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RIGHTEOUS REBEL

Is there a time God acted later than you thought appropriate? Did you wait for Him anyway?

How does waiting on God affect you?

When God did act, how did you respond?

Jeremiah 23:5 – The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

1) **It's the Perfect Time...**

Sometimes we say God's timing is perfect and mean He made us wait almost longer than we could stand. Most of us can't help it. We see the world from our point of view. It felt late to us. From God's perspective, He tried over and over but we wouldn't listen. We blew off all the prophets sent to guide us. We weren't ready to receive our Savior. We were intent on figuring it out on our own until it was obvious we were too far gone. Now's the moment! It's the perfect time and God knows it. He sends Jesus precisely when the condition of our heart is open to the possibility. We have followed our deceitful heart, been numbed by the pleasures of the world, and have denied we were ever wrong. Mired in misery, we are ready for a new leader.

DECEMBER 21ST, 2025

♦**Doubters gonna doubt**: Not everyone is ready. Doubters gonna doubt. Some of us are desperate beyond doubt. We feel the emptiness of a life selfishly chasing peace and prosperity. We know what it is to experience the highest highs only to return to the lows. We see the damage done to those all around us by the systems that reward immorality. “The days are surely coming, says the Lord (Jeremiah 23:5),” because He has never wavered in His commitment to justice. God builds our faith in the quiet desperation of our necessity. We need Him to be the God of our stories.

♦**The great hope**: God’s prophets haven’t told the story we want to hear. We want good guys and bad guys. We want evildoers—surely not us!—to be punished in all kinds of creative ways while the good guy spits out hilarious one-liners. We want a cultural tour de force that makes life fun and easy. No more temptation, patience with idiots, or need for self-denial. This is why God had to wait. It takes a long, miserable time for us to accept the great hope God sends, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch (v5).”

II) For a Rebellion...

Human history is the story of people working together for the common good until it gets too good. Then we turn against each other in every imaginable way. We divide into groups, each believing the half-truth turned lie that the other groups are evil. The groups out of power decide it’s time for a rebellion. Many of us fantasize that the rebellion will restore simpler times without anything to fight over. If this appeals to you, Jesus is your rebel.

♦**Show takeover**: Over time, civilization has decided the fairest and most just form of government is representative. More people sharing power will ensure no one’s needs are neglected. While it solves many problems of human government, it does not cure the fundamental issue with our sinful ways. In the end, our deceitful hearts will always justify illegitimate desires and tip the scale toward inequality. We need a Savior for a show takeover of the whole system. We need God’s perfect representative who “shall reign as king (v5),” abandoning frail and flawed systems in favor of pure justice for all.

♦**Give the people what they want**: We have trained our minds to equate ways that maximize personal gain at any cost with wisdom. Instead, these cause personal and communal strife. Even when we recognize true wisdom, we do not have the self-control to use it. We need a king who will “deal wisely (v5)” with us. We need a king who will give the people what they want, a leader who will show the way and provide the fortitude for us to make it to the abundant life.

III) Of Righteousness...

We don’t need another system that rewards those in power at the expense of everyone else. The rebellion we need is one of righteousness. One that restores a sense of honor to each of us by causing us to perceive an overwhelming sense of dignity in everyone else. A rebellion that drives us to act like the royal heirs we are. A people chosen to dispense the hope, joy, and goodness of life generously on behalf of our Creator. A people eager to go to others wherever they are to show the lengths of love to which Jesus will go.

♦**Keep it real**: A rebellion of justice sounds great to those who believe themselves on the right side of justice. Many of us do. We can explain everything we have done that could be counted against us. It wasn’t our fault. It was justified. As though our fate is determined by what others do to us. Let’s keep it real, we are accountable for our behavior no matter our circumstances. Salvation arrives in the form of a Forgiving King who “shall execute justice (v5),” by giving each of us the chance to reject our worldly ways and follow Him. Desperate faith rewarded.

♦**Put things back in order**: We have got so wrapped around the axel from the world spinning faster everyday that we don’t know what side is up. Our plans to restore righteousness start with removing our enemies. So do theirs. It’s the vicious cycle of destruction. Jesus will execute “righteousness in the land (v5)” by laying down His arms to embrace all who want peace. It’s the only way. We can’t love each other while terrified and threatened. Jesus put things back in order starting with love. We will too if we are ready to follow the Righteous Rebel.