

back in the Land, but still have to be taught many lessons. It is God's Land, not theirs. The 'historic right to the land' that they claim rests on the covenant and nothing else, and that matter has yet to be resolved. We now await a manifestation of judgemental power in Israel that will shake the world. God will sanctify Himself and magnify His Name. The glory will return; God will come home (Ezek. 43:7), and succeed in mercy where Israel failed in rebellion. In that day there will be one Lord and His Name one.

Jesus the Saviour fulfilled the redemptive principle. He kept the Law, manifested the Name, sanctified himself, has been glorified, and will achieve unity. All the principles of Leviticus/Ezekiel are in Jesus' prayer. They are achieved by his sacrificial love (Jno. 17:23-26). He fulfilled the tabernacle in his own body, and his life of obedience made his blood very precious. Under the Law the blood of sacrifice was united with the altar. Symbolically the given and taken life was

joined to the presence of God symbolised by the altar.

Israel failed to keep the Word. God brought forth the Word-become-flesh, and because of him we live. His delight in God's law resulted in total obedience, and his love of his Father and those who believe in him has produced the unity of love and truth. And, of course, the two sanctifications are part of that grand Divine programme that will culminate in the vision of Revelation 21:3:

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God".

Finally, Ezekiel 20:9,22 and 38:23; 39:21 provide a further thought. Israel were rebellious in Egypt and the wilderness, but God withheld His hand because of the onlooking nations. Eventually the nations did see the avenging of the quarrel of the covenant when Israel were scattered. But they will see greater things in the future.

Your Letters



The times of the Gentiles

The view that the "seven times" of Daniel 4:16 represent 2,520 years, as suggested by Brother Clements in his article ([Mar. 2009, p. 32](#)), is widely held in the Brotherhood. This assumes that there is more to the dream than what we are told by Daniel himself. But should not the interpretation given by the inspired prophet carry more weight than human speculations as to its meaning? When Daniel explicitly declares that this prophecy relates to a period in Nebuchadnezzar's own personal life—"this is the interpretation" (v. 24)—are we justified in suggesting that the prophecy is really about the course of human history over the following 2,500 years?

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that "The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong" (v. 20), represented Nebuchadnezzar himself: "it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong" (v. 22). Nebuchadnezzar was bereft of all power and authority for the "seven times" of his banishment. If "the times of the Gentiles" denotes a period of Gentile *ascendancy*, then Nebuchadnezzar's banishment is hardly a fitting representation.

And Nebuchadnezzar's story had a happy ending. He relates that after he lifted up his eyes to heaven and "blessed the most High" (v. 34), "mine honour and brightness returned unto me . . . and *I was established in my kingdom*, and excellent majesty was added unto me" (v. 36). Will this happen to Babylon in the latter days? Will Babylon "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven" (v. 37)? Surely Nebuchadnezzar's personal experience is the exact opposite of the circumstances that it is deemed to represent.

Christ's prediction, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times [Gk. *kairos*] of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24), relates to the downtreading that began with the Roman desolation of A.D. 70. With regard to the word used in this passage, Vine says, "Broadly speaking, *chronos* expresses the duration of a period, *kairos* stresses it as marked by certain features . . . *Chronos* marks quantity, *kairos*, quality". Christ was not so much alluding to the duration of that period as to a unique aspect of it: "blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom. 11:25). Gentile ascendancy over Jerusalem and the calling of the Gentiles are two phenomena—roughly coincident with

each other—that characterise the “times of the Gentiles”. And since both are a consequence of Jewish obduracy, Jerusalem will not be entirely free of Gentile oppression until her “blindness” has ended, for the two are closely linked: “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned” (Isa. 40:2).

Christ warned the Jewish elders, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Mt. 21:43); and Paul and Barnabas told the Jews at Antioch, “seeing ye put it [the Word of God] from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46). The times of the Gentiles began with the hardening of Jewish hearts against the gospel message, and will only end when that process is reversed.

If the times of the Gentiles had ended in 1914, for example, then God would not—almost 100 years later—still be taking *out of the Gentiles* a people for His Name (15:14). Similarly, if Jerusalem’s Gentile downtreading had ended in 1967, then that terrible prospect, “the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity” (Zech. 14:2), would not still lie ahead. The events of 1948 and 1967 were important prerequisites for the fulfilment of latter-day prophecies, but it cannot yet be said that “the times of the Gentiles” are at an end.

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Reply

Brother Camplin’s contention that the times of the Gentiles commenced with the treading down of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is historically and prophetically incorrect. They began when Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “Thou art this head of gold” (Dan. 2:38), and revealed in the symbolism of the metallic image the course of history bearing on God’s land and people until the return of the Lord. Jerusalem was effectively “trodden down of the Gentiles” when the city was invaded by Pompey in 63 B.C. when Palestine became a province of the Roman Empire. The fact that Jesus used the word *kairos* when speaking of the times of the Gentiles relates to the final destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and later, which was certainly of a different quality from the invasion and occupation that preceded it.

Given that the times of the Gentiles began with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and that sub-

sequent occupiers of the Land were represented by different metals, it is entirely consistent to see the stump of the Babylonish tree banded with iron and bronze with its roots in the ground as symbolic of the philosophical origins of human government rooted in the cultures of Babylon, Greece and Rome, which persist to this day. The fact that Nebuchadnezzar recovered and was restored to his kingdom has no Biblical prophetic significance, since he had already fulfilled his Divinely ordained destiny by invading Jerusalem in 606 B.C., when Daniel was taken captive, and again in 597 when Solomon’s temple was destroyed and Ezekiel went into exile. Thus the question, “Will Babylon ‘praise and extol and honour the King of heaven’ . . . ?”, in which the latter-day antitypical Babylon is implied, is misconceived.

The phrase “the times of the Gentiles” does not refer to an *ascendancy*, but to the historical fact that the Jewish era came to an end with the destruction of the polity of Israel in 606 B.C. That is exactly 2,520 years before the commencement of World War 1, an unprecedented event paralleling the time of destruction of the Jewish commonwealth, but out of which came the beginnings of restoration via the Balfour Declaration. The first exiles returned from Babylon in 537 B.C., exactly 2,520 years before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This seems more than a coincidence.

What is the point of prophecy unless subsequent generations of believers can be encouraged by the evidence of its fulfilment? The “human speculations” that Brother Camplin queries are honest attempts by generations of Bible students to understand what God has revealed to His servants, and are not to be lightly cast aside. The period of “seven times” of Daniel 4:16 is just such a matter, and, taken together with the meaning of the symbolism of the banded tree stump and the well-attested meaning of ‘times’ elsewhere in Scripture, confirms the accuracy of the interpretation.

It is not suggested that the times of the Gentiles ended in 1914, nor that “Jerusalem’s Gentile downtreading . . . ended in 1967”. They will not end until Christ returns and overthrows the kingdoms of men. But “this generation”, the one witnessing the shooting forth of the Jewish fig tree, comprehends a period of 100 years in which all the parallels of prophetic fulfilment will be completed according to the Divine timetable.

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