

Hymns: 11 How Great Thou Art 19 Light of the World Is Jesus

Scripture: Psalm 8:1, 3-6; **104:1-3, 19-20a**; 136:3-9; 148:1-6

Big Idea: Jesus our Light

Genesis 1

*[3] And God said, Let there be **light**: and there was **light**.*

*[4] And God saw the **light**, that it was good:
and God divided the **light** from the **darkness**.*

*[5] And **God called the light Day**,
and **the darkness he called Night**.*

*And the **evening and the morning** were the **first day**.*

God created light and defined a day.

*[14] And God said, Let there be **lights** in ... the heaven to
divide the day from the night;
and let them be for
signs,
and for **seasons**,*

Henry, can you name the seasons? There are four.

*and for **days**,
and **years**:*

Notice **one** purpose for these **lights** in the heaven is to help man measure time.

*[15] And let them be for **lights** in ... the heaven
to give light upon the earth:
and it was so.*

*[16] And God made **two** great lights;
the **greater light to rule the day**,*

What is our light source that rules the day?

*and the **lesser light to rule the night**:*

What is the light that rules the night?

he made the stars also.

*[17] And God set them in ... the heaven
to **give light** upon the earth,*

[18] *And to rule over
the **day**
and over the **night**,
and to divide the **light** from the **darkness**:
and God saw that it was good.*

[19] *And the **evening** and the **morning** were the **fourth day**.*

Speaking of day and light, welcome to Daylight Savings Time. If you didn't make the switch, you will arrive here an hour late. In the United States, Daylight Savings Time was established by law in 1966. Many of us lived our childhoods and beyond with no need for it. The reason for it is primarily political. So for now, we're stuck with changing our clocks twice a year. Today, we're going to take a closer look at time and in particular, Jewish time.

Two weeks ago, we started working on Jesus' timeline to the cross, the tomb, and His resurrection. We learned that the first month in the Jewish calendar, called Abib, corresponds roughly with our month of April. In that month are defined the three feasts:

1. Passover
2. Unleavened Bread
3. Firstfruits

Since our timeline is measured in time units, we need to stop and look at how the Jews measured time. This is important if we are ever to pull together this tightly woven series of events described in the gospels. Genesis chapter one gives us our first clues.

The Jews took the expression *the evening and the morning* and built their definition of days upon it. The Jewish 24-hour *day* **starts** with **darkness** (at sunset) called *night* and proceeds to **light** (at sunrise) called *day*. This becomes confusing to us because we designate our days differently and because of the dual use of the word *day* to refer to both a 24-hour period of time as well as to just daylight hours.

Now building on that foundation, let's move on to *hours*. From last time, recall that Jesus gave us the length of **daytime** and by implication **nighttime**:

John 11

[9] *Jesus answered, Are there not **twelve hours in the day**? If any man walk in the **day**, he stumble[s] not, because he see[s] the **light** of this world.*

[10] *But if a man walk in the **night**, he stumble[s], because there is no **light** in him.*

An average day has twelve hours of **daylight** and twelve hours of **darkness**. This scripture reference has Jesus using the word *day* to indicate **daylight** hours.

Next, we have a good example of **hours** in the Parable of Laborers in the Vineyard. Parables encompass another whole set of difficult teachings of Jesus. We will touch only on a select few in the future. At this point though, our interest is not in the interpretation of the parable but instead in the usage of the words *morning*, *evening*, and *hour*.

Matthew 20

[1] *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a[] householder [that is, the one in charge of a property], which went out **early in the morning** to hire labourers into his vineyard.*

We understand early in the morning. It's daybreak or sunrise. We can see that clearly in the account of the women coming to the empty tomb in:

Mark 16

[2] *And **very early in the morning the first day of the week**, they came []to the sepulchre **at the rising of the sun.***

So the first group of laborers were hired shortly after sunrise. Now, let's return to our parable.

[2] *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny **a day**, he sent them into his vineyard.*

What kind of *day* did he hire them for? As we shall see, he was referring to **daylight** hours.

[3] *And he went out **about the third hour**, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,*

If sunrise is roughly at 6 a.m., the third hour begins three hours later. What time would that be?

[4] *And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.*

[5] *Again he went out about **the sixth and ninth hour**, and did likewise.*

The sixth hour is six plus six or twelve what we call noon. The ninth is three hours later, making it three hours after noon or 3 p.m. as we typically express it.

[6] *And about **the eleventh hour** he went out, and found others standing idle, and sai[d] []to them, Why [do you] stand ... here [idle] **all ... day**?*

The eleventh hour is the last hour of daylight or 5 p.m.

[7] *They sa[id] unto him, Because no man ha[s] hired us. He sai[d] unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*

[8] *So when **even[ing]** was come,*

Notice, those hired first worked from early in the morning until evening – daylight hours.

*the lord of the vineyard sai[d] []to his steward,
Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last []to the first.
[9] And when th[ose] that were hired about the **eleventh hour** [came], ... every man [received]
a penny.*

Did you notice that expression *the eleventh hour*? That has become an idiom today for *in the nick of time* (which is another idiom by the way).

[10] But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

We will stop there. Notice we have the following time references:

- early in the morning or daybreak
- the third hour
- the sixth hour
- the ninth hour
- the eleventh hour
- evening

As we experienced today, our modern world plays around with the clock twice a year to come up with Standard Time and Daylight Savings Time. Back in Jesus' day, they kept it simple.

Now, let's move on to months. The Jews' **first** month is roughly our April, but as Henry told us last time, January is our first month. Clearly, the Jewish calendar differs from ours. Henry, how many months are there in a year? Did you ever wonder why we have **twelve** months in a year rather than ten or some other number? What's so special about twelve? And why does every month have about thirty days?

It turns out that the moon has about a 29½ day cycle. Remember today's scripture said that the sun and the moon would help man keep track of time. The moon's cycle is roughly the length of a month. The Jews use the moon's cycle to define their months.

Twelve of our months don't quite match up with the number of days in a year, so every four years we have something called a **leap year**. Henry, do you know what a leap year is? Is it a year when everyone leaps for joy? No. It's a year that contains an extra day isn't it? That extra day is February 29th. We had one just eight days ago. Do you remember?

So this year has 366 days rather than the usual 365 days. You might have noticed that Christmas creeps forward one day of the week each year. If you divide 365 days in a year by 7 days in a week, you get 52 weeks in a year with one day left over. On leap year, the remainder is two, so Christmas creeps forward two days rather one day in a leap year. For example, if Christmas was on a Wednesday last year, it will be on Friday this year since this is a leap year.

The Jews adjust for the difference between lunar and solar years by adding what's called a **leap month**

about every three years. Christians also use a lunar formula to calculate the date for our Easter. It's the first Sunday after the full moon that follows the spring (vernal) equinox. That equinox is roughly March 21st and indicates when daylight and darkness are the same period of time (twelve hours each). That explains why the date for Easter jumps around from year to year.

The formula differs from the Jewish one for Passover but is similar. The Jewish calendar ends up always putting Passover during the full moon. They also play around with the start of their year to keep certain holidays from conflicting with the weekly sabbath.

Now with that background, let's return to our timeline. Last time, we started with Jesus' final return to Jerusalem. He raised Lazarus from the dead and fled to Ephraim. Shortly thereafter, He started His daily visits to the temple followed by evening retreats apparently to Bethany – just the other side of the Mount of Olives.

Abib 8 (six days before Passover)

- He arrived at Bethany for a supper. Notice now we are starting our days with evenings.
- His feet were anointed by Mary of Bethany.

Abib 9

- A crowd gathered in Jerusalem to see Jesus and the risen Lazarus.
- The chief priests discussed killing Lazarus.
- Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem
- Jesus cleansed the temple

Abib 10

- Jesus cursed the fig tree
- Jesus cleansed the temple a second consecutive day.
- The chief priests and Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus.

We will pick up our timeline there.

Mark 11

*[19] And when **even**[ing] **was come**, he went out of the city.*

*[20] And **in the morning**, as they passed by, they saw **the fig tree dried** up from the roots.*

Evening started a new day. That would be Abib 11. The fig tree that He cursed was on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem (v. 12). So, He likely spent the night in Bethany and was returning in the morning to the temple in Jerusalem for His daily teaching (John 19:47a).

[27] And they [returned] to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there c[a]me to him

*the chief priests,
and the scribes,
and the elders,*

[28] And sa[id] []to him,

By what authority do [you do] these things?

and who gave [you] this authority to do these things?

These things likely included teaching in the temple with authority, healing the sick, and cleansing the temple.

The religious leaders tried to trap Him with these questions. He turned the tables on them and asked them a question that would trap them. He **then** proceeded with parables and entered into exchanges with the religious leaders and politicians called Herodians.

In Matthew 23, He tore into the scribes and Pharisees with an extended tirade that heaped insult upon insult. He called them hypocrites, whitewashed tombs, serpents, and a generation of vipers. He implied that they were going to hell and then stormed out of the temple. If their blood wasn't boiling with hatred toward Him before, it certainly was after that. Clearly, He was provoking them. He knew exactly what He was doing as His time to be sacrificed drew ever nearer.

With that prelude, Jesus then proceeded to give the Olivet Discourse to His disciples. Matthew chapters 24 and 25 provide the most complete record of that discourse which also appears in Mark 13 and Luke 21. There we will find prophesy of events that involve the Jews both near term and in our future. It contains difficult teaching. We will address that teaching in future messages. But now we need to wrap things up.

Application

Today, we looked at times and seasons. We're all bound by time. That's how we experience life – moment after moment. God made the seasons – spring, summer, fall, and winter – **each** with its own beauty and majesty. Our lives can be viewed in a similar way.

Youth	Spring	a time of learning, growing, and blossoming.
Young adulthood	Summer	we start out on our own with high hopes for a bright future
Middle age	Fall	we take on leadership positions and grapple with reality
Senior years	Winter	share wisdom and time with others as we face physical decline

Regardless of what season of life we are in, the only way to make it really count is to let God empower and direct us through His Holy Spirit and His Word.

We started off today reading the account of how God created **light** and then created **light** sources to make His universe work and to guide man. By observing those heavenly **lights**, man could measure time and even navigate the seas.

Interestingly, just as the Bible **begins** with accounts of **day** and **night**,
the **sun** and the **moon**,
and **light** for the earth,
the Bible **ends** with accounts of those same things.

[1] *And I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**:
for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;
and there was **no more sea**.*

[2] *And I John saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

What is more beautiful than that? What is more perfectly and meticulously prepared than a bride? John is describing something breathtakingly magnificent.

[23] *And the city had no need of
the sun,
neither of **the moon**, to shine in it:
for the **glory of God did lighten** it,
and **the Lamb is the light thereof**.*

[25] *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by **day**:
for there shall be **no night** there.*

Jesus is the light of the world – yesterday, today, and forever. His Spirit and Word are our guides into all truth if we simply follow them.

John 8

[12] *... Jesus ... sa[id], I am the **light** of the world:
he that follow[s] me shall not walk in **darkness**,
but shall have the **light** of life.*

Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)