

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Rescued!

by Dan Trygg

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course (lit., ‘age’ – Gk., ‘*aiōn*’) of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air (the atmosphere that surrounds the earth), of the spirit that is now inworking in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”
Ephesian 2:1-3

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us (lit., ‘He might take/pluck us out’) from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.”
Galatians 1:3-5

“For He rescued us (implies, ‘drew us out from severe and acute danger’) from the authority of the darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”
Colossians 1:13-14

“Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”
Ephesians 5:7-10

Last time we got a glimpse into the Biblical notion of “ages”. The Greek word, *aiōn*, means “age, eon, epoch, era, a stage or period of history”. The word occurs 122 times in the NT, but it is only translated as “age” less than 30 times. The Scriptures talk about many “ages”. There were ages before the creation of this world, and there will be ages after this world passes away, ...ages going on into the future. This realization kind of “pulls back the curtain” of our existence a little bit, and gives us a better perception of our own lives, and also about how great our God is. He has been here from ages past, and He will be here “unto the ages of the ages”. We also saw that the rebellion of Satan, and the fall of humanity, are part of the age we live in, ...just one age out of many ages..., referred to by the apostle Paul as “this present evil age” (Gal. 1:4), or “the age of imminent evil”.

This is the era, the stage of history, in which we were born, reared, and have learned to navigate in. We grew up in the atmosphere of this time. It is a time of “imminent evil”. Satan is the “ruler of this world” (Jn. 12:31; 16:11), the self-proclaimed “god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4). He deceives (“leads astray”) the whole world (Rev. 12:9). We were raised under his deception, and still are affected by it. We have been deceived, ...and still are deceived, at least in part.

Before we knew Christ, we were walking “according to the age of this world”. The word translated as “world” is the Greek word, *kosmos*. It means “an organized system of things”. It can refer to our planet but, usually in the NT, it refers to a spiritually hostile system which influences us at many levels. The apostle John warns us, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever” (1 Jn. 2:15-17). James, the half-brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, wrote, “...friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4). So, before we came to know Christ, we were unwittingly being led and programmed by hostile spiritual powers, whose agenda is to “steal, kill and destroy” us, ...especially to keep us away from God and His will for our lives. And, even now, we are continually being influenced by this organized system of spiritual beings who operate in countless ways to distract, discourage, defeat and destroy us. They know that if they can keep our attention away from what is truly important long enough, we will run out of time. Our lives will have been spent, wasted on insignificant things, ...things that will perish when this age, and this world, comes to an end.

Maybe this description will add a little credence to the idea that we need to be rescued! Remember, this is an age of impending, imminent evil. It surrounds us on every side. Paul reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers (Eph. 6:12). Notice how he describes them: “rulers, authorities, world-powers of this darkness, spiritual beings of the evil in the heavenly places”. We all lived, ...and presently live..., under their influence. We unknowingly were influenced, programmed, scripted to follow the propaganda, values, appeals and interests that are presented to us by our culture, families, society, and the spiritual beings behind them. We lived by our desires and lusts, fulfilling the appetites of our flesh and our understanding. We were lost, misguided, deserving God’s wrath, just like anybody else.

This is so much a part of our experience that we are to a large extent unaware of it, ...unless we come to compare these things with another standard of truth, ...the Word of God. We are like the fish in the aquarium,

who, when asked by the cat, “How is the water?”, replies, “What water?” Meanwhile, the cat is trying to lure us to come a little closer, ...or he encourages us to swim fast enough, and high enough, to actually break the surface and discover what so few other little fishies ever know, ...that there is more to life than water! If we try it, we find the exhilaration of discovery, ...speed and power that we never knew we had to break the limits of our everyday existence, and do what other fish never experience, ...until we either lie gasping on the floor, or snatched up by the cat! **We are largely unaware of the imminent, impending evil, ...biding its time, luring us with sensual attractions, drawing us to invest our lives in things that don’t matter**, enticing us with dreams and promises..., but all the while diverting us from what really is important, keeping us from the things that will endure beyond this temporary existence, **hypnotizing us with an endless stream of new, shiny, consumer products that are designed to consume us!!** They are designed and marketed to appeal to us to part with our time, money and energy, ...until we are spent!! Then, as we lie gasping our last breaths, the powers behind this insidious agenda mock us and congratulate themselves at their success in duping us. This, of course, is out of our hearing, usually. **We don’t often know what is really going on, until it is too late.** Then, like the rich man in Luke 16, we would wish to communicate with those we left behind, so that we could warn them of this horrific deception, ...but we will have lost our opportunity. God will say, “They have the Scriptures. ...**If they won’t listen to the Scriptures, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead!!**” (Lk. 16:31). Imagine that!

Praise God for His mercy! Praise Him for His grace and love that motivated the Lord Jesus to give Himself for our sins, in order that He might rescue us from this present evil age, ...this age of imminent and impending evil. The word for “rescue” in this verse is the Greek word, *exaireō*. It literally means to “take us out from, to pluck us out from a situation of imminent danger”. It is used of snatching someone out of a sweeping current, which would carry them downstream to either be drowned or dashed against the rocks. It is a picture of dramatic deliverance and salvation from certain demise. It is used of God “plucking” Israel out of their bondage and oppression in Egypt in Acts 7:34. It is used of the dramatic rescue of Peter from the prison in Acts 12:11, “Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.” It is used in the letter of Claudius Lysias, reporting to the governor about his dramatic rescue of Paul from the murderous mob who were beating him, in Acts 23:37, “When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.” In Acts 22:35, Paul had to be *carried* by the soldiers, because of the violence of the crowd. He literally was “plucked” and “carried out” from imminent and impending danger. In Acts 26:17, in Paul’s testimony before governor Festus and King Agrippa, he reports that Jesus used this very word when He appeared to him and commissioned him to be a witness for Him, “But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷ rescuing (plucking-out) you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”

Paul used a different word for “rescue” in Colossians 1:13. It is the Greek word, *ruomai*. It means “to draw or drag someone out from severe and acute danger to oneself”, or it can mean “to draw back, to hold back, or check someone to keep them from danger.” It is used 17 times in the NT, and **God is always the One who is rescuing a person or people from severe or catastrophic danger.** In the Lord’s prayer, God is the one who “delivers us from evil”. Literally, Jesus’ petition should be translated as “**drag us out from the evil one**” (Matt. 6:13). In Luke 1:74, He “rescues us from the hands of our enemies”, again, “dragging us out from them to Himself”. In Romans 15:31, Paul asked the Roman Christians to pray that “I might be dragged out from the disobedient in Judea”, which God in fact fulfilled. He was mobbed, imprisoned, but eventually was delivered out from all their evil intentions. **In 2 Corinthians 1:10, Paul uses this word three times in one verse, “He has delivered us from such a terrible death, and He will deliver us. We have put our hope in Him that He will deliver us again.”** Substitute, “drag us out from”, and you can see how powerful this deliverance was, ...how the danger was, indeed, severe and acute, ...real, imminent and impending..., but God dragged him out, once again, ...and Paul expected God to continue to work such deliverances in the future. We see this same confidence in God again in 1 Timothy 4:18, “The Lord will deliver me (drag me out) from every evil work, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.”

I hope this gives you an appreciation of the seriousness of the severe, acute, imminent and impending danger of the surrounding evil age we live in. Be sober and vigilant, but put your hope in God who has plucked you out of disaster, and repeatedly has dragged you out of the enemy’s schemes. Make your life count for the ages of the ages. Don’t come up short, wishing you knew what was going on, while you had time to do things differently.