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*Transformative Time Travel: Deepening Discipleship through
Meditation on the Future, Past, and Present*

by Jay S. Lowder

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New Title from Jay S. Lowder

Transformative Time Travel: Deepening Discipleship through Meditation on the Future, Past, and Present

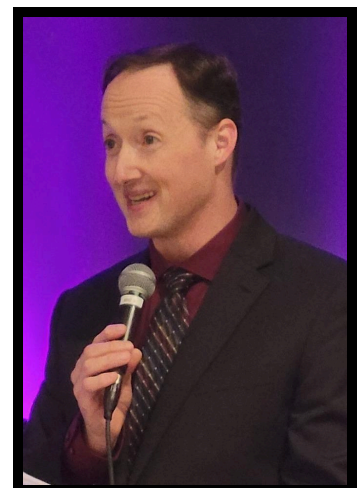
Some words belong together. But what about these? “Christian.” “Non-fiction.” “Time travel!” Is that surprising? Christians should engage in mental time travel each day. Their minds should travel back to the cross of Jesus which should impact their choices today. Then, their minds should travel forward to the return of Jesus and have increased hope!



That is biblical meditation, thinking about God’s truths and being changed by them. But what happens when we do it wrong—time-traveling in fearful, worried ways to the terrible *future* we can imagine? Or what if we fail to time-travel to the *future* to be alert? They may even live undisciplined lives *today* because we do not meditate on our *tomorrows* enough!

This book is more than just a book—it’s a biblical time-travel guide. How God wants us to think about our past and future.. Readers will be surprised how many of your struggles are linked to the quality of your time travel skills! What a victorious life can await them as they learn to enjoy transformative time travel!

Dr. Jay S. Lowder is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Beebe, Arkansas. He holds an Mdiv degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a PhD in Philosophy from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Interview with Jay S. Lowder

Why write about biblical meditation?

There is much contemporary confusion, both inside and outside the church, about what meditation is and which forms are biblical. Is it just mindfulness? Or is it Eastern, mystical, or even irrational? This book describes biblical meditation and connects its practice to answers about how we live spiritually: How can you stifle worry? Pursue discipline? Benefit from church? Or, face death?

How do you use the idea of time travel to discuss meditation?

We can meditate on many different things, including thinking about what has happened in the past or will happen in the future. Today, we should use the creative minds God gave us to "time-travel" to the past and the future. We prosper when we remember the good events of our past history, God's promises to overcome present struggles, and hope in God's promised good future.

Meditation sounds a bit intimidating. Who can meditate?

Everyone meditates! For instance, those who worry meditate excessively about the future while still in the present. So, they rob each day of its joy by fearing what might happen. As John Adams observed in a letter to Thomas Jefferson: "How much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened!" It is not a question of whether we meditate but whether we meditate (time travel) on the future and the past in helpful and holy ways!

If you do not "time travel," do you simply miss blessings?

Unfortunately, it is much worse than that! You either meditate biblically or fall into "messed-up meditation." The mind's meditative ability always travels toward life-giving topics or into severe sin problems—adultery, bitterness, and self-deception. This book maps out biblical meditation as the only way to avoid destructive thinking and gain the blessings of thinking God's thoughts after him.

This topic sounds complex. Can the average reader understand it?

I took great joy in writing this book, writing to communicate simply so that everyone can understand it, but it is backed by documentation from more than 250 scholars across the centuries. Over three decades as an educator, school administrator, and pastor, God has given me a wealth of real-life and historical examples that interest the average reader, ranging from public service announcements to rocking chairs, American Presidents, Napoleon, and Dr. Seuss.

Who should read this book?

This book is an exciting survey of aspects of our spiritual lives. It will help new believers, maturing saints, and even seekers wanting to learn more about the faith. Some categories of people who will find it extra helpful are chronic worriers, the depressed, those struggling with church attendance, and those facing disease or death. The sci-fi element of this book is attractive to readers from all sorts of backgrounds, making this unlike anything you have read before.

**An Excerpt from *Transformative Time Travel: Deepening Discipleship through
Meditation on the Future, Past, and Present***

Many women and men of history have shaped the world by being sensible and skilled regarding their past and future. Whether they use their skill for selfish reasons or God's glory, they achieve extraordinary earthly results. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) attributed his skill in handling the unexpected to his meditation: "If I always seem to be ready for everything, to face up to anything . . . it is because I never undertake anything at all without first having meditated for a long time and foreseen what might happen."¹¹

There are also spiritual time travelers, maturing Christians who have come into an intimate relationship with the Eternal Father through Jesus the Son, who is himself the "same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8; emphasis added). They were saved when they anchored their faith to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, accepted his past payment for their sin, and committed their future well-being to him. They have already entered a higher quality of unending "eternal life," just as Jesus promised: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24).

Not all Christians can travel time well, and too many struggle with worry about the future and weariness from the past. But God has given teachings and examples from Scripture and church history to help. Not surprisingly, Jesus himself is the best model. Randy Alcorn's insight is worth reflecting upon: "When Jesus walked the Earth, he lived with divine happiness in his past, the happiness of an eternal perspective in his present, and the anticipation of unending happiness in the future."

The journey forward includes your future, your past, and your present. Chapter 2 is a call to biblical "alertness," that is, time travel toward the future, obeying the admonishments of Jesus to be "alert" about the future (Matt 24:42; 25:13). Chapter 3 is a caution against the destructive time travel of anxiety, also emphatically forbidden by Jesus (Matt 6:25, 27, 31, 34). Chapters 4 and 5 present opposite approaches to the past—a person either appreciates it or develops spiritual amnesia.

Chapter 6 shows how your views of the past and the future directly influence your present choices about being disciplined. Chapter 7 happily reminds you that you do not time travel alone. You have fellow time travelers alongside you and ahead of you. In your present, they are with you to inspire and encourage you with their models and their words. Looking into the past, you have countless biblical and church-history heroines and heroes to inspire you! What a blessing also to have spiritual shepherds who show the way forward. Learning to think about members and ministers in terms of time travel will reignite your passion for God's people, with whom you can regularly gather for time-traveling tips and encouragement.

Chapter 8 puts your transformative time-travel skills to the test. By preparing now, you can overcome the ultimate tests of faith—your inevitable decline and approaching death. Many people are paralyzed by the challenges near the end of their lives, but you do not have to be. Seasoned, spiritual time travelers have already mentally and emotionally journeyed forward in time to their deaths and back to their present many times. They face both decline and death with remarkable grace and insuppressible joy, inspiring hope and resilience in those who follow their path. This book assists you, the reader, on the road of time travel.

Praise for *Transformative Time Travel: Deepening Discipleship through Meditation on the Future, Past, and Present*

“Jay Lowder’s *Transformative Time Travel* taps into the biblical movement of time—objectively conceived and existentially contemplated—as an impetus to joyful, interactive, worshipful, and confident Christian living. As the biblical narrative consistently asks us to ‘remember,’ and even pictures God as ‘remembering’ his covenant, so we arrange in mind and spirit the realities of past, present, and future to achieve an ever-maturing, God-glorifying, neighbor-loving, family-embracing, church-appreciating life here with the pleasant anticipation of life hereafter.”

—Tom J. Nettles, senior professor of historical theology,
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“What a wonderful gift for deeper worship, meditation, and discipleship Jay Lowder has delivered by guiding us through our human lenses of future, past, and present toward the God who is outside time. Each thoughtful chapter meets us where we live yet beckons us to that wonderful day, ‘when time shall be no more,’ and to the wonderful God who is already there.”

—Nate Adams, executive director,
Illinois Baptist State Association

“*Transformative Time Travel* is a delightful and thoughtful read guaranteed to edify and challenge the reader. Lowder brilliantly engages the soul interested in that which matters most—how one can take seriously their short time in this world. Highly recommended!”

—Ted Cabal, professor of philosophy of religion,
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

