

The Fullness of the Time (“The World Come of Age”)

- **Cities Representing the N.T. World:** Jerusalem / Athens / Rome

I. Spirit: Jewish Contribution

- A. Preparation for Christianity (“Salvation is of the Jews”)
 1. Recorded and preserved Scriptures
 2. God’s work in history through Israel (from Abraham)
 3. Christ as the Jewish Messiah: Fulfilled the three anointed offices—prophet, priest, and king
 4. Church originally “Jewish”
- B. Religious Setting: “Second Temple Judaism”
 1. End of idolatry as serious competition to worship of Jehovah
 2. Shift to scribal/legal emphasis
 3. Development of the synagogue
 4. Origins of Pharisees & Sadducees
- C. Content of Jewish Heritage (Rom. 9:4-5)
 1. The adoption—God’s gracious choice of them (grace, election)
 2. The glory—the blessing of God’s Shekinah glory dwelling among them (Hodge)
 3. The covenants—God’s whole framework of the OT, the covenants Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31)
 4. The giving of the law—Possession of God’s revealed word thereby revealing His person (Rom. 3:2)
 5. The service of God—Worship, the tabernacle/temple and all which represented both approach to/fellowship with God and prefigured Christ
 6. The promises—i.e., promises of Christ and His kingdom (Gal. 3:16, 21)
 7. The fathers (patriarchs)—the heritage of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, etc.
 8. “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came”—humanly speaking, the race of Christ; yet He is “God over all”

II. Soul: Greek Contribution

- A. Cultural Setting
 1. Cultural communication—the means for understanding and communication, even where there is resistance to Greek culture
 2. Language
 - a. Alphabet (developed from Phoenicians) for ease of learning
 - b. Universally understood—facilitated the spread of Christianity
 - c. Language of precision, nuances
 - d. Charged w/ reshaping an originally “Hebrew” Christianity
 3. Philosophy
 - a. Not so much formal philosophy as a Greek way of looking at things: critical thinking (examining and questioning)
 - b. Moved from comprehensive explanations of reality to moral/ethical guide lines
- B. Impact of Hellenization
 1. “Hellenization Crisis”’: How to deal w/ Greek culture
 2. Fruit of Alexander the Great (successor kingdoms = Antigonids, Ptolemies, Seleucids)
 3. Jewish Accommodation
 - a. Alexandrian Jews (cosmopolitan, assimilationist)

- b. Septuagint, LXX (because many more knew Greek than Hebrew)
 - c. Philo of Alexandria
 - 1) Reinterpreted Jewish history/theology in light of Greek thought
 - 2) *Logos*: Borrowed Greek concept of the “reason” or “mind” of the universe as the “bridge” between God and His creation. (See Beale, 74)
 - 3) Allegorical interpretation of the OT
 - 4. Jewish Resistance
 - a. Maccabees against the Seleucids
 - b. Pharisees and Essenes
- III. Body: Roman Contribution
- A. Political Setting
 - 1. Political/economic structure
 - 2. Transportation
 - a. Roads: “All roads lead to Rome”
 - b. Sea lanes: *Mare nostrum*
 - 3. Universal peace: *Pax Romana* (30 BC–AD 180)
 - 4. Rule of law (Paul’s rights of citizenship)
 - 5. Urbanization through trade: people lived in cities
 - 6. Rome provided unity—Political, Economic, & Geographic
 - B. Roman impact on Jews
 - 1. Herodians: political conformity
 - 2. Zealots: violent political resistance
 - 3. Sadducees: political opportunism
 - 4. Heightened the Messianic hope
 - C. Spiritual Hunger
 - 1. Bankruptcy of philosophy/pagan religions
 - 2. Popularity of mystery religions (Mithraism, Isis)
 - 3. Desire for a deliverer