

The Times of the Gentiles

Luke 21:24

Understanding prophecy means understanding **the times of the Gentiles**. A definition of **the times of the Gentiles** can be gleaned from **Luke 21:24** that says: **They will fall by the sword and be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. The times of the Gentiles** can best be described as that long period of time from the Babylonian captivity in 586 BC to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation, during which time **the Gentiles** will dominate the City of **Jerusalem** and the Jews. This does not rule out temporary Jewish control of the city, but all such Jewish control will be temporary until the Second Coming. Such temporary control was exercised during the Maccabean Period (164-163 BC), the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (AD 66-70), the Second Jewish Revolt (the Bar Cochba Revolt) against Rome (AD 132-135), and since 1967 as a result of the Six Day War. This, too, is temporary, as **Gentiles** will continue to trample **Jerusalem** down for at least another three-and-a-half years during the Great Tribulation (**Revelation 11:1-2**). As a result, any Jewish takeover of the city of **Jerusalem** before the Messiah returns must be viewed as temporary and does not mean that **the Times of the Gentiles** have ended. There is no phasing out, but a sudden end once and for all. Thus, **the Times of the Gentiles** can only end with the climatic Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

To understand the course of **the times of the Gentiles** there are four passages in the book of **Daniel** and two passages in the book of **Revelation** that need to be studied. In this section we will study **Daniel 2:31-45, 7:1-28, 8:1-25, and 11:3-45**. But later, while we study the book of **Revelation** itself, we will look more closely at **Revelation 13:1-10 and 17:7-14**. There are several visions in **Daniel**, but four specifically pertain to **the times of the Gentiles**. Each one of these visions builds and elaborates on the previous ones.

First, in **Daniel 2:31-25**, King **Nebuchadnezzar** had **a vision** that **Daniel** successfully interpreted. **Daniel** saw an awesome statue having a head of gold (Babylonian Empire), the breast and arms of silver (Medo-Persian Empire), the belly and thighs of brass (the Greek Empire), legs of iron (the Imperialists), culminating with the feet and toes of part iron and part clay (the Ten Kingdoms Stage). This passage provides a timeline of all that will follow.

Secondly, in **Chapter 7**, Daniel had his **first vision** where he elaborated on the four Gentile kingdoms that were seen in the statue of **Chapter 2**. We can compare these chapters in three ways. *First, they are visionary.* In **Chapter 2** the visionary was a pagan king, **Nebuchadnezzar**, but in **Chapter 7** the visionary was **Daniel himself**. *Secondly, we can compare the interpreters.* Daniel was the interpreter in **Chapter 2**, but an angel was the interpreter in **Chapter 7**. *Thirdly, we can compare the two perspectives.* **Daniel 2** gives us the perspective of **the times of the Gentiles** from a human viewpoint as something majestic, but **Daniel 7** gives us the perspective from God's viewpoint as something dreadful. There were four kingdoms, pictured as four beasts.

Thirdly, in **Chapter 8**, Daniel describes the **second vision** ADONAI gave him. The vision concerns a portion of the overall period of time symbolized in the first vision; namely, regarding Medo-Persia and Greece. Reference is made also to the Antichrist of future time in the interpretation of the vision in this chapter. Once more, animals are used for symbolism, but in place of the bear and leopard that were used in the first vision for those two kingdoms, a two-horned ram and a one horned goat are used. In this vision also, a little horn appears. He would be a foreshadowing of the antichrist that will follow his pattern in the Great Tribulation of the future.³⁶

Lastly, in his **third vision**, Daniel first describes the near historical future of the ensuing battle between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria after Alexander's death (**Daniel 11:5-35**). Then he turns to the far eschatological future to give us a more detailed look at the antichrist (**Daniel 11:36-39**). Daniel prophesies about the Ten Kingdoms that the antichrist will conquer to establish his absolute imperialism (**Daniel 11:40-44**), and then Daniel even goes on to describe his eventual death (**Daniel 11:45**).

Therefore, four Gentile kingdoms will control **the times of the Gentiles** before it is succeeded by a Jewish kingdom (**Daniel 7:17-18**). The first kingdom would be **the Babylonians**, the second would be **the Medo-Persians**, the third would be **the Greeks**, and the fourth kingdom would be **the Imperialists**. However, the last Kingdom will crush all those kingdoms, and that Kingdom will be the messianic Kingdom.