

The Times of the Gentiles

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus made this prediction in his Olivet Discourse:

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until **the times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-24, NKJV).

What did Jesus mean when he referred to “the times of the Gentiles?”¹ When did the times of the Gentiles begin? When will the times of the Gentiles end? What events will happen during this period of time when Gentiles conquer Jerusalem?

The times of the Gentiles refers to the period of time that began with the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon’s temple by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in 586 BC. The times of the Gentiles included the destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple by Titus and the Romans

¹ This paper was presented at the Pre-Trib Rapture Study Group Conference on December 5, 2016, in Irving, Texas, and has been revised for this journal.

in AD. 70.² The times of the Gentiles also includes a future time during the last half of the tribulation period when Jerusalem will be surrounded and conquered by Gentile armies (Zech 12:3; 14:2; Matt 24:15-31; Rev 11:1-3). The times of the Gentiles will end with the second coming of Messiah Jesus who will defeat the Gentile armies led by the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon and deliver the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem (Zech 14:3-9; Rev 19:11-21).

The times of the Gentiles started during the dispensation of law, includes the dispensation of grace and will end at the conclusion of the seven year tribulation period before the start of the dispensation of the kingdom. The times of the Gentiles includes all of the 70 weeks (490 years) of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:24-27). The times of the Gentiles includes the church age from Pentecost (Acts 2) until the Rapture which will happen before the tribulation period (1 Thess 4:13-17). The times of the Gentiles includes the future seven-year tribulation period (the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy) predicted in Daniel 9:27 and explained in the book of Revelation chapters 6-19.

During the times of the Gentiles the following are true: (1) no Jewish king sits on the throne of David ruling Israel, (2) four Gentile kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece,

² Preterists teach that Jesus' prediction of Jerusalem's destruction in the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled only in AD 70 when Titus and the Romans came and destroyed the city and the second temple. Premillennial dispensationalists teach that Jesus' prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem was fulfilled in AD 70 when Titus and the Romans destroyed the temple and Jerusalem. Premillennial dispensationalists also see another final fulfilment in the last half of the future tribulation period. Jerusalem and a future temple will again be trampled by Gentile armies in the last half of the tribulation period (cf. Rev 11:1-3). In the verses following Jesus' prediction of the times of the Gentiles, Jesus reveals the distress of the nations and physical signs in the heavens that precede the literal second coming of Jesus (the Son of Man) to earth in glory (Luke 21:25-28).

and Rome) conquered Jerusalem and dominated Israel in the past, and (3) ten Gentile kings along with the future Antichrist (a Gentile king) will conquer Jerusalem and dominate Israel in the future seven-year tribulation period.

This article is divided into four main sections. The first section will examine the past Gentile kingdoms in the times of the Gentiles: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The second section will examine the times of the Gentiles in the future focusing on the Revived Roman Empire and the coming of the Antichrist. The third section will look at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth as the end of the times of the Gentiles. The final section will look at the reign of King Jesus on the Davidic throne in the future temple in Jerusalem.

THE GENTILE KINGDOMS IN THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

In 603 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream of an image of a metallic man which had a head of gold, a chest and arms made of silver, a belly and thighs made of bronze, legs made of iron, and feet with ten toes made of part iron and part clay (Dan 2:31-33). The different metals and parts of the image represent different Gentile kingdoms that dominated Israel in the past during the times of the Gentiles: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.³

³ Liberal critics who reject Daniel as the author of the book that bears his name believe that the four kingdoms are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. They reject the early date of Daniel because they reject predictive prophecy. Jesus believed that Daniel wrote his book (Matt 24:15). Conservative evangelical scholars argue that Daniel wrote his book in the sixth century (Ryrie Study Bible has 537 BC). For arguments for a sixth century BC date of Daniel see J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 1324-25.

In the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream of four beasts (Dan 7). Daniel wrote,

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. Daniel spoke saying I saw in my vision by night and behold the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other (Dan 7:1-3).

The four beasts represent four Gentile kingdoms that would dominate Israel. The Great Sea refers to the Mediterranean Sea (Num 34:6-7; Josh 1:4; 9:1). The four beasts of Daniel's vision in Daniel 7 refer to the different Gentile kingdoms that dominated Israel during the times of the Gentiles: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.⁴

H. A. Ironside points out the differences between Daniel 2 and Daniel 7:

Chapter seven covers practically the same ground as chapter two. It takes in the whole course of the Times of the Gentiles, beginning with Babylon and ending with the overthrow of all derived authority and the establishment of the kingdom of the Son of Man. ... In the second chapter, when a Gentile king had a vision of the course of world-empire, he saw the image of a man—a stately and noble figure—that filled him with such admiration that he set up a similar stature to be worshipped as a god. But in this opening chapter of the second division, Daniel, the man of God, has a vision of the same empires, and he sees them as four ravenous wild beasts,

⁴ The book of Daniel was written in two languages: 1:1-2:4a and chapters 8-12 are written in Hebrew and 2:4b-7:28 are written in Aramaic. Hebrew was the language of God's covenant people Israel, and Aramaic was the language of the Gentile world in Daniel's day. Daniel 2:4b-7:28 focuses on God's prophetic plan for the Gentile nations.

of so brutal a character, and so monstrous, that no actual creatures known to man could adequately set them forth.”⁵

Babylon: The First Gentile Kingdom

Babylon was the first Gentile kingdom to conquer Jerusalem and dominate Israel during the times of the Gentiles. The Babylonian empire dominated Israel from 605-539 BC.

The Head of Gold on the Image in Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream in Daniel 2

Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon that he was the head of gold in his dream of the metallic man:

This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O King are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. (Dan 2:36-38)

The Lion in Daniel’s Dream in Daniel 7

Daniel wrote about the first beast in his vision in Daniel 7: “The first was like a lion and had eagle’s wings. I watched until its wings were plucked off and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it” (Daniel 7:4).

Daniel wrote that the first beast was like a lion that had eagle’s wings. These two symbols show that Babylon emphasize the strength and speed of the Babylonian army (cf. Jer 4:7; Ezek 17:3). Daniel watched until the lion’s wings

⁵ H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1911), 117-18.

were plucked off, it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man. Nebuchadnezzar boasted about his empire and God judged him (read Dan 4:28-33). The reference to his being made to stand on two feet like a man and being given a man's heart could be a reference to his return to his sanity and the restoration of his kingdom (Dan 4:34-37).

The Kings of Babylon

Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon from 605-562 BC. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded Judah in 605, 597 and 586 BC. In 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians took Daniel and his three friends back to captivity in Babylon (2 Kgs 24:1-4; Dan 1:1-6). In 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded Judah. They took the treasures from the temple and they took King Jehoiachin captive to Babylon (2 Kgs 24:8-16). Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah (Jehoiachin's uncle) the king of Judah and changed his name to Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:17). The prophet Jeremiah predicted that the Babylonians would rule the world (Jer 27:6-11), that the Jews would go as captives to Babylon (Jer 27:19-22), and that Jerusalem would be destroyed by fire (Jer 34:21-22).

In 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian laid siege to Jerusalem when King Zedekiah refused to pay tribute to Babylon (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 52:4; Ezek 24:1). The Babylonians captured Zedekiah and his sons who tried to escape from the city. Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons while he watched, made him blind and took Zedekiah as a captive back to Babylon (2 Kgs 25:5-7; Jer 39:4-8; 52:6-11). Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and burned Solomon's temple to the ground on the 10th of Ab (August 15, 586 BC).

The times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple. King Zedekiah was the last king of Judah to sit on the throne of David. Jehoiachin was the last surviving king of the Davidic dynasty. He was released from prison in Babylon on the 27th of Adar (April 2) in 561 BC (2 Kgs 25:27-30).

After Nebuchadnezzar died, Babylon was ruled by Evil-Merodach (562-560 BC), Neriglissar (560-556 BC), Labashi-Marduk (556 BC), and Nabonidus (556-533 BC). Nabonidus spent several years in Arabia and left his son Belshazzar in charge in Babylon. This explains why Daniel was raised to the third position in the kingdom of Babylon (Dan 5:7, 16, 29).

Belshazzar was the co-regent of Babylon with his father Nabonidus from 553-539 BC. Belshazzar gave a great banquet and used the cups from the temple in Jerusalem to serve wine. On that night he saw God's handwriting on the wall,⁶ Belshazzar was killed by the Medes and Persians who conquered Babylon (Dan 5:28-31).⁷

⁶ The Aramaic words that God wrote on the wall were *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* (Dan 5:25). *Mene* means Numbered. The days of Belshazzar's reign as king of Babylon were numbered. His time was up. *Tekel* means Weighed. Belshazzar was weighed on God's scale of justice and was found to be wanting because he used the holy cups from the temple in Jerusalem for his party in Babylon. *Upharsin* means Divided. The kingdom of Babylon would be divided between the Medes and the Persians that very night.

⁷ Herodotus explains how Cyrus and the Persians conquered the city of Babylon. They diverted the waters of the Euphrates River into a canal, and as a result the Persian army entered the city at night by wading through the water under the city walls (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.191).

Medo-Persia: The Second Gentile Kingdom

Media is the name for northwest Iran. Persia is a description for ancient Iran. Cyrus of Persia brought Media under his control in 550 BC. The Medes and Persians together conquered Babylon (Dan 5:28). The Medo-Persian empire dominated Israel from 539-332 BC.

The Chest and Arms of Silver on the Image in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream in Daniel 2

Medo-Persia is described as the chest and arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the metallic man (Dan 2:32). Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours" (Dan 2:39). As silver is inferior to gold, so the kingdom of Medo-Persia was inferior to Babylon. Babylonian King Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall which predicted that his kingdom would be divided and given to the Medes and Persians (Dan 5:28). Daniel was thrown into the lions' den because of the law of the Medes and Persians signed by King Darius (Dan 6:8).

The Bear in Daniel's Dream in Daniel 7

Medo-Persia is described as a bear in Daniel's vision in Daniel 7: "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: Arise, devour much flesh" (Dan 7:5). Persia was more prominent than Media and that is why the bear is raised up on one side. The three ribs between the bear's teeth refer to the countries conquered by Medo-Persia: Babylon to the west, Lydia to the north, and Egypt to the south.

The Ram in Daniel's Vision in Daniel 8

Medo-Persia is described as the Ram in Daniel's vision in Daniel 8:

Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great (Dan 8:3-4).

The two horns of the Ram refer to Media and Persia. Persia was greater than Media, and that is why one horn is described as higher than the other. Media was older than Persia and that is why the higher horn came up last. The Persians under King Cyrus extended their kingdom west, north, and south.

The Kings of Medo-Persia

Cyrus ruled Persia from 550-530 BC (Dan 1:21; 6:28; 10:1). In 539 BC Cyrus and the Persians conquered Babylon (Dan 5).⁸ In 538 BC Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to

⁸ Josephus writes, "Now after a little while, both himself and the city were taken by Cyrus, the king of Persia, who fought against him; for it was Baltasar, under whom Babylon was taken, when he had reigned seventeen years. And this is the end of the posterity of king Nebuchadnezzar, as history informs us; but when Babylon was taken by Darius and when he, with his kinsman Cyrus, had put an end to the dominion of the Babylonians, he was sixty two years old. He was the son of Astyages and had another name among the Greeks. Moreover, he took Daniel the prophet and carried him with him into Media and honored him very greatly and kept him with him" (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.11.4). Josephus distinguished Darius from Cyrus. Evangelical scholars differ on the identity of Darius the Mede. He has been identified as (1) Cambyses, son of Cyrus; (2) Gubaru, a governor of Babylon

the land of Israel to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5) in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (cf. Is 44:28; 45:1-13). Zerubbabel led 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1-4).

The last verse of the Hebrew Bible contains Cyrus' decree for the Jews to return to build the temple:

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up! (2 Chron 36:23).

In 537 BC the Jews set up the altar for the temple (Ezra 3:1-7). In 536 BC the Jews laid the foundation for the second temple (Ezra 3:8-13). Daniel was given a vision of the future of Israel during the Greek period and the future tribulation period (Dan 10-12). From 536-530 BC the Samaritans hindered the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 4:1-5).

Cambyses ruled Persia from 530-522 BC. During his reign the work on the second temple stopped (Ezra 4:24). Smerdis ruled Persia for a short time in 522 BC.

From 521-486 BC Darius I Hystaspes ruled Persia. He created a strong central government with satraps to govern his provinces. He established a postal system with 111 stations from Susa to Ephesus. He gave permission for the temple in Jerusalem to be finished (Ezra 4-6). Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during his reign and challenged the Jews to complete the second temple (Ezra 5:1-2; Hag 1:1, 15; 2:10; Zech 1:1, 7; 7:1).

From 520-516 BC Zerubbabel led the Jews to resume the rebuilding of the temple under the encouragement of

appointed by Cyrus; (3) Ugbaru, general of Cyrus' army; and (4) Cyrus himself. I agree with Dr. John Whitcomb Jr. that Darius the Mede was Gubaru (cf. John Whitcomb Jr., *Darius the Mede* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977], 66).

Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-2; Hag 1:1, 15; 2:10; Zech 1:1, 7; 7:1)

Tattenai (a satrap of Syria) sent a letter to Darius protesting the rebuilding project but Darius told Tattenai to leave the Jews alone (Ezra 5:3-6:14).

The Jews finished rebuilding the second temple in 516 BC:

So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia. Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius (Ezra 6:14-15).

In 490 BC Darius the Great and the Persian army invaded Greece but were defeated by the Greeks at the battle of Marathon.⁹

From 486-464 BC Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) ruled Persia. He deposed Vashti as his queen and made Esther his queen in her place (Esth 2:5-18). He defeated Greece and took Athens. His fleet was later defeated by the Greeks at the battle of Salamis. Ahasuerus helped deliver Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews from wicked Haman and his plot to destroy all the Jews. Haman hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. The Jews first celebrated the Feast of Purim in March of 473 BC (Book of Esther).

From 464-423 BC Artaxerxes I ruled Persia. In 458 BC Ezra led the second return of Jews from Persia back to the land of Israel (Ezra 7-8). Ezra confessed the sins of the Jews who had intermarried with foreign wives and they divorced their foreign wives (Ezra 9-10). In 445 BC Artaxerxes I permitted Nehemiah, his cupbearer, to return to the land of

⁹ Herodotus, *The History*, Book 6.

Israel to rebuild the broken down walls of Jerusalem (Neh 1-2).

In 444 BC Artaxerxes I gave a decree to the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This is the beginning date for the fulfillment of the 70 weeks prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27. Hoehner says that the date is March 5, 444 BC Artaxerxes I permitted Nehemiah his cupbearer to return to the land of Israel to rebuild the broken down walls of Jerusalem (Neh 1-2). Sanballat the Samaritan, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab opposed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:19). On September 22, 444 BC Nehemiah and the Jews finished rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem in 52 days in spite of opposition (Nehemiah 6:15-16). On September 27, 444 BC, Ezra read the book of the law and explained it to the people and they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh 8).

Darius II ruled Persia from 423-404 BC. Artaxerxes II ruled Persia from 404-359 BC. Artaxerxes III ruled Persia from 359-338 BC. Arses ruled Persia from 338-336 BC Darius III ruled Persia from 336-332 BC.

Greece: The Third Gentile Kingdom

Greece was the third Gentile world power to conquer Israel. Philip of Macedon united the Greek city states. Hellenism spread across the world as a result of Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia, and Greek became the language of the empire. The Greek empire dominated Israel from 332-63 BC. This period of time includes the relative period of independence of Israel led by the Maccabees and Hasmoneans from 167-63 BC.

The Brass Belly on the Image in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream in Daniel 2

Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that in his dream of the metallic man that its belly and thighs were made of bronze (Dan 2:32). Daniel interpreted the bronze belly and thighs as “a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth” (Dan 2:39).

The Winged Leopard in Daniel's Dream in Daniel 7

Daniel wrote about the third beast in his vision in Daniel 7: “After this I looked and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads and dominion was given to it” (Dan 7:6). The leopard with wings would be an incredibly fast creature. Alexander the Great conquered the known world faster than any other Gentile ruler.

The Goat with the Large Horn in Daniel's Vision in Daniel 8

Daniel had a vision of the Goat (Greece) defeating the Ram (Medo-Persia) (Dan 8:1-14).¹⁰

And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

¹⁰ Daniel had this vision of the Ram and Goat in the third year of King Belshazzar of Babylon around 551 BC. The Goat with the large horn (Greece led by Alexander the Great) conquered the Ram with two horns (Medo-Persia).

Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken (Dan 8:5-8a).

In this vision, the male Goat represents Greece and the large horn on the goat represents Alexander the Great. Through a series of battles Alexander the Great and the Greek army defeated Darius and the Persians. Daniel predicted that Alexander the Greek would be a mighty king who would rule with great dominion and do according to his will (Dan 11:3).

Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great was born on July 21, 356 BC, the son of King Philip II and Olympias. His first tutor was Leonidas who taught Alexander math and military skills, including archery and horsemanship. Alexander was tutored by the great philosopher Aristotle in 343 BC. Alexander joined his father Philip's army in 340 BC and Philip was able to unite the Greek city states. In 336 BC Philip of Macedon was assassinated and Alexander became the king of Greece. Alexander the Great ruled Greece from 336-323 BC.

After crossing the Hellespont, Alexander led the Greeks to defeat the Persians at the Granicus river in 334 BC as he crossed over into Asia. In 333 BC. Alexander the Great and his Greek army defeated Darius III and the Persians at the battle of Issus. Alexander then marched his army south along the coast. Alexander went up to Jerusalem and met Jaddua the high priest.

Josephus tells that when Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem that Jaddua the high priest showed him the reference in the book of Daniel and Alexander spared the city as a result in 332 BC. Josephus wrote,

When Jaddua, the high priest, heard that Alexander was coming, he was terrified and ordered his people to join him in prayer and

sacrifice to God. When he learned that Alexander was not far from the city (Jerusalem) he went out in procession with the priests and the people. Alexander saw the procession coming toward him. The priests were clothed in linen and the high priest in a robe of blue and gold. On his head was a miter with the golden plate on which God's name was inscribed. Approaching alone, Alexander prostrated himself before the Name and greeted the high priest. As the Jews welcomed Alexander with one voice, he replied, 'When I was in Macedonia, considering how I would become master of Asia, I saw this very person in my sleep, dressed as he is now. He urged me not to delay, but to cross over confidently and take dominion over the Persians.' Alexander was escorted into Jerusalem by the high priest and his attendants. He went up into the temple, where he sacrificed to God according to the high priest's directions. And when the book of Daniel was shown to him, which predicted that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he thought himself to be the one so intended. When he offered the Jews whatever they desired, the high priest asked that they might observe their own laws and be exempt from the tribute every seventh year. Alexander granted these requests; and when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do what they desired.¹¹

Alexander and the Greeks conquered Egypt without a fight in 332 BC. Alexander founded the city of Alexandria, which later became the capital city of the Ptolemies. In 331 BC. Alexander founded the city of Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander led the Greek army to defeat Darius and the Persians at the battle of Gaugamela and then at the battle of Arbela. Alexander and the Greeks conquered Babylon on October 18, 331 BC. Alexander led his Greek army all the way to India and defeated King Porus in 326 BC.

Daniel wrote, "Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and

¹¹ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.8.5

in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven” (Dan 8:8). The large horn that was broken refers to the death of Alexander. Alexander the Great died as a result of a fever on June 10, 323 BC.

The Diadochi

The Diadochi (Greek for successors) ruled over the Greek empire from 323-301 BC. After the death of Alexander the Great there was a power struggle between Alexander’s four generals. The Greek empire was divided into four separate kingdoms each ruled by one general.

Daniel had two visions concerning the division of the Greek empire into four powers after the death of Alexander the Great: (1) The four heads on the winged leopard (Dan 7:6), and (2) the four horns that came up after the horn on the male goat was broken (Dan 8:8). In Daniel 7 Daniel wrote “After this I looked and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it” (Dan 7:6). The four heads refer to four Greek rulers who came after the death of Alexander the Great.

The four horns (Dan 8:8) that came up after the death of Alexander also refer to his four generals who became rulers as the Greek empire was divided: (1) Lysimachus ruled Thrace and Bithynia (western Asia Minor called the Hellespont); (2) Ptolemy I ruled Egypt; (3) Cassander ruled Macedonia (including Greece); and (4) Seleucus ruled Syria and Babylon (including Persia).

The Ptolemies: Greek Rulers of Egypt

The Ptolemies were fourteen Greek rulers who ruled Egypt from 323-30 BC. They were friendly to the Jews and allowed them to maintain their religious freedom. The Ptolemies fought the Seleucidae for control of the land of

Israel (275, 245, 240, 219, 217, 202-198 BC.). The capital city of the Ptolemies was Alexandria in Egypt.

Ptolemy I Soter ruled Egypt from 323-285 BC. In 312 BC Ptolemy I captured Jerusalem after he defeated Antigonos' son Demetrius I at the battle of Gaza. Ptolemy II Philadelphus ruled Egypt from 285-246 B.C. During his rule the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) was written by Jewish scribes in Alexandria.

The Seleucids: Greek Rulers of Syria

Antiochus III was the Greek ruler of Syria from 223-187 BC. He helped Hannibal after Hannibal was defeated by the Romans. In 203 BC Antiochus III and the Seleucid empire conquered Jerusalem after the battle of Panium (part of the Fifth Syrian War) in which Antiochus III the Great defeated the Ptolemies. In 190 BC Antiochus III was defeated by the Romans at the battle of Magnesia. Antiochus III lost 53,000 men while Rome lost only 400 men. His son Antiochus IV was taken to Rome as a hostage for twelve years.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

In 175 BC Antiochus IV Epiphanes became king of the Seleucid Empire. He ruled from 175-164 BC. Daniel predicted the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes who is described as the little horn of Daniel 8 that grew out of one of the four horns that came up when the large horn was broken. Daniel wrote,

And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land (Israel). And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of his

sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth to the ground. He did all this and prospered (Dan 8:9-14).

The little horn of Daniel 8 refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes – the ruler of the Seleucid Empire (ancient Syria). He was the eighth king of the Seleucid dynasty. He came to power in 175 BC after murdering his brother. He is not to be confused with the little horn of Daniel 7 which refers to the future Antichrist (see below). Antiochus tried to expand his empire and went south to Egypt, east to Babylon and west to Israel (the glorious land). His pride was seen in his self exaltation and by his stopping the sacrifices at the second temple. He cast truth down to the ground when he had the Torah scrolls burned in Jerusalem. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple for 2300 days (Dan 8:13-14).

Daniel gave this prediction in Daniel 11 about Antiochus Epiphanes who is described as a ruler of the King of the North who would persecute Israel:

And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably and seize the kingdom by intrigue. With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people. He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his father have not done, nor his forefathers; he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time. He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. Both

these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper for the end will still be at the appointed time. While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land. At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved and return in rage against the holy covenant and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering (Dan 11:21-34).

Antiochus IV took the name Epiphanes which means "the Illustrious One," but the Jews nicknamed him Epimanes which means "the Madman." Antiochus IV illegally seized the throne from Demetrius Soter, a son of Seleucus IV Philopator (Dan 11:21). He turned aside an invading army of Egyptians and deposed Onias III (the high priest of Israel here called a prince of the covenant (Dan 11:22). Antiochus made an alliance with Egypt after his victory and robbed the rich and gave the loot to his followers (Dan 11:23-24). He sought to bring peace to his realm by redistributing wealth, taking from the rich and giving to his followers.

After consolidating his kingdom, Antiochus IV attacked Egypt (the King of the South) in 170 BC and defeated the Egyptians (Dan 11:25-27). Antiochus professed friendship with Egypt as the victor and vanquished sat at the table together. Antiochus IV plundered Jerusalem and killed thousands of Jews on his way home to Syria (Dan 11:28).

Antiochus IV desecrated the temple in Jerusalem before returning to his own country (Syria).

In 168 BC Antiochus IV moved against Egypt (King of the South) again (Dan 11:29). This time the Romans who came in ships opposed him (Dan 11:30a). Roman General Gaius Popillius Laenas took a letter to Antiochus IV telling him not to fight Egypt. When Antiochus asked for time to consider, the general drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and demanded that he give his answer before he stepped out of the circle. Antiochus submitted to Rome's demands because he knew that if he resisted he would be declaring war on Rome. This was a humiliating defeat for Antiochus.¹²

Antiochus IV took out his anger on Israel. He showed favor to those who forsook the holy covenant (Dan 11:30b). His armed forces desecrated the temple and stopped the daily sacrifices (Dan 11:31a). Antiochus sent his general Apollonius with 22,000 soldiers into Jerusalem. They attacked and looted Jerusalem on the Sabbath, set fire to parts of the city and slaughtered many Jews (2 Macc. 5:11-14). They took many women and children as slaves.

Antiochus set up an abomination of desolation (Dan 11:31b). On December 16, 167 BC, the Jews were forced to offer a pig on the altar in the temple in worship of Zeus.

Josephus wrote,

And when the king had built an idol altar upon God's altar, he slew pigs upon it and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship they paid their own God and to adore those whom he took to be gods; and made them build temples and raise idol altars, in every city and village and offer pigs upon them every day.¹³

¹² Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 12.5.3

¹³ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 12.5.4

Antiochus tried to hellenize the Jews and outlaw Judaism and many Jews abandoned their faith as a result (Dan 11:32). He prohibited circumcision and Sabbath observance. He banned and burned Torah scrolls. He ordered sacrifices to be made to Zeus in the temple (1 Macc. 1:41-64; 2 Macc. 6). Antiochus IV Epiphanes ruled the Jews from 175-164 BC. He persecuted the Jews in Jerusalem until the city was liberated by the Maccabees.

A Time of Jewish Freedom from Gentile Rule

The Maccabees

The Jews revolted against Antiochus IV and the Seleucids. Daniel predicted the Maccabean revolt: “Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time” (Dan 11:34-35).

In 166 BC the Jewish priest Mattathias refused to offer the sacrifice to the Greek gods at Modin. He killed an apostate Jew who did and this led to the insurrection. He lit the spark for the Jewish fight for freedom. Judas Maccabeus (called “the Hammer”) led the Maccabees in their revolt against the Seleucid empire from 166-160 BC. Daniel revealed that the temple would be desecrated 2300 days from 171 BC to December 25, 165 B.C. (Dan 8:14).

In 164 BC the Maccabees led by Judas captured Jerusalem following the battle of Beth Zur and rededicated the temple.¹⁴ The lampstand in the temple had oil in it for one day but it lasted for eight days. The Jewish feast which commemorates this victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucids is called Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights.

¹⁴ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 12.5.6

Interestingly enough, Jesus taught in the temple during this festival of Hanukkah and declared that he is the light of the world (John 10:22).

The Hasmoneans

From 135-63 BC the Hasmoneans ruled Israel during this time of Jewish independence. The Hasmoneans were ruling priests in Israel. Two religious political parties emerged from them. The Hasidim represented the conservatives who resisted Hellenization in Israel and they became known as the Pharisees. The Hellenizers adopted Greek customs and this group became known as the Sadducees. Both of these groups vied for power in Israel.

The Hasmoneans were named after Mattathias's great grandfather (1 Macc. 14:25-49). For 80 years the Jews experienced independence and this time was viewed as the golden age of Jewish nationalism. After Rome ended this period in 63 BC the Jews would never live in Israel as a free self governing people again until the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948.

Rome: The Fourth Gentile Kingdom

The Iron Legs on the Image in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream in Daniel 2

The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 had iron legs. The iron legs on the image represent Rome (the fourth Gentile kingdom to conquer Israel). Daniel wrote, "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others" (Dan 2:40).

Ten Horned Monster Beast in Daniel Vision in Daniel 7

The fourth beast in Daniel's vision recorded in Daniel 7 was a ten-horned monster beast. This ten-horned monster beast also represents Rome. Daniel wrote, "After this I saw in the night visions and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns" (Dan 7:7).

Roman Rulers

In 63 BC Pompey and the Romans conquered Jerusalem and Israel.¹⁵ Pompey laid siege to Jerusalem for three months and then Pompey entered the temple. His Roman soldiers even killed the priests as they were offering their sacrifices at the temple "preferring the duties about their worship to God before their own preservation."¹⁶

In 49 B.C. Julius Caesar became Roman emperor. He made war against Pompey and defeated him in Egypt. Because Antipater helped Julius Caesar, Julius made Antipater a Roman citizen. Antipater then made his son Herod governor of Galilee. From 47-40 B.C. Herod (later called the Great) was governor of Galilee. He went to Rome and became a friend of Julius Caesar when the Parthians attacked and captured Jerusalem.

From 37-4 BC Herod the Great ruled Israel as King of the Jews. Herod was the son of Antipater and an Idumean (from Edom). He consolidated his power by killing members of his family including some of his sons and his wife Mariamne.

¹⁵ Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* 1.7.1-6.

¹⁶ Ibid. 1.7.5.

Herod the Great was a great builder.¹⁷ He renovated the second temple in Jerusalem. Herod built palaces at Caesarea Maritima and Jericho and palace-fortresses at the Herodium and Masada. Herod rebuilt the capital city of Samaria and renamed it Sebaste (from the Greek equivalent of Augustus).

From 31 BC-AD 14 Octavian, later called Caesar Augustus, ruled Rome. He was the nephew of Julius Caesar. He defeated Mark Antony at the battle of Actium in 31 BC. Mark Antony committed suicide after his defeat. Caesar Augustus divided his territories into two types of provinces: senatorial and imperial. The senatorial provinces were ruled by proconsuls appointed by the Roman Senate for one-year terms. They ruled over the more loyal and peaceful provinces. The imperial provinces were ruled by legates appointed by the emperor himself and prefects called procurators. Quirinius was a legate of Syria from AD 76-9 and made a census (Luke 2:2).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem to the virgin Mary around 6-4 BC (cf. Luke 2:1-20). Herod the Great had some Jewish boy babies in Bethlehem killed in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus (Matt 2:1-18). After changing his will several times, Herod the Great died and his kingdom was divided among his three surviving sons: Archelaus ruled Judea, Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea and Philip ruled Iturea and the region of Trachonitis (cf. Luke 3:1). Herod the Great was buried at the Herodium.

From AD 14-37 Tiberius Caesar ruled Rome. Tiberius appointed Pontius Pilate to govern Judea in AD 26. Tiberius was the Roman emperor when Jesus ministered in Israel and was crucified (Luke 3:1; 20:22, 25; 23:2; John 19:12, 15). Roman procurator Pontius Pilate offended the Jews by putting ensigns of Caesar in Jerusalem. He also spent money

¹⁷ Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* 1.21

from the temple treasury on building aqueducts. Pilate sentenced the Lord Jesus Christ to be crucified (Matt 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19). Pilate condemned Jesus to die because he viewed him as a rival king to Caesar, and he was afraid that the Jews would condemn him to Caesar if he let Jesus go.

Gaius known as Caligula ruled Rome as emperor from AD 37-41. During his reign he sent Petronius to invade Judea and erect a statue of himself in the temple.¹⁸ But the Jews protested at Tiberias and were willing to die than permit the statue of Caligula to be put in the temple.¹⁹ Gaius died after he wrote a note to Petronius in which he threatened Petronius with death if he did not carry out his duty. Josephus wrote that Petronius,

rejoiced at this coincidence as to the death of Gaius, and admired God's providence who without the least delay and immediately gave him a reward for the regard he had to the temple and the assistance he afforded the Jews for avoiding the dangers they were in. And by this means Petronius escaped the danger of death which he could not foresee.²⁰

Claudius ruled Rome as emperor from AD 41-54. An extensive famine happened during his reign (Acts 11:28). Around AD 49 or 50 Claudius expelled Jews from Rome. Aquila and Priscilla came to Corinth from Rome as a result (Acts 18:1-2).

Nero ruled Rome as emperor from AD 54-68. During his trial in Caesarea Paul appealed to go to Caesar (Roman

¹⁸ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18.8.2

¹⁹ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18.8.3

²⁰ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18:8.9.

emperor Nero) for a fair trial (Acts 25:8, 10-12, 21; 26:32; 27:24; 28:19).

From AD 64-68 Nero persecuted Jews and Christians throughout the Roman empire as he blamed them for the fire in Rome. During his reign both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome. Tradition states that Peter was crucified upside down and Paul was beheaded.

Galba ruled Rome as emperor from AD 68-69. Otho ruled Rome as emperor in AD 69. Vitellius ruled Rome in AD 69. Vespasian ruled Rome as emperor from AD 69-79.

In AD 70 the Romans led by General Titus (the son of Vespasian) destroyed Jerusalem and the second temple on the 9th of Av (the same date as Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians).

The Roman general Titus did not want to destroy the temple. He told the Jewish defenders of the city,

I appeal to my own army and the Jew that are now with me and even to you yourselves that I do not force you to defile this sanctuary; and if you will but change the place where you will fight, no Roman shall either come near your sanctuary, or offer any affront to it; no, I will endeavor to preserve your holy house, whether you will or not.²¹

But after Jerusalem was taken by the Romans, Titus gave the "order that they should now demolish the entire city and temple but for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came after believe that it had ever been inhabited."²²

²¹ Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* 6.2.

²² Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* 7.1.1

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 fulfilled Jesus' prediction that he made to the disciples in his Olivet Discourse around AD 30: "Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple and his disciples came up to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Matt 24:1-2).

Domitian was the third and last emperor of the Flavian dynasty. He ruled the Roman empire from AD 81-96. Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio allege that Domitian gave himself the title of *Dominus et Deus* (Lord and God).²³ Domitian persecuted Jews and Christians throughout the Roman empire, those who refused to offer him a sacrifice and proclaim him as Lord and God.

Eusebius wrote,

With terrible cruelty Domitian put to death without trial great numbers of men at Rome who were distinguished by family and career and without cause banished many other notables and confiscated their property. Finally he showed himself Nero's successor in hostility to God. He was the second to organize a persecution against us, though his father Vespasian, had no such evil plans.²⁴

During Domitian's reign, the apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos around AD 95 "for the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9). There John wrote the book of Revelation.

²³ Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.2 and Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 67.4.7

²⁴ Eusebius, *Church History* 3:17.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES IN THE FUTURE

Revived Rome: The Fifth Gentile Kingdom

The Ten Toes on the Image in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream in Daniel 2

Daniel interpreted the ten toes of iron and clay on the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, must as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another just as iron does not mix with clay (Dan 2:41-43).

The ten toes of iron and clay refer to a future form of the Roman empire. The iron and clay show strength and vulnerability. The ten toes refer to ten kings who will rule over a revived Roman Empire. The European Union (EU) with its many nations in the west could be a forerunner of this future form of the Roman Empire.²⁵

²⁵ The European Union is an economic and political partnership involving twenty-eight European countries. It has its own currency (the euro) which is used by nineteen of the member countries. The current EU member countries in 2017 are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. The term Brexit refers to the United Kingdom which voted to leave the EU in June of 2016.

***The Scarlet Beast with Seven Heads and Ten Horns in
Revelation 17***

John saw a scarlet beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns (Rev 17:3-12). The revived Roman Empire is described by John as a scarlet beast that carries the harlot (apostate world religion) during the first half of the tribulation period. The seven heads of the beast are described as seven mountains which could refer to the seven mountains that surround Rome. The ten horns refer to the ten kings of the revived Roman Empire who “have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast [the Antichrist]” (Rev 17:12). The fourth beast of Daniel 7 which referred to Rome, also had ten horns. John said that the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose to be of one mind and to give their kingdom to the beast [the Antichrist] until the words of God are fulfilled: (Rev 17:16-17) The ten kings of the revived Roman Empire will destroy the apostate church and then give their allegiance to the Beast (the Antichrist).

The Antichrist: The Final Gentile Ruler

The Little Horn on the Fourth Beast in Daniel 7

Daniel saw a little horn rise among the ten horns of the fourth beast. Daniel wrote, “I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking pompous words” (Dan 7:8).

Daniel wanted to know about the little horn in his vision “which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words,

whose appearance was greater than his fellows” (Dan 7:21). An angel revealed to Daniel the meaning of the ten horns and the little horn. The angel said,

The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time (Dan 7:24-25).

The coming Antichrist is the little horn of Daniel 7. He will come on the scene after the ten kings of the revived Roman Empire are on the scene. He will defeat three kings in his rise to power. The ten kings will then give their authority to the Antichrist.

The Roman Prince Who Makes a Covenant with Israel for 7 Years

The Antichrist (the Roman Prince) will make a seven-year covenant with Israel. The tribulation will officially begin when the Antichrist signs a covenant with Israel for seven years. In his 70 weeks prophecy Daniel wrote, “Then he shall confirm a covenant with man for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering and on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation which is determined, is poured out on the desolate” (Dan 9:27).

The referent for the pronoun “he” mentioned in Daniel 9:27 is the “prince who is to come” who is of the people who will destroy the city and the sanctuary (temple) (Dan 9:26). The Antichrist will be a Gentile. He will be the Roman prince. He will make a covenant with Israel for one week (seven years).

A possible result of the signing of this covenant is that Israel will be permitted to build a temple on the temple mount. Today many Jews are preparing for the day when Israel will build a temple in Jerusalem.²⁶

The King who Invades Israel in Daniel 11

Antichrist and the armies of the West will invade Israel and put down the rebellion. Daniel predicted that the “king” (future Antichrist) will invade Israel and take control:

And he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land [a reference to Israel] and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him. (Dan 11:40b-45).

Antichrist and his army will enter the Beautiful Land (Israel) and take many countries (Dan 11:40b-41a). Antichrist will not totally defeat Edom, Moab, and Ammon (modern Jordan) (Dan 11:41b). Antichrist will defeat Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia (Dan 11:42-43). Antichrist will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver from Egypt (Dan 11:43). Antichrist will be disturbed by rumors from the east and north (Dan 11:44). Antichrist will set up

²⁶ Randall Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1999).

his military headquarters between the Mediterranean Sea and Mt. Zion (Dan 11:45).

The Abomination of Desolation

The Antichrist will stop the Jews from offering sacrifices in the temple in the middle of the tribulation period (Dan 9:27). Daniel wrote, “But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (Dan 9:27b). Right now the Jews do not have a temple on the temple mount. But the Jews will rebuild the temple and start offering sacrifices. In the middle of the tribulation period the Antichrist will stop the Jews from offering sacrifices.

The Antichrist will go into the tribulation temple and declare himself to be god. The False Prophet will set up the image of the Antichrist in the tribulation temple (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15-16; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev 13:14-15).

Daniel predicted this future abomination of desolation that “on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate” (Dan 9:27).

Jesus predicted the abomination of desolation in his Olivet Discourse (AD 30): “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place whoever reads, let him understand, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:15-16).

Paul wrote that the man of sin (the Antichrist) will oppose God and exalt himself above all that is called God. He will go into the temple of God and declare himself to be God:

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess 2:3-4).

The apostle John predicted that the False Prophet (the beast from the earth) would make an image of the Antichrist (the beast out of the sea) and would animate the image to that it could speak and order those who refuse to worship it to be killed. John wrote of the False Prophet that “he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast would both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” (Rev 13:14-15)

The Gentile Domination of Jerusalem and Israel in the Last Half of the Tribulation period

The Gentile Domination of the Future Temple in Jerusalem

The apostle John wrote,

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months” (Rev 11:1-3).²⁷

²⁷ Since John wrote the book of Revelation around AD 95 from Patmos during the reign of Roman emperor Domitian, John could not have been writing about the temple in Jerusalem which was destroyed in AD 70 by Titus and the Romans. The temple that is measured in Revelation 11:1-3 refers to the tribulation temple which will be on the temple mount in Jerusalem by the middle of the future tribulation period. When will this future temple be built? It could be built (1) before the pre-tribulation rapture of the church, (2) between the rapture and the Antichrist’s signing of a covenant with Israel, or (3) it could be built

John was given a reed by the angel to measure the tribulation temple, the altar (place of sacrifice), and the worshippers. John was told not to measure the court outside the temple. This is probably a reference to the court of the Gentiles in the future tribulation temple.²⁸ John wrote here that in the future the Gentiles will trample the holy city (Jerusalem) underfoot for 42 months (the last half of the tribulation period).

The Persecution of Israel

The Dragon (Satan) will persecute Israel during the last half of the tribulation period (Rev12:13-17).

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and

as a result of the Antichrist (Roman prince) signing a covenant with Israel for seven years (Dan 9:27).

²⁸ In the second temple there were several courts. The court of the priests was reserved for the Jewish priests. The court of Israel was reserved for Jewish men. The court of women was reserved for Jewish women. These three courts were on the same level as the temple building. From this level a person would descend five steps to the outer court which was called the court of the Gentiles. Archaeologists have discovered an inscription from the second temple. It says, "No foreigners may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death." Gentiles were permitted to go into the court of the Gentiles, but they could not go beyond the barricade.

swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:13-17)

The dragon refers to Satan and the woman refers to Israel. Satan will be cast out of heaven in the middle of the tribulation period and will be confined to the earth. He will persecute Israel (the woman) who gave birth to the male child (Jesus Christ). A righteous remnant of Israel will be protected by God during these last three and a half years. Israel will be given the two wings of a great eagle (airplane?) which shall carry them to a place in the wilderness (Petra?). Satan will try to destroy these Jews, but God will protect them (earth opens its mouth to swallow up the flood). Satan will then make war on the rest of her offspring = Messianic Jews who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.

The Antichrist's Reign of Terror

Daniel predicted that the little horn (the Antichrist) would “persecute the saints of the Most High” (Dan 7:25). The word “persecute” literally means to wear out. Daniel also predicted that the “saints will be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time” (Dan 7:25), which refers to the last three and a half years of the tribulation period.

John predicts that the beast out of the sea (the Antichrist) will make war with the saints (tribulation saints; not the church) and overcome them. Many believers will be martyred by the Antichrist for their refusal to take the mark of the beast and for their refusal to worship the beast:

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and

nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:7-8).

The Final Siege and Attack of Jerusalem

The Gentile nations will lay siege to Jerusalem at the end of the tribulation period. Zechariah revealed,

The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples: all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it..." (Zech 12:1-3)

Zechariah predicted that the Gentiles would lay siege of Judah and Jerusalem in the future. All the nations of the earth will be gathered against it. Just as Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's temple in 586 BC and just as Titus and the Romans besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the second temple in AD 70, so the Gentile nations will lay siege to Jerusalem and the tribulation temple at the end of the coming tribulation period.

The Gentile nations will attack and capture Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah made this prediction about the future attack of Jerusalem by Gentile armies:

Behold the day of the Lord is coming and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem. The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city (Zech 14:1-2).

Zechariah predicted the day of the Lord judgment. The nations will be gathered to battle against Jerusalem and the city will be taken. The Gentile armies will loot the homes of the residents of Jerusalem and will rape their women. Half of the population of the city will be taken into captivity. But a righteous remnant will not be killed and will survive.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE END OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

When will the times of the Gentiles end? The times of the Gentiles will end with the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth at the end of the future seven-year tribulation period.

The Destruction of the Image by the Stone Cut Without Hands

King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed that a stone cut without hands would crush the image of the metallic man at its feet. Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar what would happen to the image:

Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Dan 2:35)

The stone cut without hands represents the Lord Jesus Christ who will crush the Gentile kingdoms at the feet (the final form of the Roman empire) at his second coming to earth. Jesus did not destroy the Roman empire at his first advent. He will destroy the final form of the Roman empire at his second advent.

The Coming of the Son of Man

Daniel predicted that the Son of Man would come with the clouds of heaven to earth to reign as king over the nations. Daniel wrote,

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed (Dan 7:13-14).

The Battle of Armageddon

King Jesus (the Jewish Messiah) will defeat with a word the Gentile armies led by the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. John wrote,

Now I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He judges and makes war... And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean followed Him on white horses. Now out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that with it He might strike the nations.... (Rev 19:15a, 19-21)

John wrote,

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev 19:19-21).

The Lord's Destruction of the Nations at Jerusalem

The Lord will destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah predicted that the Lord would fight for Israel: "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zech 12:8-9).

Zechariah then predicted,

Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through my mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. (Zech 14:3-5a)

The Judgment of the Sheep and Goats

King Jesus will judge individual Gentile survivors of the tribulation period to determine who enters the kingdom (Matt 25:31-46). After the battle of Armageddon King Jesus will sit on the throne of His glory and judge the Gentile nations. Jesus gave this prediction in his Olivet Discourse: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats" (Matt 25:31-32).

Believing Gentiles who physically survive the tribulation period (called sheep) will enter the millennial kingdom (Matt 25:33-40). The evidence that they are believers is their actions of caring for Jews in the tribulation period. Believing Gentiles will give food to starving Jews and

drink to thirsty Jews. They will open their homes and provide shelter to Jews who are strangers. They will clothe Jews that are naked. They will visit Jews when they are sick and in prison.

Unbelieving Gentiles who physically survive the tribulation period (called goats) will not enter the kingdom but will be sentenced to hell called everlasting fire (Matt 25:41) and everlasting punishment (Matt 25:46).

THE REIGN OF KING JESUS ON THE DAVIDIC THRONE IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

The times of the Gentiles will be followed by a time of great blessing for the Jews as their Messiah King Jesus will sit on the Davidic throne in the millennial temple and rule the world from Jerusalem.

The Stone That Will Become a Great Mountain

Daniel explained to King Nebuchadnezzar that the stone which became a great mountain in his dream is a future kingdom that God will establish,

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold-the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. (Dan 2:44-45)

After the destruction of the Antichrist (the eleventh king of Dan 7:23-26), Daniel predicted that an everlasting kingdom would be set up for the Jewish people. "Then the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms

under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Dan 7:27). The everlasting kingdom of Messiah Jesus will have two phases: (1) Jesus will reign as King from Jerusalem during the first 1000 years (Rev 20:4,6); (2) Jesus will reign forever as King in the city of New Jerusalem which will be on the new earth (Rev 22:3).

The Reign of King Jesus on the Davidic Throne in the Future Millennial Kingdom

Jesus promised that the overcomers would sit and rule with him in the future kingdom, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Rev 3:21).

Where is Jesus today? Jesus is currently seated on the throne of God the Father in the third heaven. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead and “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:20). Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb 12:2).

Amillennialists and progressive dispensationalists believe that this throne is the throne of David in heaven. But traditional dispensational premillennialists reject this view. The Father’s throne in heaven is a distinct throne from the Davidic throne on earth. Jesus is not sitting on the throne of David today. He is seated on the throne of God the Father in the third heaven.

Jesus is the descendant of David who will sit on the Davidic throne ruling Israel in the future millennial kingdom. His rule over Israel will be the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:16).

King Jesus will sit on the Davidic throne in the millennial temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel wrote, “Then I heard Him

speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, this is the place of *My throne* and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever’ (Ezek 43:6-7). The prophet Jeremiah predicted, “At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts” (Jer 3:17).

The angel told Mary that God would give her son Jesus the throne of his father David and he would reign over Israel forever. “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33).

Zacharias predicted that God had raised up a horn of salvation from the house of David: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David” (Luke 1:68-69).

Jesus will sit on the throne of his glory after his second coming and the apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. So Jesus said, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt 19:28).

Jesus predicted in the Olivet Discourse that he will sit on the throne of his glory after his second coming to earth. Jesus told his disciples, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory” (Matt 25:31).

John predicted that the woman (the nation Israel) would have a male child (Jesus) would rule the nations: “She bore

a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And he child was caught up to God and His throne” (Rev 12:5). Why does the Messiah have to rule with a rod of iron? There will be unsaved Gentiles who are born to the believing Gentile physical survivors of the tribulation period. Many of these Gentiles will rebel against the Lord Jesus at the end of the millennium when Satan is loosed from the abyss and leads the final rebellion (Rev 20:7-10).

The Worship of King Jesus by Gentiles in Jerusalem in the Future Millennial Kingdom

Gentiles will come to Jerusalem each year to worship King Jesus in the millennial kingdom. Those Gentiles who do not come up to worship King Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles will be punished with no rain.

Zechariah predicted,

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zech 14:16-19)

The ones who are left of all the nations will be believing Gentiles who physically survive the tribulation period. After experiencing the judgment of the sheep and goats (Matt 25:31-46) and entering the kingdom as the sheep they will go up to Jerusalem every year to worship the King (Jesus) and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. King Jesus will judge

Gentile nations who refuse to go up to Jerusalem to worship with no rain. This plague of no rain will have devastating economic implications for Gentiles living during the millennial kingdom. Zechariah singled out Egypt saying that if they did not come up to worship the King in Jerusalem that they will have no rain. This is the punishment for all the Gentile nations that refuse to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (a Jewish festival held in the fall).

CONCLUSION

The times of the Gentiles began with the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple in 586 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. In the past four Gentile kingdoms have conquered Jerusalem and dominated Israel during the times of the Gentiles: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's temple in 586 BC Titus and the Romans conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the second temple in AD 70.

After the destruction of the second temple Jews have been dispersed around the world. Many returned to the land of Israel and Israel was reborn as a nation in 1948. The Israelis have had to fight for their survival as a nation. They defeated Arab nations in the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The times of the Gentiles includes the church age from Pentecost to the Rapture.

The times of the Gentiles includes the future seven year tribulation period and involves a final Gentile kingdom that will be ruled by the Antichrist. He will persecute Israel during the last half of the tribulation period. He will defile the temple as the abomination of desolation (idol image of Antichrist) is set up in the tribulation temple and the Antichrist will declare himself to be god and demand that

the world worship him. The Antichrist will persecute and kill many Jews and Gentile believers during the last half of the tribulation period.

The times of the Gentiles will end with the second coming of Christ to the earth at the end of the tribulation period. King Jesus will defeat the Gentile armies at the battle of Armageddon and deliver the righteous remnant of Jews at Jerusalem. King Jesus will then judge the Gentile nations in the sheep-goat judgment. The times of the Gentiles will be followed by the millennial kingdom when King Jesus will reign over Israel and the world as he sits on the Davidic throne in the temple in Jerusalem.