

# BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

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...to know the love of Christ  
which passeth knowledge  
that ye might be filled with  
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

## God's Appointments

A young couple learned the importance of both time and place in appointments when they planned to meet at a park for a walk together. They both went to the park at the appointed time, but he waited at one gate and she at another. They did not meet and walk together that day.

We find God confirmed the fact that two can not walk together unless they meet by appointment. Through the prophet Amos, the Lord said, "**Can two walk together, except they be agreed?**" (Amos 3:3) Here the word rendered "agree" does not mean "to think the same thing". It does not mean two must have the same opinions in order to walk together, but according to Strong's Concordance "agree" here means, "to meet at a time and place by appointment." The word rendered "agree" here is elsewhere rendered, "to meet", "to betroth", and "to engage for marriage." In other words, how can two walk together unless they meet at the same time and at the same place? Obviously, they can not."

We realize the importance of specific times and places in our appointments, but more importantly, the Scriptures tell us that there are precise times and places in *God's* appointments. Let us consider a few of God's appointments and what they teach us about events in our own lives and in the lives of all God's children.

To begin with, *our* appointments are not always met on time, but we find in Scripture that God's appointments are never early and are never late. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reads, "**To every thing**

**there is a season.**" The word "season" means "an appointed time." We understand then that God said, "**To every thing** (in His plans) **there is an appointed time**".

When God told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son, they thought it was too late because they were old and past child bearing. But God told Abraham, "...**At the time appointed I will return unto thee, ... and Sarah shall have a son.**" (Gen.18:14) And reading on we find, "**Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.**" (Gen.21:2)

Abraham and Sarah thought it was too late for them to have a son, and Mary, mother of Jesus, thought it was too early when she was told she would bear a son. She was not married and had not known a man. But it was God's appointed time and Galatians 4:4 tells us, "**But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.**" In the exact moment, when God's set time had been reached, and in the very place God planned, Mary bore Jesus, the Son of God.

When Abraham's grandson, Jacob, met Rachel, his bride-to-be, it was because they both came to the same watering well in the same month, on the same day and at the same hour. Was this a coincidence? No, they met by God's arrangement.

Throughout the ages, things in God's plans have happened according to His appointment, and we can be sure future things will continue to happen accord-

ing to His exact time table. Revelation 9:15 tells us that He has angels prepared to carry out His judgment of earth and its inhabitants; they are prepared, "...**for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,**"

Thus we see that the Lord has planned meetings and appointments, and those will occur at the exact moment and place that He has preordained. What can we learn from this? Perhaps we can understand that, though events in our lives seem to occur early or late, they are precisely "on time" according to God's schedule. Perhaps we can realize our old natures are impatient, not wanting to wait on the Lord's time.

The prophet Habakkuk learned he must wait for the Lord's appointed time. He thought the Lord was not hearing his prayer about the sin among his people. He cried, "**O LORD, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save!**" (Hab.1:2) The Lord answered Habakkuk telling him that He would give him a vision of what He would do about the sin among the People, but he must wait for it. The Lord said, "**For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.**" (Hab. 2:3) The Lord assured Habakkuk that though the vision of explanation seemed delayed, it was certain to come; it would not be late.

From these examples in the Scriptures, we may come to understand that

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## The Good Confession # 4

The fact that the nation of Israel looked for a king is evident in the events that took place during the life of Christ. From His birth until His death, even the Roman rulers were concerned about the chance that one would claim the authority to rule as a king over Israel.

At His birth, the wise men (*magi*) asked, "... **Where is He That is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.**" (Mat 2:2) When the word spread in Jerusalem that there were those who had seen a star, Herod, the Gentile ruler of Judea, was troubled and demanded of the chief priests and scribes as to where He would be born. He sought to kill Him and prevent the possibility of one rising in power and squash any rebellion against the Roman government.

Years later, when the Lord stood before Pilate and witnessed His good confession, the Roman ruler asked, "**Art Thou the King of the Jews?**" (Jn 18:33). The Scriptures had promised that someday One would come that would establish a kingdom on earth. "**For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: ...Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.**" (Isa 9:6,7) Many faithful Israelites longed for the fulfillment of this prophecy. They looked for a powerful figure of authority, but could not grasp the meaning of the Scriptures that spoke of the same Messiah Who would be meek and lowly.

Shortly before His trial, when the Lord entered into Jerusalem, He rode into the city upon an ass and a great multitude "**...spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way**" (Mat 21:8) in fulfillment of the words of Zechariah, "**Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.**" (Mt. 21:5) Yet, even His own disciples could not see the plain fulfillment of Scrip-

tures. "**These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.**" (Jn 12:16)

Many Scriptures were fulfilled throughout the life of the Lord Jesus. It was not until after His resurrection that the eyes of those who believed would be opened.

The following article is an excerpt from "God's Word Written or The Purpose of the Bible" by Stuart Allen. It is a brief summary of the fulfillment of Scripture during the last 24 hours of the Lord's life on earth:

*"The Evidence of Prophecy* - One of the most remarkable things about the Bible is the way it pin-points future events and lifts them out with definiteness and absolute accuracy. It is one thing to speak in a *general* way about the future, leaving plenty of loopholes for events to take this turn or that; it is quite another to tie them down to the smallest detail and still be perfectly correct in one's forecast. For instance, we could prophesy and say that next summer during the months of June, July and August there will be rain somewhere in the British Isles. That would be a very safe prophecy because we have made it so general. It would be an extraordinary thing if in England, Wales or Scotland there was no rain for a long period like three months. But supposing we were to say that on August 12th next year there will be heavy rain at 10.30 a.m. in the place where we live but nowhere else in the country, we should have made the prediction so definite, and multiplied the chances of being wrong so much, that it would be just as extraordinary if it actually came to pass.

Now the prophecies of Scripture are as definite as this, *but they are never wrong*, not one has failed or ever will fail. Let us look at the birth of Christ. Long before this happened an Old Testament prophet had forecast His birth, not in any vague way by saying it would occur somewhere in the East, but that it would take place in the little obscure village of Palestine called Bethlehem

(Micah 5:2). How could he have known? It was impossible to obtain such knowledge from human sources as he wrote it *centuries before it actually occurred*, but Peter assures us that 'Prophecy came not in old time by the will of *man*: but holy men of God spake as they were moved *by the Holy Ghost*' (2 Pet. 1:21). Scriptural prophecy is God the Holy Spirit writing history in advance.

Coming now to the Crucifixion, the predictions of the Word of God become more and more remarkable. The following are Old Testament prophecies together with their New Testament fulfilment:

(1) The Lord's disciples were to forsake Him.

*Prophecy:* Zechariah 13:7

'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of Hosts: Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered'.

*Fulfilment:* Mark 14:27

'... Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered'.

(2) He was to be dumb before His accusers.

*Prophecy:* Isaiah 53:7

'He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth'.

*Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:12-14

'And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly'.

(3) He was to be wounded and bruised.

*Prophecy:* Isaiah 53:5 'But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed'.

*Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:26,30

'... and when he (Pilate) had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified ... And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head'.

## The Good Confession ...cont'd

(4) His hands and His feet were to be pierced.

*Prophecy:* Psalm 22:16

‘... the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet’.

*Fulfilment:* Luke 23:33

‘And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him’.

(5) Yet none of His bones would be broken.

*Prophecy:* Exodus 12:46

‘In one house shall it (the passover lamb) be eaten ... neither shall ye break a bone thereof’.

*Fulfilment:* John 19:31-36

‘The Jews therefore ... besought Pilate that their (the malefactors’) legs might be broken ... then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs... For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken’.

(6) He was to be crucified with thieves.

*Prophecy:* Isaiah 53:12

‘... He was numbered with the transgressors’.

*Fulfilment:* Mark 15:27,28

‘And with Him they crucify two thieves ... And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors’.

(7) He was to pray for His persecutors.

*Prophecy:* Isaiah 53:12

‘... He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors’.

*Fulfilment:* Luke 23:34

‘Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’.

(8) The people were to ridicule Him.

*Prophecy:* Psalm 22:7,8

‘All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him’.

*Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:41-43

‘Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders,

said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him’.

(9) His garments were to be parted and lots cast for His vesture.

*Prophecy:* Psalm 22:18

‘They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture’.

*Fulfilment:* John 19:23,24

‘Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat ... they said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it ... that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots’.

(10) The Cry from the cross.

*Prophecy:* Psalm 22:1 *Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:46

‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’

*Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:46

‘And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?’

(11) They were to give Him gall and vinegar to drink.

*Prophecy:* Psalm 69:21

‘They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink’.

*Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:34

‘They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink’.

(12) His body was to be pierced.

*Prophecy:* Zechariah 12:10

‘... And they (Israel) shall look upon Me (Jehovah, verse 8) Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn ...’.

*Fulfilment:* John 19:34-37

‘But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They

shall look on Him Whom they pierced’.

(13) His heart was to be broken.

*Prophecy:* Psalm 22:14

‘I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels’.

*Fulfilment:* John 19:34

‘But one of the soldiers ... pierced His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water’.

(14) He was to be buried in a rich man’s grave.

*Prophecy:* Isaiah 53:9

‘... He made His grave with the wicked (plural), and with the rich (singular) in His death’.

*Fulfilment:* Matthew 27:57-60

‘When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimthaea, named Joseph ... He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus ... And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock...’.

Now bear in mind that all these prophecies were written some 1,000 to 500 years *before* these events occurred and that they all happened *literally*, not in any figurative way, exactly as had been stated by the Old Testament writers, and they all were *fulfilled in twenty-four hours*. Furthermore, Psalm twenty-two vividly describes death by crucifixion. This form of punishment was used centuries later by the Romans. How, then, could the writer of the Psalm have known about it? And how can the above fourteen prophecies be explained? Not by chance, for no sane mind could believe that these statements were fourteen lucky guesses that literally came true in one day! The conclusion is inevitable, that the Bible is what it claims to be, the Word of God. No wonder Peter says, ‘**We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed**’ (2 Pet. 1:19). ‘**These (things) have been recorded in order that you may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, through believing, you might have life through His Name**’ (John 20:31, Weymouth’s translation).’’

B. Bagby

## God's Appointments ...cont'd

in our lives, not only are God's "times" for us exact, but the "places" He has for us are also precise. It is my testimony that when my family and I moved to Phoenix, Arizona, in 1956, it was a *time* of needed change and the *place* was decided by a job offer to my husband. However, now it is plain to see that our move was at the time and to the place of God's design. Of all the churches in the huge city, we were directed to one where the truth, the final "mystery" made known to the Apostle Paul was being revealed to the pastor who shared it with us, his congregation.

At that time and in that place, we learned of the final mystery (secret) revealed to Paul. We learned of a unique time and place for a meeting. We learned that, in His foreknowledge, God the Father, chose us, members of the body of Christ, before any man existed. He selected us to meet Him at a time and in a place promised to no saint before. Ephesians 1:4 tells us He chose us, "...before the foundation (overthrow) of the world." From Ephesians 2:6 we learned of the place we will meet Him, in Christ. The place is beside Him,

"...in heavenly places", which is far above all heavens. From Colossians 3:4 we learned of the *time* of that meeting. We found, "**When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.**"

Ephesians 2:10 tells us, "...we are His (the Lord's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Can we not see that the Lord will guide us into those good works He has preplanned? Can we not trust He will arrange the times and places in our comings and goings, and trust He will set those we are to meet in our paths? If we will trust Him, then we need not fret that we are not evangelizing the whole world. Instead, as we get to know Him through His Word, He will put those ready to hear His Word in our path. Then our witnessing will be, not of our own design, not according to men's programs, but by "God's appointments."

*J Heltzinger*

**Bible Explorations** is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

**"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, ... For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."** (Mt. 11:28. 30)

While the yoke of the Lord is easy and the burden is light, nevertheless the furrow that He calls us to undertake is not always by any means easy plowing. There is no yoke that fits so smoothly and handily as His, but there is no work that requires more steady trudging and persistent faithfulness than His. Three stages of that work are strikingly set forth by Hudson Taylor when he says: "Commonly there are three stages in work for God: IMPOSSIBLE, DIFFICULT, DONE!"

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