Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

23 December 2018 Message 2 of 3

NLT 50 Minutes

Title

**Immanuel: God in Time**

***Topical Christmas Message***

**Topic:** Christmas

**Subject:** Why did God send Jesus when he did?

**Complement:** God’s timing is always perfect.

**Purpose:** The listeners will agree that God’s timing in their lives is perfect.

**Attribute:** We worship the God of Eternity

**Reading:** Matthew 1:18-25

**Song:** Joy Has Dawned (Townend/Getty), Glory to God (Steve Fee/Vicky Beeching)

# Introduction

Best & Worst

### Interest: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

#### Such were the opening lines of the 1859 classic by Charles Dickens called *A Tale of Two Cities.* And those cities? The story is set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution (1789-1799). He continued…

#### *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,*

Fuller Poem

#### *it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,*

#### *it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,*

#### *it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness,*

#### *it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair…*

What time for You?

### Need: What time is it in your life right now?

#### Are you experiencing the best of times?

##### Is your marriage or situation at home thriving?

##### Perhaps work is going better than it has in a long time.

##### Maybe you’re experiencing an increased joy!

#### Or are you experiencing the worst of times?

##### Things at home are a real struggle.

##### Or you need a new line of work.

Subject

##### Or a cloud hangs over you.

### Subject: Today we address the concept of time in relation to the original Christmas. We will answer this question: *Why did God send Jesus when he did?*

Immanuel

(2 slides)

### Curiosity: Our three-week Christmas series this month will seek to unpack the meaning of "Immanuel: God With Us” by answering these questions:

Series:   
God in…

#### God in Place was answered last week. Why Bethlehem? Why did God choose this place for Jesus to arrive? The answer to the “where” question was that Bethlehem was the perfect place for Jesus to enter this world.

Bethlehem

(3 slides)

• Place

#### God in Time is this week. Why then? Why did Jesus come at the time he did? We will answer the “When” question today.

• Time

#### God in Us is week 3. Why within? We will answer the “How” question to see how God works.

• Us

### Preview: Today we will try to look at the Christmas story from the perspective of God’s timing. We will start big, narrow it to Christ’s birth, and then see where it shows up for us today.

Preview

• • •

(What is the “big view” that must we know before we can see God’s timing in sending Jesus?)

MP

# I. God rules over time between the two eternities.

Man Made God

[The LORD invented time itself to function between eternity past and future.]

[Sadly, one recent author has turned it around and claimed that man created God.]

## God created time itself at creation since he is eternal (Gen 1:1).

Gen 1:1

### By saying “in the beginning,” God means that he began time.

### He existed long before creation since he is eternal!

• Rev 21:1

## God will remove time at the new heavens and earth (Rev 21:1).

Chiasm

### The Bible’s Chiasm places the focus of time on Christ’s two comings: one to redeem and one to rule.

### This makes Jesus—who existed for eternity before the manger—the very focus of time itself!

Proofs

(4 slides)

Jesus is Creator

### This is because Jesus is Creator God! Many NT texts teach this… [read John 1; Col 1; Heb 1].

Subject

(But why did God send Jesus when he did? What was God’s purpose in sending Jesus 2000 years ago? Why not 3000 years ago? 1000? Why not this year, for that matter?)

# II. God sent Jesus at just the right time (Gal 4:4-5).

MP

[He could have had Jesus born earlier or later—but neither time was better.]

Gal 4:1-3

(4 slides)

## The OT looked towards Jesus at God’s timing (Gal 4:1-4a).

Gal 4:4

## Jesus was born as eternal God and temporal man (4b).

Gal 4:5

## Jesus submitted to the Mosaic law so we wouldn’t need to (5).

Full Charts

(5 slides)

## God prepared the world for Jesus in the Intertestamental Era [Explain].

Tran-sition

(But how does God’s timing for Christ’s arrival relate to you? So this was the perfect time for Jesus to come, you ask. But how does that relate to me? Well…)

# III. God’s timing is perfect for you too.

MP

[He has your life right on schedule, never being early, never being late.]

Boy to Man

## How have you seen God’s timing in your life? How is he moving you from infant to grown son?

### The Law was a tutor to lead us to Jesus (cf. Gal 3:24-25), so at Christmas we celebrate his coming to free us from the Law. Just a tutor fulfills his purpose once the student grows into adulthood, so now we lay aside the Law as grown sons ready to receive our rights as sons!

### A son’s privileges over a slave’s shows a believer's faith over the Law (4:1-11).

Chart

#### In infancy, the son looks like a slave because he has to follow many of the same rules—don’t throw food, don’t talk back, etc.

#### However, when the infant son grows up, his relationship with the father no longer looks like that of the grown slave. The son owns the estate!

## God wants us to use our time for him (Eph 5:16).

Eph 5:16

(NAU)

Eph 5:16

(NLT)

### The New American Standard Updated (1995) gives the more literal sense.

### How do you “walk carefully” (cf. KJV)?

### The two commands here are “be careful” and “do not be foolish.”

### You show care and wisdom by making the most of your time.

### And you use your time wisely because many live in sin! These truly are evil days.

Redeem the Time

### How can you “redeem the time”?

Subject

(So back to our original question: why did God send Jesus when he did?)

# Conclusion

MI

### God’s timing is always perfect (Main Idea). He is rarely early and never late —but always on time.

### Main Points

MPI

#### God rules over time between the two eternities.

MPII

#### God sent Jesus at just the right time (Gal 4:4-5).

MPIII

#### God’s timing is perfect for you too.

Seasons

### Application: How can you better submit to God’s timing?

Receive

#### Is it time for you to receive Jesus? The shepherds received him gladly. How about you?

#### Is it time for you to stop wasting time? Some of us waste an awful amount of time on movies. Maybe we need to limit it to one movie per month, huh? What other activity in your life hinders you from pursuing Eph 5:16 to “make the most of your time because the days are evil”?

Stop Wasting

#### How can you better use your time in the coming year? Maybe God is telling you that his timing is perfect as an example of you giving some of that time back to him to get to know him better through his Word! I would like to encourage you as you look to the New Year to commit to a certain goal in reading his Word—even a page a day or a chapter a day or even a verse a day!

Bible

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

# Questions

# Tentative Main Ideas

Text

# Illustrations That Apply

### “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”

### Such were the opening lines of the 1859 classic by Charles Dickens called *A Tale of Two Cities.* And those cities? The story is set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution (1789-1799).

# https://www.gotquestions.org/fullness-of-time.html

# What does it mean that God sent Jesus in the "fullness of time"?

**Question: "What does it mean that God sent Jesus in the "fullness of time"? Why did God send Jesus when He did? Why not earlier? Why not later?"  
  
Answer:** “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law” ([Galatians 4:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%204.4)). This verse declares that God the Father sent His Son when “the time had fully come.” There were many things occurring at the time of the first century that, at least by human reasoning, seem to make it ideal for Christ to come then.  
  
1) There was a great anticipation among the Jews of that time that the Messiah would come. The Roman rule over Israel made the Jews hungry for the Messiah’s coming.  
  
2) Rome had unified much of the world under its government, giving a sense of unity to the various lands. Also, because the empire was relatively peaceful, travel was possible, allowing the early Christians to spread the gospel. Such freedom to travel would have been impossible in other eras.  
  
3) While Rome had conquered militarily, Greece had conquered culturally. A “common” form of the Greek language (different from classical Greek) was the trade language and was spoken throughout the empire, making it possible to communicate the gospel to many different people groups through one common language.  
  
4) The fact that the many false idols had failed to give them victory over the Roman conquerors caused many to abandon the worship of those idols. At the same time, in the more “cultured” cities, the Greek philosophy and science of the time left others spiritually empty in the same way that the atheism of communist governments leaves a spiritual void today.  
  
5) The mystery religions of the time emphasized a savior-god and required worshipers to offer bloody sacrifices, thus making the gospel of Christ which involved one ultimate sacrifice believable to them. The Greeks also believed in the immortality of the soul (but not of the body).  
  
6) The Roman army recruited soldiers from among the provinces, introducing these men to Roman culture and to ideas (such as the gospel) that had not reached those outlying provinces yet. The earliest introduction of the gospel to Britain was the result of the efforts of Christian soldiers stationed there.  
  
The above statements are based on men looking at that time and speculating about why that particular point in history was a good time for Christ to come. But we understand that God’s ways are not our ways ([Isaiah 55:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2055.8)), and these may or may not have been some reasons for why He chose that particular time to send His Son. From the context of [Galatians 3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%203) and [4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Galatians%204), it is evident that God sought to lay a foundation through the Jewish Law that would prepare for the coming of the Messiah. The Law was meant to help people understand the depth of their sinfulness (in that they were incapable of keeping the Law) so that they might more readily accept the cure for that sin through Jesus the Messiah ([Galatians 3:22-23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%203.22-23); [Romans 3:19-20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.19-20)). The Law was also “put in charge” ([Galatians 3:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%203.24)) to lead people to Jesus as the Messiah. It did this through its many prophecies concerning the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled. Add to this the sacrificial system that pointed to the need for a sacrifice for sin as well as its own inadequacy (with each sacrifice always requiring later additional ones). Old Testament history also painted pictures of the person and work of Christ through several events and religious feasts (such as the willingness of Abraham to offer up Isaac, or the details of the Passover during the exodus from Egypt, etc.).  
  
Finally, Christ came when He did in fulfillment of specific prophecy. [Daniel 9:24-27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%209.24-27) speaks of the “seventy weeks” or the seventy “sevens.” From the 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 Longimanus in 445 B.C. (see [Nehemiah 2:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Neh%202.5)). After seven “sevens” plus 62 “sevens,” or 69 x 7 years, the prophecy states, “the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary” and that the “end will come like a flood” (meaning major destruction) (v. 26). Here we have an unmistakable reference to the Savior’s death on the cross. A century ago in his book *The Coming Prince*, Sir Robert Anderson gave detailed calculations of the sixty-nine weeks, using ‘prophetic years,’ allowing for leap years, errors in the calendar, the change from B.C. to A.D., etc., and figured that the sixty-nine weeks ended on the very day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, five days before His death. Whether one uses this timetable or not, the point is that the timing of Christ’s incarnation ties in with this detailed prophecy recorded by Daniel over five hundred years beforehand.  
  
The timing of Christ’s incarnation was such that the people of that time were prepared for His coming. The people of every century since then have more than sufficient evidence that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah through His fulfillment of the Scriptures that pictured and prophesied His coming in great detail.  
  
**Recommended Resource:** [Jesus: The Greatest Life of All by Charles Swindoll](https://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?event=AFF&p=1011693&item_no=202584)

**Immanuel: God in Time**

***Topical Christmas Message***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reason God sent Jesus when he did was because this was his perfect time between the two eternities.

# I. God rules over time between the two eternities.

## God created time itself at creation since he is eternal (Gen 1:1).

## God will remove time at the new heavens and earth (Rev 21:1).

# II. God sent Jesus at just the right time (Gal 4:4-5).

## The OT looked towards Jesus at God’s timing (4a).

## Jesus was born as eternal God and temporal man (4b).

## Jesus submitted to the Mosaic law so we wouldn’t need to (4c-5).

## God prepared the world for Jesus in the Intertestamental Era.

# III. God’s timing is perfect for you too.

## How have you seen God’s timing in your life?

## God wants us to use our time for him (Eph 5:16).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will agree that God’s timing in their lives is perfect.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

### Need: What time is it in your life right now?

### Subject: Why did God send Jesus when he did?

### Curiosity: Our three-week series this month will seek to unpack the meaning of "Immanuel: God With Us” by answering three questions.

### Preview: Today we will try to look at the Christmas story from the perspective of God’s timing. We will start big, narrow it to Christ’s birth, and then see where it shows up for us today.

(What must we know before we can see God’s timing for Jesus?)

# I. God rules over time between the two eternities.

## God created time itself at creation since he is eternal (Gen 1:1).

## God will remove time at the new heavens and earth (Rev 21:1).

(Why did God send Jesus when he did?)

# II. God sent Jesus at just the right time (Gal 4:4-5).

## The OT looked towards Jesus at God’s timing (Gal 4:1-4a).

## Jesus was born as eternal God and temporal man (4b).

## Jesus submitted to the Mosaic law so we wouldn’t need to (5).

## God prepared the world for Jesus in the Intertestamental Era (see chart].

(How does God’s timing for Christ’s arrival relate to you?)

# III. God’s timing is perfect for you too.

## How have you seen God’s timing in your life?

## God wants us to use our time for him (Eph 5:16).

(Why did God send Jesus when he did?)

# Conclusion

### God’s timing is always perfect (Main Idea).

### Main Points

#### God rules over time between the two eternities.

#### God sent Jesus at just the right time (Gal 4:4-5).

#### God’s timing is perfect for you too.

### Application: How can you better submit to God’s timing?

### Prayer

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**Rick Griffith**

23 December 2018

Message 2 of 3

**Immanuel: God in Time**

***Topical Christmas Message***

# Introduction

### “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”— Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities*

### What time is it in your life right now?

### Why did God send Jesus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ he did?

(What must we know before we can see God’s timing for Jesus?)

# I. God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over time between the two eternities.

## God created time itself at creation since he is eternal (Gen 1:1).

## God will remove time at the new heavens and earth (Rev 21:1).

(Why did God send Jesus when he did?)

# II. God sent Jesus at just the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ time (Gal 4:4-5).

## The OT looked towards Jesus at God’s timing (Gal 4:1-4a).

## Jesus was born as eternal God and temporal man (4b).

## Jesus submitted to the Mosaic law so we wouldn’t need to (5).

## God prepared the world for Jesus in the Intertestamental Era (see opposite chart).

(How does God’s timing for Christ’s arrival relate to you?)

# III. God’s timing is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for you too.

## How have you seen God’s timing in your life?

## God wants us to use our time for him (Eph 5:16).

# Conclusion

### God’s timing is always \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

### Take Home: How can you better submit to God’s timing?

Download this sermon PPT and notes for free at BibleStudyDownloads.org/resource/topical-preaching/

Listen to this message online at cicfamily.com/sermon-listing/

**The** **Intertestamental Era**

**(425 BC—5 BC)**

***Issue/Time Period Malachi (end of OT) Intertestamental Advent of Christ***

Rulers Over Israel Persia (208 yrs.) Greeks (188 yrs.) Rome (58 yrs.)

Hasmoneans (80 yrs.)

Political Stability Peace/autonomy Many wars Peace (but through

Rome’s “iron hand”!)

Expectation of Messiah Moderate Increasing High

and Restored Kingdom (Zechariah) “Two Messiahs”

Language in Israel Hebrew/Aramaic Greek (Septuagint) Aramaic/Greek/Latin

-Ability to Evangelize Limited Increased Extensive

Road System Very Limited Expanded Extensive & Quality

Places of Worship Temple (Jerusalem) Rise of Synagogues Synagogues/Temple

Synagogues (Babylon) in Israel

Religious Leaders Priests/Levites Rise of Jewish Sects Pharisees/Sadducees

-Achieved office by… Genealogy Fighting illegitimate Bribes/Executions

high priest

-Extent of Power Local Jurisdiction Rise of Sanhedrin Corrupt Sanhedrin

-Hermeneutic Literal Unstable + Apocalyptic Letterism

Authority for Living OT Law Rise of Oral Law Pharisees

**The “Kingdom Stage” is Set!**

**Galatians 4:4-5** *“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

*to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights as sons”*

**The time was right:**

politically

linguistically

religiously

prophetically (Dan. 9:25-26)

emotionally

transportationally