

Why Was Jesus Christ Crucified In A.D. 33?

Today we will dig into the Scriptures and discover why Jesus Christ died in the year that He did. Why did Jesus not die in the year 2850. B.C., 1610 B.C., 450 B.C., or some other year in the future such as A.D. 2060? Why did Christ die on a cross over 2,000 years ago? This is an important question since Galatians 4:4-5 says,

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4-5 (NASB)

Here the apostle Paul gave us a summary of why Jesus Christ took on human flesh and blood. We are told in verse 5 that

Jesus came to redeem us from the Law and adopt us as sons. This is a summary of what happens when someone believes in Jesus Christ. It is another way to say that believers are no longer condemned for their sins. We are freed from sin and made a child of God. Romans 8:1 says,

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1 (NASB)

But what is the meaning of “fullness of the time”? In order to understand the meaning, I want us to turn to Genesis 3. I want to relive a situation that gives us the key that opens our

understanding about the meaning of the “fullness of the time”. Genesis 3 is an important chapter for it helps us understand the rest of Scripture.

In Genesis 1 and 2, we learn that everything God made was good. Then Genesis 3 tells us that the serpent, who was possessed by Satan, tempted Eve to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He deceived Eve into believing that she could become like God and know good and evil. I wonder if she wanted to know the difference between good and evil or if she was like Satan and wanted to be like God. Whatever reason motivated her, she ignored God’s warning and ate of the fruit of the tree. When she did, she sinned. Then Adam followed and sinned, and all of their descendants were then born as sinners. After the creation, Genesis 1:31 tells us that

everything was very good. But after Adam sinned, everything was very bad.

Eve’s journey of seeking her own desire resulted in disaster. On that unhappy day, both Adam and Eve became slaves to sin. God had warned Adam that on the day he ate of the tree he would die. As a result of

eating of the forbidden tree, three things happened to them instantly. First, they lost the spiritual relationship that they had with God. Now there was a change in their emotions, attitudes, and thoughts. Now they often preferred wickedness. They were afraid when God visited them in the Garden of Eden. They were ashamed to be naked. They were liars and



Jesus Christ Dies On the Cross in April 1, A.D. 33

their behavior proved it when they refused to admit that they had been rebellious.

The second thing that happened was they began to die physically. They would not have noticed that immediately. That would come later as they aged, especially in their old age. Third, they were destined to eternal suffering in hell for behaving like Satan and rebelling.

In addition, Genesis 3:14-19 records three curses that God announced upon them. But I want to focus on only the first curse. That curse was between Satan and a future descendant of Eve. It is recorded in verse 15. It says,

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.
Genesis 3:15 (NASB)

Here we are told that hostility or hatred would exist between Satan and Eve's seed. Notice that Eve is

described as having seed. It says her seed. But women do not have seed. Men have seed or sperm. This implies one of Eve's descendants would be born without a male being involved — virgin born (Matthew 1:22-23). The last part of Genesis 3:15 is cryptic. In later prophecies we discover it refers to our Savior, Jesus Christ, being crucified and Satan being defeated.

If we jump to Genesis 3:23-24, we learn that God had two cherubim guard the Tree of Life in order to prevent Adam and Eve from eating eat of it and living forever. Finally, verse 24 says that God drove them out of the garden. They would not be able to talk with Him in the garden again. What a tremendous tragedy for wanting to be like God.

Now we are ready for the example that will help us understand what Galatians 4:4 means that Jesus came in the "fullness of the time." Let us turn to Genesis 4:1 and discover what happened next. It says,

Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD." Genesis 4:1 (NASB)

Some believe that this verse reveals Eve was surprised that her first born child was a male and that he was not the Savior promised in Genesis 3:15. Now that may be true, but it is not clear from Scripture.

Yet, she might have assumed the same thing that Abraham and Sarah did. After God promised to make Abraham a great nation, they thought God would soon provide them with a son. After a few years, Genesis 15:1-4 reveals that Abraham offered his head servant as his heir, but God said, "No!" Then they waited ten more years and Sarah suggested that Abraham have an heir with her maidservant Hagar. But that was not God's plan either. Finally after twenty-five years, when Abraham was almost one hundred years old (Romans 4:19) and Sarah was almost ninety years old, they heard that they would

have a son. Genesis 18:12 says that Sarah laughed when she heard that she was supposed to have a son. That seemed impossible. They had

expected their son to be born twenty-five years earlier.

So, what is the point? Abraham and Sarah had to wait for the fullness of time for Isaac to be born had arrived. The fullness of time came after twenty-five years of waiting. As a result, Abraham became an example of faith. Romans 4:18-20 says that in hope against hope Abraham's faith grew stronger as he waited. By having to wait twenty-five years, Abraham became an example of faith that saves.

So if Eve did expect Abel to be the promised Savior, then she was wrong for the conditions that had to exist for Christ's first coming to be successful had not yet occurred. So I have a question, "Why did God not cause Eve to give birth to the Savior immediately? There are three reasons. I want to discuss all three.

RIGHT TIME IN HISTORY. The first reason for Christ to be born and crucified when He was is that it was the right time in human history. 2 Peter 3:9-13 tells us that God the Father

The Fullness of the Time Had Not Yet Come!

is waiting for the elect to be saved before He destroys the universe. It reveals the fulness of time for Christ's second coming has not yet arrived. Here is verse 9,

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

The "any" refers to the elect. So the Father was not eager to have our Savior to be born too soon. Instead, He was patient as He implemented His plan. His plan would help all who would be saved come to repentance and believe in Christ.

Part of His plan was to give us prophecies down through history about our Savior so that we could identify Him. 1 Peter 1:10-12 says,

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB)

These prophecies tell us that this Savior would be tortured and die for our sins (Psalm 22:6-18; Isaiah 53; Zechariah 9:9; 11:12-13; 12:10; 13:7). The prophecies indicated that the Messiah would someday rule as King over the earth (Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17; 2 Samuel 7:16-17; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 9:6-7). Micah 5:2 revealed He would be born in Bethlehem and be our God. The prophecies were given so that when they were fulfilled we could identify Him as our Messiah. He would be the suffering Messiah.

Then the Messiah came at the right time in history; for when He came, the nation of Israel was without a king. 1 Samuel 8 tells us that Israel did not want God as their king. So God gave them a king named Saul. Then they had David and Solomon. Those two kings were the greatest kings of Israel. After Solomon the nation of Israel was a disaster. It was on a political decline because it was on a spiritual decline. They had

rebelled against God and committed great wickedness.

So God punished Israel with captivity in 722 B.C. and 605, 597, and 586 B.C. The book of Malachi reveals that Israel continued to be rebellious after their return from captivity until the time of Christ. Malachi reveals that the religious leaders were mostly wicked, spiritually-deceived, teaching error, and controlling. Today, it is continuing to be controlled and dominated by other nations. So when Christ came, it was the right time. They wanted a king.

During the intertestamental period, which was from about 400 B.C. until the birth of Christ, the Pharisees and Sadducees came into power as the religious leadership of the nation. At that point, the nation and religious leaders were ready to reject Jesus Christ and kill Him, and they did. So when Jesus was born and crucified, it was at the right time in history.

RIGHT TIME IN PROPHECY. The second reason Christ was born and crucified when He was is that it was the right time in prophecy. Matthew 2:1 says that some magi came searching for the king of the Jews. King Herod asked the chief priests and scribes to tell him where this king of the Jews would be born and they quoted the ancient prophecy of Micah 5:2. It prophesied that He would be born in Bethlehem in Judah. This was a fulfillment of Micah 5:2 which was given 700 years earlier. That prophecy helps us identify His birthplace.

The early church fathers, such as Dionysius Exiguus, Clement of Alexandria, Epiphanius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Hippolytus of Rome, Hippolytus of Thebes, Irenaeus, Julius Africanus, Origen, Paulus Orosius, and Tertullian, say He was born about 3-2 B.C. The gospels of Matthew and Luke say His mother was Mary (Matthew 1:18, 20, 24; 2:11), and His supposed father was Joseph (Matthew 1:18-24; Luke 3:23). But Joseph was not His physical father. Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that He would be virgin born and He was. This was another prophecy that God gave to us identify Him.

The gospel of Luke tells us that He started His ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judah and Philip the Tetrarch was king. We know that He may have started His ministry at least by the year A.D. 29 and it ended in A.D. 33.

Another important prophecy is given to us in Daniel 9:25-

26. It says that the Messiah would die after a period of sixty-nine biblical years from a decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. We know that the decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem was given on Nisan 1, 444 B.C or February 27, 444 B.C., according to Nehemiah 2:1-8. That is the starting point.

Second, the length of time from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the death of the Messiah is given as sixty-nine biblical years or 483 biblical years. When we convert the 483 years into our calendar, we discover it equals 476 years and 25 days.

Third, we now want to determine the end date of the prophecy. So, we must add 476 years and 25 days to the start date of February 27, 444 B.C. That gives us an end date of March 25, A.D. 33. If we compare this date to the Daniel 9:25-26 prophecy, we discover that Jesus was crucified 6 days later just was the prophecy said. The Messiah would be cut off. This reveals Jesus was born and crucified at the right time in history and in the right time in prophecy.

RIGHT TIME IN JESUS' LIFE. The third reason Christ was born and crucified when He was is that it was at the right time in His life. Repeatedly throughout the gospel of John, we are told that Jesus' hour had not yet come (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 7:6-8). Jesus used that phrase to refer to His crucifixion. This hour referred to the time He would suffer, be tortured, and crucified on the cross.

Then in John 12:23, on the Monday before His death, we read that Jesus said this to the disciples,

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." John 12:23 (NASB)

Later in John 17:1 Jesus said this to the Father,

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son . . ." John 17:1 (NASB)

The Father had sent Jesus to take on human flesh. The Father sent Jesus to die for our sins. Finally, His hour would start that evening. He would be arrested and found guilty of claiming to be the Messiah (Mark 14:61-62). They asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, and when He

said, "I am", they accused Him of blasphemy and sentenced Him to death. Later when Jesus was before Pontius Pilate, they accused Him of a different blasphemy. They were accurate that He said He was the "Son of God" (John 19:7).

So, they tortured Him, abused Him, insulted Him, and killed Him by the most horrible method of execution the Romans used. The Roman crucifixion is probably the worst method of execution ever practiced in human history. So they crucified Him in fulfillment of all the prophecies. Then He cried out, "It is finished!" His body died on April 1, A.D. 33 in fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-26.

Therefore, Romans 5:6 says,

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6 (NASB)

Therefore, why did Jesus Christ die when He did? Why was He crucified on April 1, A.D. 33? It was the right time in human history, in prophecy, and in Jesus' life. He demonstrated His love for the people by healing the sick and delivering the demon possessed from their affliction. He fed thousands of people and corrected the false doctrine of the religious leaders. He suffered slander, physical abuse, torture, and died so that our sins can be forgiven. He revealed Himself to us. John 1:16 says the people saw that He was full of grace and truth.

So, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly—not a century, a decade, or a year earlier or later—so that we can repent, believe, and be saved from our sins. Jesus said,

I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. John 12:46 (NASB)

John 3:36 says,

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36 (NASB)

The last statement is a warning that should motive each of us to seek God's forgiveness if we have not already done that. Ask

the Father to forgive you because Christ has made it possible to be forgiven by believing in Him. Jesus came at the right time to save sinners. Now it is the right time to believe in Him and to seek the Father's forgiveness.

for He says,

“AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I
LISTENED TO YOU,
AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION
I HELPED YOU.”

Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE
TIME,” behold, now is “THE
DAY OF SALVATION”.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NASB)

Have you asked for forgiveness for your sins and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior? For help and understanding of how to become a Christian, visit Searching For God.

For those who are believers, we should thank the Father for His planning, for sending Christ at the right time to die for the ungodly so that we and others can have our sins forgiven and someday be with Him.