

APRIL - JUNE 2023  
EDITION



# Refreshing Times

ACTS 3 : 19

REFRESHING  
TIMES





# WHERE IS YOUR TALENT?

ARTICLE BY ELTON TOFA



In this article we will look at the parable of the talents in Matthew chapter 25 and identify some lessons we can learn from the parable. *14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

The man travelling to a faraway country in the parable represents Jesus who after giving His servants gifts went back to heaven. When He ascended, he gave gifts to men. (*Ephesians 4:10*). Every man has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (*Ephesians 4:7*). Every one of us has received a gift from God. As everyone has received a gift, minister the same to one another. (*1 Peter 4:10*). All of us have received a gift and that gift is called a grace. The body of Christ is not made up of one body part, but many and every body part has its own special function as God sees fit. For the body is not one member, but many. (*1 Corinthians 12:14*).

The servants represent believers. A servant serves. Notice, “he delivered to them his goods”. Though they were given the goods, they still remained the master’s property. Someone given charge over another’s property is called a steward. Therefore, a steward is a manager of another man’s property or goods. The problem with stewards is to presume that what they have been entrusted with belong to them when in actual fact they are mere custodians of another man’s goods. That’s is why the apostle Paul says, “People should think of us as servants of Christ and managers who are entrusted with God's mysteries.” (*1 Corinthians 4:1*)

***15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.***



# Talent

A Talent is a unit of weight that measures the amount of money. The talents represent the gifts that have been given to us. Notice that the servants were not given the same amount of talents. The talents were different in amount. The gifts given to us are diverse and unique according to the Master who gives. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Lord. (1 Corinthians 12:4). At one point Paul asked the question, "Who makes you differ from one another and what do you have that you have not received". (1 Corinthians 4:7). The reason why we abuse the gifts is because we think we worked for them. We were just given. Understanding this will keep us humble. There is no room for boasting. He is the one who makes us different. We do not have the same gifts. Our unique gifts should not divide us but unify us. There is unity in diversity. Paul planted, Apollos watered but God gave the increase. He who plants and he who waters are all of one. (1 Corinthians 3:6-8). They have different gifts yet they are one. In essence, our diverse gifts do not compete with each other but rather complement each other.

***16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.***

***17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two***

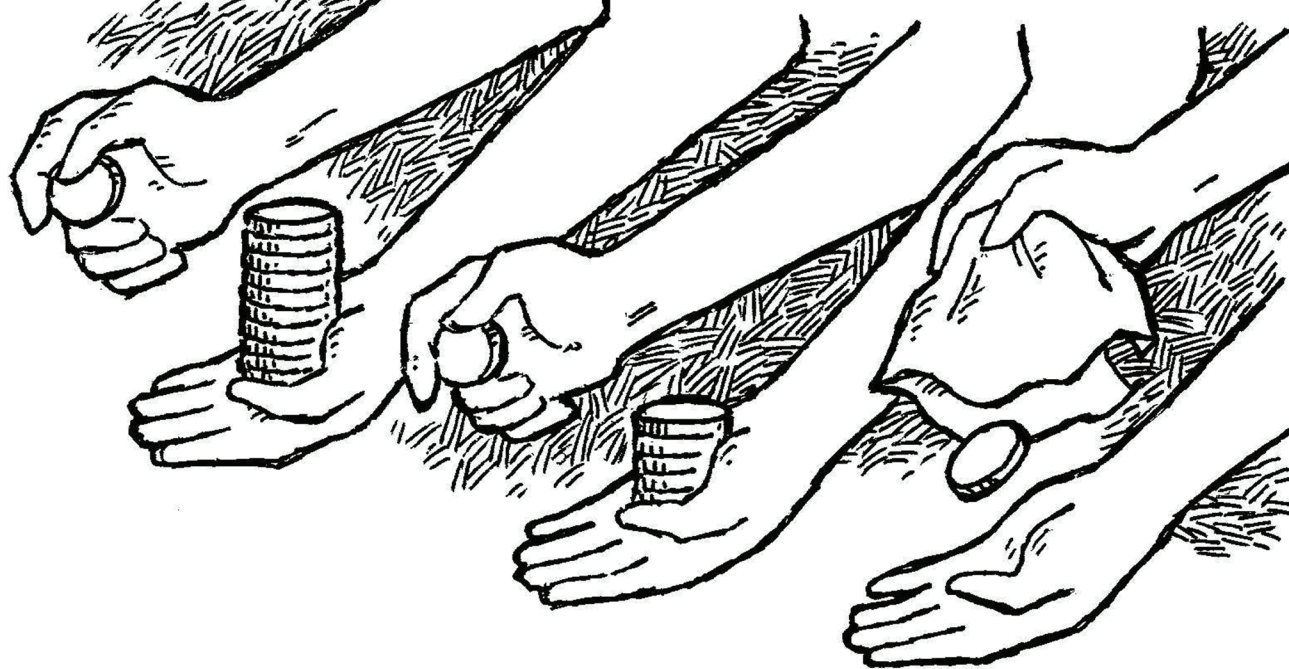
The gifts are not toys but tools. They are for trading. Trading means doing business. It involves being productive in order to gain a profit or an increase. Trading involves labour. Gifts are for use. That's why when he was 12 years old Jesus understood that he must be about his fathers business. We must trade. The profit is not for us but for him who gave the talents. The profit is when we use our gifts to advance the agenda of the kingdom and to give glory to Him who sits on the throne. Lest we forget, the main agenda of the kingdom is to win souls and make disciples of all nations. Paul planted and Apollos watered, that was trading.

***18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.***

Digging a talent in the earth means not using it. It's possible to have a gift and not use it. Gifts are to be used for increase. Its sin not to use a gift. To him who knows to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17). It is for this reason Paul admonished Timothy to stir up the gift that was in him.(2 Timothy 1:6). It is the master's duty to give the gifts to every man severally as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is our duty to use the gifts. It is the duty of the Holy Spirit to help us in this undertaking.

***19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. After a long time the master will come for accounting.***





We are eagerly waiting for the master's return, but before he returns, we must trade. He said occupy till I come. (Luke 10:13). Blessed is the servant who when the master returns will find so doing. (Matthew 24:46). To reckon means to give an account. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). We will give account of things done in this body, meaning whilst we were on earth. How have we used every resource at our disposal?

**20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.**

**21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**

**22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.**

**23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**

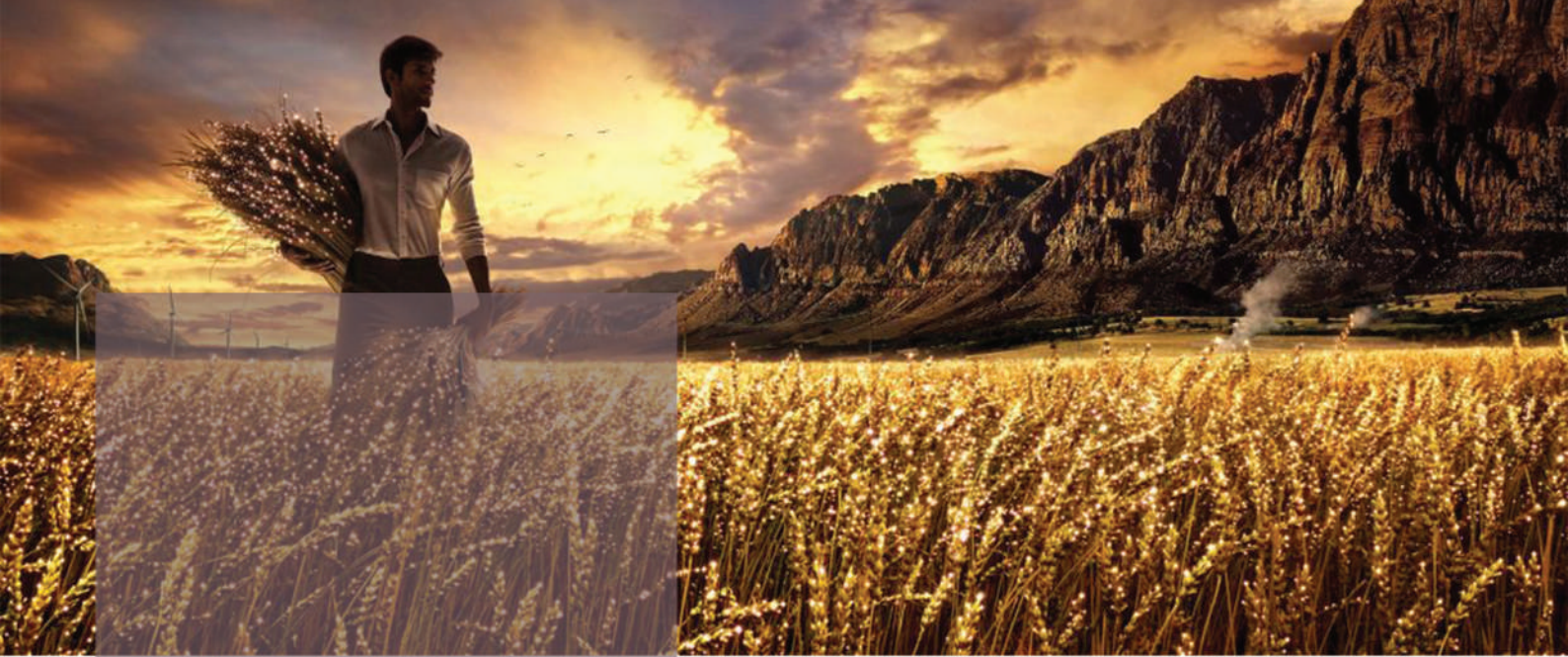
The one given five talents and the one given two traded and made a profit. That means they made effective use of the gifts given to them. They were productive and fruitful.

The Lord called them good and faithful servants. At the end of the day, it's not what we think or what others think of us but what the Lord says concerning us that matters. Faithfulness means sticking religiously to an instruction. It speaks of loyalty to the Lord. For example when a doctor gives you some medication to take for two weeks. You have to be faithful to that course until the end of the prescribed period. You don't stop after one week because you feel its not working neither do you stop after one week because you feel you are healed. Go through to the end. It is a requirement in stewards that a man be found faithful. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (1Corinthians 4:2). Those who will follow the lamb are said to be called, chosen and faithful. "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful." ( Revelation 17:14). Don't be tired of doing that which is good. (Galatians 6:9). Use your talents to the fullest.

***24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:***

This servant did not understand the character of the Master. Jesus is not a hard man. Our master Jesus will never ask us to do what He cannot do through us and in us. He says "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mat 11:29-30)





Paul says we labour according to his mighty power which worked in us. Again he says, “but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1Co 15:10). There is grace to help. That’s why these gifts are often called graces in scripture. Though we are commanded to use them, yet it is the grace of God at work in us. He does not reap where he has not sown as the wicked servant alleges. His gifts given to us are the seed. His word in us is the seed. The ultimate seed was He Himself when he gave his life for us on the cross. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” (John 12:24). Does He not deserve to harvest where He has sown?

***25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.***

The servant was afraid. That was his weakness. How many times have we feared to use our gifts? How many times have we feared to share the gospel message with others? How many times have we feared to do what we ought because we felt we were inadequate and might not measure up to the standards of men? How many times we have feared to use our talents because of what others might say?. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2-Timothy 1:7)

***26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:***

Why this servant was called wicked? He hid his master’s talent. The primary purpose of every talent is to bring men to Christ. When we hide our talents we deprive men of that blessed knowledge of knowing Christ. Is it not wickedness to be entrusted with so great a message and not share it? So Paul says, “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” (Acts 20:26-27)





# OVERCOME FEAR

ARTICLE BY TAGUMA NYANGA

*Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Joshua 1:9*

## **LITTLE WILL BE DONE WITHOUT UNSHACKLING FEAR.**

Every mission and engagement demand some level of courage. We will do little on this earth until we overcome fear. Sometimes fear is subtle. In some instances, it shows up as a voice of reason and rationality. It makes you look sophisticated and calculative. Look carefully, it could be fear! When God prepared Joshua to take over the mission of leading the Israelites, God warned him against two threats – Fear and discouragement. Some never start because they are afraid (the barrier of fear), yet some start and quit on the way because of discouragement (the impediment of discouragement). If not tamed, fear will postpone your destiny and delay your cause and manifestation.

*“And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.” 1 Samuel 16:10 - 11*

The Israelites were stuck in a valley for forty days listening to the threats and profanities of Goliath, the Phillistine. The Bible records that each time they heard those threats, they would melt in fear until a young men stepped up. Are you the one to step into the podium? Will you at this time throw your hat into the ring? This may not happen until you have clarity of vision and purpose. Everyone one else at that time saw no need to take such a great risk until David appeared at the battlefield.

“And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” 1 Samuel 16:28-29

Sometimes your courage can be mistaken for pride and haughtiness of spirit. But keep the focus still and be not discouraged.



## **WHEN OUR TRUST IN THE LORD IS WEAKENED FEAR FINDS ITS WAY**

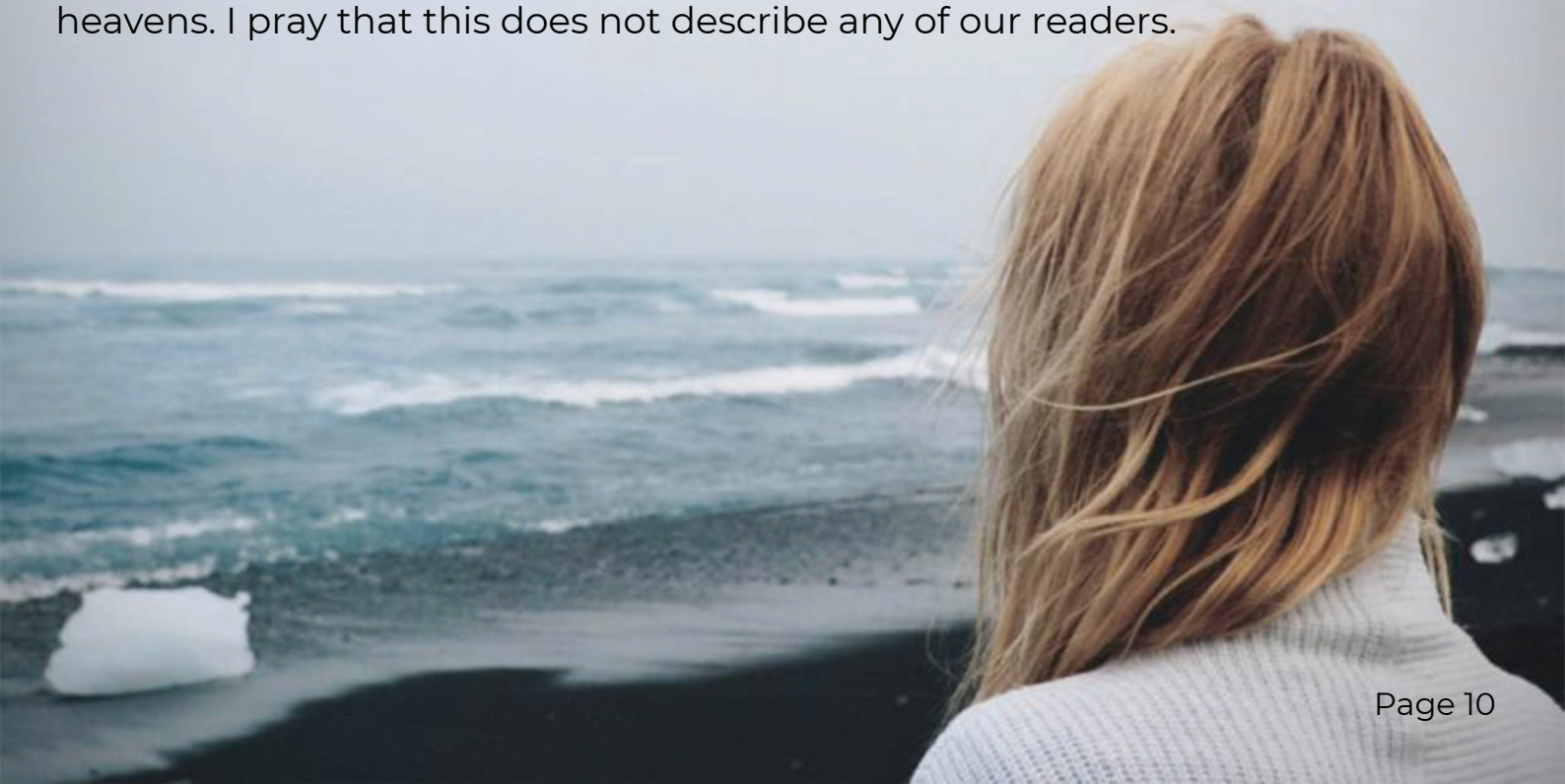
“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me” John 14:1  
When we are fully trusting, we become rested in Him. Some restlessness which we grapple with in life emanates from the attempt to figure it all by ourselves. The Psalmist says casting all your burdens upon him for He cares for you. Indeed, He cares for you and me. Not in a casual manner but in an intricate and detailed way. His extent of care is demonstrated by how He has numbered our hairs. How about His constant eye on the sparrow? Is that no proof enough of how much our Lord cares? The Lord cares.

### **The apostles prayed for boldness**


*“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word” Acts 4:29*

After being intimidated and their emotions smothered by those who were of "high religious" rank, the apostles asked for boldness. That was their most immediate need for them to continue the work of ministry. On the day of Pentecost, they had received the gifts, the anointing and everything else but still they needed the boldness. Without the virtue of boldness, we will retreat at the slightest show of resistance.

Jonah was afraid and he disobeyed. Most of us use Jonah as an example of someone who disobeyed God, and rightly so. But few of us have ever wondered why Jonah disobeyed God. It was because of fear. Nineveh was a wicked and terrible city where people were stumbling on corpses in the streets and that's how bad the city had become. The Bible said its wickedness had reached the heavens. I pray that this does not describe any of our readers.



# WE DID NOT RECEIVE A FEARFUL SPIRIT



*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7*

God is not the source of fear for He did not give such a spirit. Instead, He gave us the spirit of power, love, and sound mind. Fear or a sense of being afraid was first recorded when Adam and Eve sinned against God. It was when Adam disconnected from God through sin that he confessed to being afraid. Further associating fear with wickedness is the wiseman Solomon when He said that “The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.” Proverbs 28:11.

As you confront your fears, within and without, remember the assuring words of our Lord Jesus:

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

# WHEN GOD SENT HIS SON!

ARTICLE BY TINASHE MLAMBO

*"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Galatians 4:4*

It is just as important to know 'why' Christ came as it is knowing 'when' Christ came. Knowing 'when' Christ came helps you understand how God works in the realm of time. This is important because we are creatures of time, our very days are numbered for a reason. The Preacher says everything has its time: "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

The Holy Ghost wants us to understand the time God sent His Son, why He chose the exact moment He did. So when did Christ come? The Word says "when the time was right, at the proper time, in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son." Since we know that man is a creature of time, we can safely conclude that God sent His Son when the time was right for us, not for Him. It was at the proper time for mankind. Anytime earlier or later than the day Christ was born in the flesh would have been "bad timing."

We know why Christ came: He came to save people from sin (Matthew 1:21) and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (James 1:16). With such dire consequences, it would seem a rather an urgent matter for Jesus to have come reasonably "much earlier or sooner," as soon as sin entered into the world, and death through sin. Yet God waited (for thousands of years) and only sent His Son at what He calls "the proper time, at the right time & in the fullness of time."



# WHEN GOD SENT HIS SON!

ARTICLE BY TINASHE MLAMBO

## 1. The Day Man Sinned

That fateful & unforgettable day when man fell in Adam God didn't send His Son. The moment was tragic, in fact there has not been any tragic day since but the Saviour didn't come that day. Man sinned that day and mankind died that day, when the First man died (Genesis 3:15). Yet God did not send His Son, He gave man a promise!

## 2. The Days Man Sinned Continually

Just as Adam sinned, his son, Cain, sinned and every other descendant of Adam continued to sin exceedingly until a time when the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). Mankind sinned so continually that Scriptures say "God saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart." (Genesis 6:6 NLT) Yet even to that extent, at that present moment, God didn't send His Son to save man, He sent a Flood instead!

## 3. The Days Man Sinned Exceedingly

Even after the flood came and reduced the human population to just 8 people, just a mere family. God had simply 'started afresh' with a man who Scripture describes as "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Noah's sons with full knowledge of God's wrath & judgment on mankind, continued to sin and their descendants sinned exceedingly until the time their sin reached heaven. And the LORD said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave." (Genesis 18:20 NASB). Yet no matter how grievous it was, God didn't send His Son to save man, He sent Sulphur & Fire instead!

# WHEN GOD SENT HIS SON!

ARTICLE BY TINASHE MLAMBO



## 4. The Days Man Sinned Generationally

These are just a few key events and examples that showed the pervasiveness of sin and the depravity of a man dominated by sin. It became apparent after these events that man needed a Saviour. Generation after generation man sinned, even more than their previous generation. To the extent that man couldn't tell right from wrong, everyone was doing what was 'pleasing in his own sight' (Judges 21:25) and many people died in their sins. Yet God took no pleasure in it, He says, "As surely as I live, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live." (Ezekiel. 33:11) Yet even then, God did not send a Saviour, even for His chosen people, Israel, He sent them into captivity.

# JUST AT THE RIGHT TIME



But the question is, why did God wait for so long to send the Saviour? It sure looks long. Why did He wait? There are possible reasons why it took as long as it did, but the best answer is one already given, Christ our Saviour came at the "right time," at the proper time. Why was it the right time:

## **1. The Nature of Man**

Man needed to understand in years what man failed to understand in a day. Man didn't understand a simple instruction: for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:17) If God had sent His Son any moment earlier, man wouldn't have fully understood the character, corruption & consequence of sin & his own sin nature. God waited for so long for man to reach his lowest possible point, his weakest powerless possible moment. God waited for man to know by his own deeds the full extent of sin & death. Until "God gave them over to their sinful desires... & God gave them over to shameful lusts" (Rom 1:24-26). By the time Jesus came, man had sinned extensively until there was no longer anything new under the sun. It was then, when man was helpless & powerless to save himself or save anyone else, God sent His Son.

It is when man was at his weakest point, when man had gone so far as to being unable to save himself, that God sent forth His Son to be the Saviour of the world. "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6). It was for love's sake that God waited, to show man in years what He failed to understand in one day. To save a man when he couldn't save himself.

There is a second reason why it was the right time for God to send His Son:



## 2. The Nature of God

For man to know God's nature, His longsuffering, mercy, patience and His love. God sent His Son only when He had revealed how long suffering, kind, patient He is with his own creation. Even until now, God's true wrath has not yet been revealed. There is wrath that is coming! (1 Thessalonians 1:10) God has not yet sent His full wrath on sinners, but He will. What man has seen since the day the first man sinned: the multiplied sorrow & sweat, the thorns & thistles, the flood and the burning sulphur are nothing compared to the wrath that is coming. God waited for so long to give man the best possible chance for him to be saved, by the time when Jesus came every soul that died before He came and that came thereafter had an equal opportunity to be saved. The Lesson had been learnt, such that man is without excuse.

God waited until what could be known about God was clearly seen, His Godhead & divine power... until man was without excuse. The apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20 "For His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse."

### FINAL CALL

It is therefore evident that what kept Christ from coming the first time after the fall of man, is the same thing that is keeping Christ from coming for the 2nd time... it is called the fullness of time. It is the same fullness of time that God waits, for every man & woman, young & old, great & small, rich & poor, for them to be saved & come to the knowledge of Christ. In due time, at the proper time, Christ will come back again, but until then, He is patient with man, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Pet 3:9) The time is short, we ought to live for the Gospel and to ensure by the grace we have received that every man is saved & comes to the knowledge of the truth!

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