

"The Future Looks Uncertain...but God"

Daniel 2

I. Introduction

A. Predicting the future is big business

1. People have created an industry, from fortune cookies to horoscopes
2. In the US, it's a \$2 billion per year industry
3. This includes Christians—seminars and books regarding prophecy are in high demand

B. Why is it that people are so obsessed about knowing their future?

1. They want to know what the future will hold so they can prepare for it
2. Self-preservation is a basic human instinct; we naturally strive to get the information we need in order to know how to survive
3. Knowledge of the future, even if it's incomplete, is power
4. Lack of knowledge creates fear

C. But do you really want to know your future?

1. God wisely withholds such information from us
2. Knowledge of the future would overwhelm us

D. Daniel 2 is the story of a king—Nebuchadnezzar—who wanted to know his future

1. Nebuchadnezzar was, at this time, the world ruler
2. He was wondering about the future—who would take over his position, etc.

II. The Future Is Unknown to Us (vv. 1-2, 10)

A. From a human perspective, it's impossible to predict future events

B. Nebuchadnezzar was having dreams

1. God gave him dreams, but he couldn't remember them
2. His spirit was troubled—the word in Hebrew is *pa'am*, which means to beat something persistently

C. Nebuchadnezzar called in the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to tell him his dreams and to interpret them

1. They were unable to interpret his dreams because they didn't know what the dreams were
2. No person on earth can read minds or predict the future
3. Ecclesiastes 7:14
 - a. 125 million people in the US believe in astrology
 - b. 70 million people read their horoscopes every day; 12 million people change their behavior based on their horoscope
 - c. According to the Gallup Poll, 10 percent of people who say they are evangelical Christians also believe in astrology to some degree

III. The Future Is Well Known to God (vv. 15-23)

A. Daniel believed that it was possible to know the future if God revealed it to him

1. "The secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision" (v. 19)

2. This was not a dream—Daniel was awake when he saw what the king had seen
 - B. Because God knows everything, He knows what the future is
 1. Psalm 139:1-4
 2. God's knowledge is immediate, comprehensive, and without deterioration
 - C. God exists outside of time
 1. He is not confined by our time-space continuum
 2. He dwells in the realm of eternity—the eternal present
 3. Because of this, He often predicts what hasn't yet happened by using the past tense, as if it has already happened
 - D. Daniel believed that God is omniscient, so he activated his faith—the God Daniel knew is the God who knows everything
- IV. The Future Is Made Known to Us (vv. 26-30)
- A. "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets" (v. 28)
 1. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he couldn't tell him about his dream
 2. But Daniel told him that there is a God in heaven who was able to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream
 - B. God wants to make known to us the future
 1. All of the details of the future would overwhelm us, but He wants to give us a limited amount of knowledge
 2. That's essentially what biblical prophecy is—God telling us what's going to happen in the future
 - C. The Bible reveals future judgment
 1. The rapture
 2. The great tribulation period
 3. Jesus will come back to earth
 4. There's going to be an eternal kingdom with a new heaven and a new earth
 - D. How impressive is biblical prophecy?
 1. Some events and people were spoken about and mentioned by name hundreds of years before they existed
 2. One quarter of the Bible is predictive prophecy
 - a. The more detailed the prediction is, the more complicated it becomes
 - b. With complication comes greater risk, and with risk, the possibility of that prediction being fulfilled decreases; this is known as compound probability
 - c. The Jewish prophets predicted about 300 to 330 different layers of details with regards to the Messiah:
 - i. He would be born of a virgin (see Isaiah 7:14)
 - ii. He would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2)
 - iii. He would be born into the tribe of Judah (see Genesis 49:10)
 - iv. His ministry would begin in Galilee, not Jerusalem (see Isaiah 9:1)
 - v. He would work miracles (see Isaiah 35:5-6)
 - vi. He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (see Zechariah 9:9)
 - vii. He would be betrayed by a friend (see Psalm 41:9)
 - viii. He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver (see Zechariah 11:12)

- ix. He would be wounded and bruised (see Isaiah 53:5)
 - x. His hands and feet would be pierced (see Psalm 22:16)
 - xi. He would be crucified with thieves (see Isaiah 53:12)
 - xii. His garments would be torn, and lots would be cast for them (see Psalm 22:18)
 - xiii. His bones would not be broken (see Psalm 34:20)
 - xiv. His side would be pierced (see Zechariah 12:10)
 - xv. He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (see Isaiah 53:9)
 - xvi. He would rise from the dead (see Psalm 16:10)
3. These are impossible to arrange from a human level—100 billion years wouldn't be enough time to give us enough chances for those processes to be fulfilled without God
 4. Biblical prophecy isn't a good guess—it's good news to a guessing world
 5. There's only one explanation: divine authorship
- V. The Future Makes God Known to Us (v. 45)
- A. God predicts future events in order to make Himself known to us
 1. This is the reason for biblical prophecy—so that people will realize that there is only one God
 2. God uses prophecy as His business card—to show that other world religions are all a sham and that demonic endeavors don't add up to anything
 - a. Isaiah 41:21-23
 - b. John 14:29
 - B. There are three credentials that set Jesus apart from every other religious system or belief system
 1. His impact on history is incomparable
 2. His resurrection from the dead
 3. Fulfilled prophecy
 - C. Most religions base their beliefs on the philosophical postulates of their founders
 1. The things they said—words of wisdom
 2. A lifestyle captured by their disciples and written down
 - D. But of all the books that claim to be scripture, there is something absent in all of them except one—detailed prophecy
- VI. Conclusion
- A. God reveals Himself in prophecy not to make people aware, but to make people adore
 1. Not to inform people of His plan, but to conform people to His plan
 2. Not just to amaze people, but to get people to worship Him and surrender to His plan
 - B. You can't see what's ahead in your road, but God does
 1. He will be there to meet you when those events occur in your life, to give you the grace to endure them all
 2. Because we are limited and God is unlimited, we who are limited should surrender ourselves to the unlimited being who wants to be a part of our lives
 3. "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God" —Corrie ten Boom

4. This is the God who wants to reveal Himself to you, walk with you, and have a relationship with you

Figures referenced: Corrie ten Boom

Cross references: Genesis 49:10; Psalm 16:10; 22:16, 18; 34:20; 41:9; 139:1-4; Ecclesiastes 7:14; Isaiah 7:14; 9:1; 35:5-6; 41:21-23; 53:5, 9, 12; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9; 11:12; 12:10; John 14:29

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