

HOW YOU CAN KNOW THE FUTURE

All of us would like to know the future, right? If you're a farmer, wouldn't you like to know beforehand what the weather will be for the harvest season? If you're thinking about getting a job with a certain company, wouldn't you like to know if that company will be successful down the road? You'd like to know, wouldn't you? If you're thinking about getting married, wouldn't you like to know if you and your partner will meet each other's needs and be able to make each other happy? All of us want to know what the future will bring. Unfortunately, it's not easy to know the future.

In times past, people did all kinds of strange things to know the future. For instance, some would try to predict the future by how sunlight reflected off of a person's fingernails. Others would



The image of Daniel chapter 2 gives a panoramic view of history.

God Knows the Future

- "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." (Isaiah 46: 9,10).
- "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." (Isaiah 42:9).
- "I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee." (Isaiah 48:5)

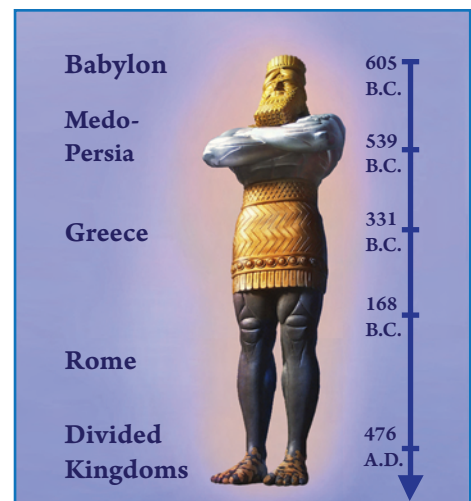
cut open the body of a sheep and look at the shape and design of its liver in an endeavor to know future events. Even today, some people believe that they can know the future by studying the stars and planets. Still others go to psychics, tarot card readers, palm readers, even witch doctors in order to find out what the future holds. These methods have never been successful. Does that mean that the future can't be known? No. On the contrary, the Bible talks about a God who knows the future; a God who knows the end from the beginning; a God who's wise enough and powerful enough to forecast the future with unerring accuracy. This is a God you can trust with your own life and future. In the box at the left is what the God of the Bible tells us about Himself!

KEY POINTS

God knows the future because he designs it and leads it. In the story of the dream given to king Nebuchadnezzar we have evidence of the reliability of the Bible as well as God's oversight and leading in the affairs of men. The story begins 2600 years ago in Babylon, what is today the country of Iraq. It is recorded in the book of Daniel, chapter 2.

The King had a dream which he could not remember. His wise men and astrologers could not tell the King his dream nor its interpretation. In anger, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all of them to be killed. Among these men were Daniel and his three Hebrew friends. After petitioning God to help them, God revealed the dream to Daniel along with its interpretation. (Dan. 2:18) The dream was a panoramic view of history from the time of Nebuchadnezzar going forward to the end of the world. Its accuracy is stunning and speaks clearly of the validity and authenticity of the Bible. We can trust the Bible. It is God's Word of hope and promise to mankind.

In the dream, Daniel saw an image whose head was made of gold. Its chest was of silver and its thighs of bronze. Its legs were of iron and its feet partly of iron and clay. These metals represented a succession of kingdoms as shown in the illustration to the right.



As you look at the statue, notice that no new metal arises after the Roman Empire. No new earthy kingdom takes its place. The metal that began in the legs goes all the way down to the feet and toes and mixes with clay. So what does this mean? It means exactly what Daniel said it meant.

This fourth kingdom would be divided. This is an amazing prediction, describing exactly what happened. The Roman Empire wasn't swept away by another great kingdom, as were those that preceded it. Instead, in the 5th century A.D. barbarian tribes in Europe broke up the pagan Roman Empire into the various nations that eventually have become what is known as modern Europe.

However, just as iron and clay cannot mix together, so the remnants of the Roman Empire would never be united again into one strong Empire.

Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Hitler have tried to



The Roman Empire would never be united.



unify what is greater Europe – but to no avail. The Word of God is true!

The Second Coming of Christ

What happened next must have been awesome to behold. The dream ended with a stone! A stone cut out without hands hits the image at the feet and crushes it until there is nothing left. Then this rock grows until it encompasses the whole world. (Dan. 2:44).

This represents the coming of Christ to set up His eternal Kingdom where sin and death will be no more.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Think about this: Babylon came and went, just as God predicted. Medo-Persia came and went, just as predicted. Greece came and went, just as predicted. Rome came and then broke apart into the various divided nations, just as predicted. The part of this prophecy not yet fulfilled is the establishment of God's eternal kingdom. Where, then, are we in earth's history? We are on the verge of the ushering in of the eternal Kingdom of God. Jesus is coming soon! We are living in the time of the divided Kingdoms.

The next major event we will see is the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

We have learned something tonight about God, about His power, His might and His care. And how have we seen it? It has been revealed to us through His Word, the Holy Bible. In Daniel 2, we have powerful evidence that God speaks to us through His Word. That's because we've been studying God's Word, not man's. And this is just the beginning. All through this series of studies we will come across evidence upon evidence to show us that God's Word is trustworthy. God's wants His Word to become the ultimate authority of our lives. Won't you choose to serve the soon-coming Savior Jesus Christ?

Won't you choose to daily trust His Word, the Bible?