

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

International Sunday School Lesson
For May 27, 1951.

Memory Selection: "And ye shall seek me, find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."
—Jeremiah 29: 13.

Lesson Text: Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-14

The last in the line of kings of Judah, before its downfall, was Jehoiakim, who was the puppet of Necho, the Egyptian ruler, who had conquered Palestine. Necho's glory did not last long, however, for he was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. Egyptian power over Palestine did not end, and Jehoiakim had to submit to Nebuchadnezzar as his overlord. After three years, he foolishly rebelled against Babylon and soon the army of Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. But, before it was finally conquered, Jehoiakim died and his son, Jehoiachin, ascended to the throne. He reigned only three months before the fall of Jerusalem and he was carried away into captivity with about eight thousand of the leading citizens of the kingdom, among whom was Ezekiel, the prophet.

Zedekiah was then made king by Nebuchadnezzar, under oath to be subservient to the Babylonians. After seven or eight years, Zedekiah made a treasonable pact with the Egyptians and, in 588 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar, angered by this faithfulness, began the second siege of Jerusalem. In 585 B. C., it fell into his hands, and he destroyed it, leaving the Temple a blackened heap and the city a mass of ruins.

Zedekiah was captured as he attempted to escape and was led before the Babylonian monarch in chains. Here he was condemned by a court for treachery and suffered a painful and life-long punishment. Many of prominent leaders of the Jews were executed and the king's children were killed in his presence just before Zedekiah was permanently blinded and carried captive to Babylon, where he finally died.

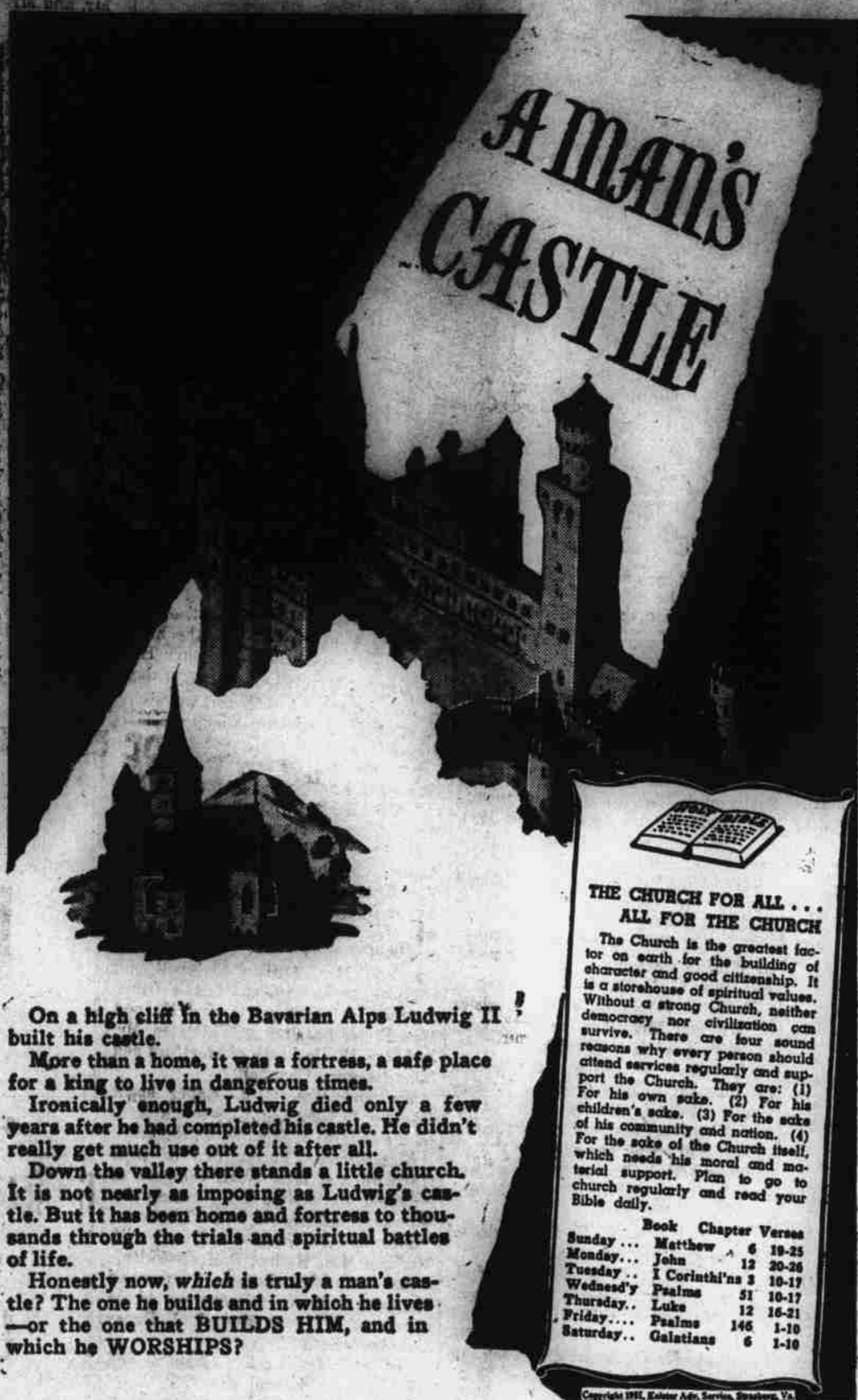
It is interesting to note that, in all times of crisis, God has a man present to warn his people and to comfort them. Jeremiah the prophet had been warning the king and the people of the punishment which would follow their departure from God but he could get no audience. When the Jews were taken into the final exile, Jeremiah was given the choice of going with them or remaining with the pitiful few who were left amid the ruins of Jerusalem. Knowing that the prophet Ezekiel was already in Babylon, Jeremiah elected to remain in Jerusalem.

It might be well to note here the milestones of Jewish history: (1) Abraham journeys to Canaan; (2) Jacob's descent into Egypt; (3) the exodus from Egypt under Moses; (4) the conquest of Canaan; (5) Israel's first king; (6) the division of the kingdom; (7) the fall of Israel; (8) the fall of Jerusalem, resulting in Babylonian captivity; and, finally, (9) the return from captivity.

There were, actually, three deportations of the Jews to Babylon rather than one. The first came in 597 under King Jehoiakim, mentioned above, when more than 8,000 were deported. Eleven years later, in 588 B. C., another 10,000 men were enslaved, and another 2,500 were taken captive in 581 B. C. Thus, when women and children who were taken captive with the men are included, probably more than 50,000 Jews suffered exile.

From Jerusalem, from time to time, the prophet Jeremiah wrote to the captives, giving them sage advice. Our lesson for today is based on one of the letters he wrote after hearing that some of the Jews were considering revolting. He advised them to settle down, build houses, take wives and seek the peace of the city. While realizing that they were helpless against the power of their captors, they were to make the most of their captivity by behaving themselves and building themselves up from within, morally and spiritually. And, to the credit of the Jews, this is exactly what they did. When the time came for them to return to their own country, after about seventy years of exile, definite and permanent effects of the exile could be seen. It is a historical fact that the synagogue, so vital in the life of the Jews, was the direct product of the Babylonian captivity. Around this synagogue revolved the social and spiritual life of the Jews, in Babylon and on down through the succeeding years.

One writer declares: "God kept his word; He always has kept it! He brought them back, stronger than ever in their faith and influence. They went away with a purely local God, a God of the Jews alone; when they came back, they had a God who was God of all the nations, all the world." It is good for us to remember the words of George MacDonald: "All things are built the shadow of God's light."



On a high cliff in the Bavarian Alps Ludwig II built his castle.

More than a home, it was a fortress, a safe place for a king to live in dangerous times.

Ironically enough, Ludwig died only a few years after he had completed his castle. He didn't really get much use out of it after all.

Down the valley there stands a little church. It is not nearly as imposing as Ludwig's castle. But it has been home and fortress to thousands through the trials and spiritual battles of life.

Honestly now, which is truly a man's castle? The one he builds and in which he lives—or the one that BUILDS HIM, and in which he WORSHIPS?

THE CHURCH FOR ALL . . . ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Day	Book	Chapter	Verses
Sunday	Matthew	6	19-25
Monday	John	12	20-26
Tuesday	I Corinthians	3	10-17
Wednesday	Psalms	51	10-17
Thursday	Luke	12	16-21
Friday	Psalms	145	1-10
Saturday	Galatians	6	1-10

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Duling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
First Sunday
11 A. M. and 8 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. R. Byrly, Pastor
Church services first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
J. S. Craffin, Pastor
First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:30 P. M.
Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:30 P. M.
Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:30 P. M.
Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:30 P. M.
Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church at 7:30 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
R. M. Gradeless, Pastor
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Carl Bjork, Pastor
Sunday School, 11 A. M. every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 8 P. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. E. G. Willis, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
Carl J. Yow, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Morning worship—11:00 A. M.
Youth Fellowship, 6:30 P. M.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
G. M. Singletary, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:30 A. M. on first and third Sundays and 2:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.
Church services, 8:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
A. L. Chaplin, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Rev. Charles F. Wulf, Rector.
10:00 A. M., Church School, Every Sunday
9:00 A. M., Holy Communion
1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays
11:00 A. M., Morning Prayer
2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays
11:00 A. M., Holy Communion
Third Sunday

BERRA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor
2nd and 4th Sunday at 10:30 A. M.
Morning worship on first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first and third Sundays at 7:30 P. M.

CHAPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
A. E. Outlaw, Pastor
Sunday School, 2 P. M. every first Sunday.
Church Service 3 P. M. every first Sunday.
Sunday School at 11 A. M. every second, third and fourth Sunday.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Go