

The Christmas Experience

Week 1: At Just the Right Time

1. What initial reactions or thoughts do you have to this presentation?
 - Read Luke 2:1-7
2. What evidence of God's timing and provision do you see in this passage?
3. Why does it matter to the gospel story that Caesar Augustus issued a decree for the entire Roman world?
 - In the video, Kyle mentioned that there are about three hundred promises made about Jesus in the Old Testament, and God kept all of them. Here are just a few of them.
 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. " (Micah 5:2)
 - "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. " (Isaiah 7:14)
 - "Out of Egypt I called my son. " (Hosea 11:1)
4. How had God orchestrated all the circumstances so that the Good News about Jesus would spread throughout the world?
 - **Politically?** Since the Jewish people had been dispersed because of oppressive Roman rule, the Gospel moved outside of Jerusalem more quickly. At the time of Jesus' birth, however, there was a time of peace. This was one of the few windows in human history where there has been extended peace.
 - **Philosophically?** People had become accustomed to the Socratic method of learning by asking questions, so people had lots of questions, but not many answers.
 - **Linguistically?** As a result of the influence of Alexander the Great, much of the world was united by a common language, Greek. Also, the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek so more people could read them.
 - **Through advancements in technology and industry?** The Romans had built roads throughout the empire, allowing the early church, including Paul and his team, to travel more easily.
5. When has God come through for you "at just the right time"?

6. Kyle shared the stories of several people who were "in God's waiting room," waiting for God to finally come through for them. He mentioned life circumstances such as trying to sell a house, needing healing after an accident, wanting to start a family, looking for a job, and wanting to get married. Would anyone be willing to share a life circumstance or situation in which you have been waiting for God to come through?
7. It can be difficult to see God's hand when you are in the middle of your "winter." Why do you think it is so hard to see God at work when you're in the midst of painful circumstances?

We learn from the Christmas story that we can trust God's timing. So much of God's Word teaches us to trust God in the middle of our life circumstances. This isn't easy, but it is how God molds us into the people he wants us to become. A familiar verse for many Christ-followers is Proverbs 3:5, 6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. "

8. How does this verse show us how to trust in God's timing?

Between the Meeting Options

- Individually or with your family, read Luke 1:5-25 together. Discuss some of the ways God was preparing to send Jesus into the world in his perfect timing.
- Call another member of the group this week and ask about a circumstance that person is going through for which he or she is waiting on God's timing. Offer to pray for the person on the phone.
- Watch Episode 1 with your family. Ask your children about how they saw God preparing for the birth of Jesus at just the right time.
- Discuss with your family or a few friends from your group: How is God preparing your heart for the celebration of Christ's coming into the world this Christmas? What does he still need to do to prepare your heart for this celebration?
- Read and meditate on Luke 1:26-38 throughout the week.