

Loris First Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #42 – The Gentiles in History and Prophecy

Note: Most information based on pages 297-300 of the book “Major Bible Themes” by Lewis Sperry Chaffer.

The Gentiles in the Program of God

1. In both history and prophecy, three major divisions of humanity may be observed in Scripture, stated simply in 1 Corinthians 10:32 as the purpose of God relating to the Jews, to the Gentiles, and to the church of God.

1 Corinthians 10:32 *“Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God.”*

2. To this can be added the ministering of God to and through angels which usually is not considered a major element of human history or prophecy.
3. In contrast with God’s purpose for Israel as the primary means of divine revelation and special dealing and the channel through which Christ could come, and His purpose for the church to reveal supremely His grace, God’s purpose for the Gentiles seems to be related to demonstrating His sovereignty and His omnipotence.

Early Prophecies Concerning the Gentiles

1. In one sense, Gentile prophecy began in the Garden of Eden, as the Gentile participated to some extent in the purpose of God in salvation.
2. Early in Genesis, prophecy is given concerning the flood of Noah’s time which wiped out the human race except for Noah and his family.
3. Likewise, history records the judgment of God upon the Gentiles at the time of the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:1-9 *“Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’ They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’ But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, ‘If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, LET US GO DOWN AND CONFUSE THEIR LANGUAGE so they will not understand each other.’ So THE LORD SCATTERED THEM from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there THE LORD SCATTERED THEM over the face of the whole earth.”*

4. Beginning in Genesis 12, however, the human race is divided into two classes:
 - a. God begins to introduce the promised seed which would come from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - b. All others continued in their place as Gentiles; and the dealings of God with Gentiles in relation to Israel are basically recorded in Scripture.
5. The first great Gentile power was Egypt, and in Egypt, Israel grew from a small family into a great nation, as recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament.
6. While in due time Israel became a great nation under David and Solomon, the ten tribes were carried off into captivity by the second great Gentile power, Assyria, in 721 B.C.
7. The judgment of God inflicted on Israel by the Assyrians was faithfully prophesied in the years preceding the event and just as faithfully fulfilled.
8. The major role of the Gentiles in relation to Israel, however, begins with the Babylonian empire, the third in a series of great empires but the first of four empires which became the subject of Daniel's prophecies.

The Times of the Gentiles

1. To Daniel the prophet were given two of the three major programs of God, that is, the program of God for Israel and the program of God for the Gentiles.
2. In a series of divine revelations beginning with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, and continuing with subsequent revelations to Daniel, God revealed that four great empires beginning with Babylon would characterize the period of Gentile dominion over Israel.
3. This is seen in the great image of Daniel 2:
 - a. the head of gold represented Babylon;
 - b. the upper part of the body of silver, the empire of the Medes and the Persians;
 - c. the lower part of the body of brass, the empire of Greece;
 - d. and the iron legs and feet, the empire of Rome.

This truth is reinforced in Daniel 7, where the four beasts represent the same four empires.

4. Daniel lived to see the second empire (the Medes and the Persians) conquer Babylon in 539 B.C., as recorded in Daniel 5.
5. Two hundred years later the Grecian Empire led by Alexander the Great conquered the remnants of the empire of the Medes and Persians.
6. Then in the second century B.C. the Roman Empire began its rise to power and became the greatest and most influential empire of all time.

7. The period of the four empires beginning with Babylon is referred to by Christ as “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) and is characterized by Jerusalem’s being under Gentile control.

Luke 21:24 *“They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES ARE FULFILLED.”*

8. While for brief periods Gentile control of Jerusalem has been relinquished, no final deliverance of Jerusalem from the power of the Gentiles will be fulfilled until the second coming of Christ.
9. Most of the times of the Gentiles have already been fulfilled as seen in the rise and fall of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
10. The last stage of the Roman empire, however, symbolized by the feet of the image in Daniel 2 and by the ten-horn stage of the beast of Daniel 7, has not had literal fulfillment.
11. The fourth beast, according to Scripture, will be destroyed by the Son of Man coming from heaven, as portrayed in Daniel 7 or in the smiting stone of Daniel 2 which destroys the image of Nebuchadnezzar.
12. Based on these prophecies, many interpreters believe a future revival of the Roman empire is in prospect which will come about after the church has been raptured and taken to heaven, but before the second coming of Christ to set up His kingdom.
13. This situation will arise in what Scripture refers to as “the time of the end” (Dan. 11:35) and will be a dominant factor in world history and prophecy as they relate to the period leading up to the Second Coming.
14. Following the completion of the times of the Gentiles at the second coming of Christ to the earth, Gentiles who are saved and on earth in the millennial kingdom will enjoy also special blessing from God, as will be brought out in later study of the millennial kingdom.
15. Taken as a whole, the biblical outline of prophecy concerning the Gentiles is the outline of world history, which explains many events of the past and casts a shadow on the future.
16. Present world conditions are in line with everything the Bible prophesies and seem to indicate a rapid approach to the consummation in the time of the end which will be preceded by the rapture of the church and will include the events relating to the time of the end and the second coming of Christ to bring His millennial kingdom.
17. The present age does not seem to advance the fulfillment of Gentile prophecy and does not seem to be in the fore-view of the Old Testament prophesied program for the Gentiles.
18. It is as if the prophetic fore-view were suspended on the day of Pentecost, to be resumed on the day of the Rapture.

19. Nevertheless, trends in world development at present seem to foreshadow a setting of the stage for the end of the age, with the implication that the present age is nearing the close and the fulfillment of Gentile prophecy is about to be resumed.
20. The study of Gentile prophecy is, accordingly, an important aspect of the total prophetic program and provides many insights in understanding what God is doing today and what God purposes to do in the future.

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Doctrine #42 – The Gentiles in History and Prophecy

1. Read Pages 1-4 from the Doctrine#42 Study Guide by next Wednesday.
2. Answer the following Questions about “The Gentiles” as you read:

a. The Gentiles in the Program of God

- 1) What are the three major divisions of humanity that may be observed in both the history and prophecy of Scripture? (page 1, top; see also 1Corinthians 10:32)

- 2) What appears to be God’s primary purpose in relating to the Gentiles throughout history and prophecy? (page 1, top-middle)

- 3) When did Gentile prophecy begin? (page 1, middle)

- 4) What are some of the consequences of God’s judgment of the Gentiles at the Tower of Babel? (Genesis 11:1-9)

- 5) Beginning in Genesis 12, God divided the human race into what two classes? (page 2, top)

- 6) True or False. The first great Gentile power revealed in the Bible was Egypt. (page 2, top)

- 7) What was the second great Gentile power which conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and carried off 10 Tribes of Israelites and scattered them into captivity throughout the Gentile nations? (page 2, top)

- 8) The major role of the Gentiles in relation to Israel (when it comes to fulfilling prophecy) really begins with what major Gentile empire? (page 2, middle)

b. The Times of the Gentiles

- 1) Which prophet in the Old Testament was given the prophetic program of God for Israel and the prophetic program of God for the Gentiles which is being fulfilled throughout human history? (page 2, middle)
- 2) What are the four great Gentile empires that Daniel prophesied would have dominion over Israel? (page 2, middle-bottom; see also Daniel 2)
- 3) What was the Gentile empire which overthrew the Babylonian empire and began to allow Jews to eventually return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding that city? (page 2, bottom; Daniel 5; Ezra 1:1-4)
- 4) Which great Grecian leader helped the Greeks overthrow the Persian empire? (page 2, bottom)
- 5) In what century did the Roman Empire begin to rise in power and become the greatest and most influential Gentile empire of all time? (page 2, bottom)
- 6) What did Christ call the period of the four empires beginning with Babylon and continuing until His days where the Romans had dominion over Israel? (page 3, top; see Luke 21:24)
- 7) True or False. After Christ rose from the dead, the Gentile control over Jerusalem was ended and the Jews have remained in control of their own land ever since. (page 3, top)

- 8) How is the last “unfulfilled” stage of the Roman empire (and its dominion over Israel) symbolized in Scripture? (page 3, top; see also Daniel 2:42-43; Daniel 7:8)
- 9) What will happen to the fourth beast (i.e. the fourth “Gentile” empire) according to Scripture? (page 3, middle-top; see also Daniel 2:44; Daniel 7:21-22)
- 10) Following the completion of the times of the Gentiles at the second coming of Christ to the earth, what will happen to the Gentiles who are “saved” and on earth during the millennial kingdom? (page 3, middle-bottom)
- 11) True or False. Taken as a whole, the biblical outline of prophecy concerning the Gentiles is the outline of world history, which explains many events of the past and points toward what will happen in the future. (page 3, bottom)
- 12) True or False. The present age appears to be continuing to advance the fulfillment of Gentile prophecy and was completely explained in O.T. prophecy. (page 3, bottom)
- 13) What do current trends in world development at present seem to foreshadow? (page 4, top)
- 14) True or False. The study of Gentile prophecy is, accordingly, an important aspect of the total prophetic program and provides many insights in understanding what God is doing today and what God purposes to do in the future. (page 4, top)