

**PROPHETIC OUTLINES (SECOND  
SERIES): THE TIMES OF THE  
GENTILES AS SCRIPTURALLY  
FORESHADOWED**

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Prophetic Outlines (Second Series): The Times of the Gentiles as Scripturally Foreshadowed by  
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**JOHN REES-MOGG**

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# PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

(Second Series.)

*THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES, AS  
SCRIPTURALLY FORESHADOWED,*

BRIEFLY CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE LATTER DAYS  
OF THE FOURTH KINGDOM.

By JOHN REES-MOGG.

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"Until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—LUKE xxi. 24.

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PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

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*SECOND SERIES.*

upon those who read and hear the words of prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein.

For reasons which I have mentioned, both above and elsewhere, my mind compels me to adopt the mixed, or perhaps I should more correctly say, the historic interpretation, which has become in these latter days almost synonymous with that of the Præterist; but I am far from saying that the whole divine scheme may not admit of a double fulfilment; and that the portion which presents itself to the Futurist as the interpretative realisation of the entire prophecy may not be the concluding scene of the grand drama which for centuries has been continuously developing itself to the Præterist in the successive events of actual history.

But in either case, the end is evidently at hand; and in contemplating that end, and the successive gradations which lead to it, I venture humbly to believe that all the teaching of Scripture is in the direction indicated in the ensuing pages.

*Sept. 30, 1868.*

# PROPHETIC OUTLINES.

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## SECOND SERIES.

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### I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

IN sketching this further Outline of Prophecy, I desire to confine myself, as much as possible, to the simple statements of Scripture, and, further than the momentary suggestion may arise, I do not wish to indulge in long-drawn arguments, or far-fetched deductions. My firm impression is, that if he who would not believe Moses and the prophets could not be persuaded though one rose from the dead, in like manner no possible amount of proof can infuse conviction into a mind so obdurally closed against the reception of divine truth. But for this purpose, in our reference to Moses and the prophets, those great and undeniable authorities, we are bound to avail ourselves of the aid of experience, and by the light thrown forward by the history of past ages, to contemplate the present, and anticipate the future.

The second advent of our blessed Lord, and all its attendant beatitudes, are the grand object of Christian hope and contemplation, and among the many and various opinions which have been expressed in these our present waiting days, it is marvellous to behold the



extraordinary unanimity which prevails amongst men of diverse minds, and different rules of interpretation, as to the urgent and immediate imminency of that long-expected event.

If I understand aught of the action of prophecy, it is a perpetual miracle; the roll, as it is gradually unfolded, identifies its pictures with historic experience, and thereby it proves its truth; and we draw from that proof the certain assurance that the yet unfulfilled portion will be most surely realised, in accordance with the prefigured symbols; but as to the exact mode of fulfilment, or the precise instant of time at which it will take place, we dare not attempt with certainty to predicate. I cannot but think that the aiming at too great precision in this respect, has misled many of our most eminent expositors, and has thus thrown a doubt upon the general interpretation of that portion of Scripture to the study of which an especial blessing has been promised.

Chronologically speaking, the times of the Gentiles begin to be computed from the early announcements made to Daniel; but the wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile was not broken down until after the ascension of the risen Saviour; and even years then elapsed before Peter and his brother apostles became fully aware, on the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius,<sup>1</sup> the Centurion of the Italian cohort of the Tenth Legion then stationed in Judæa, that, although not one jot or one tittle of the promises of God to His ancient people would fail, yet "of a truth<sup>2</sup> He is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." And at this time commenced, practically, as I apprehend, the times of the Gentiles, to whom, in succession to the Jew, would be committed the public custody of the sacred oracles until the fulness of the nations should be accomplished; but, alas! with much the same result as they had before been entrusted to the Jews; and the

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 1. See also Henry and Scott's Commentary on this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Acts x. 34, 35.

blindness of the one, and the secularism of the other, could not fail to bring about the divine necessity of the second advent, to carry out that great restitution which none but the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world could accomplish. And this is the period which, if I understand correctly, occupies the interval indicated by the two men in white apparel, between the ascension which the disciples had just witnessed, and the return in like manner, for which the Bride is now waiting, and her maidens are in attendance at the door.

A hasty glance at the state of the world, when the dim manifestations of the promised Messiah, and his kingdom of eternal blessedness, were first made to Nebuchadnezzar, and soon after to the prophet Daniel, will show us how utterly the knowledge of the true God had departed from the earth, and how universally Satan had established his ancient usurped dominion. From his first triumph over Adam, even until the time of the Deluge, sin and evil had increased and predominated, until the Almighty declared that His Spirit should not always strive with man;<sup>1</sup> and in His justice He destroyed all save eight souls; and when to that remnant of the primeval race restored to the renovated earth, God had renewed His blessing and His promises, sin again rushed in, and with an ambitious energy which Satan alone could inspire, the descendants of Noah dared to defy the power of the Most High by the erection of the tower whose top should reach to heaven; even then, in His long-suffering mercy, He only rebuked their impiety by the confusion of their common language, and thus forced them to disperse themselves over the earth, by tribes and families, and so to convert their own vain attempt into a new application of the divine plan for the general extension of mankind; but Satan still intervened, and soon, among the newly-formed nationalities, the worship of the living God began to fall away, until at length all remembrance of divine truth was well-nigh forgotten, and the service of Jehovah was superseded by the doctrines of devils.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. vi.

Then, indeed, it again pleased the divine Providence, still unwilling that any should perish, and whose promises have been from the beginning, Yea and Amen, to call from his country, and his kindred, and his father's house the faithful Abram, in whose posterity it was His good pleasure that all the counsels of eternity should be preserved and gradually developed, until the sacrificial advent of the Lamb<sup>1</sup> of God, who should take away the sin of the world; and although, at the times of the divine manifestations to Daniel, the<sup>2</sup> Israelites were weeping in captivity by the waters of Babylon, in retribution for their repeated idolatries, yet with them alone still remained the sole knowledge of the great I AM; and it is well worthy of remark, that when they were permitted to return to their beloved Jerusalem, great and many as were their subsequent backslidings, they never abandoned the worship which had been divinely instituted among their forefathers. Such, at the time of the prophetic visions to which we have referred, was the condition of the entire world. The Jew, proud of his divinely separated nationality, yet a stiff-necked and unhumiliated captive; the Babylonian kingdom, then predominant alike over Jew and Gentile, grossly and wholly idolatrous; the Medes and Persians, rising into distinction; the Greek states, yet unconsolidated in their brief martial power; and Rome herself, then only in the second century of her national existence, all no less so. And thus Time's centuries rolled on, while the designs of Him to whom yesterday, to-day, and for ever are a perpetual present, were gradually developing themselves for the accomplishment of His unalterable promises of mercy and deliverance to a fallen race, lying in worse than Egyptian darkness. But, intermediately, with regard to the great prophetic chart, yet concurrently with the closing ages of the Fourth Kingdom, occurs a most important era; the prophets do not appear to have intimated, and certainly the disciples themselves did

<sup>1</sup> John i. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *I may perhaps revert to the consideration of this subject in a separate series.*