

God's Time

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Galatians 4:4-5

We can celebrate Christmas in a religious way and yet remain aloof. But when we are gripped by the meaning of Christmas all outward show disappears.

For now, however, we throw all kinds of things into the void we feel; we sense that something is missing and try to compensate for it by all kinds of expressions of love. And this is all right; in a sense it must be like this. But still in our hearts, whether we admit it or not, each of us has a deep longing to be really gripped by the Christmas message: "Christ is born! We have a Savior!"

Yet too many of us simply don't realize what we have. Jesus has become remote, and thus we are

at a loss to know how to bring the birth of Christ into our lives. We certainly know how to talk about it, but how many of us possess a true feeling for it? Who of us are gripped to the point that we can stretch out our hands and exclaim: "We have a Savior!"

Oh, if God would give us something in this direction, we would be truly happy! For Christmas is a promise. The night when Jesus comes the world's darkness will disappear. When God's time comes great changes take place. Not only are the shepherds of this world startled, but the whole world – then we are shown something new.

Paul writes: "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of woman."

We must not take this to mean some specific hour, like midday. God's time comes under the influence of the Spirit. Under God's direction something matures – and then the time comes. If Israel had been more faithful, the time would have been fulfilled much earlier; it could even have been in Isaiah's time. But God does not send his Son if there is no one who is prepared for him. Where would he go?

For this reason God's time depends partly on us. If we follow God's word faithfully, if we

understand the ways of God and hold firmly to the goal, the last days will come. Thus we should not think that Christ's birth was connected with the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire did not have the slightest significance for the kingdom of God. But whether a Simeon was there or not, or a Mary, or other people who expected God's kingdom – that was significant. Then the time could come, as it actually did. When the Word of God becomes true through faith, something is made ready in the hearts of people.

This is our hope too. Our faith is that the Savior will come soon. I am often asked, "How do you know that?" I answer bluntly, "Because I want the Savior to come soon. That is why he is near – there is no other reason!" The cause of Christ must be fulfilled wherever there are people who are waiting for it. There it will be, there it will come! That is why the time was close at hand for the apostles. And today, something toward the Day of Christ can happen if we surrender ourselves for this. Preparations for this can begin already. When it matures in our hearts, it will spread rapidly throughout the world; then the Last Day will come, the last, great Christmas!

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