

Galatians 4

4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

NIV - Galatians 4

4. But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5. to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

6. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

ESV – Galatians 4

4. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

5. to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

6. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Christmas 2025 Series –*Live A Merry Christmas!*

#1 – Planning For Christmas

Galatians 4:4-6.

Merry Christmas!

We hear it every year expressed in all kinds of ways:

- Songs -
 - “Have yourself a merry little Christmas!”
 - The Carpenters – “Merry Christmas, Darling”
 - Greeting cards and wrapping paper - *Merry Christmas!*
 - And of course- “***We wish You A Merry Christmas!***”
- Almost everywhere we hear, “***Merry Christmas!***”

Of course, we want all of those things for each of you!

Yet, sometimes

- It can begin to feel hollow... trite... even commercial.
- It can become more of *the same old Christmas stuff*

And, there are times that it seems **almost out of place**. Perhaps out of reach to many who are struggling, stuck, suffering... **Far from *Merry and Bright*...**

The intent is good: ***A Merry Christmas*** is **a joy filled, fulfilling, happy, enjoyable time!** We want that for people, and **Christmas gives us the opportunity** to help make those things possible.

But, as usual, there is more. **To understand where we’re going, let’s go back. Several centuries.**

“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”, a popular Christmas carol even today,

- Was written in the **16th century!** It was easily **the most popular carol, even hymn, of its day**. At the time, this song was a **fresh break from the typical, boring church music** of the time. **It was fun and upbeat**. They even danced to it!
- The message – ***the story of Jesus and Christmas*** - was a **better presentation of the Gospel of Jesus** than what was heard in most pulpits!

It caught on, and endured the passing of time.

- The **lyrics were first published in 1760.**
- The song was so well known it was **referenced in Charles Dickens's classic, *A Christmas Carol*, in 1843.**

- It remains **popular to this day**, *though most have no idea what it meant then, and even now.*

“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” – What does that even mean? Glad you asked!

“Merry”: While the word **now** means happy or joyous, in **Old English** it meant **“mighty”, “great”, “strong”**:

A strong army was a **merry army**

A great singer was a **merry singer**

A mighty ruler was a **merry ruler**.

So, if we update the translation a few centuries, the phrase would be something like - **“God make you mighty, Gentlemen”, and *the verses telling the story of Jesus reveal how!***

“Merry Christmas!” is **more than a seasonal wish for happiness.**

Our prayer this season is not merely merriness—but might: a Jesus-filled Christmas, alive with purpose, power, and wonder.

God went to great lengths to make that possibility a reality. We’ll explore, and experience a part of it the next few weeks.

Today, we begin with **an important part of Christmas: The Planning!**

Our text is not a usual Christmas passage. But – it reveals much about God’s Christmas Plans!

I. The Purpose

Before there was a plan, there was a purpose. In fact, before there was *anything*, there was a purpose in the heart and mind of God.

Peter told us that **before the foundation of the world**, God loved us, knew our need, and **had a plan** – **“redeemed... not with corruptible things... but with the precious blood of Jesus”**

The angel to Joseph:

Matthew 1:21 - And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name ***JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.***

The angels to the shepherds –

Luke 2:11 – “good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Over and Over God reveals his heart - PURPOSE!

Paul, in our text, goes right to the heart: Galatians 4 -

5. **To redeem** them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

- **Redemption!**

The word by nature – bondage. Debt. Dire need.

People: “under the law”:

Galatians – Law of Moses

Romans – Law of God

Problem: Romans 3: ***All condemned. Lost.***

Purpose Of God: To Redeem. Restore.

- **Relationship!**

Sons/children of God!

Redemption creates relationship!

The purpose was where it began, but God did not merely feel compassion. He formed a strategy. Love produced a plan.

II. The Plans

In the KJV, we don't find the words “plan” or “plans” much; We find the idea translated ***“counsel”, “thoughts”***

But Grand plans of Grace by the Architect of Everything, are revealed in many places. Here are a few – (NIV)

Ephesians 1

11. In him we were also *chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,*

12. *in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.*

Psalm 33:11

But the *plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

Jeremiah 29:11

For *I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the LORD, *“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

So- **What About God’s “Christmas Plan”?** Galatians 4 –

- 5. *“To redeem”* – Purpose!
- Then - *“that we might receive the adoption of sons.*
- 6. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Redemption then Relationship then Intimate Fellowship!

Before the beginning,

- God had a purpose – “God so loved...”, “to redeem...”
- God had a plan – the eternal plan of salvation: Jesus. Redeemer. Savior.

Then, circling back to our theme for the day, we see

III. The Preparations

Great things generally don’t just “happen”. They are usually the result of great planning and preparation. That simple truth is nowhere more profound than in the birth of Jesus.

Our Text: *“when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law”*

“when the fulness of the time was come”

- From Eternity past...

- To the creation of time “In the beginning”
- **To the moment** when the eternal creator would be born into His creation through a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem

God had been working to bring together every detail, everything needed to accomplish His purpose through Jesus!

- **The Virgin Birth** was prophesied 700 years before it happened. Isaiah 7:14 — God preparing a miracle long before Mary ever breathed.
- **The birthplace** was named centuries in advance. Micah 5:2 — Bethlehem. Small, obscure... chosen.
- God prepared **shepherds** — the least likely — to be first witnesses.
- God even **prepared the star** for the wise men. Long before Bethlehem ever lit up, the universe was being scripted to point to Jesus.

Rome – horrible, brutal... Was used by our God to provide

- A connected world
- Laws to bring a uniform environment
- Roads for messengers to travel to carry the news
- Language – pretty much universal
- **The census** that moved Mary & Joseph to Bethlehem? A pagan emperor thought he was ordering a headcount... but heaven was arranging a birthplace.

Behind the eternal production of “The Christmas Story” is Divine Mastery!

Christmas wasn’t improvised. It wasn’t accidental. Every detail was divinely prepared with you and me in mind.

IV. Our Preparations

So, as we turn our minds to Christmas, *how does knowing about God’s Christmas Plans help us as we plan for the Merry, Mighty Christmas God has made possible?*

Just a note, then I’ll give you a few simple actions...

In the story of Jesus’ birth, each person ***did their part. Made their contribution. Even paid their price.***

But – We don't know them today for what **they did** to make the story a reality. It wasn't all on them. God did that. **They didn't make Christmas; Christmas – Jesus – made them!**

We do have to respond and do our part; but as we do - find great comfort and relief to know that a mighty, merry Christmas won't be up to us, resting on our efforts – but on Him! It's His. We're His. Anything mighty and truly real will be because of Him, not us.

Christmas didn't "just happen." God planned it, His masterpiece of preparation.

If God planned Christmas for us... how can we plan and prepare this Christmas - for Him?

1. Accept the finished work of Jesus.

He did the work and offers the gift of eternal life. **We simply have to accept it.**
C.S. Lewis - *"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."*

2. Prepare our hearts for Him.

The first Christmas – Each person was called into the story for one reason: Not them, but Him. **As they responded... discovered... experienced Jesus,**

- **A birth became a "mighty" – Merry birth.**
- A Manger was transformed into a "mighty", merry altar of worship.
- People from every walk of life became heroes of grace – mighty, Merry!
- A series of events and wonders proclaimed to the world the gospel – the good news of Jesus - that not only made it a Mighty, Merry Christmas then , but still does!

Plan now to listen. To make Him and His Word our priority. To leave everything...

3. Worship Him. Honor Him with...

Our presence. Our passion. Our devotion. Our gifts. Our lives....
If...

- In the darkness...
- In the chaos...
- In the busy-ness....

We find and follow Him, this will be a merry Christmas indeed!

**"God planned Christmas so you could know His love.
Let's plan Christmas so the world can see His Son."**