

Can We Know The Future?



**Does An Ancient King's Dream Reveal The
Future Of Our World?**

Can We Know The Future?

What does the future hold for us and our world?

Some people believe that life on our world will be extinguished by a giant meteor or comet crashing into the planet.

Others believe that global warming and climate change may end all life on earth.

Still others believe that the human race will eventually destroy itself through nuclear war.

And there are others who believe the opposite, that in spite of its faults, mankind is actually entering a new golden age of peace and prosperity.

Is there any way that we can know what the future holds for us? Does the Bible have anything to say about these things?

Is the Bible simply a collection of ancient and irrelevant mythical stories as most people believe? Or does it contain predictions of the future that apply specifically to our time in the 21st century?

Is the Bible irrelevant to our modern way of life? Or does it accurately foretell what will happen to the world in the near future?

Are world events purely random, or are they following a divinely ordained plan?

Is the Bible nothing more than a collection of meaningless fables? Or could it be the Creator of the Universe speaking to us, explaining our past and revealing our future?

If the Bible really can predict the future then isn't it worth taking it seriously? Don't you owe it to yourself to find out?

How can we be sure about all these things?

The Bible does indeed contain information that reveals the meaning behind world events, showing that events which happened in the past, and that are happening in the world now, in our time today, and that will happen in the future, were all foretold long ago.

And it reveals what is the ultimate destiny of our world, and of each of us, of me and you.

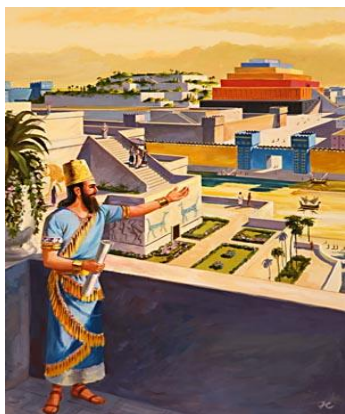
Would you like to discover what the Bible reveals about the future of our world, and your own future...?

Babylon

To understand what the Bible reveals about the future we must first travel back into the past, to the time of the ancient city of Babylon, which was located in the area of the word that we know today as the middle east, in the modern country of Iraq, over 2,500 years ago, around the year 580BC.



The city of Babylon was ruled by a king called Nebuchadnezzar. The city had over time grown to become the first super power, the Babylonian empire, which had succeeded the Assyrian empire, and which ruled the then civilised world.



The Babylonian empire had conquered the surrounding nations, including the Hebrew nation of Israel, and had taken into captivity many of the occupants of those nations, which included some of the educated royalty of Israel.

Among those Hebrew captives was a young man by the name of Daniel. The Bible records what happened to Daniel in the book that carries his name - the book of Daniel, that was written around 500BC.

King Nebuchadnezzar chose to educate Daniel and some of his fellow Hebrew captives in the language, learning and culture of the Babylonians so that they could serve him as governors of the conquered territories.

However, Daniel was a God-fearing man, and he determined to remain loyal and true to the God of heaven, and not to worship the false gods of the Babylonians, no matter what should happen to him.

The King's Dream

"In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams" Daniel 2:1

Sometime after this, as King Nebuchadnezzar was lying on his bed contemplating the magnificent city he had built, he began to wonder what would become of the city and the empire he had forged, after him - he desired that his empire should last forever.



God decided to reveal Himself to the king by answering the king's desire to know the future, and was about to reveal to the king the future of his city and empire, and the destiny of the world.

And so the king fell asleep, and had a very strange dream.



The king saw in his dream an enormous statue of a man. The statue had a head made of gold, the chest and arms were made of silver, the waist and thighs were made of bronze, the legs were made of iron, and the feet were made of iron mixed with clay.

As the king studied the statue, suddenly a huge rock, which had been cut out without human hands, came rushing down out

of the sky and crashed into the feet of the statue, destroying the statue completely, and as the king continued to watch, the rock that had destroyed the statue grew in size until it became a mountain that filled the whole earth.



“his mind was troubled and he could not sleep” Daniel 2:1

The dream was so disturbing that it woke the king from his sleep, and he was extremely troubled. He knew that he had dreamt something important and that the dream had meaning, but the dream had faded so quickly that he couldn't remember any of it.

“So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed” Daniel 2:2

Immediately the king summoned all of his advisors, magicians, psychics and astrologers, his so-called 'wise' men, and demanded of them that they tell him what he had dreamt.

“What the king asks is too difficult. No-one can reveal it to the king except the gods” Daniel 2:11

Of course the wise men were unable to do this and were astonished at what they considered a totally unreasonable request, declaring to the king that no one on earth could reveal the king's dream, but only the gods.

“This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon” Daniel 2:12

And so the king became furious and decreed that all of the wise men in Babylon should be put to death – this included Daniel and his companions who were by that time included among the king's advisors.

“Daniel went into the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him” Daniel 2:16

As soon as Daniel heard about the king's decree, he immediately sought an audience with the king and requested time to be allowed to discover what the king had dreamt. Because the king knew and respected Daniel, the request was granted. And so Daniel immediately returned to his home, and together with his Hebrew companions knelt and prayed earnestly to God to reveal the content and meaning of the king's dream.

“During the night, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven” Daniel 2:19

The prayers of Daniel and his companions were answered. That very night while Daniel slept, God gave him the same dream that He had given to the king, and showed him what the dream meant. And so in the morning when he awoke, Daniel gave thanks to God for revealing the king’s dream, then again urgently sought an audience with the king.

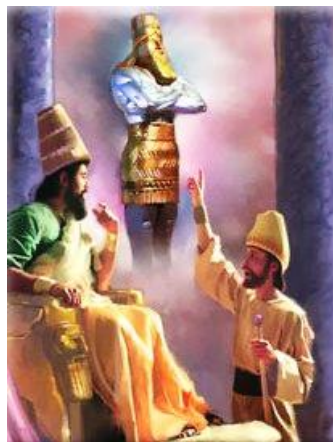
The Interpretation of the Dream

“Daniel replied ‘No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown king Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come’” Daniel 2:27-28.

When Daniel came before the king, he began by explaining to the king that no one on earth could grant the king’s request to reveal the dream, but that God Himself, who knows everything, had given the dream in answer to the king’s desire to know the future, and God Himself had also given Daniel the explanation of the dream.

“As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen” Daniel 2:29

Daniel then revealed to the king the content of his dream, so that the king would be sure that its interpretation was correct. Daniel explained that as the king had laid on his bed, his thoughts had turned to the future and the king had longed to know if his empire would last forever as he desired. Daniel explained that God had chosen to reveal to the king, through his dream, the course of world events beginning at the king’s own present, down through time to the end of human history, to the “time of the end”.



“You looked, O king, and there before you stood an enormous dazzling statue, awesome in appearance” Daniel 2:31

Daniel explained that the king in his dream had seen an enormous statue of a man, which was frightening to look at. The head of the statue was made of the finest gold, the chest and arms were of silver, the waist and thighs were of bronze, the legs were of iron, and the feet were a mixture of iron and clay.

Daniel explained that as the king watched, a huge rock, which had been cut out without human hands, came rushing down from the sky and crashed into the feet of the statue, destroying it completely and turning it to dust, and the rock then grew into a mountain which filled the whole earth.

"You are that head of gold" Daniel 2:38

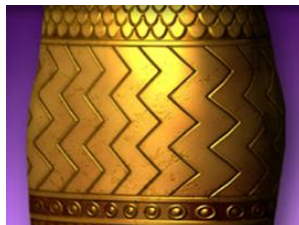
Now Daniel proceeded to explain to the king the meaning of the dream.

Daniel said to the king "You are seen as the king of kings. God has given you the power to rule and to build a mighty empire. You and your empire are represented by the head of gold.



But after a time another empire will arise and replace yours, represented by the chest and arms of silver, it will be inferior to yours just as silver is inferior to gold.

This empire will eventually be replaced by a third empire, represented by the waist and thighs of bronze, and will be inferior again, just as bronze is inferior to silver.



This third empire will eventually be replaced by a fourth, represented by the legs of iron, which will be as strong as iron, for just as iron crushes things and breaks them into pieces, so this fourth empire will crush everything that stands in its way.

This fourth empire will eventually be split into ten small kingdoms, represented by the feet and toes, some of the kingdoms will be strong and others will be weak, just as the feet and toes of the statue consisted partly of iron and partly of clay, iron being strong but clay being weak. The rulers of these small kingdoms will attempt to unite, but these unions will not last, just like iron does not stick to clay."



"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed...it will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end" Daniel 2:44

Daniel then concluded his interpretation of the dream. He said to the king "It is then, during the time of these ten small kingdoms, that the God of heaven will set up His everlasting kingdom, represented by the rock that crashed into the feet of iron and clay, and just as the rock destroyed the statue, so God's kingdom will destroy all the kingdoms of the world and will remain forever. God has revealed to the king what will happen in the future down to the end of time."

"Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries" Daniel 2:47

King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished. He was now able to remember the content of his dream, and realised that Daniel had related it perfectly accurately. The king rose from his throne and bowed before Daniel out of awe and respect. The king said to Daniel "I acknowledge that your God is above all other gods. He is the only One who can reveal the future."

"He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men" Daniel 2:48

The king then gave Daniel many rich gifts in acknowledgment of the awesome thing he had done. Daniel was then promoted to the position of prime minister of the city of Babylon and was made responsible for the affairs of the city and the greater Babylonian empire, and became the chief of all the king's advisors.

What Does It All Mean?

We've seen that God gave king Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel, a dream that revealed the future of the world, that charted the rise and fall of world empires down to the end of time.

But how is this dream relevant to our time today?

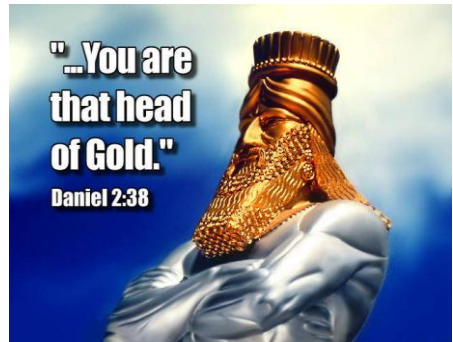
To understand this, we must begin by identifying the world empires that are represented by the different parts of the statue in the dream.

Through the dream, both the king and Daniel were shown that there would be four world empires, no more and no less, each one following the other, and each different from the others.

"You are that head of gold." Daniel 2:38

The dream began with Daniel's own time. The first of the world empires, the one that began the prophecy, was the one which king Nebuchadnezzar had himself established, and the one in which Daniel lived, the empire of Babylon, which was the ruling world power from 612-539 BC. King Nebuchadnezzar was regarded as the head of state and was the most powerful ruler that had existed up to that time, and so in the dream the king and his empire were represented by the statue's head of gold.

But the supremacy of the Babylonian empire would not last forever as the king had wished. Several succeeding inferior empires would rule in its place, each in their turn.





And so just as silver is inferior to gold, the empire that succeeded Babylon would enjoy diminished power and glory. In 539 BC The Medo-Persian empire, led by Cyrus the Great, conquered Babylon and reduced it to ruins. This empire was represented in the dream by the statue's chest and arms of silver, and just as the statue had two arms, so the empire was a combination of two powers, the Medes and the Persians, whose combined empire was the ruling world power from 539-331 BC.

The next world empire came into power when Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian empire in 331 BC, establishing the empire of Greece, which was the ruling world power from 331-168 BC, and which was represented in the dream by the statue's waist and thighs of bronze.



The fourth and final empire to appear on the world stage was the empire of Rome, which conquered the Greek empire and was the ruling world power from 168 BC - 476 AD, and which was represented in the dream by the statue's legs of iron, and just as the statue had two legs, so the Roman empire had two parts, the western

Roman empire, governed from the city of Rome itself, and the eastern Roman/Byzantine empire, governed from the city of Byzantium, later renamed Constantinople, which we know today as the modern city of Istanbul.

We've seen how Daniel foretold a thousand years of world history with unerring accuracy. The rise of the four world empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome are clearly foretold in the Bible and proved by the history books.

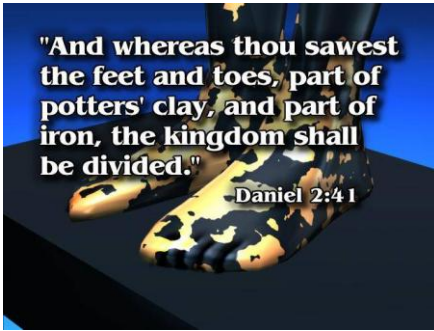
But according to the dream, the last world empire would not be succeeded by another empire, but would instead be divided.

And in 476 AD barbarian tribes, led by the Ostrogoths, captured the city of Rome and the Roman empire began to crumble, and it's territory was divided among the barbarian tribes.

And just as the statue in the dream had ten toes, so the Roman empire was divided among ten barbarian tribes. They were the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Franks, the Vandals, the Alemanni, the Suevi, the Anglo-Saxons, the Heruli, the Lombards and the Burgundians.



Three of these tribes were destroyed in ancient times, but seven of them survived and evolved into the modern nations of Europe that exist today, for example the Anglo-Saxons became the English, the Franks became the French, the Alemanni became the Germans and the Lombards became the Italians.



And just as in the dream, the mixture of iron and clay which formed the statue's feet and toes did not stick together, so the nations which evolved from the barbarian tribes have not united themselves, even though many attempts to achieve this have been made over the centuries through wars, marriage alliances and treaties.

Throughout history, leaders such as Charlemagne, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler, have struggled to unite the nations of Europe and create a new European empire, and even today attempts are still being made with the formation of the European Union, but God through the dream given to king Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel, has foretold long ago that this will never happen, the nations of Europe will always remain politically divided, their differences will always keep them apart.



Since the collapse of the Roman empire in 476 AD, no single power has ruled the world, and the dream that God gave to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel foretells clearly that the world will remain divided until the end of time, that there will never be another single world empire.

The Mysterious Stone

“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to other people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” Daniel 2:44.

There is one part of the dream that remains to be explained, and it is the last thing that king Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel saw in the dream.

They both witnessed a huge rock come flying down out of the sky, which crashed into the feet of the statue, destroying the statue completely, the rock then grew in size to become an enormous mountain which filled the whole earth.

We’ve seen that the statue symbolises the progression of world empires throughout human history. The rock which crashed into the statue symbolises a power that will cause these world empires to be destroyed, to cease to exist. The rock “cut out without human hands” symbolises a power that is not of human origin.



The Bible reveals that the power which destroys the kingdoms of the world is God’s own everlasting kingdom, one which will never pass away. The fact that the rock crashed into the feet and toes of the statue reveals that this will happen in the time of the ten kingdoms which arose out of the Roman empire, and we know from history that these kingdoms evolved into the modern nations of Europe that exist today.

The Bible clearly reveals that we in the 21st century are represented by the toes of the statue, that we are living at the end of human history, in what the Bible calls the “time of the end”, and that we are living in the days just prior to the time at which all human kingdoms will be swept away and God’s everlasting kingdom will be established.

Knowing all these things, we are now each left with a choice...

Are You Ready?

We have seen that king Nebuchadnezzar's dream reveals clearly that the nations and powers that exist in this world today will soon disappear, to be replaced by God's eternal kingdom of peace that will never end.

The question we must each now answer is: Am I ready for the final event of human history? Do I want to be part of God's eternal kingdom that is about to be established?

God the Father, and His Son Jesus, long for you to have eternal life so that you can be a part of that everlasting kingdom. That is why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world and lived among us as one of us, and willingly sacrificed His life for us, taking upon Himself the punishment for our lawlessness, suffering the penalty of death in our place, so that you and I can receive God's forgiveness and inherit the eternal life that He longs to give us, so that we can be restored to our place as God's children, members of God's own divine family.

This world has almost run out of time. God's eternal kingdom is almost here.

Are you ready to meet Jesus the Son of God when He returns to this world to set up His everlasting kingdom?

