

**Main Idea:** The timing of Christ's birth was perfect. God is sovereign over all the details of our lives.

**Christmas 2023**

For most of us, the cycle has begun. We are busy shopping, finding just the right Christmas tree, cooking and travel plans will keep us busy in preparation for the big day.

So don't miss the message of the season. It is profound and meaningful. And as you will see today, it came to mankind at just the right time (see Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 11) “God has made everything appropriate in its time.”

**God's Perfect Timing**

That's an amazing statement. The Bible teaches that every detail of your life is timely and ordained of God. Everything is appropriate for that moment. It's a picture of God's sovereignty over the small minute details and His eternal plan as well. God is in control of the NOW and He has a plan for the LATER.

**Perfect Timing**

Notice a few important details that might get overlooked following a cursory reading of the Christmas story. Over thousands of years as the OT unfolds, God’s plan was leading up to this day, these people, and this event.

**The "Diaspora."** 500 years before the birth of Christ, the Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire by Nebuchadnezzar. The Messiah would come from the Jews and now they were scattered throughout the Empire ready to respond to the Gospel and spread the news.

**The Legal Environment.** All religions were tolerated by Rome as long as each participant recognized Caesar as a "god." Every other religious sect agreed, but not the Jews. Eventually however, they were given an exception. At least for a while 1<sup>st</sup> century Christ-followers were given the same exception. For 70 years following the death and resurrection Christianity was allowed to germinate and grow throughout the Roman world.

**The Leader/ Politics.** 25 years before Christ, Augustus Caesar (a peaceful ruler) replaced Julius Caesar (a warring ruler). While he is in charge, he starts building roads, and soldiers patrolled those roads making them safe for travel.

**The Culture.** Common "koine" Greek was understood by everyone. So by the time the authors of the NT began to write the story of Christ and spread it around to all of the churches, it could be understood by all.

**The Philosophy.** Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek philosophers had done a better job raising questions than giving answers, so Christianity swept across the people and satisfied their hunger.

**Family Night Big idea – Read Luke 2:1-20**

You want your children to understand that Jesus was born at just the right moment in history. God’s plan throughout the OT has been building up to this incredible event.

**Elementary School –** Ask, “Why did Mary and Joseph have to go to Bethlehem? How did the shepherds find out about the birth of Jesus? When the shepherds saw Jesus in the manger, what did they do?”

**Middle/ High School –** Ask, “How do you think Mary and Joseph felt about the timing of Jesus’ birth? How do you typically handle inconvenient timing and circumstances that seem random and out of place? How should we view the circumstances in our lives?”

**Prayer** "Father, we know that Your timing is perfect. Thank You for Jesus and help us trust You more and more. Amen."

**Velocity (Middle and High School Students)**

**Velocity:** Meet at the church this Wednesday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Gravity:** Meets today in the Community Room

**Today's Songs**

*Joy to the World*.....Chris Tomlin

*O Come All Ye Faithful*.....Third Day

*Silent Night*.....Christmas Carol

**Kenya Correspondence**

You can now correspond with the student you sponsored. There is a mailbox in the hallway for your letters, cards, and pictures. Everything needs to be flat and 11x14 or smaller. We will send to Kenya monthly.

**Christmas Wish List for Families in Need**

Wish List is in the Lobby for you to sign up if you would like to purchase a gift for someone. Gifts are due wrapped and tagged on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Deck the Halls TODAY**

Starts at 4:30. Kids wear pajamas and bring sleeping bags. Bring money for the Concession Stand. Everyone gets their picture made at the photo booth to hang on the Christmas Tree in the Lobby. Come join us!

**Christmas Eve Service**

Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> in both services. Kids sit with parents in the auditorium. Nursery and Beginners will be open.