

No.
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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." ***COL.3.1***

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES,
AND
THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE
THEREIN.

An Address (revised)

At 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate,
21st Sept. 1914.

by

PERCY W. HEWARD

Correspondence welcome: Scriptural literature for Believers
Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY

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COL. 2.1-3.4 read.

Our subject, this evening, beloved friend, is in connection with the time the times of the Gentiles, and the believer's attitude therein. The expression "The times of the Gentiles" is a Scriptural expression. It occurs in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ when He was speaking of Jerusalem. Mark this fact: - "When He was speaking of JERUSALEM". Will you turn with me to Luke 21, "And they shall fall" says verse 24, "by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations, and JERUSALEM shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The word "times" here is rather "appointed times". The suggestion in the word is not only the lapse of years, but that God is behind all, and will stop the course, when it pleases Him to step in and assert Himself. We must not forget that there are other Scriptures which speak of other times. You remember how that the Lord Jesus said in Acts 1, - "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons", and in 1 Thess. 5, we read of the times and seasons. Again we are encouraged in 1 Tim. 6.14 to keep the commandment without spot unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what does the next verse add? "Which in His time He shall show". The times of the Gentiles are not for ever. His times are coming. Man's day, as 1 Cor. 4 puts it, shall run out. The day of the Lord shall come in. Man's day is a miserable failure. The day of the Lord shall be the manifestation of His glory, His might, His power, Himself. But though Luke 21 tells us when the times of the Gentiles will cease, it does not tell us when the times of the Gentiles began. Jerusalem shall be trodden down until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Therefore the times of the Gentiles are STILL, and Scripture prophesies that there will be the tremendous of Antichrist at

Jerusalem itself. We read in Matt. 24 how the abomination that maketh desolate will be put up in the Holy Place, that is plainly a treading down of the Holy Place. Plainly a treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles. Consequently we must draw the inference that as the wicked one who does this is destroyed by the Appearing of the Lord, the times of the Gentiles run onto the Appearing of the Lord. Zech. 14 makes it clear that Jerusalem will be attacked by a Gentile army. Half the people will go into captivity just before the Lord Jesus Christ arrive, with His glorious power to set up His kingdom. There is no Scripture for suggesting the times of the Gentiles will end by any human movement, or anything before the glorious Return of our beloved Lord. I am sure, dear friends, that there is a natural tendency with man to look at earthly things, and to conceive that these earthly things will bring about changes and almost bring about encouragements. It is true that they will bring about changes, but those changes are limited by a Divine programme. God will not allow that men shall frustrate His purpose. The Coming of the Lord in glory cannot be a day late. The setting up of the kingdom at Jerusalem cannot be hindered by all the force of men. It shall be manifest that man is but a creature, and that God is the mighty Creator, and the glorious King of kings. But if we see the terminus of the times of the Gentiles, where is the beginning? The Lord Jesus implies in that verse that the beginning of the times of the Gentiles is associated with the treading down of Jerusalem. Now the old name of Jerusalem is Jebus, and Jebus means "trodden down". We recollect how that Jebus became JeruSALEM, which implies, the possession of peace, and completeness, the exact OPPOSITE of treading down. We recollect how in Deuteronomy God said, He would choose a place and in the days of David we read how God did choose a place. He fulfilled His word to the letter, and Jerusalem was preserved even when the cities around were taken, until a momentous year. We turn to the historical books, and we find in 2 Kings 17. 24, that men were brought from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel, and they possessed Samaria and dwelled in the cities thereof. Here we find plainly that the kingdom of ISRAEL was overcome long before the kingdom of Judah. Consequently when Sennacherib sent his messenger to Hezekiah it was this, where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah, have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their countries out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver

JERUSALEM out of mine hand? We must remember at this time it looked almost certain that Jerusalem would fall into the hand of the king of Assyria. A number of cities were taken in the very neighborhood of JERUSALEM. Indeed in 2 King 19. 30 we are distinctly told, And the REMNANT that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into THIS CITY, verse 33, By the way that he came by the same shall he return, and shall not come into THIS CITY. Verse 34. For I will defend THIS CITY to save it for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake. Other cities had been taken, even in Judah, but God marked out this city and Sennacherib could not touch it. When Sennacherib made up his mind to enter it, rather than break His word, God slew 185 thousand Assyrians. God will keep His word at all costs, and man must be laid low. While Jerusalem was free the times of the Gentiles had not begun. God distinctly owns the king at Jerusalem for we read these words, "For My servant David's sake". While there is a king the line of David at Jerusalem, and that king is a free king, and God acknowledge Jerusalem, the times of the Gentiles have not begun! But we also read of the momentous year in which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up to Jerusalem, besieged it, and the Lord gave Jehoiachim into his hand, and the vessels were taken from the house of the Lord to Shiner. No longer was there a free king of Jerusalem. It was a great surprise to the people of Israel. A surprise that it was possible that the enemy could come into Jerusalem. God's grace in preserving it in the past had been misused to cause with many a certain amount of pride, and the book of Lamentations shows how surprised the people were that the enemy had even spread his hand upon all her pleasant things, that the heathen had come into Jerusalem. Jerusalem knew the reason. "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed, all that honored her, despise her". In like manner, in the fourth chapter of Lamentations, Jeremiah says, "The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world never have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into gates of Jerusalem". Never have believed it, but it came true. From the moment the adversary and the enemy entered the gates of Jerusalem, the times of the Gentiles begun. But that date was deeply important. We commonly call it 606 years before Christ. I believe the date is wrong, that the Persian Empire has been made too long. This has an important bearing on

various schemes of chronology. I am afraid of human schemes of chronology altogether, but you know there are some who will tell us that seven times in connection with Nebuchadnezzar indicate seven times 360 years, because there were 360 days in a prophetic year, and therefore they will say 2520 years for the times to the Gentiles. They take the 606 before and they add it to the 1914 afterwards, and they say, there we have our 2520, and there is to be the end of the times of the Gentiles in 1914. But argument of this nature fail, for no one can tell the length of the Persian kingdom. All men's schemes of prophetic chronology fall to the ground. When God gives us chronology we believe it for example, we have in Scripture a fairly clear chronology from Saul to the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the events that lead up to it, for this event of Babylon's entry was about 20 years before Jerusalem was finally destroyed. From Saul to Jehoiakim seems to be 490 years. Now God has distinctly spoken in Scripture of 70 sevens. In another connection, it is true, but if we have 490 with regard to Israel's kingdom, and Israel failed, we can well understand that God speaks of His compassion during another 490 and of His grace, and we understand the meaning of those words to Peter, where the apostle says, How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him, - till seven times? And the Lord says, Till 70 times seven, and that is the very way He forgives Israel, for at the end of seventy times seven Israel shall receive double for all her sins, and the words of Isa. 40 shall come true, Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, her sins removed, - and then the words will sound out to the cities of Judah which will be inhabited, Behold your God. The times of the Gentiles are therefore from Nebuchadnezzar to Antichrist. In other words in Dan. 2, we have a vision of the times of the Gentiles: - the head of gold begins the times of the Gentiles. The feet of iron finish the times of the Gentiles. In Dan. 7 we have a similar vision, only that to the prophet the greatest power of man are but as WILD beasts. The lion is associated with Nebuchadnezzar, and the little horn is Antichrist. In some respects Nebuchadnezzar is the most striking type of Antichrist. He is a king as to whom there is a particularly marked period of seven years, just as with Antichrist. He is the king who erects a tremendous image, and demands worship round about Babylon, but, of necessity, there are contrasts for Nebuchadnezzar is compelled to acknowledge the greatness of God. The vision of Dan.4 shows how important an events there was when Nebuchadnezzar was entrusted with the kingdom. We

have there a view of a great tree, and all are sheltered under that great tree. Now we know when the Lord Jesus returns Israel are to the great tree. Hosea 14 says so. In Matt. 13 we read that Christendom tries to be the great tree where we read of the little mustard seed becoming a great tree, that the fowls of the air may lodge in the branches, but the Lord never MEANT anything of this kind for His people nowadays. They were to be like Himself, despised and rejected of men. There is no appointed kingdom for the Lord's people on earth at the present time. As the apostle puts it in 1 Cor. 4, Ye have reigned as kings without us, and I would that ye did reign that WE also might reign with you. In other words, the kingdom will start for ALL believers together. God has provided a certain better thing, that His people UNITEDLY should enter upon it. The times of the Gentiles are therefore marked out. Now what are we to learn from THIS? And next, what is to be OUR attitude in those times? First, we are to learn God's sovereignty. He picked out Israel. Why? There was no reason in Israel. The reason was in God. Then when Israel sinned He allowed certain powers to have the authority. The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, He setteth over it whom He will, and as Daniel says in connection with the vision of the second chapter, He removeth kings, as well as setteth up kings. History is before God, and He works out His purpose. I know nothing more encouraging in connection with the outlook. There is another aspect that is more encouraging in connection with the uplook, to know that our beloved Lord having died FOR us is at the right hand of the Father FOR us, but as to the outlook, it is so refreshing to look out and feel God knows everything, and God is working out His purpose, and nothing can defeat that purpose. Again, the history of the times of the Gentiles shows the awful results of sin, for Israel did not lose their kingdom till God had long borne patiently with them. He waited, but they went on in their evil and lost ALL. There came the setting aside of Judah's sovereignty, and the words were illustrated, I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until He come Whose right it is to reign. He WILL come, but meanwhile we see the effects of sin. Sin cannot undo God's love. He will choose Israel again, but sin, one might almost reverently say, can hinder everything else. So is it with a believer! If he has received the wonderful lovingkindness of God, if he is in Christ Jesus, he has received eternal life, but if there is grieving God, there may be a loss of myriads of blessings, and of much that fellowship involves. We often rob ourselves of blessings, and then complain that we have not these blessings. But, secondly, what should be OUR attitude in

the times of the Gentiles? Beloved friends, there is no Scripture for saying that the attitude of believers all through the times of the Gentiles must be the same. In the midst, I do not mean the exact middle, but with a wondrously important position, in those times of the Gentiles, there came the DEATH of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ must affect the position of those who live after them. I know that myriads were blessed before because of the gracious plan that Christ should die. Abraham was redeemed, though Christ did not die in his earthly life, but none of us doubt Abraham's entrance into the glory. When the times of the Gentiles started, Israel were still and earthly people, they had lost their kingdom, but they had not the revelation of heavenly arrangements. We find that Jeremiah, the prophet, give the message to those who were under the Babylonians, in the 29th chapter, verse 5, that they were to build house and dwell in them, plant gardens and eat the fruit of them. There is a measure of contrast in Acts 4, as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them and brought the money. Further, we find in Daniel how the prophet was advanced to the highest position possible in part of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and again in the reign of Darius. This position under Nebuchadnezzar was also shared in measure by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; for we read, Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. Would it be Scriptural for children of God to occupy this position now? We see there is not a word of rebuke concerning it, with regard to those who were of Israel in the days of the Babylon and the Persian kings. To help in the answer, shall we turn to Dan. 11. We read in verse 32, "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries, but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do". Then we have, "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many". Apparently here there is a blessing coming to the many, coming to the Gentiles, as well as Jews. "Yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, days". Where do we read of their strength, and their doing of mighty works? Not after verse 32. As soon as we have the thought of the Gospel going forth there is no longer the suggestion of strength, but of suffering. Apparently in the times that succeeded Daniel there were conflicts in which some of Israel stood forth. When their temple was desecrated, and when their religion was thrown over, they stood forth, and even took up arms, nor can we find it was forbidden. They

were men who still were linked with an earthly calling, though they had not a land and had not a king of their own. But now that our beloved Lord has come into the world, there is a change. The change is not brought about by incarnation, but by His death. A Jew will frequently say to us, You say that the Lord Jesus kept the Sabbath, and so forth, why do not you keep the Sabbath? Ah, we remind him that our new beginning is linked, as Israel's new beginning in Exodus is linked, with the death of our Passover Lamb, not associated with His incarnation, but His atonement. Incarnation saves no one. It is the BLOOD that makes an atonement, and so, beloved friends, we have brought before us wonderful fact that there is a new beginning, associated with atonement. Does the Lord indicate this new beginning? We turn to John 12. In verse 31 we read, "NOW is the judgment of this world, NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out". In other words, the world was not judged in the same way before that event. I do not mean that God was ignorant or unmindful of the ruin. But when our beloved Lord died, there was a very definite JUDGMENT of this world. Think what the judgment of this world really means. The Lord Jesus, the Lord of Glory has been rejected by Jew and Gentile. The Roman power has set Him on one side, and the Roman Power has never really deviated from that decision, despite an action parallel with that of Matt. 23. 29. The Jewish people have set Him on one side and set Him on one side till this day. The world has now committed a crime beyond all other crimes. The Son of God's love has been put to death on earth. Up till that period God had not sent His greatest display of grace. There was always something more, yes Some One more to send. There was always some fuller showing forth of love, but the moment the Lord of glory was condemned, man was shown to be bad beyond all remedy. The law revealed something of badness, the way in which Christ was treated in earthly life indicated the gathering storm, but when definitely and deliberately the Lord Jesus was set at naught by three tribunals, it was plain that man was a hopeless wreck, and the child of God can no longer ally himself with any party of man. The death of Christ is the utter condemnation of the flesh in the individual. In the olden times Israel were given the law; - would they keep it? But now that the death of Chris has taken place, there is no thought of a believer trying to keep the law to get to heaven. He is shown that the only thing that can be done with the flesh is to bury it. Not improve it, not patch it up. The only thing that can be done is to bury it, and THAT is typified in baptism. The apostle says, they that are Christ's crucified the flesh. Such an expression belongs to the

PRESENT dispensation. Now that which is set forth with regard to the flesh is also now set forth with regard to the world. The apostle says that he dare not glory except in the cross of Jesus Christ. Now mark the next words. "Through which a world has been crucified to me, and I to a world". Think what that means. The expression is a very remarkable one. It implies very definitely two things. The first one is secondary in its importance, or shall I rather say that the first one I want to mention will not occupy our thoughts so long, for it is only part of the other. The word here used for world" means "adornment". Here is a remarkable two-fold meaning of one word. Through which adornment has been crucified to me, and I to adornment. The child of God is no longer to seek after the pretty and attractive things of a ruined world. He has Christ and is to live as a stranger and a pilgrim. So the apostle words it in Titus 2, the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, training us that, having denied ungodliness and desires of adornment, (as the words might be rendered) we should live soberly, godly and righteously in this present age, looking for that blessed Hope. But the wider meaning is this, I have been crucified to a world, not to a Jew or to a race, but to a world. All nations are included. The believer is called OUT OF the world. Christ never emphasized this in like manner at the beginning of His ministry. He sent out the disciples without any scrip, without anything wherewith they might provide for their needs. They received hospitality, they were told to expect it. Would it be right to seek hospitality from the world now that the death of Christ has taken place? Mark what the apostle says, They went forth taking nothing of the GENTILES, - WE therefore ought to receive them. There is thus a marked contrast. In the early witness of the Lord Jesus He sent them to Jews as Jews, the judgment of this world had not taken place, and they could receive help from the Jews. But now if children of God seek the support of the world as to God's work, they are forgetting the Divine passage, "NOW is the judgment of this world". The believer is crucified to the world in all its forms and varieties. The judgment of this world has taken place, and therefore the world is viewed as crucified now. It is true that the world still exists, it is true that the world is still comparatively successful, but to a believer it is a sentenced world, and he can no more have fellowship with the world, than a man of respectable position can go and make a friend of a criminal who is under a sentence of death. He is marked off by grace from all fellowship and friendship with the world. The believer is now consequently no longer to share in the world's pursuits, the

world's attractions, the world's reputation, the world's politics. Everything of the world is swept on one side. "If ye be raised with Christ". It is not simply if ye profess the name of God. Israel before contained many dear servants of God who professed His worthy Name. But, if ye be RAISED WITH Christ, if ye belong to the new dispensation, your only attitude to the things on the earth is to mortify them. Mortify your members which are on the earth, set your mind on things above where Christ is. We are to go through this world like strangers and pilgrims, or as the apostle puts it in 1 Cor. 7, using the world, eating food, and living in cities, for we are not hermits, but not using it to the full. This is, perhaps, more difficult than physical isolation. We are not to be taken up with any of the things of earth. We are to be manifestly distinct because we belong to the Lord, and have a heavenly prospect. In measure Abraham entered into this, He walked up and down Palestine and he did not own the land though he had the promise of it. He embraced the promise afar off, and confessed that he was a stranger. He declared plainly that he sought a better country, which was a heavenly one. But since the rejection of the world our position should be FAR MORE evidently pilgrim-like than that of Abraham. We turn to the later Scriptures after the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we find an entirely contrasted aspect among believers with regard to wealth. In the earlier part of God's book we find a stress on wealth and an approval of it. After the death of the Lord Jesus Christ every mention of money seems very carefully guarded that believers may be drawn aside from the things that draw down. We remember how the Lord Jesus guiding His people with a view to their time of rejection, says, Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, and the early Christians acted literally on this. In Acts 2 and Acts 4 you see the path of faith, and in 1 Tim. 6 the words sound forth, Charge them that be rich in this world that they trust not in uncertain riches, but the Living God. The believer is thus brought aside from earthly wealth. He is brought aside from earthly position. You do not have a single case parallel with Daniel in the later Scriptures. Perhaps the most striking contrast is Erastus. Some have already seen a leaflet titled "Daniel and Erastus". We are told very little of Erastus's character. We know that he was brought to believe in the Lord, and we know that he was one in whom God's servant Paul took a deep interest. We read about him in Acts 19.22, he was one that ministered to Paul, he was with Timothy, but he did not stay long with Timothy. In Rom. 16.23 we have, "Gaius, mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you,

ERASTUS THE CHAMBERLAIN OF THE CITY saluteth you". He is the one individual who stands out in the epistles as a public officer of a heathen city, and in 2 Tim. 4 we find in a passage that contains sorrowful rebukes of those who did not please the Lord, "Erastus abode at Corinth". His position appears to have drawn him to abide there when he ought to have gone somewhere else. The Lord's people are to be free from all which holds them down to earth. "Now is the JUDGMENT of this world" has a vast difference. Consequently the child of God is not to take any share in government in the remaining times of the Gentiles. We need to be very careful how we work out the argument as to this. I have heard the suggestion made that the Gentiles powers are regarded as wild beasts in Dan. 7; therefore it is intolerable that believers should be identified with them, but such an argument would attack Daniel, who was associated with the first two of the powers. Though the Gentile strength is thus seen, we must not forget Rom. 13, the powers that be are ordained of God. This is it which none can understand unless they are born from above. That the Gentiles powers are in one sense wild beasts, in another, ordained of God. In one sense standing in the way of Christ's glory, for He is the rightful King of the whole earth, in the other sense permitted by God until He comes in the appointed time. From the heavenly standpoint it is possible to understand these two aspects, but only from the heavenly standpoint. Our reason for not taking a share in government is not because of what Dan. 7 says, but because the Lord Jesus has made it clear that now is the judgment of this world, and that His people are to set their mind on things above, and that now they are to come out and be separate and have no fellowship with those who are not in Christ. What part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? 2 Cor. 6 settles the point. A child of God must be distinct and must be willing to be THOUGHT PECULIAR upon these matters. Since Christ has been rejected and the world is crucified to us, and we to the world, if we would please Him and be those who make manifest that we belong to Christ, and are looking for Him, we must lose all share in the government of the world. Have you noticed the most remarkable description of the false church in the Book of Revelation? It will come in our Saturday evening subject, if the Lord will, when we shall consider Mystical Babylon, and I trust the Lord will bring many along next Saturday at seven o'clock: - the great mark of mystical Babylon is committing fornication with the KINGS of earth. In other words, the professing church sharing in government and the apostle words it thus, in 1 Cor. 4, ye are kings, ye have reigned without us. We

have already noticed the added statement. I would ye did reign, why? That WE might reign with you. No child of God has a right to share in government till every other child of God is free for doing the same. While any children of God are oppressed in any part of the world, any believer who exercises his share in government in another part of the world is dishonoring his Lord. We are to act as a complete company in this matter. Government will begin for the Lord's people when the Lord Jesus returns. Dan. 7 will bring before us this with its far-reaching application. I beheld, says verse 21, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. It is remarkable though the language used gives every opportunity for saying the saints made war, they did not. The weapons for our warfare are NOT carnal, but mighty through God. The Lord Jesus said, if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered into the hands of the Jews. The most important event possible was to defend the Lord, but the Lord would not allow even fighting for that, not to protect Himself. The beast prevailed against the saints, for here is the patience and faith of the saints. But there is a limit. UNTIL the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High. It is not given now, when we are reviled, we are to revile not again, when we suffer, we are not to threaten, but simply commit ourselves to Him that judgeth. The judgment is not given yet "I saw thrones" says Rev. 20, "And those that sat on them, and judgment was given unto them". But it is not YET. The Lord says, Vengeance is Mine, I WILL repay, Not, "I am repaying at the present time". I will repay. Mark the words of Dan. 7. Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the KINGDOM". There is the end of the times of Gentiles, the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Let us, therefore, beloved friends, live as those who belong to the FUTURE day, live as those who have a HEAVENLY calling, and make manifest, in the power of God, our distinctness from those who are of the earth. It is a mercy to be redeemed from the earth, it is a mercy to be in Christ, it is a mercy to be led by the Holy Spirit. Oh that all present may know what this means, but, beloved friends, if we have these privileges, by poured-out blood, we have many responsibilities wrapped up with in them!

Further addresses available:

Scriptural literature for Believers, Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1, 74343 Sachsenheim, GERMANY