

DISCERNING DANIEL

When the Crowd Calls

TEXT: Dan. 1:3-21

Introduction: As God declared to Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar, King of _____, came against Jerusalem, the capital of the nation of _____, as an instrument of the judgment of God upon God's own people who had abandoned their _____ with the Almighty. This severe chastening of the Lord did not come in one fell swoop, but rather in a series of assaults that stretched out over a period of _____ years.

It was not that it took four separate battles for the Babylonians to defeat Judah. Each time the Babylonians came, they won, handily and quickly. But the first three times, the King of Babylon was content to steal the valuables of the city (especially from the _____), install a puppet king to rule as Babylon desired, and to deport some of the people back to Babylon.

In the first deportation, the finest young men and women of Jerusalem were taken back as _____ to King Nebuchadnezzar. Among these was a young man named Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Even as the focus of the Word of God shifted from God's people in rebellion in Judah to God's people in captivity, so the focus of the prophetic word shifted from Jeremiah who went to Egypt to Daniel who had been carried to Babylon.

Daniel has some of the most fascinating revelations about the _____ of any portion of the Bible, but that is not all it is about. It also is full of messages for living today with many _____ admonitions, insights, and examples. Such is the case with our text today, in the first chapter of the book of Daniel. The book begins by describing...

I. A DIFFICULT TRIAL

Dan. 1:1-7 1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. 3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, 4 young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king. 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave

names: he gave Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

A. Characteristics of the teens and youth selected by the Babylonians (v.4)

1. No _____
2. Good looking
3. Gifted in _____
4. Possessing knowledge
5. _____
6. Fit to serve in the palace
7. Able to learn the Chaldean _____
8. Able to learn Chaldean _____

B. The attempt to make them conform to Babylonian life and ways.

1. New home

The journey from Jerusalem to Babylon probably took ____ days or more for a large entourage including many prisoners to move this distance across vast stretches of desert. No doubt these young Jews were awestruck at the site of ancient Babylon.

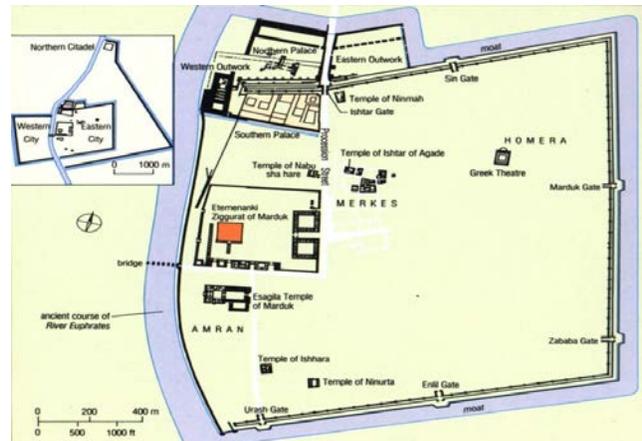
The city itself was founded by _____ in the years following the flood. This city-state varied greatly through its long history in the power and dominance it exercised over its region of Mesopotamia. It was not until a Chaldean chief by the name of Nabpolassar became King of Babylon that the neo-Babylonian Empire began its march to the zenith of its power and influence.

The son of Nabpolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, was the commander of the army. His forces decisively defeated _____ at Nineveh and _____ at the Battle of Carchemish. Nebuchadnezzar's march south to assert his control of all of Palestine was temporarily halted when his father died forcing his return to Babylon to take the throne in 605 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar was known for both his military conquests and his _____ enterprises. Militarily, he led Babylon to rule throughout Mesopotamia and the mid-east, including the region of Palestine. It was his practice to bring captives back to work and serve in his homeland.



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Nebuchadnezzar’s building of the city of Babylon was no less spectacular than the extent of his conquests. He strengthened, _____, and beautified the capital city of his empire. Although he did not view it until decades past the city’s prime, the Greek _____ Herodotus still commented, “It surpasses the splendor of any city of the known world.” Nebuchadnezzar expanded the city to span the Euphrates River. Its outer wall was _____ long. The inner wall was wide enough for two chariots to run abreast. Inside were magnificent buildings and towers and the famous _____ of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Many of the edifices were decorated with enameled brick, painted in brilliant colors to produce pictures of horses, lions, and dragons. Some of the bricks, still inscribed with the name of Nebuchadnezzar exist to this day.

- 2. **New knowledge** – Babylonian language, history, _____, literature
- 3. **New diet** – wine in _____, delicacies (including _____ foods)
- 4. **New names**

HEBREW NAME		BABYLONIAN NAME	
Daniel	God is my _____	Belteshazar	Bel protect his life
Hananiah	YHWH is _____	Shadrach	Commanded by Aku, the moon god
Mishael	Who is like God	Meshach	One who is like Aku
Azariah	YHWH is my _____	Abed-nego	The servant of Nego, the Babylonian god of wisdom

Each of the Hebrew names had a direct tie to the _____ God of the Bible. Each of the Babylonian names had a direct tie to a pagan Babylonian god.

Satan’s attempt is the same. Make us like the world. Especially our youth.
1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Next we see ...

II. A DARING TEST

Dan. 1:8-16 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. **9** Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. **10** And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.” **11** So Daniel said to the

steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 “Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king’s delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.” 14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies. 16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

- Daniel and three friends were being prepared to serve in the king’s _____.
- He therefore appointed food like he ate for them and their fellow Hebrew captives. This included wine and foods which were forbidden by Mosaic Law.
- Dan. 1:8 says, “But Daniel _____ in his heart that he would not defile himself...” He appealed to the steward and asked him to test him and his three friends for ten days. They would eat vegetables and drink water. If they did not appear healthier than the others at that time, the steward would be the sole judge of what they should eat.
- The steward agreed. God blessed Daniel and his friends and made their appearance better and their minds brighter.
- At the end of the training, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were not only the best of their class, they were _____ times better than the astrologers and magicians that served Nebuchadnezzar.

III. DIVINE TRIUMPH

Dan. 1:17-21 17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who were in all his realm. 21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

Rom. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Satan said, “You better follow the crowd if you want to stay around here.” But Daniel followed God and stayed longer than anyone - through 4 kings and 3 kingdoms. **God says, “Not conformed... but transformed!”**