

Galatians Chapter 4 v 4&5

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 December 2014

Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 0 0] into the world. And we're going to read from Galatians 3 and from verse 15 through to chapter 4 and verse 7.

And it's the verses in chapter 4 which are the most appropriate for us and we're thinking about, but it's good again, as always, when we come to God's Word to give a sense of context as to where we are.

So Galatians 3, beginning at verse 15. Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The scripture does not say, and to seeds, meaning many people, but and to your seed, meaning one person who is Christ.

What I mean is this. The law introduced 430 years later does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.

[1 : 1 1] For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise, but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. What then was the purpose of the law?

It was added because of transgressions until the seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

A mediator, however, does not represent just one party, but God is one. Is the law therefore opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not.

For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin.

So that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.

[2 : 1 3] So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

You are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.

For you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. What I'm saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave.

Although he owns the whole estate, he is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.

But when the time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

[3 : 20] Because you are sons, God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts. The spirit who calls out, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son.

And since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. So in Galatians 4, and the verses particularly that I want us to be considering are those verses in verse 4 and following.

But when the time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Timing is very important in all aspects of life. If you're simply baking a cake, it requires accurate timing. Take a cake out of the oven too soon, and as they say in Bake Off, you'll have a soggy bottom.

And if you leave it in the oven too long, it'll become burnt and hard and a bit inedible. Timing is important when you drive your car. As soon as you turn the key, very precise timing comes into play.

[4 : 46] It tells the spark plug when to fire, when to ignite the fuel in the cylinder. Even if it's just a hundredth of a second out, it can cause the car either to run badly, or with loss of power, or fuel economy, and so on.

In all areas of life, timing matters to each one of us. There was no more important occasion that demanded the perfect timing than the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No event depended so much upon split-second timing for its success than the coming of the Son of God into the world. For here, Paul writes, but when the time had fully come, God sent his Son.

And that phrase illuminates for us the marvel and the wonder of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ to Mary in Bethlehem. Born of a woman, born under the law.

Well, what does Paul mean by this phrase? Particularly this phrase, which is when the time had fully come. What does it mean about the Lord Jesus?

[5 : 54] But what does it mean to us as well? What's the application? Has this something to say to us? Clearly it does, because we're told that the outcome of his being born in that perfect time is our redemption, salvation, our reconciliation with God.

Our being brought into his family and made his sons and heirs. And the first thing that this speaks of, surely, it speaks of culmination.

The culmination of time. When everything that had gone before had reached its climax. When the time had fully come. When everything that needed to happen had taken place.

Then at the end, as it were, of this great build-up. This great gathering of time. When everything had happened as it should have happened. The greatest fulfillment in the history of the world took place.

Christ entered the world. Jesus himself recognized the very truth of this fact in his own ministry and life. We're told in Mark chapter 1, right at the beginning.

[7 : 04] Jesus' first ministry was this. To proclaim the good news. The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near.

From the moment God spoke creation into being. All of time was building up for this one. Sorry, I haven't got my radio mic on, so I'm going to have to stand here.

That's not easy to do. All of time was building up to this one moment in history. When the great creator God himself would step down from heaven.

Into a human being. And everything that has happened from creation to that time. Was looking forward to. And expecting.

In one sense, the whole of history and the whole of heaven. Were on the edge of their seats. Because something was happening and coming. Which was the fullness.

- [8 : 01] The culmination. Of all that was happening around about. The word that we have here. Which is translated in English. Fully come. Is a word that's used.
- Paul has stolen it in one sense. Or used it from. From a nautical term. It speaks about when a ship. Is at port. And all of the cargo on board.
- All of the crew on board. And it's about to set sail. It's fully loaded. Now's the time. For it to set off. I don't know if you remember watching the Krypton Factor.
- Those years ago. You can watch it on. Challenge. Or some other freebie. Channel now. But the Krypton Factor. There was always this. This intelligence round. With a puzzle.
- Wasn't it? It was either like. You had to build a pyramid from parts. Or a large jigsaw. Whatever it was. And it was always very complicated. And difficult. And some of the contestants. Just couldn't get the pieces together.
- [8 : 58] In the right order. But the ones who could. Did it a bit. No. Took it down. Did it a bit. Took it down. Only when everything was in place. Only things when. They'd come in their correct sequence.
- And order. Then the challenge. Was completed. And so it is again. Through all. Of the scriptures. And through all of history. The pieces.
- Have been put. In place. When the time. Had fully come. Everything. But you know. The wonderful truth. Is this.
- That your. Entrance into this world. And my. Entrance into the world. Was also according. To God's. Timing. Think. Acts.
- In chapter 17. In verse 26. Paul is preaching. To the Athenians. On the Areopagus. And he reminds them. Of this truth. Verse 26. About God. From one man.
- [9 : 54] God made. Every nation of men. That they should inhabit. The whole earth. And then he says. This extraordinary thing. And he determined. The times. Set for them. And the exact places.
- Where they should live. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that wonderful? I wonder if like me. You're somebody. Who loves history. And as you look at history.
- You think. Well. Wouldn't I have loved to live. In that day. Or that age. In that period. When so much was going on. But the truth is. That you and I. Are here now.
- And we are here now. In this day and generation. Because this is where. We're meant to be living. This is where God. Has placed us. He's placed us. In this day and generation.
- And he's placed us. In this place. It's not by chance. Or accident. But in God's. Perfect timing. That you have born.
- [10 : 50] Into this world. And if we would accept that. If we would acknowledge. That this life. We've been given. Is given to us. By God. And the place. We've been given.
- And the very. Time that we've been born. Then we would recognize. That life is purposeful. We only have this time.
- Dear friends. We only have this one life. Given to us by God. We have no other time. Than this. So there's a sense here. With.
- With the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a culmination. Of God's. Wonderful. Timing. Now if that's the case.
- And of course. We can't help but understand. That when Paul speaks about. When the time had fully come. We understand that there must have been. Consideration. It's the culmination.
- [11 : 43] But it's the culmination. Of God's consideration. It's the culmination. Of his plan. It's not an. Haphazard thing. That Christ came into the world. When he did.

It wasn't just by. Chance. That it should have been. On that particular. Occasion. Then. When the world was in that place. God had appointed a time. When he would send his son. Into the world.

He'd made a plan. He'd set out a purpose. A time scale. A time table. For the coming of. The Lord Jesus Christ.

And it was. Before the world was made. Here's Peter. As he writes. In his first letter. He. That's Jesus. Was chosen. Before the creation. Of the world.

But was revealed. In these last times. For. Our. Sake. The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into the world.

[12 : 39] Was not a human decision. It wasn't. Because. It was some. Last minute rescue plan. By God. Because he saw the world. Was in chaos.

And he had to. At last. Do something about it. Everything. That happened. In the birth of Christ. Was according to the plan. Of God. Exactly as he determined. To send his son.

Into the world. At this. Glorious sense. In which. Before the world. Was made. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. Together.

Conspired. In their perfect unity. That there should be. A salvation. For men. And women. And boys. And girls. To be brought. Into this world.

God. And in that plan. And in that purpose. And in that. In that glorious. Rescue. The son of God. Would have to come.

[13 : 33] Into the world. Born of a woman. Born under the law. To redeem those. Under the law. Exactly as God. Determined. That's exactly.

How it happened. And again. We can reflect. A little bit of that. In our own lives. We can understand. Something from. God's word. About ourselves.

That. Our birth. And coming into this world. In God's timing. Was actually part of his planning. Our parents. May not have planned. To have had us.

Just at the time. When we were born. In fact. We may have been told. As children. Or even now. That we were an accident. Perhaps even told. We were unwanted. But it was no accident.

From God's point of view. There's not chance. There's not. Accidents. It was plan. And purpose. The Bible makes it very clear. That God knew. Every single one of us.

[14 : 28] Before the world was made. We were known to him. Of our existence. Is due to his foreknowledge of us. Here's Peter again. As he writes. To the Christians. Those of you.

Who've been chosen. He's talking to God's elect. Strangers in the world. Blah. Those of you. Who've been chosen. According to the foreknowledge. Of God. The father. Here's Paul.

As he writes. The Ephesians. For he chose us. In Christ. Before the creation. Of the world. To be holy. And blameless. In his sight. In love. He predestined us. To be adopted. As his sons.

There's something. Very specific. About that. Throughout the scriptures. We're faced with this glorious mystery. Which we can't comprehend.

But we know. Has to be true. Because God has said it. That he knew you and I. Before the world was made. He knew. What we would be like. He knew all about us.

[15 : 26] And yet in his love. And his grace. And his mercy. He chose to save us. Dear friends. Your life. Is part of God's plan.

For this world. You are not. As I said even this morning. Again. How important. We grasp this. You are not a number. You're a name.

To God. You're not just one of six. Or seven billion people. On the planet. Or however many billion people. Have lived through history. You are a name. You are known. You are planned.

By God. To come into this world. To live in this world. To be part of his kingdom. To be part of his purpose. For now. There is nothing accidental.

Nothing coincidental. About your life. If that's the case. As it truly is. That this is the culmination. Of time.

[16 : 25] And this is. The coming together. And the. Of God's plan. The consideration. Of his plan. Then surely. It must be. That clearly. We understand.

From this phrase. That there is some control. Being exercised. By God. Control. Being exercised. It shows. That all of history. And all the events. Of human existence.

Have always been under the sovereign. Rule. And government. Of God's. He's the one. That has brought. History and time. To this point. He's the one. That's brought about.

The fulfillment. Of all of his. Promises. He's in control. Here's again. What the Bible declares. About the Lord. Our God. Verse 11. Of Ephesians 1.

Speaking about. Our salvation. In him. We were also chosen. Having been predestined. According to the plan. Of him. Who works out. Everything. In conformity.

[17 : 18] With the purpose. Of his will. Astonishing. Who works out. Everything. In conformity. With the purpose. Of his will.

We've seen. There's a purpose. Of his will. Well now. We see that. He is the one. Who conforms it. Everything. He controls. Everything. God didn't sort of. Set a time. Or make a plan.

That the son of God. Would come. When everything. Sort of. Happened to. Fixed together. When the stars. Were in alignment. Or whatever he might say. Or when certain. Circumstances. Were just right. You know what it's like.

That's how we do things. Isn't it? We say to one another. Well next week. When the weather's right. And the tide's right. We'll get down the beach. You know. But of course. Inevitably. The tide.

And the weather. Don't happen to coincide. Or our plans. We think. Well then this is right. And that is right. Then we can do it. No. God didn't sort of. Wait for things to. Flow together. And hope that by chance. At just the right time.

[18 : 15] No. From the start. Every moment in time. God has been directing. Overseeing. Working. Manufacturing.

In that sense. God is a hands on. Rolled up sleeves. Type of God. God. He leaves nothing to chance.

Nothing to the whim. Of sinful men and women. In fact. Wonderfully. In spite of sinful men and women. And in one sense. In spite of themselves. God uses them to serve his own purposes.

We see that in life of Joseph. Don't we? With his brothers. That wonderful passage there. In Genesis chapter 50. Where Joseph speaks to his evil brothers. And sent him into slavery.

You intended to harm me. But God intended it. For good. We're in Exodus. And Sunday mornings. At least we will be again. After the new year.

[19 : 12] And what do we learn? We've learned about Pharaoh. This evil king. Here's what God has to say to him. Later on. He says. I have raised you up. For this very purpose.

That I might show you my power. And that my name. Might be proclaimed. In all the earth. Pharaoh who is determined. Not to believe in God. And who is this God? Who is this Lord?

Yet God declares. I've raised you up. For a purpose. In spite of yourself. In spite of your. Animosity towards me. And your wicked actions. Against my people. I've raised you up. That I might show.

Myself. And bring glory. To my name. In this earth. And that's what we've seen. Haven't we? That the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into the world. Was under the controlling hand.

Of almighty God. All the events. Many scholars. And commentators. When they look at the events. Surrounding.

[20 : 11] When we say. The secular events. Surrounding. The Lord Jesus. They see that this was the perfect time. For the Messiah to come. There was one united world. Under the Roman Empire. Pax Romana.

So there was peace. There was freedom of travel. Along newly made roads. Throughout the empire. There was one language. Greek. Which was known. And spread. And everything else.

It was the perfect time. But God knew all that. And so astonishingly. Amazingly. And wonderfully. We can say.

Not only do the events. Of the scriptures. That we read here. Point to the fact. That God was sovereign. In the way he was working. Through his people. But the way he was working. In the whole.

Of the world. It wasn't Julius Caesar. Who had the idea. Of a kingdom. Of Pax Romana. It wasn't the idea. Of Alexander the Great.

[21 : 06] To get in place. One Greek language. So that the. The scriptures. Could be written. In the language. That everybody understood. It wasn't the idea. Of the. The manager.

Of general works. On the Roman road. Working committee. That he should make. Straight roads. Between all the cities. God was over all that. And the wonderful thing.

Is this. That this God. Who is over all things. For the salvation. Of his people. And the bringing about. Of his purposes. And the culmination. Of his plans. Is the same God.

Who works in all things. For our good. Who has worked in all things. To bring us to himself. The reason. That you are a Christian. This evening. Is because God.

In his grace. And his mercy. Was at work. In your lives. Manufacturing. And engineering. And shaping. What was happening. To you. In such a way. That he might bring you.

[22 : 00] To that place. Where he might save you. David. Writes in Psalm 31. The glorious comfort. And truth. That my times. Are in your hands. He says.

My times. Are in your hands. Doesn't just mean. That the timing. Of my life. Is in your hands. But every part. Of the time. Of my life. Is in your hands. And we can see. That in the wonderful way. That God saved people.

In the book of Acts. Think about the salvation. Of Cornelius. That Roman soldier. That Roman centurion. What happened to him. Well. Wonderfully.

God. Worked. Roman. Acts. In chapter 10. You. If you read the whole story. Then you'll get the gist of it. But. He is just a part. Of what he says. To Peter.

When he arrives. He tells Peter. Four days ago. I was in my house. Praying. At this hour. At three in the afternoon. Suddenly. A man in shining clothes. Stood before me.

[22 : 54] And said. Cornelius. God has heard your prayer. And remembered your gifts. To the poor. Send to Joppa. For Simon. Who's called Peter. He's a guest. In the home of Simon. The Tanner. Who lives by the sea.

See. So I sent for you. Immediately. He says to Peter. It was good of you to come. Now we're all here. In the presence of God. To listen to everything. The Lord has commanded you. To tell us.

God. Worked. Through his angel. To tell. Cornelius. To go. And get Peter. So that Peter. Could come and preach. The gospel to him. Later on.

In Acts 16. When. Paul is choosing. And really. Seeking to know. God's mind. About where to go. In Acts 16. We're told that. He tried to go to.

Mysia. But they couldn't get through. They tried to go to. Phrygia. But they couldn't get through. And so we're told. In verse 9. During the night. Paul had a vision. Of a man of Macedonia.

[23 : 50] Standing and begging him. Come over to Macedonia. And help us. After Paul had seen the vision. We got ready at once. To leave for Macedonia. Concluding that God. Had called us.

To preach the gospel to them. They go across to Macedonia. They go to Philippi. Lydia is converted. And many others as well. Now God may not have used an angel.

Or dreams. But he was just as instrumental. In your conversion. Who is it who sent that Sunday school teacher. Who spoke to you of the Lord Jesus.

And you'll need to put your faith in him. Who is it who sent that preacher. That evangelist. Who came. Who is it who sent that Christian work colleague. To witness to you. Or that neighbor to live next door to you.

Or the 101 things. And people that God has used. In bringing you to that place of salvation. God is in control.

[24 : 50] And so we see culmination. And we see control. And we see. That God is at work in all these things. We see that he is the one who has a considered plan.

We see here as well. Don't we. That there is a sense of completion. Different to culmination. A completion. When the time had fully come. But that I mean. It's clear that.

The coming of the Lord Jesus. Was the fulfillment of all the prophecies. And promises that God had given. It's a completion of them. Some of those prophecies.

About Jesus. And promises about the Christ. And this Messiah. Were written thousands of years. Before the Lord Jesus was born. Not just telling of a general sort of thing.

Well there's going to come this great king. One day. We don't know where. We don't know when. But there's going to come this great person. Not vague. But specific. And we particularly think about these specific prophecies.

[25 : 50] Of course around Christmas time. In Matthew's gospel. Matthew particularly likes to keep drawing our attention. To how the birth of the Lord Jesus. Was according to God's promises.

And prophecies. We read one of them just this morning. In Matthew chapter 1. Verse 22. All this took place. Matthew tells us. To fulfill what the Lord had said.

Through the prophet. The virgin will be the child. And give birth to a son. Where's that? Isaiah chapter 7. You know yourself. Verse 14. Later on. Probably next week.

We'll look at this one. Matthew chapter 2. Verse 6. For this is what the prophet has written. But you Bethlehem. In the land of Judah. Are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler.

Who will be the shepherd of my people Israel. Where is that? Micah chapter 5. Why was it that necessary? That.

[26 : 48] Quirinius. Should make. A. Censor. Censor. Of all the people. Why should he have to have this census of all the people? Well it was necessary so that Joseph could go to Bethlehem.

Why was it necessary for Joseph to go to Bethlehem? Because God had promised and said that he. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. It's a completion. How could God say such things long beforehand.

Unless he knew that he himself would fulfill and accomplish. What he had said in his word would happen. Every promise of God is faithful and true.

The coming of the Lord Jesus is the culmination and the completion of all those promises. Going back to the Garden of Eden. Going through the Exodus. Going through the kings and the judges. Going through the prophets.

Major and minor. Going through all of time. God has been saying and promising and prophesying. He would send this savior. And now in the fullness of time.

[27 : 52] Here he's come. But do you realize dear friends. If you're a Christian tonight. That you are also part of God's promise keeping. That your salvation is in keeping.

And in the fulfillment of promises that God has given throughout the Bible. Here they are. Genesis chapter 12. What did God promise to Abraham? All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Well we're some of those all peoples aren't we? Who have been blessed through Abraham. Through Abraham's seed as we read there. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah chapter 16 verse 3. Speaking of the coming savior. Nations will come to your light. Well we're one of those nations that have come. To the light of the Lord Jesus and believed on him.

Here's Jesus. His own words in John chapter 10. John chapter 10. He says I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. Meaning I have sheep that are outside of the Jewish nation.

[28 : 53] I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice. That's what you've done. You've listened to the voice of Christ. And you've come to him. And you've become part of his sheep pen. You're one of his sheep.

And that's fulfilling his word. Isn't that marvelous? As I said we're not unimportant. We're fulfilling by God's grace. The promises.

The prophecies. Of God. God made those promises. And gave those prophets those words to say.

And many more besides. Because he knew. He was confident that he could fulfill. His word. One last thing dear friends. When we think of Christ.

Coming in the fullness of time. We understand that. God was. Working to.

[29 : 53] Carry out the collection. Of his people. The collection. Jesus' birth is the coming together. Of many into one.

It's the start of God. Drawing in. Many nations. To one people. When Simeon. Held. The baby. Jesus. In Luke. In chapter. Two.

He looks up to God. And in prayer. He says. Sovereign Lord. As you have promised. You now dismiss. Your servant in peace. For my eyes. Have seen your salvation.

Which you've prepared. In the sight of. All people. A light. For revelation. To the Gentiles. And for glory. In your people. Israel. You see.

In the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Something was going to happen. That was extraordinary. Instead of him simply coming for the Jewish nation. Those who were the physical descendants of Abraham.

[30 : 50] The coming of the Lord Jesus. Was to collect in. All of God's people. From every nation. Jew and Gentile alike. To bring them into one body. Into one people. That's why we read there.

Verse 26. Of chapter 3 of Galatians. There's neither Jew or Greek. Slave or free. Male or female. You're all one in Christ. The reason that God purposed to send his son.

The reason that God planned to send his son. The reason that he brought all of time and space. As it were together. To the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Was so that he might rescue and save one people. To redeem those under the law. That we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons.

God sent the spirit of his son. Into our hearts. The spirit who calls out. Abba. Father. God did all these things for us.

[31 : 52] He worked in all these ways for our benefit. Everything was because of his great plan. Desire. Longing. Commitment.

To save sinners. What great comfort there is for us in these truths. That God sent his son in the fullness of time.

What great comfort that he knew us. Before the world was made. And yet purposed to save us. What comfort in the truth that all the promises of God.

And not just those concerning his son. But all the promises of God. Cannot fail. To be fulfilled. What glorious comfort there is in this dear friends.

If God has gone to such great length. To secure your salvation. Can you ever be lost? If God has engineered. As it were.

[32 : 50] If I can put it that way. If he has molded all of time and space. So that his son could come into the world. To redeem and rescue sinners. Can you now be lost?

Can the devil snatch you away? Can you fall and fail? But Paul tells us in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6. Being confident of this very thing.

That he who began a good work in you. Will carry it on to completion. Until the day of Christ Jesus. We have a God in whom we can put our faith.

And the very center of that faith is his son. The Lord Jesus Christ. And the very confidence we have. Is because Christ was born. In the fullness of time.

Let's sing together as we prepare. Our hearts. To consider the Lord Jesus. Our suffering savior. 217 in our hymn books.

[33 : 49] 217. Thou who was rich beyond all splendor. All for love's sake. Became as poor. We consider him who gave up the glory of heaven. To come into the world for us.

217. Family of Jesus Christ.

Family of Jesus Christ.