

## DIVINE TIMETABLE

***After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. <sup>2</sup> Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. <sup>3</sup> So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. <sup>4</sup> For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> After saying this, he remained in Galilee. <sup>10</sup> But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. <sup>11</sup> The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" <sup>12</sup> And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." <sup>13</sup> Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.***

### Introduction

1. Karen and I had the opportunity to take a little vacation this last week. It was very good, but even on vacation I was struggling with schedule. I knew I had to work hard each evening and get up early each morning to get ready for today. But it was a battle to do that – all week. It took a lot longer to get to our destination than I had anticipated. In fact, it took longer to do almost everything we planned to do which meant everything else was off schedule.
2. But everything that happened to Jesus was on schedule. His timing was impeccable. In the fullness of time He came into the world. On several occasions John writes, "My time has not yet come" meaning that it will come on schedule but the schedule is not yet. He was born at the right time and began His ministry at the right time. He was arrested and tried and crucified and was buried all at the exact time scheduled by the Father. He rose from the dead at exactly the right time and ascended into heaven at the right time and He will come again at the appointed time – right on time! Throughout John's record of Jesus' life, we see the sovereignty of God and the providence of God and the purposes of God all coming together at just the right time to accomplish the plan of God.

3. Traffic, bathroom breaks, inattentive wait staff at restaurants and even weather conditions put holes in my schedule. Most of those factors I had little or no control over. Added to those were my own attention and energy deficits. Not so with Jesus. He was pressed by people and dealt with every kind of interruption and irritation imaginable, yet He always did the will of His Father in Heaven and He was never in a hurry!
4. So today we are talking about time and timing – what that meant for Jesus and what that should mean for us. More often than not our timing is off, but His is always exactly right.
5. Kids, Jesus said that His time had not yet come. Whenever He said that He was referring to something that was to happen to Him. Do you know what He was talking about (**His death**)? Later in this account, there is some argument as to what kind of person Jesus is. What were the two things the people were saying about Jesus (**He was a good man** and **He was leading people astray**)?
6. It's time now to get back to talking about time and timing. Jesus is still in Galilee. It's late September or early October. People are preparing for a journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths). As they are preparing, we get a glimpse of...
  - I. **THE BROTHERS' TIMING** – They had some counsel for Jesus in regard to Him and time.
    - A. Go now and show yourself
      1. It's likely that Jesus' brothers were aware of what happened in Capernaum after the Bread of Life speech where so many walked away and no longer followed Jesus. The brothers may have been simply telling Him that if He didn't want the whole thing to implode, He should go to Jerusalem, do a few miracles and start building back the numbers He had earlier.
      2. There would be multitudes from all over Israel present, so these could be the largest crowds Jesus ever experienced, and the potential for the word about Him to spread would be significant.
      3. The brothers may also have been in some sense mocking Jesus with their words. John makes clear that at this time His brothers did not believe the claims He made about Himself. For these reasons and perhaps others, the brothers tell Jesus to go to the feast and make Himself known. And I would take this one step further.

B. Go now and seek your fame

1. Regardless of what they thought of Jesus' claims and His ministry, they surely knew that (in the words of D. A. Carson, "If Jesus is interested in religious prominence... sooner or later he must prove the master of Jerusalem. Otherwise he will always be regarded by the authorities and by the upper echelons of society as no more than a rustic, rural preacher" (p. 306). In other words, if you make it in Jerusalem, you've got it made!
2. If that worked out in time, it could be good for them. If not, maybe Jesus would get it out of His system before too much embarrassment came back on them. Ironically Jesus would show Himself to the world, but not in any way close to what the brothers were suggesting. What He would show would not be a great miracle worker, but a disgraced criminal nailed to a cross. All the talk about "my time has not yet come" had reference to the cross, reference to His **death**, but the brothers had no idea that this was what He meant.
3. The timing of the brothers was wrong in regard to Jesus and He let them know. They were projecting what they would have done if they were Jesus, but they were not Jesus and that is not what He was going to do. I will have more to say about that later. (As you heard in the text, the brothers left for Jerusalem, leaving Jesus behind. Later Jesus followed, but He did so in the shadows. I will talk more about Jesus' timing in a few minutes. For now I want us to turn to the end of this text, verses 11-13, for a look at...

**II. THE PEOPLES' TIMING** (in regard to Jesus and what was to be done with Him). What time is it?

A. It's time to search

1. They are looking – Regardless of Jesus' waning popularity people remained intrigued by Him. There was a certain level of expectation that He would be present at the feast. If my calculations are correct, it had been several months since Jesus had been in Judea. During that time He had confined His ministry to Galilee. While news likely traveled freely from Galilee to Judea and back, it had been a while and a number of people wanted to again see the Lord in action. But they couldn't find Him. So...

2. Some are inquiring – When you are looking for something or someone and you can't locate what you are looking for, you ask. That's what many did. As more and more people were questioned, the conversations about Jesus escalated.
  3. Once again, I don't think the people were for the most part looking for Jesus in order to hear Him teach. They were looking for Him because they wanted to watch His works. So on their to-do list was "search for Jesus." To be accurate, I need to clarify who was really looking for Jesus and why. John speaks of "the Jews" and he speaks of "the people." The Jews were the religious leaders. The people were everyone else. These Jewish religious leaders were mostly the ones looking for Jesus – at least as far as our text is concerned. Their reasons for looking for Jesus were almost all bad. The hatred they had for Jesus before He went to Galilee had been simmering now for months. Expecting Him to be present for the Feast made them quite antsy about finding Him to do something with Him. But as they were looking and inquiring, a controversy began to develop. The time to look has become the time to argue.
- B. It's time to argue – Even among the people there was a wide opinion as to the kind of person Jesus was. Some said...
1. He's a **good man** – Was He? In the words of C. S. Lewis, "**Good men don't say they're God. Liars and crazy people do.**" Many saw Jesus as good because He went around doing good. But because He claimed an exclusive divine relationship with the Father and the ability to do things that only God can do, if He could not do these things and was not who He said He was, then He could not be a good man. If He is claiming to be God and He's not, whatever else He might be doing, He is not a good man. Though many people try to argue that Jesus is not God but He is good, that's an impossible position to take. Others argued...
  2. He's a deceiver (**leads people astray**). The leaders of the Jews had already made this assessment of Jesus. It surfaces again in this chapter and then again in the resurrection account in Matthew 27:62-63 – "**The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After**

**three days I will rise.”** The charge that **“He is leading people astray”**, that He was an imposter was gaining ground. In either case, for many...

C. It's time to turn (It was not clear to most who Jesus was. People were turning from Him because of this...

1. Lack of consensus – Some things are just hardly worth an argument. The people were doing some muttering about this controversy, but no one was getting on a soapbox and declaring Jesus as good or as deceiver. At this point He was neither defended nor indicted by the people. Why?
2. Fear of the Jews – The religious leaders were gunning for Jesus and the people didn't want to get caught in the crossfire. A time to look for Jesus and a time to argue the character of Jesus gave way to keeping quiet, turning from even any mention of Jesus. Who knows what the “Jews” might do! (It is interesting that the fear of men and the lack of consensus remains a problem today. We are concerned about what people might think of us if we talk about Jesus. It's safer not to speak of Him – so we take the safe way). We've looked at the brothers' timing and the people's timing. Let's consider Jesus' timing. This is really the core of the passage.

**III. JESUS' TIMING** – Let's start with Jesus' timing in relation...

A. To the brothers – **delayed** (Jesus made two statements to the brothers which speak of His timing but also highlight the brothers' complete unawareness of Jesus' identity and mission.

1. **My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.** While it is true that all of us live in the sphere of the control of a sovereign God, much of time we are not conscious of that fact. Jesus was fully aware of His mission and all that would happen leading up to the fulfillment of that mission, being constantly consciously aware of the Father's hand. As far as the brothers were concerned, they were doing what they wanted to do when they wanted to do it.
2. **The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.** The brothers had suggested that Jesus go to the feast and publicly make Himself known there. What the brothers did not understand was that the world hated Him and the increased exposure would bring intensified hatred. The hatred would increase because as Jesus declared His message the world's evil

was exposed. For Jesus to go in the way the brothers had suggested would have placed Him in a situation that would compromise His time – His mission. To say it another way, the time the brothers chose to go to the feast was without significance and consequence, but for Jesus the time was not right because it had not been so directed by the Father. He would not go to the feast when they said He should go. He would go only when directed so by the Father. (We will learn next week that He did go – as directed by the Father – as His time was drawing near).

#### B. To Him – **determined**

1. A correct understanding of sovereignty - He did not test God – Some subjects are beyond our ability to comprehend. Sovereignty is probably one of them. Sovereignty means control – complete, absolute control. God has absolute control over everything. Nothing can happen that is outside of God's control – God's plan. As one person has said, "There are no maverick molecules in the universe!" Jesus came to earth as Savior, and as Savior He came to die as the perfect sacrifice for sin. It was determined (before the foundation of the world) that He would complete His mission. So, why would there be concern regarding the people and the Jews? We can absolutely trust the sovereignty of God but we are not to test it. Contained in the divine plan of God were the arrest and the trials and the crucifixion and the resurrection. The timing was determined. The Father would direct everything at just the right time in just the right way. When He directed Jesus to move, He moved. Everything Jesus did, He did according to the will of God. Jesus did not presume on the sovereignty of God; nor should we.
2. A correct understanding of mission – Jesus knew that His time was soon approaching. He knew when and where He would die. His death would occur in Jerusalem in Judea. He was in Galilee. He knew He was going to Judea, but it would be the right time at the Father's direction and it would be the final time before His death.

#### **Conclusion**

1. So where am I going with this? Several areas of application surely could be made. Like the brothers, we have our own timetable and we seem to have instructions for Jesus in regard to when and how He should act. But what we want may not be

what He has planned. And His plans always impact us whether we know it or not! We tend to view our lives as independent, separate entities, but they are actually pieces of God's divine plan that fit together to bring Him glory. His timing is always perfect whether we know it or not.

2. There is also the matter of our spiritual condition. Paul, writing to the Romans, said, ***<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*** Writing to believers, Paul speaks of the day fast approaching when our faith will become sight. It's time to live in light of that coming meeting with Jesus! Paul is telling us how to live, how to use our time.
3. And there is this in 2 Corinthians 6 – ***Behold, now is the favorable time; behold now is the day of salvation.***