Daniel 2 Ages 11-14

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Teacher's Notes

Like Nebuchadnezzar, we sometimes struggle with selfishness. The Lord made Nebuchadnezzar aware of his spiritual choices by sending a dream, which he could not understand. The image in his dream pictured how selfishness can drag a person down completely if left unchecked. Only Daniel (conscience) could bring true perspective on the dream and its meaning.

Daniel 2 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
1. Welcome Activity (2-3 minutes)	Dream Discussion p. 1	
2. Focus on the Word (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 2 and discuss p. 2	shortened version of text included on p. 3
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Take Time to Step Back pp. 5-6	Scissors, stopwatch or phone app to keep time
	Who Are Your Advisors? pp. 7-8	stiff paper, scissors
4. Closing (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 9	Take Home Cards p. 10

New Church Concept Dreams

It is known that the Lord revealed heavenly secrets to the prophets by means of dreams. Things to come were disclosed to others besides the prophets, for example the dreams which Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and others had. Dreams of that kind come down and flow in from heaven. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1975

There are three types of dreams. The first type comes from the Lord through heaven. Prophetical dreams in the Word were like this. The second type comes by way of angelic spirits. This type of dream taught people in the Most Ancient Church. The third type of dream comes from spirits close to a person sleeping. These too carry spiritual meanings. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1976

Welcome: Dream Discussion

Our story today involves a dream with a message. Numerous people in the Word had dreams that gave messages, for example Jacob, Joseph and the wise men. The dreams we have today do not give us messages in the same way, but may also serve to draw our attention to things happening in our lives.

1. Have you had a dream that was so good you didn't want to wake up?
2. Have you ever dreamed a dream you couldn't remember, but wished you could?
3. Have dreams affected the way you see yourself, or others?
4. In today's story, the king had a troubling dream. He had a vague feeling that something was wrong and needed help to figure out what the dream meant.

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Focus on the Word

Read: Daniel 2. A shortened version is included on page 3.

Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful king. He built an empire superior to all other empires at that time. Even today Babylon is known for its amazing writing, technology, architecture and artistry. This story describes an incident that clouded Nebuchadnezzar's happiness. Although he went to his advisors, they were unable to help him.

1. **What was Nebuchadnezzar's problem?** He had a troubling dream he could not understand. He wanted to find out what the dream meant.
2. **Who were Nebuchadnezzar's advisors?** Magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans.
3. **Who are your advisors—people you ask for help at important times?** We turn to people we trust. **Ultimately the Lord is our truest Advisor. People who love and do what He teaches are wise. But the "wise men" who Nebuchadnezzar asked for help represent selfish (false) ideas that told him only what he wanted to hear.**
4. **Is hearing only advice that makes you feel good genuinely helpful? Why or why not?**
5. **How did the king react when he did not hear what he wanted to?** He threatened to kill all his advisors and destroy their homes. **Compare his reaction with your reaction when you don't hear what you want to. How is it similar and different?**
6. **Warned of the king's deadly anger, Daniel asked to see him. What, in you, has the strength to face burning selfish anger like Daniel did?** True ideas you know from the Word give you strength.
7. **Nebuchadnezzar became worried about what his dream meant. Have you had a vague feeling that something you've said or done wasn't right—something that might have a consequence? How might seeing the situation clearly help you take action?**
8. **How did Nebuchadnezzar react when he heard Daniel's explanation of what the dream meant?** He made Daniel a ruler in Babylon and gave him gifts.
9. **How does life change if Daniel (conscience) rules? Making conscience rule is what's needed to enter heaven. Jesus called it being "born again". It is the first step on a person's spiritual journey toward heaven.**

New Church Concept: The Stone

A stone struck the statue and smashed it to pieces. It became like chaff which the wind carried away. But the stone that struck the statue became a great rock and filled the whole earth. The subject here is the Lord and His kingdom, "a stone" being used to mean faith, and "a rock" the Lord in respect of faith. "A stone" also means in the Word the truth that composes faith because "a rock" also means a fortress that withstands falsities. The actual fortress is the truth of faith, for this is what the battle against both falsities and evils is waged from. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8581

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Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

[1]King Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream and could not sleep. [2] So he summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came [3] he said, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means." [4] They answered, "May the king live forever! Tell us the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied, "I have decided if you do not tell me my dream and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into rubble. [6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive gifts and rewards and great honor." [10] The astrologers answered, "No one on earth can do what the king asks!"

[12] This made the king angry. [13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends. Daniel asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" The officer explained and Daniel went to the king and asked for time to interpret the dream.

[17] Then Daniel explained the matter to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **[18]** He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven so that they might not be executed. **[19]** During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said, "Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream." **[25]** The officer took Daniel to the king and said, "I have found a man who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel, "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" **[27]** Daniel replied, "No wise man can explain the mystery the king has asked about, **[28]** but there is a God who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen. Your dream and visions are these:

[31] "You looked, and before you stood a large statue. [32] The head of the statue was gold, its chest and arms silver, its belly and thighs bronze, [33] its legs iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. [34] While you were watching, a rock was cut. It struck the statue on its feet and smashed them. [35] Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken, and the wind swept them away. The rock that struck the statue became a mountain and filled the earth.

[36] "Now we will interpret the dream. [37]God has given you power and glory. [38]He has made you ruler. You are that head of gold. [39]After you, another kingdom will arise. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the earth. [40]Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. [41] The feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom. It will be partly strong and partly brittle. [43] And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will not remain united.

[44] "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. [45] This is the meaning of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

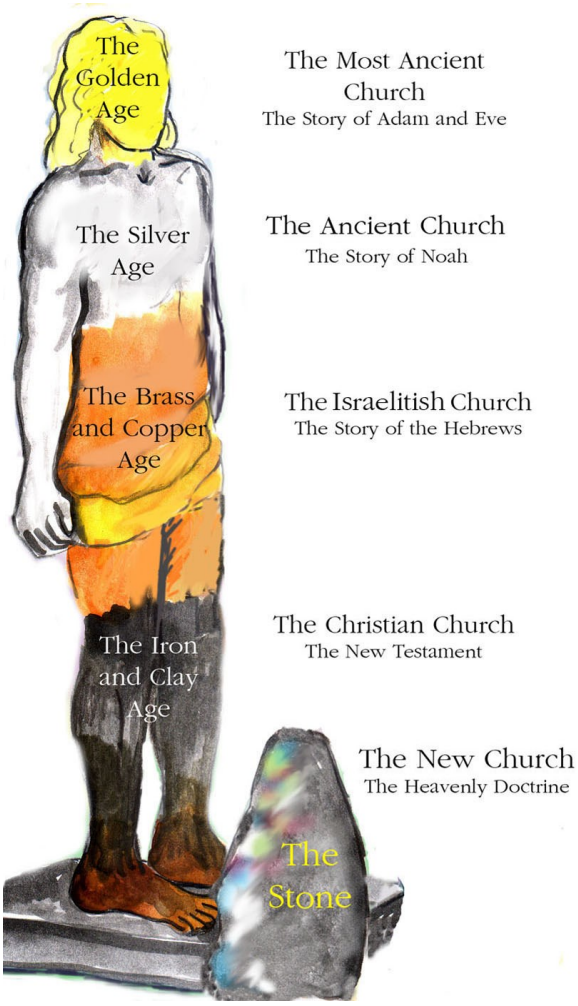
[46] Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell before Daniel and paid him honor. [47]The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

[48] Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and gave him gifts. He made him ruler over the province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men.

(Daniel 2:1-48 adapted from the NIV)

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For Teachers: The Meaning of the Statue



Many people have interpreted the meaning of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream as having to do with the history of civilizations. Although we have not focused on this aspect in the materials for students, the New Church has been given a variation of this understanding. Instead of earthly civilizations, we are taught that the different parts of the statue represent different churches, or religions, that the Lord has established on the earth.

The way the Lord established these religions or churches was through revelations. The Lord helps people find the way to heaven by revealing Himself to them. Over time, as the human race developed, the Lord provided new revelations, so that all people might know Him.

Historically, the Lord has established five churches on earth where He is known, each with a distinctive revelation. These churches are the Most Ancient Church, the Ancient Church, the Israelitish Church, the Christian Church, and the New Church. The statue and the rock in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represents these churches.

The revelation for **The Most Ancient Church** was not written. Instead the Lord gave the Most Ancients dreams and visions as well as the ability to communicate with angels. He also filled their minds with heavenly ideas, for they perceived spiritual meanings in everything they saw in nature. The golden head of the statue represented the Most Ancient Church.

The **Ancient Church** was given a revelation called the Ancient Word, written as stories with spiritual meanings. Most of this Word was lost, but a portion is found at the beginning of the book of Genesis. The silver chest of the statue represented the Ancient Church.

The Lord gave the **Israelitish Church** the Old Testament by means of Moses and other prophets. The Old Testament tells about the history of the Israelites while also teaching us about the Lord and His laws of order. The belly and thighs of the statue represented the Israelitish Church.

The New Testament was the new revelation given as the **Christian Church** was established. This part of the Word tells us what the Lord did on earth, describing His miracles and what He taught people. It also prophesies how the Lord would establish the New Church. The legs and feet of the statue represented the Christian Church.

The revelation given to the **New Church** is called the "Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem" or "The Writings". It tells the inner meaning of stories in the Old and New Testaments and provides us with new teachings about the Lord, heaven, and marriage which people are now ready to receive. The stone that broke the statue and grew to fill the earth represents the New Church.

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Take Time to Step Back



Nebuchadnezzar threatened to kill his wise men if they couldn't tell him about his dream. When they pleaded for time he accused them of *stalling.* When Daniel heard, he asked why it was so *urgent*, and went to the king and *asked for time* to interpret the dream. After he went home and *took time to pray*, the secret was revealed. Daniel gave thanks for receiving the answer and then delivered the Lord's message.

Like Nebuchadnezzar, we might sometimes want something *now*, and lash out in anger— "killing" others' joy, sense of fair play, or even our relationships. Students will engage in a timed task—"building" Nebuchadnezzar's statue—and race to beat their time (and/or others' times). Discuss how acting quickly in anger can hurt ourselves and others, and how taking time to pray keeps the Lord in mind.

1. Distribute copies of *Nebuchadnezzar's Statue Puzzle* (p. 6) and scissors. Cut out all the puzzle pieces. Some of them will make a statue that fits together correctly. Some of them will not work at all. You can either have all the students work together try to assemble one puzzle while you keep time or divide them into pairs and have them take turns timing each other.
2. Shuffle the pieces and place them face down on the table. Give students a go mark and have them assemble Nebuchadnezzar's statue, putting aside any pieces that do not fit. Encourage accuracy.
3. Tell students how long it took, and then challenge them to cut their assembly time *in half* i.e. if it took 30 seconds, try for 15 seconds next time. Re-shuffle the pieces, and time students as they re-assemble the statue. Did you make your goal? How did hurrying affect you?
4. Nebuchadnezzar pictures selfish desires. Why might he have been so impatient that he ordered his wise men to be killed? What qualities in us are like this?
5. Compare Daniel's use of time with Nebuchadnezzar's use of time. Is speed a virtue? What's more important—*how* something is done, or how *fast* it's done?
6. Older people can be very good at sports because they think strategically, based on a lot of experience, even though they are not as fast as younger people. How might taking time to strategize (sports, homework, hobbies) actually *save* time?
7. Daniel took time to pray for clear understanding. And then he didn't rush right to Nebuchadnezzar to tell him the answer. He took time to thank the Lord first. How might using the strategy of keeping the Lord in mind through prayer and thanksgiving change the outcome of a problem?
8. Have you tried stepping back from a situation? How did it help?

Materials Needed for Each Student

copies of the *Nebuchadnezzar's Statue Puzzle* p. 20, scissors, stopwatch or phone app or other way to keep time to share

Prepare in Advance

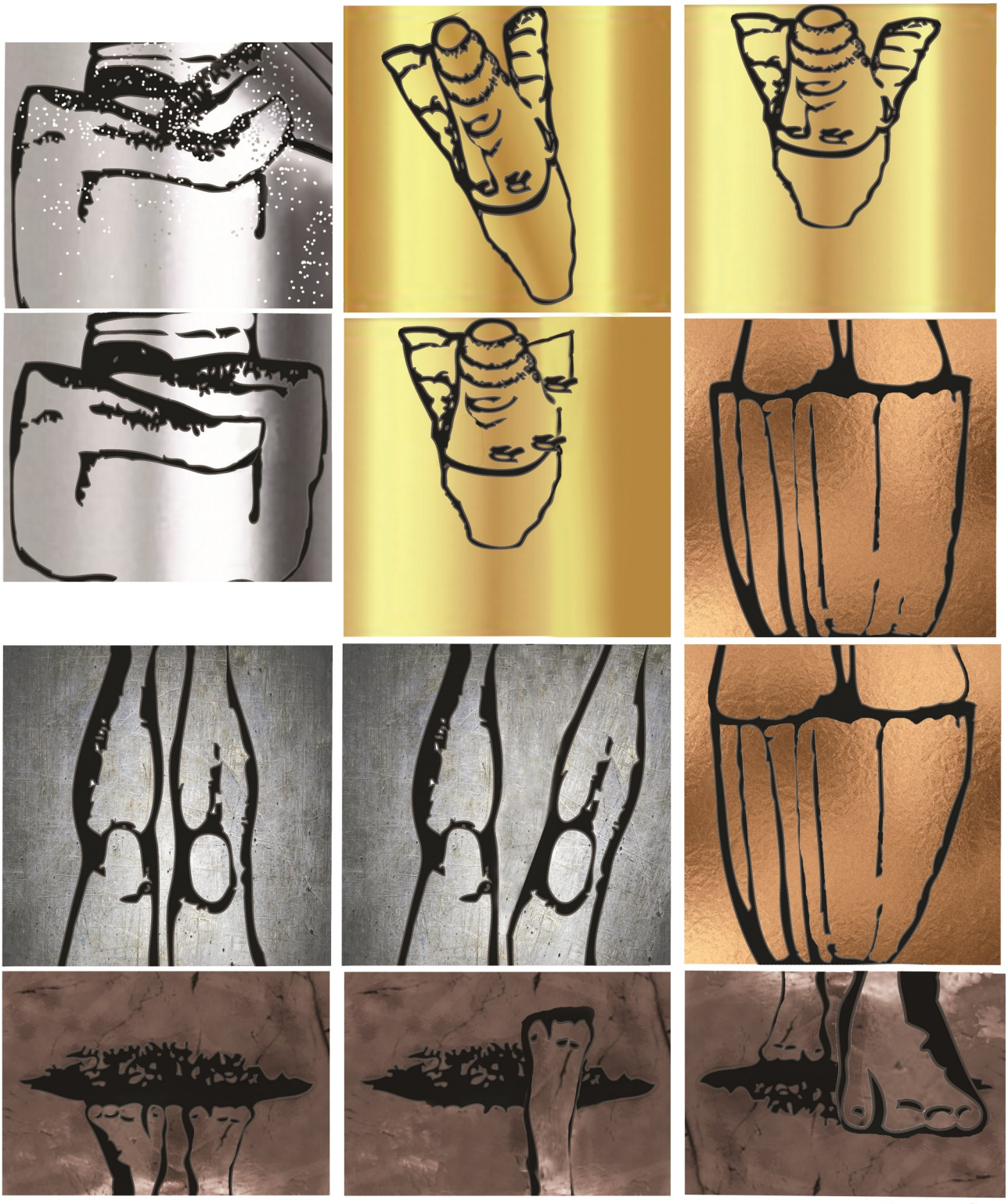
Print puzzle. Gather supplies.

New Church Concept Loves

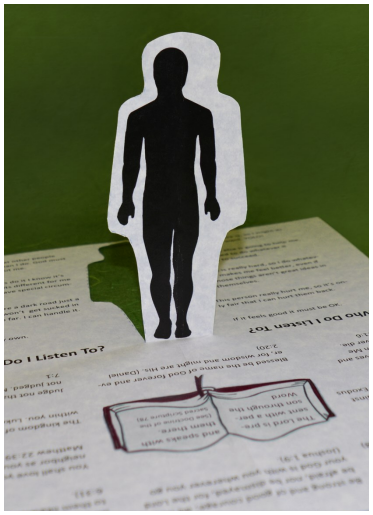
When the loves of the Lord, the world and ourselves are properly prioritized in us, they are also coordinated in such a way that the highest love, our love for heaven, is present in the second love, our love for the world, and through that in the third or lowest love, our love for ourselves. In fact, the love that is inside steers the love that is outside wherever it wants. Therefore if a love for heaven is present in our love for the world and through that in our love for ourselves, with each type of love we accomplish useful things that are inspired by the God of heaven. See *True Christian Religion* 395

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Nebuchadnezzar's Statue Puzzle



Who Are Your Advisors?



King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that bothered him. None of his advisors were able to tell King Nebuchadnezzar about the disturbing dream he had. But the Lord revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel. In this activity, students will think about the different advisors in their own head—their conscience and the sometimes subtle messages that come from evil spirits.

1. When Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that bothered him, he asked his advisors to tell him about it. If they failed, they would be killed. Do you remember what some of the advisors said? ("No one on earth can do what the king asks!") They were right! Daniel could only tell the king about the dream, because the Lord had revealed it to him.
2. In a way, we have advisors in our own minds—voices that suggest what we might think about something or what actions to take. One of these voices is our conscience—our Daniel. It is built of true ideas from the Lord's Word—which is Him talking to us.
3. But there are other voices that try to advise us as well. They don't really have our best interests at heart, but they tell us they can help, and sometimes we want to believe them. These voices are the advisors to our own selfishness, in the same way that the astrologers and sorcerers were advisors to Nebuchadnezzar. They help us to justify things that are not true, kind or useful. But like Nebuchadnezzar, we can choose to listen to the voice of Daniel—to the messages from the Lord.
4. Hand out copies of *Who Do I Listen To?* (p. 8). Have students cut off the bottom of the page along the dotted line. Fold the page in half lengthwise and cut around the figure on the dotted line. Unfold the page and place it face up on the table. Fold the figure to stand up in the center of the page as shown in the picture above.
5. Choose a couple of the messages from other "advisors" to read together. Are there any that seem familiar? Give students a chance to discuss if they wish. Choose some of the messages from the Word to read. Are there any that mean a lot to the students?
6. Who are you going to listen to? Which messages will you turn toward?

Materials Needed for Each Student

copy of *Who Do I Listen To?* p. 8 printed on stiff paper, scissors

Prepare in Advance

Print Who Do I Listen To? on stiff paper, enough for each student to have one.

Note: YOLO = you only live once

New Church Concept
The Lord's Power

The Word is the Lord in respect of Divine Truth. Through this Truth all things in heaven and in hell are arranged into order. It is the source of all order on earth too; and all miracles were accomplished through it. In short, Divine Truth holds all power within itself, so completely that it is power itself. *Arcana Coelestia* 8200.1,2

All power in the spiritual world belongs to truth from good. Falsity from evil has no power whatever. That is why all power is in heaven and none in hell. See *Heaven and Hell* 539

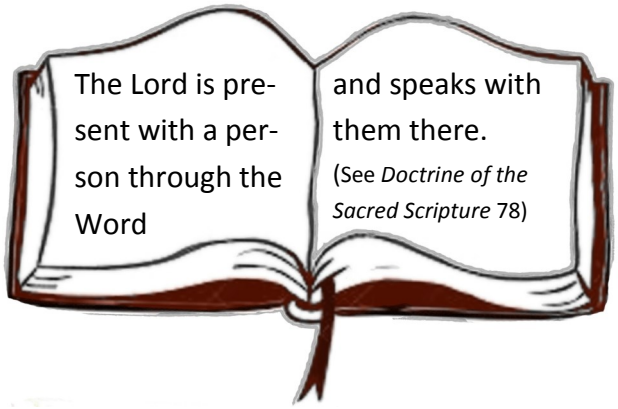
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What does the Lord require of you, but to love mercy, do justly, and walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

Just as you want others to do to you, you also do to them likewise. (Luke 6:31)

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Exodus 20:16



You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39

The kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:21

Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. John 11:6

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. (Daniel 2:20)

Judge not that you be not judged. Matthew 7:1

Who Do I Listen To?



This life is all there is, so I might as well live how I want. YOLO!

Nobody else is going to help me, so I need to do whatever it takes to succeed.

Life is really hard, so I do whatever makes me feel better, even if those things aren't great ideas in themselves.

This person really hurt me, so it's only fair that I can hurt them back.

It isn't fair that other people have more than I do. God must not care about me.

When others do it I know it's wrong, but its different for me because I have special circumstances.

I can explore a dark road just a little bit. I won't get sucked in and go too far. I can handle it.

I'm on my own.

If it feels good it must be OK.

Who Do I Listen To?

Recitation and Closing

The Book of Daniel contains beautiful prayers. We are focusing on one quotation during the close of each lesson. For this lesson, focus on quotation 2: "He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him." Read the verse aloud and invite the students to repeat it.

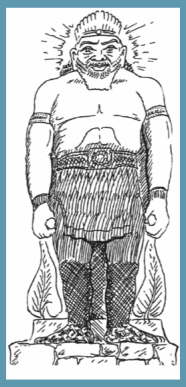
What part of today's story do these words describe? Compare light and darkness with truth and falsity. How are light and truth similar? How about darkness and falsity?

Closing

Daniel is one of the true heroes in the Word. Even when the king angrily threatened to kill anyone who could not explain his dream, Daniel remained calm, asked for time, and prayed to the Lord. The Lord answered his prayer.

The Lord made Nebuchadnezzar aware of his spiritual choices by sending a dream that pictured his selfishness. Only Daniel, who represents conscience, could bring true perspective on the dream and its meaning. Like Nebuchadnezzar, we may struggle with selfishness at times. The Lord gifts us with a conscience to give perspective from His Word on our thoughts and feelings.

Give students Take Home Cards (p. 10) as they leave.



Crushing Evil Desires and False Ideas

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great statue that represented different earthly kingdoms. The golden head stood for Nebuchadnezzar himself, who thought he was better than everyone else just because he was a powerful king. This was selfish and also a false idea, an idea that would eventually be destroyed.

The rock that smashed the statue represents true ideas from the Word. These true ideas can crush the false ideas that every human being has. It is the truth that can set us free!

Can you think of a true idea from the Lord's Word that could help set you free when you are being held captive by false ideas or selfishness? Write the true idea on the rock pictured here.



Prayers in Daniel

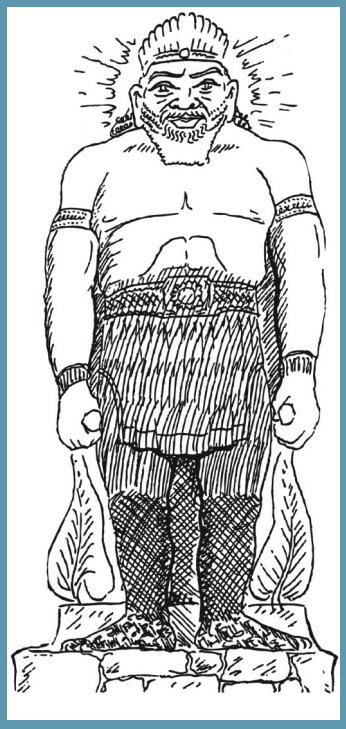
1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His.
2. **He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.**
3. How great are His signs and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And His dominion is from generation to generation.
4. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding.
5. And He changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings and raises up kings.
6. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers. For You have given me wisdom and might.

Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted

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Take Home Cards

Cut the Take Home Cards apart and give one to each student.



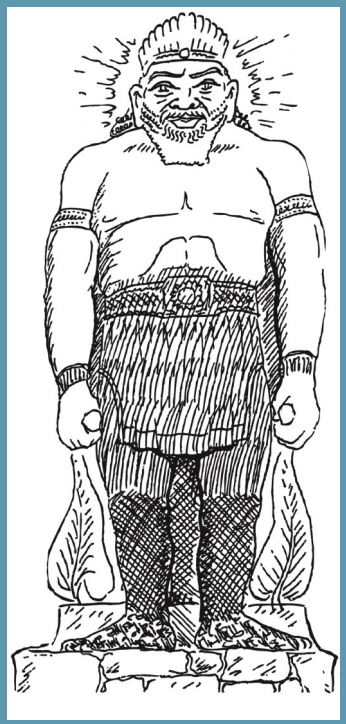
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