

BETWEEN THE LINES

A Deeper Look...

#961- GENTILE KINGS: Lessons From The Pagans

The Bible is filled with the interactions of dozens upon dozens of gentile kings- both Old and New Testament. These references relate to minor tribal chieftains (i.e. the first one mentioned- Amraphel of Shinar) all the way to major players in the geo-politics of earth history (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar and Caesar Augustus).

Were we to provide an exhaustive listing this study guide would end up to be pages and pages long... and to what purpose? So that you could become a Bible trivia expert?

To avoid that rather meaningless endeavor we'd like to provide for you a fairly extensive listing of the gentile kings from Genesis into the time of David's reign. That should be more than enough to give you a perception of the scope of this study...

- Genesis 14- Amraphel of Shinar, Arioch, Chedorlaomer, Bera, Birsha, Shinab, Shemeber, and Zoar.
- Genesis 12- The first Pharaoh mentioned (in contrast to Genesis 40, Exodus 1, etc.).
- Genesis 14- Melchizedek... Definitely not a pagan! Were his subjects?
- Genesis 20- Abimelech, the first mentioned. (The name means "father of the king").
- Genesis 26- Abimelech II? Also Abimelech III?
- Genesis 36- Bea, Jobab, Hushan, Hadad, Samelah, Saul, Baal-hanan, and Hadar.
- Numbers 20- The king of Edom.
- Numbers 21- Arad, Sihon, and Og.
- Numbers 22- Zippor and Balak.
- Deuteronomy 33- Moses is called "king". (Definitely not pagan, but did you know it?).
- Joshua 2- The king of Jericho.
- Joshua 8- The king of Ai.
- Joshua 10- Adonizedec, Hoham, Piram, Japhia, Debir and six more who are not named.
- Joshua 11- Jabin, Jobab, and the kings of Shimron and Achshaph who aren't named.
- Joshua 12- About 30 who are not specifically named.
- Judges 3- Eglon and Chushanrishathaim (there's a mouthful!).
- Judges 4- Jabin of Hazor... a century after the one in Joshua 11.
- Judges 8- Zebah and Zalmunna.
- I Samuel 12- Nahash of Ammon.
- I Samuel 15- Agag the Amalekite.
- I Samuel 21- Achish of Gath (I Samuel 27 tells us his father was King Maach).
- I Samuel 22- A king of Moab whose name is not recorded.
- I Samuel 5- Hiram, King of Tyre.
- I Samuel 8- Rehob, Hadadezer, and Toi.

In Conclusion: Where are they all now? What good did their "power" do them? The vast majority is lost in antiquity and if it weren't for the passing Biblical reference we wouldn't even know they passed by this existence.

Jesus asked about the balanced wisdom of gaining the world and losing the soul. These men must have thought they had something lasting and impressive... but each of them will be less than the least of the Kingdom!

Prophetic Symbols in Daniel: Some are fairly well versed in the prophetic representations but others will find some new insights in this listing...

2- Nebuchadnezzar's dream of progressive kingdoms.

Moving from the glory of Babylon to the lesser glory (but greater strength) of the progressive kingdoms of Medo-Persia, Greece, and eventually the iron grip of Rome. When all is said and done the Kingdom of God will crush all earthly kingdoms to powder and cover the whole earth.

4- Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a massive tree.

Nebuchadnezzar is chopped down to being nothing more than a "stump" by the "holy one" of Heaven.

7- Four creatures represent the kingdoms portrayed in chapter 2.

Babylon as a majestic lion with wings. The dual kingdom of Medes and Persians represented by the bear who has a dominant shoulder. The three major kings of that empire also have a place in the vision. Alexander's role of sweeping his Hellenistic view of the world is portrayed as a leopard that races across the sky. The separation of his empire to the four directions of the earth is seen in the wings and heads. Eventually the iron tyranny of Rome crushes all opposition. The "Son of man" again brings all earthly "power" to impotence.

8- Two kingdoms again prophesied.

Medo-Persia again represented as a dual kingdom (with one dominant side) coming from the east. In it's zenith Alexander (as a goat with a singular, mighty horn) comes flying into the picture and smashed the ram to pieces. Very quickly the dominant Alexander died and his kingdom was separated into four with the western empire being overtaken by Rome.

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**Paul Faces Gentiles:** Paul had his experiences with gentile "kings" too. Most were little regional governor-types (i.e. leaders in Antioch, Lystra, Iconium, and Philippi) for in the empire the title of "King" was jealously guarded. It was given to lesser Roman representatives (i.e. Herod the great) but Felix and Festus were not called by that title. Remember, if you lived in the empire the only "appropriate" attitude was- "We have no King but Caesar"... and at the end of his life that was Nero, the degenerate.

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Kings In Jewish Folklore: In spite of the fact that he only interacted briefly with the Jews one time (after conquering Tyre in 332 bce) *Alexander Mukdon* (the great, of Macedon) is, surprisingly enough referred to fairly often in the stories of the *Talmud*.

In those passages he is generally regarded with respect (perhaps because of his more civilized manner of dealing with subjugated peoples). The Jewish folklore also often shows their exalted opinion of their place in the body politic by the tenor of many of the stories.

Here's a sampling of some of those references on Alexander...

- One day Alexander rode an eagle and learned a lesson regarding arrogance and pride... The farther you rise from the earth the smaller spot you are!
- He tested the sages of Jerusalem with 10 questions and because they answered wisely he followed their counsel on how to safely attack Egypt.
- Alexander learns that God gave the rain and sunshine to his land for the sake of the innocent creatures... His people were too greedy to deserve them.
- The young king learns that on a scale the eye will always out-weigh all treasures for the eye can never be satisfied... But in the end it will surely be out-weighed by common dust for "to dust it will return"!

Even apocryphal stories teach excellent lessons at times...

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