

Sermon 12/31/17

It is God's Time! Galatians 4:4-7

Dear Believers in God's Timing:

Why did God choose this time...2000 years ago...for the birth of Jesus?

Looking at the time of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem history tells us that it was a time of...

- Oppressive rule by Rome
- A number of messianic pretenders
- Wildly divergent religious beliefs
- General freedom of worship
- The rise of the philosophies of Hedonism, Epicureanism and Stoicism
- Spiritual hunger
- 16 different nationalities in Jerusalem
- General peace in the Roman empire

Why this time?

The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law."

The time had come - God has chosen a specific time in history to bring Jesus into the world. It was a time of...

- World wide peace
- One dominant language – Greek
- One dominant government – Rome

The time was ripe for Jesus to come into the world but how many people who celebrated Christmas this past week considered that Jesus' birth was calculated and planned by God. How many people missed the real point of Christmas?

How many people have gone through this Christmas season only thinking that Jesus is someone who is to be placed between Santa and the reindeer?

When we sing "Joy to the World" this time of year we need to say that the Joy is all about our sins being paid for. Isaiah 63 says this: **"In all their distress He too was distressed...in his love and mercy He redeemed them."** V9

The time had come for Jesus to be "born under the law..."

- Under the law means He was born to keep the law for us
- We fail to keep God's law perfectly because of our sinful nature
- Jesus kept the law perfectly for us and satisfied God's demands

Jesus was born of a woman...One commentator thought about the impact of Jesus' life on the world..

“Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30 and then for 3 years he was a preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never went to college. He never traveled more than 200 miles from his home. His friends ran away from him. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth.” Yet, today he is the centerpiece of the human race...

- All the armies that ever marched
- All the parliaments that ever sat
- All the kings that ever reigned
- All of them...put together...have not affected the life or death of men and women for all time as powerfully as Jesus.

What did Jesus do for us?

Paul says: **“To redeem those under law**, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” V5

What about the time of Jesus’ birth? It was God’s time!

Now the time has come for you and me.

It is time to...**receive + remember + repeat**

1. to receive God’s gift

II Corinthians 6:2 Now is the time of God’s favor

Psalm 40:7-8 He lifted me out of the slimy pit out of the mud and mire

2. to remember God's plan

I Timothy 2:4 God wants all men to be saved

II Peter 3:9 Everyone to come to repentance

3. To repeat God's message

Acts 4:12 No other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved

What time is it?

It is a time to receive the redemption that Jesus won for us.

V5 "to redeem those under the law"

- Jesus said on the cross "It is finished"
- Jesus paid the ransom to God the Father for our sins
- Jesus fulfilled all of God the Father's righteous demands upon us
- Romans 10:4 Christ is the end of the law

The time has come for us to be children of God not slaves.

V5 **that we might receive the full rights of sons**...So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

I John 3:1 We are called the children of God. How great is the love of the Father...

In Roman law an adopted child was equal to a natural child by birth.

- We say as the Apostle Paul: “Christ lives in me” Galatians 2:20
- We may call God the Father **“Abba” = Daddy** – We are His children
 - He has accepted us
 - He has adopted us
 - He loves us

Now is the time to receive the Holy Spirit v6 “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out - Abba, Father.”

Because we are adopted by God the Father we...

- Have faith given to us by the Holy Spirit - Romans 8:16 “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” God puts assurance into our hearts that we are His children
- Have the witness of the Holy Spirit - He testifies that we are God’s children. In Roman law when a child was adopted there had to be 7 witnesses. Isaiah refers to the Holy Spirit as the 7-fold witness.

The time is now to celebrate! How was your celebration of Christmas?

Michael Card, a songwriter, writes: “Christmas is a struggle for my wife and me. Our ongoing war with the world seems to intensify as the decorations go up all over town. There is His name, in every window. Sometimes there is even a statue of His sweet infant body, lying in some straw with shepherds and wise men standing around with blank porcelain expressions. I have always thought their faces convey the attitude of the world toward Christmas: blank, dazed and bewildered. If people today would just look at the birth of Jesus “straight on”, they would be puzzled that we should celebrate the horrific birth of a baby who was born to die. If Christmas means anything to you, then it must mean everything.

- It is a beginning and an end
 - It is a time of darkness and inexpressible light
 - It is a time of blessed relief at finally seeing all God’s promises come true in one person
- *Immanuel* Michael Card

The birth of Jesus came at the right time.

God’s time...for you and me!