

Pastor's Devotional
November 26, 2017

Read Galatians 4:4-6

Thanksgiving Day is behind us...shopping is in full force...it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! To rediscover the "good news of great joy" (Luke 2:10), *Church in the Wild* will unpack the Gospel summary that Paul provided in Galatians 4:4-6, today's scripture reading. Each week we'll explore a phrase. This morning we focus on what the apostle meant in writing "when the set time had fully come..." What do we mean by God's "on-time delivery"?

The Father's sending of His Son was not a random thing. The Incarnation had been planned for a specific point in Jewish history. God prepared His people to receive their Messiah (Anointed One) by embedding predictions and explanations in Old Testament scriptures. Scan the list of Messianic prophecies printed on the back or review this cool interactive list: <https://jewsforjesus.org/answers/top-40-most-helpful-messianic-prophecies/>

By the time that Jesus was born, Jewish Messianic expectation had reached a fever pitch, affecting even Jesus' parents. Joseph and Mary chose to live in a village called "Netzerem (Nazareth). Fervently awaiting the Messiah, the villagers named their settlement after the bud that bursts from an olive tree stump, for the prophet Isaiah declared that "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit—the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him" (11:1). When Jesus' parents took him to the Temple for consecration, they met Simeon to "whom it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah" (Luke 2:26). Messianic expectation was in the air!

Not only were the Jews were expecting a Messiah. God had also been cultivating the conditions by which the Jewish Messiah could become the Savior for non-Jewish people:

1. A shift in religious preferences prepared pagan worshippers for the good news of Jesus. No longer impressed with idols, many non-Jews were attracted to cults that worshipped a single deity. Many Gentiles practiced Judaism (the Book of Acts calls them "God-fearers"). A relationship with Jesus would fulfill these yearnings.
2. The Jewish *diaspora* (Jews scattered by exile and their own pursuit of economic opportunities) resulted in synagogues popping up across the Roman Empire. These far-flung synagogues became ready-made venues for the apostles to share the news of Jesus the Messiah with Jews and God-fearing Gentiles...and many believed!
3. In previous decades, the Empire built "Roman roads" so that soldiers could move quickly and trade would flourish. The Empire also cleared the Mediterranean Sea of pirates. These beneficial aspects of *Pax Romana* (Roman peace) made it possible for apostles like Paul to travel frequently and safer than would have been the case a hundred years earlier or several hundred years later. In regard to getting the word out, Jesus was born at just the right time!

As Paul declared, Jesus' birth came "when the set time had fully come." As you celebrate the season, relish how the Father patiently prepared for His Son's arrival, so we could receive the greatest Gift ever given. It's news worth sharing!

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

- Which of the Messianic prophecies are most compelling to you?
- What did you learn about the meaning of "Nazareth"? What does this name tell us about the people who lived in this village?
- Which of the three factors do you think was most significant in helping in Gentiles become Christ-followers?

MESSIANIC PROPHECY FULFILLMENT CHART

O.T. Prophecies	Arranged Chronologically	Fulfilled in the Gospel
Ge 3:15	He Would Be the "Offspring of a Woman"	Ga 4:4 (Lk 2:7; Re 12:5)
Ge 22:18 (Ge 12:3; 18:18)	The Promised Offspring of Abraham	Ac 3:25 (Mt 1:1; Lk 3:34)
Ge 17:19	The Promised Offspring to Isaac	Mt 1:2 (Lk 3:34)
Nu 24:17 (Ge 28:14)	The Promised Offspring of Jacob	Lk 3:34 (Mt 1:2)
Ge 49:10	He Will Descend from the Tribe of Judah	Lk 3:33 (Mt 1:2-3)
Isa 9:7 (Isa 11:1-5; 2 Sa 7:13)	He Would Be the Heir to the Throne of David	Mt 1:1 (Mt 1:6)
Mic 5:2	His Place of Birth	Mt 2:1 (Lk 2:4-7)
Da 9:25	His Time of Birth	Lk 2:1-7
Isa 7:14	He Would Be Born of A Virgin	Mt 1:18 (Lk 1:26-35)
Jer 31:15	The Slaughter of Infants	Mt 2:16-18
Hos 11:1	His Escape into Egypt	Mt 2:14-15
Isa 9:1-2	His Ministry in Galilee	Mt 4:12-16
Dt 18:15	Him Being a Prophet	Jn 6:14 (Jn 1:45; Ac 3:19-26)
Ps 110:4	His Being a Priest, Like Melchizedek	He 6:20 (He 5:5-6; 7:15-17)
Isa 53:3 (Ps 2:2)	His Rejection by Jews	Jn 1:11 (Jn 5:43; Lk 4:29; 17:25; 23:18)
Isa 11:2-4 (Ps 45:7)	Some of His Characteristics	Lk 2:52 (Lk 4:18)
Zec 9:9 (Isa 62:11)	His Triumphal Entry	Jn 12:13-14 (Mt 21:1-11; Jn 12:12)
Ps 41:9	His Betrayal by a Friend	Mk 14:10 (Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:43-45)
Zec 11:12-13	He Was Sold for Thirty Pieces of Silver	Mt 26:15 (Mt 27:3-10)
Zec 11:13	The Money Returned for a Potter's Field	Mt 27:3-10
Ps 109:7-8	Judas's Position to Be Taken by Another	Ac 1:16-20
Ps 27:12 (Ps 35:11)	False Witnesses Accuse Him	Mt 26:60-61
Isa 53:7 (Ps 38:13-14)	He Was Silent When Accused	Mt 26:62-63 (Mt 27:12-14)
Isa 50:6	He Was Struck and Spit on	Mk 14:65 (Mk 15:17; Jn 19:1-3; 18:22)
Ps 69:4 (Ps 109:3-5)	He Was Hated without Cause	Jn 15:23-25
Isa 53:4-6, 12	He Suffered in the Place of Someone else	Mt 8:16-17 (Ro 4:25; 1Co 15:3)
Isa 53:12	He Was Crucified with Sinners	Mt 27:38 (Mk 15:27-28; Lk 23:33)
Ps 22:16 (Zec 12:10)	His Hands and Feet Pierced	Jn 20:27 (Jn 19:37; 20:25-26)
Ps 22:6-8	He Was Mocked and Insulted	Mt 27:39-44 (Mk 15:29-32)
Ps 69:21	He Was Given Gall and Vinegar	Jn 19:29 (Mt 27:34, 48)
Ps 22:8	He Hears Prophetic Words Repeated in Mockery	Mt 27:43
Ps 109:4 (Isa 53:12)	He Prays for His Enemies	Lk 23:34
Zec 12:10	His Side Was Pierced	Jn 19:34
Ps 22:18	The Soldiers Cast Lots for His Clothes	Mk 15:24 (Jn 19:24)
Ps 34:20 (Ex 12:46)	Not a Bone of Him Was Broken	Jn 19:33
Isa 53:9	He Was Buried with/by a Rich Man	Mt 27:57-60
Ps 16:10	He Was Resurrected	Mt 28:9 (Lk 24:36-48; Mt 16:21)
Ps 68:18	He Ascended Back into Heaven with the Father	Lk 24:50-51 (Ac 1:9)

CHRIST ALWAYS EXISTS

1. He Is Eternally the Same: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever" (He 13:8).
2. He Had No Beginning: Jesus Christ is like Melchizedek, who was: "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually" (He 7:3).
3. His Activities Are Eternal: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings

forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2).

4. He Existed before Abraham: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am'" (Jn 8:58).

5. He Was before Creation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn 1:1). And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (Jn 17:5).

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