

THE SCEPTRE

ABOUT TO CHANGE HANDS

CHRIST AND HIS CO-HEIR'S ABOUT TO ASCEND THE THRONE

By Arlen L. Chirwood

Why do the heathen [the Gentiles] rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen [the Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2:1-9).

The scene in the second Psalm depicts the final thrust and end of Gentile world power, followed by Christ's rule over the earth. Events in Ps. 2:1ff parallel events in Rev. 19:11ff. There is, however, a near and a far fulfillment of Ps. 2:1-3. The near fulfillment occurred at Christ's first coming, in connection with *His sufferings and humiliation* (Acts 4:23-28); and the far fulfillment will occur at Christ's second coming, in connection with *His glory and exaltation* (Rev. 2:26, 27; 19:15).

The final thrust of Gentile world power under Satan will be against the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" Himself. *Gentile world power will be reduced*

to naught, the sceptre will change hands, and God's Son, with His co-heirs, will then reign supreme and rule the earth in righteousness with a rod of iron.

Times...Fulness of the Gentiles

The day in which we presently live is known in Scripture as "the times of the Gentiles." This expression simply refers to *that period during which Gentile nations hold the sceptre.*

This period began with the conquest of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar about twenty-six hundred years ago (605 B.C.), and it will end following a future conquest of Jerusalem under the Antichrist. And Jerusalem, in that future day, is to be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

This action by the Gentile nations has to do with a final treading under foot during the rule of Antichrist; and according to Matt. 24:15-26 (which parallels Luke 21:20-24) and Rev. 11:2, this will occur during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. Christ will then return and bring an end to Gentile world supremacy.

"The fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25), on the other hand, is an expression referring to *a work of God among the Gentiles during a part of the period known as "the times of the Gentiles."* This activity involves God turning His attention to the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14).

Contextually in Romans chapter eleven, the time during which God brings this to pass is following Israel's unbelief and rejection at Christ's first coming — over six hundred years after the beginning of "the times of the Gentiles." And by comparing the same context with related Scripture, it is clear that "the fulness of the Gentiles" covers the complete period extending from the time of Israel's unbelief and rejection at Christ's first coming to the time of Israel's belief and acceptance at His second coming, which would cover time throughout both *the present dispensation and the future Tribulation.*

God brings "the fulness of the Gentiles" to pass during the present dispensation through placing believing Gentiles together in the same body with believing Jews, forming *the one new man* "in Christ" (vv. 5, 11, 20; cf. Eph. 2:12-15; 3:1-6). During the present dispensation, the Spirit of God is in the world searching for a bride for God's Son who will reign as

consort queen with Him during the Messianic Era. And the bride is being taken from *the one new man* "in Christ," made up mainly of individuals removed from the Gentiles rather than from the Jews (though individuals removed from the Jews are included).

Then, following *the one new man's* removal from the earth at the end of the dispensation (the resurrection and rapture of Christians), numerous Gentiles will be saved during the Tribulation. And, though they will not form part of the bride of Christ, many from this group will hold regal positions in the kingdom as well (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 2:26, 27; 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 20:4-6).

The vast multitude of Gentiles saved during the Tribulation — mainly through the ministry of 144,000 Jewish evangelists during the last three and one-half years — will complete "the fulness of the Gentiles"; and the armies under Antichrist will constitute the final thrust of Gentile supremacy during "the times of the Gentiles."

The period during which God removes from the Gentiles "a people for his name" (effecting "the fulness of the Gentiles"), and the period known as "the times of the Gentiles" (during which Gentiles, because of Israel's disobedience, hold the sceptre), will both end at the same time — with Christ's return. The return of Christ will immediately follow "the fulness of the Gentiles" being realized (Rom. 11:26; Acts 15:16); and the return of Christ will, as well, through the destruction of Gentile world power, bring an end to "the times of the Gentiles."

God's removal of "a people for his name," from among the Gentiles, is for purposes involving *the government of the earth*, to be realized following "the times of the Gentiles." That is, during the concluding two millenniums of Gentile supremacy under Satan, God has been removing from the Gentiles "a people for his name" to exercise supremacy over the nations during the coming age.

The reason for man's very existence upon the earth involves *dominion over the earth.* Adam was brought into existence for this purpose (Gen. 1:26-28), Israel was brought into existence for this purpose (Ex. 4:22, 23), and *the Church* was brought into existence for this same purpose (Heb. 2:10).

Because of Israel's disobedience and unbelief, "the times of the Gentiles" and "the fulness of the Gentiles" were both made necessary. Israel's disobedience during the days of the Old Testament theo-

racy led to the nation being uprooted and dispersed among the Gentile nations, beginning “the times of the Gentiles”; and Israel’s rejection and unbelief surrounding their Messiah and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens at Christ’s first coming led to the setting aside of the nation, anticipating God’s removal of “a people for his name” from among the Gentiles.

The present exercise of Gentile supremacy (“the times of the Gentiles”) is simply a rule by fallen man under Satan which can last only until God has accomplished His purpose for Man’s Day (in which “the fulness of the Gentiles” will occur). The length of the period during which Gentiles will be allowed to exercise supremacy is shown by Nebuchadnezzar’s image in Daniel chapter two. Gentile power, depicted by the image, came into existence during the days of Nebuchadnezzar; and it will pass out of existence during the days of Antichrist (Dan. 2:31-45; cf. Dan. 7:1-14; 8:1-25).

That depicted by the image in Daniel chapter two came into existence because of *the disobedience* of God’s firstborn son, Israel; and that depicted by this image will one day pass out of existence, at the time of Israel’s repentance, through *the action* of God’s firstborn Son, Jesus.

The image is seen smitten in its final form by Christ at the time of His return, bringing an end to Gentile supremacy and opening the way for God’s firstborn Sons (*three firstborn Sons* in that day — Jesus, the Church, and Israel) to exercise the rights of primogeniture.

With this in mind, it should be noted that there is possibly nothing more out of place in the world today than Christians becoming involved with the present Gentile governmental system under Satan. Christians comprise *a separate, distinct creation*; they comprise *the one new man*, called into existence to participate in *a government under Christ during the coming age, after the present system under Satan has been destroyed*. And they are to fix their attention on that future day, following “the times of the Gentiles.” They are to pray for and be subject to incumbent rulers (Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-3; I Peter 2:13-17), but they are not themselves to hold the sceptre during the present day and time (I Cor. 4:2-5; II Tim. 2:4, 5).

Removed From, Positioned In

The Gentile nations, although they have been

allowed to rule the earth under Satan throughout “the times of the Gentiles,” are, in one sense of the word, not in a position to rule. Christ’s future rule, Israel’s future rule, and the future rule of the Church all center around exercising *the rights belonging to the firstborn*; and Gentile nations are in no position to exercise these rights. The Gentiles are “aliens from the commonwealth [Gk., *politeia*, ‘citizenship,’ ‘political activity’] of Israel” (Eph. 2:12). *They possess no birthright*.

(The Greek word *politeia* in Eph. 2:12 is a cognate form of the word *politikos*, from which the English word “politics” is derived. Note the use of *politeuma*, another cognate form of the same word, with the same basic meaning, in Phil. 3:20:

“For our conversation [*politeuma*, ‘political sphere of activity’] is in heaven [‘heavens’]; from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”)

The rights of the firstborn, the “birthright,” has to do with *firstborn sons*. Israel’s standing as “firstborn” while still in Egypt during the days of Moses (Ex. 4:22) placed this nation in an entirely different standing to that held by any Gentile nation. Israel had been adopted, and no Gentile nation has ever entered or will ever enter into this experience (Rom. 9:4; cf. Ps. 147:19, 20).

Gentile nations were to be ruled by *the one nation* in possession of the rights of primogeniture. Gentile nations themselves were not to rule, for they did not possess primogenital rights. And their present rule, although allowed by God, is something which must end, *if for no other reason* than the alienated position occupied by the nations. The sceptre *must* ultimately be delivered into the hands of those in a position to exercise the rights of primogeniture. Only then will God bestow His full blessings upon mankind in accordance with Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:17, 18.

This is the reason for the existence of *the nation of Israel* and the bringing into existence of *the one new man* “in Christ.” Israel awaits her blindness being lifted *after* God completes His work with respect to “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:26); and God taking out of the Gentiles “a people for his name” will bring into existence, following the adoption (Rom. 8:23), a second segment of mankind placed in a position to exercise the rights of primogeniture. Israel,

still retaining her standing as *firstborn*, will exercise these rights upon earth (following the nation’s repentance and conversion); and the Church, coming into the position of *firstborn* (following the adoption), will exercise these rights from the heavens over the earth.

God is presently in the process of accomplishing a work which will result in “many sons” being brought “unto glory” (Heb. 2:10; cf. Rom. 8:18, 19). These “sons” are mainly individuals being removed from the nations presently holding the sceptre, with a view to these sons one day holding the sceptre. The immersion in the Spirit of those believing on the Lord Jesus Christ places them “in Christ,” a part of *the one new man*. And because they are positionally “in Christ” (Who is Abraham’s Seed), this allows God to recognize them as “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (cf. Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:26-29).

Then there is also the “remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5), consisting of believing Jews who avail themselves of the redemption which is “in Christ.” And, through this same immersion in the Spirit, believing Jews find themselves in exactly the same position as believing Gentiles — a part of *the one new man*, becoming “fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise *in Christ* by the gospel” (Eph. 3:1-6).

Believing Gentiles are being removed from the nations of the earth, and believing Jews are being removed from the nation of Israel. Individuals from both groups relinquish their national identities, becoming *new creations* “in Christ,” part of *the one new man* (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:11-15).

Believing Gentiles come into possession of a calling, *a heavenly calling*; and believing Jews relinquish their *earthly calling* and come into possession of a higher calling, *a heavenly calling*. These individuals are being removed from the nations of the earth and from the nation of Israel respectively, with a view to being positioned *in heavenly places during the coming age*. Those occupying such positions will sit with Christ on His throne and, in this capacity, *rule the nations with a rod of iron, as co-heirs with Christ* (cf. Rom. 8:17; Rev. 3:21).

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