

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sermon: The Fullness of The Time Pt 3

Topic: Working out His Plan

Scripture Text: Galatians 4:4–7

12/17/2017

“At Christmas many things are opened by mistake; none more than the mouth.”

Galatians 4:4–7 (NKJV) ⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Last week we left off at about a little less than 100 years before the birth of Jesus the Christ. While still in the Intertestamental period we are approaching the fullness of time for Jesus to come. It is sometimes called the silent years

This period is known by members of the Protestant community as the "400 Silent Years" because it is believed to have been a span where [God](#) revealed nothing new to his people.[\[1\]](#)

It is said that many of the [Deuterocanonical \(belonging to the second canon\) authoritative scripture](#)), accepted as scripture by [Roman Catholicism](#) and [Eastern Orthodoxy](#) respectively, were written during this time. This is also the time when many “falsely –attributed” works were produced.

An understanding of the events of the Intertestamental period provides context for the New Testament. The very first lesson I want us to understand is that just because we do not hear or see what God is doing it does not mean that God is not working. He is a God that neither slumbers nor sleeps. (*Psalm 121:4*). God is always working out His Plan.

I mentioned this last week that God will act in His fullness of time for us for He cares for us.

1 Peter 5:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

The Intertestamental period began after Israel began coming out of exile from Babylon ruled then by the Meds and Persians, and began rebuilding Jerusalem and the wall under the leadership of Nehemiah. The last recorded prophet is Malachi.

Reviewing some of the books written during and about that period we can see the unmistakable intervention of God for His people. During that time the people needed a savior to fight for them and God rose up the Maccabees and the Hasmonean family to successfully revolt against the desecration of the temple by the Greek, Antiochus IV. (Called the Jewish War). This ushered in the Hasmonean Kingdom (140 – 37 BC).

Then the Roman Empire began to become prominent on the scene starting about 63 BC.

Simon Maccabaeus' great-grandsons, became pawns in a [proxy war](#) between [Julius Caesar](#) (death 44BCE) and [Pompey the Great](#). The related [Roman civil wars](#) temporarily relaxed Rome's grip on the Hasmonean kingdom. This short independence was rapidly crushed by the Romans under [Mark Antony](#) and [Octavian](#).

[Julius Caesar](#) appointed Antipater to be [procurator](#) of Judea in 47 BCE and he appointed his sons [Phasael](#) and [Herod](#) to be governors of [Jerusalem](#) and [Galilee](#) respectively. Antipater was murdered in 43 BCE; however, his sons managed to hold the reins of power and were elevated to the rank of tetrarchs in 41 BCE by [Mark Antony](#).

Tetrarch – any ruler of a fourth part, division, etc., 2. a subordinate, one of four joint rulers or chiefs. The ruler of the fourth part of a country or province in ancient the Rome Empire.

It has taken me some time to get here but we now enter the Christmas story and the fullness of time.

During the 400 years between the Testaments God was preparing to send a savior. We see in *Matthew 1:12–17* (Responsive Reading) that the lineage of Joseph is spelled out verifying the legal birth claim of Jesus to the throne of David.

Matthew list the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph to establish the legal claim to the throne as the “Son of David” (list 40 names beginning with Abraham)

Matthew 1:12–17 (NKJV) 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. 14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Genealogy through Mary is listed in *Luke 3:23–38* and has 75 names from Adam.

Once again, we see that God is working out His Plan.

After the fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom Rome replaced it with the Herodian Kingdom lead by Herod the Great (37 or 47BC – 1 AD).

The Roman Empire was ruled by Augustus (Caesar), the nephew of Julius Caesar, from around 27 BC – 14AD

Luke 2:1 (NKJV) 1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee an Edomite (offspring of Esau) and as the ruler of Judea, did not want his kingdom challenged because he knew the kingdom did not rightly belong to him (not in the line of David), so he planned to have Jesus killed. God sent an angel to warn Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt. (*Matthew 2:13–15*).

He was the same Herod that began the rebuilding of the Temple. This period marks the beginning of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Herod then orders the [Massacre of the Innocents](#) at the time of the [birth of Jesus](#).

Matthew 2:16–18 (NKJV) 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.”

We are now in the heart of the Christmas story. I hope we all have a greater understanding of how we got here.

The fullness of time has come; here are just a few things in place at this time that fits in with God’s Plan

- The known world has a common language, Greek.
- There was a lot of written material that could be decimated over the years.
- The Roman roads were very instrumental to travel and the spreading of the Gospel
- Mixed cultures enabled easier cross-cultural evangelism.
- The faith grew in face of persecution.
- The good examples set by Christians.
- Existing military and trade routes meant relatively easy access to large numbers of people.
- Rome produced a certain economic and political stability.

END

Message Scriptures: Galatians 4:4–7, Psalm 121:4, 1 Peter 5:6–7, Matthew 1:12–17 , Matthew 1:12–17 ,
Luke 2:1 , Matthew 2:16–18 ,