

## Galatians 4:4-7

Christmas 1; December 28, 2025

Have you ever paused to think about how much timing matters in life? You wouldn't plant tomato seedlings in November, paint the outside of your house in January, or go swimming in a pond in February. Why not? Because it's simply not the right time. Certain things belong in certain seasons. And I think we'd all agree—December probably isn't the ideal time to start a diet either.

Consider how critical timing is in sports. If the timing is off, a quarterback won't connect with the receiver for a completion. In football, it doesn't take much—just a moment—to throw everything off. The same is true in basketball: if the timing is wrong, the player reaches the spot too early or too late, after the ball has already moved on.

Timing matters just as much in everyday life. If you've ever missed a flight because you arrived a minute after boarding ended, you know how decisive timing can be. A delay at work might feel frustrating, yet that same delay could mean you unknowingly missed a major accident on the interstate. And any parent of a preschooler knows this well—look away for just a moment, and that child can be gone and already into trouble.

God's timing in the birth of Jesus is perfect. He did not send his Son into the world hoping that everything would somehow work out in the mission to save us from our sins. Scripture tells us that God acted at exactly the right moment. As the apostle Paul writes, **"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son."** If God was directing all of history to bring his Son into the world at precisely the right time, then there must be something truly extraordinary about the child whose birth we celebrated just three days ago. Therefore, let us take a look at the words of our text and answer the question: *What child is this?*

The birth of this child changes everything. When we entered this world, we came bearing the stain of sin—a stain we cannot remove, no matter how hard we try. Because of that, God himself had to step into our world to cleanse what was marked in our hearts. This child was **"born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."** God requires perfect obedience to his law for entrance into heaven, and since no one after Adam and Eve has been able to meet that demand, God sent his Son to do it for us. Jesus came to accomplish what we could not, so that we might be changed and welcomed as adopted members of God's family.

Everything in this world eventually changes. We change as we grow older. The Christmas gifts we enjoyed will one day wear out and end up as tomorrow's trash. Yet, no matter how hard we try, we cannot change our standing before God on our own. But Jesus did what we could not. He changed us by coming into this world and dying the death we deserved, taking upon himself the punishment for our sins. Paul speaks about that change in us. **"Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So, you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."**

We are nearing the close of another year. When you look back on 2025, you can probably point to changes in your life—some joyful, some painful. And as we look ahead to 2026, none of us knows what changes await us. Yet through every change behind us and every uncertainty ahead of us, who has carried you through? Jesus. No matter what lies before us, we can trust the God who changes everything—the God who came to us as a child lying in a manger.

Consider what that child has done for you. God took on human flesh. The God who placed the stars in the sky was announced by a single star. The God who breathed life into Adam and Eve entered this world by being born of a woman. The hands that created a perfect world were pierced with nails on the cross. And those same hands that ascended into heaven will one day raise us up to be with him forever.

Isn't it striking how quickly the world slips back into "business as usual" after Christmas? People spend months searching for the perfect gift, only to have it returned within hours of Christmas morning. Radio stations fill the airwaves with Christmas music for weeks, and then—on December 26th—it disappears. Store shelves once packed with Christmas decorations are already being replaced with Valentine's cards and gifts. And before long, the decorations you carefully set up and enjoyed will be taken down and packed away for another year.

Timing matters. And time is God's specialty. As the eternal God—with no beginning and no end—he stands outside the boundaries of time. That's hard for us to grasp, but God is not limited by past, present, and future the way we are. He sees them all at once. As the creator of everything, including time itself, God knows and works according to the perfect timing for all things.

Let's give thanks for God's timing in our lives. Let us rejoice in the words of the Apostle Paul: **“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So, you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.”** Amen.