

The Moral and Religious Conditions of the Times of the Gentiles

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

The sermon explores the moral and religious conditions of the times of the Gentiles, as described in the four chapters of the book of Daniel, and their prophetic significance.

Topics: "End Times", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Arno Clemens Gaebelein delves into the historical events recorded in the four chapters following Nebuchadnezzar's dream, highlighting their prophetic meanings. These chapters depict the moral conditions during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede, as well as foreshadow events at the close of the Gentile age. The purpose of the Holy Spirit in guiding Daniel's pen through these historical accounts is to reveal the moral conditions that will persist until the end of the times of the Gentiles.

Transcript

The four chapters which follow the great dream of Nebuchadnezzar are of a historical character. They do not contain direct prophecies, but record certain events which transpired during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, his successor and grandson Belshazzar and Darius, the Mede. On the personal history of these three persons and where they are found in profane history we have little to say, as a deeper examination of this subject would lead us too far and would be tedious. But this much must be said that the criticism which charged Daniel with being incorrect has been completely silenced by the Babylonian cylinders of Cyrus and Nabonaid and the so-called annalistic tablets, the very records of those days. It is true the personality of Darius the Mede has not yet been definitely located historically. However, we do not believe the Bible because its historical statements can be verified from profane history. We believe the Bible because its records are divinely inspired and therefore correct. What would we know of the genuineness of these ancient tablets and cylinders covered with cuneiform inscriptions if it were not for the Bible? These witnesses from the stones, which indeed cry out, do not verify the Bible, they are rather declared genuine and correct by the Word of God.

These four chapters then give us historical events. Each has a prophetic meaning, though direct prophecy is not found in them.

Analysis of the Four Chapters. We give first of all an analysis of these four chapters before we comment on them briefly.

Chapter III. The golden image Nebuchadnezzar erected. The fiery furnace and the miraculous deliverance of the faithful captives.

Chapter IV. Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation. His dream vision. Daniel's interpretation. The Mania of the King and his restoration.

Chapter V. Belshazzar's feast. The handwriting on the wall. Daniel interprets. The fall of Babylon. This happened in 538 B. C. or 68 years after Daniel had been brought to Babylon.

Chapter VI. The decree of Darius the Mede. Daniel's faithfulness; how God delivered him out of the lion's den. The proclamation of Darius. This must have happened in the same year when Babylon fell. The pictures one sees sometimes showing Daniel as a young man standing amid lions are not correct. If Daniel was 14 years old when he was brought to Babylon he was over 80 years of age when they cast him into the lion's den.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit in guiding the pen of Daniel in this manner, reporting first these historical happenings, is not difficult to discover. These chapters describe the moral conditions prevailing during two of the great world empires. But they also indicate the moral conditions which will continue to the very end of the times of the Gentiles. We may trace in them the following five things which are prophetically foreshadowed:

1. The moral characteristics of the Times of the Gentiles.
2. .What shall happen at the close of the Gentile age.
3. The faithful remnant of His people in suffering.
4. Their deliverance.
5. The Gentiles acknowledge God as the King and God of Heaven.

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