

## Can We Be Certain About the Future?

In episode 1 of the New Beginnings series, we were introduced to an ancient king, a remarkable dream, and the God who is a revealer of secrets. This study guide will further demonstrate that throughout human history, the Bible has been repeatedly vindicated as accurate in predicting future events.

The prophecies of the book of Daniel have proven accurate for more than 2500 years and is especially relevant for those of us living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **1. What does the Bible say about God's ability to reveal the future?**

*Isaiah 46: 9,10*

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### **2. How does God reveal the future?**

*Amos 3:7*

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God's ability to look into the future and foretell what is going to take place centuries beforehand is demonstrated in His communications directly through Bible prophets. As we study the recorded prophecies and see their fulfillment through the records of history, our faith in the validity and accuracy of the Bible is strengthened.

This episode of New Beginnings focuses of the prophecy found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Daniel, in the Old Testament.

Read Daniel 2 and then answer the following questions:

**3. What unusual thing happened to nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon?**

*Daniel 2: 1-3*

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Have you ever had a dream that you knew was significant but that when you tried to remember it, you couldn't bring it to mind?

**4. Who did king nebuchadnezzar call on to tell him his dream and the interpretation?**

*Daniel 2: 2, 3*

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King Nebuchadnezzar expected that the magicians and sorcerers should be able to reveal his dream. When they could not, he called them out for their deceptive methods of manipulation.

**5. What decree did Nebuchadnezzar issue out of frustration with the so-called wise men of Babylon?**

*Daniel 2: 12, 13*

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Although they were Hebrew captives, Daniel and his companions had been educated in the best schools of Babylon and were considered among the wise men and thus marked for death by the irate king.

**6. When the king's soldiers came to carry out the king's death decree, how did Daniel respond?**

*Daniel 2: 16-18*

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In an amazing display of faith in the God of heaven, Daniel made the bold request for the time to pray and ask God for the dream and the interpretation.

- 7. After Daniel and his friends held a prayer meeting in their private quarters, how did God answer their prayer?**

*Daniel 2:19*

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- 8. Who did Daniel give credit for revealing the dream and its interpretation when he was brought before the anxious king?**

*Daniel 2: 27,28*

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- 9. What did Daniel explain to King Nebuchadnezzar regarding the time-period of his dream?**

*Daniel 2:28*

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While each of the prophecies of the book of Daniel begin during his lifetime, they span through the ages and have specific implications for those who are living during the end of earth's history.

- 10. What did Daniel reveal that the king had seen in his dream?**

*Daniel 2: 31-35*

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**11. According to Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream, what do the different metals represent?**

*Daniel 2: 38-40*

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**12. List the metals that correspond with each of the different sections of the great image.**

*Daniel 2: 32,33*

|                | Image | Metal |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| Head           |       | <hr/> |
| Breast & Arms  |       | <hr/> |
| Belly & Thighs |       | <hr/> |
| Legs           |       | <hr/> |
| Feet           |       | <hr/> |

**13. What kingdom does the Bible identify as represented by the head of Gold?**

*Daniel 2:38 (last part)*

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Gold was certainly a fitting symbol for the kingdom of ancient Babylon. The temple for the primary god worshipped by the ancient Babylonians, *Bel Marduk* contained more than 18 TONS of gold. Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon was *THE* world power from 605 to 539 B.C. But although a wealthy and powerful kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream showed that Babylon wouldn’t last forever.

**14. Which Kingdom conquered Babylon, represented by which metal?**

*Daniel 2: 32, 39; Daniel 5: 26-28*

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History reveals that the dual kingdom of the Medes and the Persians overthrew Babylon in 539 B.C. when the Persian King Cyrus executed a strategic siege on the capitol city. The Medo-Persian Empire ruled from 539 to 331 B.C.

**15. What kingdom overthrew the Medes and Persians?**

*Daniel 2: 39; Daniel 8: 20,21*

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In Daniel 2, the prophecy is told using the imagery of metals and the same story is reiterated in Daniel chapter 8 with animals representing the different kingdoms. Alexander the Great famously conquered the Persian Empire over the course of 6 great battles spanning roughly 3 ½ years from 334-331 B.C.

**16. How does the Bible describe the fourth power to dominate and control the earth?**

*Daniel 2: 40*

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The Ancient Roman Empire conquered the Greeks in 168 B.C., and their rule spanned more than 500 years. It was during Roman World Dominance that Jesus was born and lived. The ancient historian Edward Gibbon, in his famous work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, referred to the “iron monarchy of Rome,” to describe the cruelty under which their subjects suffered.

**17. Does the Bible describe a fifth world ruling empire? What significant difference is mentioned regarding the kingdom of iron? What is unique about the metal at the feet of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream?**

*Daniel 2:41*

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The Bible predicted that rather than being conquered, the kingdom of iron (Roman Empire 164 B.C. to 476 A. D.) would be divided. We know from history that the breakup of the Roman Empire took place over a 125-year span (351 A.D. to 476 A.D.).

Daniel insisted, “But they will not cleave one to another.” (v. 43) History has unfolded just as the detail of this dream described it would. Many dictators and military leaders have tried in vain to unite the countries of Europe that are what remains of the divided Ancient Roman Empire.

From Charlemagne to Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin to even the failing European Union after the Brexit vote in 2016 to withdraw Great Britain from the EU, God’s Word is proven accurate time and time again. “...the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure.” (v 45)

Each of the kingdoms depicted in King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream were merciless in their oppression of God’s people throughout the ages. Beginning with the Ancient Israelites and the captivity in the time of Daniel in Babylon to faithful Christians through the long centuries of the dark ages.

The final scene in the dream delivers hope for God’s people in every age, especially those living in the time of war and famine and corruption as we see unfolding on our Social Media timelines across our world today. The future is in God’s hands.

**18. What is the final event in earth’s history? Is there hope beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? What/Who is the stone cut out without hands?**

*Daniel 2: 44, 45*

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Just as the head of God represented the head of the Babylonian Empire, the stone represents Jesus Christ, the Head of Kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:20; Isaiah 9:6). No matter how bleak things may look, Hope is coming soon!!