

Fullness of Time

(Sermon Notes)

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In today's sermon we will touch on the **timing** of Christ's first coming and its fulfillment and placement in the overall Plan of God. We are so privileged to know the Plan of God which has been revealed to us so clearly in these last days. The world, not knowing the Plan of God remains in the dark – not understanding so much of God's word in the Bible. There is a veil over their eyes so that they might not see.

John 12:40 God has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should **not see** with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted...

We are privileged to see the Plan of God as it unfolds throughout the ages.

The things that God brings about **are not** the same in every age, but are progressive, happening or developing gradually or in stages; proceeding step by step. The things that God brings about are interconnected major interventions to bring about His Plan of adding God-beings to His Family.

There are many clear stages or steps in God's unfolding Plan:

Before the Beginning - the pre-Adamic period before man.

1. Before Time of Creation
2. Re-Creation – Adam made in God's image.
3. Fall of Man – man sins and therefore must die as his penalty.
4. Fullness of Time – the Savior is sent to redeem man – today's sermon.
5. Millennium – God's Kingdom established on earth – ahead of us yet.
6. Judgment – men's hearts revealed.
7. All in All – All turned over to God the Father

Each time period – Each step of the way is a reference point to God's active involvement and administration over time of His Plan in bringing about His will – which is to recreate/reproduce Himself in us. Bringing many sons and daughters to Glory.

The subject of the **fullness of time** encompasses the entire role of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures.

The fullness of time – is about the **birth** of Jesus. The fullness of time – is about **Christianity** as Jesus taught it.

The fullness of time – is about Christ's crucifixion and what it accomplished.

The fullness of time – is about the institution of the **Church** of God.

The fullness of time – is about Jesus Christ, the Savior, being sent to **redeem** man.

The fullness of time – is about the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ to Life.

The fullness of time – is about God sending His **Spirit** to converted men.

Those things **and many more** having to do with the life of Jesus Christ...

... could not have taken place before **creation**...

... could not have taken place before **Adam and Eve**...

... could not have taken place before the **flood**...

Those days were **too early** for Christ to come.

Those things ...

...could not have taken place at the time of the millennium...

...could not have taken place at the Great White Throne Judgment.

That would be **way too late** for Jesus' first coming.

God sent Jesus into the world at the pivotal point of His Plan. Jesus came at the exact right time within the Plan of God in the **fullness of time**.

God speaks of times and dispensations. They are important!

Galatians 4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

Galatians 4:2 But, he is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Galatians 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Mankind needed the **hope** of salvation and the hope of the **resurrection**.

We find the **title** of today's sermon in verse four:

Galatians 4:4 But when the **fullness of the time** was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Jesus Christ was sent the first time at the perfect time, the decisive moment to fulfill God's Plan.

That is what the "Fullness of the Time" means.

The "Fullness of the Time" is a somewhat difficult phrase to understand unless you think of it in the context of the overall Plan of God.

For example we find **fullness** or **fully**, Greek [*pleroma*] or a form of the word, [pronounced, play-ro-mah] meaning "filled to completion" when a Holy Day has its **fulfillment** in time. Example:

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was "**fully**" come,

'Fully' means to implenish completely, that is, **fill up** for the first time, to finally accomplish. "**Fully** come," means that the Feast of the Lord was finding its fulfillment on that very day.

In the same way, the term, "Fullness of the Time" means that all the prophecies of the Messiah coming to this earth were finding their fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh.

"Made under the law" (Galatians 4:4) means that Jesus was subject to all the same laws of nature that apply to common man. Jesus never sinned – had He sinned, He would have been under God's spiritual law which calls for the death penalty.

Hebrews 4:15 ...[Jesus] was in all points tempted like as we are, **yet without sin**.

Had He sinned, Jesus would have died for His own sin – and not ours. We would be without hope. Christ was not "born under the law," in the sense that He was duty-bound to keep all of the ceremonies, washings, and sacrifices. However, He was "made under law."

To be "under law" means to be subject to the condemnation of the law, which comes into action when one sins. Jesus Christ clearly never sinned, but nonetheless He was "under law" when He was crucified, and all of mankind's sins were laid upon Him, and He paid the death penalty which the law required.

Christ was caused to be "under law," under the condemnation of the law, when He accepted the death penalty for all of our sins.

We need to understand that Jesus, **in the flesh**, accomplished what Adam failed to do. Jesus **overcame** the world (John 16:33).

Romans 8:3 What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of **sinful flesh**, and for sin, **condemned sin** in the flesh:

Jesus **became sin** and was condemned to death in **our** place.

2Corinthians 5:21 For [God the Father] has accounted [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Galatians 4:4 declares that God the Father sent His Son when "**the time had fully come.**" ...Had fully arrived.

So, what does the phrase, "fullness of the time" refer to? God in His wisdom knew before the heavens and earth were created that man would be a sinful being. Without God's Spirit in him, man would be utterly incapable of remaining sinless. The Savior would be the atoning sacrifice that would pay for the sins of the world.

It was a foregone conclusion that some day—in the **fullness of time**—Jesus would be sent to the world to die for the sins of mankind, because only Jesus Christ, the creator of all things, was worthy to pay the price of all sin and iniquity. How is that possible?

The answer is that he who creates something is always worth more than that which he gave rise to. Just as an artist is worth more than the picture he has painted, Jesus is greater than all of the combined creation.

So God knew before the beginning that it would become necessary to send a Savior who would atone for the sins of man that he might be delivered from the penalty of sin.

When we look at the meaning of the Scriptural phrase, the **fullness of time**, we have come to the unique day in the Plan of God, the fulcrum—the pivotal point—upon which all other events revolve. Jesus, Immanuel (God with us) - the Son of God, was born into our human realm.

We are being delivered from this evil world—which was God's Plan from the very beginning. We are being redeemed as the literal Children of God—embraced into true son-ship (as Jesus is the Son) in the very Family of God.

God **brought about** the **fulfillment** of all the messianic prophecies of Jesus' first coming – because only God knows the end from the beginning.

God the Father ordained from **before** the beginning – before man was created, exactly when Christ would be born, at the right place and the right time – in "**the fullness of time.**"

Many people in the world read this verse to mean that history and culture had come to the point where the Gospel could finally be preached, received, accepted, and dispersed throughout all nations by the masses. They believe that somehow God in all His power and wisdom was somehow subject to the whims of mankind. They think, 'horrors,' Jesus had to come as **a Jew** in order to be at the right place at the right time. The world wishes that Jesus was anything but a Jew. Christ's coming when world conditions warranted it, is not what this term "**fullness of the time was come**" or "the time was fully come" is speaking about. It was not that circumstances were finally ideal for the Messiah to come on the scene.

Yes, God builds on the foundation He has laid in previous ages, but “**fully come,**” refers to the fact that a major part of God’s Plan had not yet been given to mankind prior to Jesus’ first coming. God knew the timing and steps He would take utterly from the foundation of the world.

Galatians 4:4 declares that God the Father sent His Son when the time was right, when the: **fullness of the time** was come, “the time had **fully come.**”

The **Fullness of Time** is about Jesus Christ, the Savior, being sent to redeem man.

Galatians 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Galatians 4:6 And because **you are sons** [not adopted children], God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Galatians 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 4:8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

Galatians 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

All mankind needs to be redeemed and reconciled to God.

God the Father sent Jesus to mankind according to their purpose set forth from the foundation of the world. When the proper time in the Plan of God came, Jesus was sent to this earth in the flesh to begin the process of making it possible for all men to be reconciled to God the Father.

It is necessary that man be restored to a right relationship with God after the sin of Adam separated all mankind from His presence (Romans 5:12, Isaiah 59:2).

Jesus was born of a woman in the same sinful flesh in which we all exist.

We saw in Galatians 4:4 that Christ was born: **Made of a woman:**

God stresses the **full** humanity of Jesus on earth. A lot of people think that Jesus was above it all – above the fray – but He was fully as enmeshed in humanity as we are.

Luke 1:27 [Jesus was born] To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. [Deliverer, Savior]

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

A lot of people like to **focus on the Miracles** Jesus performed, in order to raise Him far above the humanity we are a part of. God the Father worked the **miracles** – not Jesus.

John 14:10 ...the Father that dwells in me, **He doeth the works.**

We are going to delve extensively into Ephesians. Let's go over to Ephesians where Paul speaks of our part in the **Plan of God**.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **to the saints** which are at Ephesus, and to the **faithful** [that is us] in Christ Jesus:

Ephesians 1:2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the **God and Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Notice the timing of the origin of God's Plan for us:

Ephesians 1:4 According as He hath chosen us in Him [as His children] **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless in His sight in love:

Paul is speaking of **God's eternal Plan** for the ages, and we see that it was established and settled "before the foundation of the world."

God determined to choose a people – the saints – prior to the sin of Adam and Eve.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children

(pronounced hwee-ho-thees-ee-a in the Greek), [*'uihotesia'* – sons of God] by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Again we are not "adopted" but literally first case **sons** and daughters of God.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Ephesians 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the **mystery** of His will [the Plan of God], according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in His sovereign will: (J.B. Phillips translation in part)

God did what He had Planned to do, and He made known to us the **secret** Plan He had already decided to complete by means of Christ.

Matthew 13:34-35 All these things spoke Jesus... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been **kept secret** from the foundation of the world.

God the Father has revealed His long held secret Plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ. God's Plan is centered in Jesus Christ.

Fullness of time (singular), and **Fullness of times** (plural).

We need to be careful not to confuse two very **similar** looking and sounding steps or dispensation in the Plan of God given in the Scriptures.

The **fullness of time** [singular], as was mentioned, takes place at the very middle time-frame of God's Plan with the first coming of Jesus Christ.

Now we will see the other term:

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the **fullness of times** (pl.) He might gather together [future tense] in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

It is very similar – the **fullness of times** (plural) which has to do with the entire Plan of God, in all of its phases, but especially as it takes place at the time of the end of this earth with the coming of the new heavens and new earth (2Peter 3:11-13).

What does Paul mean by "the fullness of **times**"? J.B. Phillips' translation has this as: "That all human history should be consummated in Christ..."

God is assuring us that He will bring His Plan of redemption to its ultimate fruition and conclusion "in the fullness of the times." Paul has told us in the opening verse of Ephesians that God has an **eternal Plan**.

Here he is telling us when and under what circumstances God's Plan will be brought to completion. Paul is speaking collectively of all the different steps that God utilizes in His Plan for the salvation of mankind - "the fullness of **times**."

Jesus Christ was sent the first time at the perfect, decisive moment of God's Plan – in the "**fullness of time** (sing.)."

Now (in verse 10) Paul tells us here that "in the dispensation of the "**fullness of times** (pl.)" God the Father might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

Paul is very precise here in distinguishing between the "fullness of time (sing.)," and the "fullness of times (pl.)."

The first has to do with Christ coming in the flesh and establishing the **New Covenant** for His Church.

The second phrase has to do with the entire Plan of God and the final step and ultimate fulfillment of His Plan – the fruit that comes from the work of God (John 6:29) in bringing many sons to glory.

The "dispensation of the "fullness of time" encompasses the first coming of Jesus, born to a woman.

The dispensation of the "fullness of **times**" is not yet complete in that it includes the yet future administrations or steps in which everything will come under the spiritual purview and rule of Jesus Christ.

That final step in the Plan of God will not be complete until the conclusion of the Great White Throne Judgment. Then, Jesus will deliver the entire creation from the bondage of sin and corruption. We do not see that happening yet because it is still in the far off future.

When God speaks of these **times** – it behooves us to be able to distinguish between the two – otherwise God would not have gone to the trouble of mentioning them in the context of His Plan for mankind!

Then, Jesus will come the second time, in glory, to deliver the entire creation from the bondage of sin and corruption.

Paul includes us – the saints – in the "Fullness of Times." In fact the entire Plan of God **is about us!**

Ephesians 1:11 In whom also **we** have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated [*'proorizo'* – predetermined, ordained beforehand] according to the purpose [*'prothesis'* – a setting forth before God] of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

In the Greek that little section would read: Pro-or-id-zo kata pro-thee-see-is. It is sort of poetic and catchy (in Greek) in that it rolls off your tongue. Paul likes to employ onomatopoeia – an old Spokesman Club Word for rhetorical, dramatic, or poetic effect.

The phrase, Pro-or-id-zo kata pro-thee-see-is, means that we are privileged to be among those that have obtained an eternal inheritance that God himself determined prior to the foundation of the world (:4).

Ephesians 1:12 That **we** should be to the praise of His **glory**, who first trusted in Christ.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the **praise of His glory**.

...A reference to the day of our resurrection when we will become **glorified** spirit beings.

Hebrews 2:10 For it became him [God the Father], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, **in bringing many sons unto glory**...

This Plan, which God will complete in the **fullness of times**, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

All things are done according to God's Plan and decision; and God chose **us** to be His own Children in unity with Christ because of His own Plan, based on what He had decided from the very beginning.

More on Glory and the Plan of God:

1Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

1Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1Peter 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you,

1Peter 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1Peter 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

1Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

1Peter 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

1Peter 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

1Peter 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

1Peter 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and **the glory that should follow**.

Jesus prayed the night before He died:

John 17:5 And now, O Father, **glorify** thou me with thine own self with the **glory** which I had with thee before the world was.

Brethren, God's Plan is that we **too**, partake of that **glory**.

There is a great wrapping up and sorting out as we await the return of Jesus Christ - which has begun right now. Though many groups expend all their time and energy in preaching the Gospel to the

world - which would not be wrong in itself - except they neglect the care and feeding of the flock - going so far as to mistreat and abuse many of the true saints.

There will be a short time that God calls **Jacob's trouble** to sort those out who do not understand what Jesus brought in the **Fullness of Time** – and that is Christianity – not what so many practice each week!

What is this "trouble" that befalls the last of the people of Jacob - or as we prefer, Israel? We assume our understanding of end-time events is correct! We also assume that, we will not lose our understanding through deception.

God is sorting out - He is being merciful to the churches to the nth degree. God is allowing people to declare where they stand in His sight - whether in the **righteousness of Christ**, or in the **authority** of church organizations.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Matthew 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Matthew 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false christs/messiahs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Matthew 24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

Matthew 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:28 For where so ever the carcass [spiritually dead] is, there will the eagles [buzzards] be gathered together.

In addition to the circling of buzzards being a symbol of God's judgment of shame, a circling of buzzards also indicates a diseased spiritual condition. Buzzards are probably at the top of the list of unclean and hated birds because buzzards represent death and decay!

God the Father determined, according to His Master Plan, when the time was right for His Son to come to earth as man.

Revelation 13:8 says that the Lamb (Jesus Christ) was slain "from the foundation of the world."

This world, is the world apart from God, and that world was founded when Adam and Eve sinned. When sin entered into God's creation, given God's **Plan** and **purpose** for mankind to be made into His image, it was necessary that there be a method of reconciliation between man and God. This reconciliation was only possible through the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

Notice **how far back** the **timing** goes to the origin of God's Plan for us:

Ephesians 1:4 According as He hath chosen **us** in Him [as His children] **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless in His sight in love:

Paul is speaking of **God's eternal Plan** for the ages, and we see that it was established and settled "before the foundation of the world."

End: Fullness of Time