

NT Week 3: *The Fullness of time*: Gal 4: 4-5

What made the time when JESUS came so completely providential?



Big Idea 1: THE FULLNESS OF TIME

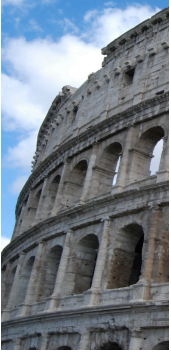


WHEN THE TIME HAD FULLY COME, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. Galatians 4: 4-5



Big Idea 2: One world—Alexander the Great

Big Idea 3: Greek culture & philosophy: Plato dualism & Aristotle monism.



Platonic and Aristotelian ideas and world views dominate in the coming Christian era and give a foundation for Christians to communicate their worldview with their society. Plato with his dualistic opposition between good and evil. And Aristotle with his emphasis on education and the wholeness of the human psyche. The ideas of soul and body.

Big Idea 4: Common language and thought forms including the Septuagint LXX

τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου

Big Idea 5: Roman organization



A. Peace



B. Roads

- C. Postal service
- D. No petty state/ethnic boundaries
- E. Courts—Uniform justice system -- generally



Big Idea 6: Divided, confused and competing Judaism—a time of sorting.

See previous week on the various “denominations” within the Judaism of the first century.

Big Idea 7: Messiah

Messianic expectations were at fever pitch in the first Century.

- Isaiah 9:6—shoot from the stump of Jesse; See also Zechariah 6:12 –the righteous branch.
- Isaiah 11—Messianic paradise.
- Ezekiel 21:27—until the “one comes whose right it is”—FF Bruce says this is Ezekiel’s interpretation of the enigmatic prophecy of Jacob about Judah in Gen 49.10—“until Shiloh comes”.
 - A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! The crown will not be restored until he to whom it rightfully belongs shall come; to him I will give it.’
- Psalms of Solomon 17: 23-24, 32-36: their king, the anointed Lord. The Messiah Lord in Greek: Christos Kurios—Christ the Lord should call to mind the Angel announcement to the Shepherds.
- Angel to Mary: “he will be called the son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David...” Luke 1.32f
- And Simeon’s blessing in the Temple: “my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” Luke 2.30-32.

Daniel—the calculation of the weeks: Daniel 9. Let’s do this as a puzzle. [Is this about The Maccabees or about Jesus?]

What are the possible starting dates?

Cyrus decree: 538 BC

Artaxerxes I: 458 BC—Ezra 7.11 ff,

To what do these dates add up?

While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill—²¹ while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision:

²⁴ “Seventy ‘sevens’^[c] [weeks of years] are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish^[d] transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.^[e]

²⁵ “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One,^[f] the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing.^[g] The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’^[h] In the middle of the ‘seven’^[i] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple^[j] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.^{[k]”}^[l]

$$70 \times 7 = 490$$

Big Idea 8—Spiritual confusion, Moral deterioration, Spiritual hunger

E.R. Dodds, himself a confessed agnostic, calls society the “Age of Anxiety” and says: “One reason for the success of Christianity was simply the weakness and weariness of the opposition: paganism had lost faith both in science and in itself.” Dodds says pagan society crumbled under a massive “failure of nerve.” Has anyone watched the *I Claudius* PBS series? It disgustingly depicts the decadence of the age.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T40mDHDKqWM>

Virgil writes the Aeneid just before the birth of Jesus in order to bolster the status of Rome and to call Romans back to the “old time religion” of Jupiter and Juno, Apollo and Venus, Mars and Diana.

Lucian a poet of the first century writes that all men lived their lives between the twin poles of peace and anxiety and constantly felt the anxiety that drove them on a ceaseless quest for peace.

So, ER Dodds says Christianity succeeded for 4 reasons:

1. “Its very exclusiveness—the religious tolerance which was the normal Greek and Roman practice had resulted by accumulation in a bewildering mass of alternatives.”
2. “Christianity was open to everyone; it made no social distinctions.”
3. “In a period when earthly life was increasingly devalued and guilt feelings were widely prevalent, Christianity held out the ... promise of a better inheritance in another world.”
4. AND Christianity offered “a community in a much fuller sense than any corresponding group ...”

Assignment for week NT Week 4

Read the Gospel of Mark

Read the start of Matthew, Luke and John: Matt 1-2; Luke 1-2; Luke 3; John 1:1-18;
And Mark 8: 27-29; Colossians 2.9

Names given to Jesus

Mt 1.23
Mt 3.17
Mt 4.3
Mt 8.2 & 19
Mt 12.23
Mt 13.55
Mt 16. 13 & 16
Mt 26. 49 & 69
Mt 27.42

Check out Gospel of John for titles Jesus takes for himself (the I AM sayings), starting in John 4 and list as many as you find.

Reactions to Jesus' claims:

Mk 2. 6-7
Mt 26. 63-65
Jn 8. 59
Lk 4.28-29

MARKERS

Mt 1 & Lk 3	Genealogies of Jesus
Mt 1 & Lk 2	Birth of Jesus
Mt 4 & Lk 4	Temptation of Jesus
Mt 5-7	Sermon on the Mount—Find Lucan parallels (for example, Lord's Prayer)
Mt 7	Golden Rule
Mt 9	Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners

ROMAN ROADS

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the US Railroads.

Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. And bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a spec and told we have always done it that way and wonder what horse's patoot came up with that, you may be exactly right because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses.

Now the twist to the story...

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's rump.