

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: Dec. 24, 2008

Title: The Hero Arrives - Part 2

Text: Galatians 4:3-5

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

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The Storyline of the Bible

Date: Dec. 24, 2008
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 Text: Galatians 4:3-5

Introduction:

“The redemptive purpose of God is the source of the deliverance of man from his bondage to the law [i.e., sin]. The eternal decree was effectively executed by the Son through His entrance into the world and His subsequent vicarious crucifixion.” (Robert G. Gromacki, *Stand Fast in Liberty: An Exposition of Galatians*, 122).

Why didn't Jesus come sooner? Why were there about 400 silent years between the testaments? Why wasn't the world's Redeemer waiting in the Promised Land to meet the incoming Israelites with Joshua?

“When the law had fully accomplished its purpose of showing man his utter sinfulness and inability to live up to God's perfect standard of righteousness, God ushered in a new era of redemption.” (John MacArthur, *Galatians*, 107).

THE BIG PICTURE

- The Subject of the Story – The Person and Purpose of God
- The Villain Appears
- The Hero Foretold
- The Hero Arrives
- The Hero's Work
- The Hero's Legacy

The Outline:

- There is an appointed person
- There is an appointed period
- There is an appointed purpose

A key element within our currently study is the timing of the actual event in history. The immediate passage draws a parallel between the selections of a date by the human father at which the child would become a son, “so the divine Father chose a time when the world would pass from its childhood under legal supervision to a period of spiritual Sonship. The events of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection marked the change from the [economy of law to that of grace].” (Robert G. Gromacki, *Stand Fast in Liberty: An Exposition of Galatians*, 122).

“It appears that the Book of Daniel, like Revelation, has in view the eternal and complete establishment of God's kingdom, the glory of the saints, and the complete subjugation of the nations of this world. The prophecy could be explained by

emphasizing the numbers, but it appears that the purpose of the revelation is encouragement and comfort in the removal of sinners) and the completion of redemption.” (Willem A. VanGemeren, “Daniel,” ed. Walter A. Elwell, *Baker Commentary on the Bible: Based on the NIV*, 599).

“Daniel predicted that the age of the Messiah could actually be discerned by the computation of years from the Persian decree to rebuilt Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25). The Messiah was to come during the domination of the fourth Gentile world power over Israel: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome (Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-14). The Magi recognized the significance of their era (Matt. 2:1-2), but the religious leaders were ignorant of the signs of the times (Matt. 16:1-5; Luke 19:41-44).” (Robert G. Gromacki, *Stand Fast in Liberty: An Exposition of Galatians*, 122).

- I. There is an appointed person (See 12/21/08 sermon)
- II. There is an appointed period

³“So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. ⁴**But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵**so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons**” (Gal. 4:3-5).

Galatians 4:4 speaks of a specific time when God would send His prepared Son into the world to become her Savior. The purpose of God is neither random nor reactionary. There is nothing arbitrary as to who God is or what He will do. The Son was sent in execution of a flawless plan. There is neither doubt nor delay in all that the Father planned. He will neither be denied nor defeated.

For centuries this *time* had been in preparation and various societal elements had contributed to it.

1. The Jews, with their concept of monotheism and the Old Testament Scriptures (with scores of prophecies regarding the Messiah) had prepared the way.

There were various prophecies from the Old Testament that were fulfilled precisely by Jesus’ entrance into the world - His birthplace, His flight into Egypt, His being born of a virgin. But the timing of His death has been pre-figured to Daniel in Daniel 9:24 through the prophecy of the “sixty-nine weeks.” After 490 years (from the decree of Artaxerxes to release Israel from Babylonian captivity), the Messiah would be led to His atoning work.

2. The Greeks had provided a language and culture that was common to everyone in the immediate area.

“Alexander the Great had thoroughly established Greek culture and language throughout the known world, and these continued their dominating influence long after Rome succeeded Greece as world ruler.” (John MacArthur, *Galatians*, 107).

God waited until the world was ready culturally. Paul's experience at Athens, recorded in Acts 17, is very telling about the intellectual and philosophical atmosphere of the Roman Empire into which Jesus came. It was a time when truth was fluid and culture found itself between religions. The ancient Greek and Roman mythological belief systems were highly doubted by most citizens, but belief in the supernatural was almost universal. The Roman world was polytheistic, which made the Jews stand out even more.

Athens, as the cultural epicenter of the Greek Empire, had set the tone for the culture of the Mediterranean world of the time. Art, architecture, and sculpture from the period survives today as a testament to this fact. God waited to send Jesus in a time when people were searching for meaning and absolute truth. Are we headed there? The erosion of belief in absolute truth is the single most threatening factor existent in our culture today.

3. The Romans had given humanity a time of peace and a marvelous transportation system.

The Romans were responsible for opening the world up to every community. The landscape was paved with "Roman roads." They would take a mortar/concrete type mixture and pour it into a trench sometimes three feet thick. Cobblestones would cover the top and then salt would be applied to the surface to harden it all. Many of these roads are still traveled today.

The Ignatian way, in particular, stretched its way across the Macedonian world allowing the early apostles, especially Paul, an easier means of travel. In spite of the bandits and other threats along the way, one could go from city to city with relative ease. This established a wonderful opportunity for the spread and communication of the gospel. <http://www.brandonacox.com/2008/12/03/the-fullness-of-time/>

When Jesus was born, it was indeed the fullness of time. Underline the phrase "fullness of time," and in your margin record: *Hebrews – Scriptures; Greeks – language; Romans – peace*. These will remind you of the providential preparation of God in anticipation of the sending of His Son. <http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/688-galatians-4-4-5-the-fullness-of-time>

"God does nothing prematurely, but, foreseeing the end from the beginning, waits till all is ripe for the execution of His purpose. Had Christ come directly after the fall, the enormity and deadly fruits of sin would not have been realized fully by man, so as to feel his desperate state and need of a Savior. Sin was fully developed. Man's inability to save himself by obedience to the law, whether that of Moses, or that of conscience, was completely manifested; all the prophecies of various ages found their common center in *this* particular time: and Providence, by various arrangements in the social and political, as well as the moral world, had fully prepared the way for the coming Redeemer. God often permits physical evil long before he teaches the remedy. The smallpox had for long committed its ravages before inoculation, and then vaccination, was discovered. It was essential to the honor of God's law to permit evil long before He revealed the full remedy." (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, Galatians 4:4).

“Christ’s birth at Bethlehem was not an accident; it was an appointment.” (Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Free*, 90).

When the Father sent His only begotten Son as the seed of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent and in turn have His heel bruised, it pleased Him (Isa. 53:10, 11). When the Son of God, in obedience to His Father, saw the good pleasure of God in the outcome of His sacrifice, He joyfully endured the cross and embraced the shame (Heb. 12:2) and all this was done according to the divine plan.

Yet all this is but a half truth if it is stated apart from the purpose of His coming. Again, we might celebrate the season religiously, but there is something lying beneath the surface calling out to us for it to be unveiled. Remember Abraham in Genesis 22:8?

⁷ Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "**God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.**" So the two of them walked on together. ⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." ¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided" (Gen. 22:7-14).

In this shadow God stayed the hand of Abraham and provided in type a substitute for his son Isaac. But we know that the shadow was cast by a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. We know that the type will find an antitype and God the Father will not stay His hand, nothing will keep Him from “crushing Him” (Isa. 53:10). God has unsheathed His sword and He has cut the throat of Christ, His lamb in order that sin would be destroyed, His people would be delivered and His power, justice, and grace would be declared.

Now let us consider the full import of this season. Our next study will explore the magnitude of what God did in the sending of His Son, His only begotten Son.

SHEPHERDING THE PEOPLE: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. God was in control of Jesus’ birth to every extent. He determined when exactly Jesus would be born (the best time), which was the best time for the moment as well as the best time for prophetic fulfillment. This leads me to make two observations: 1) God will be right on time when Jesus comes again and 2) 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, always, is whether we trust Him. In light of thousands of years of a perfect track record, do you trust Him?

2. This is a holy night. It is a time when we should come together and celebrate the community of faith and that which all of us hold most dear. It is a time in which we should observe family and the giving of gifts and the joy of food and shelter. But it is also a time when we should acknowledge these things as mere shadows callings us to the greater reality.
3. My prayer for my family and me and for us as a community of faith is that we would not permit the shadow to replace the substance and that we would "party with a passion" knowing that it is but a taste of something more and may the "more" drive us straight to Him.