

# VI

---

---

## *FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS*

. . . And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this . . . ? (Esther 4:14).

### ELIJAH

The Bible contains many miracles of timing. The components of the story, in and of themselves, may not be miraculous. It is timing, however, which frequently sets these events apart in our minds as experiences “beyond the veil.” The fact that it did not rain in Israel for three years, for example, is not in and of itself miraculous. Many nations experience severe and prolonged drought. The fact that the drought began and ended, however, just when Elijah said that it would, does give us pause for some serious reflection (I Kings 17:1—18:46). James 5:17-18 encourages us to pray with the reminder that Elijah was a fallible human being just as we are.

## ESTHER

Miracles of timing are particularly evident when reading the book of Esther. Wicked Hamaan had ordered the death of all Jewish people. This terrible edict was to be carried out on the 13th day of the 12th month, which is the month Adar. The Jews responded with fasting and prayer.

As a result of those prayers, a number of unusual things began to happen. At just the right time the king could not sleep. In the absence of sleep he called for the book of records and chronicles to be read before him and the passage selected just happened to be the right passage. Two of the king's chamberlains had plotted to kill the king, and a man named Mordecai just happened to be there at the right time to overhear their sinister conversation. Mordecai thus saved the king's life and under normal circumstances would have been immediately rewarded, but from God's perspective, the timing was not right.

In retrospect, we see that God waited until it was just the right time for the king, just the right time for Mordecai, just the right time for Esther, just the right time for the Jews, and just the wrong time for Hamaan and the Devil. The whole story was orchestrated by God like a precision clock so that the Jewish people were spared and wicked Hamaan was hanged upon his own gallows.

In the midst of this exciting drama, Mordecai asks Esther this piercing question, "and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther just happened to be at the right place, at the right time. If she failed in her responsibility, God would have to bring about deliverance from another place, but she did not fail! She became the queen at just the right time, she petitioned the king at just the right time, she exposed the wicked Hamaan at just the right time, and none of these incidents of timing were accidental.

## JESUS

The Scriptures teach that Jesus was born in the "fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4). Just as a woman's body becomes perfectly

prepared for the moment of birth, so also the world was ripe for the birth of Jesus. Individuals and empires were used by God to create the perfect atmosphere for the advent of the Messiah. The appearance of the angels, the decree of Caesar, the journey to Bethlehem, the visit from the wise men, the flight into Egypt, the murder of the infants, and countless other events were woven by our Omnipotent God into what is unquestionably the Greatest Story Ever Told. Each participant appeared on cue and performed as expected though few, if any, were fully aware of the part they were playing in the destiny of mankind.

### PHILIP

When Philip the evangelist left his prosperous ministry in Samaria to go to a deserted roadway between Jerusalem and Gaza, it seemed both unfortunate and irrational. There appeared on that road, however, at just the right time, a eunuch of great authority from Ethiopia. He just happened to be reading from the scroll of Isaiah the prophet and as he drew near to Philip he just happened to be reading that beautiful and profound prediction about Jesus that He would be "led as a sheep to the slaughter . . ." Touche! The timing was perfect. Philip began at that Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. They came to a certain water and the eunuch was baptized into Christ and then went on his way rejoicing.

### SPECTATOR OR PARTICIPANT

At this point in time, I am concerned that you, the reader, may have the mistaken idea that such miracles of timing could never happen to you. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people within the framework of Christendom have the mentality of spectators. We watch parades, we watch athletic events, we watch television, we watch the choir, we watch the preacher,

## BEYOND THE VEIL

and our whole frame of reference is from the perspective of only a spectator.

One famous football coach has observed the irony of 22 men on the playing field who are in desperate need of rest, and 22,000 people in the grandstands who are in desperate need of exercise.

The need of the hour is for you to become a "doer" of the word and not just a "hearer." The Scriptures teach that those who only hear the word of God are guilty of a kind of self-deception. It is like looking in a mirror and then forgetting what manner of person you saw. It is living in a dream world without reality.

If you could have a personal experience "beyond the veil" it would transform your day from a dead experience with drudgery, into a thrilling adventure with an ever present power.

### ANDY LAY

Some years ago Andy Lay was ministering with a congregation in Joplin, Missouri. Being caught between insurance policies, he found himself deeply in debt for medical expenses which he was unable to pay.

As the deadline approached and it became inescapably obvious that he had more bills than money, he began to blame God for placing him in that predicament. At the point of utter desperation, he was pacing the floor in the foyer of their church building. He glanced at the glass door just in time to see a sparrow fly into the glass and fall upon the sidewalk.

At this moment, Andy was reminded of the Scripture which teaches that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's knowledge. Jesus, therefore, encourages us not to worry for we are of more value than many sparrows.

Deeply ashamed of his attitude, Andy repented of his rebellion at just the time the mailman walked up from the street. In the mail was an anonymous cash gift which was precisely the amount needed to pay all of his bills which were due.

In retrospect, Andy observed, that the timing of these incidents was the most remarkable aspect of their occurrence. He was at the lowest point of his desperation when God sacrificed the sparrow as a reminder of His care, and it was at the moment of his repentance that God sent the postman with the anonymous gift which he so desperately needed.

Is it not exciting to consider the possibility that God allowed that sparrow to come into being for such a time as this? All of the days of his life may have been orchestrated by God so that he could appear in one man's life at the precise moment when an encounter with Deity was most desperately needed.

Obviously, the money had been mailed some days before. Again, however, the thought was planted in someone's mind at precisely the right moment. The envelope was sealed and placed in the mailbox on just the right day. The postman arrived at the right address, with the right amount of money, at just the right time.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. His providence was reserved for such a time as this!

### MARJORIE HOLMES

Guideposts magazine contains an amazing story about Marjorie Holmes. On January 1, 1981, she was reflecting upon 47 years of happiness in marriage, and the sadness which she felt over the recent death of her husband. Enough time had lapsed that she was thinking about the possibility of remarriage and she prayed, "Please, God, send me a wonderful man who will love me and whom I can love." She was even bold enough to write down criteria which would characterize the man for whom she prayed. First upon the list was that he be "a believer, devout . . ."

On the same night, and at essentially the same time, a medical doctor named George Schmieler sat in his bedroom in deep despair. He was alone and bitter. His wife of 48 years had just passed away. She had not only been his wife, but also his secretary, bookkeeper, and nurse.

## BEYOND THE VEIL

Dr. Schmieler was frustrated and bitter and began to blame God. At precisely that moment, his picture fell to the floor from his wife's dresser. There was no wind . . . no bolt of lightning . . . but the crash of the picture caused him to fall to his knees and ask help from God.

As he raised his head, he found himself staring at the closet door. For the first time, he noticed that the panels on that door formed a cross. Impulsively, he went to the closet where he found a book by Marjorie Holmes entitled, *I've Got to Talk to Somebody, God*.

The fact that Dr. George Schmieler and Marjorie Holmes became husband and wife gives us something to think about. Marjorie feels that for the believer there are no "coincidences" only "Godincidences." She and her future mate, whom she had never met before, lived many miles apart and it took a series of "Godincidences" to make them husband and wife.

As a matter of fact, it was not until their honeymoon that Marjorie found her list of requisites for a husband, and that she and George were able to compare notes and realize in retrospect that God had orchestrated and directed their entire courtship.

God had arranged their marriage for just such a time as this!

### PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

Down through the years I have had a number of unusual experiences with reference to timing which I attribute to the remarkable power of God.

In 1974, I set out to visit a number of congregations to do research for a book. I was accompanied by my eldest son, John, and the late Mike Pratt.

When we arrived at San Jose, California, there were several that I had hoped to see. Among them was my old friend, Marvin Rickard, who ministers to the Christian Church in Los Gatos, just a few miles away. The congregation had grown to several thousand, and I was told that even members of his own church had to schedule appointments several weeks in advance.

We were picked up at the airport by Harold and Phyllis Lass and spent a leisure couple of hours catching up on old times. About 7:30 or so we went out to eat and without any particular place in mind, wound up at a large restaurant on South First Street. Since the parking lot was about full we had to park some distance from the door.

When we arrived at the canopy in front of the door, I was pleased to discover less than ten feet away, Marvin Rickard, who had just stopped his car to let out his wife. We ate together and enjoyed a beautiful fellowship which a few moments either way would have made impossible.

Consider the unusual "coincidences" involved in our meeting. Marvin had no idea that I was anywhere in the area or that I had hoped to see him. He merely took his wife out for a meal. Since the Bay Area of California has millions of people and thousands of restaurants, the statistical possibility that we would meet by chance is virtually non-existent. Had either of us arrived a minute earlier or later there would have been a good possibility that we could have eaten at the same restaurant and not even known of each others presence.

God's timing, however, is perfect.

Or consider the phone call which I received from Gerald Marvel. Brother Marvel preaches in Vancouver, Washington. To the best of my knowledge, we had never spoken to one another before.

Gerald and I both attended the same high school and graduated the same year. It was a large school, however, and we were not close friends. I had heard his name, and he had heard mine, but again, to the best of my knowledge, we had never spoken to one another before.

Sometime after graduation he attended a family reunion and his aunt informed him that Boyce Mouton had married Betty Coppenger and become a preacher.

His initial response was, "No! You've got the wrong guy." His aunt, however, assured him that it was so and asked him to give me a call. He promised that he would.

## BEYOND THE VEIL

Since both of us had moved away, he had no idea where I was, but one day determined to honor his promise and give me a call. After several long distance calls, he found my parents, then my wife, and finally spoke for an hour or so long distance with me.

He then visited our home on his way back to Washington from a meeting in Texas.

From my own personal standpoint, his phone call and his visit could not have come at a more opportune time. I had been in a state of depression and indecision, and his ministry to me was more meaningful than words can describe.

The "rest of the story," so to speak, was that his aunt, to whom he had made his promise, had been dead for over 10 years when he remembered his promise and decided to call.

Again, this is more than a coincidence to me. God's timing is perfect. The seed had been planted ten years before it blossomed to bring fragrance into my life . . . but it arrived on schedule just the same.

## QUITT'N NOTHING

Bob Cox tells of old fashioned "quitt'n meetings" down in Texas. Periodically, a spirit of repentance comes upon the church and they gather to testify about the things they intend to quit. Some are going to quit smoking, cussing, drinking, etc.

One little old lady moved to the platform. She was blessed with an impeccable record in the community and no one could imagine anything which she would have to quit. She stood on her tiptoes and peered over the pulpit to announce, "I ain't been doing nuthin' and I'm gonna quit it!"

Perhaps she speaks for a lot of us. We cannot go back and undo our yesterdays . . . and we cannot count upon tomorrows.

Now is the acceptable hour. Today is the day of salvation. When God places an impulse in your mind, it just may be that He is calling you to do His will . . . for such a time as this!



**THOUGHT QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER VI**

1. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him and also when he would do it. Does this mean that Judas did not have “free will” to make his own decisions?
2. Do we have “free will” to do anything today we want to do?
3. How can God guide people who have free will?
4. How does the Devil get people to do his will?
5. How can we tell whether an idea came from God or the Devil?
6. If God wanted you to send some money to someone today . . . how would He get you to do it?
7. Did Jesus ever get in a hurry?
8. What would have happened to the people of God if Esther had failed?
9. If God wanted you to make a call on someone today . . . how would He get you to do it?
10. Whom do the Scriptures liken unto a person looking in the mirror and forgetting what he sees (James 1:22-25)?

