

James T. Jeremiah
In the Fullness of Time
December 9, 1980

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm sure we always rejoice in the music at Christmas time and we appreciate this message that has to do with the coming of Christ. I hope you have a great Christmas, after you help win that ballgame and after you have those devotionals called examinations. My heart goes out to you, but I can't help you. Will you open your Bibles please to Galatians chapter four and let me read beginning with verse four in chapter four. And that passage of scripture it reads, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son. Made of a woman, made under the law. To redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons." And then in verse six scriptures tell us that God sent forth his spirit. God sent forth his son that we might be redeemed. He sent forth his son that that great message of redemption might find its place in our hearts in saving grace.

James T. Jeremiah:

There are those who say that the Apostle Paul did not believe in the virgin birth. I read just recently from a commentary that tried to somehow explain this, but I do not understand how he could eliminate the virgin birth out of his theology when he makes such statements as God sent forth his son. And when we read in his letter to the young preacher, Timothy that great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. We think about the birth of Christ as described in these verses, we have a reference of the fact that his birth was supernatural. He was sent from God. It was human, he was born of a woman. It was Jewish, he was born under the law. It was special, he was born to redeem.

James T. Jeremiah:

The Old Testament has almost a counterpart of this, right in the Old Testament scriptures in Isaiah 9:6 it says "Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. Unto us a child is born." Paul says "He was born of a woman. Unto us a son is given." God sent forth his son. Comparison of Isaiah 9:6 and Galatians chapter 4 and verse 4 makes a very interesting study. You believe I'm sure that there are no coincidences in God's plans. His son came to this earth in the right time. In the proper time. He came when he was supposed to come, in God's program, in God's calendar. The whole life of Christ is predicted and pre-written in Old Testament scriptures.

James T. Jeremiah:

Many years ago CG Brown wrote a pamphlet entitled 33 Prophecies Fulfilled In A Day. Those 33 prophecies were fulfilled when Jesus Christ died on the cross. 33 of them in a single day. A few weeks ago I had a good time working on a series of radio messages entitled Christmas In Prophecy. And you can find the Christmas story in the Old Testament. For example, we read about his ancestry. In the book of Isaiah it speaks of him as the one who is the rod out of the stem of Jesse. It speaks to us in the Old Testament about the seed, the seed of the woman. In Genesis 3:15 that great classic text of prophecy of Old Testament days. Speaks about his birth, that he would be born of a virgin in Isaiah 7:14. Many names of Christ are given in the Old Testament. He's called the anointed or the Christ. He is called Lord in Psalm 110. It is predicted that he will be the king. And when the angel appeared to Joseph in New Testament times the angel told Joseph that he was to name him Jesus. And the Bible predicts this would happen and it also gives the record that it came to pass.

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It's an amazing story about the Savior. Read about him in the Old Testament, see the fulfillment of all of these prophecies in the New. Several years ago when I was pastor in an Ohio city my wife and I became good friends with a Jewish family. They're still good friends of ours. I remember talking one day to the man in the household while we were waiting for dinner one day. And I asked him on what he based his religion. He replied very emphatically, "We base our religion upon tradition, don't you?" "No." I said, "We base our faith, our religion if you call it upon the Old and the New Testaments." He said "What do you do when they disagree?" "Oh my friend" I said, "They never disagree. You can read about the birth of Jesus, about the life of Jesus, about the death of Jesus, about the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus, return of Jesus in the Old Testament." By the time I arrived in my outline to this dear friend, just about the time I arrived at the cross he changed the subject.

James T. Jeremiah:

Because the Old Testament predicts precisely what would happen concerning this lovely savior of ours. Many years ago ET Pearson, a great Bible scholar who once was a pastor of the Spurgeon Tabernacle following Spurgeon's death, wrote this "In predicted prophecy we have an impregnable rock fortress for rational faith. Defying all successful assault. It is a double defense. It proves the divine origin, inspiration, and authority of scripture. And because at least one half of all its forecasts converge upon the Lord Jesus Christ, it vindicates his deity and his messiahship." These prophetic statements form the Old Testament tell us that the word of God is more than a human book. That it is a book inspired, directed by the Holy Spirit. It is inerrant, we can depend upon it, and the prophetic scriptures shout loudly that this is so.

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And it also, as Pearson mentions, bears witness to the fact that no other person in all of time ever had so many predictions made of him as they are made of Christ. So he is more than an ordinary human being. There is a phrase in that verse in Galatians that attracts my attention this morning. It says that in the fullness of time, God sent forth his son. The fullness of time. Christ came the first time exactly on schedule. He didn't miss it at all. And I want to give you some reasons why I believe in the fullness of time in the coming of the son of God. First of all, we believe that he came in the fullness of time when the existing government was operating to make this fulfillment possible. Now that wasn't brought about by the Romans or the Greeks, it was brought about by the God of the universe, the God of all time, the God of heaven and earth.

James T. Jeremiah:

In Luke 2:1 it says "It came to pass in those days." And then it mentions Caesar Augustus. As we study a little bit about the Roman empire of the time, I'm reminded of the time of peace, the Pax Romana. Romana, the peace time. From 30 BC to 180 AD there was a long peace time and a long time of prosperity. Gave this vast empire stability. It perpetuated the Greek culture that had preceded it, and it was an ideal time for the Prince of Peace to come. There were no battles, no wars, nothing that would upset the coming of the son of God. Furthermore, it came to pass in the fullness of time because the Romans were the best road builders of any people up to that hour. They surpassed all others as road builders. Roads were carefully planned and maintained. And as they did build the roads, they circled the Roman Empire. Today you can go in the ancient parts of the world and see remains; the Appii Forum and the lands in Greece and even in the other parts of the Mideast where these Romans built roads. Why is that so important?

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Do you remember the word of God says "He came to redeem. He came that there might be a gospel to preach. And he came at the proper time when the Roman government built the roads, so Paul and the other apostles could propagate the gospel to the then-known world, in the fullness of time when the Romans had built the roads. I even think that they had the tax on schedule. Where we read about it in Luke 2:1 and 2. Tax was to come. They were to register the people. The Jews resented it. It is said they sent commissions to Rome protesting it. The tax collectors had to visit the various county or country seats and then when they did all of this, just in the nick of time Mary and Joseph came to be taxed or to be registered for taxation. And when they came to the place God ordained them to be, when the taxing was going on by the Roman government right there in Bethlehem, Jesus was born in the fullness of time.

James T. Jeremiah:

God controlled a world empire. To make conditions possible for his son to come into this world in the fullness of time. We think also the universal language existing then. Rome had preserved much of the Greek culture, including the language. You say, "So important?" Yes. Because it made it possible for this gospel message that Jesus Christ came to provide and make possible by his death, burial, and resurrection. It made it possible for them to propagate the gospel in the language of the people. You ever stop to think what it would be like if Jesus Christ would come to the Mideast today. There would be Hebrew, Arabic, French, Italian, all kinds of languages. But he came when there was a language that would reach the then-known world.

James T. Jeremiah:

He came to a special city. In Micah 5:2 it speaks of him being born in Bethlehem Ephrathah of Judah. That's interesting. That's what the Bible says. Yes, but do you understand what the Bible also says? That there is another, at least one other Bethlehem in Israel at that time. There was a Bethlehem in Zebulun, which was seven miles Northwest of Nazareth. You can understand I'm sure why Mary must have preferred going to Bethlehem in Zebulun. But instead, God brought her somewhere between 90 and 100 miles over rough terrain to Bethlehem of Judea. Why so important? Important because the Old Testament predicted that's the way it would be and God will move mountains, God will control governments, God will take care of peasants in order to see to it that His word is fulfilled.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now if Micah were writing out of the inspiration and the generosity of his heart he would have had Jesus born in Jerusalem. The city of the great king. Bible says he'll be born in Bethlehem. There are many continents in the world. He chose one, Asia. Of many countries in the world he chose one, Israel, Canaan, many provinces in Israel, he chose one, Judea. Many cities even in Judea, He chose one, Bethlehem. Several Bethlehems, he chose one. Bethlehem of Judea. In the fullness of time. Certain events had to take place, or rather, let me put it this way, he had to be born before certain events that are recorded in the Bible took place.

James T. Jeremiah:

Go back to the Old Testament to the book of Genesis and in Genesis 49:10 we have a prediction of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says the scepter shall not depart from Judah. Nor the law giver from between his feet until Shiloh come and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. He had to be born before Judah lost its tribal identity. He had to be born before they went into captivity, went out

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and were scattered to the ends of the earth. The word Shiloh refers we believe, to the Messiah. Means peace or one sent. And so he had to be born before these people of the tribe of Judah lost their tribal identity. The word of God says in Malachi 3:1 that the Lord shall suddenly come to his temple. In Daniel 9:26 it says he had to be born before the people come who shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Jesus had to be born before the destruction of the temple. The temple was destroyed in the days of Titus. It has not been rebuilt and if anyone would come and claim to be Messiah today, born as he was to come in prophetic language, he would be an imposter because there is no temple, because there is no tribe of Judah as such.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now think of it, the Lord Jesus Christ came in the fullness of time. The Bible speaks about times. Times of the Gentiles. And by the way I am not persuaded that the times of the Gentiles have ended yet. The word of God in Revelation 11 makes it clear they're going to be around during part of the tribulation period. A period of time called the times of the Gentiles. The fullness of the Gentiles has not been ended yet either because if that had happened those of us who were saved would be in the glory following the rapture. The word of God speaks about time in relation to you and to me. Now we can get really thrilled about Christ coming in the fullness of time. But do you know something? God put me in this world in his time. He put you here in his time. I get a great thrill about living today. I don't know about you. I don't have any ambitions of doing what some of my contemporaries think it's great to do to go back to the good old days. I started living in the good old days.

James T. Jeremiah:

The little old hillbilly boy in the country of New York. My first church demonstrated the good old days. We had running water. I ran next door to get it. We had central heating, big old stove in the front room that had to be fed with soft coal or wood and it always went out in the middle of the night and my dear wife never did learn how to start a fire in the morning. Guess who did? And I should have. Good old days. I'm glad to be alive today. I like to think of that verse that speaks of Esther, the days of her trial, days of her testing. God gave her a message that said "You've come to the kingdom for such a time as this." You've come to school at this time. You're facing challenges in Christian education in your time, in God's time for you. The amazing thing about time is it runs out and there's no repetition of it. And that challenges me and frightens me a little bit.

James T. Jeremiah:

I think so often of that reference to time in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 5:16, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil." Buying up time is a very scarce commodity. That's what it means. Time is the most scarce commodity on Earth. One year faculty member said to me one day "Have you bought any gold lately?" I haven't bought any gold any time. I don't know what you use to buy gold with. Gold I guess. But more precious than gold is time. More precious than silver and precious stones is time. Think of it. You can lose every possible possession you have and somehow get it back, but you won't get back 1980. It's gone almost. Redeeming the time. I remember reading somewhere about a couple of Indians standing on the bank of a lake watching someone pull a water skier. They'd never seen water skiing before. One Indian said to the other Indian, "How come him drive boat so fast?" The other Indian said "He have to. Little man on string chasing him."

James T. Jeremiah:

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Sometimes I think about it like this, how come time passed so fast? Little fellow, time chasing him. Redeeming the time. The days are evil. In the Old Testament there were predictions concerning the first coming of the Lord Jesus. They were fulfilled. The Lord Jesus when he was here in the flesh, gave the great Olivet Discourse and talked about the things that would come to pass at the end times. You read and studied in your classes. Seems to me that we're living in a time of converging trends. I began to preach 45 years ago. Talk about a nation of Israel in the land. They looked at me rather skeptical. There was no Israeli nation then. When we talk about the one world church, we were aware of apostasy, but we've lived to see the apostasy produce the Ecumenical Church. And we're living to see a day when the charismatics are tying it all together. We're in a day of converging trends. When we would speak about the occult and demonism, they thought that was way out. Most people thought it was ridiculous. You can go to a Walden Book Store today and find volume after volume on the shelves of that store and others like it given over to the occult.

James T. Jeremiah:

There was a Russia then, but it wasn't as strong and forceful as it is now. But it's coming to the fore and it's going to be one of these days we believe the attacking force against the Mideast. It is risen. There is also a technology increase that we didn't know anything about. They shall run to and fro, knowledge will be increased in the last days Daniel said. We have a sign that many of us don't like. But unfortunately many of God's professing Christians are a part of it. The Lord Jesus said as it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot, they shall eat, they shall drink, they shall give marriage and so on, and buy and sell and build. And think that the Lord Jesus would have pointed out some of the wicked signs of that period of time. But he's talking about these people at the end time doing legitimate, right, ordinary things without God. And one of the great trends of our time, even among Fundamentalists, among so-called Conservatives, in our churches is a spirit of indifference.

James T. Jeremiah:

Many times I think of myself, oh God, help me to discern the signs of the times and not be one. I don't want to be a sign of the times like that. As the Old Testament predicted his first coming there are outlines in the scripture to tell us of his second coming. And if all of these trends or signs point to the day when Christ shall come in power and great glory and all the holy angels with him, then the rapture of the saints is seven years before that if I understand the Bible correctly. And if that is the case, as I think it is, the coming of the Lord draws nigh. I don't know when. I heard of a man one day, Prophecy teacher made the statement that if Sadat and Begin ever sign the peace treaty you can look for the rapture tomorrow. I don't know why the dear brother wasn't looking for the rapture today because I think we ought to.

James T. Jeremiah:

We won't see him born in the manger, come in humility to be mistreated and crucified and nailed to a cross. But when he comes again he'll come in power, glory, the holy angels with him, and he shall rule, reign upon the throne of his father David in the city of Jerusalem. The king is coming one day to reign. He may come for us before we have an opportunity to meet in classes again. I'm not saying he will, but he may. When you think about him coming in fulfillment of prophecy in the Old Testament, in the New, remember the savior who came as a baby is coming one day as King of Kings, Lord of Lords. Thank God for him. Our Father, we thank you for the scriptures, how clearly they outline the coming of the Lord.

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We pray that our hearts might rejoice in this Christmas season as we think about Christ coming the first time and anticipating his coming the second time. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Paul D. Dixon:

Thank you Doctor Jeremiah. Good Christmas message. Have a good day.