

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: DANIEL 2:1-49

*God's wisdom prevails.*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God gave the king a dream, and the king demanded an interpretation- King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream and wanted to make sure he got an accurate interpretation. So he demanded that his wise men tell him both what he dreamed as well as what it meant. This, his advisors told him, was impossible for any man. Because the wise men failed to do as Nebuchadnezzar demanded, they were all to be killed. Daniel and his companions fell within the group who were about to be killed.

Daniel prayed for and received the dream and interpretation – After asking to speak with the king, Daniel returned to his house and asked his companions to pray to God for mercy. Daniel's faith was amazing. He did not despair like the other wise men because he knew that his God is a living God who knows all things. In a dream that night, God showed Daniel the dream and interpretation. Daniel called a halt to the execution of the wise men. This showed that he was interested in others, not just himself. God told Nebuchadnezzar that no man could do what he asked, but that there was a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

Daniel gave the king the interpretation and was rewarded – The dream involved a large statue made of different materials and a stone that is not cut out by human hands. The statue represented man-made kingdoms. The stone struck the statue and the statue crumbled and was carried away by the wind while the stone became a mountain. The mountain represented the kingdom of God.

Traditionally, the interpretation of this dream has been as follows: The head of gold is King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon; the arms and chest of silver refer to the Medo-Persian Empire; the belly and thighs of bronze represent the Greek Empire; the legs of iron were the Roman Empire; and the rock is Christ. The mountain is indeed the Kingdom of God.

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that Daniel had solved the mystery. The King exalted Daniel's God. He then promoted Daniel and made him ruler over all the provinces of Babylon in a move reminiscent of Pharaoh's appointment of Joseph.

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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

As it is written,

"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame" (Romans 9:33)

In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a rock that was not cut out by human hands. That rock, Jesus Himself, would usher in an eternal kingdom. Jesus is the rock about which He told Peter,

"Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

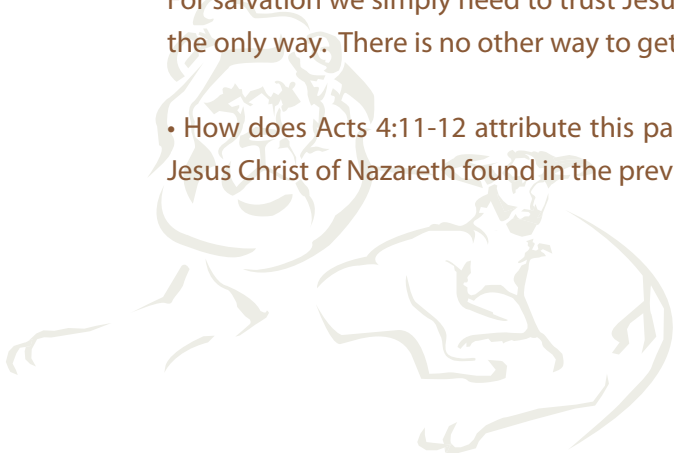
Bible Passage: Psalm 118:22

Connecting the passage to Christ:

This passage is connected to Jesus in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, and 1 Peter 2:7. In Acts 4:11-12, it says that, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved".

Questions for reflection:

- Why is Jesus called the stumbling stone? (Men want to save themselves. We tend to trust our works. For salvation we simply need to trust Jesus for we cannot provide salvation for ourselves. Also, Jesus is the only way. There is no other way to get right with God. These truths cause a lot of men to stumble.)
- How does Acts 4:11-12 attribute this passage to Jesus? (The "he" in Acts 4:11 is a direct reference to Jesus Christ of Nazareth found in the previous verse.)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

REMEMBER THE STONE

Supplies

small stones (enough for each child in the class)

Read the story to the children then ask them, "Who is the stone?" Of course, the answer is Jesus is the stone.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What do we learn about God's plan from this dream? (God's kingdom is stronger than all the kingdoms of the earth and it will last forever. The stone will crush the kingdoms of this earth and grow into the mountain of the kingdom of God.)
- How should this affect the way we live? (We should not live for this worldly kingdom but for the kingdom of God. Why would we want to give our lives to something that is going to pass away?)

Give each child a stone and tell them to keep the rock with them as they go through their day to remind them of Jesus and living for His kingdom. Ask them what that looks like practically and what that looks like inside their hearts.



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ANSWER THE RIDDLE

Supplies

a book of children's riddles
or a few taken off the
Internet

The object of this lesson is to have the children experience just how difficult a task the King put before the wise men.

Announce to the class that you are going to see if they can figure out a few riddles and problems.

Give them an easy riddle or problem to start with such as, "What is black and white and read all over – a newspaper!" Or you can use mathematical equation such as, "If I had ten apples and gave all but two away and one that I ate how many did I give away? – eight"

After having fun with a few riddles, ask a volunteer to guess the next one. (You are literally going to ask the volunteer to guess the next riddle – not just the answer.)

Bring the volunteer to the front of the class and ask them to tell you the riddle. Press the issue a bit saying, "You volunteered to guess the next one, so what is it?"

Ask the class if there is anyone who can give you both the riddle and the answer.

Read the story of the king's dream to the class, then ask the class the following questions:

- Why was it so difficult for the wise men to know the king's dream? (Only God is all knowing. The only way the dream could be discovered was by a wild lucky guess or by a revelation from God. The wise men knew this and since they did not know God, had nowhere to turn.)
- What does this story teach us about God? (The God of Daniel is all knowing and powerful.)



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DRAW THE VISION

Supplies

paper and colored pencils

Read the description of the vision and have the children draw their own version of the statue and interpretation of the rock crushing the statue. While they are working on the drawing ask them about the meaning of the rock and its power.

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children make the statue out of clay.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

Bibles with simple concordances

Read the story as a class. Then ask the class who they think the rock is.

Have someone look up the following verses: Matthew 21:42-44, Mark 12:10-11, Luke 20:17-18, 1 Peter 2:6-9, Isaiah 8:14, Isaiah 28:16, and Romans 9:32-33.

Ask the class the following questions:

- What do we learn from all these verses that connects them to the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream? (We learn that Jesus is frequently referred to as a stone and that stone has the power to crush, see Luke 20:18.)
- What other component of the vision works with the stone? (The stone becomes a mountain, which is the kingdom of God.)
- If Jesus is to be interpreted as the stone, He would somehow need to be identified as bringing in the kingdom of God. Is this the case in scripture? (Yes.)

Break the class up into groups and have them find scriptural proof and then report back to the class. This will be an easy exercise for there are many references to Jesus and His relationship with the Kingdom of God. Just have the children look up the word "kingdom" in the concordance and then look up New Testament references. If you want, you can give different groups different gospels to look verses up and the Epistles as well.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

The Kingdom of God – The Kingdom of God refers to God's rule and reign. King Nebuchadnezzar received a prophetic look ahead at the institution of the Kingdom of God. Sometimes it is called the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of Christ, but both are referring to the same kingdom. God's Kingdom has a present reality which has come with the ministry of Christ, see Luke 11:20. Even though God's Kingdom is a present reality, God's Kingdom has not yet been fully established and there is a component that has not yet come. In the end, God's reign will be complete with death and sin destroyed and God reigning among His redeemed people.

