

# Fullness of Time

“But when the fulness of the time was come” – Galatians 4:4



When you take the time to ponder the Galatians 4:4 passage, you will find that it is one of the most profound statements made in Scripture. It is speaking about the pinnacle of all human history.

It is not speaking of some future event. Instead, we are being told there was a point in the past that was so significant and so earth-changing that it comprised the center piece of all history. It is the APEX of all time. Every past, present and future event relates to that monumental moment. Every significant event before that time led to its climax and everything that followed was, is, and will be affected by its occurrence.

It should cause us to ask questions, like . . . “What is this historic event? When did it take place? How can any single event or time-period have such seismic effects on history and on our lives individually?”

The Apostle Paul simply explains it in Galatians 4:4-5

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,<sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

However, to understand the importance of this passage and how radically it impacts us today, we need to understand a few more details.



**The impact of Adam's fall on all creation.**



**The providential hand of God moving people, armies, nations and kings.**



**The change that took place with Christ's first Advent.**

1. **Discuss the impact of Adam's fall on men and on creation. What was the earth like before and after the fall? Why did God curse the earth? What was lost in the fall?** — Romans 5:12; 8:19-22; Ecclesiastics 1:2-9; Genesis 1:28-30

Adam's fall was no small thing. It impacted everything.

**a. Death passed unto all men for all have sinned.**

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" – Romans 5:12

This is not just physical death, but it is also a spiritual death. Sin separates us from God. No longer is man conditionally holy. He is dead in trespasses and sin. No longer is man able to walk in the presence of God without a new covering of righteousness. Every aspect of life is affected.

**b. All of creation is cursed and is suffering because of man's sin.**

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, <sup>21</sup> Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" – Romans 8:19-22.

The entire world dramatically changed with the fall (Ecclesiastics 1:2-9). In other words, the fall impacted all of creation. Everything suffers because of the curse.

2. **Discuss Hebrews 2:8 in light of the "things lost" in the fall.** — Genesis 1:28; John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 5:1-9

*Replace the pronouns (his, him, he) with the proper noun in the Hebrews 2:8 passage.*

"Thou hast put all things in subjection under **his** ( man's ) feet. For in that **he** ( God ) put all in subjection under **him** ( man ), **he** ( God ) left nothing that is not put under **him** ( man ). But now we see not yet all things put under **him** ( man )" Hebrews 2:8.

Genesis 1:28 tells us that man was granted dominion before the fall.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth . . ."

**Man lost his dominion.** Hebrews 2:8 speaks of this lost dominion. Furthermore, Jesus calls Satan "the prince of this world" (John 14:30). This is confirmed in 2 Corinthians 4:4,



where he is called the “God of this world” and in Ephesians 2:2 he is called, “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” This is also supported by man’s limited ability to control nature.

**Dominion to be regained.** In Revelation 5:1-9, the Lamb of God is seen unsealing the scroll which results in Him subduing all people, nations and powers. He is reclaiming the earth. Christ, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), the Second Man (1 Cor. 15:47) will one day restore all things (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The pinnacle point of this reclamation began with Christ first coming. There, sin and death were dealt with and Satan’s works were brought to ruins (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8). The earth-shattering effects and catastrophic consequences of man’s fall were broken with the Messiah’s first appearance. When Christ, the Second Man returns, he will reclaim earth’s rule. Those that are His will rule and reign with Him for 1,000 years.

### 3. In summary, what items will the Deliverer restore?

- a. **Restore True Life:** He will provide deliverance from sin and death — Romans 6:9; 8:2; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57; John 1:4; Romans 6:23b
- b. **Restore Dominion:** He will regain the dominion that was lost — 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 5:10; 20:6; 22:5
- c. **Restore Rightful Rule:** He will destroy the works of the devil — Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8
- d. **Restore Holiness:** He will bring about righteousness and justice — Isaiah 9:6; Romans 5:17-18, 21; 8:4
- e. **Restore New Heavens and Earth:** He will free all creation from the curse caused by sin - Romans 8:19-22

### 4. Discuss the providential hand of God in Isaiah 44:28 to 45:7. In what ways did God change the course of history to bring about His will?

1. In Isaiah 44:28 to 45:7 we find the providential hand of God moving families, men, armies, governments and nations at His will.
  - a. First, we find Isaiah naming a man who is not yet born – Cyrus. This man will not become a conquering king for another 190 years. However, Isaiah is able to call this future leader by name. Furthermore, the nation He will lead is yet to become a world empire. In other words, God will orchestrate these events – right down to Cyrus’ parents naming their child.
  - b. Furthermore, Isaiah hinted that one of the nations Cyrus would conquer would be Babylon. Isaiah 45:1b says, God would “open before him (Cyrus) the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.” At the time of this prophecy these gates were not even built. They are the gates of Babylon.
  - c. Another amazing part of this prophecy is found in Isaiah 44:28. There, Isaiah predicts Cyrus will have a major role in allowing Israel to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The astonishing part of this prophecy is the fact that Jerusalem and the temple were still standing when Isaiah made this prediction. It will be another 110-120 years before Jerusalem is conquered by Babylon and eventually destroyed. Then, another 70 years

more before Cyrus conquers Babylon and allows Israel to return to Jerusalem and lay the foundation for the temple.

d. God raised Cyrus up for two prime reasons.

1) Is. 45:4 “**For Jacob my servant’s sake**, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.”

For Israel’s sake – Cyrus would return Israel to her homeland after 70 years of captivity.

2) Isaiah 45:5-7 - That all the world would know that the LORD, HE is God and there is none else.

## 5. Discuss the providential hand of God in the Daniel 9:25-26 prophecy.

Daniel predicted “that **from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem** unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (7 sabbatical weeks plus 62 sabbatical weeks = 483 years or 173,880 days) — Daniel 9:25.

Daniel also predicted that, “After threescore and two weeks **shall Messiah be cut off**, but not for himself.” That is, after 173,880 days the Messiah would be cut off — Daniel 9:26a.

**The Context:** Cyrus had just conquered Babylon — Daniel 9:1. The Darius mentioned in Daniel 9:1 is either a governor under Cyrus, or Cyrus’ son. It was after Persia’s conquest of Babylon that Daniel received the following revelation from the Lord.

- a. In this revelation Daniel was told that after 173,880 days the Messiah would be on the earth and be killed. The count down would not begin until someone made a decree for Israel to rebuild Jerusalem.
- b. That decree did not take place for another 85 years. (see Nehemiah 2:1-8 — The Spring of 445 BC).
- c. However, when the two events from Daniel’s revelation are put together (the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the 173,880 days) we come to Jesus’ His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Five days later Jesus was crucified.
- e. For all these events to come together, God must be on the throne. It shows that God’s power is without limit. It demonstrates that He is in control of all things and is restoring all things to Himself.

“Know therefore and understand, that **from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince** shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. <sup>26</sup> And **AFTER threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself**” – Daniel 9:25-26

---

### Additional details on Daniel 9

Seven weeks (7), and threescore and two weeks (62) equals sixty-nine weeks (69). The 69<sup>th</sup> week takes us “unto the Messiah the Prince.” It is after the threescore and two week period that the

Messiah is “cut off.” The meaning of the Messiah being “cut off” is a clear reference to His death, i.e. His crucifixion. The Messiah’s death comes after the 69<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel’s prophecy.

It is interesting that the Bible says that the Messiah did not die “for Himself” – Daniel 9:26b. This is again a clear reference to the fact that His death is not due to some crime on His part. The Messiah died a substitutionary death!

It is fascinating to discover that the 69<sup>th</sup> week runs out around the time of Christ’s triumphal entry. It takes us to within a few days of His crucifixion. The math of Daniel’s prophecy predicts that 173,880 days will transpire after the decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. After that, the Messiah will be cut off. The decree of Artaxerxes “to rebuild the city” is found in Nehemiah 2:1-8 and was made in the spring of 445 BC.

---

## 6. What changes took place in Christ’s first coming for Paul to call this period “the fulness of time?”

Galatians 4:4-6 tells us some of the story.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,<sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.<sup>6</sup> And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

- a. God orchestrated men, armies, kings, people and nations to bring the world to this point in time.
  - 1) Rome united most of the known world.
  - 2) Roads were built making it easier for people to travel.
  - 3) A common trade language existed.
  - 4) The Jews and the Gentiles were hungry for a Savior to appear.
- b. It was at this point in history that Jesus came into the world. Scripture says, He “was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times . . .” — 1Pet. 1:20

### With Christ’s entrance into this world

#### a. He provided redemption for His people.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” — Gal. 3:13

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” — Gal. 4:5

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” — 1 John 2:2

#### b. He made it possible for men to be reconciled to God.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were **reconciled** to God by the death of his Son, much more, being **reconciled**, we shall be saved by his life” — Rom. 5:10.

“And all things are of God, who hath **reconciled** us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto

himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye **reconciled** to God" — 2Cor. 5:18.

"And that he might **reconcile** both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" — Eph. 2:16.

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to **reconcile** all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. <sup>21</sup> And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he **reconciled**" — Col. 1:20.

### c. **Satan was defeated.**

The Genesis 3:15 prophecy was fulfilled when Christ bore our sins on the cross.

Heb 2:14 "that through death He (Christ) might **destroy** him (Satan) that had the power of death, that is, the devil"

1 John 3:8 "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the **devil**."

### d. **Sin and death no longer holds sway over all men.**

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" – 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

### e. **Jesus will one day soon restore all things.**

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. <sup>28</sup> And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" 1 Corinthians 15:25-28

### **In Summary:**

"The fullness of time has come."

It is the APEX of all time. Every past, present and future event relates to that monumental moment at Jesus' first Advent. Every significant event before that time led to its climax and everything that followed was, is, and will be affected by its occurrence.

**First**, the impact of Adam's fall on all creation.

- a. Death passed unto all men for all have sinned.
- b. All of creation was cursed and is suffering because of man's sin.
- c. The title deed of earth's rule was forfeited.

**Second**, the providential hand of God was making a way to redeem us and to restore all things.

- a. In Genesis 3:15 we were given the promise of a Deliverer who would one day come.
- b. And then in some small fashion we saw God's powerful hand providentially moving men, armies, nations and kings to bring the Deliverer into the world at the appointed time.

**Third**, the fullness of time took place.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, <sup>5</sup> To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" – Gal 4:4-5

The change that occurred with Christ's first Advent is nothing less than monumental. It is the Apex of history. The course of humanity was forever changed. Doomed men could now be saved.

**With Jesus' entrance into the world we find:**

- a. He provides deliverance from sin and death — Romans 6:9; 8:2; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57. He made it possible for all men to be reconciled to God. Sin and death no longer needs to hold sway over men. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- b. The foundation was laid for Him to regain the dominion that was lost — 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 5:10; 20:6; 22:5
- c. He destroyed the work of the devil — Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8
- d. He brings with him righteousness and justice — Isaiah 9:6; Romans 5:17-18, 21; 8:4
- e. He made it possible that one day soon all creation would be freed from the curse caused by sin - Romans 8:19-22

## 7. How does this passage apply to us?

It should cause everyone who studied this lesson to understand the reality of their human predicament in a new light.

- a. That is, if they have never received God's sole solution for sin, death and eternal life, then today they are facing the most important decision of their life.

If they have never received Christ, then they should carefully consider the evidence given from Scripture. It points to the historic changes that came upon humanity with the birth, life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. They will find that He, and He alone, is the center piece of all history. Furthermore, with Christ's first advent and work on the cross they are now facing the most important decision they will ever make. They must either receive Christ, or reject Him. Scripture is clear on this point,

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" – 1 John 5:12.

- b. God supernaturally and providentially moved all of heaven and earth to make it possible for us to be saved from our sin so we would not endure an eternity apart from Him in hell. He provided the sole solution for sin through Jesus Christ. He who is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, humbled Himself and was born among us.

"He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup> And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

d. Jesus alone is the center piece of all history.

For those who have received Christ as their Savior, they should be awed by the powerful, providential hand of God as He moved, kings, nations, armies, families and individuals throughout the ages to bring forth the Deliverer — Jesus Christ our Savior. It is God’s desire to have fellowship with us. In His foreknowledge; before the foundations of the world, He planned to redeem that which would be lost at the fall. He pulled out all the stops to reconcile the world unto himself. He provided in and through Christ, the only way to become a new creation. His desire is man’s redemption and sanctification. Through Christ we can stand blameless before Him in love and His desire is that we be to the praise of His glory.