

## God's Perfect Timing

Galatians 4:4-5 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.* (NIV)

*"But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son..."* (KJV)

### Intro

Today I would like to look at God's timing. The first thing we need to understand about God's timing is that it is perfect, just as all of God's ways are perfect. God's timing is never early, and it's never been late. In fact, from before our birth until the moment we take our last earthly breath, our sovereign God is accomplishing His divine purposes in our lives. He is in complete control of everything from everlasting to everlasting. No event in history has put so much as a wrinkle in the timing of God's eternal plan, which He designed before the foundation of the world. God is in control of time.

In Acts 17:26 Paul said to the Athenian philosophers, *"From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands."* God is absolutely sovereign and He has set appointed times in history for all humanity.

Also we read Isaiah 46:10 where God says, *"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'" This means that no one can alter or thwart the time or the purposes of God. He will do what He pleases.*

In Habakkuk 2:3 God also says, *"For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."* From these passages of Scripture we learn that God is in absolute control over time, not just the past or present but also the future. God has perfect time according to His own purpose and pleasure.

Let's look at one of the greatest events of God's perfect timing. It's found in Galatians 4:4, *"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."* What does it mean "when the time had fully come, God sent His Son?" King James Bible says, *But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son..."*

I would like to share with you some amazing things that happened when God sent His Son Jesus into the world. It was the fullness of time and the perfect time for His first coming.

1. **The Language.** Alexander the Great had conquered the world up to Bactria near India before he died in 332 BC. This military conquest led to a cultural conquest. The Greek culture and language spread through the world and in the process it was altered by contact with other cultures; this new mixture of cultures was called *Hellenism*. The Greek language was a very useful and common language, just as English today is the language of the world because of the British Empire a century ago. Internationally people were given a common tongue by which to trade and exchange. That new language was called *Koine Greek* or common Greek.

Eusebius the church historian around 300 AD. wrote a book called the *Preparation of the Gospel*, in which he states that the Greek language was spread by God in order to prepare the world for the gospel. God united a tremendously large part of the world with a common method of language. Many Jews became well-lettered in Hellenistic Greek having forgotten their own Hebrew because of seventy years in Aramaic-speaking Babylonia. Interesting to note that during the time the Jews were exiled in Babylon and when they returned to Israel they ceased to worship idols. They started to build synagogues and also they completed Old Testament, which was assembled by Ezra.

By Ezra's day the Jews had forgotten how to speak Hebrew and spoke Aramaic which was the *lingua franca* of the Ancient Near East. So around 200 BC the Jews had translated their own Hebrew Bibles into Greek which was easier to understand. There are at least six different Greek versions from that period. The apostle Paul quoted from the Greek Old Testament which was called

the Septuagint. By the time Christ came the Greek language was on the lips and hearts of the known world and this is why the New Testament was written in *Koine Greek*. The early church and the first missionaries evangelized in Greek because the masses knew what they were talking about. God had prepared the way for the spread of the Gospel through an international language.

2. **The Literature.** The writings of that day also show a longing in the hearts of the people for a hero, a messianic figure. The whole world was looking for and longing for relief and divine mercy. The world felt like it was in a mess because of crime, political corruption, violence, piracy, excessive taxes, etc. Around 58 BC a Roman poet named Virgil wrote about the coming messiah. His poem was in Latin but when he came to the section on the messiah he began to write in a Hebrew style. He must have had contact with Jewish ideas. In fact, just as today people have some sense that we are in the end times and Jesus is going to return, so did the world at least sixty years before the birth of Christ had a sense that the messiah was soon to come. This expectancy was also in the hearts and minds of the Essenes in Qumran (2 BC) who were looking forward to the coming of Messiah.
3. **The Romans.** In world history up to the birth of Jesus there had been many different types of empires. The Babylonians owned a large chunk of the world at least twice. The Assyrians had a major empire. The Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans all had mega-kingdoms. Caesar Augustus was the first and the greatest of all the Caesars. Augustus reigned from 27 BC until 14 AD. He helped bring in the famous *Pax Romana* or peace over the Roman world. His government brought law and order to a crime infested world. It was during the reign of Augustus when Jesus was born. The world was looking for a great king to come. It received a great political king, but crucified the messianic king. Jesus was born at the right time of the *Pax Romana*.

Crucifixion was a tool of the Romans to make sure law and order was maintained in the empire. According to the Old Testament “*anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse*” (Deuteronomy 21:23). Also in Galatians 3:13 we read, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*” So you see Christ came at the right time in history because only the Romans used the cross as a means of torture and capital punishment.

4. **The Land.** Among the architectural achievements of the Roman government, the building of roads and highways was a major accomplishment. The Romans had connected the world through road systems and highways that exist to this day. At the time of Christ the world experienced the revolution of roads. This connected cities and communities in the empire. One of the longest roads was called *The Ignatian Way* which stretched its way across the Macedonian world allowing the early apostles, especially Paul, an easier means of travel to preach the Gospel.

Also many Jews had been dispersed over the centuries into many different countries. This dispersion is called the Diaspora. The Diaspora caused synagogues to be established in every major city of the known world. Many Gentiles attended the synagogue faithfully and were called “*God-fearers.*” At those synagogues the first Christian missionaries came to preach Jesus. It was a miracle that these preaching stations had been providentially set up through the dispersion of the Jews. This scattering of Jewish centers everywhere and the road systems helped Christianity spread through the ancient world. Thus, this prepared the perfect time for Christ to come among His people.

5. **The Temple.** The temple was crucial to the times. Solomon's temple was built about 900 BC but had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Initially, the second temple was built with less money and effort. The Jews were rebuked by the prophets for their laxness in rebuilding the temple. The rebuilding started in 520 BC. Later, just before Jesus was born, Herod the Great repaired and rebuild on the temple making it a breathtaking sight. Herod did a tremendous amount

of building all over Israel. He made extraordinary improvements to the temple. He reigned over thirty plus years and accomplished much in the way of construction, but he also stirred up the hatred of the Jews because of his high taxes needed to build Israel.

Needless to say, at the time of Jesus there was a beautiful temple building. The worship of the temple was glorious and sacrifices were being made daily. The blood of bulls, goats, lambs, and birds were regularly sacrificed on holy altars. From the altar area the amount of blood was so great it was drained by plumbing pipes into the Kidron River valley. The necessity for atonement by death and blood was very real to the people. Everyone knew that the shedding of blood was necessary for spiritual cleansing. The time was perfect for the Messiah's blood to be shed.

#### 6. **The Prophecies.**

Christ's first coming fulfilled specific prophecy. In Daniel 9:24-27 we read of the "seventy weeks" or the seventy "sevens." In context these "weeks" or "sevens" refer to groups of seven years, not seven days. We can examine history and line up the details of the first sixty-nine weeks (the seventieth week will take place at a future point). The countdown of the seventy weeks begins with "the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem" (verse 25). This command was given by Artaxerxes in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:5). After seven "sevens" plus 62 "sevens," or 69 x 7 years, the prophecy states, "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing..."

(Dan. 9:25-26). This means a major destruction. Here we have an unmistakable reference to the Saviour's death on the cross.

We also know that there were numerous other prophecies which had to be fulfilled in the birth of the Messiah. Here are some:

- His birth predicted (Gen. 3:15 & Gal. 4:4)
- Place of birth, Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- He would be called Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14)
- Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
- He would be preceded by John (Isaiah 40:3)
- His triumphal entry (Zech. 9:9)
- Betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9)
- Crucified with sinners (Isaiah 53:12)
- Hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16)
- His resurrection (Psalm 16:10)
- His ascension (Psalm 68:18)

All these things God knew would happen just as He foretold, so that at the one moment in time when all of the necessary prophecies were completed or prepared – it was perfect timing, the fullness of time.

7. **The Love.** At the fullness of time God sent his Son into the world. Under the conditions noted above we can see the hand of God working in the detail of time and history. But the entire purpose of God was not to bedazzle us with his providential power and planning. His main purpose was to demonstrate his love for us in Christ. This is why God sent his Son into the world.

John 3:16 describes the magnitude and the meaning of God's love. He loved us so much he sent his Son to die for us. He loved us so much that he did not want anyone of us to die for our own sin forever. He wanted to free us from our sin and turn us loose for heaven forever. After we experience God's saving love through the Lord Jesus, he wants us to live our life based on love for him. We are now set free from the power and penalty of sin and are free to live for him not out of fear or condemnation but out of pure love. We obey because of the love in our heart for God.

The timing of Jesus' first coming was perfect; it was in the fullness of time. Also His second coming will be perfect and in the fullness of time. We are seeing those times coming to fulfillment!

### **Conclusion**

God has his own sense of timing: '*With the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day*' (2 Peter 3:8). He has perfect timing: never early, never late. God is never in a hurry, but he is always on time.

God will be right on time in my life. We wonder why God doesn't answer our prayer sooner or grant the miracle we've been waiting for. But God does know best and He is a God of purpose and perfect timing. But the question that faces us is whether we trust Him. In light of eons and eons of years of a perfect track record, do you trust Him?