

“....in the fullness of time...”

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son...

Galatians 4:4 KJV

But when, in God's plan, the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son...

Galatians 4:4 Amp

During the Christmas season, the verse above is one that is often part of a passage we read aloud during the service. Five of those words impacted me last Christmas and I have reflected on those five words for some time now. Those five words—**“in the fullness of time”**— combine for so many rich applications for anyone, anytime, anywhere, under nearly any circumstances.

The short Galatians passage is filled with insight for those who are set on learning our Father's ways. Not just what the Bible tells us of his plans for his Kingdom, which includes every part of his created universe, but also his plans for you and for me personally in our journey on planet earth as a member of that vast and eternal Kingdom.

First, we should look at the context of Paul's statement. What he was telling the people in Galatia was that God's plan was in the immediate process of taking a major shift in its direction. It was time to end the long period that was represented as a time of bondage and legalism for the people of God. It was a time that was so major in God's shift of direction that the only person who could have orchestrated the change through his sacrificial death for all the sins of the world, was his only son—the Lord Jesus Christ. And **“in the fullness of time”** became **Now!**

It's always interesting for those of us who are bound by time, to try and comprehend how an eternal, timeless God, who is ever present in time, can function outside the framework of time, and be always on time with those interactions that produce his purpose on behalf of his creation.

To bring it into a practical focus, it was **“in the fullness of time”** • that the Apostle Paul was confronted on the road to Damascus, • that Hudson Taylor was compelled to take the gospel to China with powerful results, • that Johannes Gutenberg developed the first printing press that ultimately led to the publication of God's Word which would become the largest selling book in all of history, • that the 20th century would flood the world with antibiotics that save the lives of millions, • that centuries of agricultural developments, machines, and technology would feed the majority of inhabitants of planet earth, • that the simple development of the wheel would become a major player in world travel from the carriage to the automobile to trains and planes, • that the development of communication signals would explode in a very short time with radio, television, and satellites proclaiming the gospel to nearly every part of our planet, bringing with it cell phones and social media connecting masses of people, • that in May 1948 the nation of Israel would again be recognized. The list is endless, but it would be foolish to not see our sovereign

God “in the moment” of every impacting activity, bringing it about—“in the fullness of time.”

And lest we leave it all in such a universal landscape, how might we bring our personal God into the tangible application of his working in our own lives and in the lives of our marriage, our children, our friends, and yes, even those who have brought pain and suffering into the intimate areas of our lives? We are reminded of the personal connection we have with our God and Father, who through His Word assured us of his timely care....

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.¹

He keeps every promise forever. He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners, opens the eyes of the blind, and lifts up those who are weighed down. He protects the foreigners among us and cares for the orphans and widows...²

Who provides food for the ravens when their young cry out to God and wander about in hunger?³

...you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on....⁴

He gives food to every living thing. His faithful love endures forever.⁵

...if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.⁶

And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?⁷

And how could we overlook the many individuals in Hebrews 11—God’s Hall of Fame, when “in the fullness of time”...

Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God

Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying

Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood

Abraham obeyed without knowing where he was going

Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and old

Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed Joseph’s sons

Joseph forgave his brothers and supplied food to all his family

Moses led the people through the Red Sea on dry ground

Israel marched around Jericho and the walls came crashing down

Rahab gave a friendly welcome to the spies of Israel

Paul was confronted and blinded on his way to Damascus

Judas would betray the Lord for a few pieces of silver

Jesus would die, go to his grave, and be resurrected by our Father

A day is coming when our gracious Father will unfold the pages of time in generations and seasons for his children to see how every person, event, and outcome had its purpose

“in the fullness of time.” Whatever you may be going through right now, has its purpose. God will provide what is right for every need.

In whatever way God may be testing your patience, guiding you through a period of long-suffering, testing your faith as you trust him on behalf of a friend, a spouse, a family member, a rebellious child, a sudden financial need, or calling on him to intervene in the affairs of our nation. **“In the fullness of time”** prayers are answered.

Your gracious, loving Father is fully aware of any situation you face. I would encourage you to take a moment to remind your heart—this too shall pass, **“in the fullness of time.”** The favor of God rests upon you.

In Jesus name, we press on!

- 1 1 Peter 5:7
- 2 Psalm 146:6-9 (selected)
- 3 Job 38:41
- 4 Philippians 4:15
- 5 Psalm 136:25
- 6 1 Timothy 6:8
- 7 Luke 12:28