

**Galatians 4: 4 and 5; “The Fullness of the Time”, Message # 24 in the series –
“Christ has Made us Free”, Conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on the
evening of May 28th, 2014, at the church.**

Why was Christ sent into the world at the particular time that He was? Why not sooner? Why not later? That is the subject under consideration tonight. Our text states that it was because there was a certain “fullness of time” which the Father saw was the right time to send His only-begotten Son into the world. This, in His mind, was the perfect time. I believe that we can see from this text that 3 considerations were ever evident to His holy mind, even from before the foundation of the world. And He would have us to know what they were. 1st of all – When the Father sent the Son into the world He considered what fallen mankind really needed. 2nd – When the Father sent the Son into the world He considered what men had done with His holy law. And 3rd – When the Father sent the Son into the world He considered His own loving purpose, to redeem a people and to adopt all those who would receive His Son.

1st of all – When the Father sent the Son into the world He considered what fallen mankind really needed.

Verse 4 says, “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were born under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Let us consider this phrase, “born of a woman”. It is very important to our being saved, and to our being able to witness the truth of the gospel to other people around us, that we remember that it was Adam who brought all mankind into a state of being fallen sinners, way back at the beginning of the world. It was Adam who was the first man; and although God created him without sin, his disobedience as the Federal (Representative) Head of our race, has brought us all into the terrible predicament of our being born into the world as sinners who need to be redeemed and adopted by God. Let’s talk about our nature and our birth in relation to Adam for just a few minutes. Turn with me, back to Genesis 2, verse 7. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” We see here that Adam was not born of a woman. He was formed by the immediate creative handiwork of God. He was formed out of the dust of the ground, and he was created in the image and likeness of God. That formation of Adam out of the dust of the ground was the creation of his body; and in giving him the breath of life, Adam became a living being. Now let’s think together about how God made man’s spirit; his mind and His spiritual heart. Genesis 1, verses 26 and 27. “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’” “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Now, you can see the purpose of God in the creation of the first man and the first woman. It was so that they would be image-bearers of God Himself; that they would reflect His glory and represent His righteous and holy character here upon the earth. He created them for His own good pleasure and for His own glory. He created them to be able to stand in their own created natural and spiritual righteousness; that was, to do and keep the one good commandment that He gave to them. Genesis 2: 16 – “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” This was not the moral law in all of its particulars that was given to Adam. It was a simple positive commandment. For the “law” was already written on Adam’s heart; that is, that is that in his very nature he had already been given a mind, and affections, and a free will to do whatever God commanded him. But his obedience

would be tested and proved to both God and to himself by his keeping this commandment. The commandment that given to him, as I have said before, was positive; that is, that even though it was not an essentially moral thing in itself to abstain from eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that Adam would refrain from doing so simply because God said so, and he would obey God out of that love and righteous desire that he already had in his heart for the One who had made him; the One who had given him the spiritual blessings of fellowship and communion with Himself in the garden.

We know the rest of this early story in this history don't we? The serpent came into the garden and tempted Eve and deceived her into thinking that she would become wise. Eve thought it perfectly legitimate to become wise, and so thought to make up her own mind about whether she would eat from this tree. Satan had falsely promised her that she would not die, but rather become like God, and so she ate and gave some to her husband and he ate, and they both died spiritually immediately, and sin entered into their very nature. Now turn over to Genesis 5: 1. "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam." "In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God." "He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created." "And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." You can see that God calls Adam and Eve "mankind". Both were created in His image and likeness, but after they fell from their original righteousness, they had a child who was begotten in Adam's own likeness. But now Adam's nature was fallen, and so Seth and all other children born into this world have the likeness of Adam's sinnership stamped upon their nature. And they grow up confirming the fact that they are sinners by committing their own sins against God. All mankind are under the judgment and condemnation of God because of Adam's sin. And all of those who are in Adam are also "in the flesh" when it comes to trying to do what pleases God. Their mind and their heart do not want God by nature, and they think to be able to please God in their own strength. Turn with me to Romans 8: 5. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God' for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

What was God's response to carnally minded men who were at enmity to Him? Well, it was given in promise form in Genesis 3: 15 – "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." The enmity that is spoken of here in this verse is that which exists in the hearts of those who do not know the Lord and who are antagonistic to Christ and gospel; those who belong to Satan, to whom these words are addressed, and the Seed of the woman, which we know from Galatians 3: 16 is Christ Himself. Why did God wait so long to send His only-begotten Son into the world? Because He wanted to show all mankind how antagonistic they are to the thought that they need to be saved from their sins. All mankind by nature think that if they do need to be saved, that they can do it themselves. Most do not even believe that they need to be saved. But God waited a long time, even 4,000 years later, to send His Son, and He would be born of a woman; the virgin Mary. He began the outworking of the history of redemption with a promise of Christ, and He expected Adam and Eve to believe in it then, and He expects all mankind to believe in it now, or perish. In the fullness of time He would send His Son, who was begotten in eternity past, to become the Savior of the World. In His incarnation, He would take upon Himself human nature, and in that nature, He would suffer, bleed, and die for the sins of each one who would believe in Him. He would suffer in a perfect human nature, so that your nature could be changed; so that you might come to know and have the free gift of eternal life; so that you might not be condemned for your sins, or die in your sins, or perish everlastingly in your sins.

2nd – When the Father sent the Son into the world He considered what men had done with His holy law.

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law...” We have seen that God waited 4,000 years from the creation to send His Son because after that long a time His purposes would best be fulfilled, to show the contrast between the sinfulness and darkness in the nature of man, and the sinlessness and righteousness of the Son of God. The realization of this difference would not at all of itself guarantee that anyone in particular would be saved, but it would set the stage for God’s glorious work of redeeming His people through His own dear Son to come to be at exactly the time that He thought best. It was and it is essential in God’s holy mind, that the darkness of man’s nature in Adam be shown for what it really is. This was one of the grand purposes for which God gave His holy law, and had His Son born under it. Romans 3: 19 and 20 – “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” So God gave His holy law to Moses to give to the children of Israel, but none could be justified by it. They could only be found guilty by it. The conclusion that God intended them to come to was that they could only be justified through another way which God provided. Verses 21-26 – “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.” “For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

You can see here that the law and the Prophets both witnessed to righteousness of God being intrinsically and meritoriously found in Jesus Christ our Lord alone, not in any other man. The righteousness of God is apart from the law, even though witnessed to by the law. That means that no man can be saved by trying to keep the works of the law. A sinful man or woman can only be justified, or declared righteous, freely by God’s grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Salvation is the gift of God, it is not of works lest any should boast. Look at verse 27 of Romans 3. “Where is boasting then?” “It is excluded.” “By what law?” “Of works?” “No, but by the law of faith.” Who and what is the sinner’s faith placed in? It is placed in the propitiation which has been made by Jesus Christ our Lord. A propitiation is two things really. It is a wrath-removing sacrifice. And it is a mercy-seat where the sinner may come and find forgiveness for all of their sins and a perfect righteousness with which they may be clothed. Thus God’s righteous justice is satisfied and the sinner can be saved. This was all done by God in the fullness of time. Christ being born under the law satisfied for all our sins and unrighteousness, and His righteousness is imputed to us when we first believe in Him, and it covers us and clothes us all the days of our earthly life. And thus God’s love also comes to be sensed and known by every Christian trusting in Christ. 1st John 4: 14-16. “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.” “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.” “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us.” “God is love, and he who abides in God, and God in Him. This leads us to our final thought on these verses:

3rd - When the Father sent the Son into the world He considered His own loving purpose, to redeem a people and to adopt all those who would receive His Son.

God's purpose was, as it says in verse 5 – “To redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” I like what Joseph Benson says in his commentary on this verse – He says on the phrase - “to redeem them that were under the law” – “Christ redeemed them from the curse of it, which He bore in their stead, and from that low, servile state in which they were before; and that He might bring them into a happy liberty from any future obligation to observe its ceremonial institutions.” “It must be observed, however, that the apostle had not only the Jews in his view here, but the Gentiles also, as is evident from Galatians 4: 8, where they are addressed in particular.” “The law from which all are redeemed, or bought off, was not the law of Moses alone, but the law of nature, as a rule of justification.” “From both these laws, with the religious institutions attached to them, Christ hath redeemed mankind (I would say “elect mankind”) by his death, that he might place them under the gracious dispensation of his gospel.” “That we – Whether Jews or Gentiles, who believe; might receive the adoption of sons – Might stand related to God, not only as His people, His true and spiritual worshippers, His subjects and His servants, but also as His sons and daughters; might be peculiarly near and dear to him; made partakers of His nature, favored with His special guidance, protection, and care; might have continual liberty of access to Him and intercourse with Him; might have all our wants, ghostly and bodily, supplied by Him here, and might be constituted joint heirs with his beloved Son of the heavenly inheritance hereafter.”

In closing I want you to see and understand that when Paul says that God sent forth His Son to redeem those who were under the law, that all Mankind has been under the law, in one sense or another, ever since the beginning of the world; Adam and all the Gentiles under the broken Covenant of Works, their lying under the law of a fallen human nature which always tries to justify itself in the sight of God if they do not believe in the promise of God. And the Jews under the broken Covenant of Works; they were not able to justify themselves by the works of the law of Moses. But our text says, “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” The “we” here are all the elect Jews and Gentiles who will trust in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation, and not trust to ceremonial works of the law of Moses, or the ceremonial ordinances of a church which teaches sacramental salvation. It is faith in Christ and His finished work which we preach, so that they might be justified before God and receive the adoption as sons. The fullness of time was the time when the Jews had come to their full height of trying to be justified by their own works. Romans 10: 3 and 4 – “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” This is what every person must submit to, in order to be saved.