

God's Perfect Timing

'We kicked the drummer out of the band because his timing was awful. He was so upset he went to the station and threw himself behind a train'. // Poor drummer! Truly he is in the wrong line of work, when timing it right is literally everything! Probably he just got into it at the wrong time!!

Talk about timing. Let's take a look at what happened with the shepherds the very night of Lord Jesus' birth.

[VIDEO: "The Other Shepherd" (3:56)]

Going on a coffee run to the Bethlehem Starbucks and plum missed a concert of angels, well, I'd be upset, too. But it wasn't like he'd been playing hooky, he was actually dutifully helping out his fellow shepherds. Still, he let his disappointment get the better of him, and the insinuations, accusations, selective memories, nasty and ill-advised words started flying, to say nothing of being accentuated by some flying fists to drive home the points! While grammatically-correct Tobias, and Ira with the easily upset stomach stood helplessly by, Haman and Zeke dissolve into a flurry of fists and fury. After an apology is offered, and forgiveness given, they hurriedly go on their way to see this newborn Baby Messiah. Turns out that Zeke wouldn't miss out after all!

And aren't there times that all of us feel like Zeke? Left out,

ignored, running late and missing out? Well, if our hearts are right with the Lord, what looks to be horrible timing, may actually turn out to be, in the end, absolutely perfect. Consider our days now, in 2025. We're old enough to have gone through years of normal human living, through many trials and tribulations, some more than others. But we should know, after all these years, that God has always been with us, every single minute of every single hour of every day and week and month and year and lifetime! We just may not have been paying attention. We may have slipped our hands out of the Lord's, and He had to push us one way or other to keep us from going too far astray. We may even have tried to escape His loving grasp, but we, by His grace mind you, finally decided that He knew better after all. Which is why we're here.

Our times now are perilous times, but we're not here by accident. God put each of us right here, right now, on purpose, not early nor late. We're all perfectly timed to be here, to be His people and servants for this world right now. Consider the time that the famous Christmas carol, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" was written. It was right in the middle of the Civil War. Truly the whole country was at war. Worst of all, it was at war with itself. The casualties were horrific. America has never suffered such loss of life as then. May it never happen again. But in our days, we are suffering tremendous loss of life as well. We're at war again, a kind of "cold" civil war. When one political party is so deceived and deceiving that they see nothing wrong with letting in

hordes of enemy, terrorist combatants, with the smuggling spigots full on spewing fentanyl, cocaine, heroine, etc., with over 100,000 Americans dying each year from drug overdoses, is not this, a war? When outstanding Christian leaders are assassinated in broad daylight on college campuses, is this not war? When the former president while campaigning miraculously survived two assassination attempts, is this not war? Bleak as it appears, is there now no more hope for us?

Let this inspired Christmas carol answer for us.

["I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" solo (3:33)]

Living in the end of days, we don't know how many more years are left before our Lord Jesus returns in the sky to call all of us up in the rapture, to join Him in the skies, from where He will take us all back to Heaven. But then, just a few years later, He will return to Earth, this time to take charge over everything. And this time, He'll bring us all with Him, as we all take our places in Heaven's vast armies. Then the Millennial Reign of Christ Jesus the King will commence. It won't quite be Heaven on Earth for that millennium, but He will totally run the show on Earth with us as His administrators. Humans in those days will learn what it is like to live under the direct governance of God, an absolute theocracy, where God in Christ rules everything justly, as everyone exercises their free will. There will still be sin, but a whole lot less of it, since satan, Revelation 20:1-3 tells us, will be bound and imprisoned in the abyss for the entire 1,000 years. Those days will

be almost as if the Garden of Eden has been restored over the entire earth. There will be universal peace among the nations, no more fighting or war, no more animals preying upon other animals, near perfect health for all with all living multiple hundreds of years. Not quite Heaven on Earth, but a necessary transition step from what's going on now, and the eternal Heaven on Earth that commences shortly after the initial Millennial Reign concludes.

And it's all happening perfectly right on schedule. It's been about 2,030 years since our Lord was humanly born. He came just when needed. Alexander the Great's Greek Empire had come and gone, but unlike all other empires before him, he sought to Hellenize all the lands he conquered in what turned out to be a short life of only 32 years. His vision was to make Greek all the peoples he governed. The Greek language, which Alexander standardized, and Greek religion and culture was taught in the many schools he had established. So successful was he that even after the Roman Empire took over, Greek remained the lingua franca of the whole civilized world for centuries afterward. Even for us. Just consider the myriads of root words we still use in English that are originally Greek. The influence of Greek culture was so pervasive that even many Jews were in danger of losing their own cultural identity. And if it weren't for the devout clan of the Maccabees, the Jews might have vanished entirely.

Indeed, because of the loyalty of the Maccabees to God and each other, the Lord blessed them to successfully rebel and throw

off the paganizing, desecrating rule of the Greek Seleucid Emperor Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 B.C. with the liberation of Jerusalem, and the rededication of the Temple, now called Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication, or the Festival of Lights. Which just so happens to happen during the Christmas season, which just so happens to celebrate the birth of Lord Jesus, Who is the Light of the World. Our Lord Jesus was born during the celebration of the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah, Who is the very Light of Lights, the Light of the World. Could God not have scheduled this any perfectly? Seems He did it right on purpose.

And He was born in Bethlehem, the name means “the House of Bread”. Did He not proclaim Himself to be the very Bread of Life, and we commemorate His Body being the bread of Holy Communion every Sunday? Sounds like this was on purpose as well. Furthermore, He was born in a stable, which in those days were caves, not freestanding wooden buildings. But, because there was no vacancies in any upper rooms in the whole town, Joseph and Mary had to find a cave. Turns out it was in one of the very caves surrounding Bethlehem in which were birthed the special lambs destined to be slaughtered for the Passover sacrifice. These special lambs had to kept unblemished, unscratched all the days of their lives so they would be perfect sacrifices at Passover. To keep them from scratching or scraping themselves, they were wrapped in “swaddling” cloths, and laid down in straw-lined feeding troughs, called mangers, which would protect the lit-

the lambs from in any way injuring themselves, as their “sacred” lives depended on it until they were sacrificed for the sins of the nation in the Temple come next Passover. Sounds like this was all on purpose, too, happening at just the perfect time.

The shepherds themselves were no ordinary shepherds. These were special Temple shepherds employed by the priests to procure and supply the lambs needed for the Temple sacrifices. For them to witness the angelic army in the sky, and be told what to look for, this unique, miraculous sign of a human baby wrapped and sleeping in the exact same way as the baby lambs, well, the point could not be lost by any of those shepherds. It was plain what it all meant. I wonder how many of them were still alive 33 years later when the Lamb of God, Whom they had seen as a newborn Baby, was actually sacrificed on the day of Passover for the sins of the whole nation, indeed the whole world.

God’s timing is always perfect. Not a minute too soon, or a minute too late. Just perfect. May we praise Him now as we celebrate His perfect timing in coming to Earth in the perfect place on the perfect night. Let’s all sing “O Holy Night”.

[VIDEO: “O Holy Night” (5:10)]

