

# Learning to Tell Time

Galatians 4:3-5; Genesis 49

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# connect groups

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## **PATH** //

We have been examining the amazing prophecies of the Old Testament and how Jesus Christ has fulfilled them. The prophets predicted His lineage, extraordinary birth, places of His residence, and character of His ministry. But why did Jesus come at the time that He did? Why not earlier? Why not later? Were there any indicators that pointed to His timely entrance into the world? Pastor Skip suggests there were five things that were just right:

I. The Expectation Was Right: *"We...were in bondage"*

II. The Season Was Right: *"When the fullness of the time had come"*

III. The Action Was Right: *"God sent forth His Son"*

IV. The Person Was Right: *"Born of a woman, born under the law"*

V. The Reason Was Right: *"To redeem"*

## **POINTS** //

### **The Expectation Was Right:**

- To understand why the Lord chose the time of Jesus' ministry, we must understand the word *Shiloh*. Genesis 49 offered a prophecy regarding the *lawgiver* and *Shiloh* (see v. 10), references to the Messiah. Later, other biblical references were made to Shiloh—all of which indicate that the entire Jewish world awaited the Messiah.
- The Bible presents one central theme: Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, Jesus was promised. In the Gospels, Jesus was presented. In Acts, Jesus was preached. In Revelation, Jesus was predicted.
- Paul described Judaism like a child coming of age (see Galatians 4:3-5). Prior to Christ, the Jews were under the bondage of the Law. With Christ, freedom of faith flourished.

### **The Season Was Right:**

- The Greek word for *fullness* is *plérōma*, meaning full, plump, and ripe.
- God worked according to His perfect plan in three specific ways:
  - Spiritually: The Jews longed for the Messiah, and the emptiness of the Roman religion ensured the world was ripe for the perfect God-man.
  - Culturally: There was a common global language (Greek) and a culture that catered to the singular message of Christ.

- Politically: The *Pax Romana* had enforced peace, allowing people to travel safely and present ideas to many places. Paul traveled roughly 15,000 miles under Roman protection. Some surmise that by AD 312, one in ten people in the Roman Empire were Christians.

### **The Action Was Right:**

- That Jesus was referred to as *Son* suggests His pre-existence (see Galatians 4:4). God sent Jesus out from His presence at the perfect time to be a propitiation (payment) for our sins.
- Jesus came from heaven for a mission: to redeem and restore. In fact, Jesus said, "For this cause I have come into the world" (John 18:37).

### **The Person Was Right:**

- Jesus was born of a human under the law. He followed the normal Jewish course of upbringing: He was circumcised, dedicated, taught the Torah, attended synagogue, etc.
- Like every Jewish male, He would have had a bar mitzvah and was responsible for obeying God's Law. But unlike any other human, He obeyed it perfectly and was without sin.
- In this sense, both Jesus' divinity and humanity were seen.

- He had to be human to represent people and take the penalty of sin on humanity's behalf.
- He had to be God for His sacrifice to have enough value to atone for sin.

### **The Reason Was Right:**

- To *redeem* means to buy back, or to set free at a cost.
- The concept of redemption conveys the act of freeing slaves at a slave market by paying the price.
- God went to the slave market of sin, bought us, adopted us, and will bring us home.
- The Son of God became a slave-servant so that slaves can become sons.
- This means we are no longer under the bondage of sin.
- When everything was set up perfectly, God sent His perfect Son, the person of Jesus, the Shiloh.
- *Shiloh* (see Genesis 49:10):
  - A scepter is a tribal staff, identifying authority.
  - The lawgiver was the one to have the right to rule and enforce the law of Moses.
  - As the Jews sought the Shiloh in the streets of Jerusalem, the Messiah came in the streets of Nazareth.

## **PRACTICE** //

**Connect Up:** As Pastor Skip stated, "The precision God keeps and the plan that God made all revolve around the Person that God sent." Discuss God's precision in both the Bible (prophecy, etc.) and in your own life. How has the Lord showed His perfect timing in circumstances you've faced?

**Connect In:** Pastor Skip said that one of the questions he gets asked most often

is about the last days. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, the apostle Paul told the church to "comfort one another with these words." Paul was referencing the rapture and the fulfillment of the church's time on earth. Why is it important for the church to discuss the end times? How can the last days encourage us?

**Connect Out:** As important as Jesus' teaching and truths are, Pastor Skip

reminded us that Jesus never said, "Follow My *teachings*." Rather, Jesus said, "Follow Me." The message of the Messiah is found in the promise of a person—Jesus. How would you communicate this truth to an unbeliever: Jesus is the pinnacle of our faith, not necessarily teachings or ethics? Conversely, the teachings are important because of the Person. Discuss the interconnected role between Jesus and His teachings.