

## “Fullness of Time was Come” Galatians 4:4-5

### I. For 400 years God did not speak to the children of Israel

A. God’s people commanded His prophets not to prophecy. Amos 2:11-12

The people would also kill the prophets that would speak against their sin. This was a well know fact in Jesus’ day. Matt. 23:29-31; Luke 11:47 They despised God’s Words and the messengers. In Deut. 6 God had told Israel to put His words in their hearts and teach them to their children, yet they despised both God, His word, and His messengers.

B. The hearts of God’s people became hard and they would not listen. Zech. 7:8-12

The people forgot God. They lived their lives without a thought of God and His Word. They sought for pleasure and satisfaction in this life only.

*In essence, they stopped listening and God stopped talking – for 400 years!*

### II. During those 400 years, God had not forgotten His promises and was working on their behalf.

A. Conditions in Israel prior to the coming of Christ:

1. Language – Greek Language – very expressive/descriptive and known by the educated world. It was in place for the spread of the Gospel.
2. Travel – The Roman government constructed roads connecting their kingdom. It was made to move their armies swiftly. Travel was made easier for all. This infrastructure was in place for the spread of the Gospel.
3. Government – Rome ruled with an iron hand; every conquered land had similar laws, governmental rulers, and taxes. These laws protected citizens while the well-developed military kept the peace. This uniformity and peace in the known world helped in the spread of the Gospel.
4. Religion – To keep peace and protect from uprising, Rome would allow the religion of the conquered land to remain in place. The Jews were fairly free to practice their religion. Only a small group of people really trusted in God and sought for the Messiah. **Most practiced Judaism with little regard to God and His laws.**

- Places and Governing Powers of the Jewish Religion

Synagogues – Local Jewish meeting places for worship, teaching and prayer

Temple in Jerusalem – Herod’s Temple was the elaborate central location for worship supported by Rome

Sanhedrin – 70 rulers of Israel. The members were from the main religious parties, Pharisees and Sadducees.

- Religious Parties or Sects

Pharisees – resisted foreign influence and were zealous for their traditions. They were patriotic, orthodox, and in the time of Christ numbered about 6,000 in Israel. **They had their own Oral Law that they held up as equal to the Scriptures.** Jesus attacked their traditional rules and emphasized the heart rather than ceremonialism and self-righteousness.

Sadducees – did not believe in the Oral Law or an after-life. Their chief interests were in politics and not religion. **At the time of Christ, they held the chief seats in the Sanhedrin.**

Herodians – supporters of the government of the Herods. They were like the Pharisees in belief.

Zealots – were much like the Pharisees in belief but insisted on war against Rome. By the time of Christ, the party was **mostly a terrorist group** that had the support of most of the people. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was a result of activity of the Zealots.

- Messianic Hope – The Jews knew the Scriptures and the earliest of prophecies concerning their Messiah. (Gen. 3:15; 9:27). This gave them great hope in the midst of foreign rule. The contemporary writings of Josephus, Zealots, and the Pharisees expressed a **wrong understanding of a temporal king. This was openly taught as truth.**

## 5. Moral Status of Israel (which included the entire Roman Empire)

Slavery – 6 million slaves lived in the Roman Empire at the time of Christ. Slavery and slaves were a normal part of life.

Morality – Chastity and marriage were the exception. Divorce and all kinds of sexual sins were the rule.

Entertainment – Elaborate sports and games played a large part in the Roman Empire but by the time of Christ, the sacrificing of human life in the arena of entertainment was common place.

Luxury – An extravagant lifestyle was the standard for all of the Roman Empire. The Jews were not excepted from this desire. We see this in the lives of the Religious Leaders of Jesus' day.

Family/Children – Men and women lived selfish lives. A family and children were considered a great inconvenience.

B. Two Primary Ramifications of a “famine of hearing the words of the Lord”.

1. Insecurity in their position before God. – God’s chosen people

The Jews identity was found in the fact that they had received God’s Words and were God’s people. Deut. 6:4-9; 10:15 It set them apart from other nations. But they found themselves without a message from God for 400 years.

2. A hunger to hear God’s Words again.

Some did desire to hear from God again and were faithful to Him. During the time of the nativity of Christ God took special care to reveal Christ’s coming to those who were waiting for the Messiah. At least part of the overall plan was to invoke a famine of hearing the words of the Lord in order to provoke a hunger for hearing the words of the Lord again!

*“God used a silence to prepare hearts and the world for His Son.”*

**But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:4-5**

“fullness of the time” – Gk meanings – time -“actual passing of moments or a period of measured time”

“fullness” – “to make full or to fill up” The time of Jesus’ coming was not “full” until their spiritual stomachs were empty! The people were waiting for a deliver – religion and philosophies were powerless to fulfill and change lives. “Religious bankruptcy and spiritual hunger were everywhere.” Warren Wiersbe p. 565

“God sent forth his Son,” – God was preparing the world for the arrival of His Son! Do you see preexistence suggested here? Jesus was in heaven beside His Father, and God sent Him to earth. Jesus laid aside His glory and obeyed His Father.

“made of a woman,” – Here we see the humanity of Christ. The incarnation – God in the flesh. Gen. 3:15; Is. 7:14

“made under the law,” – This speaks of the subjection Jesus put Himself under. He placed His life under the Mosaic law, He followed His very own laws! He obeyed in all points!

“To redeem them that were under the law,” – The Greek word for “redeem” held special meaning to the six million slaves in the Roman Empire during the days this was written. Paul had already used this word in Gal. 3:13. It means, “to set free by paying a price”. The slave markets were everywhere, the buying and selling of slaves was as common as we sell a used car on Marketplace or Craigslist. But ever-once-in-awhile, for some reason, a slave would be bought and set free. Here we see Jesus did that transaction for all of us, who were trapped in submission to a standard of laws we could not keep. (Matt. 20:28) Heaven is not attained because we can obey the laws of God, it is given as a gift of God’s grace and mercy----that is the only way we can see Heaven. Titus 3:3-7 says this plainly, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his

mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

“that we might receive the adoption of sons.” – We move from slaves to laws we cannot keep and sin we cannot shake, to the adopted sons of God! As Paul wrote to Titus, “made heirs” to the hope of eternal life! (Rom. 8:14-17) What a wonderful Savior! What a wonderful plan! How Jesus suffered and how we benefited!

### **Application to Believers:**

1. Though God seems silent in our lives, in reality He is working for our good.

Be faithful in seeking Him in prayer and waiting on Him to do miracles for you. Rom. 8:26-28; 2 Tim.1:9

2. Do you have a hunger to hear from God? You have His Word---Read and Study it!

Sin hardens our hearts against God. Stay in His Word---seek Him with a pure heart.

Jer. 15:16; Ps. 19:7-11; 119:72; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:14