



## **Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.**

### ***"Discerning the Time"***

#### **Christmas 2015**

It all begins in Genesis...of course, the book of beginnings! Adam's believing another wisdom and in so doing rejecting Christ the wisdom of God and rejecting God's Word as Truth, results in the LORD God moving in judgment. (Genesis chapter 3) In the midst of wrath, however, God remembers mercy. But a war between the seed of Satan and the seed of Christ is clearly declared as is the outcome. (Genesis 3:15) The Good News begins here.

Time moves along. After hundreds of prophecies of a Savior to come and warnings of impending judgment through His prophets, God sends His unique Son from heaven to earth.

*In beginning-ness the Word always was, and the Word always was with God, and the Word always was God. The same was in beginning-ness with God...In Him was life; and the life was the light of men...And the Word was made flesh; and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 2, 14)*

Jesus Christ is born! He is a Divine Person with a Divine Nature who takes on a human nature in a human body. He is fully God and fully Man. His two natures are unmixed, unchangeable, indivisible, inseparable; united in one Person.

Time moves along. Jesus grows in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. Jesus is now witnessing to the Truth. John the Baptizer witnessed to Jesus being the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin. Jesus' Father bears witness. The works that Jesus does bear witness.

#### Pharisees and Sadducees Demand a Sign

Then this. Jesus fed the 4,000 and then sent away the multitude. He took ship with His disciples and came into the coasts of Magdala, in parts of Dalmanutha. Pharisees and Sadducees came desiring and demanding from Jesus to show them a sign out of heaven. They began to dispute and question with Jesus. They were tempting and testing Him. Jesus had this right up to the point of the Cross. The idea was that if Jesus would show them a sign, then they would believe. Cf John 2:18; John 4:48; John 6:30; Matthew 12:37, 38; Matthew 27:42.

The Pharisees and Sadducees tempted Jesus, desiring a sign from heaven, but Jesus, sighing deeply in His spirit, said no sign would be given to their wicked and adulterous generation but the sign of the prophet Jonah. They wanted something by which they could recognize and confirm who Jesus really is. Miracles don't really convince anyone of sin, however, or give a desire for salvation. Evidence was not the issue. They tempted because of no faith. (Matthew 15.39-16.4; Mark 8.10-12)

Jesus said the only sign they were going to get was that of Jonah, who spent three days and nights in the belly of the great fish and then went to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, to warn of coming judgment and destruction. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, wicked though they were. Jesus is greater than the prophet Jonah; and Jesus, like Jonah, is a true prophet of God, speaking right things about God and His plan. (Luke 11.29-32)

What! I thought this was going to be about little Baby Jesus meek and mild and all wrapped up.

Okay. Keep thinking that but let's remember why Jesus was sent here. He was sent as the Messiah, to bear the curse, to bear sin, and to bear the wrath of God on behalf of those given to Him by the Father to save; to die on the Cross bearing the penalty for sin; and to rise the third day as evidence that His perfect, personal, perpetual obedience to the Father's will and eternal plan was accepted by the Father. Folks, eternal life hinges on this.

Jesus indicts for demanding a sign that they, the Pharisees and Sadducees, might believe. He also indicts for not discerning the signs of the time(s). Let's keep on.

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting, desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, you say, fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, foul weather today for the sky is red and lowring [having a gloomy countenance]. O you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the signs of the time(s)? A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. And He left them, and departed. (Matthew 16:1-4)

There had been signs: The sceptre had departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet; the fourth great empire was established; the prophetic weeks of Daniel were at their close; the lineage of Jesus stood as evidence; the Baptist had come in the spirit and power of Elias; all the world was expecting the advent of some great personage; the best and holiest Jews were looking for the Redeemer; Christ's own miracles and teaching proved his Divinity and the fulfillment of many obscure prophecies; these and such like signs were set for all to see and ponder.

These Pharisees and Sadducees were blind. The signs were right before them, present tense. Had they searched the Scriptures, they would have found the Scriptures pointing to Jesus. But even at that, blind eyes must be opened to see.

Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me, that you might have life. John 5:39, 40

Words are signs too. Words are signs of natural facts. They stand, they symbolize, and they point. They are emblems. Natural facts symbolize spiritual facts. Jesus taught spiritual truth with His words. He Himself was the Word, the Sign pointing to spiritual truth. (John 17:7, 8, 14, 17) Jesus is the Sign and they didn't get it. His words are life and truth. He is life and truth. He is the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke. He is the One who will rise from the dead after three days and who is warning of coming judgment like Jonah. The point here is: **How will we respond to the warning of impending judgment?**

### Discerning the Time

Discern the set or proper time. The Syriac reads "the time" singular, the present time. If the Pharisees and Sadducees had not been blind, they would have discerned. The signs of the time of the Messiah was upon them, right then, present tense.



To someone who knew the prophetic words of the OT this should have been like reading the sky, but they were blind, and had no faith.

Jesus was telling the Pharisees and Sadducees that they were in open disrespect and contempt of court. The Divine court and authority of God the Creator/Redeemer had declared both through the forerunner John the Baptizer and through the One sent by the Father, namely Jesus the Christ, that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The Kingdom of Heaven is present! Proof had been demonstrated and was continuously being demonstrated. It is still so today.

We love when babies are born. We celebrate it. We have birthday parties. Jesus was born at the proper time, a “Kairos” moment. But Jesus says to discern the time. He came in the power of an endless life. He came on a Mission, sent by the Father to save. He came to die, not for His own sins, but for the sins of His own. The sign to a wicked and adulterous generation would be His resurrection.

If Christ is not raised without seeing corruption, then no atonement has been made. Had He not risen without seeing corruption, His disciples could have no assurance that sin was annihilated. They would have had evidence that sin HAD NOT been taken away. Having done away with sin, Jesus could see no corruption. If the cause is removed, the effect must cease. Jesus remained in the grave for such a period of time to give assurance that He actually died and actually resurrected from the dead.

Death could not hold Him. This is not about omnipotence but about Jesus’ perfectly holy humanity. Jesus satisfied all requirements for the elect to be accepted by the Father. He bought the flock of God by His blood sacrifice, His offering up of Himself. (Hebrews 9 and 10) He could not remain in the state of death, but must needs be raised by God legally. Jesus in His humanity was perfectly holy, blessed, and immortal. He is the Second Man, the Last Adam, the Federal head of a new human race.

He did die by His voluntary consent, allowing the sins of the elect to be charged to Himself. Though innocent, He was numbered with the transgressors and accounted guilty. He was treated as guilty. By His own act, He took in our place, “you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). When the satisfaction was complete, the sinless Surety was raised from the death. See Acts 2:24. Jesus as to His personal life had no sin; He was not legally subject to death. He was legally to be blessed, the Blessed and Only Potentate. See 1 Timothy 6:15, 16.

Were the resurrection not a fact, then our faith would be vain and worthless. The object of our faith would be false. We would still be in our sins, meaning that we should still be under the guilt of sin in a state of condemnation.

So let’s forego demanding signs from heaven and discern the time(s) as we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ this Christmas. Let’s celebrate with joy the birth of our Savior and LORD. Let’s celebrate His Life and what He accomplished through His obedience, His life being before the Father one, righteous act. See Romans 5:17ff. Let’s remember His death until He comes, and let’s remember His resurrection.

Let's remember that He is coming again, at the proper time, in power and great glory. Let's remember that baby Jesus meek and mild sits high and lifted up, Sovereign, King of kings and Lord of lords. The Day of Judgment comes. **Will we live in God's perspective?**

And let's get the message out. For it is GOOD NEWS!

Taking the gospel around the world and across backyard fences,

*Mary Craig*

Mary Craig, D. Min.

But when the fullness of the time was come,  
God sent forth His Son,  
Made of a woman, made under the law,  
To redeem them that were under the law,  
That we might receive the adoption of sons.  
Galatians 4:4, 5

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