

THE ENDING OF THE GENTILE TIMES

IF IN times past the records of history had been kept as they are at present, there would seem to be no excuse for any discrepancy or misunderstanding on the subject of chronology. But they were not so kept. In olden times it was the custom to date events according to the period of the reigning king, thus: In the third year of the reign of King Cyrus; in the seventh year of the reign of King Solomon, etc. As king followed king, some living a few months, some a few years, some many years, the threads of history were always in danger of becoming entangled. Indeed, no particular necessity was seen for keeping chronological records. Even the Bible merely relates these histories in their order, telling the number of the years of the life or of the reign of each king, without twisting these threads into one common cord of history.

So matters continued, with little effort to arrange an exact chronology of human history, until the Sixth Century A.D. when Dionysius, a Roman abbot, set forth our present method of counting, styled the Christian Calendar. It undertook to mark the beginning of the Christian era with the birth of Christ, reckoned as January 1st. Previous history was reckoned and styled *Before Christ* (B.C.) and subsequent history was styled *Anno Domini* (A.D.) – in the year of our Lord.

Whether Dionysius began his A.D. period January 1st, A.D. *1*, or whether he began it January 1st, A.D. *0*, we may not be sure; neither may we feel too certain whether he began the B.C. dates December 31st, B.C. *0*, or December 31st, B.C. *1*. For all ordinary purposes this question would be rather immaterial. But it has a very important bearing on our calculation of Gentile Times. Even in this particular the matter seemed less important thirty or forty years ago than it does today; for now as we come down to the *close* of the Gentile Times we

are disposed to give every feature a critical and microscopical examination not thought so necessary some years ago.

Then, we were content to say, "606 B.C. seems a well authenticated date for the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and B.C. 536 the date when the seventy years' appointed desolation of the land ceased."

Our method adopted in the STUDIES IN THE	360
SCRIPTURES was a simple one. We said:	7
The Bible <i>times</i> of Gentile supremacy and	---
Israel's rejection equals 7 times 360, or	2,520
2,520 years. From this we deducted the	B.C. 606
date before Christ (B.C.) 606. Thus we	-----
found the year A.D. 1914.	A.D. 1914

AN OPEN QUESTION

Coming now to a very critical examination of the date 536 B.C., there is an open question: Shall we call it 536 full years to A.D., or 535 full years? The difference in time between October 1st and January 1st would be the fourth of a year; hence our query is respecting $536\frac{1}{4}$ or $535\frac{1}{4}$ years B.C. What is the proper method of calculation, is in dispute. If we count the first year B.C. as *0*, then the date $536\frac{1}{4}$ B.C. is the proper one for the end of the seventy years of captivity. But if we begin to reckon it by counting the first year before the Christian era as B.C. *1*, then evidently the desolation ended $535\frac{1}{4}$ years B.C.

As to the methods of counting, Encyclopaedia Britannica says, "Astronomers denote the year which preceded the first of our era as *0* and the year previous to that as B.C. 1 – the previous year B.C. 2, and so on."

Whichever of these ways we undertake to calculate the matter the difference between the results is one year. The seventy years of Jewish captivity ended October, 536 B.C., and if there were $536\frac{1}{4}$ years B.C., then to complete the 2,520 years' cycle of the Times of the Gentiles

would require 1913¾ years of A.D., or to October, 1914. But if the other way of reckoning were used, then there were but 535¼ years of the period B.C., and the remainder of the 2,520 years would reach to A.D., 1914¾ years, otherwise October, 1915.

Since this question is agitating the minds of a considerable number of the friends, we have presented it here in some detail. We remind the readers, however, that nothing in the Scriptures says definitely that the [R5142 : page 377] trouble upon the Gentiles will be accomplished before the close of the Times of the Gentiles, whether that be October, 1914, or October, 1915. The trouble doubtless will be considerable before the final crash, even though that crash come suddenly, like the casting of a great millstone into the sea. (Rev. 18:21.) The parallel between the Jewish Harvest and the present Harvest would corroborate the thought that the trouble to the full will be accomplished by October, 1915.

OUR CONSECRATION IS UNTO DEATH

Many of our readers will recall our reference to this subject in a sermon preached at Allegheny, Pa., January 11, 1904, and published in the Pittsburgh Gazette. We make an extract from that sermon as follows: –

"We find, then, that the Seven Times of Israel's punishment and the Seven Times of Gentile dominion are the same; and that they began with the captivity of Zedekiah, and, as will be seen from the Chart, they terminate with the year 1915. According to the best obtainable evidences on the subject, synchronized with the Scriptural testimony, Zedekiah's captivity took place in October, 605¼ years before A.D. 1. If we will add to this 1914¾ years, we will have the year, October, 1915, as the date for the end of Gentile supremacy in the world – the end of the lease of 2,520 years, which will not be renewed. Instead, He whose right the Kingdom is, shall take possession of it. This, therefore, marks when the Lord Himself shall assume control of the world's affairs, to end its reign of sin and death, and to bring in the True Light."

There surely is room for slight differences of opinion on this subject and it behooves us to grant each other the widest latitude. The lease of power to the Gentiles may end in October, 1914, or in October, 1915. And the period of intense strife and anarchy "such as never was since there was a nation" may be the final ending of the Gentile Times or the beginning of Messiah's reign.

But we remind all of our readers again, that we have not prophesied anything about the Times of the Gentiles closing in a time of trouble nor about the glorious epoch which will shortly follow that catastrophe. We have merely pointed out what the Scriptures say, giving our views respecting their meaning and asking our readers to judge, each for himself, what they signify. *These prophecies still read the same to us.* Should we ever see reason for changing our belief, be assured we will be prompt to advise you respecting the same and give you the reason for it. However, *some* may make positive statements of what they know, and of what they do not know, *we never indulge in this*; but we merely state that we believe thus and so, for such and such reasons.

Many disposed to cavil at every statement of faith respecting the time and ending of this Age and the dawning of the New Age are very positive in their assertions. Some of them declare that surely the end of this Age cannot come for fifty thousand years yet. Others, with [R5142 : page 378] equal positiveness, declare that it may happen at any moment. Neither one gives any Scriptural proof. Then why should either of them criticize us for merely presenting the Scripture testimonies and our opinions respecting the signification of them, with the request that others investigate and form each his own opinion?

Finally, let us remember that we did not consecrate either to October, 1914, nor to October, 1915, or to any other date, but "unto death." If for any reason the Lord has permitted us to miscalculate the prophecies, the signs of the times assure us that the miscalculations cannot be very great. And if the Lord's grace and peace be with us in

the future as in the past, according to His promise, we shall rejoice equally to go or to remain at any time, and to be in His service, either on this side the veil or on the other side, as may please our Master best.

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