

## A Personal Word for You

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Have you ever been arrested? Have you ever been stopped and taken prisoner, hauled off into captivity? No, not by the police! Ideas, events, compelling personalities, visions of the mind, beauty: all alike are capable of stopping us in our tracks and holding us captive with the force of their impact on our souls.

Three weeks ago I was arrested with a **question**. It came unannounced in the middle of the night. It came into my mind and quietly asked, **“Why did Jesus come when he did?”**

“Silly question,” I sluggishly mused, “let me answer that quickly, be done with it, and get some sleep.” So I quoted Paul’s answer found in Galatians 4:4-5, “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” (A very powerful theological/ historical concept is expressed here by Paul when he uses the Greek word *pleroma* for “fully,” meaning, “the absolute completion of history’s preparation for the crowning event.”) There! Done! But not so fast! That question’s child then stepped up and asked...

**“Why didn’t God act decisively 20,000 years earlier?”** Given the human condition of our inability to deal with the untamed self within us all, why didn’t we get a head start? Why not act during Paleolithic era when we were “Stone Age” slow pokes milling around and chipping rocks? Why not give us 20,000 extra years to absorb the revelation that the God of all Creation is Absolute Love and Absolutely Loving? We need all the help we can get! So why did our Creator **wait** until the First Century of our Common Era to demonstrate a love for us all which is so radically personal and so transcendently powerful? Now I was fully awake. Just in time for a third question:

**“Why was the first century the right time?”** Yes! What was so special about that particular moment in history? What was going on to make that time *the time*? I began to review the beginnings of history and then to fast forward the pictures of developing mankind. It looked like a time-lapsed film of a seed growing into a bush then crowned with a rose.

Everything had to be in place. So God waited patiently for us to be ready for his great act of Self-Disclosure. Look at the panorama! From scattered and wandering humanity, tribes are formed. Then villages, cities, states, and nations come forth. Wars flow with precious few ebbs. But a seed of sanity is planted in this shifting soil. A patriarch named Abraham leaves Babylon to follow a call. Sarah is with him.

From this seed, roots of faith shoot forth, bearing names like Isaac and Rebekkah, Jacob and Rachel, Joseph and the tribes of a Nation. Then Moses. A people unlike any people before are brought together for a purpose. What seminal genius resides within in the Jewish Nation! They know God. They know our God’s Love for all humanity! They are called to be a Nation whose people are all “priests” and whose purpose is to bring all the world to know and love the One Creator who knows and loves each one of us (Exodus 19:6). So a people are ready but the world is not.

As time passes, Rome arises. The Jews are subjugated. But so is almost everyone else in the Western Mediterranean world. **For the first time in history a systematic society surrounds The**

**Chosen People selected to serve and to spread the Love of God.** This society is called “The Pax Romana,” the Roman Peace. There is one Government administering a hundred nations. There is one Law and one common legal system embracing the customs of many peoples. There is one official language that the multitudes can speak and understand, Latin. And one unofficial language left by Alexander the Great, which everyone knows, Greek. For the first time, there are highways that connect entire empire.

The time is finally here. The time is finally right. It is now time to get the message out because the people surrounding The Chosen Ones are inextricably connected to one another. “When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son...” to tell us and to show us a Love that will never die from the very Heart of our Creator God.

Now when people experience this Good News, it spreads like wildfire because of the **connectedness** of the people in the world of the First Century of the Common Era. Why? It is simple. **You share what you prize with the people whom you love.** As a consequence of the closeness of people, a world is set aflame and conquered when God sends the Spark of Love.

*God did not send his Son 20,000 years ago during the Paleolithic Era of the “Stone Age” because it would mean going to each and every separate little egocentric, self-absorbed tribe on the face of the globe.* They were not connected. They were isolated. No! He waited for the time to fully come! So it is with the history of God’s saving acts. People truly connected to people provide the setting for the flame of God’s Love to spread. **But now see what has happened!**

*We have allowed our Nuclear Age Technology to mask the fact that we are precipitously sinking into a new “Stone Age” RELATIONALLY!!* We are not connected. We are isolated. We go to our churches and our synagogues and we do not know each other. We go home to our neighborhoods and we do not know each other. And we enter our own houses and we do not know each other!

Good News is not spreading because the bridges it crosses are only present when there is a relational connectedness. And we are failing because we are seeking to compensate by substituting doctrinal precision and institutional organization for personal involvement!

The purpose of Shreveport Community Renewal is to inspire, equip, and mobilize people to become reconnected to one another at home, on their block, in their city. We must rebuild relationships first. Then and only then will we be ready for the “time to fully come”...AGAIN!! Come and join in this great adventure, won’t you? **You are needed because your love is part of the answer.**