

AFTER 2,600 YEARS

THAT FUTURE TIME WHEN ISRAEL WILL AGAIN HOLD THE SCEPTRE

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“Let the Gentiles be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the Gentiles round about.

Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 3:12-16).

From the days of Moses (during the fifteenth century B.C.) to the days of Nebuchadnezzar (the king of Babylon at the end of the seventh century B.C.) a theocracy existed on the earth. Throughout this time, covering a period of over eight hundred years, God’s firstborn son — Israel (Ex. 4:22, 23), exercising the rights of primogeniture — held the sceptre.

But, after eight centuries, during Nebuchadnezzar’s day, God, in His sovereign control of all things, brought conditions to pass after such a fashion that Israel was left with no recourse other than to relinquish the sceptre, with a corresponding end to the theocracy.

And God brought these conditions to pass for a reason and a purpose:

The reason: Israeli disobedience, extending over centuries of time.

The purpose: To ultimately bring Israel to the place of repentance regarding their disobedience.

And, once Israel had relinquished the sceptre, the nations would continue holding the sceptre *until God had worked out His purpose for bringing these conditions to pass. Only then would conditions change.*

The Times of the Gentiles

The period during which the Gentiles hold the sceptre is called in Scripture, “The Times of the Gentiles.” This period, as previously stated, began about 2,600 years ago, dating back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon whom God allowed to uproot the Jewish people from their land, bringing an end to the Old Testament theocracy.

The theocracy though will one day be restored to Israel, with the Times of the Gentiles correspondingly being brought to a close. And this is not simply one of the subjects seen in the Prophets. Rather, this is *the overriding, major subject of the Prophets. All Scripture moves toward this coming day.*

Nor is this something which will be brought to pass at some distant time in the future. Rather, *this is something which will be brought to pass in the immediate future, during the days of the last king of Babylon, typified by Nimrod, the first king of Babylon (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9).*

And that which happened to Nimrod’s kingdom, will happen to this man’s kingdom. The Lord is going to once again come down, take a look at, and destroy this kingdom. This has been set in the type, and it *must* occur in the antitype. This time though, unlike in the past, *the destruction will be final and complete, with Babylon never to rise again (Jer. 51:20-26; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45).*

And as Abraham came into the picture at this time in the past, the descendants of Abraham will be brought back into the picture at this time yet future, with matters then occurring exactly as seen in the overall type in Genesis (Gen. 11:10ff).

All these things have been set forth in the word of God

for all to see; and they have lain there for centuries and millenniums, leaving any and all without excuse for not knowing and understanding what is about to transpire.

A Brief History of the Theocracy

For some eight hundred years preceding Nebuchadnezzar’s day, a theocracy had existed in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The theocracy had come into existence at Mt. Sinai about one year following the Exodus (upon completion of the tabernacle, when the Glory filled the tabernacle [Ex. 40:1ff]). And the theocracy existed in the land almost forty years later after Joshua had led the Israelites across the Jordan river into the land (abt. 1,400 B.C.).

The Old Testament theocracy reached its greatest heights during the days of King David and King Solomon, but it never came anywhere near approaching the heights which God had reserved for the theocracy.

Then, following King Solomon’s death (abt. 925 B.C.), a division occurred in the theocracy, in the kingdom (mainly because of disputes concerning leadership), forming northern and southern segments of the kingdom. Two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) remained in Jerusalem, ruled by Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. And the remaining ten tribes settled in the northern part of the land; Samaria became their capital city, and they were ruled by Jeroboam.

The days of Elijah and Elisha followed [in the northern segment of the kingdom], with a renewed call to repentance. But even with the events of Mt. Carmel during Elijah’s ministry, no lasting change was effected. And things continued to deteriorate throughout the kingdom—something seen even more so in the northern segment of the kingdom than in the southern segment, for not a single godly ruler rose to power in Samaria.

And by the latter part of the eighth century for the northern segment of the kingdom and the latter part of the seventh century for the southern segment of the kingdom, the cup of iniquity for the children of Israel had become full (*cf.* Gen. 15:16).

About 722 B.C., God allowed the Assyrians (the Gentile power of that day) to come over and begin tak-

ing the northern ten tribes into captivity. Then slightly over a century later, about 605 B.C., God allowed the Babylonians [the Gentile power of that day, having previously conquered the Assyrian Empire] to come over and begin taking the southern two tribes into captivity.

This latter removal of the people occurred over time (some twenty years); and about 586 BC, with the Babylonians completing what they had begun, the Glory departed from the temple, resulting in the theocracy coming to an end (Ezek. 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23).

And the Times of the Gentiles, with the Gentiles holding the sceptre, has existed ever since.

How Much Longer?

How much longer will the Times of the Gentiles last? The answer to that question is clearly stated time after time in Scripture.

This period of time will last *until God has accomplished His purpose for removing the sceptre from Israel's hands, placing it in the nations' hands, uprooting His people from their land, and scattering them out among the same nations which then held the sceptre.*

Rather than ruling at the head of the nations, with the nations being blessed through and evangelized by Israel, the nations would now rule over Israel, with the blessings and evangelization of the nations being withheld.

Then, beyond the preceding, the Jewish people would increasingly find themselves hated and persecuted by the nations. And God would allow this to continue until His purpose for bringing these conditions to pass had been fulfilled.

Things though will not continue after this fashion indefinitely. The day is *rapidly approaching* — the coming Tribulation, Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week — when the Jewish people will find themselves in such dire straits that they will have no place to turn other than to the God of their fathers. And this will be brought to pass during the latter part of the coming Tribulation when Satan, through the man to whom he will have given "his power, and his seat [*lit.*, 'his throne'], and great authority" (Rev. 13:2b), *seeks to destroy the Jewish people from off the face of the earth.*

In that day, *which can only be in the very near future*, God's purpose for that which He brought to pass 2,600 years ago will be fulfilled. *The Jewish people will be brought to the place of repentance.*

(Note something about blessings and evangelization among the nations being withheld because of *the current condition and state of Israel*. Though Israel is presently out of place in the world in relation to God's calling, plans, and purposes for the nation, *the very presence of the nation in the world* [though completely out of place in the preceding respect] can only result in an issuing forth of some things connected with the nation's calling.

For example, *note the vast number of Jews whom God has used in recent times to bring about scientific discoveries, particularly in the field of medicine. And even where a Jew is not seen as directly involved, the Jewish people cannot possibly be absent, for God views and deals with the nations through Israel* [cf. Deut. 32:8-10; Ezek. 5:5; Zech. 2:8].

Or, any evangelistic efforts throughout the present 2,000-year dispensation can occur only because of the presence of the Jewish people. "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22b). *The one new man "in Christ" has a Jewish Saviour, uses a Jewish book, and has been grafted into an existing Jewish trunk. And this new man, today, can take the message to the nations, as well as to the Jew, only because of the continuing existence of the Jews.*

[If the Jewish people could be *completely removed*, conditions worldwide would become very much like they existed in the garden in Eden following Adam partaking of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The question which God asked at this that, calling to Adam, "Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9), *would then exist relative to the nations worldwide, for, again, God views and deals with the nations through Israel.*

And, if positive conditions of this nature can exist with Israel even in the nation's current state [which it can and does], think how conditions will be following that time when God brings things in the world to pass after such a fashion that the Jewish people cry out to the God of their fathers in repentance.)

Then...

In that coming day, after the Jewish people have

been brought to the place of repentance, then God will begin to work with the Jewish people once again, and for the final time, *relative to restoration.*

The Jewish people possess *a promise*, dating back to the days of Moses, reiterated during the days of Solomon, then by the Prophets:

"If they [the Jewish people] confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me;

And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land" (Lev. 26:40-42; cf. II Chron. 6:24-27; 7:12-14; Ezek. 36:16-39:29; Joel 2:12-3:21; Jonah 2:1-10).

When the Jewish people fulfill the condition in God's promise, He will do exactly as the Old Testament Scriptures state. God will, at that time, *hear from heaven and, apart from delay, begin acting on behalf of His people in complete accord with His numerous promises — which begin in Genesis and end in Malachi.*

How close are we to that time when God will remove the Church and bring about conditions during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week which, after 2,600 years of Gentile dominance, will bring Israel to the place of repentance?

How close are we to that time when regal conditions between Israel and the nations will be reversed, with the nations then not only being ruled by but evangelized by and blessed through Israel?

The answer to both questions is the same:

We're much, much closer than anyone dares to even think or admit. The hands on the clock are about to strike midnight; the time is almost up; it's almost over.

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