

Unsealing DANIEL'S MYSTERIES

WITH MARK FINLEY

◆ The Psychics vs. the Prophet ◆

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The Psychics vs. the Prophet!

Throughout the centuries the future has always intrigued people. We have desired to know what lies just ahead. How can we face tomorrow with greater confidence? What kind of world will our children live in? Many sources claim to have reliable information regarding the future. The psychics, astrologers, and fortune tellers all claim to have the ability to predict coming events.

In Daniel, chapter 2, God challenges the psychics head on! And He reveals Himself as the only One who really knows the future. In this chapter, God clearly outlines 2,500 years of history in advance, accurately foretelling the rise and fall of empires. As you study this lesson, you will marvel at God's ability to guide the destiny of the nations. If He is wise enough to predict the future and powerful enough to orchestrate the rise and fall of nations, He can certainly guide our personal lives. Our lesson today clearly reveals that it is safe to trust God.

An Ancient King's Dream

1. Who alone can foretell the future? Isaiah 46:9, 10.

2. What unusual experience did Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, have one night while he was sleeping? Daniel 2:1.

3. What was the king's immediate response? Daniel 2:2.

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The wise men of Babylon utterly failed. Miraculously, God hid the dream from Nebuchadnezzar's mind. If the king could have remembered the dream, the psychics would have been able to make up a plausible interpretation.

The King Called in His Brightest Minds

- The magicians—used sleight of hand, magic, and trickery.
- The astrologers—observed the patterns of the stars as a means of attempting to forecast the future.
- The sorcerers—spiritualists who claimed to communicate with the dead for information regarding the future.
- The Chaldeans—the educated elite who attempted to tell the future by human genius, mathematical calculations, and an understanding of philosophy.

The angry king condemned all the wise men of Babylon to death when they could not tell him what he had dreamed.

4. How did Daniel respond to this crisis in the nation? Daniel 2:16–18.

5. What two qualities does God have in super abundance? Daniel 2:20.

God Reveals the Future

6. Who alone could reveal the king's dream? Daniel 2:28, first part.

What period of time does the dream especially apply to? Daniel 2:28, last part.

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The book of Daniel especially reveals events in the last days of earth's history. The king's dream focuses on the end times. It foretells events which occur at the close of this earth's history.

7. What did Nebuchadnezzar see in his dream? Daniel 2:31.

8. Label the corresponding metals (see Daniel 2:32-35):

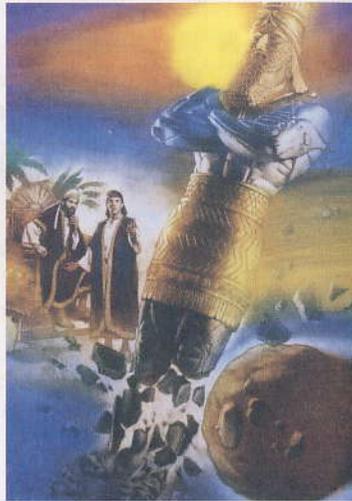
verse 32, first part

verse 32, middle part

verse 32, last part

verse 33, first part

verse 33, last part



verse 34

ILLUSTRATIONS: NATHAN GREENE

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According to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, each corresponding metal represented a kingdom that would rule the world. Beginning with Babylon, the prophet traces the destiny of the nations through the centuries.

9. How did God describe Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of Babylon? Daniel 2:38.

Gold is a fitting symbol for Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom ruled the world from 605 to 539 B.C. Located in modern-day Iraq, some sixty miles south of Baghdad, the capital city of Babylon was the center of the most powerful nation in the Middle East at that time. Its chief god, Bel-Marduk, was crafted of solid gold. His golden image sat on a golden throne beside a golden candlestick before a golden table in a golden-domed temple. The prophet Isaiah also calls Babylon "the golden city" Isaiah 14:4.

Yet Babylon would not last forever. It would be overthrown by another dominant power.

10. How does the Bible describe the next three world powers? Daniel 2:39, 40.

a. "But after you shall arise _____"
verse 39, first part.

The Medes and Persians overthrew the Babylonians in 539 B.C. Cyrus, the general who led the Medo-Persian armies, is predicted by name 150 years in advance in Isaiah 44:28 and Isaiah 45:1. The Medes and Persians ruled the world from 539 to 331 B.C.

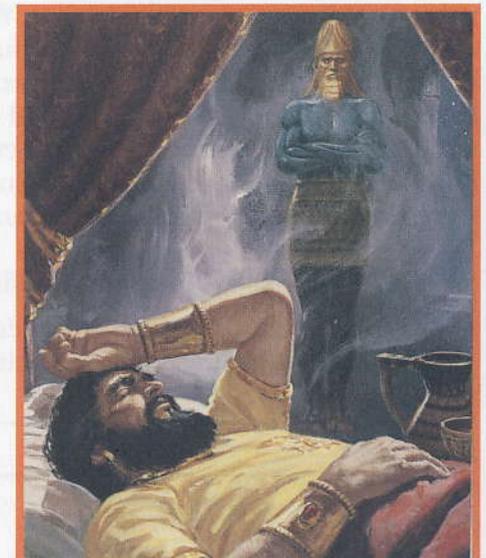


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b. "Then another _____
_____ " Daniel 2:39, last part.

The nation of Greece overthrew the Medes and Persians. The Greeks ruled the world from 331 to 168 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered the world by the time he was 33 years old. We will study more about his meteoric rise to power in Daniel, chapter 8.

c. "And the fourth kingdom shall be _____
_____ " Daniel 2:40.

The Romans conquered the Greeks in 168 B.C. The Roman Empire ruled the world during the time of Christ. Caesar Augustus, a Roman emperor, passed the decree that all the world should be taxed. A Roman court tried Jesus, and Roman soldiers nailed Him to the cross.

11. What did the Bible predict would be the fate of Rome, the fourth kingdom? Daniel 2:41, 42.

The prophet Daniel predicted that the Roman Empire would be divided. The break-up of the empire occurred from A.D. 351 to 476. No fifth world empire overthrew the Romans. Rome was divided exactly as the prophet predicted. The barbarian tribes from the north invaded the Roman Empire, and it was divided into separate, distinct states. The nations of Europe today—France, Germany, England, Spain, Italy, etc.—were predicted in this amazing dream.

Prophecy Fulfilled

12. Would the nations of Europe ever be united into one cohesive, lasting, political nation again? Daniel 2:43.

God's Word is clear. These seven prophetic words, "They shall not cleave one to another," have stopped every would-be conqueror of Europe through the centuries. Throughout history, political leaders such as Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin have attempted to rule the world by uniting Europe. Each has desperately failed. Bible prophecy is accurate. The future is in God's hands. He can be safely trusted.

Hope on the Horizon

13. What is the next event on the horizon of history? Daniel 2:44.

The rock that was cut out without hands represents the coming kingdom of God. Christ is the Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4). Soon all wickedness, evil, and rebellion will be gone forever. The forces of evil will be crushed, broken into pieces, and destroyed. God will establish His everlasting kingdom forever.

- My decision: Lord Jesus, I choose to follow You in all things and to be one of Your children. I want to be remembered when You come in Your kingdom.
- Lord, I surrender my life to You today, along with any habits that are not pleasing to Your will.