

the full blessing of sonship without the necessity of tutelary preparation corresponding to the pedagogical discipline of the OT period."

2. The comparison made (verses 3-6)

(The comparison is introduced by the words "Even so" which could also be rendered "just so.")

a. the Jew under the Law is like the child under "tutors and governors"

- (1) when Paul says "we" he is referring to the Jews. "When we were children" refers to the Jew under the Old Testament economy. Just as the child was obligated to obey the "tutors and governors" so the Jew was obligated to obey the Law.
- (2) "The elements of the world" refers to the rudimentary teachings of the Law which were of the world in the sense that they were temporary. This is not a reference to the eternal truths contained in the Law but only to the ceremonial acts which have passed away.

Though this is the primary meaning in this verse, it could also be applied to the Gentile in the sense that the Gentile was held in bondage by the law of his conscience. The application could also be made personally, for certainly we were in bondage to sin before Christ set us free. It should be remembered, however, that Scripture has one meaning but several applications. Paul is speaking of the Jews in this reference but the principle involved can be applied to every Christian.

b. the point in history when Christ came is analogous to the "appointed time" of the father

(1) the fulness of time is literally "when the time was filled up." When we fill a glass, the point is reached when the glass can hold no more - the water spill over the brim. When Christ came the first time the hour of his advent was perfectly timed. History reveals how the world was prepared for his appearing.

(a) there was a universal language

Alexander the Great had conquered the world in 333 B. C. He and his successors were obsessed with the task of spreading the Greek language. At the time of Christ's birth Greek was understood in every part of the civilized world by a high percentage of the people. In 250 B. C. the Old Testament was translated into Greek. The Greek Old Testament was the Bible of New Testament times.

(b) there was a good system of transportation

Of course transportation was nothing like it is today. But the Roman roads built shortly before Christ's birth improved transportation considerably. This enabled the first missionaries to spread the Gospel quickly.

(c) all religious systems were bankrupt

Judaism had become a corrupt system of rituals and petty regulations not designated in the Old Testament. The Pharisees were the religious leaders of the Jews. These men were outwardly religious but inwardly corrupt. The masses were untouched and uncared for.

The heathen religious systems were shot through with skepticism. There was a void that needed to be filled. The fact that all religions were in such a state meant that many hungry hearts would be opened to the truth of the Gospel.

(d) the political situation of the Jews prepared them for the coming of Messiah

The Jews had been oppressed for over four hundred years. They had suffered under Persia, then the Greeks, and finally the Romans. They longed for their kingdom to be restored. While some only looked for political deliverance this situation caused many to look for the true Messiah.

These are only a few of the ways in which the Father "filled up" the time, preparing the way for the coming of Christ.

- (2) "made of a woman" is literally "become out of a woman." Christ was pre-existent and He entered the world through a chosen woman, Mary. While Paul is not seeking to defend the virgin birth in this verse, it is clear that the virgin birth is implied.