

# Matthew 2:1, Luke 1:1-5, 2:1-2

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] is this what I want you to do? I don't do this very often. Very, very few of you are in the room that were with me 18, 19 years ago when I first started preaching.

Back then, there was an old saying that if you ever go hear Billy Joe preach, you have to take a bunch of bookmarks with you because we went a lot of different places. So I don't typically do that anymore, but I will do it this morning.

So I'm gonna ask you to put a mark in the Gospel of Luke. If you really wanna get, I can give you a whole bunch of them because I will reference a lot of passages this morning, okay? I'll just go ahead and let you know that in my pastoral ministry, I try not to do this much anymore because I want to be appointed.

But if you understand, if many of you do know this about me, but in my pastoral study, this is my wheelhouse. This is where I get excited, these type of matters. So if you really wanna get carried away, you can mark Daniel chapter nine, you can mark Galatians chapter four, you can mark Mark one, verse 15.

You can go, but I do want you to put one in Luke chapter one. You'll have to have another one in Luke chapter two, but we're gonna start out in Matthew chapter two. If you wanted to take a little bit further, you could also go to the book of Ephesians and put a marking there.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] You could go to the Gospel of John and put a marking there. And in case you haven't figured it out yet, we will be looking at a lot of scripture, but we'll be looking at one glorious truth, okay?

And just some of you say, oh, well, pastor, I thought you were an expository preacher. Some of you didn't know that, but you sat under expository preaching each and every Sunday. With all due respect, and I understand that most expositors stay in one text and we have to do that, but this will just as equally prayerfully and hopefully so be as much expositional as any other type of preaching rather than topical.

But to really to get to the exposition, that is to pull the truth out of scripture, we need to do it this way because we are looking at the Christmas events. Last week, we began this series of the Christmas event of what child is this?

And we looked at his position, who this child is. And this morning, I want you to see the period of time he entered, the period of time in which he entered. We will start.

And every Sunday morning, Jerry comes up to me and he hands me a piece of paper and he wants me to write my passage down so that he can put it online. And I laughed this morning. I said, I don't think you can fit it all in.

[ 2 : 2 0 ] Just condense some of it. So we tried to condense. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm not gonna make you turn to all those texts while we're standing, okay? But if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you stand with me as we read together our text found in Matthew.

We'll start in Matthew, but we will go over to Luke as well. So we're gonna read Matthew chapter two, just the first verse. And you're gonna say, well, this doesn't make sense. Stay with me.

And we're gonna read the first verse and then we're gonna go immediately to Luke chapter one, okay? Just so you understand. The word of God says, now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem.

Just stop right there. Go with me to Luke chapter one. We're gonna be in Luke one verses one through five and then Luke two verses one and two. Okay, when you're there, just tell me to say amen.

Amen. All right, here we are. In as much as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. [ 3 : 41 ] In the days of Herod the king, in the days of Herod king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughter of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

Go over to Luke chapter two, just two more verses, and then we'll pray. Luke chapter two, verses one and two. Now in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabitant earth.

This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for this day. We thank you for your word.

We thank you for the consistency of the truth proclaimed and declared in your word. So Father, we ask that you give us insight into it now as we take a moment to consider not only this season, but the season in history in which you entered into.

So Father, give us understanding. Give us eyes to see, hearts and minds to heed, and lives to live it out for your glory.

[ 4 : 47 ] We thank you for this place. We thank you for this time. And we thank you for this grand opportunity. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. For the sake of your legs and the sake of our time, we will refer to the other texts.

We may turn to some of them, but I will not ask you to do it while we are standing. We have been looking at this wonderful child of the Christmas season.

Last week, we looked at the position he holds, not the position he held, but the position he holds. And we understood that there was not the reality that he could be anything he wanted to be when he grew up.

As a matter of fact, we were declaring who he was when he showed up. We looked at his eternal nature. We looked at the reality that he is one who comes and empowers us and gives us the opportunity to become the children of God through the spirit of adoption.

But now that we know who this child is, the position he holds, and we stand in wonder of it, I want you to see the period of time he entered.

[ 5 : 54 ] That is the timing of the season. We understand from scripture that God very clearly declares to us that it was a pointed period in time.

And it was a period of time that has been signified and declared unto us. We see it here in our text. We will dive into it in just a moment, but it is very becoming of us to pay attention to that.

It is becoming because we understand, and we will repeat this in just a moment, because we understand that everything God does, God does with intentionality. That is, God does not respond based upon a series of events that are happening that took him by surprise.

In your life and in your day-to-day life, in the period of time in which you call history, too often our actions, our reactions to something that we did not perceive coming, therefore we could not plan what was going to happen.

As pastor, I'm trying to mature to this point where we are not so much reactive as we are proactive. That is, we are going to do things with intentionality rather than something happening, and all of a sudden now we need to adjust to that.

[ 7 : 04 ] The fall of man in the Garden of Gethsemane, by the way, is not something that God adjusted to. And we need to acknowledge that in scripture. It is not like God created man and woman, and he placed them in the Garden, and he gave them all this liberty and freedom, and told them they could eat from any tree that they wanted to, but they could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

They could eat from the tree of life and all these realities. And then one day God went looking for Adam and Eve, and he couldn't find them because they were hiding among the trees in the cool of the day, and God's calling out, and it isn't the reality that God said, wow, what happened here? And when God asked Adam why he was hiding, God was asking a question he already knew the answer to, right? And God was not in his mind coming up with what he needed to do now that they took from the fruit which they were not supposed to eat from.

You need to understand that because Jesus is referred to the lamb that was slain before the foundations of the earth were laid. When John the Baptist points to Christ, he says, behold the lamb, right?

But what does he say? Behold the lamb which takes away the sin, singular, not sins, not the bad things you do, but the bad people we are, the sin of the world.

[ 8 : 14 ] He is the lamb slain before the foundations of the world were laid. So what we understand is that God's plan of redemption was already in movement and in work before he even created.

So with that in mind, when we understand scripture, when he shows up on the scene, we call it the advent of Christmas, it is very becoming of us to step up and take notice of that time because God is not just responding.

He is not doing things haphazardly. Rather, this is with intentionality. There is a period of time he entered.

So if that is true, and it is, then why that time? The first thing that we notice is this is a particular time. It is a particular time.

It tells us in the Gospel of Matthew, the reason we read Matthew chapter 2 verse 1, it says, now in those days of Herod the king, in those days of Herod the king, pay attention to that, in those days of Herod the king.

[ 9 : 29 ] And then when we go to the Gospel of Luke, and we read in Luke chapter 1, where Luke declares in the first chapter that he has investigated everything thoroughly.

Luke, by the way, by practice is a physician. I love Luke. Sometimes he would probably bother some of us because Luke pays a lot of attention to a lot of details. There are things in Luke that really tell, it is a telltale sign that he is a physician.

There is the woman who had the flow of blood that could never be healed. Remember that? When we read in the other Gospel accounts, it says that she was done much harm by all the doctors. And it says that no one could cure her, that all the physicians.

It was Luke who declared that the disease was incurable. He didn't say she was done much harm. He said what she had was incurable. It was Luke who told us that the man whose withered hand was healed when Jesus saw him on the Sabbath, that it was his right hand.

Because he paid attention to the small details because you want the physician to know whether or not it was the right hand or the left hand. Right? Right? You want them to understand. You want them to pay attention to this. And it is Luke who says that he investigates everything thoroughly.

[ 10 : 35 ] And he wants to give an accurate account to you, O most excellent Theophilus. He is also the author of the book of Acts. But by the time we get to the book of Acts, he is no longer referred to as most excellent Theophilus.

It is just Theophilus. Theophilus, if you remember, when we went through the book of Acts, means lover of God. That's what that name means. But the implication between most excellent and then dropping of the most excellent is that when Luke wrote the gospel, he was writing to a man who held a political position in the Roman Empire.

Therefore, he is referred to as most excellent Theophilus. That is, he is in the position of the most excellence. He loses that position, more than likely because of his Christian faith. And by the time Luke writes to him the second half of his writing, the book of Acts, he just refers to him as Theophilus.

He wasn't doing him any discredit. He just no longer held that position in the political world. So now Luke, writing to someone who is of some prestige, at least within the world's standards, and he is declaring that he is writing after doing a thorough investigation, tells us the same thing that Matthew says, in those days when Herod was the king.

Right? He says, in those days when Herod was the king. And then when we get to the second chapter of Luke, it says, now the birth of Christ was like this, that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

[ 11 : 55 ] And this was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. So now, stay with me. You can put your thinking caps on a little bit this morning, okay?

I want you to do that for me. I want you just to think about it for just a few moments. Scripture has done something that most of us don't like to do. It has tied itself into a very small window of time. It has bound itself into a particular period of time in which Herod was the king of Judea, Caesar Augustus was the emperor of the Roman Empire, and Quirinius was the governor of Syria.

Really bound itself in. Now, for the early historians, now by early historians, I mean historians that are dated pre-1700s.

So like, I think somewhere around 1750 was the date. So the historians for the first 1700 years of Scripture had a major problem here. Because the major problem was, is that when Quirinius was governor of Syria, Herod was already dead.

[13:06] Herod died about 4 BC. Quirinius didn't reign over Syria, according to history, until 7 AD.

And we have a bad problem in our particular time. But as is the case most often, the shovel and the spade do a lot to testify to the reality that Scripture is true.

Because archaeologists in the mid-1700s are digging in the land, and they dig up a coin, and in this coin there's an inscription. It is not just a coin, actually. It is a tabernacle. It's inscription. It does not name a name, but it begins to speak of a prefect and governor over the Syrian region at the exact time in which Herod was the king.

And it begins to declare the deeds of this prefect. And it begins to talk about the things which he did. It begins to talk about the historical narratives. And now, it's not recorded for us in Scripture because, by the way, Quirinius, we do know, issued a census.

It is referred to in the book of Acts. Remember when Gamaliel talks about the revolt that came during the time of the census and another man rose up and said he was a deliverer and they put it down? Well, that's the one that Quirinius, that history knew Quirinius had done.

[14:20] And they were really upset and said, well, it can't be the same one. But this inscription, which just the name of the prefect is smudged off a little bit. But every other detail on that inscription, every deed, every recorded event, everything they did could only match one person in history.

And that person is Quirinius. And that governor of Syria reigned at the same time that Herod was the king in Judea.

And if we go a little bit further and if we agree, now this is where we get excited, that the words matter, right? Scripture matters. And every word of Scripture matters. This is why, my friend, by the way, it is very, very important that you have an accurate translation of Scripture.

I have a preferred translation of Scripture. As a matter of fact, I have two preferred translations of Scripture. Many of you know I preach from the New American Standard Bible. That's my preferred literal translation of Scripture. Along with that, I've begun to fall in love with the Legacy Standard Bible because it is really just a refining of the New American Standard Bible.

And it really is a lot more literal in its wording. So we want a literal translation of Scripture. We want a word-for-word, not a thought-for-thought. Now, I mean that because I'm not saying, some of you say, well, read whatever Bible is comfortable to you.

[15:37] And if you're reading Scripture, then read Scripture. But when you're studying Scripture, I want you to study Scripture, and I want you to study it word-for-word translation because we want to go a little bit further because we have to pay attention to this.

There's a word in there. If we don't pay attention, we miss it. What does Luke say? This was the first census that Quirinius issued.

The only other census that we know about historically is the one that happens that is referred to in the book of Acts. If it was not for the writer, if it was not for Luke, as he wrote the Gospel, we would not know that he had a first because first implies second, right?

If there was not one to follow, he would not have said first. He would have just said this was the census. When you tell me that something is first, it just naturally implies that something is going to follow after it.

Well, that was the first time that I went to that store, so you must have went the second time. If not, then you would have said, yes, that's when I went to that store. To say that something in first implies that there was something which followed.

[16:39] So Luke is writing to an audience. Now, stay with me. I know you're thinking your brain's already smoking, but we haven't got deep yet. Luke is telling us that there was a time prior to this in which his intended audience would have known about.

And if, by the way, your title is most excellent, then you would have been in the legal courts of the empire and you would have known there was another census. So what we have seen here is that there is a very particular time in history in which this child chose to manifest himself.

Now, the reason this is wonderful is because he that is not bound nor confined by history chose a particular moment in which to enter it.

So that is the eternal one chose a moment in time to enter. And if he chose it, then why? So now we see that it is a particular time.

Number two, this is where we have to put our big thinking caps on and we think a little bit further. Number two, it is a prophetic time. It is a prophetic time.

[17:54] Do you know that each of the four gospels has a reference to the timing of Christ's coming? We have read Matthew chapter 2, verse 1.

We have read Luke chapter 1, verses 1 through 5, and Luke chapter 2, verses 1 and 2, which give reference. I have already alluded to the fact that if you were to go to Mark and you go into the gospel of Mark right at the beginning of Mark, which is, by the way, it is really a wonder that Mark even references time because what is Mark's favorite word in his gospel?

Does anyone remember? Immediately, immediately, immediately, straight way or straight forth because Mark moves with speed. Mark is writing to the Greeks. He's writing to the people who are used to gods becoming man and doing things in a fast way.

So immediately, immediately, immediately, Mark writes very fast. He writes and he keeps moving on. But there, in the first chapter, Mark starts out with John the Baptist. We go beyond the birth.

We go right past all that. We go right past all these things. But then it tells us by the time we get to the 14th verse of the first chapter, John the Baptist is already arrested. So it tells us in Mark 1, verse 14, that John the Baptist is arrested.

[19:04] And after his arrest, Jesus makes this statement. Jesus says that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

So there we have a reference to time, right? Mark 1, 15. For Jesus says, for the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. So now we know that Matthew says it, Mark says it, Luke says it.

Well, what about John? When you go read the gospel of John, John has this repeated reference to a timetable. We get into the second chapter of John, John chapter 2 and the very first miraculous event which Christ ever did was at a wedding.

You remember that, right? He is at the wedding in Canaan. He turns the water into wine. But do any of you remember how he responded to his mother? Do you remember that, right? When he was there and they ran out of wine and his mother came to Jesus, son, they ran out of wine.

And what does he say? Woman? That's not a disrespectful way. That's a good way of saying ma'am. Children don't need to look at their mothers and go, woman? I don't do that, right? I don't look at my wife and say that.

[20:09] But anyway, he looks at her and says, woman, what has that to do with me for my hour has not yet come? And he makes this declaration and even in the gospel of John, time after time again, people rise up.

They're going to push him off the cliff, but he passed between them for his hour had not yet come. They were going to stone him, but they could not. He walked between them because his hour had not come.

And then all of a sudden, we get to John chapter 13 and it says, and Jesus, knowing that the hour had come, washed the disciples' feet and looked at Judas Iscariot and said, what you do, do quickly.

Everything in the gospel of John is bound up in this timetable of God. So now, all four gospels declare to us that what God was doing, he was doing by a divine timetable.

And it is a prophetic time. To understand the timing of it, we have to go back to the Old Testament. This will be one reference that I do ask you to turn to, and I'll give you a few moments to get there, and I'll ask you to go with me to the book of Daniel.

[21:17] Go into the book of Daniel, to the ninth chapter of Daniel, and we will start in the 24th verse. Daniel chapter 9, verse 24. I should have asked you to mark that before we begin, but we will be in Daniel chapter 9, verse 24.

Now, while you're turning there, I'll ask you a question which we will see the answer to later, and you probably already know the answer to it. But in our reference to the timing of Christ appearing in the gospel of Matthew, Matthew declares to us in the second chapter that in the days of King Herod, who came from the east?

The Magi came from the east, right? Now, who in any biblical history has any other connection to the Magi besides Jesus Christ?

It's Daniel. When you read the book of Daniel, he is one of those sons who is led into captivity. He refused to eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine.

He ate those things which were holy, he set in parts. He began to interpret the king's dreams, and when he interpreted the king's dreams, the king said, Behold, you know mysteries that God has revealed mysteries to you unknown unto others.

[ 22 : 29 ] So he made him the chief of the Magi. So Daniel becomes chief of the Magi, and as chief of the Magi, he would have taught the other Magi, and then he has the opportunity, by the way, to record his books in the library of that region in which every other Magi following him would surely read the historical records.

So he would have recorded one of the books that he would have recorded, surely, since it is Daniel, would have been the Pentateuch. And in the Pentateuch, there is this book called the Book of Numbers. And in the Book of Numbers, there's a chapter in Numbers 24 with verse 17 that talks about a star arising out of Judah that the scepter shall never depart from his hand.

That is why when we get to the Magi coming, they're following a star and they're looking for a king that has the scepter that will reign forever. But they also would have known that Daniel spoke of other things.

And one of the other things that he would have known or that he would have surely told them would be some of these angelic revelations that were given to him. As Daniel sees the divisions of the kingdom, when he begins to see the man who has the difference, he goes from gold to silver to bronze and then to iron mixed with clay.

And you remember that and he sees the kingdom being divided up and he's praying for interpretation and then he gets sick and then later the angel Gabriel comes and one of the interpretations that he gives him is recorded in Daniel 9.

[ 23 : 50 ] It starts in verse 24. It says, 70 weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city. 70 weeks, it says. To finish the transgression, to make an end of sin.

Now pay attention to what's going to happen at the end of 70 weeks. To finish the transgression, that is to make a fullness of sin, to make an end of sin. So sin, not sins, not what we're doing, but sin itself will be ended.

To make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. What a wonderful thing.

But look at how he breaks it up. So you are to know and to discern that from the issue, now again, the demarcation of time. From the issue of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, not the temple, but Jerusalem, the city.

From the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah, the prince, there will be seven weeks and 62 weeks. It will be built again with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

[ 24 : 54 ] Then after the 62 weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary and its end will come with a flood.

Even to the end there will be war. Desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week. But in the middle of the week, he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.

And on the wing of the abominations will come one who makes desolate even until a complete destruction. One that is decreed is poured out on the one who makes desolate. So, you say, what does all this mean?

Well, that means that now we have a demarcation that we can go back and it is from the issuing of a decree to rebuild the city. To see the issuing of a decree to rebuild the city, I'm not going to ask you to turn there, but make this mark.

You have to go to the book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah chapter 2. Now, Daniel is in captivity. He knows the end of the years of the Babylonian captivity are coming to an end and he prays that they will. There comes a decree from Cyrus that anybody that wants to go rebuild the temple can go back and rebuild the temple and he sends the temple gods with him.

[ 25 : 59 ] By the way, that is foretold by Isaiah, but that is not the decree we're looking for. This is good. I know you say this is a lot of technical information, but in the end we will say hallelujah, okay? So, we know that's not the decree we're looking for because they don't rebuild the city.

The city lays in ruin until there's a cupbearer who's walking around the kingdom and the cupbearer gets news from some people who just came back from Jerusalem and says, what about Jerusalem? What does it look?

They say, oh, it's walls are in disrepair. The city is in ruins and he's broken and that cupbearer's name is Nehemiah. Nehemiah goes before the king and the king says, what's wrong with you, Nehemiah? You look sad and you're not supposed to be sad in the presence of the king and it says, so Nehemiah says, so I prayed, right?

He said one of those spontaneous prayers. Father, don't let this man kill me and he asked and he said, how can I not be sad when my city is broken? Now we're talking about the city, not talking about the temple. By the way, Nehemiah does not rebuild the temple, he rebuilds the city.

So in Nehemiah chapter 2, King Artaxerxes issues a decree. King Artaxerxes issues a decree and writes out in royal script that Nehemiah can rebuild the city.

[ 27 : 03 ] Start the clock, my friend, because now the time stamp is there. Artaxerxes mentions a decree. Seven weeks past. Seven weeks will be seven sets of seven for a week is seven.

So that's 49 years. Most people would agree that that 49 years gets you to the end of Nehemiah's life. At the end of his life, by the time Nehemiah is done, the city is rebuilt. And it says, then after those seven weeks will be another 62 weeks.

So 62 times seven, you do the math, but I've already done it for you. So you have 49 years. And then after the 62 times seven, you have another 434 years. So we've had our first set of 49 years. Now we have 434 years. Add the 434 to the 49 and you get 483 years. From the time, now stay with me. This is where I slow down a little bit. From the time King Artaxerxes issued a decree to rebuild Jerusalem, 483 years later, on 10 Nisan, the month, not a car, on 10 Nisan, your Lord and Savior rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey and revealed himself in what we call the triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

483 years later, the Messiah showed up. And you know what happened? He was cut off. He was crucified. Because, see, it says that after that 69th year, it will be cut off.

[ 28 : 31 ] We live between the 69th year and the 70th year. It has not begun. The 70th set of seven, 70th week. We live in what is called the church age.

But you need to know that this was a prophetic time that Jesus entered the right time so that when he rode the donkey into Jerusalem, it would be a fulfillment of the 483 days, of 483 years.

You say, why does that matter? In case you ever think God doesn't know how to control the circumstances of your own life, long before King Artaxerxes ever sat on the throne, he told Daniel what was going to happen.

A man named Nehemiah gets upset because the city's in disrepair. A king responds to the prayers of Nehemiah because it's according to the timetable of God. A decree goes out and that starts the clock.

And it starts the clock in such an extent that some 33 plus or minus a couple years before that he needs to enter into the city. So it's 483 years following.

[ 29 : 36 ] So back it up to about 450 years later, some shepherds are standing on a hillside and angels show up. Which just happens to be the days when King Herod was king of Judea and Quirinius was governor of Syria.

This is a particular time that was also a prophetic time. This is when it had to happen. Not only, now you can go back to the other, not only was it a particular time and a prophetic time, it was a prepared time.

It was a prepared time. The way that God prepared the events of history is astounding. We will look at this in a little bit more detail later when we begin to look at the people that God uses because it is almost as equally amazing the people that he utilizes throughout this time of history.

But we know the preparation that went into Numbers 24. We know the preparation that Daniel happens to be in captivity at the right time. Happens, quote unquote, to be in captivity at the right time. The king has a dream that he cannot interpret but Daniel can interpret it.

He is made the Magi's leader. He deposits the book of Numbers there along with other writings. He declares this prophecy to those who will follow the Magi who happen to be astrologers or look into the heavens and God prepares it by putting a star there that would move across the sky.

[ 30 : 57 ] But we also know that by the time we get to the end of the book of Malachi God goes silent. There are 400 plus years of silence. Now I know that there are what we call intertestinal books that are out there that you can read those intertestinal books but they are not considered to

be cannings of scripture.

That is, they are not God authorized portions of scripture. The last word that we have from God is in the book of Malachi, Malachi chapter 4 and that last word is God declaring that a forerunner would come before the Savior and a forerunner would turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the hearts of the children back to the fathers.

After 400 plus years God shows up exactly where you expect him to show up in the temple to a man named Zacharias and you know what he says, your wife's going to give birth to a child who will be the forerunner of the Messiah who will turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the hearts of the children back to the fathers.

God shows up and says the very same thing that he had said, the last thing he had said. So if I said something to you and for 400 plus years you kept showing up. Now I know if we think mathematically that's an impossibility none of us would ever show up here 400 years later, right? But say you kept coming to church for 400 plus years. I said something to you and for 400 years you came and you showed up and I just stood here and said nothing and we went home after silence and for 400 years that goes on and 400 years later you come back and I just start the same message over again.

[ 32 : 23 ] we would all be amazed. For one, we'd be amazed because we'd be so old and you'd be amazed that I would still remember what I said but you would be amazed because it would be the last thing you heard.

For 400 years the Jewish people go into the temple, they go through the ceremony, they do everything the same. For 400 years this tradition keeps passing on, this tradition keeps passing on. 400 years pass and God speaks and he says the same thing he was saying so many years ago. So the years of silence are a time of preparation. God is not caught off guard but even then we see that the prophecies that are spoken of everything politically, geographically, socially and every other way it was a time prepared for his appearing.

And we see here that this was a prepared time. So God knew what he was doing. Fourth and finally will be done. It's a particular time, it's a prophetic time, it's a prepared time.

Finally, it is a profitable time. It is a profitable time in history. If you were to turn to the book of Galatians, I'm not going to ask you to but if you were to turn to the book of Galatians into the fourth chapter, write that down because you need to pay attention to that.

[ 33 : 42 ] Galatians chapter four and you were to begin reading in the fourth chapter along the third verse and you would read verses three, four and five. In the third verse, you would read that we are bound as sinners under the law.

That in our natural state in the third verse of the fourth chapter of Galatians, it says that we are all under the law. But then in verse four, it makes this declaration. But in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son.

Wait a minute. Scripture's still talking about time. But in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son to set us free so that we would no longer be under the law but we would be free from the law.

We are redeemed and we are no longer held to the legal standards of the law because of the redemption that we have in Jesus Christ. But he could have made the transition and said we once were under the law but we're not anymore because Jesus came.

That's not how he said it. He said in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son. That is, there again is this peculiar matter of it that God sent forth his son at a moment in time, at a particular time, at a prophetic time, at a prepared time.

[ 34 : 54 ] It says it is a full time. It means to be a time full of opportunity. It means to be a time of completion. It means to be an opportune time. That's what the wording means. This is a profitable time.

Think about it, my friend. When you read your scripture, the gospel message is carried down the roads that Rome built that are still in existence today. It goes to the end of the earth on the ships that are sailing to seas under the Roman flag.

It spreads because there is a common language among a common people. No longer are we speaking the Hebrew language because the Hebrew language got lost in translation, so to say, during the Babylonian captivity.

And since not every Jew came back from the diaspora and they were out there in the Gentile world, they began to take on the marketplace language or the Greek language, the Koineo Greek. And so

now, when you read your New Testament, you are reading a translation of the Greek. When you read the Old Testament, you're reading a translation of the Hebrew. But not only is there a common marketplace language so that on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit falls and every man hears the gospel in his own language because people are gathered there, because people are making sojourns to come during the Pentecost festival because they never moved back.

[ 36 : 07 ] So they make the trip because it's easy to make a trip because Rome built some cool roads all the way around so you can make the trip to Jerusalem. And when you make the trip to Jerusalem, you respond to the gospel some 3,000 people that day.

And guess what? The majority of those 3,000, we didn't build a mega church in Jerusalem because the majority of those 3,000 had to go home. So when they went home, all of a sudden they went away. This is why by the time they get all the way to the coast of Egypt, Thomas is said to show up on the coastal shores of Egypt and then he made his way into Africa.

By the time that Thomas gets to Africa, there's already a church there. Why? Because there is an Ethiopian eunuch who is on his way back from Jerusalem traveling down what? The Roman roads. And all of a sudden someone meets him in the wilderness and he can speak a particular language because they all share a common language which is the Greek.

Not only are the ships sailing, not only are the roads paved, but now there are synagogues in every one of these Roman citizens because the Jews are dispersed among them. So when Paul goes into a city, he finds a friendly avenue.

He can walk in as a Jewish by birth, a Roman by birth. All of a sudden, no one can oppose him and he can go into a synagogue and declare the gospel. Friend, this is a profitable time in history.

[ 37 : 20 ] It was a time in which the gospel could spread like no other time in history save for our day. And what a profitable time in history it was for the Savior to show up so that he could set men and women free from bondage under the law in the fullness of time.

And what a profitable time in history we have to know these things because we live in a world that is so united.

There are people around the world several years ago, my wife and I were still working with youth groups and we had this one year that we had a youth group and in that youth group there were nine nations represented in that youth group.

You said, wow, you had an international youth group. Yeah, we did for one year because a lot of people and around the community had foreign exchange students. We actually had one living with us but we had nine different nations that were living as foreign exchange students that were connected to us and they were all gathered and so we were looking at our youth group and like, man, we had them from Vietnam to Germany to Mexico to Mongolia France Spain and it was amazing but you know what?

I didn't have to know all those languages because they had all been taking English since they entered into school. We as a church sent people to Mission Field in Taiwan this past year and one of the great doors of opportunity that were opened is that one of our members was acknowledging to a parent of a child how well that child's English was.

[ 39 : 05 ] Why? Because the door of opportunity is there. You have been placed in history at a particular time by a God who knows what He's doing and He's put you at such a profitable time in history to proclaim the news of Emmanuel.

You say, oh, I wish I was born at another time. Oh, God does not mess up. Look at the period of time in which He entered and also look at the period of time in which you entered and praise God that He put you there because before the foundations of the world were laid, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, your name was recorded and He had a work prepared, it says in Scripture.

He had a work prepared for you to do. So, friend, do the work in the time He's put you to do it for His glory and His glory alone.

Let's pray. Father, thank You so much for this day. Thank You for Your faithfulness and goodness towards us. Lord, we thank You for Your Word. I do pray if there's any here today who do not truly know You as Lord and Savior, that today, as Your Word says, that today would be the day of salvation.

You know the timetable, but we do not. So we lay it at Your feet and trust You in Your work. Use us as You see fit for Your glory. And we ask it all in Christ's name.

