

## The Day Is Past and Gone

*John Leland (1754–1841)*

The day is past and gone,  
The evening shades appear.  
O may we all remember well  
The night of death draws near.

We lay our garments by,  
Upon our beds to rest;  
So death will soon disrobe us all  
Of what we here possess.

Lord, keep us safe this night,  
Secure from all our fears;  
May angels guard us while we sleep,  
Till morning light appears.

And when we early rise,  
And view th'unwearied sun,  
May we set out to win the prize,  
And after glory run.

And when our days are past,  
And we from time remove,  
O may we in Thy bosom rest,  
The bosom of Thy love.

## ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

### *In the Nick of Time*

#### The Most Important News of 2024

*Kevin T. Bauder*

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Many periodicals make a New Year's tradition of summarizing the most important stories of the past year. That tradition has never been followed by *In the Nick of Time*, but I thought this year might be a good time to begin. Since I'd never done this before, I perused several lists that others had put together. What struck me is that they universally missed the most important stories. So, in no particular order, here are my picks for the top stories of 2024.

#### Jesus Did Not Return

Few if any news outlets have reported that the Rapture did not occur during 2024. We believers are still on earth. We were unexpectedly granted an entire extra year to prepare ourselves. We were given a whole twelve months for devotion to our Lord. We had fifty-two whole weeks to apportion our time, energy, and money in such a way that as many people as possible (including ourselves) would be ready for His coming. The non-Rapture of the church during 2024 is clear evidence that the Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Eager as we are to be with Him in heaven, we can rejoice that He intends to show mercy to yet more sinners.

#### Few Were Disappointed

Almost as remarkable as the non-Rapture is the non-disappointment of the saints. Those who obeyed Scripture were looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. For such people, every year in which they have not yet glimpsed His face leaves them both heartsick for Him and homesick for a better country, that is: an heavenly. They yearn for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They exhort one another, and so much the more, as they see the day approaching. The absence of this eagerness for the coming and presence of Jesus is certainly news.



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## Many Were At Ease

People who seek a better country are willing to dwell in tabernacles. They confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. On the other hand, those who are mindful of that country from whence they came out might have opportunity to return. For the former, God is not ashamed to be called their God. For the latter—well, they are newsworthy. It is as if, when they look up the word *world* in their thesaurus, they find the synonym *friend*. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. That is news.

## The Government Martyred No One

Nowhere in the United States did any level of government—local, state, or federal—kill any Christian believers because of their testimonies. We have not yet resisted unto blood. On the contrary, we have been granted an opportunity to lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and to make straight paths for our feet. We have been given another chance to follow that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. If that's not news, what is?

## Christians Stood Up for Their Rights

It is no great thing that Christians, like Paul and Silas in Philippi, would challenge governments that fail to keep within their proper boundaries. What is newsworthy is that Christians should decide that the life of faith requires them to insist upon their rights instead of approving what is excellent. Only through the latter may a believer be sincere and without offense until the day of Jesus Christ. Here is the news: Christians have forgotten that one who strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. They are unaware that we become all things to all men, not by imitating them and seeking their approval, but by denying ourselves whatever rights and privileges would block us from serving them. That Christians should spend their efforts defending their rights would certainly be news to Paul: "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."

## God Was Denied Glory

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of those who bear God's image spent the year exchanging the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. They also spent the year bearing the consequences of uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. Here is some news: God will not give His glory unto another. People are condemned first and foremost, not because they

have broken God's law, but because they have dishonored Him by preferring idols.

## God Unleashed His Power

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. The gospel is not like a yapping Chihuahua that needs to be kept on a leash to protect it from the big dogs. The gospel is like a lion that pulls down its prey and subdues it. The gospel has the power to penetrate the hardest heart, humble the most arrogant mind, and bring the vilest sinner to repentance. News flash: the gospel never needs to be protected. It needs to be set loose. It did its work during 2024. The salvation of a single soul (and many were saved, all over the world) is a magnificent display of the infinite power of God.

## Billions Are Still Lost

As 2024 closed, billions and billions of human beings, made in God's image, were still lost and on their way to hell. Of these, the majority had never even heard the good news of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the substitutionary death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Billions had never even heard the name of Jesus or seen a Bible. After two millennia, Christians have still not completed the task of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature. They see a world wholly given to idolatry, and the news is that their spirit is not stirred in them. They do not dispute in the market daily with them that meet them. From these billions of unrepentant sinners, God is not receiving the glory and worship that He deserves—and He commands all men every where to repent. He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained. The news is that we still have a job to do.

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The biggest news of 2024, and the biggest news of every year, is the gospel itself. The gospel is not a religious philosophy. It is not a collection of moral precepts. It is not a guide to self-improvement. It is not a stimulus for spiritual inspiration. It is news—news about events that occurred when God entered space and time, assumed a human nature, died to bear the penalty of human sin, and arose bodily from the dead. Not only is the gospel news, it is good news. It is the best news that sinful humans could ever hear.

Spread the news.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

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