



December 12, 2017

Dear Ones in Christ,

"But when the fulness of the time was come,
God sent forth His Son . . . (Gal. 4::4)

At this season of the year, we who know the Lord often are drawn to this passage as we commemorate the fact that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ." At the same time many "hurried" saints say, "Where has the time gone? There is so much to do and so little time to do it." Others carrying great burdens of heart groan, "I wish the Lord would come and take us home. I'm ready to go."

These varied remarks (and I've heard the gamut of them very recently) draw our consideration to the quote from Paul to the Galatians. The key seems to (at least partially) center on the word "fulness." It draws us to the realization of the end of a particular period of time. We are too often a bit impatient to accept our Father's time. We want to advance it or delay it. We are not alone. Consider a couple of earlier views from Scripture.

In I Kings chapters 18-19, Elijah had been granted great victory on Mt. Carmel, but now Jezebel had sent the prophet of God a defiant ultimatum -- "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow." This was perhaps in current phraseology -- "You are as good as dead." The embattled man of God prayed, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." But the Lord was not finished with Elijah. Instead, he was commissioned to name two kings and Elisha, the prophet. Elijah's "fulness of time" had not come.

Some nine centuries rolled on, and now in Bethlehem of Judea "the Word was made flesh" and was dwelling among men. Mary and Joseph brought the young Child to the Temple to present Him to the Lord. A dear saint, Simeon by name, had received from the Holy Spirit a unique promise -- "he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Luke records "Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant die in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation . . .'" Simeon felt that for him, he had reached the fulness of Simeon's time.

We, unlike Simeon, may not know when we have reached the fulness of our times, and we may not know for certain whether we shall meet the Lord momentarily, or whether we still have a race to run. This much we know -- we have this moment to love and serve Him. May we rejoice in His presence.

It seems so distant and even improbable, but in the 1800's, Edmund Sears penned these words which we sing in joyful anticipation:

For lo, the days are hast'ning on, by prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

May we praise Him for His grace, and determine that by His grace we shall grant to Him all that we have and are. May each of you have a blessed Christmas season and a joyous New Year in Him!!

In the service of our risen and coming Lord,

Stanley and Marvina Cline

