

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*At the Right Time*  
Galatians 3:19—4:11

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Ask two people to read Lamentations 3:22-23. Give them a copy of the reading printed at the end of the Worship Time in order for them to prepare ahead of time.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

### **Worship Time Leader:**

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You may choose to read the words to “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” if you feel that it is too unfamiliar for your group to sing.

### **Music Sources:**

“Great is Thy Faithfulness” found in various hymnals.

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”, #176, *The Worship Hymnal*

“In His Time”, #41, *Maranatha Praise*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

## Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

### *At the Right Time*

#### **Focal Text**

Galatians 3:19—4:11

#### **Background Text**

Galatians 3:19—4:31

#### **Main Idea**

At the right time God sent his Son that we might no longer be slaves to the law but God's children by faith.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What role did the law play in God's plan of salvation? Do you mean the Christian life is not about keeping rules and observing rituals?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to contrast the place of the law with the wonder of being God's children by faith.

#### **Gathering together:**

Sing "Great is Thy faithfulness" found in various hymnals.

#### **Use two readers to read Lamentations 3:22-23**

**First reader:** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

**Second reader:** "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him."

**First reader:** The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

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**Second reader: Let him sit alone in silence when He has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust – there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.**

**First reader: For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though He cause grief, He will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love; for He does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men.**

### **First thoughts:**

The writer of today's material tells this story. "We were so excited waiting for the birth of our second child. The Doctor confirmed that early November would be the due date. My wife's parents never traveled far from their home and seldom stayed over night anywhere else. We lived almost four hours from them. We did not expect they would be able to come to see the baby. To our surprise, they came the first day of November to be there when the baby arrived. We were so surprised and delighted. The baby was due any day. Day after day we waited, but the baby wouldn't come. The Doctor would say, "That baby will come when it is ready, and not before!" Tension began to hang over our happy home. My parents-in-law had never stayed away from their home so long. My wife grew very edgy and would cry without warning. I just loved leaving the house to go to work! Our second son was finally born early in December. Then it snowed! My wife's parents could not go home for another week. We always remember that very special time. We really got to know our parents well and our love for them grew. Since that time I've wondered why babies don't come when they're supposed to come? Sometimes their timing leaves a lot to be desired!"

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Our timing in life can be a challenge. Our birth, death, and most things in between defy our ability to predict. God is not constrained by such a problem. Today we will learn that God's timing is always perfect. God sent his son at the right (perfect) time that we could be God's children by faith.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *At the Right Time*

#### **Focal Text**

Galatians 3:19—4:11

#### **Background Text**

Galatians 3:19—4:31

#### **Main Idea**

At the right time God sent his Son that we might no longer be slaves to the law but God’s children by faith.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What role did the law play in God’s plan of salvation? Do you mean the Christian life is not about keeping rules and observing rituals?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to contrast the place of the law with the wonder of being God’s children by faith.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

In May, 1940 British and Allied armies had been pushed back to a narrow piece of sandy beach in Northwest France. Enemy tanks and airplanes continued to attack them. When all seemed lost and it appeared that this force of men would be killed or captured, the Miracle of Dunkirk occurred. An armada from England arrived. 887 boats arrived, most civilian. It was a motley collection of boats; wind-driven, oar-driven, motor driven. There were boats for fishing, pleasure boats, whale boats, life boats, yachts and ferries, paddle wheelers. They arrived just in time to evacuate about 340,400 men who would soon be serving in other battles to defeat the enemy. At the right time this motley fleet arrived to rescue this defeated army. So it is with our relationship to God. When

the time was fully come, at the right time, He sent His Son to redeem those under the law.

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

In Galatians 3:6-25 Paul gave the Galatians a history of redemption from the institutional level. He begins with the Promise and Abraham, moves to the Law and Moses, and concludes with faith and Christ. In Galatians 3:26 through 4:31 he again goes over the history of redemption, but this time from a personal and individual level. He begins with faith and the Spirit. He states that every Christian is the same; no distinctions are made. He concludes with the allegorical explanation of Hagar and Sarah. Hagar represents slavery and the law while Sarah represents freedom and faith through the promise.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **The Purpose of the Law (Galatians 3:19-20)**

This far in his letter Paul has been negative about the law. This discussion would prompt the question, “What then is the purpose of the law?” If the promise was given first, why did God give the law? The law was sent to show men what wrongdoing was. When a person committed a transgression under the law, it meant that sin became “exceeding sinful.” It was to last until Jesus, the Seed that the promise referred to, was come. The law was given by angels with a man (Moses) acting as a go between, a mediator. The law was a contract between God and the Jewish people with both parties having responsibilities. However, when God, who is one, acts, there is no need for a mediator. All obligations to the covenant were assumed by God.

### **Law. Opposed to Promise? (Galatians 3:21-22)**

Paul then asks: is the law opposed to the promise? In answer to this question he answers. No, it is not opposed to the promise. Negatively, the law does not replace the promise nor does the law give spiritual life. However the law prepares men for the grace of God through Jesus Christ. This is its purpose. Paul continues: if law could make people right with God, then they could receive God through the law. The scripture states that all humanity is controlled by sin. Because of that, the promise was given, that through faith all who believed in Christ would receive it.

### **Law. To Lead to Christ (Galatians 3:23-25)**

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The law restrained the people prior to the coming of Jesus. This confinement by the law looked ahead to the coming of Christ. The law was in charge and kept people prisoners until faith was revealed. The law is compared to a tutor or school master who was in charge of a child before the child reached his adulthood. It was in charge of individuals until they could be justified by faith. When the time came and faith was revealed, then the tutor-school master (law) no longer had authority or custody of the individual.

### **Results of Putting on Christ (Galatians 3:26-29)**

Paul summarizes. The Galatians were the sons of God. They became sons through faith. That faith was in Jesus Christ. Those having in faith in Christ are the sons of God. Paul uses the example of baptism to illustrate the relationship of the believer to Christ. Baptism is pictured as “putting on Christ” in the same way a person would put on a coat. Once a person was in Christ all social, economic, racial, national and gender differences vanished and all were equal. Up to that time Jews felt that any Gentile was simply “fuel for the fires of hell.” Greeks felt that non-Greeks were barbarians and much inferior. Under grace every Christian is the same, no distinctions are made. The term “in Christ” is one that is used about eighty-nine times in the Bible. It is used almost exclusively by Paul. One verse in Acts uses it to describe Paul’s testimony. It is used once in Hebrews and three times in 1 Peter. All the other uses are in Paul’s letters. Those that are Christians are described as the true descendants of Abraham. All the promises God made to him now belong to Christians. They became heirs by the promise.

### **Law as a Teacher/Custodian Until the Right Time (Galatians 4:1-7)**

An individual, even though he is an heir, is in the same position as a slave as long as he is still a child. He is under a guardian or trustee until he is of the age that the father had specified. A guardian was one to whose care something or someone is committed. The heir is under the guardian’s control until the time comes that was appointed by the father. Paul then says that while we were still “children” that we lived under basic moral guidance.

When the time was proper Jesus was sent to redeem us so that we might really become the sons of God. He was born to a human mother and was born under the law. He bought freedom for all who were slaves to the law in order that we could be adopted as his own sons. As a result of being his sons, God sent the Spirit of his son into us. This resulted in us calling God, “Father.” This meant we are no longer servants and slaves but a son.

### **Considering Life Before Faith (Galatians 4:8-11)**

Paul reminds the Galatians of their lives before they had faith in Jesus. He indicates that they were slaves to pseudo gods that did not even exist. Now they had come to a place where they found God. Or put more correctly, they had been found by God.

Since this occurrence, Paul asks them why they want to go back and become servants and slaves of another poor, weak religion. In this religion they were trying to discover God by obeying God's laws. He accuses them of trying to find God by what they do or refrain from doing. Paul tells them that their religion is starting to be a simple observance of special days, seasons, and ceremonies. Paul then expresses a fear that he wasted his efforts on them. Paul in this passage has them review their spiritual journey. First he begins with their original false religion or paganism. Secondly, he shows how they moved to Christian deliverance. Thirdly, Paul indicates that they have a lapse or a step backward into their original bondage and slavery.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

This session welcomes creative teaching methods. By using visual and mental images, you, as the leader, could choose some interesting ways to communicate the goals of accepting God's perfect timing and the wonder of living our lives as God's children through the awesomeness and joy of our faith in Jesus. Think about using clocks, an hourglass, or a timer while you teach, noting the relationship to our timing and God's timing. As well, think of ways to create images of wonder, awesomeness, and majesty to help the participants connect with the concept of living by faith instead of by obedience to religious laws.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***At the Right Time***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Galatians 3:19—4:11

#### **Background Text**

Galatians 3:19—4:31

#### **Main Idea**

At the right time God sent his Son that we might no longer be slaves to the law but God's children by faith.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What role did the law play in God's plan of salvation? Do you mean the Christian life is not about keeping rules and observing rituals?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to contrast the place of the law with the wonder of being God's children by faith.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Say: A person goes to a swimming pool. He cannot swim. He reads the rules posted on the wall. "Non-swimmers not permitted in pool without a lifeguard present." He waits until a lifeguard comes, then gets to play in the water. Picture this same person a few months later after participating in swimming classes. Can you see him diving, swimming the length of the pool, enjoying water polo with others? What are the differences in his feelings? At the beginning he was limited by rules to keep him safe. In the new situation he has freedom of movement and can enjoy the pool to its fullest.

Today we are looking at the rules (the law) and it's purpose and comparing it to the freedom that a believer has in Christ.

## **Guide the Study:**

Read Galatians 3:19-25.

Question the group: What is the purpose of the law?

If we become Christians because of putting our faith in Christ, why did God send the law?

Using the **Teacher Preparation** lecture briefly on the purpose of the law:

It showed people what wrongdoing was.

It set a standard of thought and behavior for people.

As a standard, it stood as a mediator, or a means through which the people could come before God.

It helped people understand the wrongfulness of their personal actions and those of their group as a whole.

Point out the difference between the law with Moses as a go-between compared to the promise when there would be no human mediator. Tell them: Moses served the Israelites by spiritually standing between them and God. He pleaded to God on their behalf many times when they sinned. Later, priests did the same for them. But now that Jesus came to earth, only He will ever stand before God on our behalf.

Find out if any of the group remembers the verse where Jesus says that He is the only way that anyone can come to the Heavenly Father. ("***...I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***" John 14:6.

Ask: Is the law opposed to the promise and faith? Help members understand that the law is not opposed to God's promises.

Read this to the class: Paul says in v. 21 that the law is not in opposition to the promises. If the law had been able to give life, then righteousness would have resulted from it. Since it could not give life, the Scripture says that the world was a prisoner of sin. The promise of God was that which was promised would be given to those who had faith.

Then ask: What does v. 24 say about the purpose of the law? (It was to lead us to Christ. It was so that we would be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.)

Seek an answer to this question: What is our position under the law now that we are Christians? (We are no longer under the supervision of the law. We are independent of it.)

Read Galatians 3:26-29.

Share: The passage says we are the sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Ask: How does the scripture picture that relationship? (We are clothed with Christ.)

Question the class: What does this relationship to Christ do to distinctions between races, nationalities, cultures, sexes, etc? (There are no distinctions.)

Urge discussion for these questions:

Do we as Christians today make distinctions?

What are the distinctions?

Why should we make changes in our attitudes towards others?

Say: V. 29 tells us that if we are Christians that we are descendants of Abraham and therefore heirs according to the promise God made to him.

Read Galatians 4:1-7.

Suggest this: Let's assume that a certain child will inherit a million dollars when he reaches adulthood.

Ask: What is situation until he reaches adulthood? Use Galatians 4:2 to answer this question.

Now ask: In Galatians 4:3 what was our situation? (We were in slavery.)

Pose this question: What happened at the right time? (When the right time came, God sent his own Son.)

Have the group answer this: What was the circumstance and purpose of this? (He was born of a human mother. He lived under the Jewish Law. The purpose of this was that we might become God's children.)

Ask: What evidence do we have to show us we are God's children? (God sent His Spirit into our hearts.)

Question them: What will happen to us since we are God's children? (God will give us all he has for his children.)

Read Galatians 4:8-11.

Call for answers: What questions did Paul ask the Galatians? (How is it that you want to return to the weak ruling spirits? Why do you want to become their slaves again?)

Explain: He was trying to point out that they were going backward. He was seeking them to examine their spiritual journey. They began in slavery. They had found righteousness with God through Jesus Christ. Now they were contemplating going back into slavery. Their religion was beginning to become just simple observance of days, and ceremonies without meaning.

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Encourage a brief discussion of this: What are some routines that Christians can do without meaning? What do we feel like today that are important in our relationship to God? Possible answers you might receive: Attending worship, giving an offering, or routinely reading the Bible.

Conclude with these thoughts: Are these meaningful or are we simply going through the motions feeling that the mere performance of them brings us into fellowship with Christ. The Christian life is not about keeping rules and observing rituals. Call on a participant to lead in prayer that we won't perform meaningless actions and that we will take part in activities which bring us into contact with God.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### *At the Right Time* Galatians 3:19—4:11

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Sundials, Hourglasses, Clocks, and Other Time Controllers in Our Lives!**

Teens are particularly aware of time. Sometimes it seems that time is passing rapidly and the good times of the teen years will be over all too soon. On other occasions it seems that being an adult won't happen soon enough. Having independence and being free from the rules of teachers and parents seem most desirable. Today, think about a plan you have for the future. Share with the group. Now think about something in your life that you like just the way it is today. Share that with the group. Pray together that each one may treasure the joys of today while awaiting the good things God has for the future.

# 3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

## Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

### *At the Right Time* Galatians 3:19—4:11

#### **Beginning the Service:**

Sing or read “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”.

#### **Offering:**

#### **Praying for the World:**

Baluchistan, a province in Pakistan, is accurately described as a dustbowl. Settlements are few and far between, and bandits often stalk wayward travellers.

The capital city is Quetta and there is beauty there in the fruit orchards in the city of 650,000 inhabitants. Islam may be mixed with elements of animism and folk religion. Pray for God to make his presence known to the people of Quetta. (See Missions Mosaic, October, 2005, p. 30).

#### **Sharing Guide:**

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

## **God’s Perfect Timing**

#### **Introduction:**



The huge planet Jupiter consists mostly of methane and other gas-like substances. It is more than four times farther from the Earth than the Sun is. When you look into our sky at night, sometimes you can see Jupiter, but it appears as little more than one of the stars. It is amazing that we can send a probe to Jupiter aboard a rocket. The missile must travel seven years aimed at a moving target. Timing and trajectory are everything. All the variables must be considered to hit the target. We rejoice in human engineering success when we receive the pictures from the probe.

We bask in our achievement but overlook God's perfect timing in the birth of Jesus. Paul mentions the "fullness of time" or the strategic moment when all the variables come together perfectly. God prepared the world when he sent his Son, "born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law (Galatians 4:4-5)."

Every year, as we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating God's perfect timing. Let us notice how many variables at the first Christmas make the time full.

## **I. God was ready!**

The implication in verse 2, "the time set by his father," is that God set a time from the beginning to provide a means of salvation. He told Adam and Eve that their seed would crush Satan's head (Genesis 3:15). He promised Abraham, and others, who followed him, that their seed would bless all the nations of the world. The time had come. God acted in the birth of Jesus. His birth in Bethlehem was not an accident. The Jewish Nation had long waited for the promised Messiah. They bore the name, God's Chosen People, because he chose them to bring the Savior into the world. God was ready.

Every time we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas we celebrate God's plan. Jesus was not born in a vacuum. He came to a world gripped by sin. He died on a cross and rose from the dead at Easter. Had there been no Easter, there would not be a Christmas either.

## **II. The people were ready.**

Any study of the New Testament world will confirm that the world was morally bankrupt. Read Galatians 5:19-21. The description of that world also is a description of our world. Without Christ, we live by worldly values.

People were religiously bankrupt. Idolatry was the norm. Men claimed to be gods. The Caesars were deified and worshipped. Religious practices had nothing to do with hope or one's eternal destiny. Everyday was a day without God. Paul says in verse 3, "we were enslaved by the basic principles of the world." Aren't you glad Paul's next word is "But."

The Jews were also ready. They had a spiritual hunger. The Law God gave had been corrupted by the religious leaders. The Priesthood had no resemblance to that of

Moses' time. The situation was desperate and God stepped in to offer our only hope. The people were prepared for God's action that would offer hope to all of mankind!

### **III. The world was ready.**

Rome was a pagan empire. They had many gods from every country they conquered. There were crude religious practices all over the empire. Who would have known that God would use such a pagan empire to accomplish his will! Rome provided a common language and government throughout the empire. It was amazing what benefits Rome provided for the spread of the gospel.

Maintain the Roman Peace was the task of the Roman Military. As the Gospel spread, the missionaries could be certain of plenty of opportunity provided by the peace in place all over the empire.

Rome had all-weather roads built throughout the kingdom. Travel became easier for everyone. No matter what mode of travel was used, travel was easier. The roads became arteries for the spread of the Gospel.

Sea travel throughout the empire could be booked for no more than three days wages. Never in the history of man was travel easier or more inexpensive. God's timing was perfect. The announcement of his provision for eternal life could be carried to the entire world in a timely way.

#### **Call to Commitment:**

God's timing is perfect in our world. Think of the many ways he has provided for us to share the good news. Great evangelists like Billy Graham have preached the gospel all over the world. You and I can also share the gospel in so many ways.

#### **Concluding the Service:**

Choose an appropriate blessing on the congregation from the Bible. You will find many in the Book of Psalms and from Paul's writings in the New Testament—both in his introductions to his Letters and in their conclusions.

Use two readers to read Lamentations 3:22-23  
Make a copy for each.

***First reader:*** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

***Second reader:*** “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in Him.”

***First reader:*** The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

***Second reader:*** Let him sit alone in silence when He has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust – there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.

***First reader:*** For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though He cause grief, He will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love; for He does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men.