

GOD'S WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE

Introduction A famous English author once said: "A silent heaven is the greatest mystery of existence."

Why is God silent? Is He indifferent to human needs and sorrows? Will He remain silent forever? Or will He one day break the silence, burst in with awesome majesty upon the human scene, and actually do something to bring the long reign of evil to an end?

The Bible answers: God will break the silence. He will intervene. He has vast and wonderful plans in mind for the future of this planet. These plans are revealed in Daniel, chapter 2. This prophecy has been called: "God's Window into the Future". In this lesson we will take a look through this amazing prophetic window.

Discussion 1.—NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FORGOTTEN DREAM (vv 1-6)

Nebuchadnezzar II was the greatest king of the Second Babylonian Empire. He brought the power of ancient Babylon to the pinnacle of its glory, about 600 B.C. Daniel was a young Hebrew captive in Babylon, a worshipper of the true God, who had already earned a reputation for great wisdom (see Daniel 1). Verse 29 shows that before Nebuchadnezzar fell asleep on the night of his dream, he had been worrying about the future of his kingdom. This was probably the reason why he was so anxious to recall the dream. It might contain some kind of key to the future!

2.—THE FAILURE OF BABYLON'S WISE MEN (vv 7-13)

These men were members of a guild of magicians, soothsayers and astrologers, who claimed to be in direct contact with the Babylonian gods. This explains why Nebuchadnezzar became so angry with them. When put to the test, they confessed that they did not have contact with the gods, after all, so their hypocrisy was openly unmasked (v 11).

Because of his reputation for wisdom, Daniel was evidently classed among Babylon's "wise men". Therefore, he, too, was involved in the death decree.

3.—THE DREAM AND ITS MEANING REVEALED TO DANIEL (vv 14-30; 31-35)

Note the simplicity and childlike faith of Daniel and his companions. In their extremity they got down on their knees in an old-fashioned prayer meeting. And God heard their prayer. He will do the same for us today if we approach Him with Daniel's simple faith.

Note also the references to "the latter days" (v 28); "hereafter" (v 29) and "what shall come to pass" (v 29). God took the troubled mind of Nebuchadnezzar, filled with anxious thoughts about the future of his kingdom, and made it a channel through which to reveal the future history of the world!

4.—GOD'S WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE (vv 36-43)

A Divine Hand now turns the pages of world history in advance. The ages yet to be burst wide open before Daniel's astonished eyes. These eight amazing verses, containing only 213 words, foretell the major political changes in the world's future for 2,500 years.

(See Chart No. 5—The Great Image of Daniel 2)

Head of Gold (vv 37, 38).....	BABYLON	606 B.C.—539 B.C.
Breast and Arms of Silver (v 39).....	MEDO-PERSIA	539 B.C.—331 B.C.
Thighs of Brass (v 39).....	GREECE	331 B.C.—168 B.C.
Legs of Iron (v 40).....	ROME	168 B.C.—A.D. 476
Feet of Iron and Clay (vv 41-43).....	DIVIDED NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE	A.D. 476—Second Advent

5.—ROME DIVIDED INTO FRAGMENTS (vv 41-43)

(See Chart No. 6—Map of European Kingdoms)