

## **“The Times of the Gentiles”**

The phrase **“*The Times of the Gentiles*”** was used by Jesus in Luke 21:24. This is the only place this exact phrase is used in the Bible. This statement of Jesus presupposes that we have some background knowledge of Old Testament history, which Jesus’ statement builds on.

From the time of Israel’s conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua (c. 1406 BC) until the time of the Babylonian Captivity (c. 586 BC) was a period of about 800 years (i.e. 820 years).

It was because Israel sinned against their God and egregiously violated their covenant relationship with Him (cf. Jer. 22:8-9), that He sent them into EXILE, as seen in the Babylonian Captivity.

### **2 Chronicles 36:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

**17** Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand.

The last king to sit on David’s throne in Jerusalem was King Zedekiah (cf. 2 Kg. 25:6-7; Jer. 39:6-7; 52:9-11; Ezek. 12:13; 17:16).

There were three sieges of Jerusalem by Babylon, occurring in 605 BC, 597 BC, and in 586 BC. The final siege in 586 resulted in the destruction of the temple. This was a most significant event in the history of Israel.

The temple was “God’s House”, where the manifestation of His glory resided. Therefore, the Jews thought their temple to be impregnable (cf. Jer. 7:4). And that would have been true except for the fact that God vacated the temple prior to its destruction, as chronicled in Ezekiel 9-11.

So go the leaders – so go the people. Part of Israel’s problem was their lack of godly kings.

God’s disciplinary judgment on Israel involved Him bringing judgment against the ruling scepter of the Davidic line (cf. 2 Chron. 7:17-22; Ezek. 21:10-27). And yet, there remained this promise:

### **Genesis 49:10 (NKJV)**

10 The scepter shall not depart from **Judah**, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **Until Shiloh comes**; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

The scepter is a symbol of royal power. Government and rulership belong to the tribe of Judah. God sovereignly allowed Saul to be Israel's first king, but the spirit of this was the people's choice. God's choice was David, a man after God's own heart, from the tribe of Judah (cf. 1 Sam. 15-16). The royal dignity attained in Judah (through David) was made permanent by the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam. 7; which is to be fully realized in the Kingship of Jesus Christ, Who is the "greater David".

From David on, the recognized leadership role on the throne over Israel belonged to Judah; and specifically, to the line of David.

Note that not a single good king ever came out of the Northern Kingdom. God, while sovereign over all that was happening, was not in that. The scepter belongs to Judah. This truth will culminate in Jesus, the Messiah.

After the fall of the Judah in 586 BC, a king has never been seated on David's throne in Jerusalem. The next King to come was Jesus. He presented Himself to Israel as her legitimate King, but they rejected Him. Therefore, there will be no King proper sitting on the throne in Jerusalem until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

The turning point is seen in the phrase, ***"Until Shiloh comes"***.

It is generally agreed that ***"Until Shiloh comes"*** is a Messianic designation. The rabbis said that **Shiloh** means ***"to whom it belongs"***. The sense then, is that the scepter – the right to rule, belongs to the tribe of Judah. It will remain there until the One comes to Whom it ultimately belongs; namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Ezekiel 21:25–27 (NKJV)**

**25** 'Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, [**Zedekiah**] whose day has come, whose iniquity shall end,

**26** thus says the Lord God: "Remove the turban, and **take off the crown**; Nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted.

**27 Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown!** It shall be no longer, **Until He comes whose right it is**, And I will give it to Him."

The point is that the Davidic ruler (i.e. Zedekiah) would be the last ruler to sit on David's throne until it is occupied by the Messiah. From the fall of Zedekiah to the enthronement of the Messiah would be a period

characterized by the lack of a Davidic Ruler sitting on the throne, and by Gentile domination over Israel. This long period of time is called THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES and it continues on to this very day as we await the coming of the Lord Jesus and His rightful rule!