

## INTRODUCTION

Please open your Bibles to the book of Galatians. That's in the New Testament. I know your Bible may try to fall open to Romans, because we have been preaching out of there for two years. But go on through Romans, through 1 and 2 Corinthians, and you'll find Galatians, and we'll look at chapter 4 in just a moment.

Americans are fascinated with numbers. How many of you have ever stopped and looked at the odometer on your car when it rolled over from a bunch of nines to a bunch of zeroes, whether it was 50,000 or 100,000? That's significant. I say that because in 13 days, our calendar is going to click over from 1999 to 2000, and a lot has been said and made of the so-called date change, the Y2K scare. In fact, I have here in my hand a clipping from the Tyler paper about a week ago, and it says a Jewish Rabbi predicts thousands of millennial suicides in Jerusalem. Why somebody would want to go to Jerusalem to commit suicide on January 1? I literally want to say, just get a life, okay? It's a calendar change. People are trying to read so much more into it than is really there.

That's actually why I'm preaching starting today a series entitled, "Are you ready for the new millennium?" Today I'm going to talk on God's impeccable sense of timing. Next Sunday, the day after Christmas, I'm going to speak on the man who divided history. And then on New Year's Eve, December 31st, right here, 9:45 to just a little after midnight, we're going to have our Celebrate 2000 service, and I'm going to teach through the whole book of Revelation, entitled, "Where are we *now* in the book of Revelation." As I said, I'm going to teach the whole book. This is your chance to learn about it.

Have you seen those yellow books like *Computers for Dummies*, *Internet for Dummies*? This is going to be *Revelation for Dummies*, so come on and learn about the book of Revelation. Just before midnight as the calendar clicks over to 2000, we're going to get on our knees and pray. I don't know anywhere else better to be on New Year's Eve than praying in a new millennium. If you find a better place to be, let me know and I'll join you there. If not, you join us here on New Year's Eve. On January 2nd, I'm going to bring a message entitled "2000, now what?" I hope that you've been hearing from banks, hospitals, utility companies, saying that they have invested a lot of time, a lot of money and a lot of effort in making sure that all of their computers are Y2K compliant. That means when the date goes over from 99 to 00, that the computers will not read 1900. They will read 2000. Somebody told me the other day, they were at a yard sale here in Tyler and there was a bunch of junk, some people call it antiques, for sale out there. One of the items was a old manual typewriter. It was the kind that's not electric, and it gets to the end and a bell rings and you have to use the manual return. It was for sale. Somebody put on there "Y2K compliant."

I really am not afraid of the Y2K bug, but I need to warn you about the other bug that's just now looming before us. May I inform you about it? And you're free to laugh any time during this. Experts warned today of a new threat to our civilization: The 100 GB bug. That's the 100 gigaburger bug. As you know, McDonald's restaurants have signs that show the number of burgers the giant chain has sold. The number is now at 99 billion. Within a few weeks, the number will roll over to 100 billion burgers, or 100 gigaburgers. However, when the

McDonald's signs were designed years ago, they were only given two decimal places. This means after the sale of the 100 billionth burger, the signs will all read 00 billion burgers sold. Experts predict that the public will be convinced that in over 30 years, McDonald's has sold zero hamburgers. This will cause a complete collapse of consumer confidence in McDonald's. The ensuing drop in sales will force the teetering American economy over the brink, which will in turn lead to the total devastation of the global economy, ending civilization as we know it, and forcing all of us to live on Chick Filet. Watch out for the 100 GB bug.

I can summarize this entire series on "Are You Ready for the New Millennium?" by this one statement. Are you ready? If you miss everything else, don't miss this. January 1, 2000, is an event on man's calendar. God does not operate by man's calendar. Therefore, calm down, relax; God is in control.

Now, today we're going to talk about God's impeccable sense of timing. Timing is everything. William Shakespeare wrote in Act IV of *Julius Caesar*, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which if taken at the flood leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and miseries." Timing is everything. Those of you that invest in the stock market, know it's not so much what you buy or sell, it's when you buy or sell. Timing is more important than time. Today, we're going to learn about God's perfect sense of timing.

Look here at Galatians 4:4-5. This is a great Christmas text. The Bible says, "But when the time had fully come, God sent his son." The King James says in the fullness of time. "God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law that we might receive the full rights of sons." Now, could I ask you to focus on that phrase, when the time had fully come. What time? Well, God has this perfect sense of timing. He knew exactly when was the right time for Jesus to come. Now, this morning I would like to share with you three things about God and time, and I hope you'll learn something today.

## **I. GOD RULES OVER TIME**

Number one, may I say to you that God rules over time? He is not bound by time. He rules over time, and he overrules time. Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, and all of you are familiar, I think, with the phrases that he uses there in chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes. "For everything turn, turn, there is a season, turn, turn. A time to be born, a time to die." You heard it before. Maybe Solomon was listening to the radio or something when he wrote those words down that we have there. In Ecclesiastes 3:11, he makes this summary statement about time. "He, that is God, has made everything beautiful in its time. He also set eternity in the hearts of men." That's interesting that you and I as people have the ability to know that there even is an eternity. We're not told in the Bible that other animals have that ability. You don't see animals worrying about dying or going to heaven. They just don't have that sense of eternity. You do and I do.

Keep reading there. "Yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." Now, see, the problem with us is that we're creatures of time and we're creatures of space. I want you to think for just a moment and consider how much of a slave are you to the clock and to the calendar? Those of you whose business depends upon setting appointments, you just live by that calendar. That's why you haul that Daytimer around, why you have that Palm Pilot that you've

got to keep up with your calendar. We're creatures of this clock. Because for us everything has got to have a start, have a beginning and an end. This sermon started about 7 minutes ago and you hope it ends in about 20 minutes. When you sing a song, you hear a song; it has a beginning and an ending. A movie has a beginning and an ending. We're used to working in times, thoughts of beginnings and endings. God doesn't have anything to do with beginnings and endings. He's not bound by a beginning point and an ending point. For instance, when the Bible says in the beginning, God created, it wasn't his beginning. It was our beginning. He had no beginning. He has no ending. You've got to step outside of time to understand the character and nature of God.

In fact, let's learn a couple of things about God and time.

### **1. God's timing isn't the same as our time**

Now, you see, there are two words in the New Testament in the original Greek language for time. One is *kairos*, which means timing, a sense of when to do the right thing. That's what God uses, *kairos*. But the other word in the New Testament is that word *chronos*, and we get our word chronology, chronometer from that, clocks. We are bound by these minutes that make up hours that make up days that make up weeks that make up months that make up years that make up decades that make up centuries that make up millennia. We're bound by chronology, but God isn't.

By the way, I need to tell you, all of this confusion and all of this millennium hysteria and madness about man's calendar, God who sits in the heavens must just laugh. I think the biggest problem we're going to have in the year 2000, are you ready for this? You and I are going to forget, we're going to write 19--on our checks about a thousand times. We're going to have to write out 19-- and keep writing 2000. God is not concerned with man's way of keeping time. He's not into chronology; he's into *kairos*.

I told you last week, if I could name the number one prophet of the 20th century it would be C.S. Lewis. He was the professor of literature at Cambridge University in England, one of the most respected intellectuals of the 20th century. He was not a Christian but an agnostic. If you remember, he set out to disprove the claims of Christianity in an academic, scientific, intellectual way. As a result of his study to disprove Christianity, he became a Christian. In fact, his autobiography is entitled, *Surprised by Joy*, because he met Jesus in setting out to disprove Christianity. He became one of the greatest thinkers. Let me read to you what he wrote in his book, *Mere Christianity*, about God and time. "God is not hurried along in the time stream of this universe any more than an author is hurried along in the imaginary time of his own novel." Think about that. Have you ever read a novel that the whole novel only covers 24 hours but it takes you four weeks to read it? An author is not bound by time when he's writing a novel. He says that's the way God is with the entire universe. Listen to this.

God has infinite attention to spare for each one of us. He does not have to deal with us in the masses. You, he writes, are as much alone with him as if you were the only being he had ever created. When Christ died, he died for you individually, just as much as if you had been the only person in the universe. Wow. God is not bound by neither time nor space. You and I are

creatures, slaves to the clock, to the calendar. We are bound by the dimensions of time and space, and God isn't.

By the way, have you ever wished you could be two places at one time? You can't, because we're bound by time and space. Don't you wish you could clone yourself and be two places at one time? I heard the funny story about a scientist who decided to do that, because he was real busy. He decided to clone himself. They have that technology. So he took one of his cells from his body and put it in a test tube and cloned himself. He made a replica of himself, his clone. The only problem was, this clone was mean and disgusting, and he was obscene, terrible. He just used foul language. He was an obscene person. Finally, the scientist said, "I've got to get rid of this guy, he's causing me more trouble." So he got the clone and took him to a mountain and pushed his clone off the mountain to kill him. And they arrested that scientist. They charged him with making an obscene clone fall. I'll wait a minute for those of you from Louisiana to get that.

Wouldn't it be great if you could clone yourself, if you could be more than one place at one time? Listen, God doesn't have that limitation. We say that God is omnipresent, meaning he can be with a group of Christians who are worshipping in Singapore at the same time he's with a group of Christians worshipping in Tyler. By the way, he can be with you when you're having your quiet time with him as if there's nobody else in the universe. Isn't that amazing? God is not bound by time nor space.

Here's another thing we need to learn about how God rules over time.

## **2. We weren't created for time, but for eternity**

You see, we are slaves to time and space, but that's in our lost, physical condition. We weren't created for time, but for eternity. That's why it says in Ecclesiastes 3:11, God put eternity in our hearts. Let me just tell you what salvation is. Salvation is God taking you out of time and placing you in eternity. Again, C. S. Lewis, one of my heroes, kind of helps us understand that. He said if you want to compare time and eternity, consider eternity as a long, endless roll of white butcher paper with neither beginning nor end. And then he said take a pencil, and on that white butcher paper, draw a horizontal line one-half inch long. And then draw two little vertical lines at the end of that horizontal line to mark off a beginning and an end. He says that little half-inch pencil mark is not your life. That's all of time, which has a beginning and an end. And then imagine the butcher paper is as wide as it is long and it is as thick as it is long. That's the comparison of time to eternity.

When you become a Christian, God lifts you out of time and places you in eternity. You start thinking about life differently, because suddenly life is not just this 70 or 80 years that you may live, so you try to grab for all the gusto you can get, because when you die, that's it. Suddenly you think there's more to life than just this physical time that I'm on earth. You start living in light of eternity, relating to God.

Now, can I remind you that the Bible uses the word eternal life, eternal life, eternal life over and over again, but eternal life has nothing to do with quantity, because quantity has nothing to do with eternity. It's beyond quantity. The word eternal life is a qualitative phrase. It talks about a

quality of life, not a length of existence. That's why in John 17:3, Jesus said this about eternal life. He said, "And this is eternal life, that you may know God." Do you want a great definition of eternal life? It's not living forever. It is knowing God. And one of the biggest misconceptions Christians have is they think that eternal life starts when you die. No. Eternal life begins when you meet Jesus. See, God didn't create you for time. He created you for eternity. How many of you in this room are truly living in light of eternity? Most of us are living in terms of next hour, next week, next month, next year. God says, "I want you to live in terms of eternity."

## II. JESUS WAS BORN AT THE PERFECT TIME

Here's a second thing I want us to learn about time. Number one, God rules over time. Number two Jesus was born at the perfect time. I want us to demonstrate God's impeccable sense of timing, because on the first Christmas when Jesus was born 2000 years ago, that was the perfect time. You remember what it said in Galatians 4:4 when we read it? "In the fullness of time." Sometimes people say, well, God didn't know what he was doing. Why wasn't Jesus born in 1999? After all we've got computers, we've got television, we've got satellites. It could have been broadcast on CNN, all over the globe. God didn't know what he was doing. Oh yes, he did. Two thousand years ago when Jesus was born in the stable in Bethlehem, it was the perfect time. Let me show you how perfect it was.

### 1) The first Christmas was a time of religious expectation on the part of the Jewish people

They had been expecting a Messiah to come for 400 years, because after they came back from the Babylonian exile, they started reading Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, the other Old Testament prophets who predicted a Messiah would come, so they started looking for him.

By the way, did you know they proclaimed every Jewish leader who came along for about 200 years as the Messiah? "That's the Messiah. That's the Messiah. He's the one. He's the one. He's the one." There was a family called the Maccabeans, and their family led a revolt against the Syrians, and many people thought the men in that family were the Messiah. For instance, Matthaïs Maccabees had a son named Eliazer. And Eliazer was a great warrior. And people said, "Eliazer, he's the Messiah who is promised to come." And Eliazer did gather an army of Jewish warriors around him, and they attacked the Syrians. This is all in history books.

It's interesting to know how Eliazer died. One day, he was leading a Jewish army against the Syrians, and they had a new secret weapon in battle. They covered African elephants with leather and put wooden towers on their backs so they could stand and shoot arrows from a height. Then they fed those elephants tremendous quantities of fermented wine until the elephants became drunk. And they would charge into battle. And during this particular battle there were 32 intoxicated, wild, war elephants coming against these rag-tag Jewish revolutionaries. Well, you know what they did? They did the same thing you would do if you saw an elephant coming at you. They turned and ran, all except Eliazer Maccabees. He ran up under the biggest, meanest-looking elephant. He took his spear and thrust that spear up into the tender underbelly of that elephant and killed it, but forgetting all about the law of gravity. Boom. Seriously, that elephant fell on him and crushed him. They said, "Okay, Eliazer must not be the Messiah."

Then they said, "Okay, his brother, Judah, Maccabees, he's the Messiah. Well Judah did a great work. He did go into Jerusalem and capture Jerusalem from the Syrians. And by the way, in 167 B.C., Judah Maccabees rededicated the Jewish temple that had been defiled by the Syrians, and it is called to this day the celebration of Hanukkah. Our Jewish friends are celebrating Hanukkah, which means "the dedication of the temple." They thought, "Judah Maccabees, he's the Messiah!" But you know what? Judah died. Then the other brothers died. Then they were thinking, "Well, if they're not the Messiah, surely the Messiah is going to come."

The Jewish people were expecting, expecting, expecting and expecting Messiah? And when that Messianic expectation was at a peak, boom, Jesus was born. It's hard to believe they could have missed it, because their expectation was so high. Never in the history of the world had it been that high. Here's a second reason Christmas was the right time.

## **2. It also was a time of cultural saturation**

Those of you who, like me, love history, know there was a guy that lived about 350 years before Jesus. He was a son of Phillip of Macedonia. His name was Alexander, and he was a great guy. They called him Alexander the Great. In 12 years, he conquered the known civilized world. But really what he did was more than a military conquest; it was a cultural conquest. He introduced this Greek culture, Hellenism, and he introduced a language and philosophy. The Greek language during the time Jesus was born and the birth of Christianity was the international language. The academics, the educated people, spoke Greek and read Greek. For many, many years, up until a couple of generations ago, a classic education in England and America included teaching everyone to read Greek. Why? Because it was the intellectual language. Why do you think that the New Testament originally was penned in Greek? That was God's planning, because those who study languages say that there never has been a language that is as expressive and as deep in its meaning as the Koine Greek in which the New Testament was written.

That's why guys like me that go to seminary, we learn to read Greek, so we can learn what the Bible is actually saying, because in English, it really loses a lot in translation. Why do you think Jesus was born in a time that Greek was the international language? It was the perfect time for the gospel to be shared with even us today.

The third way we know it was the perfect time,

## **3. It was also a time of political preparation**

Those of you who study history, again, you'll agree that perhaps relatively speaking, the greatest empire in the history of the political world was the Roman Empire. It was so great they had instituted something called *pax romana*, the peace of Rome, that made it possible for missionaries to travel all over the civilized world and take the gospel of Jesus Christ. They had built roads, some of which you can travel on today. They had built aqueducts you can still see today. They had so much worldwide authority at the time that a single emperor named Augustus could issue a decree that everybody in the Roman world had to go back to their hometown and be counted for a census for taxation purposes, such that a young man and his fiancée, who was very much pregnant at the time, had to travel from Galilee to Bethlehem. Augustus was

unknowingly following God's orchestration, because the Bible had prophesied 750 years earlier that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. It's right there in print. Micah predicted 750 years before, he said, "out of you, Bethlehem." And not just any Bethlehem, because, by the way, there were several towns named Bethlehem. "Out of you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, shall come the prince that shall lead my people." You see? All of this was just fitting into place, boom, till Jesus was born. It was the perfect time. I want to convince you that God has an impeccable sense of timing that has to do with history.

### **III. JESUS WILL RETURN AT THE PERFECT TIME**

But the final thing I want to share with you this morning has to do with the future. If God rules over time and if he knew exactly the perfect time for Jesus to be born, here's the third thing I want to say. Jesus will return. Jesus will return at the perfect time, because the next thing on God's calendar, not man's calendar, the next thing on God's calendar is what we call the second coming of Jesus Christ. Now, ladies and gentlemen, Jesus Christ is going to return to planet earth. The Bible predicts it over and over and over again. But I need to straighten some misconceptions and some flaws out about when people think he's going to come back. Here's the first thing I want you to know.

#### **1. We know how, but not when it will happen**

The Bible talks about *how* it's going to happen, but it never says *when* it will happen. In fact, read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2. "Now, brothers, about times and dates, we do not need to write to you." The word time comes from *chronos*. The word date comes from *kairos*. "For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." What does that mean? It is going to be unexpected. You don't know when a thief is going to come to your house. That's why you get a burglar alarm. That's why you watch out and guard your place, because he always comes unexpectedly. Now, Jesus said in Matthew 24:36, he said, "No man knows the day nor the hour of my return." He said, "only the father in heaven." So listen to me very clearly. Any time you hear a preacher in the pulpit, a preacher on television, on the radio or in print who predicts the date Jesus is going to come back, you know immediately that is a false prophet, that he is off base immediately. Why? Because Jesus said, no man knows the day or the hour.

You ask, "Have people been setting dates?" They have been setting dates for centuries. In 1840 William Miller, originally a Baptist, led the biggest movement in America. He calculated from the book of Daniel 9 and he miscalculated it. He predicted that Jesus Christ was going to return in March of 1843. And this group of people, almost 100,000 Americans believed him and followed him. Thousands of them sold their possessions, sold their homes, quit their jobs, put on white robes and went to a mountain in upstate New York to wait the return of Jesus. He didn't come back. Anybody that sets the date is off target.

In 1988, every pastor in America, me included, received a book in the mail. The title of the book was, *88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Come Back in 1988*. It wasn't saying Jesus might come back. He will come back. He didn't come back in 1988. And perhaps you forgotten, just a few years ago there was a guy in California, Harold Camping, a radio preacher who predicted Jesus was going to return September 6, 1994. Maybe you heard on television on the news, they said this is

the time he’s going to come back. He didn’t come back. Anyone who predicts when it’s going to happen, they’re off base.

The second thing I want you to see is this.

## **2. God’s timing is so that many will repent**

That’s the reason God has delayed, so that many will repent. Now, let’s read 2 Peter 3. “First of all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, where is this coming he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation,” By the way, we’ve got 20th century scoffers. If Jesus tarries, we’ll have 21st century scoffers who say, “Second Coming, ha, ha. People have been talking about that for years. He’s not going to come back.” Keep reading there. “Do not forget this one thing, dear friends – and please underline this next phrase: A day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” That’s very important. With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

The biggest mistake a lot of people have made about that statement, is that they believe that statement, “with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day,” they think it’s like a precise mathematical equation, like X equals one day, Y equals 1,000 years. X equals Y, thereby 2,000 years equals 2 days in God’s counting. Listen, I know that some of you have heard this from even some Baptist preachers, and I want to apologize for some of my Baptist brothers in just putting out heresy. Some people are saying when we enter the year 2000, Jesus will return immediately. Why? One day is 1,000 years. Two days, 2,000 years. And when we start the third millennium, that’s the third day, and just as Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, that’s when he’s going to come back.

That theory has more holes in it than your screen door. It really does. Seriously. First of all, Jesus was not resurrected on the third day. The Bible says in Matthew 12:40, after three days and three nights he was raised from the dead. So even following that theory, we’ve got another 1,000 years to wait. Another way that doesn’t hold any water is this. I’ll say more about this next week about where we got our calendar. This is tremendously important, and it’s interesting, too.

When Jesus was born 2000 years ago, there wasn’t somebody saying, “Okay, you’re born now, we’re going to make that 0. Next year will be A.D. 1.” Have you ever thought about how we got this calendar system we have? In the 6th century A.D., there was this Catholic monk by the name of Dionysius Exiguus; that literally means Dennis the Short. I guess maybe he was sort of a short guy. He calculated it back, and I’ve got to hand it to him, he did a pretty good job, considering the tools that he had or the lack of tools. He went back and he said, all right, Jesus was born and in those days they kept time from the founding of the City of Rome. It was called A.U.C., (Latin for *Anno Urbanus Condictio*) the founding of the city, the year of the founding of the city. Of course, Dionysius said Jesus was born 753 A.U.C., and that became 1, A.D. The only problem is, any reputable scholar, both Christian and secular agrees he made a mistake; he miscalculated. Herod the Great, who obviously was alive when Jesus was born, died four years

before that date. The truth of the matter is Jesus was born 4 or 5 B.C. He was born before Christ, according to our calendar. You might just put that in your pipe and smoke it.

One seminary professor said the way you can remember that is this, "Hark, the herald angels roar, Christ was born in B.C. 4." So listen, I hope more than anything that lets you know that man's calendar and all of this 2000 millennium stuff, it's man's calendar. Are you ready for this? It's totally out of sync with the true passing of years. If you want to celebrate 2000 something, it passed in 1996, and you missed it. That's true.

So any time somebody starts trying to predict when it's going to happen, they're off base for a number of reasons. There's the third thing and final thing I want to say to you this morning.

### **3. Rather than predict his time of return, our job is to proclaim it and to prepare for it**

You see, people are wasting their time, their wasting God's timing. They're involved in a spiritual trivial pursuit when they're trying to figure out the date of the return of Christ.

Historians call the last 500 years of the first millennium the Dark Ages, because the entire Bible was translated into Latin. Only a few people could read it, and they were like the educated priests, and they didn't read it very much and obey and preach it. Instead, they retreated into their monasteries and they sat around and debated about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, while a lost world out there wasn't hearing the gospel, wasn't learning about Jesus. And that's why we call it the Dark Ages, one reason, because there was no education, there was no spiritual light.

What I'm saying is, today Christians can be guilty of the same thing, sitting around with their little charts, their little calculators, trying to figure out, this is when he's going to come back, when friend, our job is to go out there and tell people who aren't Christians. We don't know when he's going to come back. It could be tomorrow, could be next year, and could be the 3002. We don't know, but the main thing is, he's going to return. Are you ready? That's the question I want to ask you as we finish today.

I don't know when Jesus is going to come back. I personally very seriously doubt he'll come back at midnight, December 31, 1999. Why? Some are expecting him to. He did say at a time you do not expect it, I'll come back. It could be 2:10 this afternoon, anybody expecting it at 2:10 this afternoon? That would be a lot better time than midnight, December 31st, because people are expecting it. The main thing is, be ready. Can I ask you again, if your life consisted of just living X number of years and then being annihilated, if that's all there was, sure, live it up, grab for all the gusto you can get, because when you die, that's it. But if there is indeed an eternity and a God of eternity, and God's desire for you is to remove you from the confines of time and free you from the clock and the calendar to live in eternity, isn't it worth a lot of your time and attention to relate to God, to serve God, to know God right now? Because the truth is, your human life, your physical life does have a set limit. It had a beginning and it will have an end, your physical life. It's like a clock that is ticking, and nobody knows when it will stop for you or for me, but God knows.

The clock of life is wound but once, and no one has the power to say just when the hands would stop, at late or early hour. Now is the only time we own to do God’s perfect will; don’t wait until tomorrow, for your clock may then be still.

## OUTLINE

### I. GOD RULES OVER TIME

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. *Ecclesiastes 3:11*

1. God's timing (*kairos*) isn't the same as our time (*chronos*).
2. We weren't created for time—but for eternity.

### II. JESUS WAS BORN AT THE PERFECT TIME

The first Christmas was a time of:

1. Religious expectation (Jews)
2. Cultural saturation (Greeks)
3. Political preparation (Romans)

### III. JESUS WILL RETURN AT THE PERFECT TIME

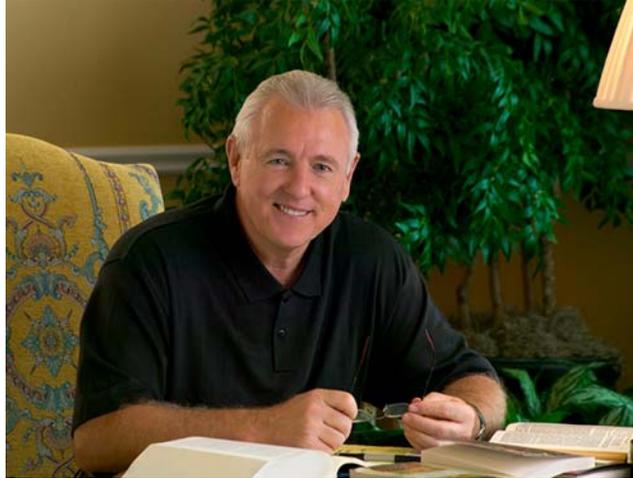
1. We know how but not when it will happen.

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. *1 Thessalonians 5:1-2*

2. God's timing is so that many will repent

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ...But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. *2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-9*

3. Rather than predict the time of His return—our job is to proclaim it and to prepare for it.



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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes