



In The Fullness Of Time



It was no accident

God's plan unfolded exactly as it
needed to (Acts 2:23, 4:28).

In The Fullness Of Time

- Galatians 4:1-7
- It was the right time for the Son of God to come in the form of a man and become the sacrifice for all mankind.
- The phrase “the fullness of time” leads us to some questions, though. What was it about the first century that was suitable for the greatest event in human history? What conditions existed that made it the perfect time for the Gospel?

In The Fullness Of Time

- Take a step back and see how the great plan unfolded from age to age:
 - A need is identified (Gen. 3:14-15)
 - But revelation was limited because of other immediate concerns, such as populating the earth (Gen. 9:1ff).
 - It was necessary for humanity to grasp the basic concepts of truth and error. The tendency was for everybody to do what they wanted (Gen. 8:21). Truth was revealed as humanity was able to understand it.

In The Fullness Of Time

- The Law was a necessary next step. It codified truth and error. Humanity's ability to record and read its experiences made this possible.
- But it was not the end goal. It was a teacher that led humanity to something greater (Gal. 3:19-24).
- The Law taught humanity about the extent of its sins. It clarified and illuminated what was always right and wrong (Rom. 7:7ff).

In The Fullness Of Time

- The Law made it clear that people cannot save themselves by right action. They cannot earn salvation or achieve it by merit (Eph. 2:1-19).
 - It was weak (Rom. 8:1-4)
 - It was limited (Heb. 10:1-4)
 - It intensified our knowledge of sin (Rom. 7:13)
 - It was, however, necessary!
- Truth needed to be revealed in a progressive manner, to show the unfolding nature of God's will (Exodus 6:2-4, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ephesians 3:1ff, Habakkuk 2:2-3, Mark 1:15).



At The Right Time

Romans 5:6 notes that Christ died at “the right time.” So what was it about that time period that made it ideally suited to bear the Gospel?

At The Right Time

- The Romans – Unequaled up to that time in commerce, communication, and relative safety. Most earlier empires lasted only a few generations, with periods of upheaval.
- Language – Koine (common) Greek was familiar and uniform, well-suited to be written, and exact beyond our own language.
- Social situation – There were almost as many slaves in Rome as there were free citizens (Rom. 6:16-18). They were, however, often more talented, educated, and skilled than their Roman masters. They represented a literate, unpretentious population, eager to hear the gospel.

At The Right Time

- Morality was not connected to religion, so Christianity was all the more intriguing and revolutionary
- Contempt for life – Abortion, suicide, and divorce were quite common. The bloodlust in the arena was also an indication of Rome's low estimation of human worth. Consider just how much such people had to change (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- Acceptance – For political reasons, Rome allowed religious freedom throughout the provinces. This made it possible for Christians to present the Gospel while being somewhat protected by the “law and order” that the Romans craved.

At The Right Time

- First Century Jews – The people longed for substance in their religious experience (Matt. 7:28-29). They flocked to John's message of repentance (Matt. 3:1-6). There was also a heightened sense of messianic expectation (Luke 3:15ff).
- The Diaspora – There was a built-in “starting point” for evangelism in every community around the known world.
- The Gentiles – There was no doubt that the Gentiles were a willing and ready audience for the Gospel (Mark 7:26, Matt. 12:15-21, Acts 10).