

# What is the future for this planet?



**E**arth is the only planet where life is known to exist. The people on this planet have developed technologies able to explore the far reaches of the universe, to probe the tiniest units of matter, to save life and to destroy it. In fact, they are capable of self-extinction.

Just a few nuclear warheads, carefully aimed, could wipe out most of the earth's human population. Many fear that one day those weapons could be used to do the job for which they were intended.

## Will humanity destroy itself?

Never before has the human race had the capability to destroy itself several times over.

But will the earth's Creator let humanity wipe itself out?

The answer is "No". God has a definite purpose for His creation, a purpose soon to reach its climax with the return of His son Jesus Christ to set up a new world order.

The fact Jesus will come back is central to the Bible's message. After his resurrection he went into heaven as his disciples watched. The angels' words to the disciples at that time were clear: Jesus will return in the same way as he went.

*"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he have seen him go into heaven."*

Acts 1, verse 11

Jesus himself spoke of the conditions to precede his return. He gave an apt description of the fear many people feel today for the very future of the earth.

*"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven\* shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."*

Luke 21, verses 26 and 27

## The new world order

When he returns, Jesus will set up the Kingdom of God on earth.

\* "The powers of heaven" are a biblical symbol for political powers

Glimpses of what like will be like in the Kingdom Age appear throughout the pages of scripture.

- Jesus will be at the head of a fair and honest world government.

*"He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment."*

Psalm 72, verse 2

*"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."*

Revelation 11, verse 15

- There will be lasting peace and security, no more war, strife or fear.

*"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*

Micah 4, verse 3

- Joy and contentment will prevail, with no more disease, disabilities or hunger.

*"Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us."*

Psalm 67, verse 6

*"Then the eye of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."*

*Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and the streams in the desert."*

Isaiah 35, verse 5 and 6

These passages do not describe some impossible utopia. They set forth the fulfillment of God's plan.

## Journey through time

604 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, the greatest empire of its time.

One night he had a terrifying dream, a vision which he was convinced must have far-reaching importance.

God revealed the interpretation of this dream to him through a young Jew named Daniel.

What the king had seen was a spectacular image of a man with a gold head, silver arms and chest, brass belly and thighs, iron legs, and feet made of a mixture of iron and clay. Suddenly a stone miraculously appeared and struck the image on its feet. The whole image crumbled, and the wind blew away the pieces. Finally, the stone became a mountain that grew to fill the entire earth.

The vision was awe-inspiring. Even more powerful was its meaning; for it was no less than a preview of world history!

It represented the major empires that held control over the ancient Middle Eastern World: the gold stood for Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's empire; the silver, Medo-Persia; the brass, Greece; and the iron, Rome.

After the fall of Rome the Middle East was never again under one strong empire. Iron is strong and clay is not; strong and weak nations replaced these first four empires. Just as iron and clay do not mix, so these nations did not "cleave one to another".

The feet of iron and clay depict the situation just prior to the coming of Jesus Christ. He is the stone which hits the image on the feet and brings it down.

An amazing forecast of four great empires--amazing because when it was given Babylon seemed as though

# What is the future for this planet?

it could rule forever, and Rome was only a small Latin village.

Only the last part of the dream remains to take place. The “stone” must still appear and fill the earth, when Christ returns as king.

Nebuchadnezzar saw the four great empires as an impressive image of a man made of valuable metals. God later showed Daniel the same empires as He saw them--cruel, fierce beasts. The accounts of Nebuchadnezzar’s image and Daniel’s vision of the beasts are found in the Old Testament, Daniel 2 and Daniel 7.

## Israel– the center of God’s plan

Today you can look at the prophecies in Daniel and marvel at how exactly they correspond with the course of history which followed.

Indeed, you can find numerous Bible prophecies which have come to pass in history, right up to the present. Bible prophecies have an outstanding record when compared with human predictions, because *no Bible prophecy has ever been proven wrong*.

Take, for instance, the chain of prophecies about the Jews. They were to be scattered and persecuted, then regathered to the very land they originally settled. Ezekiel’s prediction that they would come back to the land of Israel has come to pass during this century:

*“Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:*

*And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king unto them all.”*

Ezekiel 37, verses 21 and 22

Notice the last phrase: “and one king shall be king to them all.” This refers to the rule of the Messiah, Jesus

of Nazareth, the “stone” whose influence grows until it covers the whole world.

One hundred years ago the idea that the Jews would return to their ancient land seemed impossible. But today the Jewish state of Israel is constantly at the forefront of world attention.

God’s plan has a very definite geographical focus: the nation of Israel, and specifically the city of Jerusalem.

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah says Jerusalem will be “a burdensome stone for all people,” the center of the final world conflict which will herald the return of Jesus Christ. This conflict will mark the end of the present world order and the establishment of a worldwide government with Jerusalem as its capital and Jesus as its head. This is the consummation of human history, the Kingdom of God on earth.

## A certain future

God has a purpose for his planet. His promises for the future will come to pass just as His prophecies have been fulfilled over the course of history.

Right now, world events are leading up to the final stage of His unfolding plan-- the return of Jesus Christ to set up God’s Kingdom on earth.

## Recap

God’s final purpose for the earth is to establish His Kingdom on it.

Jesus Christ will soon return to be ruler of this worldwide kingdom.

## Recommended Bible Readings

The Kingdom of God: Isaiah 35 and 65, Micah 4.

Prophecies of the empires to dominate the Middle East: Daniel 2 & 7

Jesus Christ describes world conditions before his return: Luke 21.

# What is the future for this planet?

## Two prophecies of the four great empires of the ancient world and the Kingdom of God

### Nebuchadnezzar's dream: the image of a man- Daniel 2

- Head of gold (verse 38)
- Breast and arms of silver (verse 39)
- Belly and thighs of brass (verse 39)
- Legs of iron (verse 40)
- Feet of iron and clay (verse 41)
- Stone destroys the image, becomes a great mountain and fills the earth. (verse 44)



- Babylon*, the empire of Nebuchadnezzar, was the most magnificent of the four. 604-539 BC
- In *Medo-Persia* according to the historian Herodotus, taxes and tribute were paid in silver. 539-331 BC
- Greece* was noted for brass (or copper), which was used in armour. 331-63 BC
- Rome* was a strong empire which later divided into two parts, represented by the legs. 63 BC - 476 AD (west), 1453 AD (east)
- Strong and weak nations, some with Roman heritage, tending not to cling together. 476 AD to the return of Christ
- Jesus Christ takes over the whole territory of the image and sets up the Kingdom of God on earth.

### Daniel's vision of the four beasts- Daniel 7

- Winged lion (verse 4)
- Bear with 3 ribs in its mouth (verse 5)
- Leopard with wings and four heads (verse 6)
- Terrible beast with iron teeth (verse 7)



The Babylonian people of Daniel's time would be familiar with this royal symbol.



Three conquered nations comprised the Persian empire: Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.



After the death of Alexander, the Grecian Empire was divided into four parts.



The Romans were known for their ruthless march to power.

Son of Man (verse 13)  
Jesus Christ will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.