

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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The Gentiles in History and Prophecy

- Introduction
 - Three major divisions of humanity are outlined in Scripture – Gentiles, Jews and the Church.
 - Regarding Israel: God selected Israel to deliver divine revelation to humanity and designated them to be the channel through which the Savior would come.
 - Regarding the Church: God selected the Church to deliver divine revelation (especially regarding His supreme plan of grace) and is preparing them to be the bride for His Son.
 - Regarding Gentiles: God's dealings with the Gentiles are most often a demonstration of His sovereignty and omnipotence.
- Early Prophecies Concerning the Gentiles
 - After the fall of Adam, God prophesied that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head (Gen 3:15).
 - At the time of Noah, God prophesied the destruction of all of mankind except Noah and his family (Gen 6:5-13).
 - At the call of Abraham (Gen 12) mankind was divided into two distinct classes – Jew and Gentile.
 - The first great Gentile power was Egypt and in Egypt Israel grew from a small family into a vast multitude (Ex 1:7).
 - After Israel was freed from Egypt by God (Ex 14:13-31) they became a great nation under David and Solomon.
 - Israel turned their hearts from God and He sent prophets to warn them that they He would raise up a Gentile nation against them.
 - Because they did not repent, the ten tribes of Israel (the northern kingdom) were taken into captivity by the second great Gentile power, Assyria.
 - God sent prophets to warn the people of Judah (the southern kingdom) they would be taken captive as well.
 - Because they did not repent, the people of Judah were taken captive by the third great Gentile power, Babylon.

- The Times of the Gentiles
 - God revealed to Daniel that four great empires would characterize a period of Gentile dominion over Israel (Dan 2).
 - ✦ The head of gold represented Babylon.
 - ✦ The breast and arms of silver represented Medo-Persia.
 - ✦ The belly and thighs of bronze represented Greece.
 - ✦ The legs of iron represented Rome.
 - ✦ The feet of iron and clay represented the post-Roman (western) world which would spring out of Rome.
 - This prophecy was reinforced by Daniel's dream of the four beasts which represented these same four empires (Dan 7).
 - Daniel lived long enough to see the Medes and the Persians conquer Babylon (Dan 5).
 - Two hundred years later Greece (under Alexander the Great) conquered the remnants of the Medo-Persian empire.
 - In the second century B.C. Rome began to rise to power and eventually became the most influential empire of all.
 - This period of the four empires beginning with Babylon is referred to by Christ as "The Times of the Gentiles" (Lk 21:24).
 - The Times of the Gentiles will finally come to an end at the Second Advent of Christ.
 - While most of the Times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled with the rise and fall of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, the last stage of the Roman empire represented by the feet of iron and clay has not had literal fulfillment.
 - After the Rapture of the Church, the feet of iron and clay will take the form of a revived Roman empire which rises out of the western world (Europe, America, etc.) during the Tribulation.
 - The feet of iron and clay will be smashed by the stone cut without hands (Dan 2:45) which is the destruction of the fourth beast (Dan 7:26) at the Second Advent of Christ.
 - Although the dispensation of the Church is occurring prior to the conclusion of the Time of the Gentiles, the Church is not in any way a fulfillment of the Times of the Gentiles prophecies.
 - Nevertheless, trends in world development at the present time seem to foreshadow the setting of the stage for the end-times prophecies to be fulfilled.
 - The study of Gentile prophecy helps us understand history by explaining many events of the past and casting a shadow on the future, providing many insights in understanding how God's plan and program will be carried out to perfection.

- Questions
 - Explain how the Gentiles are one of the three major divisions of humanity in the present age.

 - Summarize prophecy prior to the call of Abraham.

 - What were the first two great Gentile empires, and how was each related to Israel's history?

 - Name the four empires revealed to Daniel as the outline of Gentile world history.

 - What are "The Times of the Gentiles" and how are they described by Christ in Luke 21:24?

 - When, according to Daniel, will the Times of the Gentiles be ended?

 - How is the present Church age related to the Times of the Gentiles?

 - Should we expect future fulfillment of the last stage of the Times of the Gentiles?