

The Birth of Christ in the Fullness of Time

Galatians 4:4–5 (NKJV)

**⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

- ***“But when the fullness of time had come ...” – Often when we think of the birth of Christ, we may contemplate the wonder of the virgin birth, or the awe of the angelic visitation the shepherds experienced. However, there is another amazing aspect to consider—God’s perfect timing.***
- ***“But when the fullness of time had come” – The Greek word for “fullness” means “the totality of a period of time with the implication of proper completion; full measure; full contents such as ship that has been filled not only with its cargo but also all the crew.”***
- ***The Greek word for “time” used in Galatians 4:4 is “chronos” which speaks about sequential time where one event follows another. Our English word chronometer is derived from “chronos,” or as we now call it—watch or clock.***
- ***So when the Scripture says, “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,” it is referring to, among other things, a sequence of events that needed to take place and be fulfilled before the birth of Christ could take place.***

1 Peter 1:18–20 (NKJV)

¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

²⁰He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

- ***“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days” – In the foreknowledge of God, He foresaw the sinful choices man would make and foreordained the birth of His Son Jesus “in these last days” to redeem mankind.***
- ***From this Scripture it is clear that Jesus Christ’s birth was not an afterthought on the part of God, it was His plan of salvation before time began.***

- *The question is this: “Why didn't God send Jesus Christ immediately after the fall of man instead of waiting almost 4000 years?”*
- *The first thing to recognize is that in the context of our present life span, 4000 years seems a very long time, but in the context of Adam’s life span, which was almost 1000 years, it would be only four life spans.*
- *However, another factor in understanding why Jesus Christ’s birth did not occur immediately after the fall of mankind is to consider the phrase “but when the fullness of time had come.”*
- *It is clear from Scripture that a number of things had to happen and very specific things had to be in place in order for Jesus Christ to be born.*
- *The numerous detailed prophecies found in the Old Testament from the circumstances of His miraculous birth to His earthly ministry to His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection could only be fulfilled at a specific time in history, in a specific location, and involve specific people.*
- *We can learn something very important from the phrase, “but when the fullness of time had come” that will give us insights into how important our choices really are. These insights will challenge us to a deeper spiritual walk.*

Mark 1:1–3 (NKJV)

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.”

³“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.’ ”

- *Mark is quoting from Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 in reference to John the Baptist’s ministry which was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ’s ministry.*
- *John the Baptist’s birth occurred six months before Jesus Christ’s birth. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, preparing His way. John was one of those people whom God put in place in order to bring about the fullness of time.*
- *One thing that many Christians take for granted and fail to recognize regarding the life and ministry of John the Baptist is this—he still had the freedom to choose if he would follow the call of God on his life.*

- *There are many tragic examples in the Bible where God called men and women for special and wonderful purposes, but they failed to respond, so He did not choose them, "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14 NKJV).*

Ezekiel 33:11 (NKJV)

¹¹Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

1 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV)

⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- *We must always interpret Scripture from a godly perspective, correctly understanding the character of God, otherwise we will develop erroneous conclusions.*
- *Both Ezekiel 33:11 and 1 Timothy 2:4 are just a small sampling of the many Scriptures that express God's heart of love and His desire that no one perish, but that all would turn to Him to be saved.*
- *God has given each person free choice.*
- *If God has given free choice to all mankind, then one may think God has taken a great risk, because things may not work out as He would have planned.*
- *However, the amazing thing about God's sovereignty is that He is so sovereign that He can give man free choice and His plans will still be fulfilled. As Job stated, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted." (Job 42:2).*
- *People do not have free will, but free choice.*
- *Free will would mean that people have the power and authority to choose and carry out whatever they want to do.*
- *Our choices will not cause God's plans to fail, but our choices can cause us to fail!*

Romans 9:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."

- *Some Christians mistakenly believe that God created Pharaoh and placed him as the ruler over Egypt simply to destroy him by bringing judgment on him and all of Egypt.*
- *In reality, God created Pharaoh and placed him as the ruler over Egypt in order, “that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”*
- *There were two ways in which God could be glorified by Pharaoh as ruler of Egypt.*
- *Pharaoh, the king of the great empire of Egypt, could have humbled himself before the God of Israel, confessed the greatness of God, and released the children of Israel. All the earth would have heard about this and glorified the God of Israel.*
- *The entire world would have thought, “How great is the God of Israel that even Pharaoh himself bowed to Him.”*
- *Sadly, Pharaoh chose to rebel against God. As a result, the entire earth heard about God’s judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt, and trembled and glorified the God of Israel.*
- *God would be glorified regardless of Pharaoh’s choice.*
- *God completed the process Pharaoh himself initiated through Pharaoh’s own choice.*
- *Nebuchadnezzar is an example of a great ruler who was initially arrogant, but later he humbled himself before God and even wrote a decree to the great empire of Babylon declaring the greatness of the God of Israel.*
- *As Believers, we have a choice to make. Our lives can glorify God’s name in this world, or we can become an example of a Believer who brings disrepute to God’s name by resisting God’s grace.*
- *Negative examples, though representing a great loss to the person, can motivate us as powerfully as positive examples.*
- *When Scripture says “but when the fullness of time had come” in reference to Christ’s birth, it is not speaking only about the immediate circumstances. It*

also speaks about those faithful men and women, who through the generations, had come into agreement with the will of God to see it fulfilled.

1 Corinthians 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.

- *God calls believers “His fellow workers,” implying that we have an important role to play in seeing the will of God fulfilled—not only in our lives, but even upon the whole earth!*

Genesis 1:26 (NKJV)

26 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.”

- *“let them have dominion over ... all the earth” – When God created man, He gave him authority over all the earth.*
- *When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the authority they had been given. However, Jesus won back man’s position of authority.*
- *Jesus said, “Behold, I have given you authority...over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.” (Luke 10:19, ESV).*
- *Now, the authority over the earth does not lie with God or Satan, but with man. God has given believers authority over Satan because of Jesus Christ’s victory.*
- *Although God gave man authority over the earth it does not mean that God created man with the power to fulfill anything he wishes.*
- *Power would be the ability and strength to carry out everything one desires to do. Man is a limited, created being, meant to rely on God’s power and strength.*
- *However, God has given us the authority to choose who will rule our lives and whose will will be done in our lives.*
- *When we pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” it is an act of agreement as we exercise our authority to see God’s power released in our lives and in the circumstances around us.*
- *Throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation we see that God is searching for men and women who are willing to put their faith in God and allow themselves to be used for the glory of God, “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” (2 Chronicles 16:9).*

Genesis 22:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—

¹⁷blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

- *Abraham’s act of obedience and faith by offering up Isaac his son to God resulted in God’s promise: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”*
- *Abraham’s willingness to agree with God’s will resulted in the Kingdom of Heaven being manifested on the earth and God’s plan of salvation being made manifest to all mankind.*

Galatians 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

- *Abraham exercised his authority as Isaac’s father when he offered up Isaac his son. Prophetically, he opened the door so God could use His offspring to bring salvation to all mankind. It was through Isaac’s descendants that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born into the world.*
- *God was looking for a man who would be willing to submit his own will to the will of God, so God’s plan of salvation could be fulfilled.*
- *When Abraham gave Isaac to God, he in fact gave his offspring to God, so that God had the right to have His Son, Jesus Christ, incarnated as a man through the seed of Abraham to die for our sins. That is why God said, “because you have done this thing all the nations of the earth will be blessed.”*
- *Abraham was one of those people who made it possible for “the fullness of time” to arrive and to usher in the birth of Christ and the resulting redemption through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection.*
- *Throughout the Bible we find stories of men and women who either chose to be part of God’s plan to bring together His plan of salvation or chose to resist.*
- *Each person who heard the call of God and responded in faith and obedience became part of the great cloud of witness co-labouring with God to see the fulfillment of His will on earth as it is already done in Heaven.*

Luke 2:25–30 (NKJV)

²⁵And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

²⁷So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,

²⁸he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

²⁹“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

³⁰For my eyes have seen Your salvation

Luke 2:36–38 (NKJV)

³⁶Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

³⁷and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

³⁸And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

- *In these verses, we observe that the birth of Jesus Christ didn't simply happen. God revealed His will to godly men and women such as Simeon and Anna, who dedicated their lives to pray and intercede in agreement with the will of God for the birth of the Messiah.*
- *Simeon and Anna spent their lives in intercession so that the fullness of time would come and the birth of Jesus the Son of God would take place.*
- *How many untold others were also praying in agreement with the will of God to see the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Messiah? We don't know their names, but their names are well known in Heaven!*

Luke 1:26–38 (NKJV)

²⁶Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

²⁹But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

³⁰Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.

³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

³³And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

³⁵And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁶Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

³⁷For with God nothing will be impossible.”

³⁸Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- *Mary is a perfect example of one who submitted to the will of God so that “the fullness of time” could come.*
- *There is a cost to submitting to the will of God, but the outcome is most glorious and is incomparable to the trifling temporal cost, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18).*
- *What costs did Mary have to face?*
- *The shame of being seen as a harlot, with the potential of being scorned by her family, divorced from Joseph, and possibly facing capital punishment. However, her response resonates with a heart of faith and obedience, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.”*
- *Once Mary agreed with the will of God for her life the angel’s task was complete and “the angel departed from her.” The last piece of the puzzle was complete for the birth of Christ and “the fullness of time had come.”*

1 John 5:14 (NKJV)

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

- *When our prayers line up with God’s will, then we will see God’s will released in our lives and those around us.*
- *When we pray according to God’s will and submit to His will, our prayers will be like well-placed arrows hitting their intended target. They will bring forth eternal results.*

- *If we submit to God's will and come into agreement with God's will in prayer, we will see God's will done in our lives.*
- *Some Christians don't seek to know God's will. Others fail to pray into God's will, even when it is revealed to them.*
- *Some Christians speak about freedom, but fail to agree with God in prayer until that freedom is fully manifest.*
- *Every revival, whether recorded in the Bible or in the history of the Church, was birthed by people surrendering to the will of God, waiting on Him, and continuing to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" until it was fulfilled.*

Acts 1:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

- *The birth of the Church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the first revival meeting of the Church, were birthed by prayer. Jesus' disciples spent ten days in prayer waiting in the Upper Room for the promise from the Father.*
- *The culmination of all the events that led up to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world were not the sole result of Abraham's faith and obedience. Many men and women prayed, interceded and obeyed during the centuries to see the will of God advance.*
- *In Scripture, we see men and women who advanced the will of God, such as Moses, Rahab, Ruth, Boaz, David, and the prophets, who all had a part to play in seeing the fulfillment of the birth of Jesus Christ.*
- *As we study the Bible, one of the many amazing things about the birth of Christ is how God has woven through the history of mankind a company of faithful men and women who submitted to the will of God and co-laboured with Him to see the fulfillment of His purposes and promises.*

Galatians 4:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

- *Just as Jesus was formed in Mary's physical body so He could be birthed into this world, Jesus is in the spirit of every born again Christian. Now His life and character must be formed in our souls so His life can be manifest to this world.*

John 9:5 (NKJV)

⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Matthew 5:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

- *As long as Jesus was in the world He was the light of the world, but now He can only shine His light through His Church—through each one of our lives.*
- *God will not change us unless we come into agreement with Him and submit to His will.*

Philippians 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

- *God's purposes will ultimately succeed, but the question is this: “Will His purpose for our lives succeed?” It is our choice whether or not we “hold fast the word of life.”*

Matthew 9:37–38 (NKJV)

³⁷Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

³⁸Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

- *Let the heart of God be manifest in us as we are touched by the suffering of those around us, so they too can experience the wonderful salvation of Christ.*
- *Let us set our hearts to continually pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” and pray into those things God has put on our hearts or those needs we see waiting to be met.*
- *Let us redouble our prayer life both personally and corporately to pray for revival and the glory of God to be manifest in our midst to bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ so many will come and find salvation and freedom.*