is during this time of year that the most northern parts of the earth have no daylight at all.

I remember one fall several years ago when I mentioned to my family that our days were getting shorter. One of my sons, who was very young at the time, then asked me, "Does that mean that we are going to die?" It was funny to me that such a small boy assumed that I had spoken in a metaphorical sense rather than literally. He thought I meant that our days of life were nearing an end, but I was simply saying that the hours of daylight in each day were decreasing.

Of course, the number of days we have left to live on the earth is decreasing. The longer we live, the nearer we approach the inevitable limit of our time under the sun. Death is an appointment that every man and woman must keep (Heb. 9:27). It is the penalty and consequence that stems from Adam's sin, and no one is exempt (Rom. 5:12). The sin of man has earned the wages of death (Rom. 6:23a), and the wrath of God justly comes upon us. We simply cannot live here forever. Consider the words of Moses written to God in Psalm 90:9-12:

⁹For all our days have declined in Your fury;

We have finished our years like a sigh.

¹⁰As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,

Or if due to strength, eighty years,

Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow;

For soon it is gone and we fly away.

¹¹Who understands the power of Your anger

And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You?

¹²So teach us to number our days,

That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

Knowing that our days are getting shorter, "a heart of wisdom" makes the most of the time it has. In wisdom, let us recognize the truth of Ecclesiastes 11:7-8, which says,

⁷The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun. ⁸Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come will be futility.

Indeed, the darkness of our futile days on earth is increasing, but the light of Christ is also increasing if we are growing in His grace and knowledge (2Pet. 3:18). Notice Ephesians 5:13-16:

¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

As we “number our days” and “remember the days of darkness,” let us not despair. If we “have faith to the preserving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39), then our winter solstice of death will quickly end. Just as the hours of daylight in the northern hemisphere begin to increase after the winter solstice passes, so also eternal life will commence after we perish from this earth. Jesus will come to raise the dead who sleep in Him and to take the living who are faithful to Him, and they will be with Him forever (1Thess. 4:14-17). In eternity, we will be in that city that “has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev. 21:23). Indeed, “there shall be no night there” (Rev. 21:25), and there shall be no winter solstice and no days of darkness. We will live forever and ever in the abundant sunshine of the glory of our Lord.

None of us knows when our days on earth will end, but we all know that our days under the sun are getting shorter. The darkness of death is approaching, but we don’t have to remain in that darkness forever. Jesus came that we “may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Do you have that life abiding in you? “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Come to the sunshine of Jesus Christ and live in Him for endless days.

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