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Sermon Notes

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## **In the Fullness of Time, God Sent His Son**

### **Galatians 4:4-7**

*Galatians 4:4-7 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. <sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

## I. O For a Truly Spiritual Celebration of Christmas!

### A. Secular and Sentimental

#### 1. Christmas in Japan

- a. I remember distinctly walking through a shopping mall in Tokushima listening to Christmas carols like “Jolly Old St. Nicholas” and “Silver Bells”, seeing tons of red and green ribbons, looking at stores advertising Christmas sales and being amazed
- b. At that time, Japan was the largest single unreached people group in the world... less than 1% of the nation were Christians
- c. And yet, here were all the same sights and sounds of Christmas as in shopping malls in America
- d. Purely secular... a shopping holiday

#### 2. Christmas at Starbucks

- a. You see the same thing this year at Starbucks
- b. Last year, Starbucks infuriated many people with their minimalist red cups with the green Starbucks logo... the red cups had nothing else on them at all; in previous years, they had standard Christmas symbols like Christmas trees, wreaths, reindeer, snowflakes, poinsettia leaves, etc. But 2015’s cup was just a simple red cup

- c. The official reason given by the corporate headquarters was that it was part of an effort to “usher in the holidays with a purity of design that welcomes all our stories”
  - d. Apparently also Starbucks corporate authorities were forbidding their employees from saying “Merry Christmas” to customers
  - e. So internet evangelist Joshua Feuerstein made an anti-Starbucks video in which he pranked them in order to make them say the words “Merry Christmas”... when ordering his coffee they asked as usual “Can I get a name for your cup?”, he said his name was “Merry Christmas”... when his order was finished, they had to write “Merry Christmas” on the cup, and call out in the shop. “Merry Christmas”
  - f. This year’s “Holiday” Starbucks cup is green with a drawing of tons of people’s faces, all drawn in one line from one pen, showing unity
  - g. On and on it goes!
3. Christmas in Williamsburg... and in the Protestant colonies
- a. On the other side of the equation is the ever-popular Christmas in Williamsburg
  - b. Many of us love going to Williamsburg to get a realistic sense of what life in Colonial Virginia would have been like
  - c. Actually Christmas was illegal in Puritan New England in those days... very much in keeping with their conviction that Christmas—literally Christ’s Mass—was a Roman Catholic observance that no Protestant should keep
  - d. The Puritans in England loved to make a show of working on Christmas when the non-Puritans were playing games and drinking and celebrating; in New England, they just made it illegal
  - e. Though Christmas was not illegal in Colonial Virginia, it was nowhere near the holiday we know now... there were some balls and feasts among the wealthy... but they needed little excuse for those anyway; one observer
4. Christmas in Victorian England
- a. Many of our popular images of Christmas in merrie old England come from the Victorian era...
  - b. It may be hard for us to imagine, but at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant rejection of Christmas in England was just about total... Christmas was hardly celebrated at all; many businesses did not even

consider it a holiday... but by the end of the century, it was by far the biggest holiday of the year

- c. The change happened primarily because of the influence of Queen Victoria and her marriage to the German-born prince Albert; Albert brought many German customs to the royal family of England, including the Christmas tree, depicted in 1848 in the *Illustrated London News*... soon every home in England had a tree decorated with candles, sweets, fruit, homemade decorations, and gifts... just like the royal couple
- d. The royal couple also influenced the giving of gifts, Christmas cards and the holding of lavish feasts to celebrate the birth of Christ
- e. By the end of the century, Christmas in Victorian England was HUGE
- f. In this same era, in 1843, Charles Dickens penned his classic *A Christmas Carol*... Ebenezer Scrooge and the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future fill our minds with indelible images... none of which have anything to do with Christ
- g. Actually, the story is one of redemption of an old, hate-filled miser through repentance and reformation, but with no faith in Christ at all
- h. But the images of that era are powerful... a lot of the public depictions of Father Christmas (known to us as Santa Claus) began then

#### 5. Christmas in pagan Rome

Roman pagans first introduced the holiday of Saturnalia, a week long period of lawlessness celebrated between December 17-25. During this period, Roman courts were closed, and Roman law dictated that no one could be punished for damaging property or injuring people during the weeklong celebration. The festival began when Roman authorities chose "an enemy of the Roman people" to represent the "Lord of Misrule." Each Roman community selected a victim whom they forced to indulge in food and other physical pleasures throughout the week. At the festival's conclusion, December 25<sup>th</sup>, Roman authorities believed they were destroying the forces of darkness by brutally murdering this innocent man or woman.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity imported the Saturnalia festival hoping to take the pagan masses in with it. Christian leaders succeeded in converting to Christianity large numbers of pagans by promising them that they could continue to celebrate the Saturnalia as Christians

The problem was that there was nothing intrinsically Christian about Saturnalia. To remedy this, these Christian leaders named Saturnalia's concluding day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, to be Jesus' birthday.

Christians had little success, however, refining the practices of Saturnalia. In return for ensuring massive observance of the anniversary of the Savior's birth by assigning it to this popular date, the Church for its part quietly agreed to allow the holiday to be celebrated more or less the way it had always been.

The Puritan Pastor Increase Mather of Boston observed in 1687 that "the early Christians who first observed the Nativity on December 25 did not do so thinking that Christ was born in that Month, but because the Heathens' Saturnalia was at that time kept in Rome, and they were willing to have those Pagan Holidays metamorphosed into Christian ones." Because of its known pagan origin, Christmas was banned by the Puritans and its observance was illegal in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1681. However, Christmas was and still is celebrated by most Christians.

Many of the Christmas practices we now delight in had origins in pagan rituals and practices... including the Christmas Tree, mistletoe, Christmas presents, and the cult of St. Nicholas

Now, like meat sacrificed to idols, if the mental connection to pagan worship has been severed, then the traditions are more or less benign...

However, the overwhelming tendency toward excess, toward materialism and other forms of idolatry are a clear and present danger, quite apart from the dubious ancient roots of the Christmas tree...

The call of the gospel this morning is toward HIGHER and PURER meditations...

We need to turn away from the secular and sentimental to ...

#### B. Spiritual and Scriptural

1. Spiritual: The Holy Spirit's unique ministry: glorifying Christ
2. Scriptural: turning to the Bible to understand the truth of the incarnation
3. Doctrine: the incarnation of Jesus Christ... the greatest mystery of our faith

***John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

***John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

The more we meditate on the infinite majesty of God, the more mysterious the incarnation becomes. God is holy, infinitely high and lofty above all creation. There is nothing in all creation that we can compare to God; nothing is like him, nothing is his equal. God the Son reigned in glory with his Father before he was born. Working with the Father and the Spirit, the Son created the universe and sustains it at every moment. Heaven, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him. His power is infinite, his glory is so overwhelming that even the holy Seraphim must cover their faces in his presence. Yet this infinitely holy, powerful God laid aside all the outward trappings of glory and humbled himself to be born as a human baby.

“The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men. For one who wanted to make a display the thing would have been just to appear and dazzle the beholders. But for Him Who came to heal and to teach the way was not merely to dwell here, but to put Himself at the disposal of those who needed Him, and to be manifested according as they could bear it, not vitiating the value of the Divine appearing by exceeding their capacity to receive it.”

— Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation*

We have to celebrate this mystery by the power of the Spirit in the study of his Word. Spiritual and scriptural, not secular and sentimental. We need to ask the Spirit to expand our minds and illuminate our hearts... we need to allow the incomprehensibility of this mystery to humble us and excite us... to move on and on to every higher levels of delight in the truth that the WORD BECAME FLESH and made his dwelling among us.

That is what we get to celebrate today!

I want to focus on this marvelous passage of scripture which exalts Jesus Christ as the Savior of the World... a Savior born at just the right time, who lived the perfect life, and died in our place

## II. The Fullness of Time

***Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come...***

### A. History Has a Wise Purpose

1. Many question whether there really is any purpose to the flow of history

William Shakespeare's suicidal character Hamlet called history

"A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Henry Ford famously said

"History is BUNK!"

2. But we Christians know differently!
3. We believe that history is a magnificently complex tapestry filled with significance and meaning... a narrative first established in the sovereign mind of Almighty God before the foundation of the world and then unfolded in just the right pace and manner

***Isaiah 14:26-27 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. <sup>27</sup> For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?***

***1 Corinthians 2:7 we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.***

4. The "Alpha and the Omega"
  - a. History had a beginning and it will have an end

***Revelation 22:13 [Jesus said] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.***

Jesus IS history... ultimately he will be the centerpiece of this magnificent and complex plan that God is unfolding before our very eyes

- b. Not only the beginning and the end, but every step along the way was carefully planned by God
5. And Galatians 4 tells us that Jesus was born IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME
  - a. Like a ripe fruit... events had to occur first... the fruit couldn't be plucked from the tree early
  - b. Everything had to be done decently and in good order
  - c. So Jesus was born when God's timing was just right
  - d. The Greek word is FULLNESS or sometimes "fulfillment"
  - e. God was waiting for that right moment... many generations of Jews bitterly lamented that God had not yet sent the Son of David to rescue them from their captivity to the Gentiles... they cried out aa

*Psalm 13:1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?*

Perhaps the Jews during the terrible time of the wicked Greek king Antiochus cried out like that... when the Greeks defiled the temple and defied Almighty God with terrible blasphemies... but it was not yet the fullness of time

Many could have asked about a much earlier time

f. Men think they know when the right time is...

John Calvin: "We could ask why God delayed, when we were all lost and condemned the moment Adam fell. Why did he not give the remedy sooner? Paul however has no interest in satisfying men's curiosity... Paul therefore puts us in our place when he says that they fullness of time had not yet come. What does he mean by the 'fullness of time?' He is referring to a time which God had appointed according to his will, and not a time that man would choose, simply because men are not competent to judge the best time. We must submit to God and delight in what he has established." [Sermons on Galatians, 368]

Application: this is a sober lesson for us as well... we may be going through bitter trials and wonder why God does not answer our prayers for healing or deliverance or financial blessing. Some of our brothers and sisters in Christ are persecuted in other countries and cry out day and night for deliverance from prison and from torture... they wonder HOW LONG, O LORD! Will you forget me forever?? But God has his perfect timing, and the birth of Jesus Christ "in the fullness of time" is a clear indicator of this

#### B. Why Was That the Right Time?

1. God had a perfect timetable for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world
2. The salvation plan of God was worked out before the creation of the world
3. For centuries, God had been predicting it through the prophets...but still the people waited
4. God is very patient... it had been over five centuries from the last prophet, Malachi
5. Since that time, there had been the rise and fall of the Medo-Persian Empire, and then the rise and fall of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great and his successors... now, a new power had risen—ROME!!

6. How shall we understand “the fullness of time”? John MacArthur gives us a sense of how right the time was for the Messiah to come
- a. The time was right **religiously**: the Jews had come back from exile to Babylon and were living under Gentile domination, but had repudiated completely the idolatry that led to the exile; also, they had set up synagogues all over the Greek-Roman world where the Jewish faith was being taught...
    - i) Beyond this, there had been SUFFICIENT TIME to prove that no one could keep the Law
    - ii) Generation after generation had failed to obey the Old Covenant
    - iii) The time was right for the New Covenant
  - b. The time was right **culturally**: Alexander the Great’s conquests and his zeal for spreading Greek culture meant almost everyone in that region spoke Greek... it made the spread of the gospel much easier
  - c. The time was right **politically**: the Roman empire had risen, unifying that part of the world economically and by commerce and excellent roads; the *pax Romana* made the world a very stable place, and evangelists could travel those excellent Roman roads with a sense of security
  - d. Each of these factors contributed to the rapid spread of the gospel
- C. Everything is Planned Concerning Christ... not only his birth but his death and his resurrection

Jesus began his preaching ministry by announcing the time:

But he also said often the time had not yet come for his death

***John 7:30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.***

But then, right before his arrest, he prayed

***John 17:1 "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.***

- D. The First Coming Was “In the Fullness of Time”... The Second Coming will also be in the Fullness of Time
1. God has a timetable also for the second coming
  2. The existence of this timetable is clearly asserted:



**Acts 1:6-7** *So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.*

3. The reason for the apparent delay is plain as well:

**2 Peter 3:4** *[Scoffers] will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."*

**2 Peter 3:9-10** *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*

**2 Peter 3:15** *Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation*

4. The DELAY is for missions

**Acts 1:7-8** *He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

5. But at just the right time, he will return and put to rights all the evil in the universe!

**Ephesians 1:9-10** *And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

### III. God Sent Forth His Son

**Galatians 4:4** *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son*

A. Jesus Christ was SENT by the Father... He was a Missionary to Planet Earth

1. The Greek word here is powerful and emphatic... Jesus did not take it upon himself to enter the world... he was SENT FORTH by His Father... SENT OUT... the word speaks of the heavenly origin of Jesus

**John 3:17** *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

2. So also Jesus did everything in submission to the will and plan of the Father

***John 8:28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.***

B. The Saving Initiative Comes from the Father

1. Just as God looked with compassion on the enslaved Jews in Egypt

***Exodus 2:23-25 The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. <sup>24</sup> God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.***

2. So also God was concerned with the entire human race, enslaved to sin and to demonic forces

***Galatians 4:3 ... were in slavery under the elemental forces of the world.***

All over the world, people were in bondage, enslaved to these elemental demonic forces and we were HELPLESS

3. God looked upon us in our bondage and helped us when we were utterly helpless

***Romans 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.***

***Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.***

C. GOD SENT HIS SON

1. The Father did not send an angel... even a radiant and glorious archangel
2. He sent the best, the greatest gift he could possibly send

God said at Jesus' baptism:

***Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."***

***Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.***

***Colossians 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were***

*created by him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

***Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form***

3. The Worth and Value of the Son

***Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?***

By that logic, Jesus is worth MORE to God than ALL THINGS in the universe

IV. Born of a Woman, Born Under the Law

***Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law***

A. Here Again we Have the Mystery of the Incarnation... SON OF GOD and SON OF MAN, born of a woman

***John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

***John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

1. The focus here: born of a woman... the fulfillment of the first prophecy every uttered about Him

***Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.***

2. How Jesus could be both the Son of God and the Son of Man?

***Luke 1:30-35 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." <sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.***

How can we fully understand this? We cannot!

Mary, His mother, was fully human, and from her Jesus received His human nature... but the other 23 chromosomes that normally would have come

from a human father to make the fertilized egg that grew in her womb were miraculously supplied by God the Father

B. Jesus was “born of a woman” but not of a man... He had no human father, but was rightly called the Son of God

C. Born Under the Law

1. This is absolutely vital to our salvation
2. Jesus was a JEW... born as a descendent of Abraham... like all Jews of that time, he was born UNDER THE LAW of Moses
3. The essence of this Law was its relentless demand for total perfection!

***Romans 10:5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."***

4. The slightest breaking of the Law meant death

***1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.***

***James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.***

***Ezekiel 18:4 The soul who sins will die.***

5. The relentless nature of the Law

The Apostle Peter called the Law:

***Acts 15:10 a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear***

Charles Spurgeon on the ceremonial law: “The Jewish [nation] of old was under the yoke of the law; its sacrifices were continual and its ceremonies endless; new moons and feasts must be kept; jubilees must be observed and pilgrimages made: in fact, the yoke was too heavy for feeble flesh to bear. The law followed the Israelite into every corner, and dealt with him upon every point: it had to do with his garments, his meat, his drink, his bed, his board, and everything about him

But what about the MORAL LAW??

***Matthew 22:37-39 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'***

Jesus even took the Ten Commandments into the heart:

***Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.***

***Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.***

6. This was the relentless crushing burden of the Law... but Jesus bore this immense weight PERFECTLY!!

***Hebrews 4:15 [He] has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin.***

***John 8:29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.***

7. Jesus was like a MIGHTY SAMSON that took up the weight of the Law every day and carried it without once dropping it

***Judges 16:3 [Samson] got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.***

Louis Zamperini ["Unbroken"]

WWII American soldier interred in a Japanese POW camp was repeatedly beaten by a Japanese guard named Watanabe and tortured; one of the tortures Watanabe used was to force Louis to stand holding a six-foot long heavy wooden beam over his head, commanding another Japanese guard to beat him if he lowered the beam. Zamperini stood and held that beam steady for an astounding 37 minutes.

I picture the force of will and determination shown by that man as nothing compared to Jesus... born UNDER THE LAW... a YOKE THAT NO HUMAN BEING IN HISTORY had ever been able to bear... carrying every command of the law perfectly without wavering his entire life

This perfect record of obedience under the Law won for us a perfect righteousness that God credits to us by faith!!

Tim Keller: "Jesus lived the life we should have lived, and died the death we should have died!"

"...the Lord Christ fulfilled the whole law for us; He did not only undergo the penalty of it due unto our sins, but also yielded that perfect obedience which it did require... Christ's fulfilling of the law, in obedience unto its commands, is no

less imputed unto us for our justification than His undergoing the penalty of it is." - John Owen

## V. To Redeem Those Under the Law

***Galatians 4:4-5*** *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law*

- A. The word “redeem” fits this context PERFECTLY!! It is the word used for the deliverance of a slave by the payment of a price

***Deuteronomy 15:15*** *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you*

***1 Corinthians 6:19-20*** *You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price.*

- B. Christ redeemed us also from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us... paying the penalty we deserved for our sins

***Ephesians 1:7*** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,*

1. By Christ’s death, the Law no longer has any claim on us
2. We are BROUGHT OUT FROM UNDER the Law... by the blood of Christ

***Romans 6:14*** *For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

3. We are no longer under what once bound us... we are REDEEMED from our former tyrannical masters and have been set free!!

***Galatians 5:1*** *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*

## VI. That We Might Receive Adoption

***Galatians 4:4-7*** *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. <sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

- A. Adoption is the Most Amazing Aspect of our Salvation!
- B. Christ’s Birth Under the Law led to a Whole Life Under the Law
- C. That Whole Life Under the Law led to a Death Under the law as our substitute

- D. That Death under the Law redeemed us from the Law and opened the way for our Adoption
- E. And God SENT FORTH the Holy Spirit into our hearts... by that Spirit we know we are the children of God
- F. We are HEIRS now!!

***Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.***

- G. This is the greatest Christmas present we can imagine!!

***1 Peter 1:4 an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you***

***Genesis 15:1 "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

***Romans 4:13 Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world***

## VII. Applications

- A. Celebrate in a scriptural and spiritual way!

1. The secular and sentimental don't last
2. The physical gifts don't last
3. The fun times are a very temporary blessing
4. We are not those who live for their stomachs but for the Kingdom of Christ!
5. So rejoice! God loves celebrations and delights in pure spiritual joy
6. The Holy Spirit will enable you to celebrate today with a pure joy

- B. Meditate on the Phrases of this Passage

1. Trust in the wisdom of God's unfolding plan... how God knows the FULLNESS of time for everything... the massive huge things like the birth, death, resurrection, and second coming of Christ... but also the tiny details like when a specific sparrow dies or when a person texts some news to another person... even the very hairs of our heads are numbered, so are all our days... the FULLNESS OF TIME
2. Understand the mystery of Christ's incarnation... the infinite mystery of the baby in the manger being God the Son; though it is beyond our comprehension, we need our souls to be stretched in the meditation of it... the

humility of the birth; the majesty of it; the mixture of divine and ordinary elements... angels appearing with heavenly glow along with a normal pregnant woman's labor and delivery

3. Delight in Christ's perfect obedience to the Law... how he shouldered the Law for us so that he could hand us a different yoke... the yoke of obedience to Him by the power of the Spirit... you are FREE from the Law in its power to condemn you to hell! You are free to live out the moral law by the power of the Spirit

***Psalm 119:32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.***

4. Delight in your true wealth... not the gifts under the tree, but your status as heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ
5. Pray by the power of the Spirit... if you are redeemed, if you are a child of God, he is within you crying "Abba Father"
6. Rejoice

C. Come to Christ!

1. If you entered this church this morning as an unbeliever, I plead with you to join the worldwide celebration by faith in Christ
2. Receive the true gift of salvation this very morning! How wonderful would it be for you to look back years later and say, "I was saved on Christmas Day!"