

**Not Ashamed
(Week 25)
Daniel 2:1-45
“The Times of The Gentiles”**

Introduction

“...I will call Not My People, My People, and she who is Unloved, Beloved. And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not My people, there they will be called sons of The Living God.”
Romans 9:25b-26

I believe that many Christians today struggle with the idea of God's complete sovereignty. Many believe that God is reactionary, that He sees what is going on down here, and then, responds to it accordingly. *The Bible* is clear that this is not the case. God is SOVEREIGN, that means there is never a moment when He is not in complete control. He sees the beginning from the end and nothing can occur unless He allows it to be so. If people could only get a grasp upon this reality, then their faith would increase exponentially. God's will cannot be undone, or even slowed. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and fully in command. This is how that we can know that we are secure in Christ Jesus, because God has destined it to be so.

God has made several promises to the nation of Israel, and it would seem that they have permanently turned their backs upon His grace offered in Christ. But God has always had a plan for Israel, just as He has always had a plan for the Gentiles. He knew, when He called the nation of Israel out of Egypt, that many of them would perish in the wilderness, but He called them anyway. He knew, when He established the throne of David, that generations of kings that followed would rebel against Him. He established the throne anyway.

He always knew that Israel's unfaithfulness would manifest itself in the worship of foreign gods, and yet, He promised to keep a remnant of them anyway. You see, it has always been God's plan to rescue many from Israel, just as it has always been His plan to rescue many from the Gentile nations as well. God's will shall always be accomplished. He keeps His promises, and He sticks to the plan. Even when, in our earthly weakness, we cannot always see what He is doing. Trust in Him. He knows exactly what He is doing!

So what is prayer then? Is it a way in which we get God to adjust to our plans? When we pray, does God somehow change course and do our will, rather than His? Absolutely not! Prayer is the means by which we align our will to the will of God. We don't change God's mind when we pray. He changes ours, that is, if we truly pray “in The Spirit” (**Ephesians 6:18**). When our will is perfectly aligned with God's will, then amazing things will happen in our lives.

“...I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He will give you.”
John 15:16b

So you see, when we give ourselves over to God's sovereignty, **we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, and who are called according to HIS PURPOSE.**” (**Romans 8:28** emphasis added). Today, as we look further into Paul's claims that God will fulfill His purposes for Israel, as well as, the Gentiles, we are “going back in time”, as it were, to look closely at an old familiar scripture that lays out perfectly for us God's plan for this world. Israel had rebelled against God, and as a result, the nation and its temple were destroyed. The people of the northern kingdom had been scattered and assimilated by the Assyrians, and the people of Judah were carried off into captivity by the Babylonians. Among these captives was a man named Daniel, a man of royal descent.

Daniel was made a eunuch and forced into the service of the Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. To Daniel things must have seemed hopeless, but God had not forgotten Him, nor the promises He had made to his people. With Nebuchadnezzar, a new era had begun and would come to be known in The Scriptures as “the times of the Gentiles”. Israel's status as a favored nation and world superpower was at an end, until such time that God would restore a remnant of His people. In the meantime, the Gentiles have been given the power to rule. In the *Second Chapter of the book of Daniel*, we see God give this vision to a Gentile King, and then He arranged for a Jew to interpret it. It was a revelation from

God to show the history of the world, before it ever happened. It tells of God's sovereign plan to allow the Gentiles to have dominion, for a time, until The Son of God shall return and establish His throne and once more raise up Jerusalem as the center of power upon the earth. Let us closely examine Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so that we can see the unveiling of God's plan and come to understand His sovereignty in all things.

The Head of Gold (Babylon)

"Your Majesty, you are king of kings. The God of the heavens has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and glory. Wherever people live — or wild animals, or birds or the sky — He has handed them over to you and made you ruler over them all. You are the head of Gold." **Daniel 2:37-38**

When Nebuchadnezzar had conquered the nations surrounding Babylon, he had specifically commanded that all those who were known to possess the "powers of divination" be brought into his service. It was the wicked king's intention that these psychics would be able to give him wisdom as he ruled. After all, no one who has achieved great power ever intends to relinquish it, and therefore, Nebuchadnezzar thought he could insure his security by having lots of "wise guys" around him. Trouble was, those so called magicians, sorcerers, and astrologers were all a bunch of phonies, and after a time, the king suspected as much.

Nebuchadnezzar had a frightful dream. Little did he know, it was actually a vision from The LORD, but he knew enough to know that it was serious. He summoned all the wise men to the throne room. But rather than reveal to them his vision and then allow them to make up some phony interpretation, he put them to the test. If they truly had the power to interpret dreams, then the same source they used for the interpretation should be sufficient in revealing the dream itself. Pretty wise thinking on the king's part, I might add. After all, if you truly have psychic powers, then you should be able to do much greater things than this, should you not?

Of course, the "wise men" of Babylon all went into panic mode. They couldn't reveal the king's dream, just as surely as they couldn't have told him what it meant! He had exposed them for the frauds that they were, and what's more, they knew it. It was then that the king decided having all these "physics" on his payroll was a waste of care and feeding, and rather than just fire them, he ordered their execution. Every last one of the "wise men" were to be exterminated immediately. And that command included Daniel and his companions. The king was cleaning house. And even though Daniel wasn't summoned to the palace that day, he was to be killed along with the rest. After all, if the Chaldeans, those ancient astrologers that were renowned throughout the known world for their incredible insight and wisdom, ...if even they could not reveal to the king his dream, nor its meaning, then what could these young Jews from Jerusalem do?

But... there is a God in heaven that can reveal mysteries (**Daniel 2:28**). When the executioner came to Daniel's house, the young Hebrew requested time to pray and assured the king that he indeed would reveal the dream and its meaning, not by his own power, but by the power of God. God was revealing to a Gentile monarch the complete story of Gentile dominion, and he did it through a young Jew, who was part of a small remnant that never lost faith in Almighty God. How fitting is that?

From **Daniel 2:4 to the end of Chapter 7**, Daniel changes the language of his writings. **Chapter 1** is written in Hebrew, as is **Chapters 8-12**. For these chapters deal with things pertaining mainly to the nation of Israel. But **Chapters 2-7** are about the times of the Gentiles, and therefore, Daniel wrote them in another language entirely, Aramaic a Gentile trade language. You see, God is sovereign over every last detail, my friends. He even uses a different language here to emphasize His great plan.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen a statue in his dream, one of incredible splendor, but there was a problem with the construction. It was designed to fail structurally. The top was much more dense and valuable than its base. The statue was destined to be toppled. From the head to the toes the colossal statue was in a state of constant decline, not only in value, but in density. Gold is more valuable than silver, and also much more dense, and silver is much more valuable and has a greater density than bronze. And so on. By the time we see the feet of the statue, we know that they cannot support its weight.

Daniel tells the king that he and his kingdom are the head of gold. It is a fitting description for the king of Babylon, for within his kingdom were mountains of gold. Nebuchadnezzar had become rich and powerful indeed. Babylon, as a city, had within its walls one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the famous hanging gardens that the king built for his wife. It is said that two chariots could pass by one another atop the city walls.

The king of Babylon had absolute power. His word alone was law. He could change his mind, and the law would change with it. We see this when he reverses his own decision to execute the wise men of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was in fact the “golden head” over all the known world during his reign. It was with such power and majesty that the “times of the Gentiles” began. No one could have ever imagined the fall of such a great kingdom, but its downfall would come nonetheless. The kings of Babylon prided themselves upon their fortress city’s impenetrable wall as their source of security. Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar’s foolhardy grandson, was actually having a drunken party when the Medes and Persians began their final assault upon the city. He never dreamed that they would find a way to get in... but they did. And the kingdom of Babylon fell in a single night.

Chest and Arms of Silver (Medo-Persia)

“After you, there will arise another kingdom, inferior to yours....”

Daniel 2:39a

The Medo-Persian empire conquered Babylon in 539 BC. The story of this victory can be found in **Daniel Chapter 5**. As Belshazzar threw his infamous party, his enemy was entering the fortified city via the tunnel that allowed the river to pass through the its city walls. The head of gold was brought down, and the chest and arms of silver had taken its place. This new kingdom was, as the statue’s two arms would suggest, a divided empire. As is always the case, the combining of various cultures requires that there be laws in order that different people groups be able to maintain loyalty to one another. When differing cultures are blended together, rules for such a union must be established.

The Medo-Persian alliance was formed with a structure based upon strict rules of law. While much like their Babylonian predecessors, the kings of Medo-Persia were monarchs with vast amounts of power. However, unlike Nebuchadnezzar, they were bound by the rules of law. Once a law had been decreed, it could not be broken, even by the king who had decreed it. This was done so that the two groups of peoples could form an alliance ensuring that no one side would completely dominate the other. We see an example of this in the narrative of Daniel and the lions den. Even though King Darius had been tricked into making the law that sealed Daniel’s fate, he was powerless to change it (**Daniel 6**).

The empire was aptly described as one of “silver” in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, for its treasuries were laden with silver. The coinage of the empire was silver, and the empire enjoyed vast amounts of wealth. The empire, however, because of its conjoining of two sets of peoples, as well as, the constraints of its laws, made it a much “inferior” kingdom to that of Nebuchadnezzar’s.

Just as Babylon before it, this “silver” empire had its time of power and prosperity, but it was not to last. Alexander The Great conquered the empire in 331 BC. After two hundred plus years of world domination, the rule of the Medo-Persian alliance also passed into history and legend. The time had come for yet another Gentile kingdom to reign over all the earth.

Belly and Thighs of Bronze (Greece)

“and then another, a third kingdom, of bronze, which will rule the whole earth.”

Daniel 2:39b

Alexander the Great was an incredibly determined young man bent upon world domination. His mighty, and fiercely loyal, armies with their helmets and shields of bronze swept across the world like a raging wildfire that could not be quenched. The man’s thirst for conquest was insatiable, and by the time he died at the age of thirty-two, he had never lost a single battle. His reign ended as abruptly as it began, and as the statue’s formation would suggest, what began as a single person rule (belly of bronze), was

divided upon Alexander's death (thighs of bronze). Alexander's generals divided his kingdom amongst themselves when he died, and the kingdom was never as strong as it had been under Alexander.

One of Alexander's main accomplishments was the "hellenization" of the known world. This was the spreading of the Greek religion and culture, as well as, the Greek language throughout the world. Alexander wanted to "make the whole world Greek", as it were. Little did he realize that by doing so, he made it possible for great numbers of the Gentiles to learn of Christ, as the gospels were written in this language. A version of *The Old Testament*, known as "The Septuagint", was also written in Greek. So, the world would now have a complete *Bible* and all would know of The One True God. Where Israel had failed to make God known to the Gentile nations, God saw to it that they were given the knowledge of Himself! Thanks to Alexander, the whole world would be able to hear the story of sin's curse and the redemption offered through the blood of Christ. Alexander had mistakenly believed that he was changing the world for his own selfish ambitions, but little did he know that The Sovereign King of Heaven was using him to allow the message of grace to be shared with all who would come to faith in Jesus Christ.

"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Legs of Iron and Clay (Rome)

"A fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; for as iron crushes and shatters everything, and like iron that smashes, it will crush and smash all others. You saw the feet and toes, partly of a potter's fired clay and partly of iron — it will be a divided kingdom, though some of the strength of iron will be in it. You saw the iron mixed with clay, and that the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly fired clay — part of the kingdom will be strong, and part will be brittle. You saw the iron mixed with clay — the peoples will mix with one another but will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with fired clay." **Daniel 2:40-43**

The "Iron Legions" of Rome crushed anything that would dare to stand in their path. The Romans took the world by force and were arguably the most brutal empire of them all. Rome was not a complete monarchy like its predecessors. The power was divided between the King (Caesar) and the Senate. It was the beginning stages of what we now know as a "democracy" in our time. Rome allowed the blending of different cultures in such a way that the citizens were allowed to adhere to the cultural belief of their heritage, so long as, those beliefs were not viewed as a threat to the empire. Hence, the Jews of Jesus time were allowed to practice their religion, as long as, they obeyed Roman law.

This "commingling" of various beliefs and cultures is only possible if strict laws are placed upon the people in order to maintain the unity of the "empire". Rome is the "predecessor" of the system of government that we have in the world today. We have governments and laws (iron), juxtaposed against the "will of the people", or democratic rule, if you will (clay). The more that the whims of the people impose their will upon the government, the more brittle the alliance becomes. The more competing factions of beliefs and ideals, the more fragile the unity of purpose. Welcome to the world of the twenty-first century! We are the living among the fractured remnants of the old Roman empire. We stand today upon the precipice of world collapse. It is getting harder and harder to keep this fragile coalition together. Everyone has their own banner under which they wish to assemble. We are as divided a people as there has ever been in history.

The full weight of the colossal statue is bearing down upon us. It is when these "times of the Gentiles" will reach their full maturation, that the world will begin to search for someone who can hold everything together, by charisma or even sheer force, if necessary. The world is ripe for the kingdom of the Antichrist. *The Bible* tell us that he will arise from the remnant of the Roman Empire. Ten nations will unite under his banner. And under his rule, the world will once more bow, as they did before Nebuchadnezzar. But His kingdom shall be short lived. He will rise to power during what is known as "the great tribulation", a seven year period of absolute hell on earth. He will pretend to befriend the nation of Israel and even rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. But in the middle of the seven year tribulation period

he will set up **"the abomination that causes desolation" (Daniel 12:11).** He will place an image of himself in the newly built temple and require all the earth to worship him.

During this terrible time, the nation of Israel will reject the antichrist, and God will raise up an army of 144,000 "Jewish evangelists" to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church will have been raptured, and the Jews will take up the mantle of preaching the gospel to any who will believe. The times of the Gentiles shall come to its predestined end, and once more, the nation of Israel will be placed at the center stage of God's redemptive plan.

"I will call Not My People, My People, and she who is Unloved, Beloved. And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not My people, they will be called sons of The Living God." **Romans 9:25-26**

The Rock that Fills the Earth

"Then the iron, the fired clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were shattered and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away, and not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." **Daniel 2:35**

"In the days of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them an end, but will itself endure forever. You saw a stone break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is certain, and its interpretation reliable."

Daniel 2:44-45

The coming kingdom of The LORD Jesus Christ will forever bring an end to the times of the Gentiles. Jesus, the Son of David, will establish the throne of David forever. Take heart, my friends, as you see the turmoil in this world today. God's plan is still in effect. We are living in the last days. Those who would mock the people of faith in this world will witness the shattering of the corrupt governments of man. And those who believe will witness the ushering in of an eternal kingdom that has not been corrupted by the hands of men. God's sovereign will be done... Jesus shall reign! He is the Rock of our Salvation.

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This came from The LORD; it is wondrous in our sight." **Psalms 118:22-23**

So, as we witness the whole world crumbling around us, as we see the brittle bonds of iron and clay begin to fall apart, know this: *God's plan is right on schedule.* And He will keep safe those whom he has chosen to be His.

"We KNOW that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose. For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those he justified, He also glorified." **Romans 8:28-30**

Take heart... its all going to work out according to plan!

And let all of God's people say... **TRUTH!!!**