

Investigating God's Word...

Year Seven

**Ezekiel, Daniel,
Obadiah, Nahum,
Habakkuk, Zephaniah**

Sunday School Curriculum

Fall Quarter

Lesson Sequence

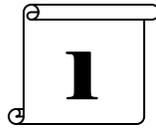
Fall Quarter

The **Lesson Sequence** gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter.

The central goal of the **Investigating God's Word...** curriculum is to enable children the opportunity to read and study the entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—by the time they “graduate” from 6th grade.

Week One	Ezekiel 1-20
Week Two	Ezekiel 21-48
Week Three	Daniel 1
Week Four	Daniel 2
Week Five	Daniel 3
Week Six	Daniel 4
Week Seven	Daniel 5
Week Eight	Daniel 6
Week Nine	Daniel 7-9
Week Ten	Daniel 10-12
Week Eleven	Obadiah, Nahum
Week Twelve	Habakkuk
Week Thirteen	Zephaniah

Winter Quarter: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi



Welcome

Greet the students. Welcome visitors. To prepare the students for class today, read Proverbs 18:10.

¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Say: *How do you find safety in God's "name?" Just think of what a name is—it is a word that tells you something about someone. God's name tells us that He is the Almighty Sovereign of the universe. His name tells us that He is in control. So where else would you run for help except to the LORD and His name?*



Drill Time

Now, it's time for DRILL TIME. This is our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

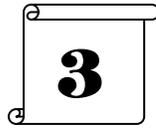
Today's questions: *What was the name of the Old Testament city whose inhabitants tried to build a tower that reached heaven? Why did they want to build the Tower of Babel? What did God do about it? For extra credit: What does the word "Babel" mean?*

Call on students or choose volunteers.

- Answers:**
1. Babel.
 2. So they could make a name for themselves and not be scattered over the earth.
 3. He confused their languages so they could not finish the tower. They scattered throughout the earth.
 4. "Confused."

Say: *The Hebrew word "Babel" has another variation—the word "Babylon." Babel or Babylon in Scripture is used to describe a world power that stands against God. Just as the people of Babel tried to be like God and make a name for themselves, the King of Babylon also tried to take God's position in the world. We will see what happens to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, today.*

The answers to today's *Drill Time* questions are found in **Genesis 11**.



W.O.W!

Our *W.O.W!* (*Word of the Week*) this week is **PRIDE**. **Write it on the board.** This is a familiar word. Who can define it for me? **Allow answers.**

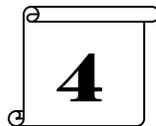
The word *PRIDE* is used in a negative way in the Bible, even though many people today use it in positive ways. *PRIDE* is basically self-centeredness and self-reliance. *PRIDE* is thinking too highly of myself!

The original sin of Adam and Eve was *PRIDE*. The serpent said that when they ate the forbidden fruit they would be just like God. That is what our *PRIDE* says: "I want to be like God!"

The men who constructed the Tower of Babel were also living out their *PRIDE*. They wanted to make a name for themselves instead of obeying God. Our *PRIDE* makes us independent from God.

What's the opposite of *PRIDE*? [Humility.] Humility is the state of submission to God. God regularly humbles the proud.

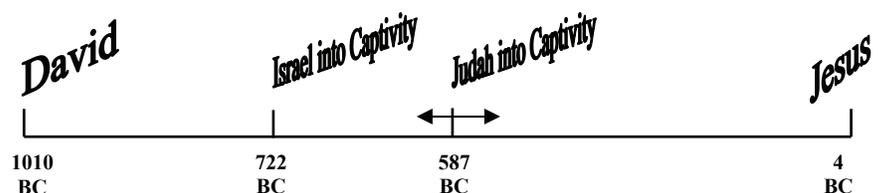
Look for this *W.O.W!* in our lesson today.

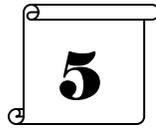


Historical Context

As you study from the Book of Daniel today, draw this timeline on the board. Always remember that the students need to understand God's Word in its historical context.

When Daniel lived and prophesied (605-536 BC)





Bible Investigation

Have the students open their Bibles to Daniel 4.

Introduction: *God has shown His mighty power to King Nebuchadnezzar twice. First, he empowered Daniel to interpret the king's dream of the future. Second, God miraculously delivered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from certain death—showing the king that He is the most powerful God. Do you think Nebuchadnezzar is getting the message?*

Let's begin reading and find out. Read Daniel 4:1-3.

¹King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly! ²It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. ³How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Discussion: *Our chapter opens with a pronouncement from King Nebuchadnezzar. This is also called an edict—an official statement from the king to all the people in his kingdom. What an amazing opening paragraph out of the mouth of a pagan king! What does he say about God? [That He is great, mighty, and sovereign over all.]*

Wow! Do you think he means it? Let's see. Read verses 4-7.

⁴I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. ⁵I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. ⁶So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. ⁷When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me.

Discussion: *Does this sound familiar? This is Nebuchadnezzar's second dream that none of his wise men could interpret. This dream probably came much later in his reign over Babylon.*

Let's continue. Read verses 8-9.

⁸Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.) ⁹I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no

mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me.

Discussion: *Why can Daniel interpret dreams?* [Because God has given him the power to do it.] *Nebuchadnezzar believes Daniel has the “spirit of the holy gods” in him, but it is really the ONE Holy Spirit of the ONE God that is in Daniel!*

Let’s listen to the dream. Read verses 10-18.

¹⁰These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. ¹¹The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. ¹²Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed. ¹³“In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. ¹⁴He called in a loud voice: ‘Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field. “Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. ¹⁶Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him. ¹⁷““The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.’ ¹⁸“This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Discussion: *Pretty amazing dream, huh? What stands out to me is what the messenger says about God in verse 17. Look at that again. What does he say about God, the Most High?* [That He is sovereign and is the one who gives out kingdoms to men.] *The LORD is the King of kings—he hands out kingdoms and he takes them away.*

Application: *It is very easy for us to study history and think that people rule the world because of their might and power. Scripture tells us that rulers only rule because God has put them in these positions of authority. God rules the rulers—even the evil ones. God is in control of all the nations of the earth and all those who are in authority over us. That’s a great comfort, isn’t it?*

Let's continue. Read verses 19-22.

¹⁹ Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you." Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!" ²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, ²¹ with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air— ²² you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

Discussion: *Why was Daniel fearful to tell the king the interpretation? [It was bad news for the king.] Yes, the king is the tree—great and strong. Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest ruler of his time, and Babylon was the greatest kingdom. But, who really rules over Babylon and the nations of the earth? [God does.]*

Let's hear more of the interpretation. Read verses 23-26.

²³ "You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.' ²⁴ "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: ²⁵ You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. ²⁶ The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.

Discussion: *Did you catch all that? What's going to happen to the most powerful king of the world? [He will live like a wild animal and lose his kingdom for a time.] What is God going to teach Nebuchadnezzar? [That He is the Sovereign God over all.]*

Application: *Do you know that God is all-powerful and is in control of everything that happens in your life? There will be many times in your life that God will use circumstances to teach you this lesson. He may not make you live like a wild animal, but He will make sure that you know that He is God and He is in control. This is a tough lesson for us humans to learn!*

Let's continue. Read verse 27.

²⁷ Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

Discussion: *Stop there for a moment. Daniel told the king that there was still a chance that this vision would NOT come true. Nebuchadnezzar could repent of his sins and turn to God by caring for the oppressed. This is God's grace for a pagan king! Do you think he will heed Daniel's advice? He has one year to do it.*

Let's see. Read verses 28-30.

²⁸ All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”

Discussion: *Do you think Nebuchadnezzar had repented? Look at what he thinks of himself— “I have built”... “by my mighty power”... for the “glory of my majesty.” Has he learned that God is sovereign and has given him his kingdom? Do you think the king is humbly submitted to God? I don't think he paid attention to Daniel's advice!*

Let's see what happens. Read verses 31-33.

³¹ The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. ³² You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.” ³³ Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

Discussion: *Can you imagine what Nebuchadnezzar came to look like? Hair like feathers and nails like claws? Eating grass like cattle? In our terminology today, we would say that the king was driven to INSANITY. He had lost his mind. He was a nut case. God took the great kingdom of Babylon away from him for “seven times”—that could mean seven weeks, months or years, we don't know. However long it was, God did exactly what He warned Nebuchadnezzar he would do, to teach him a lesson.*

Let's see if the king learns. Read verses 34-35.

³⁴ At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

Discussion: *Sounds good so far. He got his mind back and immediately praised God.*

Application: *Our minds are very important to God! We need renewed minds in order to think right thoughts about God. How do we get renewed minds? [Only by the Spirit of Christ working in us.] When you put your faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, He begins to renew your mind. Our minds must love God!*

Let's continue. Read verses 35-36.

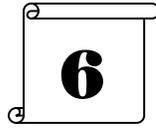
³⁵ All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" ³⁶ At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.

Discussion: *Verse 35 is another incredible statement of God's great sovereignty. He does what He pleases. No one can stop Him. No one can question Him. God is in absolute control. Yet don't ever forget that He is both Sovereign AND loving. Look how gracious He is to Nebuchadnezzar! The LORD gives him back his mind and his kingdom. Did the king deserve it? [No!] This is all a work of grace.*

Let's finish the chapter. Read verse 37.

³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Conclusion: *There's our W.O.W! All those who walk in PRIDE, God is able to humble. Do you think Nebuchadnezzar now truly saw his sin of PRIDE? Do you think he has become a worshipper of God? It seems as though the LORD has changed the king's heart and mind. What a gracious God we serve. Is God able to change your heart of PRIDE? Yes He is! When our hearts are truly changed, we can lift our voices in praise to God and agree with what Nebuchadnezzar has said. This is the last we read of this king. Maybe we'll see him in heaven.*



Lesson-At-Home

Distribute the “Lesson-At-Home” bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (Daniel 4:37) together.

Daniel 4:37 (NIV)

³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Say: *These last words of Nebuchadnezzar are so good that we should memorize them. They sum up who God is and who we are—people of PRIDE who need to be humbled. Just take out the king’s name and insert your name there, if you can say these words with all your heart.*

Review the verse a couple of times.

Direct the students’ attentions to the bottom half of the bookmark. It includes reminder points of today’s lesson that can be discussed with their parents and reviewed during the week.

Close in prayer and dismiss the students.