

The Fullness of Time

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4/19/2026



For Discussion: Fullness of Time

(Pete Garcia; raptureready.com; Jan 24, 2026)

<https://www.raptureready.com/2026/01/24/fullness-of-time-by-pete-garcia/>

Besides, “as it were in the days of Noah & Lot,” how will the return of Jesus be similar to His first coming?

The time will be right...

Galatians 4:4-5 – *When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

The Greek word translated “fullness” (plērōma) means that which is (has been) filled; a fulness, abundance or a fulfilling and keeping.

- That word fullness conveys the idea of something being filled up to a culminating point—a decisive moment that triggered Christ’s first coming.
- There are some striking parallels between the First and Twenty-First Centuries that we’ll consider...

What other fullness will there be that will be completed before the return of Jesus?

Romans 11:25 – *blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

The Lord will return when the completion of the Gentiles being brought into the body of Christ is complete.

- With that in mind, it is worth focusing on the similarities between the first century—when that earlier fullness arrived—and our own twenty-first century world.
- When we do, the question naturally arises: are we seeing enough mirrored conditions that point once again toward an approaching fulfillment?

How was the time right for Jesus to come the first time?

Daniel gives the time when the Messiah was to come:

Daniel 9:25 – *From the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*

The 69 weeks of years in Daniel or 483 years was fulfilled between Persian King Artaxerxes commanding Jerusalem to be restored until Messiah Jesus was “cut off” by dying on the cross (Daniel 9:26). We know when this command was given:

Nehemiah 2:1-6 – *And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes... And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” ...So it pleased the king to send me*

We know from secular history sources that this declaration was made in 445 BC. So, do the math: 445+483 = 38 AD. Given that Jesus was actually born about 4 BC and there was no year zero, this points to 33 AD when scholars say that Jesus went to the cross.

Is there any similar such prophecy indicating when the Lord will return?

No... this is intentional so that Christians during the Church Age would just live ready for His imminent return for us.

- God has revealed sufficient details about conditions leading up to the 70th Week of Daniel so that we can know when we are in the season of His return.
- And we have the pattern of God working in history that helps us refine this even further (stay tuned... we’ll get to that later in this study).

What role did the Greek language and Roman roads play in the fullness of time?

Both of these developments prepared the way for the gospel to be disseminated using Greek as a common language of commerce and facilitating travel with Roman roads.

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century with regard to facilitating global communications?

- Today, English serves as the global language of commerce. And AI translation technology fills the gaps where English is not used.
- The modern parallel to the Roman roads is the infrastructure for international air travel which is well developed in our day. Also, the Internet facilitates international communications today.

What was the global political situation in the First Century?

Israel was well established in the land God had given them and a dominant Gentile world power ruled the world.

- At the time of Christ's first advent, the known world was under the authority of Rome, fulfilling Daniel's vision of successive Gentile empires.
- Rome unified vast territories politically, militarily, and culturally—hence the saying, “All roads lead to Rome.”

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

After nearly two millennia of successive Gentile powers rising and falling, a dominant force has emerged once again—one that closely mirrors the Roman Empire in its power, scale, reach, and global influence: The United States of America.

- And this is not to mention that Israel is back in the land God gave them!
- Since WWII, the United States, with deep historical and ethnic roots in Europe, is largely based on the Greco-Roman political structure and geopolitical worldview, constitutes the most powerful and stable form of government on earth.
- While all roads don't lead to Washington, D.C., per se, certainly, the US dollar has been the foundation for its global hegemony by becoming the global reserve currency for the last 75 years, and militarily dictates how the rest of the world should behave.

What characterized the morality of 1st Century Rome?

It was a pagan and violent empire.

- Rome was thoroughly pagan with its Pantheon of gods and goddesses which normalized idolatry.
- There was brutal treatment of slaves and the conquered, and deep moral corruption in the political classes throughout the Roman Empire.
- From the coliseum's gladiator games to the Roman siege, Rome's foundations were soaked with blood.

Ironically, many modern legal and political frameworks trace their roots to Roman systems, despite Rome's spiritual darkness.

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

The United States, despite possessing a historically strong moral compass, has become profoundly violent in what it tolerates and normalizes.

- This includes abortion on demand, an unparalleled capacity for destruction in warfare as seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Vietnam, and the War on Terror, as well as a culture increasingly saturated with violence and moral decay.

How can the USA be given over to so much violence having modeled itself on a Judeo-Christian ethos?

Because the people have embraced postmodernism, expressed through revived neopaganism and humanist secularism, producing an internal clash of civilizations within Western society itself.

What kind of political turmoil and intrigue was there between 1st Century Rome and Jerusalem?

Both Rome and Jerusalem were rife with political tension between numerous competing factions.

- Roman governors, Herodian rulers, priestly elites, and revolutionary factions (e.g., Zealots) created a volatile environment filled with intrigue, oppression, and unrest.

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

Since the 1960s, the US has increasingly become riddled with turmoil and intrigue...

- From the JFK assassination, through Trump's second term, the US government has become increasingly polarized, swinging wildly between extreme political swings from progressive programs to those of political conservatism.

What contributed to the climate of volatility and expectation in the First Century?

Heavy taxation, military occupation, and messianic expectation created an atmosphere primed for upheaval.

- The first century was rife with messianic expectations, and many Jews longed for deliverance, though often in political terms rather than spiritual ones.
- The Jews wanted another David or Moses to come and throw off the yoke of Gentile oppression by the Romans, and when Christ came teaching them they must first be a people fit for the kingdom, they crucified Him.

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

The rapid inflation of the Dollar as the global reserve currency, alongside with an expansive worldwide military footprint and mounting geopolitical strain, has led the nations to recognize the current world order about to change.

- Compounding this moment is the resurgence of messianic expectations across Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and even New Age movements.
- In one form or another, nearly everyone senses that a dramatic shift to the global status quo is imminent. And much like the first century, most are not longing for the return of Jesus. They are waiting for the Mahdi or some enlightened charismatic great man who will lead the world out of its present chaos.

What were the spiritual and religious conditions at the time of the Lord's First Advent?

There was apostasy within official Judaism...

- While God preserved a faithful remnant, institutional Judaism had largely become entangled in legalism, tradition, and external righteousness.
- They missed the spirit of the Mosaic Law attempting to replace that with the letter of the law.
- They missed the promises of a Messiah in their desire for a political deliverer.

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

Christendom has been in the Laodicean Era since at least the mid-1800s, which has resulted in a fracturing of the Church into an explosion of denominations.

- Christians do their own thing and true faith has been replaced with legalism, political activism, commercialism, human secularism, and eastern mysticism.

What kind of Messianic expectation was there in the First Century?

Misunderstanding of the coming of the Lord characterized their expectation...

- Most were not looking for a suffering Servant who would address sin, reconciliation, and the kingdom of God (Daniel 9:24); they were anticipating a conquering king who would overthrow Rome (Zech 12, 14).

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

Misunderstanding of the coming of the Lord characterizes our expectation...

- Eschatological understandings and expectations vary just as wildly here in the 21st century as they did in the first century.
- The primary similarity is that both timeframes saw only a small remnant who still hold to the actual Biblical reality, which will unfold.

The order is as follows: the Rapture of the Church, the 70th Week of Daniel (the 7-Year Tribulation), which is culminated by the Second Coming of Christ, the Millennial Kingdom, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the future eternal order.

What was the prophetic and biblical timeline context of the First Advent of the Lord?

Jesus came following a long period of prophetic silence...

- Christ arrived after roughly 400 years of prophetic silence, following Malachi.
- No new prophetic revelation had been given, heightening anticipation for divine intervention.

While no new prophetic revelation came in those "silent years," there was prophetic fulfillment (Daniel 2, 8, 9).

How does the 21st Century parallel the 1st Century?

The year 2033 will be the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's Crucifixion.

- While there was a flurry of revelation through the Apostles following that event, there has likewise not been any new prophetic revelation after John recorded the book of Revelation in 95 A.D.

What is significant about our coming up on the 2,000th anniversary of the Lord's First Advent?

The Lord returning much beyond the 2,000th anniversary breaks the biblical model...

- Christ came 4,000 years after Adam and the dispensation of the Church has been about two thousand years... the Bible records one final millennium in which Christ will rule and reign on the Earth over the nations (1,000 years as a day).
- This models Creation Week perfectly, since we see the sun created on the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19) as the greater light; the advent of Jesus during the 4th millennium as the Light of the World (Malachi 4:2, Luke 1:78-79, John 1:4-9, John 8:12, etc.).

How is there symmetry in the 2,000-year pattern of redemptive history?

Two thousand years before Christ, God called Abraham, a Gentile, and set him apart to become the father of many nations, and more specifically, the father of the Jewish people.

- Through Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob (the Patriarchs), God formed a distinct people to represent Him on earth, the nation of Israel.

What is the significance of the 21st Century in the 2,000-year pattern of redemptive history?

It has now been nearly two thousand years since Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

- During this time, Christ has been continuously building His church by once again separating a people for Himself who represent Him (Matt 16:17-19).
- These people are drawn from both Jews and Gentiles and united into the body of Christ as one.

What applications come to mind from this discussion?

Today there are striking parallels to the fullness of time that prompted Jesus' First Advent... we are in the season of His return!