SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF NEBUCADNEZZAR AND HIS BABYLON

SECOND HALF 2020

ADVENT PILGRIMS FELLOWSHIP
SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS
Lessons from Nebuchadnezzar and His Captivity of Judah

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SECTION 1

THE LEAD UP TO CAPTIVITY
Introduction

During the next six months our study will encompass a vast field of lessons to be learnt from the experiences of a heathen king.

To our surprise, we will discover that the object lesson contained in the life of Nebuchadnezzar is of vital import to us for whom the book of Daniel was written, a book sealed for the time of the end during which many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.

To be among the wise who will understand this experience of purification, our study into the life of Nebuchadnezzar is paramount.

In this first section we will contemplate the object lesson of Judah and its apostasy that led to an encounter with the king of Babylon. We will observe how God’s purpose to evangelise the heathen via His chosen people is not thwarted by their apostasy; but rather how He will use their miserable failure by bringing into prominence the faithful few whom God will use for that purpose.

Our study will reveal the detail behind the following quote and bring to light God’s profound design to convert souls via the most unexpected means.

“Why did the Lord permit Jerusalem to be destroyed by fire the first time? Why did he permit His people to be overcome by their enemies and carried into heathen lands? It was because they failed to be his missionaries, and had built walls of division between themselves and the people round them. The Lord scattered them, that the knowledge of His truth might be carried to the world.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 2, p. 1040.

May our minds be receptive to glean the insights conveyed in this lesson for us whom God wants to use for His closing work.
God’s Purpose Regarding Israel

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. Deuteronomy 28:1

OBJECTIVES

- To consider God’s call to Abraham.
- To study the extension of that call upon the Hebrews.
- To examine the prerequisite condition to fulfil that calling.

THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM

1. Where did God call Abraham from? Genesis 12:1, 4, 5; Hebrews 11:8-10

“It was a wise arrangement, which God Himself had made, to cut off His people, so far as possible, from connection with the heathen, making them a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations. He had separated Abraham from his idolatrous kindred, that the patriarch might train and educate his family apart from the seductive influences which would have surrounded them in Mesopotamia, and that the true faith might be preserved in its purity by his descendants from generation to generation.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 141.
“Abraham had grown up in the midst of superstition and heathenism. Even his father's household, by whom the knowledge of God had been preserved, were yielding to the seductive influences surrounding them, and they "served other gods" than Jehovah.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 44.

2. What was the purpose behind this calling? Genesis 12:2, 3; Galatians 3:7-9

“It was for the purpose of bringing the best gifts of Heaven to all the peoples of earth that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan. "I will make of thee a great nation," He said, "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Genesis 12:2. It was a high honor to which Abraham was called—that of being the father of the people who for centuries were to be the guardians and preservers of the truth of God to the world, the people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 15.

“The message of God came to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." In order that God might qualify him for his great work as the keeper of the sacred oracles, Abraham must be separated from the associations of his early life. . . . Abraham's unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 44.

3. Is there a lesson to learn for us in the calling of Abraham? Romans 4:16

“It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call.
He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise—whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God had spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.

“Many are still tested as was Abraham. . . . They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations, and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. God has a work for them to do. . . .

“Who is ready at the call of Providence to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations? Who will accept new duties and enter untried fields . . . ? He who will do this has the faith of Abraham, and will share with him that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," with which "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared"” —Conflict and Courage, p. 44.

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE HEBREWS**

4. To which nation was the calling of Abraham initially extended? 
   **Genesis 12:2**

   “Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man.

It was for the accomplishment of this purpose that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan. "I will make of thee a great nation," He said, "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."” —Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 286.
5. How did God establish Abraham’s descendent nation as an influence for the salvation of all nations? Genesis 15:13, 14

“The descendants of Abraham, Jacob and his posterity, were brought down to Egypt that in the midst of that great and wicked nation they might reveal the principles of God's kingdom. The integrity of Joseph and his wonderful work in preserving the lives of the whole Egyptian people were a representation of the life of Christ. Moses and many others were witnesses for God.

“In bringing forth Israel from Egypt, the Lord again manifested His power and His mercy. His wonderful works in their deliverance from bondage and His dealings with them in their travels through the wilderness were not for their benefit alone. These were to be as an object lesson to the surrounding nations.”

“Christ was the leader of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. Enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, He led and guided them. He preserved them from the perils of the wilderness, He brought them into the land of promise, and in the sight of all the nations that acknowledged not God He established Israel as His own chosen possession, the Lord's vineyard.” —Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 286, 287.

6. By what endearing expressions did God establish Abraham’s posterity? Deuteronomy 32:9-12

“Christ was their instructor. As He had been with them in the wilderness, so He was still to be their teacher and guide. In the tabernacle and the temple His glory dwelt in the holy shekinah above the mercy seat. In their behalf He constantly manifested the riches of His love and patience.
“God desired to make of His people Israel a praise and a glory. Every spiritual advantage was given them. God withheld from them nothing favorable to the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 288.

**A CONDITIONAL CALLING**

7. Why could God use Abraham to fulfil His purpose?  
   *Genesis 18:18, 19; 26:5*

“God designed that Abraham should be a channel of light and blessing, that he should have a gathering influence, and that God should have a people on the earth. Abraham was to be in the world, reflecting in his life the character of Jesus. When he received the divine call, Abraham was not a man of renown, neither a lawgiver, nor a conqueror. He was a simple herdsman, dwelling in tents, but employing a large number of workmen to carry on his humble employment. And the honor which he received was because of his faithfulness to God, his strict integrity and just dealing. The Lord said of him: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

“Abraham's unselfish life made him indeed a "spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." And the Lord declared he would bless those who blessed Abraham, and that he would punish those who misused or injured him. Through Abraham's experience in his religious life a correct knowledge of Jehovah has been communicated to thousands; and his light will shed its beams all along the path of those who practise the piety, the faith, the devotion, and the obedience of Abraham” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 4, 1897.
8. If the nation of Israel was to fulfil God’s purpose as faithful Abraham proved to be, what condition did they need to fulfil? Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 13, 14

“To this people were committed the oracles of God. They were hedged about by the precepts of his Law, the everlasting principles of truth, justice, and purity. Obedience to these principles was to be their protection, for it would save them from destroying themselves by sinful practices. And as the tower in the vineyard, God placed in the midst of the land His holy temple.” —Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 287.

“Not one of the good things which God had promised to his people would fail if they would comply with the conditions upon which these blessings were bestowed. If God's angels wrought with the armies of Israel to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan because of their wickedness, the Hebrews must be free from the sins of those nations. They must maintain a high standard of purity and holiness, and must show in all their words and acts that they loved, feared, and obeyed, the great Ruler of the universe.”

“God singled out the Hebrew nation and connected them with himself, that he might make them representatives of his own character. He would make them a beacon of light to all surrounding nations, that his name might be glorified, and his service exalted. By communion with God, the Israelites were to become partakers of the divine nature, their hearts, debased by sin, were to be purified, their aspirations ennobled. They were to stand forth before the world as an example of what men may become through Jesus Christ. Those whom God would elevate and ennoble by connection with himself, would become, by transgression, wholly debased and Satanic in character. It was for them to choose the course which they would pursue.”

—The Signs of the Times, March 3, 1881.
Only Judah Left

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Genesis 49:10

OBJECTIVES

- To observe the thwarting of God’s purpose for Israel.
- To research the demise of ten tribes of Israel to apostasy.
- To behold Judah in government at Jerusalem sustained by God’s care.

GOD’S PURPOSE THREATENED

1. In the purpose of God for Israel to be a witness to all nations, who was to be their king for the nations to witness? Isaiah 43:15

“Balaam prophesied that Israel's King would be greater and more powerful than Agag. This was the name given to the kings of the Amalekites, who were at this time a very powerful nation; but Israel, if true to God, would subdue all her enemies. The King of Israel was the Son of God; and His throne was one day to be established in the earth, and His power to be exalted above all earthly kingdoms.”

“The people of Israel, in their gratitude at deliverance from the Midianites, proposed to Gideon that he should become their king, and that the throne should be confirmed to his descendants. This proposition was in direct violation of the principles of the theocracy. God was the king of Israel, and for them to place a man upon the throne would be a rejection of their Divine Sovereign. Gideon recognized this fact; his answer shows how true and noble were his motives. "I will not rule over you," he declared; "neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."”—Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 450, 555.
2. As God wanted to reveal Himself to the nations through His people, what was Israel’s first step to threaten this purpose? Judges 8:33-35; 9:1, 6

“Abimelech was successful in his schemes, and was accepted, at first by the Shechemites, and afterward by the people generally, as the ruler of Israel. But while thus exalted to the highest position in the gift of the nation, he was utterly unworthy of the trust. His birth was ignoble, his character vicious. The higher and nobler qualities,—virtue, integrity, and truth,—he had never cherished. He possessed a strong will and indomitable perseverance, and thus, by the most unscrupulous measures, he accomplished his purposes.

“The Israelites, blinded by their own sinful course of apostasy, were acting directly contrary to God's express commands, and he left them to reap the results of their own folly. It was not Gods will that Israel should have a king. But in case they desired to be thus governed, the Lord, understanding the pride and perversity of the human heart, had reserved to himself the right to appoint a king over them. God had brought Israel out from Egypt to be a peculiar people, especially devoted to himself, and unlike any other people. Israel's great ambition to imitate the idolatrous nations around them was the result of separation from God.”—The Signs of the Times, August 4, 1881.

3. Upon Israel’s insistence, did God finally relent and give them their wish? 1 Samuel 8:4, 5, 7; Hosea 13:11

“The Lord had, through His prophets, foretold that Israel would be governed by a king; but it does not follow that this form of government was best for them or according to His will. He permitted the people to follow their own choice, because they refused to be guided by His counsel.
Hosea declares that God gave them a king in His anger. Hosea 13:11. When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, or in opposition to His revealed will, He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realize their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires contrary to the will of God will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing.

“God desired His people to look to Him alone as their Law-giver and their Source of strength. Feeling their dependence upon God, they would be constantly drawn nearer to Him. They would become elevated and ennobled, fitted for the high destiny to which He had called them as His chosen people. But when a man was placed upon the throne, it would tend to turn the minds of the people from God. They would trust more to human strength, and less to divine power, and the errors of their king would lead them into sin and separate the nation from God.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 605, 606.

**CONSEQUENCE OF A KING**

4. In rejecting Samuel’s counsel, is there a lesson to gain for us at this time, and how did God adjust the terms of a human king? 
1 Samuel 12:13-15, 25

“Those who despise and reject the faithful servant of God show contempt, not merely for the man, but for the Master who sent him. It is God's words, His reproofs and counsel, that are set at nought; it is His authority that is rejected.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 605.

“When Saul was proclaimed as king, Samuel had assured the people that the danger of the future would be that of forgetting the covenant of the Lord, and of failing to acknowledge God as the supreme Ruler of their nation. Israel had sought and obtained a monarchy after their own heart, yet Samuel had told them that the Lord in his infinite mercy was willing to forgive them, and to help them, if they would only fear him, and serve him in truth. The question of the conversion of Israel into the royalty of the
kingdom of God, was to be decided. Would the Israel of God, with their king at their head, obey God explicitly, or would they not? Either Israel must cease to be the people of God, or the principles upon which the monarchy was founded must become spiritual, and the nation must be governed by a divine power. If Israel would be wholly the Lord's, then the Lord would constitute a kingdom in which the will of the human and earthly would be in subjection to the will of God, and, by this means, the covenant relationship that constituted God the Ruler of Israel, would be preserved. The question may seem of little consequence to our finite minds; but it was far from this. Would the king whom Israel had chosen listen to the Ruler of all kings? Would he surrender his will, and do the will of the Father which is in Heaven? No monarchy in Israel that did not acknowledge in all its ways the supreme authority of God, could prosper. As long as the people of Israel would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long would he be their protection and defense.” —The Signs of the Times, June 1, 1888.

5. Can it be shown that by the actions of apostasy in a king, a whole section of Israel would be rejected by God? 1 Kings 11:1, 2, 5-9, 11-13

“The breach created by the rash speech of Rehoboam proved irreparable. Thenceforth the twelve tribes of Israel were divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin composing the lower or southern kingdom of Judah, under the rulership of Rehoboam; while the ten northern tribes formed and maintained a separate government, known as the kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as their ruler. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet concerning the rending of the kingdom. "The cause was from the Lord."”

“But, far from repenting, Jeroboam "made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places." Thus he not only sinned greatly himself, but "made Israel to sin;" and "this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth."”
“The apostasy introduced during Jeroboam's reign became more and more marked, until finally it resulted in the utter ruin of the kingdom of Israel. Even before the death of Jeroboam, Ahijah, the aged prophet at Shiloh who many years before had predicted the elevation of Jeroboam to the throne, declared: "The Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall root up Israel out of this good land, which He gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger. And He shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.”” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 91, 107.

6. As the ten tribes of Israel were finally obliterated, which tribe continued in Jerusalem until the first advent of Christ?
   Genesis 49:10; 1 Kings 11:31, 32, 35, 36

“"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” This prophecy was uttered by the dying Jacob, and addressed to his sons. But it bore with weight upon future generations. . . . The scepter is a rod carried in the hands of chiefs and rulers as a badge of authority. . . . “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah.” The ensign of his tribeship shall remain. Judah shall not cease to be a distinct tribe until Shiloh come. . . . And the tribe of Judah did maintain its supremacy through all its adversities till Christ’s first advent. It remained a distinct tribe till Shiloh came.” —Christ Triumphant, p. 93.

**JUDAH IN JERUSALEM**

7. Due to the faithfulness of one king, namely David, can God’s sustaining mercy and blessing be seen upon Judah and Jerusalem?
   1 Kings 11:34, 36; Hosea 11:12
“With the rending of the kingdom early in Rehoboam’s reign the glory of Israel began to depart, never again to be regained in its fullness. At times during the centuries that followed, the throne of David was occupied by men of moral worth and far-seeing judgment, and under the rulership of these sovereigns the blessings resting upon the men of Judah were extended to the surrounding nations. At times the name of Jehovah was exalted above every false god, and His law was held in reverence. From time to time mighty prophets arose to strengthen the hands of the rulers and to encourage the people to continued faithfulness. But the seeds of evil already springing up when Rehoboam ascended the throne were never to be wholly uprooted; and at times the once-favored people of God were to fall so low as to become a byword among the heathen.

“Yet notwithstanding the perversity of those who leaned toward idolatrous practices, God in mercy would do everything in His power to save the divided kingdom from utter ruin.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 96.

8. Although the ten tribes of Israel were finally eliminated due to apostasy, did God try to present their demise? Isaiah 65:1-5; Hosea 4:15-17; 11:8

“Yet the Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him. Through long, dark years when ruler after ruler stood up in bold defiance of Heaven and led Israel deeper and still deeper into idolatry, God sent message after message to His backslidden people. Through His prophets He gave them every opportunity to stay the tide of apostasy and to return to Him. During the years that were to follow the rending of the kingdom, Elijah and Elisha were to live and labor, and the tender appeals of Hosea and Amos and Obadiah were to be heard in the land. Never was the kingdom of Israel to be left without noble witnesses to the mighty power of God to save from sin. Even in the darkest hours some would remain true to their divine Ruler and in the midst of idolatry would live blameless in the sight of a holy God. These faithful ones were numbered among the goodly remnant
through whom the eternal purpose of Jehovah was finally to be fulfilled.” 

--Prophets and Kings, p. 108
Apostasy in Judah

The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. Hosea 12:2

OBJECTIVES

- To examine God’s revelations regarding Judah contrasting the ten tribes.
- To observe the development of apostasy in Judah as well.
- To research God’s warnings by which He threatens the use of Nebuchadnezzar.

KING DAVID’S LEGACY UPON JUDAH

1. Having learnt that Israel’s desire for a human king exposed them to the fate of a disobedient king (i.e. 1 Kings 11:5, 6, 11), how did God demonstrate the blessings of a godly king? 1 Samuel 13:13, 14; 2 Chronicles 13:5

“Then He called to the throne "a man after His own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14)--not one who was faultless in character, but who, instead of trusting to himself, would rely upon God, and be guided by His Spirit; who, when he sinned, would submit to reproof and correction.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 148.

“Either Israel must cease to be the people of God, or the principle upon which the monarchy was founded must be maintained, and the nation must be governed by a divine power. If Israel would be wholly the Lord's, if the
will of the human and earthly were held in subjection to the will of God, He would continue to be the Ruler of Israel. So long as the king and the people would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long He could be their defense. But in Israel no monarchy could prosper that did not in all things acknowledge the supreme authority of God.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 621.

2. Upon which part of Israel was this blessing extended?
1 Kings 12:20; Zechariah 12:7, 8

“For three years Rehoboam tried to profit by his sad experience at the beginning of his reign; and in this effort he was prospered. He "built cities for defense in Judah," and "fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine." He was careful to make these fortified cities "exceeding strong." 2 Chronicles 11:5, 11, 12. But the secret of Judah's prosperity during the first years of Rehoboam's reign lay not in these measures. It was their recognition of God as the Supreme Ruler that placed the tribes of Judah and Benjamin on vantage ground. To their number were added many God-fearing men from the northern tribes. "Out of all the tribes of Israel," the record reads, "such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon."” —Prophets and Kings, p. 92.

“With the rending of the kingdom early in Rehoboam's reign the glory of Israel began to depart, never again to be regained in its fullness. At times during the centuries that followed, the throne of David was occupied by men of moral worth and far-seeing judgment, and under the rulership of these sovereigns the blessings resting upon the men of Judah were extended to the surrounding nations. At times the name of Jehovah was exalted above every false god, and His law was held in reverence. From time to time mighty prophets arose to strengthen the hands of the rulers and to encourage the people to continued faithfulness.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 96.
3. How far into the future was David’s legacy in fact to extend? Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:31-33

“To David was given the promise that Christ should reign forever and ever, and that of his kingdom there should be no end.” —The Youth’s Instructor, September 13, 1900.

JUDAH’S APOSTASY

4. Notwithstanding Judah’s preeminence, did it also fall into apostasy due to unfaithful kings? 2 Chronicles 12:1

“How sad, how filled with significance, the words, "And all Israel with him"! The people whom God had chosen to stand as a light to the surrounding nations were turning from their Source of strength and seeking to become like the nations about them. As with Solomon, so with Rehoboam—the influence of wrong example led many astray. And as with them, so to a greater or less degree is it today with everyone who gives himself up to work evil—the influence of wrongdoing is not confined to the doer. No man liveth unto himself. None perish alone in their iniquity. Every life is a light that brightens and cheers the pathway of others, or a dark and desolating influence that tends toward despair and ruin. We lead others either upward to happiness and immortal life, or downward to sorrow and eternal death. And if by our deeds we strengthen or force into activity the evil powers of those around us, we share their sin.”

“But the seeds of evil already springing up when Rehoboam ascended the throne were never to be wholly uprooted; and at times the once-favored people of God were to fall so low as to become a byword among the heathen.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 94, 96.
5. How did Judah express their false assurance while they lived in apostasy? Jeremiah 7:4; Isaiah 65:2-5. What lesson is in it for us?

“The warning was not heeded by the Jewish people. They forgot God, and lost sight of their high privilege as His representatives. The blessings they had received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages were appropriated for their own glorification. They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example. Like the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, they followed out every imagination of their evil hearts. Thus they made sacred things appear a farce, saying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these" (Jeremiah 7:4), while at the same time they were misrepresenting God's character, dishonoring His name, and polluting His sanctuary.” —Christ's Object Lessons, p. 291

“What is it that constitutes the wretchedness, the nakedness, of those who feel rich and increased with goods? It is the want of the righteousness of Christ. In their own righteousness they are represented as clothed with filthy rags, and yet in this condition they flatter themselves that they are clothed upon with Christ's righteousness. . . . They may be crying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we," while their hearts are filled with unholy traffic and unrighteous barter. The courts of the soul temple may be the haunt of envy, pride, passion, evil surmising, bitterness, and hollow formalism. Christ looks mournfully upon His professed people who feel rich and increased in the knowledge of the truth, and who are yet destitute of the truth in life and character.” —Our High Calling, p. 349.

GOD’S WARNINGS

6. How did God speak in love to His people, and how did they respond? Jeremiah 6:16-19; Isaiah 30:15-17
“The reformation under Josiah had cleansed the land of the idolatrous shrines, but the hearts of the multitude had not been transformed. The seeds of truth that had sprung up and given promise of an abundant harvest had been choked by thorns. Another such backsliding would be fatal; and the Lord sought to arouse the nation to a realization of their danger. Only as they should prove loyal to Jehovah could they hope for the divine favor and for prosperity.

“Jeremiah called their attention repeatedly to the counsels given in Deuteronomy. More than any other of the prophets, he emphasized the teachings of the Mosaic law and showed how these might bring the highest spiritual blessing to the nation and to every individual heart. "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein," he pleaded, "and ye shall find rest for your souls.""

“This promise of prosperity as the reward of allegiance was accompanied by a prophecy of the terrible judgments that would befall the city should its inhabitants prove disloyal to God and His law. If the admonitions to obey the Lord God of their fathers and to hallow His Sabbath day were not heeded, the city and its palaces would be utterly destroyed by fire.”—Prophets and Kings, pp. 410, 411.

7. In Judah’s persistent rejection of God’s overtures of love, did His warnings become more intense? Jeremiah 5:11-15; 6:10-13; 18:11, 15, 16

8. How specific was the warning God gave just before the final invasion? Jeremiah 21:7; 22:25; Habakkuk 1:6, 7
“Foremost among those who were rapidly leading the nation to ruin was Zedekiah their king. Forsaking utterly the counsels of the Lord as given through the prophets, forgetting the debt of gratitude he owed Nebuchadnezzar, violating his solemn oath of allegiance taken in the name of the Lord God of Israel, Judah's king rebelled against the prophets, against his benefactor, and against his God. In the vanity of his own wisdom he turned for help to the ancient enemy of Israel's prosperity, "sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people."

"'Shall he prosper?' the Lord inquired concerning the one who had thus basely betrayed every sacred trust; "shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord God, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war: . . . seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape." Ezekiel 17:15-18." —Prophets and Kings, pp. 450, 451.
God’s Use of Nebuchadnezzar

*I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them.* Isaiah 42:16

OBJECTIVES

- To come to know God’s way in handling human interrelationships.
- To observe Nebuchadnezzar’s complicated nature and God’s use of it.
- To see God in action upon apostate Judah.

GOD’S WAYS IN HISTORY

1. For God to deal with the apostasy in Judah, we have learnt He would use a bitter and hasty nation; what can we learn of God from this? Jeremiah 25:7-9

“Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God's great work after His own plan will be carried out by men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or evil. In opposition to righteousness, men become instruments of unrighteousness. But their course of action is unforced. They need not have become instruments of unrighteousness any more than need Cain.

Men of all characters, righteous and unrighteous, will stand in their positions. With the characters they have formed, they will act their part in the fulfillment of history. In a crisis, just at the right moment, men will stand in the places they have prepared themselves to fill. Believers and
unbelievers will fall into line as witnesses, to confirm truth which they do not themselves comprehend. All will cooperate in accomplishing the purposes of God.” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 12, p. 390.

2. What did God mean in declaring the king of Babylon, namely Nebuchadnezzar, as His servant? Jeremiah 27:6

“The work outlined in these scriptures is the work before us. The terms "My servant," "Israel," "the Lord's servant," mean anyone that the Lord may select and appoint to do a certain work. He makes them ministers of His will, though some who are selected may be as ignorant of His will as was Nebuchadnezzar.” --Testimonies for the Church Vol. 9, p. 138.

“Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God's wrath upon impenitent Judah.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 422

3. As history has unfolded since Nebuchadnezzar’s time, can it be shown that God has used kings and nations as servants and instruments in His hands? Isaiah 45:1-3; Jeremiah 27:7

“There is to be such a time of trouble as there never was since there was a nation. Already nations are angry, already Satan is working with signs and lying wonders, and this will increase until the end. God will use his enemies as instruments to punish those who have followed their own pernicious ways whereby the truth God has been misrepresented, misjudged, and dishonored. These enemies of God are living evidences of the truth of His word; they are fulfilling that which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” —The Paulson Collection, p. 136.

“In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power,
ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.” — Prophets and Kings, p. 499.

GOD’S WAY AGAINST JUDAH

4. Did God use Nebuchadnezzar to abruptly invade and destroy Jerusalem? 2 Chronicles 36:5-7, 9, 10, 11-13; Jeremiah 30:11 (last part)

“Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God's wrath upon impenitent Judah. Again and again Jerusalem was to be invested and entered by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Company after company--at first a few only, but later on thousands and tens of thousands--were to be taken captive to the land of Shinar, there to dwell in enforced exile. Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah--all these Jewish kings were in turn to become vassals of the Babylonian ruler, and all in turn were to rebel. Severer and yet more severe chastisements were to be inflicted upon the rebellious nation, until at last the entire land was to become a desolation, Jerusalem was to be laid waste and burned with fire, the temple that Solomon had built was to be destroyed, and the kingdom of Judah was to fall, never again to occupy its former position among the nations of earth.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 422.

5. Even in their apostasy, did God intend that the city of Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed, and the kingdom of Judah totally devastated? Jeremiah 29:5-7
“Zedekiah at the beginning of his reign was trusted fully by the king of Babylon and had as a tried counselor the prophet Jeremiah. By pursuing an honorable course toward the Babylonians and by paying heed to the messages from the Lord through Jeremiah, he could have kept the respect of many in high authority and have had opportunity to communicate to them a knowledge of the true God. Thus the captive exiles already in Babylon would have been placed on vantage ground and granted many liberties; the name of God would have been honored far and wide; and those that remained in the land of Judah would have been spared the terrible calamities that finally came upon them.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 440.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S INSTRUMENTALITY

6. What was the nature of Nebuchadnezzar by which God could effectively use him to deal measured blows upon apostate Judah? Jeremiah 6:22, 23; Daniel 4:37

“An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and God was able to use him as an instrument for the punishment of the rebellious and for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. "The terrible of the nations" (Ezekiel 28:7), it was given Nebuchadnezzar, after years of patient and wearing labor, to conquer Tyre; Egypt also fell a prey to his victorious armies; and as he added nation after nation to the Babylonian realm, he added more and more to his fame as the greatest ruler of the age.

“It is not surprising that the successful monarch, so ambitious and so proud-spirited, should be tempted to turn aside from the path of humility, which alone leads to true greatness. In the intervals between his wars of conquest he gave much thought to the strengthening and beautifying of his capital, until at length the city of Babylon became the chief glory of his kingdom, "the golden city," "the praise of the whole earth." His passion as a builder, and his signal success in making Babylon one of the wonders of the world, ministered to his pride, until he was in grave danger of spoiling his record as a wise ruler whom God could continue to use as an
instrument for the carrying out of the divine purpose.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 514, 515.

7. Can a study of Nebuchadnezzar prove to make him an instrument for our edification? Isaiah 42:16

“God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as "the most high God," "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."” —Evangelism, p. 88.

“It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts and detect that which is wrong, modify their dispositions, and refine their manners. God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them so that they may be purified.” —Mind, Character, and Personality Vol. 2, p. 617.
God’s Intent—A Wooden Yoke

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors. 1 Peter 2:13, 14

OBJECTIVES

• To study God’s measured dealings with apostasy.
• Because God can use heathens for His purposes, to therefore learn to discern the application of His biblical counsel.
• To gain discernment from conflicting messengers.

MEASURED PUNISHMENT

1. How did God indicate the measure of His chastisement upon apostate Judah? Jeremiah 27:11-13

“Ambassadors came from the various nations named to consult with the king of Judah as to the matter of engaging in battle with the king of Babylon. But the prophet of God, bearing the symbols of subjection, delivered the message of the Lord to these nations, commanding them to bear it to their several kings. This was the lightest punishment that a merciful God could inflict upon so rebellious a people, but if they warred against this decree of servitude they were to feel the full rigor of His chastisement. They were faithfully warned not to listen to their false teachers, who prophesied lies.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 169.
2. What was the symbol God used via Jerimiah to illustrate His degree of intended punishment? Jeremiah 27:2-6

“God had said that His people should be saved, that the yoke He would lay upon them should be light, if they submitted uncomplainingly to His plan. Their servitude was represented by a yoke of wood, which was easily borne; but resistance would be met with corresponding severity, represented by the yoke of iron. God designed to hold the king of Babylon in check, that there should be no loss of life nor galling oppression; but by scorning His warning and commands they brought upon themselves the full rigor of bondage.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 172.

3. What vision did God give to describe His tactical capabilities to deal with both Judah and other nations, and with Nebuchadnezzar? Ezekiel 1:15, 16

“As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth.”

“All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 536.

“With what tender compassion did God inform His captive people in regard to His plans for Israel. He knew what suffering and disaster they would experience were they led to believe that they should speedily be delivered from bondage and brought back to Jerusalem according to the prediction of the false prophets. He knew that this belief would make their position a very difficult one. Any demonstration of insurrection upon their part would have awakened the vigilance and severity of the king, and their liberty would have been restricted in consequence. He desired them to quietly submit to their fate and make their servitude as pleasant as possible.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 173.
**SUBMISSION TO HEATHENS**

4. Was it easy for some of the prophets and priests of Judah to accept the counsel of Jeremiah to submit to the heathen yoke of Babylon? Jeremiah 26:7, 8; 28:10, 11

“Jeremiah was already deprived of his liberty because he would obey God and give to the king and others occupying responsible positions in Israel the words of warning which he had received from the mouth of God. The Israelites would not accept these reproofs nor allow their course to be questioned. They had manifested great anger and contempt at the words of rebuke and at the judgments which were predicted to come upon them if they continued in rebellion against the Lord. Although Israel would not hear the word of divine counsel, it did not make that word of less effect, neither did God cease to reprove and to threaten with His displeasure and His judgments those who refused to obey His requirements.” —*Testimonies for the Church* Vol. 4, p. 176.

5. Is there counsel that comes to us today as to our interaction with the authorities of modern Babylon? Jeremiah 29:7; 1 Peter 2:13-17

“We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's Word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church" or a "Thus saith the state." The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 240.
6. How careful are we admonished to be not to arouse the opposition of governments by any unwise insubordination to them? Romans 12:18; 13:1-7

“The question of religious liberty is very important, and it should be handled with great wisdom and discretion. Unless this is done there is danger that by our own course of action we shall bring upon ourselves a crisis before we are prepared for it. The burden of our message should be "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Our brethren should be cautioned to make moves that will not stir up and provoke the powers that be, so that they will make moves that will limit the work, and cut us off from proclaiming the message in different localities.” —Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 219.

“A great work is to be done for the Master in proclaiming the last message of mercy to our world, and we are dependent upon authorities and powers to find passage from one end of the world to another, and as long as we are dependent upon the powers that be, we must not divorce ourselves from them, for this is a worldwide message.

“We are to go forward quietly, and when our way is apparently blocked in one direction we are to make no condemnation of the powers that be, for in thus doing we are teaching other powers how to work to hedge up our way. We are not to stir up opposing elements or provoke retaliation or revenge. The climax will come soon enough. It is already stealing on as a thief in the night. And we can speak Bible truth which will not set opposing influences at work.” —This Day With God, p. 250.

**DISCERNMENT BETWEEN THE FALSE AND TRUE**

7. As Jeremiah presented the messages from God, were there the contradictory messages given to confuse the people? Jeremiah 27:14-17
“It was far more agreeable to the people to receive the message of the false prophet, who predicted prosperity; therefore it was received. It wounded their pride to have their sins brought continually before their eyes; they would much rather put them out of sight. They were in such moral darkness that they did not realize the enormity of their guilt nor appreciate the messages of reproof and warning given them of God. Had they had a proper sense of their disobedience they would have acknowledged the justice of the Lord's course and recognized the authority of His prophet. God entreated them to repent, that He might spare them humiliation and that a people called by His name should not become tributary to a heathen nation; but they scoffed at His counsel and went after false prophets.”—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 172.

“Those who pursue a course of rebellion against the Lord can always find false prophets who will justify them in their acts and flatter them to their destruction. Lying words often make many friends, as in the case of Ahab and Zedekiah. These false prophets, in their pretended zeal for God, found many more believers and followers than the true prophet, who delivered the simple message of the Lord.”—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 174.

8. **Are we today also receiving messages which we need wisdom to discern from the true? Matthew 24:24**

“My soul is much burdened, for I know what is before us. Every conceivable deception will be brought to bear upon those who have not a daily, living connection with God. Satan's angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions and will teach for doctrine the commandments of men. If there was ever a time when we should watch and pray in real earnest, it is now.”—Mind, Character, and Personality, p. 42.
MEDITATION

“To the end of time, men will arise to create confusion and rebellion among those who claim to be representatives of the true God. Those who prophesy lies will encourage men to look upon sin as a light thing. When the terrible results of their evil deeds are made manifest, they will seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them, responsible for their difficulties, even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes. But as surely as the words of Jehovah through His prophet were vindicated ancienly, so surely will the certainty of His messages be established today.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 442.
Judah’s Insubordination

_For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not._ Isaiah 30:15

**OBJECTIVES**

- To reflect upon God’s longsuffering and patience with apostate Judah.
- To observe Judah’s progressive insubordination.
- To learn and understand how man’s fallen nature will use God’s kindness for its own destruction.

**YEARS OF APPEAL**

1. From the time of faithful King Josiah’s death (in 2 Chronicles 35:23, 24), how many years accumulated during which the subsequent wicked kings wore out God’s patience? 2 Chronicles 36:5-13

2. Having already seen God’s messages delivered to Judah during these twenty two years, does God’s word reveal His compassionate nature? 2 Chronicles 36:15

“The long-suffering of God is wonderful. Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with the sinner. But "righteousness and judgment are the establishment of His throne." Psalm 97:2, margin. "The Lord is slow to
anger;" but He is "great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet."” —Christ’s Object Lessons, p 177.

3. What are the words of inspiration that further enlarge God’s compassion? Lamentations 3:22-24

“We should carefully consider what is our relation to God and to one another. We are continually sinning against God, but His mercy still follows us; in love He bears with our perversities, our neglect, our ingratitude, our disobedience. He never becomes impatient with us. We insult His mercy, grieve His Holy Spirit, and do Him dishonor before men and angels, and yet His compassions fail not. The thought of God's long-suffering to us should make us forbearing to one another. How patiently should we bear with the faults and errors of our brethren when we remember how great are our own failings in the sight of God. How can we pray to our heavenly Father, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12) if we are . . . exacting in our treatment of others? —That I May Know Him, p. 181.

JUDAH’S INCONSIDERATE REJECTION

4. In the further study of those twenty two years, how does Judah and its kings reveal the evil of their nature? Jeremiah 37:1, 2

“Through Daniel and others of the Hebrew captives, the Babylonian monarch had been made acquainted with the power and supreme authority of the true God; and when Zedekiah once more solemnly promised to remain loyal, Nebuchadnezzar required him to swear to this promise in the name of the Lord God of Israel. Had Zedekiah respected this renewal of his covenant oath, his loyalty would have had a profound influence on the
minds of many who were watching the conduct of those who claimed to reverence the name and to cherish the honor of the God of the Hebrews.

“But Judah's king lost sight of his high privilege of bringing honor to the name of the living God. Of Zedekiah it is recorded: "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the Lord. And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel."” —Prophets and Kings, p. 447.

5. **Heeding the words of the false prophets, how did the princes of Judah view the words of Jeremiah in their hope of overcoming Babylon?** Jeremiah 38:4-6

“For many years Jeremiah had stood before the people as a faithful witness for God; and now, as the fated city was about to pass into the hands of the heathen, he considered his work done and attempted to leave, but was prevented by a son of one of the false prophets, who reported that Jeremiah was about to join the Babylonians, to whom he had repeatedly urged the men of Judah to submit. The prophet denied the lying charge, but nevertheless "the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison.""

“At last the princes, enraged over the repeated counsels of Jeremiah, which were contrary to their set policy of resistance, made a vigorous protest before the king, urging that the prophet was an enemy to the nation, and that his words had weakened the hands of the people and brought misfortune upon them; therefore he should be put to death.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 453, 455.

6. **How is this apostasy of Judah replicated by the apostasy of modern Israel and the treatment of Jeremiah also?** Matthew 24:45-49; Jeremiah 18:18; Psalm 64:3
“The Jewish nation is before us as an example of the termination of God's long forbearance. In the destruction of Jerusalem the destruction of the world is typified. The lips of Him who ever pronounced blessings upon the penitent, and spoke encouragement to the poor and suffering, and brought gladness to the humble, pronounced a curse upon those to whom He had presented light, who would not appreciate or accept light. Those who thought to evade the clear, distinct Word of God, and cherish man-made traditions, He declared would be found guilty of all the blood of the prophets which had been slain from the foundation of the world.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 3, p. 1133.

“The Scriptures, pointing forward to this time, declare that Satan will work with all power and "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 717.

**MISSUSE OF MERCY**

7. In the expression of God’s provision of mercy in the above key text, how did apostate Judah demonstrate their insubordiation? Isaiah 30:15-17; Jeremiah 6:16, 17. The lesson is for us.

“"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." Every time you turn away your ear and refuse to listen, every time you fail to open the door of your heart, you strengthen yourself in unbelief, and make yourself more and more
unwilling to listen to the voice of Him that speaketh, and you diminish your chance of responding to the last appeal of mercy. . . . Let not Christ weep over you as He wept over Jerusalem, saying, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”” —To Be Like Jesus, p. 348.

8. As God’s mercy was extended to Judah, what lesson do we learn from their incessant resistance? Ecclesiastes 8:11; Zephaniah 1:12

“The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence.” —The Great Controversy, p. 28.

“In His dealings with the human race, God bears long with the impenitent. He uses His appointed agencies to call men to allegiance, and offers them His full pardon if they will repent. But because God is long-suffering, men presume on His mercy. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." The patience and long-suffering of God, which should soften and subdue the soul, has an altogether different influence upon the careless and sinful. It leads them to cast off restraint, and strengthens them in resistance. They think that the God who has borne so much from them will not heed their perversity.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 3, p. 1166.

MEDITATION

“It is our duty to inquire the cause of this terrible darkness, that we may shun the course by which men and women have brought upon themselves so great delusion. God has given the world an opportunity to learn and to obey His will. He has given them, in His Word, the light of truth; He has sent them warning, counsel, and admonition; but few will obey His voice. Like the Jewish nation, the majority, even of professed Christians, pride themselves on their superior advantages, but make no returns to God for these great blessings.” —To Be Like Jesus, p. 197.
“The spirit of opposition to reproof, that led to the persecution and imprisonment of Jeremiah, exists today. Many refuse to heed repeated warnings, preferring rather to listen to false teachers who flatter their vanity and overlook their evil-doing. In the day of trouble such will have no sure refuge, no help from heaven. God's chosen servants should meet with courage and patience the trials and sufferings that befall them through reproach, neglect, and misrepresentation. They should continue to discharge faithfully the work God has given them to do, ever remembering that the prophets of old and the Saviour of mankind and His apostles also endured abuse and persecution for the Word's sake.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 437.
Nebuchadnezzar's Magnanimity

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. Proverbs 21:1

OBJECTIVES

- To focus on the big heart of Nebuchadnezzar.
- To observe how God could use this bigheartedness to affect Judah.
- To gain the lesson by which we might soften the persecution of the last days.

THE KING'S HEART

1. Can it be demonstrated that God can mitigate the cruelty in the heart of the heathen? Habakkuk 1:6, 7, 9, 10; Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 4:1-3

2. Besides the cruel pride in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, what else was in his heart that God could tap into? Daniel 1:3-5

“The king did not compel the Hebrew youth to renounce their faith in favor of idolatry, but he hoped to bring this about gradually. By giving them names significant of idolatry, by bringing them daily into close association
with idolatrous customs, and under the influence of the seductive rites of heathen worship, he hoped to induce them to renounce the religion of their nation and to unite with the worship of the Babylonians.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 481.

3. How was this further demonstrated in the treatment of Judah’s kings by Nebuchadnezzar? 2 Chronicles 36:9, 10

“Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God's wrath upon impenitent Judah. Again and again Jerusalem was to be invested and entered by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Company after company--at first a few only, but later on thousands and tens of thousands--were to be taken captive to the land of Shinar, there to dwell in enforced exile. Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah—all these Jewish kings were in turn to become vassals of the Babylonian ruler, and all in turn were to rebel.”

“Through Daniel and others of the Hebrew captives, the Babylonian monarch had been made acquainted with the power and supreme authority of the true God; and when Zedekiah once more solemnly promised to remain loyal, Nebuchadnezzar required him to swear to this promise in the name of the Lord God of Israel. Had Zedekiah respected this renewal of his covenant oath, his loyalty would have had a profound influence on the minds of many who were watching the conduct of those who claimed to reverence the name and to cherish the honor of the God of the Hebrews.”—Prophets and Kings, pp. 422, 447.

GOD’S ORCHESTRATION

4. Because of Nebuchadnezzar’s good-heartedness, how was God able to negotiate the king’s actions to administer ever-increasing discipline upon apostate Judah? Jeremiah 30:11-15
“It was God's purpose that Jehoiakim should heed the counsels of Jeremiah and thus win favor in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar and save himself much sorrow. The youthful king had sworn allegiance to the Babylonian ruler, and had he remained true to his promise he would have commanded the respect of the heathen, and this would have led to precious opportunities for the conversion of souls.”

“The kingdom of Judah, broken in power and robbed of its strength both in men and in treasure, was nevertheless still permitted to exist as a separate government. At its head Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, a younger son of Josiah, changing his name to Zedekiah.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 437, 439.

5. After all of Nebuchadnezzar’s patient tolerance of Judah’s insubordination, what was the final act which reached the limit of his kindness? 2 Chronicles 36:12, 13; Ezekiel 17:15-18

“Foremost among those who were rapidly leading the nation to ruin was Zedekiah their king. Forsaking utterly the counsels of the Lord as given through the prophets, forgetting the debt of gratitude he owed Nebuchadnezzar, violating his solemn oath of allegiance taken in the name of the Lord God of Israel, Judah's king rebelled against the prophets, against his benefactor, and against his God. In the vanity of his own wisdom he turned for help to the ancient enemy of Israel's prosperity, "sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people." —Prophets and Kings, p. 450.

A LESSON FOR US

6. Can we learn something from the benevolent nature of a heathen king as God’s people will face the interrogations of the final days? Luke 21:12; Psalm 119:46
“Kings, governors, and great men will hear of you through the reports of those who are at enmity with you, and your faith and character will be misrepresented before them. But those who are falsely accused will have an opportunity to appear in the presence of their accusers to answer for themselves. They will have the privilege of bringing the light before those who are called the great men of the earth, and if you have studied the Bible, if you are ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, your enemies will not be able to gainsay your wisdom.” —Evangelism, p. 560.

7. How are we admonished to meet these interrogations?  
1 Peter 3:14-16

“When before kings and dignitaries of the earth, who held his life in their hands, [Paul] quailed not; for he had given his life to God, and it was hid in Christ. He softened, by his courtesy, the hearts of these men in power, men of fierce temper, wicked and corrupt though they were in heart and life. . . . Propriety of deportment, the grace of true politeness, marked all his conduct.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 352.

8. What would this manner of answering for our faith do for those who have a kind heart mingled in their cruelty? 1 Peter 2:12, 15

“This instruction is given to us all. Ministers are to take heed, and with pen and voice echo the words of God. When we are called upon to violate the law of God, we shall be given wisdom from above, to answer as did Christ, "It is written." Speak as few words of your own arrangement as possible, but have your heart supplied with the sharp arrows of God's furnishing. If
God, the great Master Workman, is with us, we shall pass through the perplexing ordeals before us as firm as a rock to principle, obeying God rather than man. This attitude will bring victories which our lack of faith has led us to regard as hopeless and impossible. These definite instructions were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” — *Manuscript Releases* Vol. 2, p. 194.

**MEDITATION**

“Truth will bear the test of all opposition. Let it be put strongly, as in Jesus, and let the characteristics of the worker be hidden in Christ. Let not one word be expressed to stir up the spirit of retaliation in opposers of the truth. Let nothing be done to arouse the dragon-like spirit, for it will reveal itself soon enough, and in all its dragon character, against those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. There are hereditary tendencies and natural dispositions that will wrestle for exhibition, but self must be lost in Jesus. The truth must appear in its beautiful, solemn character, dignified, uplifting, and ennobling. Let souls that are ready to perish receive from the teacher of truth only such impressions as are not perishable, but enduring as eternity. Give opportunity for the Holy Spirit to place the acceptable mold upon the souls that are turning from error to truth, from darkness to light.” — *Christ Triumphant*, p. 131.

“When Herod saw that Jesus submitted passively to all the indignity that was heaped upon him, preserving an unparalleled serenity through it all, he was moved by a sudden fear that after all this might not be a common man who stood before him. He was greatly perplexed when he looked upon the pure, pale face of the prisoner, and questioned if he might not be a god come down to earth. The very silence of Jesus spoke conviction to the heart of the king, such as no words could have done. Herod noticed that while some bowed before Jesus in mockery, others, who came forward for the same purpose, looked into the sufferer's face and saw expressed there a look so like a king that they turned back, ashamed of their own audacity. Herod was ill at ease, and, hardened as he was, dared not ratify the condemnation of the Jews; and he therefore sent Jesus back to Pilate.” — *The Spirit of Prophecy* Vol. 3, p. 139.
Final Invasion

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

OBJECTIVES

- To learn a lesson from the soothsaying false prophets of Judah.
- To take the lesson from God’s longsuffering patience over Judah.
- To acknowledge that God’s warnings of doom ultimately will take place.

SOOTHSAYERS

1. In recalling God’s warnings upon Judah because of its apostasy, was it possible for them to soften the blow? Jeremiah 25:4-9; 27:6-8, 11, 12

“God had said that His people should be saved, that the yoke He would lay upon them should be light, if they submitted uncomplainingly to His plan. Their servitude was represented by a yoke of wood, which was easily borne; but resistance would be met with corresponding severity, represented by the yoke of iron. God designed to hold the king of Babylon in check, that there should be no loss of life nor galling oppression; but by scorning His warning and commands they brought upon themselves the full rigor of bondage.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 172.

“The Lord commanded Jeremiah to stand in the court of the Lord's house and speak unto all the people of Judah who came there to worship, those things which He would give him to speak, diminishing not a word, that
they might hearken and turn from their evil ways. Then God would repent of the punishment which He had purposed to inflict upon them because of their wickedness.” —*Testimonies for the Church* Vol. 4, p. 165.

2. Did Judah respond favourably to this word from God via Jeremiah? Jeremiah 26:8, 9

> “When the priests and the people heard the message that Jeremiah delivered to them in the name of the Lord, they were very angry and declared that he should die. They were boisterous in their denunciations of him, crying: "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord." Thus was the message of God despised and the servant with whom He entrusted it threatened with death. The priests, the unfaithful prophets, and all the people turned in wrath upon him who would not speak to them smooth things and prophesy deceit.” —*Testimonies for the Church* Vol. 4, p. 167.

3. Who were especially to blame for the insubordination of the people of Judah? Jeremiah 28:10, 11, 15; 23:16, 17

> “There were two other false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, who prophesied lies in the name of the Lord. These men professed to be holy teachers; but their lives were corrupt, and they were slaves to the pleasures of sin. The prophet of God had condemned the evil course of these men and warned them of their danger; but, instead of repenting and reforming, they were angry with the faithful reprover of their sins and sought to thwart his work by stirring up the people to disbelieve his words and act contrary to the counsel of God in the matter of subjecting themselves to the king of Babylon. The Lord testified through Jeremiah that these false prophets
should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon and slain before his eyes, and in good time this prediction was fulfilled.

“Other false prophets arose to sow confusion among the people by turning them away from obeying the divine commands given through Jeremiah, but God's judgments were pronounced against them in consequence of their grievous sin of bringing rebellion against Him.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 173.

4. Is there a lesson for us to consider regarding our desire to hear smooth things? Isaiah 30:9, 10; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4

“Just such men arise in these days and breed confusion and rebellion among the people who profess to obey the law of God. But just as certainly as divine judgment was visited upon the false prophets, just so surely will these evil workers receive their full measure of retribution; for the Lord has not changed. Those who prophesy lies encourage men to look upon sin as a small matter. When the terrible results of their crimes are made manifest, they seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them responsible for their difficulties, even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes.

“Those who pursue a course of rebellion against the Lord can always find false prophets who will justify them in their acts and flatter them to their destruction. Lying words often make many friends, as in the case of Ahab and Zedekiah. These false prophets, in their pretended zeal for God, found many more believers and followers than the true prophet, who delivered the simple message of the Lord.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, pp. 173, 174.

PATIENT DELAY OF JUDGEMENT

5. Observing from the previous lessons God’s orchestration delaying the destruction of Jerusalem, what do we learn of His character? Jeremiah 26:12, 13; 2 Peter 3:9
“But Israel remained unrepentant, and the Lord saw that they must be punished for their sin; so He instructed Jeremiah to make yokes and bonds and place them upon his neck, and to send them to the kings of Edom, of Moab, of the Ammonites, and of Tyrus and Zidon, commanding the messengers to say that God had given all these lands to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that all these nations should serve him and his descendants for a certain time, till God should deliver them. They were to declare that if these nations refused to serve the king of Babylon, they should be punished with famine, with the sword, and with pestilence, till they should be consumed. "Therefore," said the Lord, "hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein."

—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 168.

6. For twenty two years, the looming threat of destruction over them, did God show His heart yearning for their compliance? Jeremiah 6:8, 10, 11

“There was still opportunity for the king to reveal a willingness to heed the warnings of Jehovah, and thus to temper with mercy the judgments even now falling on city and nation. "If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes," was the message given the king, "then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand."”
“Thus even to the last hour, God made plain His willingness to show mercy to those who would choose to submit to His just requirements. Had the king chosen to obey, the lives of the people might have been spared, and the city saved from conflagration; but he thought he had gone too far to retrace his steps. He was afraid of the Jews, afraid of ridicule, afraid for his life. After years of rebellion against God, Zedekiah thought it too humiliating to say to his people, I accept the word of the Lord, as spoken through the prophet Jeremiah; I dare not venture to war against the enemy in the face of all these warnings.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 456, 457.

**ULTIMATE DOOM**

7. When the last vestige of God’s patience was crossed by the nation, what took place? 2 Chronicles 36:15-20

“In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem," to besiege the city. 2 Kings 25:1. The outlook for Judah was hopeless. "Behold, I am against thee," the Lord Himself declared through Ezekiel. "I the Lord have drawn forth My sword out of his sheath" it shall not return any more. . . . Every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water." "I will pour out Mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of My wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, and skillful to destroy." Ezekiel 21:3, 5-7, 31.”

“With tears Jeremiah entreated Zedekiah to save himself and his people. With anguish of spirit he assured him that unless he should heed the counsel of God, he could not escape with his life, and all his possessions would fall to the Babylonians. But the king had started on the wrong course, and he would not retrace his steps. He decided to follow the counsel of the false prophets, and of the men whom he really despised, and who ridiculed his weakness in yielding so readily to their wishes. He sacrificed the noble freedom of his manhood and became a cringing slave to public opinion. With no fixed purpose to do evil, he was also without resolution to stand boldly for the right. Convicted though he was of the
value of the counsel given by Jeremiah, he had not the moral stamina to obey; and as a consequence he advanced steadily in the wrong direction.”

“The weakness of Zedekiah was a sin for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless avalanche and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. The king was led away from Jerusalem a captive, his eyes were put out, and after arriving in Babylon he perished miserably. The beautiful temple that for more than four centuries had crowned the summit of Mount Zion was not spared by the Chaldeans. "They burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof."" —Prophets and Kings, pp. 452, 457, 458.

8. What can be learnt from the story of Judah’s final invasion by the king of Babylon after their false dreams of peace and safety?
   Jeremiah 25:12-18, 31-33; 1 Thessalonians 5:3

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place--that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

“The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men's hearts to fail them for fear.

""Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof; . . . because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken
the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate." Isaiah 24:1-6.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 537.
Lesson 9

Sabbath, August 29, 2020

Nebuchadnezzar’s Respect for Jeremiah

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. Proverbs 8:15

OBJECTIVES

• To confirm the lesson that God regarded Nebuchadnezzar as His servant.
• To show how the king was impressed by the faithful in Judah.
• To see the softening of Nebuchadnezzar’s heart to God’s servant.

GOD’S SERVANT

1. How does God in His word regard kings and rulers?
   Proverbs 8:15, 16; Romans 13:1-7

“Rulers are God's servants, and they are to serve their time as His apprentices. It is for their good that they faithfully follow the plain "Thus saith the Lord," keeping the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. They are to exercise their powers without partiality and without hypocrisy, refusing to be bought or sold, scorning all bribes, and standing in moral independence and dignity before God. They are not to connive at one act of dishonesty or injustice. They are not to do a base, unjust action themselves, nor to sustain others in acts of oppression. Wise rulers will not permit the people to be oppressed because of the envy and jealousy of those who disregard the law of God. . . . All need to keep eternity in view, and not to act in such a way that God cannot ratify their judgment in the courts of heaven.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6, p. 1081.

“An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and God was able to use him as an instrument for the punishment of the rebellious and for the fulfillment of the divine purpose.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 514.

**IMPRESSIONS UPON NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

3. By taking the Jews captive, how was the king of Babylon exposed to the influences of God? Daniel 2:17-20

“Through the Hebrew captives the Lord was made known to the heathen in Babylon. This idolatrous nation was given a knowledge of the kingdom the Lord was to establish, and through His power maintain against all the power and craft of Satan. Daniel and his fellow-companions, Ezra and Nehemiah, and many others were witnesses for God in their captivity. The Lord scattered them among the kingdoms of the earth that their light might shine brightly amid the black darkness of heathenism and idolatry. To Daniel God revealed the light of His purposes, which had been hidden for many generations. He chose that Daniel should see in vision the light of His truth, and reflect this light on the proud kingdom of Babylon. On the despot king was permitted to flash light from the throne of God. Nebuchadnezzar was shown that the God of heaven was ruler over all the monarchs and kings of earth. His name was to go forth as the God over all gods. God desired Nebuchadnezzar to understand that the rulers of earthly kingdoms had a ruler in the heavens. God's faithfulness in rescuing the three captives from the flames and vindicating their course of action showed His wonderful power.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1169.
4. Due to the exposure cited in question three, did Nebuchadnezzar reveal respect to the people of Judah? Daniel 2:47-49

“Through Daniel and others of the Hebrew captives, the Babylonian monarch had been made acquainted with the power and supreme authority of the true God; and when Zedekiah once more solemnly promised to remain loyal, Nebuchadnezzar required him to swear to this promise in the name of the Lord God of Israel. Had Zedekiah respected this renewal of his covenant oath, his loyalty would have had a profound influence on the minds of many who were watching the conduct of those who claimed to reverence the name and to cherish the honor of the God of the Hebrews.”—Prophets and Kings, p. 447.

5. While showing respect to the faithful of Judah, how did the king of Babylon respond to king Zedekiah’s unfaithfulness? 2 Chronicles 36:11-13; Jeremiah 39:5-7

**MERCY FOR JEREMIAH**

6. Did Nebuchadnezzar reveal respect for the faithful Jeremiah even upon executing his revenge upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants? Jeremiah 39:11, 12-14

“Released from prison by the Babylonian officers, the prophet chose to cast in his lot with the feeble remnant, certain "poor of the land" left by the Chaldeans to be "vinedressers and husbandmen." Over these the Babylonians set Gedaliah as governor.”—Prophets and Kings, p. 460.
7. **What can we learn as lessons for our time from the faithful of Judah in their submission to the invading king of Babylon?**  
*Amos 5:13*

“What can we learn as lessons for our time from the faithful of Judah in their submission to the invading king of Babylon?

*Amos 5:13*

“Caution is to be prayerfully exercised by everyone who believes the truth. There are trying scenes before us, and we need to exercise great caution, keeping the door of our lips while the wicked are before us. We shall have to meet in our experience with men having fanatical zeal which will provoke those who hate the truth and it will be necessary to preserve a calm attitude and not state all we do know, for impressions will be made upon human minds that will, under the influence of Satan, grow to large proportions.”

“Many laws will be enacted for the government of nations, calculated to oppress; and old laws that have practically become of none effect, will be resurrected. We need to move forward in our work understandingly and in faith, under the wise generalship of Jesus Christ. A great work is to be done for the Master in proclaiming the last message of mercy to our world, and we are dependent upon authorities and powers to find passage from one end of the world to another, and as long as we are dependent upon the powers that be, we must not divorce ourselves from them, for this is a worldwide message.” — *This Day With God*, p. 250.

8. **Although we are informed regarding spiritual Babylon not to be polluted by its corruptions, should we treat its leaders with scorn and disrespect? Romans 13:5, 7**

**NOTE**

“We are to go forward quietly, and when our way is apparently blocked in one direction we are to make no condemnation of the powers that be, for in thus doing we are teaching other powers how to work to hedge up our way. We are not to stir up opposing elements or provoke retaliation or revenge. The climax will come soon enough. It is already stealing on as a thief in
the night. And we can speak Bible truth which will not set opposing influences at work” —This Day With God, p. 250.
Nebuchadnezzar’s Prospects

Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful. Isaiah 49:7

OBJECTIVES

- To take a closer look at the king of Babylon.
- To look for the qualities manifest in him that could serve for his salvation.
- To take the lesson in order to coincide with God in outreach for souls.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S PERSONALITY

1. What do we know of the hereditary nature of the king of Babylon? Habakkuk 1:6, 7

“The human family is under the despotism of custom and false education, of hereditary and cultivated habits. Appetite reigns as a king over the mind and reason. The animal propensities are allowed to become a controlling power.” —Spalding and Magan Collection, p. 40.

“It is not surprising that the successful monarch, so ambitious and so proud-spirited, should be tempted to turn aside from the path of humility, which alone leads to true greatness. In the intervals between his wars of conquest he gave much thought to the strengthening and beautifying of his capital, until at length the city of Babylon became the chief glory of his kingdom, "the golden city," "the praise of the whole earth." His passion as a builder, and his signal success in making Babylon one of the wonders of
the world, ministered to his pride, until he was in grave danger of spoiling his record as a wise ruler whom God could continue to use as an instrument for the carrying out of the divine purpose.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 515.

2. **In the light of his proud-spirited nature cited in Habakkuk 1:7 as the nature of his race, was there also another ingredient in his nature which needed to be awakened? John 1:9**

   “An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right…” —Patriarchs and Kings, p. 514.

   “As the sunbeams penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth, so does the light of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon every soul.” —The Desire of Ages, p. 464.

3. **How was it first awakened, and can we feel its glow in the expression of the king? Daniel 2:1, 26, 47**

   “Nebuchadnezzar felt that he could accept this interpretation as a divine revelation; for to Daniel had been revealed every detail of the dream. The solemn truths conveyed by the interpretation of this vision of the night made a deep impression on the sovereign's mind, and in humility and awe he "fell upon his face, and worshipped." . . .

   “Nebuchadnezzar saw clearly the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the most learned men of his kingdom” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1169.

**PROSPECTS UNTO SALVATION**

4. **What is the wisdom manifest in Nebuchadnezzar which God could tap into for his ultimate salvation? Daniel 2:1-5, 9**
“The Lord in his providence had a wise purpose in view in giving Nebuchadnezzar this dream, and then causing him to forget the particulars, but to retain the fearful impression made upon his mind. The Lord desired to expose the pretensions of the wise men of Babylon. The king knew that if they could tell the interpretation, they could tell the dream as well. Angered over their inability to relieve his mind, he threatened that they should all be slain, if, in a given time, the dream were not made known. "The thing is gone from me," he said to the Chaldeans; "if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut to pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof." Still the wise men returned the same answer, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it."

“Nebuchadnezzar began to see that the men whom he trusted to reveal mysteries by means of their boasted wisdom, failed him in his great perplexity, and he said: "I know of a certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof."” —The Youth’s Instructor, September 1, 1903.

5. In God’s faithfulness to save, is it demonstrated in the life of the king of Babylon? Isaiah 49:6, 7; Daniel 4:1-3, 37

“In Daniel's life, the desire to glorify God was the most powerful of all motives. He realized that when standing in the presence of men of influence, a failure to acknowledge God as the source of his wisdom would
have made him an unfaithful steward. And his constant recognition of the God of heaven before kings, princes, and statesmen, detracted not one iota from his influence. King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven"."

“The king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart that was partaking of the mercy and grace, the righteousness and peace, of the divine nature.”

—S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1170.

**INSTRUMENTS OF SALVATION**

6. As Daniel and his friends were used as instruments of salvation for a pagan king, can we learn a lesson on how we should regard and respond to the apparently most unlikely prospects?
   2 Timothy 2:24-26; Jude 1:22; Psalm 44:20, 21

“Those who work in the large cities are to reach if possible to the high ones of the world, even to ruling powers. Where is our faith? God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as "the most high God," "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."

—Evangelism, p. 88.

7. What is our intelligent work of copartnership with God in the salvation of the ungodly? 1 Corinthians 3:9

“It is the purpose of God to glorify Himself in His people before the world. He expects those who bear the name of Christ to represent Him in thought, word, and deed. Their thoughts are to be pure and their words noble and
uplifting, drawing those around them nearer the Saviour. The religion of Christ is to be interwoven with all that they do and say. Their every business transaction is to be fragrant with the presence of God.”—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 9, p. 21.

“The soul temple is to be sacred, holy, pure, and undefiled. There must be a copartnership in which all the power is of God and all the glory belongs to God. The responsibility rests with us. We must receive in thoughts and in feelings, to give in expression. The law of the human and the divine action makes the receiver a laborer together with God. It brings man where he can, united with divinity, work the works of God. Humanity touches humanity. Divine power and the human agency combined will be a complete success, for Christ's righteousness accomplishes everything.”—Faith and Works, p. 26.

8. **How important is this lesson even for our attitude to those who err in the church? Jude 1:23**

“You will have many perplexities to meet in your Christian life in connection with the church, but do not try too hard to mold your brethren. If you see that they do not meet the requirements of God's word, do not condemn; if they provoke, do not retaliate. When things are said that would exasperate, quietly keep your soul from fretting. You see many things which appear wrong in others, and you want to correct these wrongs. You commence in your own strength to work for a reform, but you do not go about it in the right way. You must labor for the erring with a heart subdued, softened by the Spirit of God, and let the Lord work through you, the agent. Roll your burden on Jesus. You feel that the Lord must take up the case where Satan is striving for the mastery over some soul; but you are to do what you can in humility and meekness, and put the tangled work, the complicated matters, into the hands of God. Follow the directions in His word, and leave the outcome of the matter to His wisdom. Having done all you can to save your brother, cease worrying, and go calmly about other pressing duties. It is no longer your matter, but God's.”—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 347.
“We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer, but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 347.

**MEDITATION**

“There is work for you to do in the church and out of the church. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." The fruit we bear is the only test of the character of the tree before the world. This is the proof of our discipleship. If our works are of such a character that as branches of the living Vine we bear rich clusters of precious fruit, then we wear before the world God's own badge as His sons and daughters. We are living epistles, known and read of all men.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 348.
God’s Prospective Candidate

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Isaiah 60:3

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the candidacy of the king of Babylon.
- To see that God views every human being as a possible candidate of the kingdom of heaven.
- To recognise the human responses that qualify a candidate for heaven.

GOD’S CANDIDATE

1. What is written regarding God’s ability to locate and develop a candidate for His saving purposes? Romans 8:28-30; Psalm 44:21 (last part)

2. In reference to Nebuchadnezzar, was God able to designate him as a candidate for God’s purposes for good and the king’s ultimate conversion? Ezekiel 31:3, 5, 6; Jeremiah 27:5, 6;

“An illustration of this truth is found in the history of ancient Babylon. To Nebuchadnezzar the king the true object of national government was represented under the figure of a great tree, whose height "reached unto
heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all;" under its shadow the beasts of the field dwelt, and among its branches the birds of the air had their habitation. Daniel 4:11, 12. This representation shows the character of a government that fulfills God's purpose--a government that protects and upbuilds the nation.

“God exalted Babylon that it might fulfill this purpose. Prosperity attended the nation until it reached a height of wealth and power that has never since been equaled--fitly represented in the Scriptures by the inspired symbol, a "head of gold."” —Education, p. 175.

“King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven".”

“The king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart that was partaking of the mercy and grace, the righteousness and peace, of the divine nature.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1170.

3. How did God demonstrate that He knew His intervention in the king’s life would produce the desired end? Daniel 2:1; 4:4, 5

“The dream of the great image, opening before Nebuchadnezzar events reaching to the close of time, had been given that he might understand the part he was to act in the world's history, and the relation that his kingdom should sustain to the kingdom of heaven. In the interpretation of the dream, he had been plainly instructed regarding the establishment of God's everlasting kingdom.” —Patriarchs and Kings, p. 503.

“The last dream which God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, and the experience of the king in connection with it, contain lessons of vital importance to all those who are connected with the work of God. The king was troubled with his dream; for it was evidently a prediction of adversity, and none of his wise men would attempt to interpret it. The faithful Daniel stood before
the king, not to flatter, not to misinterpret in order to secure favor. A solemn duty rested upon him to tell the king of Babylon the truth.”

“God's purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 253.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE LESSON

4. As we look for prospective candidates unto salvation, does King Nebuchadnezzar’s story teach us a lesson? 1 Samuel 16:7 (last half); Ecclesiastes 11:6

“Christ delights to take apparently hopeless material, those whom Satan has debased and through whom he has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. He rejoices to deliver them from suffering and from the wrath that is to fall upon the disobedient. He makes His children His agents in the accomplishment of this work, and in its success, even in this life, they find a precious reward.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6, p. 308.

“Those who work in the large cities are to reach if possible to the high ones of the world, even to ruling powers. Where is our faith? God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as "the most high God," "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."” —Evangelism, p. 88.

5. From this lesson, how are we to relate to those apparently hopeless cases? 1 Corinthians 13:4, 7; 9:22
“We talk and write much of the neglected poor; should not some attention be given also to the neglected rich? Many look upon this class as hopeless, and they do little to open the eyes of those who, blinded and dazed by the power of Satan, have lost eternity out of their reckoning. Thousands of wealthy men have gone to their graves unwarned because they have been judged by appearance and passed by as hopeless subjects. But, indifferent as they may appear, I have been shown that most of this class are soul-burdened. There are thousands of rich men who are starving for spiritual food. Many in official life feel their need of something which they have not. Few among them go to church, for they feel that they receive no benefit. The teaching they hear does not touch the soul. Shall we make no personal effort in their behalf?” —Counsels for the Church, p. 70.

“The workers are to treat all with kindness. Their words are to be gentle and loving. Those who show true modesty and Christian courtesy will win souls to Christ.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 7, p. 68.

6. Does Inspiration invite every human being unto salvation?
1 Timothy 2:3, 4; John 3:16; Revelation 22:17

“In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God, predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus.” —The Faith I Live By, p. 157.
**PROSPECTIVE RESPONSES**

7. What were the indicators Nebuchadnezzar manifested which identified him as a prospective candidate for salvation?
   Daniel 2:46, 47; 3:25, 28

“Nebuchadnezzar’s wonderful dream caused a marked change in his ideas and opinions, and for a little time he was influenced by the fear of God…” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 177.

“Nebuchadnezzar saw clearly the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the most learned men of his kingdom.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 1169.

8. As coworkers with God in the salvation of souls, is it possible to identify those who would respond favourably to our efforts of imparting the gems of truth? Matthew 7:6, 7; John 7:17

“People, who love to see opponents combat, may clamor for discussion. Others, who have a desire to hear the evidences on both sides, may urge discussion in all honesty of motive; but whenever discussions can be avoided, they should be. They generally strengthen combativeness and weaken that pure love and sacred sympathy which should ever exist in the hearts of Christians although they may differ in opinions.

“Discussions in this age of the world are not real evidences of earnest desire on the part of the people to investigate the truth, but come through the love of novelty and the excitement which generally attends discussions. God is seldom glorified or the truth advanced in these combats. Truth is too solemn, too momentous in its results, to make it a small matter whether it is received or rejected. To discuss truth for the sake of showing
opponents the skill of the combatants is ever poor policy, for it does but very little to advance the truth.”

“I have beheld angels grieved as the most precious jewels of truth have been brought before men utterly incapable of appreciating the evidences in favor of the truth. Their entire being was at war with the principles of truth; their natures were at enmity with it.

Those who are seeking to know the truth and to understand the will of God, who are faithful to the light and zealous in the performance of their daily duties, will surely know of the doctrine, for they will be guided into all truth.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3, pp. 424, 425, 427.
The Activity of Providence

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

**OBJECTIVES**

- To revisit God’s orchestration of using King Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument for the punishment of Judah.
- To note that in that orchestration four faithful young men were taken captive.
- To behold the activity of this providence in the conversion of the king and the evangelisation of that civilisation.

**THE INSTRUMENT OF PUNISHMENT**

1. **What is God’s method of punishing the wicked nations that have passed the threshold of His patience?** Psalm 9:16; 7:11, 12, 15, 16; Jeremiah 25:30-33

“In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.”—Conflict and Courage, p. 250.
“Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of "the Watcher and the Holy One." Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world's great empires--Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another.

“While the nations rejected God's principles, and in this rejection wrought their own ruin, it was still manifest that the divine, overruling purpose was working through all their movements.” —Education, pp. 176, 177.

2. As Jerusalem and Judah had reached its stage of punishment, which power-hungry monarch was used? Jeremiah 25:8, 9

“God had pleaded with Judah not to provoke Him to anger, but they had hearkened not. Finally sentence was pronounced against them. They were to be led away captive to Babylon. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise His disobedient people. The sufferings of the men of Judah were to be in proportion to the light they had had and to the warnings they had despised and rejected. Long had God delayed His judgments, but now He would visit His displeasure upon them as a last effort to check them in their evil course.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 425.

“Nebuchadnezzar was an instrument of God’s judgements.” —Youth’s Instructor, October 11, 1904.

**PROVIDENTIAL INTERVENTION**

3. Having seen Nebuchadnezzar’s measured and staged invasions, what was the activity of his first invasion? Daniel 1:1-4
“Among the children of Israel who were carried captive to Babylon at the beginning of the seventy years' captivity were Christian patriots, men who were as true as steel to principle, who would not be corrupted by selfishness, but who would honor God at the loss of all things. In the land of their captivity these men were to carry out God's purpose by giving to heathen nations the blessings that come through a knowledge of Jehovah. They were to be His representatives. Never were they to compromise with idolaters; their faith and their name as worshipers of the living God they were to bear as a high honor. And this they did. In prosperity and adversity they honored God, and God honored them.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 479.

4. **What providential developments took place among the young captives? Daniel 1:6-8, 11-16**

""Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." Seeing in these youth the promise of remarkable ability, Nebuchadnezzar determined that they should be trained to fill important positions in his kingdom. That they might be fully qualified for their lifework, he arranged for them to learn the language of the Chaldeans and for three years to be granted the unusual educational advantages afforded princes of the realm.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 480.

5. **Because of Daniel and his three friends’ faithfulness, what was God able to do in order to unfold the king’s experience with God? Daniel 1:18-20**

""He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of
the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. . . . I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord."

“At the court of Babylon were gathered representatives from all lands, men of the highest talent, men the most richly endowed with natural gifts, and possessed of the broadest culture that the world could bestow; yet among them all, the Hebrew youth were without a peer. In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainment, they stood unrivaled. The erect form, the firm, elastic step, the fair countenance, the undimmed senses, the untainted breath—all were so many certificates of good habits, insignia of the nobility with which nature honors those who are obedient to her laws.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 475, 485.

6. How did God commence this unfolding experience of the king? Daniel 2:1, 2, 10-12, 16, 26-28

“This is the dream,” confidently declared Daniel; and the king, listening with closest attention to every particular, knew it was the very dream over which he had been so troubled. Thus his mind was prepared to receive with favor the interpretation. The King of kings was about to communicate great truth to the Babylonian monarch. God would reveal that He has power over the kingdoms of the world, power to enthrone and to dethrone kings. Nebuchadnezzar's mind was to be awakened, if possible, to a sense of his responsibility to Heaven. The events of the future, reaching down to the end of time, were to be opened before him.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 497.

**PROCESS OF CONVERSION**

7. As by this first dream God initiated Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion, what was the next event to deepen this experience and display God’s kingdom to that entire civilisation? Daniel 3:24-29
“How did that heathen king know what the Son of God was like? The Hebrew captives filling positions of trust in Babylon had in life and character represented before him the truth. When asked for a reason of their faith, they had given it without hesitation. Plainly and simply they had presented the principles of righteousness, thus teaching those around them of the God whom they worshiped. They had told of Christ, the Redeemer to come; and in the form of the fourth in the midst of the fire the king recognized the Son of God.”

“Forgotten was the great golden image, set up with such pomp. In the presence of the living God, men feared and trembled. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," the humbled king was constrained to acknowledge, "who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."

“The experiences of that day led Nebuchadnezzar to issue a decree, "that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill." "There is no other god," he urged as the reason for the decree, "that can deliver after this sort."

“In these and like words the king of Babylon endeavored to spread abroad before all the peoples of earth his conviction that the power and authority of the God of the Hebrews was worthy of supreme adoration. And God was pleased with the effort of the king to show Him reverence, and to make the royal confession of allegiance as widespread as was the Babylonian realm.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 509, 510.

8. Having received such powerful convictions by circumstantial providence, how was Daniel used to bring the king to his complete conversion? Daniel 4:9, 10, 24, 33, 34, 37
NOTE

“The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God; the tyrannical, overbearing ruler, a wise and compassionate king. He who had defied and blasphemed the God of heaven, now acknowledged the power of the Most High and earnestly sought to promote the fear of Jehovah and the happiness of his subjects. Under the rebuke of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, Nebuchadnezzar had learned at last the lesson which all rulers need to learn--that true greatness consists in true goodness. He acknowledged Jehovah as the living God, saying, "I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

“God's purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 521.
Where the Church Fails  
Individuals Shine  

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. Genesis 18:18

OBJECTIVES

- To consider the purpose behind God’s raising of the Hebrews.
- To observe their failure as a nation to fulfill this purpose.
- To see that God succeeded to use them in spite of their failure.

GOD’S NATION

1. Was there a reason for God to single out Abraham and his posterity? Genesis 12:1-3

“It was for the purpose of bringing the best gifts of Heaven to all the peoples of earth that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan. "I will make of thee a great nation," He said, "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Genesis 12:2. It was a high honor to which Abraham was called--that of being the father of the people who for centuries were to be the guardians and preservers of the truth of God to the world, the people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 15.

2. How vividly did God make known His purpose for the Hebrew nation? Deuteronomy 26:17-19
“Through Moses the purpose of God was set before them and the terms of their prosperity made plain. "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God," he said; "the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.""
—Prophets and Kings, p. 18.

3. Does Inspiration enlarge on God’s design in raising the nation of Israel? Exodus 19:5, 6

“God's purpose for His institutions today may also be read in the purpose which He sought to accomplish through the Jewish nation. Through Israel it was His design to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through them the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost a knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring in man the moral image of God.”

“God desired to make of His people Israel a praise and a glory. Every spiritual advantage was given them. God withheld from them nothing favorable to the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6, p. 221.

“God singled out the Hebrew nation and connected them with himself, that he might make them representatives of his own character. He would make them a beacon of light to all surrounding nations, that his name might be glorified, and his service exalted. By communion with God, the Israelites were to become partakers of the divine nature, their hearts, debased by sin, were to be purified, their aspirations ennobled. They were to stand forth before the world as an example of what men may become through Jesus Christ. Those whom God would elevate and ennable by connection with himself, would become, by transgression, wholly debased and Satanic in character. It was for them to choose the course which they would pursue.”
—The Signs of the Times, March 3, 1881.
4. Is this design extended to those Christian organisations that God raised through the Christian era? 1 Peter 2:9, 10; Galatians 3:7-9

“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world.”—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 455.

ISRAEL’S FAILURE

5. In the study of this first section of our lesson, have we come to realise that Israel failed miserably to fulfil God’s purpose? 2 Chronicles 36:14-16

“How frequently ancient Israel rebelled, and how often were they visited with judgments, and thousands slain because they would not heed the commands of God who had chosen them.” —The Review and Herald, June 25, 1861.

6. As God tried to restore the ten tribes by the labour of Elijah and Elisha, and the other two tribes by Isaiah and Jeremiah, what is God’s lament over them, and how did they respond to His final effort? Isaiah 65:2, 3; Isaiah 8:14, 15
“Had God's chosen people stood in their appointed place, as the repositories of sacred, eternal truth, which was to come to the heathen world Jerusalem would have stood to this day. But they were a rebellious people. And when God had done all that a God could do, even to the sending of His only begotten Son, they were so ignorant of the Scriptures and the power of God, that they refused the only help that could save them from ruin. "This is the heir," they said, "come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours."

“God appointed Israel to be a light to the Gentiles, thus to call them back to their loyalty. But Israel herself became blind to the light, deaf to the messages sent to open her understanding.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1156.

**GOD’S USE OF NATIONAL FAILURE**

7. As by Israel’s failure they were punished, did God fail to use them according to His original purpose? Ezekiel 6:7, 8, 9 (first phrase); 11:16; Esther 3:8

“Why did the Lord permit Jerusalem to be destroyed by fire the first time? Why did He permit His people to be overcome by their enemies and carried into heathen lands?—It was because they had failed to be His missionaries, and had built walls of division between themselves and the people round them. The Lord scattered them, that the knowledge of His truth might be carried to the world. If they were loyal and true and submissive, God would bring them again into their own land.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 2, p. 1040.

“Had Israel been true to God, He could have accomplished His purpose through their honor and exaltation. If they had walked in the ways of obedience, He would have made them "high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor." "All people of the earth,"
said Moses, "shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee." "The nations which shall hear all these statutes" shall say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Deuteronomy 26:19; 28:10; Deuteronomy 4:6. But because of their unfaithfulness, God's purpose could be wrought out only through continued adversity and humiliation.” —The Desire of Ages, p. 28.

8. How was God’s purpose via His nation achieved by scattering them? Acts 8:4

“Through the Hebrew captives the Lord was made known to the heathen in Babylon. This idolatrous nation was given a knowledge of the kingdom the Lord was to establish, and through His power maintain against all the power and craft of Satan. Daniel and his fellow-companions, Ezra and Nehemiah, and many others were witnesses for God in their captivity. The Lord scattered them among the kingdoms of the earth that their light might shine brightly amid the black darkness of heathenism and idolatry. To Daniel God revealed the light of His purposes, which had been hidden for many generations. He chose that Daniel should see in vision the light of His truth, and reflect this light on the proud kingdom of Babylon.”

“Great light shone forth from Daniel and his companions. Glorious things were spoken of Zion, the city of the Lord. Thus the Lord designs that spiritual light shall shine from His faithful watchmen in these last days. If the saints in the Old Testament bore such a decided testimony of loyalty, how should God's people today, having the accumulated light of centuries, shine forth, when the prophecies of the Old Testament shed their veiled glory into the future.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1169.

“They were brought into subjection to Babylon, and scattered through the lands of the heathen. In affliction many renewed their faithfulness to His covenant. While they hung their harps upon the willows, and mourned for the holy temple that was laid waste, the light of truth shone out through them, and a knowledge of God was spread among the nations. The heathen systems of sacrifice were a perversion of the system that God had appointed; and many a sincere observer of heathen rites learned from the Hebrews the meaning of the service divinely ordained, and in faith grasped the promise of a Redeemer.” —The Desire of Ages, p. 28.
SECTION 2

THE STUDY OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Introduction

Having focused heavily on Nebuchadnezzar’s interaction with apostate Judah in the past three months, and learnt something of his character and God’s use of it; we now embark upon a more in-depth study into his personal details. In the study of God’s intervention into this monarch’s personal life and his progressive conversion, we will behold an object lesson from which we can gain an understanding of our personal conversion.

Having mentioned in the previous introduction that we who live at this time are to be thoroughly purified, we can learn from the process of this king’s conversion the precious lessons of God’s measures to thoroughly convert us. Inspiration tells us that conversion is a patient protracted process, and in the following quote we observe whereto it is designed to bring us:

“Every living Christian will advance daily in the divine life. As he advances toward perfection, he experiences a conversion to God every day; and this conversion is not completed until he attains to perfection of Christian character, a full preparation for the finishing touch of immortality.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 2, p. 505.

Further, to receive this “finishing touch of immortality”, we read our experience in the following quote:

“We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time.

“When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But
those who are unjust, unсанctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.” —Counsels for the Church, pp. 214, 215.

By a diligent study into the life of King Nebuchadnezzar we can gauge the interplay of our fallen nature with God’s providential intervention to bring about our final conversion. We will see that the powerful impressions of conviction gained at one time can easily be lost by the distractions of our earthly life and nature. And when we discover our shameful failures, we learn from this king that God doesn’t give up on us, but takes us over the ground again and again until the lesson sticks and He finally succeeds in our total conversion.

From this lesson we can also take the understanding of why the four angels have been holding the four winds of heaven for so long, waiting for us to be sealed, as the sealing process is a “settling into the truth both intellectuay and spiritually, so they cannot be moved.”

Let us study this lesson with diligent application to hasten our cooperation with God, so Jesus can come soon and take us home.
Lesson 1

Sabbath, October 3, 2020

Writer of a Bible Chapter

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4

OBJECTIVES

- To expound the meaning of our key text.
- To marvel over a heathen king being used of God to write for our learning and comfort of the Scriptures.
- To reiterate God’s purpose in His intervention in our lives.

COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES

1. What is the comfort we are looking for when we are aware of our fallen condition? Hebrews 7:25, 26; Luke 1:37

“No one need say that his case is hopeless, that he cannot live the life of a Christian. Ample provision is made by the death of Christ for every soul. Jesus is our ever-present help in time of need. Only call upon Him in faith, and He has promised to hear and answer your petitions.

“Oh, for living, active, faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us, or drive us to despair. It is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience. In that day when God has a controversy with His people, this experience will be a source of comfort and hope—Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White, p. 190.
2. How far reaching is the comfort found in Scripture? Jude 1:24; Psalm 138:8

“We need to trust in Jesus daily, hourly. He has promised that as our day is, our strength shall be. By His grace we may bear all the burdens of the present and perform its duties. But many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring tomorrow's burdens into today. Thus a large share of all their trials are imaginary. For these, Jesus has made no provision. He promises grace only for the day. He bids us not to burden ourselves with the cares and troubles of tomorrow; for "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 200.

3. Is there another element connected with the comfort of the word? James 1:3, 4; Romans 8:24, 25

“And he brings forth fruit "with patience." None who receive God's word are exempt from difficulty and trial; but when affliction comes, the true Christian does not become restless, distrustful, or despondent. Though we cannot see the definite outcome of affairs, or discern the purpose of God's providences, we are not to cast away our confidence. Remembering the tender mercies of the Lord, we should cast our care upon Him, and with patience wait for His salvation.” —Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 60.

EVEN A HEATHEN KING

4. When we feel overwhelmed by the ungodly elements in our nature, and we feel forsaken of God, is there comfort for us? Job 23:8-10
“The Holy Spirit is to be continually present with the believer. We have need more carefully to consider the fact that the Comforter is to abide with us. If we individually comprehended this truth, we should never feel alone. When assailed by the enemy, when overwhelmed by temptation, we are to repose our faith in God; for we have his pledged word that we are never to be left to battle alone. Every soul, pardoned of sin, is precious in his sight,—more precious than the whole world. It has been purchased at infinite cost, and Christ will never abandon the soul for whom he has died. The soul may leave him, and thus be overwhelmed with temptation; but Christ can never turn from one for whom he has paid the ransom of his own life.”

—The Youth’s Instructor, December 13, 1894.

5. Is there patience and comfort for us by that which was written aforetime by Nebuchadnezzar with his pagan heritage?
2 Timothy 3:16 (first phrase); Daniel 4:1-3, 34, 37

“Those who work in the large cities are to reach if possible to the high ones of the world, even to ruling powers. Where is our faith? God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as "the most high God," "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."” —Evangelism, p. 88.

6. Can God see something in the most degraded person whom He can reach and ultimately restore? Psalm 44:20, 21; 2 Timothy 2:19
“Many who are not connected with any church, and who appear wholly unmindful of the claims of God, are not at heart as indifferent as they seem. Even the most irreligious have their hours of conviction, when there comes to them a longing for something they have not.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 6, p. 71.

“The juices of the vine, ascending from the root, are diffused to the branches, sustaining growth and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from Christ, and imparted to every disciple, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections and even the most secret thoughts, and brings forth the precious fruit of holy deeds.” —Healthful Living, p. 300.

**GOD’S PURPOSE**

7. Did God have a purpose in making Himself manifest to Nebuchadnezzar, both for himself and for his empire?
   Daniel 4:27

   “An illustration of this truth is found in the history of ancient Babylon. To Nebuchadnezzar the king the true object of national government was represented under the figure of a great tree, whose height "reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all;" under its shadow the beasts of the field dwelt, and among its branches the birds of the air had their habitation. Daniel 4:11, 12. This representation shows the character of a government that fulfills God's purpose--a government that protects and up builds the nation.

   “God exalted Babylon that it might fulfill this purpose. Prosperity attended the nation until it reached a height of wealth and power that has never since been equaled--fitly represented in the Scriptures by the inspired symbol, a "head of gold."” —Education, p. 175.
8. In the study of Nebuchadnezzar and his interaction with Daniel and his friends, is God’s purpose for us, His church in the last days, made manifest? Isaiah 60:1-3; Revelation 18:1

“The message of Revelation 14, proclaiming that the hour of God's judgment is come, is given in the time of the end; and the angel of Revelation 10 is represented as having one foot on the sea and one foot on the land, showing that the message will be carried to distant lands, the ocean will be crossed, and the islands of the sea will hear the proclamation of the last message of warning.” —Maranatha, p. 18.

“It is the purpose of God to glorify Himself in His people before the world. He expects those who bear the name of Christ to represent Him in thought, word, and deed. Their thoughts are to be pure and their words noble and uplifting, drawing those around them nearer the Saviour. The religion of Christ is to be interwoven with all that they do and say. Their every business transaction is to be fragrant with the presence of God.”

“It is not only by preaching the truth, not only by distributing literature, that we are to witness for God. Let us remember that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, and that a cheap Christian character works more harm in the world than the character of a worldling. Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life. Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives. Too often the influence of the sermon preached from the pulpit is counteracted by the sermon preached in the lives of those who claim to be advocates of truth.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 9, p. 21.
A Cruel Character

The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul. Proverbs 20:2

OBJECTIVES

- To study the carnal nature of the one whom God seeks to save.
- To observe that even the carnal nature can be wise and honourable.
- To appreciate God’s ability to orchestrate the cruelty of the carnal nature for His purpose.

CARNAL BEGINNINGS

1. When God finds a candidate for salvation, such as Nebuchadnezzar, how does Inspiration describe his initial state?
   Ephesians 2:2, 3; Habakkuk 1:6, 7, 10

“By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: "Dead in trespasses and sins;" "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint"; "no soundness in it." We are held fast in the snare of Satan; "taken captive by him at his will." Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him.” —The Faith I Live By, p. 87.

2. How well does the king of Babylon display this fallen nature?
   Isaiah 19:4; Jeremiah 6:22, 23
“The weakness of Zedekiah was a sin for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless avalanche and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. The king was led away from Jerusalem a captive, his eyes were put out, and after arriving in Babylon he perished miserably. The beautiful temple that for more than four centuries had crowned the summit of Mount Zion was not spared by the Chaldeans. "They burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof."” —Prophets and Kings, p. 458.

A WISE CARNAL NATURE

3. Although Nebuchadnezzar was a carnal, cruel man, have we learnt that in such a nature he could also be wise and forebearing? 2 Chronicles 36:9, 10

“The unrest caused by the representations of the false prophets brought Zedekiah under suspicion of treason, and only by quick and decisive action on his part was he permitted to continue reigning as a vassal. Opportunity for such action was taken advantage of shortly after the return of the ambassadors from Jerusalem to the surrounding nations, when the king of Judah accompanied Seraiah, "a quiet prince," on an important mission to Babylon. Jeremiah 51:59. During this visit to the Chaldean court, Zedekiah renewed his oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar.

“Through Daniel and others of the Hebrew captives, the Babylonian monarch had been made acquainted with the power and supreme authority of the true God; and when Zedekiah once more solemnly promised to remain loyal, Nebuchadnezzar required him to swear to this promise in the name of the Lord God of Israel. Had Zedekiah respected this renewal of his covenant oath, his loyalty would have had a profound influence on the
minds of many who were watching the conduct of those who claimed to reverence the name and to cherish the honor of the God of the Hebrews.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 447.

4. Is it possible to have a cruel unconverted nature and yet manifest wise and honourable traits? Matthew 7:11

“It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on?” —Steps to Christ, p. 58.

5. Because Nebuchadnezzar’s nature was wise and honourable, could God use it effectively for His purposes? Proverbs 21:1

“They trust in their own wisdom; and the Lord permits them, for a time, to apparently prosper, to reveal the weakness and folly of the natural heart. But the Lord will, in his own time, and in his own way, bring down the pride and folly of these deceived ones, and show to them their true condition. If they will accept the humiliation, and by confession and sincere repentance, turn unto the Lord, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, he will renew his love to them. But if they shut their eyes to their own sins, as did the Jews, and choose their own ways, the Lord will give them up to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, that they cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God.” —The Spirit of Prophecy Vol. 2, p. 52.

GOD’S ORCHESTRATION

6. As God is able to turn the heart of an unconverted man “as rivers of water,” how is this demonstrated in the life of the king of Babylon? Daniel 2:12, 13, 24, 47
“Nebuchadnezzar revoked the decree for the destruction of the wise men. Their lives were spared because of Daniel's connection with the Revealer of secrets. And "the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king."” —Prophets and Kings, p. 499.

7. Is there a further illustration by which the changeable nature of the unconverted king was used by God? Jeremiah 21:3-7

“God had pleaded with Judah not to provoke Him to anger, but they had hearkened not. Finally sentence was pronounced against them. They were to be led away captive to Babylon. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise His disobedient people. The sufferings of the men of Judah were to be in proportion to the light they had had and to the warnings they had despised and rejected. Long had God delayed His judgments, but now He would visit His displeasure upon them as a last effort to check them in their evil course.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 425.

8. What did Zedekiah do by which God’s warning came true, and Nebuchadnezzar displayed his carnal cruelty? 2 Chronicles 36:11-13; Proverbs 20:2, 3; 14:35

“Foremost among those who were rapidly leading the nation to ruin was Zedekiah their king. Forsaking utterly the counsels of the Lord as given
through the prophets, forgetting the debt of gratitude he owed Nebuchadnezzar, violating his solemn oath of allegiance taken in the name of the Lord God of Israel, Judah's king rebelled against the prophets, against his benefactor, and against his God. In the vanity of his own wisdom he turned for help to the ancient enemy of Israel's prosperity, "sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people."" —Prophets and Kings, p. 450.

“But the weakness of Zedekiah was a crime for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless avalanche and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. Then he was led away from Jerusalem a captive, hearing the shrieks of his wretched people and the roaring of the flames that were devouring their homes. His eyes were put out, and when he arrived at Babylon he perished miserably. This was the punishment of unbelief and following ungodly counsel.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, p. 184.
Subverting Intentions

To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.
Lamentations 3:36

OBJECTIVES

- To note the shrewd-minded intelligence of Nebuchadnezzar.
- To identify the means by which he sought to subvert the captive youth of Judah.
- To learn from Daniel the rectitude by which to withstand such subversion.

A SHREWD OPERATOR

1. In his invasion tactics of Judah, can we observe the intellectual genius of Nebuchadnezzar? Instead of using mere brute force to take over the nation, what was his strategy? 2 Chronicles 36:5-7; Daniel 1:1-3, 4

“The kingdom of Judah, broken in power and robbed of its strength both in men and in treasure, was nevertheless still permitted to exist as a separate government. At its head Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, a younger son of Josiah, changing his name to Zedekiah.”

“Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God's wrath upon impenitent Judah. Again and again Jerusalem was to be invested and entered by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Company after company--at first a few only, but later on thousands and tens of thousands--were to be taken captive to the land of Shinar, there to dwell in enforced exile. Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah--
all these Jewish kings were in turn to become vassals of the Babylonian ruler, and all in turn were to rebel.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 439, 422.

2. By saving the cream of Judah and taking them to Babylon, did the king have a plan? Daniel 1:4, 5

“"Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." Seeing in these youth the promise of remarkable ability, Nebuchadnezzar determined that they should be trained to fill important positions in his kingdom. That they might be fully qualified for their lifework, he arranged for them to learn the language of the Chaldeans and for three years to be granted the unusual educational advantages afforded princes of the realm.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 480.

3. What shrewd scheme did Nebuchadnezzar engage in to influence the Hebrew princes to adopt Babylonish lifestyle and pagan practices? Daniel 1:6, 7

“The names of Daniel and his companions were changed to names representing Chaldean deities. Great significance was attached to the names given by Hebrew parents to their children. Often these stood for traits of character that the parent desired to see developed in the child. The prince in whose charge the captive youth were placed, "gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego."

“The king did not compel the Hebrew youth to renounce their faith in favor of idolatry, but he hoped to bring this about gradually. By giving them names significant of idolatry, by bringing them daily into close association with idolatrous customs, and under the influence of the seductive rites of heathen worship, he hoped to induce them to renounce the religion of their nation and to unite with the worship of the Babylonians.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 480, 481.
4. Due to the scheming mentality of Nebuchadnezzar, how serious were the influences surrounding the faithful of Judah?  
Lamentation 3:36; Psalm 105:25

“Daniel was subjected to the severest temptations that can assail the youth of today; yet he was true to the religious instruction received in early life. He was surrounded with influences calculated to subvert those who would vacillate between principle and inclination; yet the Word of God presents him as a faultless character. Daniel dared not trust to his own moral power. Prayer was to him a necessity. He made God his strength, and the fear of God was continually before him in all the transactions of his life.”  
—The Sanctified Life, p. 20.

**RECTITUDE TO WITHSTAND**

5. By Nebuchadnezzar’s shrewd-mindedness in detecting the talented youth of Judah, did he underestimate their integrity to faithfulness? Daniel 1:8

“The fact that these men, worshipers of Jehovah, were captives in Babylon, and that the vessels of God’s house had been placed in the Temple of the Babylonish gods, was boastfully cited by the victors as evidence that their religion and customs were superior to the religion and customs of the Hebrews. Yet through the very humiliations that Israel’s departure from Him had invited, God gave Babylon evidence of His supremacy, of the holiness of His requirements, and of the sure results of obedience. And this testimony He gave, as alone it could be given, through those who were loyal to Him.

“Among those who maintained their allegiance to God were Daniel and his three companions—illustrious examples of what men may become who unite with the God of wisdom and power. From the comparative simplicity of their Jewish home, these youth of royal line were taken to the most
magnificent of cities and into the court of the world’s greatest monarch. Nebuchadnezzar "spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace. . . .” —A Call to Stand Apart, p. 53.

6. In his magnanimity to provide the same nourishment which Nebuchadnezzar partook of, how did these faithful youths manage to turn the favour for better results? Daniel 1:9-16

“Strong were the temptations surrounding them in that corrupt and luxurious court, but they remained uncontaminated. No power, no influence, could sway them from the principles they had learned in early life by a study of the word and works of God.

“Had Daniel so desired, he might have found in his surroundings a plausible excuse for departing from strictly temperate habits. He might have argued that, dependent as he was on the king’s favor and subject to his power, there was no other course for him to pursue than to eat of the king’s food and drink of his wine; for should he adhere to the divine teaching, he would offend the king and probably lose his position and his life. Should he disregard the commandment of the Lord he would retain the favor of the king and secure for himself intellectual advantages and flattering worldly prospects.

“But Daniel did not hesitate. The approval of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer than life itself. He determined to stand firm in his integrity, let the result be what it might. He “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.” And in this resolve he was supported by his three companions.” —A Call to Stand Apart, p. 54.
7. How did God intervene to render their faithfulness with glowing consequences? Daniel 1:17-20

“For three years the Hebrew youth studied to acquire “the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” During this time they held fast their allegiance to God and depended constantly upon His power. With their habits of self-denial they united earnestness of purpose, diligence, and steadfastness. It was not pride or ambition that had brought them into the king’s court, into companionship with those who neither knew nor feared God; they were captives in a strange land, placed there by Infinite Wisdom. Separated from home influences and sacred associations, they sought to acquit themselves creditably, for the honor of their down-trodden people, and for the glory of Him whose servants they were.

“The Lord regarded with approval the firmness and self-denial of the Hebrew youth, and their purity of motive; and His blessing attended them. He "gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." The promise was fulfilled, "Them that honor Me I will honor." 1 Samuel 2:30. As Daniel clung to God with unwavering trust, the spirit of prophetic power came upon him. While receiving instruction from man in the duties of court life, he was being taught by God to read the mysteries of the future and to record for coming generations, through figures and symbols, events covering the history of this world till the close of time. —A Call to Stand Apart, p. 55.

8. Is there a profound lesson for us in the example of these faithul missionaries? Proverbs 22:29; Isaiah 43:11, 12

“Only by faithfulness in the little things can the soul be trained to act with fidelity under larger responsibilities. God brought Daniel and his fellows into connection with the great men of Babylon, that these heathen men
might become acquainted with the principles of true religion. In the midst of a nation of idolaters, Daniel was to represent the character of God. How did he become fitted for a position of so great trust and honor? It was his faithfulness in the little things that gave complexion to his whole life. He honored God in the smallest duties, and the Lord co-operated with him. To Daniel and his companions God gave "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Daniel 1:17.

“As God called Daniel to witness for Him in Babylon, so He calls us to be His witnesses in the world today. In the smallest as well as the largest affairs of life He desires us to reveal to men the principles of His kingdom.” —Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 356, 357.
God’s Intervention

Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. Psalm 44:21

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate God’s inroads for heart responses to Him.
- To marvel over God giving a heathen king a dream.
- To observe the providential unravelling of an idolatrous mind into submission to the true God.

GOD’S PREPARATIONS OF HEART

1. Having seen the intention of Nebuchadnezzar to subvert the religion of his Jewish prisoners, how did God impress Nebuchadnezzar and his courtiers by His faithful children?

Daniel 1:20

“When the time came for the youth in training to be tested, the Hebrews were examined, with other candidates, for the service of the kingdom. But "among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." Their keen comprehension, their wide knowledge, their choice and exact language, testified to the unimpaired strength and vigor of their mental powers. "In all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm;""therefore stood they before the king."

“At the court of Babylon were gathered representatives from all lands, men of the highest talent, men the most richly endowed with natural gifts, and possessed of the broadest culture that the world could bestow; yet among
them all, the Hebrew youth were without a peer. In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainment, they stood unrivaled. The erect form, the firm, elastic step, the fair countenance, the undimmed senses, the untainted breath—all were so many certificates of good habits, insignia of the nobility with which nature honors those who are obedient to her laws.” —A Call to Stand Apart, p. 55.

2. What evidence do we have that Daniel and his friends were placed among the wise counselors of the king of Babylon?
Daniel 2:12, 13

“The magicians were full of fear and trembling. They declared that the request of the king was something unreasonable, and a test beyond that which had ever been required of anyone. The king became furious and acted like all persons who have great power and uncontrollable passions. He decided that every one of them should be put to death, and as Daniel and his fellows were numbered with the wise men, they also were to share their fate” —Christ Triumphant, p. 176.

3. Are we able to see the providential means by which God paved the way to reach the heart of the pagan king? Psalm 10:16, 17; 61:6, 7; 44:21

“More than this: as we impart the blessings of this life, gratitude in the recipient prepares the heart to receive spiritual truth, and a harvest is produced unto life everlasting.” —Education, p. 110.

“As an educator no part of the Bible is of greater value than are its biographies. These biographies differ from all others in that they are absolutely true to life. It is impossible for any finite mind to interpret rightly, in all things, the workings of another. None but He who reads the
heart, who discerns the secret springs of motive and action, can with absolute truth delineate character, or give a faithful picture of a human life. In God's word alone is found such delineation.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 10.

**GOD USES A DREAM**

4. Having placed Daniel among the wise counselors of the king of Babylon, how does God now engage the mind of Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 2:1, 3-5

“Soon after Daniel and his companions entered the service of the king of Babylon, events occurred that revealed to an idolatrous nation the power and faithfulness of the God of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream, by which "his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." But although the king's mind was deeply impressed, he found it impossible, when he awoke, to recall the particulars.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 491.

**THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS**

5. What does the king come to realise regarding his trust in his idols and magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans? Daniel 2:8-12

“Nebuchadnezzar began to see that the men whom he trusted to reveal mysteries through their boasted wisdom, failed him in his great perplexity, and he said, "I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.” —Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 410.

“The king knew that if they could really tell the interpretation, they could tell the dream as well. The Lord had in His providence given Nebuchadnezzar this dream, and had caused the particulars to be forgotten,
while the fearful impression was left upon his mind, in order to expose the pretensions of the wise men of Babylon.” —The Sanctified Life, p. 34.

“If the wise men would supply this, he would accept it as a proof of their claim as magicians and astrologers. The magicians were full of fear and trembling.”

“Daniel sought the Lord when the decree went forth to slay all the wise men of the kingdom of Babylon because they could not relate or interpret a dream which had gone from the king's mind.” —The Youth’s Instructor, November 22, 1894.

6. Having brought Nebuchadnezzar to such a climax of dissapointment and associated passionate fury, how does God now expose Daniel to the king’s attention? Daniel 2:13-16

“Nebuchadnezzar demanded not only the interpretation of the dream, but the relation of the dream itself. . . . They declared that the request of the king was. . . beyond that which had ever been required of any man. The king became furious, and acted like all men who have great power and uncontrollable passions. He decided that every one of them should be put to death, and as Daniel and his fellows were numbered with the wise men, they also were to share this fate.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 251.

“Hearing of this decree, "Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret." The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Daniel and his fellows, and the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. As he related the facts, the dream came fresh to the king's mind, and the interpretation was given, showing the remarkable events that were to transpire in prophetic history.” —Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 411.
PROVIDENTIAL IMPACT


“The Lord was working in the Babylonian kingdom, communicating light to the four Hebrew captives, that He might represent His work before the people. He would reveal that He had power over the kingdoms of the world, to set up kings and to throw down kings. The King over all kings was communicating great truth to the king of Babylon, awakening in his mind a sense of his responsibility to God. He saw the contrast between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the most learned men in his kingdom.

“The Lord gave His faithful representatives lessons from heaven, and Daniel declared before the great men of the king of Babylon, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him." "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." Glory was not given to the men who stood as oracles in the kingdom; but the men who put their entire trust in God, seeking for grace and strength and divine enlightenment, were chosen as representatives of the kingdom of God in wicked, idolatrous Babylon.” —Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 411.

8. Is Nebuchadnezzar now fully able to see that the God of the Hebrews is the true God, and is he brought to a change or conversion of worship? Daniel 2:31-34, 45-47
“Nebuchadnezzar felt that he could accept this interpretation as a divine revelation; for to Daniel had been revealed every detail of the dream. The solemn truths conveyed by the interpretation of this vision of the night made a deep impression on the sovereign's mind, and in humility and awe he "fell upon his face, and worshipped." . . .

“Nebuchadnezzar saw clearly the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the most learned men of his kingdom.” —*S.D.A. Bible Commentary* Vol. 4, p. 1169.
Initial Conversion Lost

For the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. 1 Chronicles 28:9

OBJECTIVES

- To enlarge the deep impact made on Nebuchadnezzar’s heart.
- To watch the unconverted forces left in the heart blunting the impact.
- To recognise that in the process of conversion, reverses are to be expected.

A GENUINE RESPONSE

1. Can it be shown that Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion was genuine?
Daniel 2:48, 49

“Nebuchadnezzar felt that he could accept this interpretation as a divine revelation; for to Daniel had been revealed every detail of the dream. The solemn truths conveyed by the interpretation of this vision of the night made a deep impression on the sovereign's mind, and in humility and awe he "fell upon his face, and worshiped," saying, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret."

“Daniel's exposition of this dream resulted in the king's conferring honor and dignity upon him and his companions.” —The Youth’s Instructor, September 8, 1903.
“Nebuchadnezzar’s wonderful dream caused a marked change in his ideas and opinions, and for a little time he was influenced by the fear of God.” —Christ Triumphant, p. 177.

“The king had acknowledged the power of God, saying to Daniel, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, . . . and a revealer of secrets." Verse 47. For a time afterward, Nebuchadnezzar was influenced by the fear of God.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 503.

2. What else reveals that the king was in truth convicted?
Daniel 2:12

“At the time when Nebuchadnezzar saw the vision of the great image, he had purposed to destroy the wise men, because he discerned their deceptions, and was convinced that they did not have the learning and power that they claimed to possess. Only by the intercession of Daniel had they been saved from a cruel and ignominious death.” —The Youth’s Instructor, February 2, 1904.

**DEEP CONVICTIONS BLUNTED**

3. Deep convictions having been aroused by God’s intervention, did Nebuchadnezzar retain them?

“This wonderful dream caused a marked change in his ideas and opinions, and for a little time he was influenced by the fear of God; but his heart was not yet cleansed from its pride, its worldly ambition, its desire for self-exaltation.

“The prophet Daniel described to King Nebuchadnezzar the rise and fall of the kingdoms that were to succeed Babylon; but the king did not cherish the conviction that came to his mind in regard to the fall of all earthly governments, and the greatness and power of Jehovah's kingdom. After the first impression wore away, he thought only of his own greatness, and studied how the dream might be turned to his own honor.”

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“The king had acknowledged the power of God. saying: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, . . . and a revealer of secrets;" but notwithstanding this acknowledgment, the years of prosperity that followed filled his heart with pride, and he forgot God, resuming his idol-worship with increased zeal and bigotry, and cherishing the thought that the Babylonian kingdom would stand forever.” —The Youth’s Instructor, February 2, 1904.

4. **What did the king fail to do and wherein was his mind turned from his former convictions?** Proverbs 4:20-22

“He said much regarding the interpretation given by Daniel, but the words, "Thou art this head of gold," produced the greatest effect upon his mind. These impressed him so much that his wise men, who had not been able to tell the dream, proposed that he make such an image as the one seen in his dream, and that he set it up, that all might see the head of gold, which was a representation of his kingdom.

“This pleased the king. His pride and vanity found full scope in the thought that he could thus represent his importance; and he resolved that instead of merely copying the image he had seen, he would make an image that should excel the original. It was his design that the whole image should represent the greatness of Babylon. Therefore that which had been said regarding the kingdoms that were to follow, should be blotted from his mind, and from the minds of those who had heard the dream, by the splendor of the image he was about to make. This image should not deteriorate in value from the head to the feet, as had the one he had been shown, but should be composed throughout of the most precious metal.”—The Signs of the Times, April 29, 1897.

5. **Is there a lesson for us in that the king failed to “cherish the conviction”, and the manner in which his “first impression wore away”?** Revelation 2:4
"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." God forbid that these souls should ever lose the ardor of their first love, that a strange coldness, through pride and love of the world, should take possession of their minds and hearts.” —To Be Like Jesus, p. 260.

“A cunning and cruel foe attends our steps, and is working every moment, with all his strength and skill, to turn us from the right way. Ever since he succeeded in overcoming our first parents in their beautiful Eden home, he has been engaged in this work. More than six thousand years of continual practice has greatly increased his skill to deceive and allure. On the other hand, he who once yields to temptation becomes spiritually weak, and yields more readily the second time. Every repetition of sin blinds his eyes, stifles conviction, and weakens his power of resistance. Thus while the power of the human race to resist temptation is continually decreasing, Satan's skill and power to tempt are continually increasing. This is one great reason why the temptations of the last days will be more severe than those of any other age.” —The Signs of the Times, September 29, 1887.

**GOD UNDERSTANDS**

6. Although Nebuchadnezzar fell back into his former pride and idolatry, how does God view this? 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9

“What God intends to do with these apparently unpromising ones, you do not know. He has in the past accepted persons no more promising or attractive to do a great work for Him. His Spirit, moving upon the heart, has aroused every faculty to vigorous action. The Lord saw in those rough, unhewn stones precious material that would stand the test of storm and heat and pressure. God sees not as man sees. He does not judge from appearances, but He searches the heart, and judges righteously.” —Selected Messages Book 3, p. 240.

“The eye of the Lord is upon all the work, all the plans, all the imaginings of every mind; He sees beneath the surface of things, discerning the
thoughts and intents of the heart. There is not a deed of darkness, not a plan, not an imagination of the heart, not a thought of the mind, but that He reads it as an open book. Every act, every word, every motive, is faithfully chronicled in the records by the great Heart Searcher who said, "I know thy works."” —Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 463.

“The sinner may err, but he is not cast off without mercy. His only hope, however, is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 6, p. 1070.

7. In the process of conversion, is there a possibility that some evil traits may resurface? Isaiah 44:22; 2 Samuel 7:14, 15

“Should he trust to his own strength and judgment, Saul would move impulsively, and would commit grave errors. But if he would remain humble, seeking constantly to be guided by divine wisdom, and advancing as the providence of God opened the way, he would be enabled to discharge the duties of his high position with success and honor. Under the influence of divine grace, every good quality would be gaining strength, while evil traits would as steadily lose their power. This is the work which the Lord proposes to do for all who consecrate themselves to Him.”—Conflict and Courage, p. 149.

8. From the observations of God’s dealings with the king of Babylon, how should we regard the stumbling of those who have revealed convictions for truth? 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Galations 6:1

“When perplexities crowd upon you, and the people oppose the truth, you are not to say indifferently or impatiently, "Well, there is no use, I can do them no good." Come to them in the Spirit of Christ, "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give
them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" for "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient." You are to come to the people in sympathy, and be clothed with humility as with a garment. The Lord has set his people to be a light to others, and the grace of God should be seen in all your conversation and conduct. The spirit of kindness must characterize your dealings with all men.

“You will be tempted to deal harshly with those who are reported to you as in error. Persons will come to you with accusations against this brother or that sister, and you may feel stirred with indignation, and feel that you must immediately set things in order, but you must remember that you are to be as wise as a serpent, as harmless as a dove. Those who are so ready to accuse their brethren might better be attending to their own defects of character instead of seeking to expose the failings of others. Do not let these reports move you to act in a hasty, unchristlike manner. Let God put his Spirit upon you, that you may not go according to human judgment, but be directed as God would have you go. Sit low at the feet of Jesus and learn of him how you are to deal with your brethren, and with the momentous truths that are committed to you to give to the world.” —*The Review and Herald*, April 26, 1892.
The Fiery Furnace

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Psalm 103:8

OBJECTIVES

- To study the reverses manifested in Nebuchadnezzar’s dealings.
- To learn God’s way of handling these reverses.
- To behold God reaching into the recesses of a heart to reach its hidden qualities buried under a surface of hopeless idolatry.

MANIFESTATION OF CONTRADICTIONS

1. Did Nebuchadnezzar manifest decisive expressions and actions in response to the revelations of his dream by Daniel? Daniel 2:46-49

“Nebuchadnezzar felt that he could accept this interpretation as a divine revelation; for to Daniel had been revealed every detail of the dream. The solemn truths conveyed by the interpretation of this vision of the night made a deep impression on the sovereign's mind, and in humility and awe he "fell upon his face, and worshiped," saying, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret."

“Daniel's exposition of this dream resulted in the king's conferring honor and dignity upon him and his companions.” —The Youth’s Instructor, September 8, 1903.
2. Having placed himself into such a definite support of the God of the Hebrews, what does Nebuchadnezzar do after a period of time? Daniel 3:1-6

“From his rich store of treasure, Nebuchadnezzar caused to be made a great golden image, similar in its general features to that which had been seen in vision, save in the one particular of the material of which it was composed. Accustomed as they were to magnificent representations of their heathen deities, the Chaldeans had never before produced anything so imposing and majestic as this resplendent statue, threescore cubits in height and six cubits in breadth. And it is not surprising that in a land where idol worship was of universal prevalence, the beautiful and priceless image in the plain of Dura, representing the glory of Babylon and its magnificence and power, should be consecrated as an object of worship. This was accordingly provided for, and a decree went forth that on the day of the dedication all should show their supreme loyalty to the Babylonian power by bowing before the image.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 505.

3. How did such a reversal of conviction and actions take place in the king’s mind? Jeremiah 49:16 (first two phrases); Psalm 10:4

“The king had acknowledged the power of God. saying: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, . . . and a revealer of secrets;" but notwithstanding this acknowledgment, the years of prosperity that followed filled his heart with pride, and he forgot God, resuming his idol-worship with increased zeal and bigotry, and cherishing the thought that the Babylonian kingdom would stand forever.

“At the time when Nebuchadnezzar saw the vision of the great image, he had purposed to destroy the wise men, because he discerned their deceptions, and was convinced that they did not have the learning and power that they claimed to possess. Only by the intercession of Daniel had
they been saved from a cruel and ignominious death. The king now united with these men in planning to dishonor the God of Daniel. The light that had been permitted to shine from heaven upon Nebuchadnezzar was used to serve his pride and self-exaltation. The wise men, in counsel with the king, concluded that Babylon was the kingdom which was to break in pieces all other kingdoms; and they endeavored to make an image that would represent Babylon as eternal, indestructible, all-powerful,--a kingdom that would stand forever.” —The Youth's Instructor, February 2, 1904.

**GOD'S ORCHESTRATING INTERVENTION**

4. Having positioned the three friends of Daniel over the affairs of the province of Babylon, how did Nebuchadnezzar now meet them in God’s providence? Daniel 3:8-13

“As the three Hebrews stood before the king, he was convinced that they possessed something the other wise men of his kingdom did not have. They had been faithful in the performance of every duty.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 507.

5. How did God try to arouse the memory of Nebuchadnezzar’s first conviction that He was above all gods? Daniel 3:14-18

“The answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego was respectful, but decided. Looking with calmness upon the fiery furnace and the idolatrous throng, they said: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so [if this be your decision], our God whom we serve will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." These Hebrew youth had unquestioning faith in God, and they were determined to honor him at any cost. Their faith strengthened with the declaration that God would be glorified by delivering them, and with a triumphant ring of trust in their
voices, they added: "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."
—The Youth’s Instructor, March 8, 1904.

6. Wherein did these three worthies trust by which God could use them to penetrate the unbending nature of the king? Isaiah 43:2

“The king decided to give them a second trial. "If ye be ready," he said, "at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." Then, with hand stretched upward in defiance, he asked, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

“In vain were the king's threats. He could not turn these noble men from their allegiance to the great Ruler of nations. From the history of their fathers, they had learned that disobedience to God results in dishonor, disaster, and death; that the fear of the Lord is not only the beginning of wisdom, but the foundation of all true prosperity. They knew that they owed to God every faculty they possessed; and while their hearts were full of generous sympathy toward all men, they had a lofty aspiration to prove themselves loyal to God.

“Standing before the angry monarch, with the image in sight, and the sound of the entrancing music in their ears, these young men thought of the promise made to the prophet Isaiah more than one hundred years before: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."” —The Youth's Instructor, March 8, 1904.

7. Is God able to achieve a conversion of this obdurate, incorrigible mind of Nebuchadnezzar? Jeremiah 23:29; Proverbs 25:15
“Ministers have been presented to me, with their course of action and their character before they were converted—the hardest and most incorrigible, the most unbending, the most stubborn—and yet, every one of these traits of character was what they needed in the work of God. We don't want to kill that. It is needed in order to fill important positions of trust in the cause of God. There must be a transformation of character. The leaven must work in the human heart, until every action is in conformity to the will of God, and they are sanctified; then they become the most valuable. It is this very kind of individuals that God can use in the different branches of His work.”—Manuscript Releases Vol. 9, p. 61.

8. What was the leaven by which God could achieve His design upon Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 3:19-23

“When the king saw that his will was not received as the will of God, he was "full of fury," and the form of his visage was changed against these men. Satanic attributes made his countenance appear as the countenance of a demon; and with all the force he could command, he ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than its wont, and commanded the most mighty men to bind the youth, and cast them into the furnace. He felt that it required more than ordinary power to deal with these noble men. His mind was strongly impressed that something unusual would interpose in their behalf, and his strongest men were ordered to deal with them.”—S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol 4, p. 1169.

9. How was God now able to use the previous witness of the Hebrew captives which the king had received? Daniel 3:24-27
“How did Nebuchadnezzar know that the form of the fourth was like the Son of God? He had heard of the Son of God from the Hebrew captives that were in his kingdom. They had brought the knowledge of the living God who ruleth all things.”

“These faithful Hebrews possessed great natural ability and intellectual culture, and they occupied a high position of honor; but all these advantages did not lead them to forget God. All their powers were yielded to the sanctifying influence of divine grace. By their godly example, their steadfast integrity, they showed forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. In their wonderful deliverance was displayed, before that vast assembly, the power and majesty of God. Jesus placed Himself by their side in the fiery furnace, and by the glory of His presence convinced the proud king of Babylon that it could be no other than the Son of God. The light of heaven had been shining forth from Daniel and his companions, until all their associates understood the faith which ennobled their lives and beautified their characters.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, pp. 1169, 1170.
Half Converted

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.
Lamentations 3:40

OBJECTIVES

- To meditate upon Nebuchadnezzar’s second deep conviction.
- To identify where even yet he revealed an incomplete conversion.
- To glean from the king’s example an understanding of the process of conversion in our personal case.

A SECOND CONVICTION

1. By contemplating the events of the divine intervention relative to the fiery furnace, does Nebuchadnezzar manifest a similar response to that of his first conviction? Daniel 2:46, 47; 3:26, 28, 29 (last part), 30

“And now, his own greatness and dignity forgotten, Nebuchadnezzar descended from his throne and, going to the mouth of the furnace, cried out, "Ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither."

“Forgotten was the great golden image, set up with such pomp. In the presence of the living God, men feared and trembled. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," the humbled king was constrained to acknowledge, "who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."

—Prophets and Kings, pp. 509, 510.
2. Can we discern from these heartfelt expressions something in the inward core of the king which God wanted to fan into life? Isaiah 42:3; Proverbs 20:5

“Nebuchadnezzar's noble conception of God's purpose concerning the nations was lost sight of later in his experience; yet when his proud spirit was humbled before the multitude on the plain of Dura, he once more had acknowledged that God's kingdom is "an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation." An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and God was able to use him as an instrument for the punishment of the rebellious and for the fulfillment of the divine purpose.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 514.

HALF CONVERTED AS YET

3. Acknowledging the God of the Hebrews with great zeal, how does the king manifest a very carnal element within? Daniel 3:29

“In these and like words the king of Babylon endeavored to spread abroad before all the peoples of earth his conviction that the power and authority of the God of the Hebrews was worthy of supreme adoration. And God was pleased with the effort of the king to show Him reverence, and to make the royal confession of allegiance as widespread as was the Babylonian realm.

“It was right for the king to make public confession, and to seek to exalt the God of heaven above all other gods; but in endeavoring to force his subjects to make a similar confession of faith and to show similar reverence, Nebuchadnezzar was exceeding his right as a temporal sovereign. He had no more right, either civil or moral, to threaten men with death for not worshiping God, than he had to make the decree consigning to the flames all who refused to worship the golden image. God never
compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 510.

4. **Does Inspiration deal with this kind of conversion to illuminate our understanding to expel such thinking?**

“We do not realize how untiring are Satan's efforts to sap our spirituality. He is working mightily that the people of God may be only half converted. Then self will swell to large proportions, and there will be no revelation to the world of the transforming power of God.” —The General Conference Bulletin, June 6, 1913.

“The archdeceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner, and to exercise his power through his vicegerent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose.” —The Story of Redemption, p. 329.

5. **How does Daniel manifest the mind of a truly converted man?**
   **Daniel 2:24**

“Daniel was imbued with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and he pleaded that the wise men of Babylon should not be destroyed. The followers of Christ do not possess the attributes of Satan, which make it a pleasure to grieve and afflict the creatures of God. They have the Spirit of their Master, who said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Had Daniel possessed the quality of religious zeal which is so quickly inflamed today in the churches, when men are led to afflict and oppress and destroy those who do not serve God after their prescribed plan, he would have said to Arioch: "These men who claim to be wise men are deceiving the king. They have not the knowledge they claim to have, and should be destroyed. They dishonor the God of heaven; they serve idols, and their lives in no way do honor to God: let them die: but bring me in before the king, and I
will show unto the king the interpretation.” —The Youth’s Instructor, November 22, 1894.

**EXAMINING OUR PERSONAL CONVERSION**

6. Is this study of the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar opening an important understanding to us regarding the protracted process of conversion? John 3:6-8

“The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God,—a patient, protracted process.” —The Desire of Ages, p. 172.

7. As we observe the carnal, ungodly elements enacted by this king, and God’s orchestration with them, are we becoming aware of His orchestrations of ours? Isaiah 45:4-8; Lamentations 3:40, 58, 59

“Many of you have made great mistakes the last year; will you repeat these mistakes during the year upon which you have just entered? Human
judgment is finite; and men in their blind self-will often trust to their own opinion, and take a course that cuts directly across the path of God's providence, and defeats his ends. You need to examine yourself carefully to see what is the tendency of your course. The Spirit of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and it will reveal to you your standing and the nature of your work.” —The Review and Herald, January 20, 1885.

8. What are we admonished to do in the light streaming from the dealings of God with the king of Babylon? 2 Corinthians 13:5

“We are not to pass on indifferently. We must inquire into the character of our thoughts and feelings, our tempers, purposes, words, and deeds. We are not safe unless we are constantly and successfully warring against our own sinful corruptions. We must consider whether we are an example of Christian holiness, whether we are in the faith. Unless we search diligently examining our hearts in the light of God's Word, self-love will prompt to a much better opinion of ourselves than we should have. We must not be so earnest in our efforts to set others right that we shall neglect our own souls. We need not be so zealous for our brethren and in this zeal neglect the work that needs to be done for ourselves. Another's wrong will not make our cases any nearer right. There is an individual work to be done for ourselves, which we should in no wise neglect.” —This Day With God, p. 83.
Nebuchadnezzar’s Second Dream

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. Mark 4:19

OBJECTIVES

- To ponder over the distractions by which God’s powerful impacts are lost sight of.
- To marvel over God’s enduring compassion toward repeated human forgetfulness.
- To behold the king’s willingness to accept the connotations of his dream.

LOSS OF HOLY IMPRESSION

1. We would think that after God’s vivid and miraculous manifestations to Nebuchadnezzar he would never lose their impressions; but how did the words of the king describe his amnesia? Daniel 4:4

“In the providence of God, Nebuchadnezzar was given ample opportunity to ascribe to the Lord the glory for the splendor of his reign. And for a time after the vision of the great image, he acknowledged God as supreme. Falling back into idolatrous habits, he was again, by the miraculous deliverance of the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace, led to acknowledge that God's "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his
dominion is from generation to generation." But once more the king perverted the warnings God had given him, and turned aside from the path of humility to follow the imaginations of his naturally proud heart. Thinking that his kingdom should be more extensive and powerful than any that would follow, he made great additions to the city of Babylon, and gave himself up to a life of pleasure and self-glorification. Of this time he himself says: "I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace."” — _The Youth’s Instructor_, October 11, 1904.

2. **By what means are these holy impressions lost sight of?**
   Mark 4:7, 18, 19

   “Christ specified the things that are dangerous to the soul. As recorded by Mark He mentions the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. Luke specifies the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. These are what choke the word, the growing spiritual seed. The soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ, and spirituality dies out of the heart.” — _Christ’s Object Lessons_, p. 51.

3. **How clearly is the answer to question two illustrated in Nebuchadnezzar?**

   “As he added nation after nation to the Babylonian realm, he added more and more to his fame as the greatest ruler of the age.

   “It is not surprising that the successful monarch, so ambitious and so proud-spirited, should be tempted to turn aside from the path of humility, which alone leads to true greatness. In the intervals between his wars of conquest he gave much thought to the strengthening and beautifying of his capital, until at length the city of Babylon became the chief glory of his kingdom, "the golden city," "the praise of the whole earth." His passion as a builder, and his signal success in making Babylon one of the wonders of the world, ministered to his pride, until he was in grave danger of spoiling his record as a wise ruler whom God could continue to use as an
instrument for the carrying out of the divine purpose.” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 514, 515.

“Because Nebuchadnezzar did not continue to walk in the light he had received from heaven, he lost the holy impressions that had been made upon his mind. But God, in his mercy, gave the king another dream, to save him, if possible, from appropriating to himself the glory that belonged to the Supreme Ruler.” —The Youth’s Instructor, November 1, 1904.

GOD’S COMPASSIONATE INTERVENTION

4. How does God illustrate to us that He doesn’t reject those who lose themselves in their pursuits of selfish pride when they have revealed honest-hearted worship of Him? Psalm 103:10-14

“In mercy God gave the king another dream, to warn him of his peril and of the snare that had been laid for his ruin. In a vision of the night, Nebuchadnezzar saw a great tree growing in the midst of the earth, its top towering to the heavens and its branches stretching to the ends of the earth. Flocks and herds from the mountains and hills enjoyed shelter beneath its shadow, and the birds of the air built their nests in its boughs. ”The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: . . . and all flesh was fed of it.”” —Prophets and Kings, p. 515.

5. How did the dream and his associated quest to understand it resemble the king’s first experience? Daniel 4:5-7 i.e. 2:1, 2. And therefore how was he quickly able to resolve his perplexity? Daniel 4:8, 9, 18

“Daniel was esteemed by the king because of his unswerving integrity, for he was faithful in honoring God at all times and in all places. His wisdom was unexcelled, and neither he nor his fellows would make any
compromise to secure positions in the court, or even to preserve life itself, when the honor of God was involved. In the early part of his acquaintance with Daniel, the king had found that he was the only one who could give him relief in his perplexity, and now at a later period, when another perplexing vision is given him, he remembers Daniel.” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 13, p. 63.

6. In turning away from the magicians and wise men, to Daniel the man of God, what distinct lesson is conveyed in this event?  
Jeremiah 17:5, 7

“The dream given him was very explicit, but the magicians, the astrologers, the soothsayers, and the Chaldeans could not make known to the king his dream or tell the interpretation thereof. Those who do not love and fear God cannot understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. They cannot approach unto the throne of Him who dwelleth in light unapproachable; and the things of God are to them mysteries of mysteries. But the king bears testimony to the fact that the servants of God understand the things of God. Daniel told the dream and the interpretation thereof before the king.” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 13, p. 63.

“God sees how strong man's inclination is to accumulate earthly treasure, and in the highways and byways of life His voice is heard saying, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."” —This Day With God, p. 30.

THE KING’S RECEPTIVE DISPOSITION

7. Wherein can it be seen that by this stage Nebuchadnezzar’s heart was conditioned to be receptive to God’s inroads? Daniel 4:18, 19
“To Daniel the meaning of the dream was plain, and its significance startled him. He "was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him." Seeing Daniel's hesitation and distress, the king expressed sympathy for his servant. "Belteshazzar," he said, "let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee."

“"My lord," Daniel answered, "the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies." The prophet realized that upon him God had laid the solemn duty of revealing to Nebuchadnezzar the judgment that was about to fall upon him because of his pride and arrogance. Daniel must interpret the dream in language the king could understand; and although its dreadful import had made him hesitate in dumb amazement, yet he must state the truth, whatever the consequences to himself.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 517.

8. Although Nebuchadnezzar received the interpretation gracefully, did this dream captivate him to respond into full conversion? Proverbs 15:12

“For a time the impression of the warning and the counsel of the prophet was strong upon Nebuchadnezzar; but the heart that is not transformed by the grace of God soon loses the impressions of the Holy Spirit.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 519.
A Year to Forget

A man’s pride shall bring him low. Proverbs 29:23

OBJECTIVES

- To consider the appeal of Daniel in the light of the seriousness of Nebuchadnezzar’s second dream.
- To repeat and enlarge on how time wears away the deep impression of the heart.
- To magnify the lesson of Nebuchadnezzar’s example.

A SOLEMN APPEAL

1. What were the serious connotations of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream which troubled Daniel in giving its interpretation? Daniel 4:19 (last sentence), 24, 25

“To Daniel the meaning of the dream was plain, and its significance startled him. He "was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him." Seeing Daniel's hesitation and distress, the king expressed sympathy for his servant. "Belteshazzar," he said, "let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee."

“"My lord," Daniel answered, "the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies." The prophet realized that upon him God had laid the solemn duty of revealing to Nebuchadnezzar the judgment that was about to fall upon him because of his pride and arrogance. Daniel must interpret the dream in language the king could understand; and although its dreadful import had made him hesitate in dumb amazement, yet he must state the truth, whatever the consequences to himself.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 517.
2. Did faithful Daniel leave the king in the dark forebodings of the dream without a message for Nebuchadnezzar to avert the doom? Daniel 4:27

"Having faithfully interpreted the dream, Daniel urged the proud monarch to repent and turn to God, that by rightdoing he might avert the threatened calamity. "O king," the prophet pleaded, "let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."" —Prophets and Kings, p. 518.

**DISTRACTED ONCE MORE**

3. Was there still something within Nebuchadnezzar’s heart which distracted him from fully responding to the serious connotations of the dream and the solemn appeal of Daniel? 1 Corinthians 2:14

"If the feelings of the natural heart are not restrained and brought into subjection by the sanctifying influence of the grace of God received through the channel of faith, the thoughts of the heart are not pure and holy. The conditions of salvation brought to view in the word of God are reasonable, plain, and positive, being nothing less than perfect conformity to the will of God and purity of heart and life. We must crucify self with the lusts thereof. We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 1, p. 440.

“Self-indulgence and ambition had not yet been eradicated from the king's heart, and later on these traits reappeared. Notwithstanding the instruction so graciously given him, and the warnings of past experience, Nebuchadnezzar again allowed himself to be controlled by a spirit of jealousy against the kingdoms that were to follow. His rule, which
heretofore had been to a great degree just and merciful, became oppressive. Hardening his heart, he used his God-given talents for self-glorification, exalting himself above the God who had given him life and power.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 519.

“God had greatly honored the king in communicating with him; but He allowed him to follow his own inventions. He set up a golden image in the plain of Dura, and commanded men to bow down before it. It was exceedingly costly and magnificent, representing the kingdom of Babylon and magnifying the king who ruled over that kingdom. But the three Hebrew captives who cherished the knowledge of the true God refused to worship the image that the king had set up, and for their loyalty to the God of heaven they were cast into the burning, fiery furnace. But the Lord Jesus was with them, and preserved them from all harm.” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 13, p. 61.

4. How far did the king go in forgetting his previous respect for God? Proverbs 29:23; Job 40:12 (first part)

“For months the judgment of God lingered. But instead of being led to repentance by this forbearance, the king indulged his pride until he lost confidence in the interpretation of the dream, and jested at his former fears.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 519.

5. What happened to Nebuchadnezzar after a year of God’s patient waiting? What was the final expression of his arrogance that triggered the verdict? Daniel 4:28-33

“But Nebuchadnezzar did not heed the heaven-sent message. One year after he had been thus warned, as he walked in his palace, he said within himself, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the
kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

The God of heaven read the heart of the king, and heard its whisperings of self-congratulation. "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar."" —*The Review and Herald*, September 8, 1896.

“To us who believe have been committed the oracles of God. The books of Daniel and Revelation are full of matter which concerns every one of us. We should study these books, and let the Lord God of Israel communicate truth to us, so that we may be able to communicate the truth to others who live in these last days. The Lord would have His people learn of Jesus. God forbid that those for whom He has wrought shall become highminded and be left to their own way as was the king of Babylon.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 13*, p. 65.

**THE LESSONS TO LEARN**

6. Does Inspiration refer to the story of Nebuchadnezzar as a lesson for us living in these last days? Daniel 12:9, 10; Romans 15:4

“The last dream which God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, and the experience of the king in connection with it, contain lessons of vital importance to all those who are connected with the work of God.” —*The Review and Herald*, September 8, 1896.

“In the experience of Nebuchadnezzar is contained a lesson to which we should give heed, lest we fall into temptation. The perils of the last days are upon us, and we should watch and pray, read and heed the lessons that are given us in the books of Daniel and Revelation.” —*Manuscript Releases Vol. 13*, p. 67.
7. How did Nebuchadnezzar convey a lesson to us in church capacity and positions of trust and leadership? Matthew 20:25-28

“Nebuchadnezzar again allowed himself to be controlled by a spirit of jealousy against the kingdoms that were to follow. His rule, which heretofore had been to a great degree just and merciful, became oppressive.” —Prophets and Kings. p. 519.

8. Is this oppressive leadership exercised by the king when he lost sight of the true God of the Hebrews also a potential problem in the church? James 3:13-18

“Whatever the position we are called to fill, our only safety is in walking humbly with God. The man who glories in his supposed capabilities, in his position of power, in his wisdom, in his property, or in anything else than Christ, will be taken in the net of the enemy. He who fails to walk humbly before God will find a spirit rising up within him, prompting the desire to rule others connected with him, and causing him to oppress others who are human and erring like himself. He appropriates to himself jurisdiction and control over other men,—an honor which belongs alone to God.” —The Review and Herald, September 8, 1896.

“One finite human being compelling another to do his will, claiming to be mind and judgment for another--this sentiment, that has Satan for its originator, has presented a history, terrible, horrible in oppression, tortures, and bloodshed.” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 4, p. 7.

**MEDITATION**

“Let no one among you glory any longer against the truth by declaring that this spirit is a necessary consequence of dealing faithfully with wrongdoers
and of standing in defense of the truth. Such wisdom has many admirers, but it is very deceptive and harmful. It does not come from above, but is the fruit of an unregenerated heart. Its originator is Satan himself. Let no accuser of others credit himself with discernment; for in so doing he clothes the attributes of Satan with the garments of righteousness. I call upon you, my brethren, to purify the soul temple of all these things that defile; for they are roots of bitterness.

“How true are the words of the apostle, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." One person in an institution or in a church who gives loose rein to unkind thoughts by speaking evil of the brethren, may stir up the worst passions of the human heart, and spread abroad a leaven of evil that will work in all who come into association with him. In this way the enemy of all righteousness gains the victory, and the result of his work is to make of no effect the Saviour's prayer when He pleaded that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father.”—S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, pp. 936, 937.
Hopeful Insanity

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians 5:17

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the source of Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity.
- To investigate the mind activity during insanity.
- To identify the contrast between hopeful insanity and that of the hopeless.

SOURCE OF THE KING’S INSANITY

1. Having explored the lofty mindedness of the king of Babylon, and its fluctuating exercises, can we recall the intensity of these fluctuations? Daniel 2:7, 8, 12, 26, 47; Daniel 3:19, 20, 24, 25, 28, 29

“From his royal seat the king looked on, expecting to see the men who had defied him utterly destroyed. But his feelings of triumph suddenly changed. The nobles standing near saw his face grow pale as he started from the throne and looked intently into the glowing flames. In alarm the king, turning to his lords, asked, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

"
“And now, his own greatness and dignity forgotten, Nebuchadnezzar descended from his throne and, going to the mouth of the furnace, cried out, "Ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither."”

“Forgotten was the great golden image, set up with such pomp. In the presence of the living God, men feared and trembled. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," the humbled king was constrained to acknowledge, "who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."”

—Prophets and Kings, pp. 509, 510.

2. As the interplay of conviction from God and the dictates of his natural heart took place repeatedly, was there a moment where this fluctuation of mind came to a climax? Daniel 4:24, 25, 27-31

“While the proud boast was yet on the king's lips, a voice from heaven announced that God's appointed time of judgment had come. Upon his ears fell the mandate of Jehovah: "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

“In a moment the reason that God had given him was taken away; the judgment that the king thought perfect, the wisdom on which he prided himself, was removed, and the once mighty ruler was a maniac. His hand could no longer sway the scepter. The messages of warning had been unheeded; now, stripped of the power his Creator had given him, and driven from men, Nebuchadnezzar "did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."” —Prophets and Kings, pp. 519, 520.
3. When an intelligent mind filled with a sense of justice and right and respect for God, is interfered with by the proud-spirited idolatrous heart, what is the outcome when God vividly exposes this inwardly? Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:23, 24; Daniel 4:33

“If envy and unholy ambition are cherished, if they wrestle for the victory to obtain human glory, the mind will be filled with confusion.” —Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 463.

**NATURE OF INSANITY**

4. What is illustrated in the story of the demoniac whom Christ met on the other side of the Sea of Galilee? Mark 5:1-3, 5, 6; Daniel 9:8

“The magicians of heathen times have their counterpart in the Spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants, and the fortune-tellers of today. The mystic voices that spoke at Endor and at Ephesus are still by their lying words misleading the children of men. Could the veil be lifted from before our eyes, we should see evil angels employing all their arts to deceive and to destroy. Wherever an influence is exerted to cause men to forget God, there Satan is exercising his bewitching power. When men yield to his influence, the mind is bewildered and the soul polluted ere they are aware.” —The Review and Herald, September 7, 1911.

“The mental faculties are perverted.” —Evangelism, p. 611.

5. Do mind exercises still take place where the mind is bewildered and mental faculties perverted? What may Nebuchadnezzar have thought? Jeremiah 23:9; James 1:8
“There is a disease of the spiritual faculties when a man or woman fancies that he sees things which do not exist. He is intoxicated with an illusion as verily as the liquor drinker becomes intoxicated by using strong drink. There is an inspiration, but not of God. The mental faculties are perverted. Let every soul make God his trust and obtain an experience that is wholesome and healthy.” —Evangelism, p. 611.

**HOPEFULNESS VERSUS HOPELESSNESS**

**6. What is an insanity with hope? Job 14:7; Proverbs 26:12**

“The mind of this wretched sufferer had been darkened by Satan, but in the Saviour's presence a ray of light had pierced the gloom. He was roused to long for freedom from Satan's control; but the demon resisted the power of Christ. When the man tried to appeal to Jesus for help, the evil spirit put words into his mouth, and he cried out in an agony of fear. The demoniac partially comprehended that he was in the presence of One who could set him free; but when he tried to come within reach of that mighty hand, another's will held him, another's words found utterance through him. The conflict between the power of Satan and his own desire for freedom was terrible.”

“The man praised God for his deliverance. The eye that had so lately glared with the fire of insanity, now beamed with intelligence, and overflowed with grateful tears.” —The Desire of Ages, pp. 255, 256.

**7. What is an insanity without hope? Jeremiah 18:12, 15; Job 8:13, 14; 27:8-10**
“Men cannot depart from the counsel of God and still retain that calmness and wisdom which will enable them to act with justice and discretion. There is no insanity so dreadful, so hopeless, as that of following human wisdom, unguided by the wisdom of God.

Such is the perversity of the human heart that has refused the guidance of God.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 167.

8. Why was Nebuchadnezzar in his insanity able to recover?
   Proverbs 21:1

“Those who work in the large cities are to reach if possible to the high ones of the world, even to ruling powers. Where is our faith? God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as "the most high God," "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."” —Evangelism, p. 88.
Eyes Lifted to Heaven

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. Psalm 121:1

OBJECTIVES

- To see what it was that brought Nebuchadnezzar out of his madness.
- To learn the important lesson of keeping our eyes fastened on heaven.
- To appreciate that true religion keeps the believer from insanity.

SOURCE OF RECOVERY

1. After seven years of mind exercises of insanity, what did Nebuchadnezzar finally do to terminate his demented state of mind? Daniel 4:34

“For seven years Nebuchadnezzar, in his degradation, was an astonishment to all his subjects. For seven years he was humbled before the world, as a punishment for ascribing to himself the glory that belonged to God. At the end of this time his reason was restored to him. Through his terrible humiliation he was brought to see his own weakness, and to acknowledge the supremacy of God.” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 13, 1904.

2. How significant is the meaning of those words “lifted up mine eyes unto heaven”? Psalm 121:1, 2; 123:1, 2
“By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. Many realize their helplessness; they are longing for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God, and are striving to obtain it. But in vain. In despair they cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24, margin. Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He bids you arise in health and peace. Do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe the Saviour's word. Put your will on the side of Christ. Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength. Whatever may be the evil practice, the master passion which through long indulgence binds both soul and body, Christ is able and longs to deliver. He will impart life to the soul that is "dead in trespasses." Ephesians 2:1. He will set free the captive that is held by weakness and misfortune and the chains of sin.” —The Ministry of Healing, p. 84.

3. Having seen that it was Nebuchadnezzar’s forgetfulness of God’s powerful impacts of conviction that drove him to an unsound mind, what was it that he gained by looking up and back to that heavenly conviction? 2 Timothy 1:7

“Satan is the originator of disease; and the physician is warring against his work and power. Sickness of the mind prevails everywhere. Nine tenths of the diseases from which men suffer have their foundation here. Perhaps some living home trouble is, like a canker, eating to the very soul and weakening the life forces. Remorse for sin sometimes undermines the constitution and unbalances the mind. There are erroneous doctrines also, as that of an eternally burning hell and the endless torment of the wicked, that, by giving exaggerated and distorted views of the character of God, have produced the same result upon sensitive minds. Infidels have made the most of these unfortunate cases, attributing insanity to religion; but this
is a gross libel and one which they will not be pleased to meet by and by. The religion of Christ, so far from being the cause of insanity, is one of its most effectual remedies; for it is a potent soother of the nerves.”—Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5, p. 443.

**THE KING’S LESSON**

4. As Nebuchadnezzar revealed sound mindedness when under the influence of God, but fell repeatedly back to his pagan sinfulness, is there a lesson in this for us? Psalm 121:1; compare Isaiah 50:7

“Looking unto Jesus, Peter walks securely; but as in self-satisfaction he glances back toward his companions in the boat, his eyes are turned from the Saviour. The wind is boisterous. The waves roll high. . . . For a moment Christ is hidden from his view, and his faith gives way. He begins to sink. But while the billows talk with death, Peter lifts his eyes from the angry waters, and fixing them upon Jesus, cries, "Lord, save me." Immediately Jesus grasps the outstretched hand, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

“Walking side by side, Peter's hand in that of his Master, they stepped into the boat together. But Peter was now subdued and silent. He had no reason to boast over his fellows, for through unbelief and self-exaltation he had very nearly lost, his life. When he turned his eyes from Jesus, his footing was lost and he sank amid the waves.

“When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not bid Peter come to Him that he should perish; He does not call us to follow Him, and then forsake us.” —Conflict and Courage, p. 310.

5. Upon lifting his eyes to heaven, the king’s sanity returned; how thoroughly was he now confirmed as a witness for God? Daniel 4:34-37
“The chastening that came upon the king of Babylon wrought reformation in his heart, and transformed him in character. He now understands God's purpose in humiliating him. In this chastisement he recognizes the divine hand. Before his humiliation he was tyrannical in his dealings with others, but now the fierce, over-bearing monarch is changed into a wise and compassionate ruler. Before his humiliation he defied and blasphemed the God of heaven, but now he humbly acknowledges the power of the Most High, and earnestly seeks to promote the happiness of his subjects.”

“Thus the king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart that was partaking of the mercy and grace, the righteousness and peace, of the divine nature. God's design that the greatest kingdom of the world should show forth his praise, was now fulfilled.

“The public proclamation in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged his guilt and the great mercy of God in his restoration, is the last act of his life as recorded in Sacred History.” —The Youth’s Instructor, December 13, 1904.

6. Are we well informed now by this pagan king as to where our safety lies from going into the insanity of this world?
   2 Corinthians 3:18

“"And we beheld His glory." It is this beholding that the apostle Paul speaks of in the words, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory,"--from character to character,--"even as by the Spirit of the Lord." He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness sheds light into the mind of every one who beholds Him, every one who loves Him supremely and shows unswerving faith and trust in Him. The heart is filled with the light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and with this light comes spiritual discernment,--the knowledge of the glory of God.

“Our safety is in beholding Christ. When self is the object of worship, when, filled with self-exaltation, men bow to their own image, losing sight of Christ, they are in fearful danger. Christ is the light of the world. Turn
your face from Him, and you walk in darkness. Keep your eyes fixed on His perfection, and you walk in the light of heaven. Through the power of the manifestation of divine glory, you constantly increase in spiritual understanding.” — *The Signs of the Times*, March 26, 1902.

7. **How firmly is the lesson learnt which God designed to teach us from this king’s experience? Daniel 12:9, 10, 3**

“The lesson that the Lord would have all humanity learn from the experience of the king of Babylon is that all who walk in pride He is able to abase. By stern discipline Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the lesson that God, not man, is Ruler, that His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. So man today must learn that God is supreme. When men gain success in the work of the Lord, it is because God has given them this success, not for their own glory, but for God's glory. He who seeks to steal a ray of light from the glory of the Lord will find that he will be punished for his presumption.”

“Let a people boast themselves in their own wisdom, let them exalt self and indulge pride, and the result will surely follow. As surely as the sun shines by day, so surely does pride go before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Let a church become proud and boastful, and that church will be laid low. Let those in charge of any institution become presumptuous, taking to themselves the credit for the success that has come to them in certain lines, let them glory in their wisdom and their efficiency, and they will certainly be brought to humiliation.” — *The Publishing Ministry*, pp. 139, 140.
Distinctive Lessons for the 144,000

*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

*Revelation 7:14*

**OBJECTIVES**

- To confirm that the story of Nebuchadnezzar is integral to the content of the book of Daniel to be opened to our understanding today.
- To summarise the lessons derived from the king’s experience.
- To recognise the distinctive process in Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion by which the 144,000 will reach perfection.

**FOR THE TIME OF THE END**

1. For what time was the book of Daniel written? Daniel 12:9, 13

“*In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days. The angel commanded, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end."*” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.
2. As both books of Revelation and Daniel deal with events pertaining to the time of the end, does the Revelation deal with character purification in the time of the end? Revelation 7:1-3, 14

“About four months since, I had a vision of events, all in the future. And I saw the time of trouble, such as never was,—Jesus told me it was the time of Jacob's trouble, and that we should be delivered out of it by the voice of God. Just before we entered it, we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four Angels cease to hold the four winds.” —The Day-Star, March 14, 1846.

3. Does the book of Daniel also deal with this purification, and does Inspiration connect the story of Nebuchadnezzar with this process? Daniel 12:9, 10

“In the experience of Nebuchadnezzar is contained a lesson to which we should give heed, lest we fall into temptation. The perils of the last days are upon us, and we should watch and pray, read and heed the lessons that are given us in the books of Daniel and Revelation.” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 13, p. 67.

**SUMMARY OF LESSONS**

4. In our study into the history of King Nebuchadnezzar, are we able to identify the philosophy behind this history, and what is God’s purpose for us at this time? Daniel 4:34, 35, 37; Isaiah 60:1-3
“This is to understand the philosophy of history.

In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose.” —Education, p. 175.

“God has presented to me the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord worked with power to bring the mightiest king on the earth to acknowledge Him as King over all kings. He moved upon the mind of the proud king until Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged Him as "the most high God," "whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."” —Evangelism, p. 88.

5. In what state was Nebuchadnezzar when God began to use him as his servant? And what is the lesson he demonstrates for us?
Jeremiah 27:6; 21:7 (last part)

“The terms "My servant," "Israel," "the Lord's servant," mean anyone that the Lord may select and appoint to do a certain work. He makes them ministers of His will, though some who are selected may be as ignorant of His will as was Nebuchadnezzar.” —Testimonies for the Church Vol. 9, p. 138.

“Exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honor, and acknowledged even by Inspiration as "a king of kings", Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless at times had ascribed to the favor of Jehovah the glory of his kingdom and the splendor of his reign. Such had been the case after his dream of the great image. His mind had been profoundly influenced by this vision and by the thought that the Babylonian Empire, universal though it was, was finally to fall, and other kingdoms were to bear sway, until at last all earthly powers were to be superseded by a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, which kingdom was never to be destroyed.”

“An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and God was able
to use him as an instrument for the punishment of the rebellious and for the fulfillment of the divine purpose.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 514.

“It is in mercy that the Lord reveals to men their hidden defects. He would have them critically examine the complicated emotions and motives of their own hearts and detect that which is wrong, modify their dispositions, and refine their manners. God would have His servants become acquainted with their own hearts. In order to bring to them a true knowledge of their condition, He permits the fire of affliction to assail them so that they may be purified.” —Mind, Character, and Personality Vol. 2, p. 617.

6. **Having seen Nebuchadnezzar taken over the ground of repeated convictions and subsequent reverses, can we receive the lesson intended for us?** Malachi 3:2, 3; Deuteronomy 4:9

“A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set His hand to this work. This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. . . . He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril.” —My Life Today, p. 92.

**ULTIMATE ENTIRE CONVERSION**

7. **After those seven years of insanity, how was God able to use the king, and how will He do this for us?** Daniel 4:1-3, 37; Revelation 14:6, 7
“King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven".

“The king upon the Babylonian throne became a witness for God, giving his testimony, warm and eloquent, from a grateful heart that was partaking of the mercy and grace, the righteousness and peace, of the divine nature.” —S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, p. 1170.

“Another heavenly being exclaimed with firm and musical voice, "They have come out of great tribulation. They have walked in the fiery furnace in the world, heated intensely by the passions and caprices of men who would enforce upon them the worship of the beast and his image, who would compel them to be disloyal to the God of heaven. They have come from the mountains, from the rocks, from the dens and caves of the earth, from dungeons, from prisons, from secret councils, from the torture chamber, from hovels, from garrets. They have passed through sore affliction, deep self-denial, and deep disappointment. They are no longer to be the sport and ridicule of wicked men. They are to be no longer mean and sorrowful in the eyes of those who despise them. Remove the filthy garments from them, with which wicked men have delighted to clothe them. Give them a change of raiment, even the white robes of righteousness, and set a fair mitre upon their heads."” —Manuscript Releases Vol. 2, p. 210.

8. Is there a significance in the fact that the king of Babylon wrote a chapter in the inspired word of God? 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

“The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God; the tyrannical, overbearing ruler, a wise and compassionate king. He who had defied and blasphemed the God of heaven, now acknowledged the power of the Most High and earnestly sought to promote the fear of Jehovah and
the happiness of his subjects. Under the rebuke of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, Nebuchadnezzar had learned at last the lesson which all rulers need to learn—that true greatness consists in true goodness. He acknowledged Jehovah as the living God, saying, "I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

“God's purpose that the greatest kingdom in the world should show forth His praise was now fulfilled. This public proclamation, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the mercy and goodness and authority of God, was the last act of his life recorded in sacred history.” —Prophets and Kings, p. 521.
Souls to Meet in Heaven

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

OBJECTIVES

- To reflect upon the future of those who like Nebuchadnezzar have been converted and cleansed by God’s intervention.
- To contemplate the joys of fellowship with the redeemed of the Lord.
- To appreciate that the trauma of God’s methods of purification as described in Nebuchadnezzar’s experience are worth it to attain heaven.

THE ULTIMATE REWARD

1. Having studied the process by which Nebuchadnezzar gained thorough conversion, does this story end here?
   1 Corinthians 15:19

“The apostle carried the minds of the Corinthian brethren forward to the triumphs of the resurrection morn, when all the sleeping saints are to be raised, henceforth to live forever with their Lord.

“Glorious is the triumph awaiting the faithful. The apostle, realizing the possibilities before the Corinthian believers, sought to set before them that which uplifts from the selfish and the sensual, and glorifies life with the hope of immortality. Earnestly he exhorted them to be true to their high calling in Christ. "My beloved brethren," he pleaded, "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."” —The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 320, 321.
2. If we learn to submit ourselves to God’s intervention demonstrated by Nebuchadnezzar’s case, what assurance is ours?  
2 Peter 1:10, 11

“The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them.”

“The apostle Peter had had a long experience in the things of God. His faith in God's power to save had strengthened with the years, until he had proved beyond question that there is no possibility of failure before the one who, advancing by faith, ascends round by round, ever upward and onward, to the topmost round of the ladder that reaches even to the portals of heaven.” —The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 532, 533.

JOYS OF HEAVEN

3. What corporate experience will be made by all who come through the process of purification, at the second advent of Christ?  
1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

“Soon appeared the great white cloud. It looked more lovely than ever before. On it sat the Son of man. At first we did not see Jesus on the cloud, but as it drew near the earth we could behold His lovely person. . . . The voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints, clothed with glorious immortality. The living saints were changed in a moment and
were caught up with them into the cloudy chariot. It looked all over glorious as it rolled upward. On either side of the chariot were wings, and beneath it wheels. And as the chariot rolled upward, the wheels cried, "Holy," and the wings, as they moved, cried, "Holy," and the retinue of holy angels around the cloud cried, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" And the saints in the cloud cried, "Glory! Alleluia!"

—Maranatha, p. 305.

4. According to Inspiration, are we able to comprehend the experience of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar and ourselves, as we have studied them closely, when we meet together with them?

Matthew 25:21; 16:27

“In the mansions above we shall meet to part no more. We shall know each other in our heavenly home.

“The redeemed will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they have with these souls! "I was a sinner," it will be said, "without God and without hope in the world, and you came to me and drew my attention to the precious Saviour as my only hope. . . . Others will say, "I was a heathen in heathen lands. You left your friends and comfortable home and came to teach me how to find Jesus and believe in Him as the only true God. I demolished my idols and worshiped God, and now I see Him face to face. I am saved, eternally saved, ever to behold Him whom I love. . . ."

“What rejoicing there will be as these redeemed ones meet and greet those who have had a burden in their behalf! And those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings--how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction!” —My Life Today, p. 353.
5. What is the glory we will be ushered into at the coming of Jesus?  
1 Corinthians 13:12

“There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together “the whole family in heaven and earth” these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.”
—Heaven, p. 143.

HEAVEN CHEAP ENOUGH

6. Thinking of the seven years of madness Nebuchaddnezzar had to experience before he reached saving conversion, will he bemoan this in heaven? Romans 8:16-18

“Heaven will be cheap enough if we obtain it through suffering. . . . As I saw what we must be in order to inherit glory, and then saw how much Jesus had suffered to obtain for us so rich an inheritance, I prayed that we might be baptized into Christ's sufferings, that we might not shrink at trials, but bear them with patience and joy, knowing what Jesus had suffered that we through His poverty and sufferings might be made rich.”

“Heaven is worth everything to us. We must not run any risk in this matter. We must take no venture here. We must know that our steps are ordered by the Lord. May God help us in the great work of overcoming. He has crowns for those that overcome. He has white robes for the righteous. He has an eternal world of glory for those who seek for glory, honor, and immortality. Everyone who enters the City of God will enter it as a conqueror. He will not enter it as a condemned criminal, but as a son of God. And the welcome given to everyone who enters there will be, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."” —Child guidance, p. 567.
7. How does Inspiration expand on this concept that heaven will be cheap enough? 2 Corinthians 4:15-18

“We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us, that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, "Alleluia! heaven is cheap enough!" and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring.” —Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White, p. 61.

“When sinful man can discern the inexpressible love of God in giving His Son to die upon the cross, we shall better understand that it is infinite gain to overcome as Christ overcame. And we shall understand that it is eternal loss if we gain the whole world, with all its pleasure and glory, and yet lose the soul. Heaven is cheap enough at any cost.” —Confrontation, p. 78.

**MEDITATION**

“Then my eyes were taken from the glory, and I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. The angel said to them, "... Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar--self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory. Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where no thief can approach or rust corrupt. Ye must be partakers of Christ's sufferings here if ye would be partakers with Him of His glory hereafter."

“Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view.
“The work of salvation is not child's play, to be taken hold of at will and let alone at pleasure. It is the steady purpose, the untiring effort, that will gain the victory at last. It is he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. It is they who patiently continue in well-doing that shall have eternal life and the immortal reward.” —The Faith I Live By, p. 359.