

# *High Time*

BY MURRAY WYLIE

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in  
*Song*  
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Murray Wylie

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TCF 10 Old Goombungee Road  
Toowoomba QLD 4350  
Phone: +61 1300 885 048  
Email: [info @ visionone.org.au](mailto:info@visionone.org.au)

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Author: Murray Wylie | Brisbane Christian Fellowship BCF  
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MLC

# High Time

Murray Wylie

Fluido (♩ = 62)

*mf* A - wake out of sleep\_ it's time\_ to love\_ Put on the ar - mour of light,

4 of light\_ The night is far spent, the day is at hand\_ Let us

7 **CHORUS**  
Allegro (♩ = 128)  
put on Christ the new man. *f* It's high time\_ put off\_ the works of dark - ness

11 High time\_ sal - va - tion is near It's high time\_ there's\_ a new com - mand - ment, A -

15 - wake out of sleep\_ it's time\_ to love. (It's)

Chords: G, D7/G, G, Am/G, G/D, C/E, D, G(-3), Gsus, G, Gsus, D7/G, G, GM7+9, G, Am7, Deus, D, Em7, Em, Am7, D, G+2, Em7, Am7, Deus, D, Am7, D7sus, D7, G, Am7, Deus, D7, G

# 'High Time'

By Murray Wylie

Awake out of sleep, it's time to love  
Put on the armour of light, of light  
The night is far spent, the day is at hand  
Let us put on Christ, the new man.

It's high time, put off the works of darkness  
High time, salvation is near  
It's high time, there's a new commandment  
Awake out of sleep, it's time to love.

1

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As is often the case, a song will spring forth from a number of meditations over a number of weeks. The words of this chorus grew from Romans 13:11-14. The theme of 'light' is related to our studies on the 'lampstand' church, which is to shine the light of the seven-fold Spirit of God. 'Put on the armour of light ... the day is at hand.'

## It's time to love

Initially though, the content of the song grew out of a verse earlier in Romans chapter thirteen, 'Owe no one anything except to *love one another*, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law'. Rom 13:8. The verses that follow then illustrate how love fulfils the law. If we *love* our neighbour, we won't *murder*, steal, lie or covet. That seems fairly obvious. If we love others, we are certainly not battling with serious temptations.

But we need to look beyond the issues of murder and theft to see what Paul is saying. Then we'll understand why he writes the next verses, 'And do this [love one another] knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep ...'. Rom 13:11. Paul is making an important announcement, and that is central to the spirit of this song – awake out of sleep and love! It's high time. So our aim will be to understand why Paul is speaking about sleep, the night, the day, the armour of light, and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

To do this, we need to read the whole chapter, which sets out a list of duties and obligations – to authorities, ordinances, rulers and 'God's ministers', with respect to judgement, doing

good, earning praise, avoiding wrath, being subject, paying taxes, and giving fear and honour to those who deserve it. A quick read of Romans 13:1-7 will remind us of these points. This is what leads to the verse, 'Owe no one anything', which is the seed of the song.

## Owe no-one anything except love

So, after Paul's list of practical instructions, he writes, 'Owe no one anything except to love'. What does this mean? The thrust is this. If we are going to love (and it is 'high time' we did) then love is a supreme command, much greater in responsibility and demand than *any of these other* obligations; all of which are valid in their place. Further, we need to wake up, put on Christ, put on the armour of light, and love one another in a very clear and unambiguous manner.

Furthermore, love is not a nice feeling that excuses us from doing anything else. To speak ironically for a moment – believers are not usually an ignorant, lawless, presumptuous, tax-avoiding group who mostly please themselves, provided they avoid murder and other major crimes. No, love is the greatest command and highest demand, and requires the ultimate in responsible, self-conscious, accountable action. Love will rise above and overshadow every 'good' behaviour, and make every other responsibility seem fairly straightforward.

And indeed, as Paul says, those who love will *not* murder and steal. They *will* very easily obey governments, pay taxes and give due reverence to all the institutions that God has put in place.

So what does Paul mean when he says to 'owe no one anything except to love one another'? Clearly, he is not recommending more love and less duty. He is not saying that we should ignore all obligations and just love people. He is making an important cultural statement. At the basic level, he is saying that we are to be diligent with all our obligations, so that we don't live in debt to others. If we are remiss in these basics of life, we certainly can't get on with loving as we ought. But more than this, Paul is commending a life of loving *initiative*, where we not doing anything at all from a sense of *obligation or duty*. We are not 'owing'. We are not repaying others. Instead, we are awake to the new commandment. We are discovering the power of Christ to lay our lives down, willingly, and not from a sense of religious obligation.

Looking at the negative side, those who are not honouring God in the basic duties of life will owe various debts. As Paul says, we can find ourselves 'under wrath' if these obligations are not fulfilled. Rom 13:4,5. So, at the very least, we are to honour others in very basic ways. But the life of love should go well beyond this.

## Owing - as a way of life

On the negative side, if we *do* fall into 'owing', as a way of life, it will show itself when we:

- practise the Christian life because we feel we 'ought' to do certain things

- only extend kindness, hospitality and service as a 'debt' to others
- trade favour for favour
- offer loyalty, but expect the same in return
- hold expectations of how others should honour us for our loyalty or service
- interpret our value by how others accept or include us
- interpret relationship in a pecking order of status
- feel qualified or disqualified on the basis of our performance
- hold opinions of how others should act, based on our own standards.

## Loving - without owing

True love, not self-interest, is to be the motivation of our offering. When we genuinely give, we have no investment in receiving a return for ourselves. We are not loving our brethren, children, or parents, out of *duty*. We are not going to church because we 'owe it' to God, and we are not offering relationship out of obligation. What darkness it would be if we lived in that way. No, if we put on love, which is the armour of light, we are always free, and never in debt. *We are always offering and never bound by obligation.*

## It's high time!

This is the way Paul sounds the supreme call to love. He intends that we catch a vision of love at this 'high time'. It's time to walk properly, Paul is saying. The sleep of night has gone on for too long. Believers are not meant to be quibbling over obeying the law and giving basic respect to others. They should not be locked up under the shadow of law, with a veil over their eyes. No, love is more than this. It's a triumph. Love overcomes all because it even surpasses death itself.

This kind of victory is the spirit of the song, 'High Time'. It carries the same spirit as the verse in Revelation, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death'. Rev 12:11.

Paul is triumphant. Love has come! It fulfils law. He doesn't say '*the* law'. His Greek language is just 'love fulfils *law*'. This is strong, and helpful, because the discussion is not really about how to obey the ten commandments. Paul's reference to 'law' is to the covenant of God, in its entirety. He uses 'law' here in the same sense as when Jesus refers to 'the law and prophets' as summarising the whole of Scripture.

## Law and prophets

This is a major backdrop to the song - the law and prophets. These two are the whole story! When it comes to the Scripture, and to the entire purpose of God, there is just

'the law and prophets'. Putting it another way, there is just the *covenant* and the prophets' revelation *about* the covenant. There are two things: the substance and the declaration. The whole covenant of God can be described as 'law', and the whole task of the 'prophets' was to declare this covenant purpose. The covenant (law) is what God is offering to us, and the prophets are sent to declare this to us.

This is extremely useful to our purpose here. Why is that? Because it was the prophets' mission to shed light on the covenant of God - or else to cast a *veil of sleep* over those who were disobedient. Note what the prophet Isaiah says: 'Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! ... for the Lord has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep.' Isa 29:10. This is what Isaiah was sent to do. 'Go and tell this people that in seeing they will *not* see!' The prophets' mission was to pour out a spirit of deep sleep!

## The spirit of deep sleep

*Sleep was a judgement.* We must remember that the Scriptures are consistent to themselves in the expressions that are used. When the New Testament speaks of 'sleep', it's not merely a symbol. It's an expression drawn from the Scriptures, and has very specific background in the language of the prophets. Now Paul is proclaiming, 'Awake out of sleep!' He is really saying: it's time for the penalty of sleep to be lifted. Paul had authority to proclaim a message of present truth that could awaken those who were under the judgement of slumber.

This is what we are seeking, as well. We need messengers of present truth who can call hearers to ‘the obedience of faith’. Obedience reverses the penalty of deep sleep.

## The veil

In this same theme, we need to consider the Corinthian discussion by Paul on the *veil* that covered Moses’ face. This was not a spirit of sleep, as we have just discussed, but the subjects are connected.

Simply, in the Corinthian chapters (2 Cor 3-4), Paul is announcing that the same God who commanded the light of creation is now shining in our hearts. We can put on the armour of light! We can be part of a lampstand. The light of the seven Spirits of God is upon His people, as the light of the world.

Now to the story of Moses’ veil. Moses was able to stand before the glory of God in his tent. But once he left the presence of God, the light faded. So he placed a veil over his face. In this symbolic way, he indicated that the former glory of the Old Covenant would fade to make way for the glory of the New Covenant. In his discussion of the veil, Paul adds some other points. He says that the minds of those former worshippers were *hardened* and that, in fact, a veil was still over their minds in understanding Moses’ writings. Then Paul adds that if we turn to the Lord, this veil can be removed. What are we to learn from this?

The Scriptures of the prophets contained a message that many believers could not see. Their minds were blinded. They should have understood! In particular, they ought to have known that the glory of the 'flesh' - that is, the 'glory' of that old economy - was coming to an end. It was passing away. God was indicating that outward endeavour would come to nothing, no matter how glorious it seemed to be.

This was the lesson that was represented by the veil of Moses. However this veil was still in place, Paul said, whenever believers looked at the former glory. They were veiled. They were in darkness. They had not come to terms with the bankruptcy of that economy. It was actually obsolete. Heb 8:13. It was finished. Any thought of holding on to the glory of the flesh was nothing but an insolent hardness of heart.

This is where Paul proceeds, in second Corinthians, when he says, 'We have renounced the hidden things of shame ... if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing'. Who is perishing? Those who are blinded to the prophetic Scriptures. They can't read the Old Testament, or Moses' writings. In other words, they are still full of shame, based in the culture of that former covenant.

## Shame

What is shame? We know that shame is the result of turning on oneself. Shame is like being under a veil. Let's make a more comprehensive statement. Shame is the result of a law of

self-examination, an 'evil conscience'. Heb 9:14; 10:22. We no longer serve the living God. We are doing what we are doing to serve ourselves; to please ourselves.

We are no longer offering back to God what he has offered us. If it continues, shame can lead to the trampling of our own offering. Heb 10:29. It is important to deal with our shame, daily. Shame is an aspect of the 'sleep' from which we must awake. Awake out of sleep. It's time to love.

## The armour of light

'Put on the armour of light', the song says. Paul describes light as an armour, because he is mindful of the power of God enabled by the Holy Spirit. 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' Acts 1:8.

The apostles understood the meaning of the symbolic lampstand described by Zechariah. They understood the aspects of life growing up, and oil coming down. The almond cups, buds and flowers were representative of life branching up from Christ, the foundation. The olive oil flowing down was representative of the power of God, revealed as seven Spirits; seven lamps. Zech 4:2-6; Rev 4:5.

In the time of rebuilding, when Zechariah prophesied, the nation was to be a light of witness of the ends of the earth. 'By My Spirit', says the Lord, the power of Babylon,

the destroying mountain, was to become like a plain. Zech 4:6,7. The Scriptures are united in declaring the power of resurrection life over death. Though we are 'weak in Him', the power of Christ rests upon us. 2 Cor 13:4. In the same spirit as Christ, we present ourselves as a living sacrifice. Rom 12:1. Our members are weapons of righteousness, not just 'instruments'. Rom 6. The cross is a weapon for destroying arguments and high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. 2 Cor 10.

It is this triumph, the victory of a life of offering, of love, that is carried in the song. 'Awake out of sleep, it's time to love.' It's high time!