

10 TIMES BETTER By Jarrod Davidoff December 26, 2021

This is the story of 4 Jewish boys caught up in a world of chaos. Their nation was being judged by God and His instrument of discipline was king Neb.

(Nebuchadnezzar) who was the most powerful man the world had ever seen.

Just to understand the story let me give you some context:

BACKGROUND OF BABYLON

Babylon was the greatest city and empire in the pre-Christian era.

It has been estimated that Babylon was the largest city in the world.

Estimates for the maximum extent of its area range from 890 to 900 hectares (2,200 acres).

Assyrians ruled longer, but their cities were not as great or beautiful. Babylon was ruled for most of its time by Nebuchadnezzar (45 years in all) who never tired of beautifying and improving its great capital city.

Ancient historians say that the **walls around the city were 60 miles long** (15 miles on each side). The **walls were 300 ft. high** (300 feet nearly round to 28 to 35 stories. One storey is usually 10.83 feet, so multiplying that by near 28 feet gives you a bit more around 300 ft), **80 ft. thick** (A tennis court is 78ft wide) and **35 ft. into the ground so enemies could not tunnel under**. All were made of brick.

There was **¼ mile of cleared space around the wall where a mote was built**.

There were **250 towers, 100 gates of brass and sentries posted everywhere**. The city of Babylon was an impregnable fort. The city itself was divided by the Euphrates River that flowed through it and there were draw-bridges to get across. There were 53 temples and 180 altars to the goddess Ishtar (goddess of war and love).

- Nebuchadnezzar's palace was considered to be the most magnificent building ever erected on earth

Nebuchadnezzar's **palace was huge with walls 50 ft. thick**. Nebuchadnezzar also built one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: **the hanging gardens of Babylon**. He built these for his queen. The gardens were 400 square foot platforms held up by arches that cascaded down one from another. They were filled with flowers, trees, and shrubs and were all watered from a reservoir at the top fed by hydraulic pumps from the Euphrates River from below. Underneath the arches were **luxurious apartments**, the pleasure grounds of the palace. **These were built while Daniel was the chief governor of the wise men of Babylon.**

The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that the walls of Babylon were so thick that chariot races were held on top of them. The city inside:

- The Euphrates River also flowed through the middle of the city. Ferry boats and a 1/2 mile long bridge with drawbridges closed at night

The looting and destruction of the First Temple (Book of Jeremiah 39:1–10; 52:1–30). Nebuchadnezzar's assault on Egypt four months before the fall of Jerusalem in 587 is represented in Ezekiel as a divine initiative undertaken "by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon."

2 Kings 24:13 And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. **14** Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. **15** And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. **16** All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all who were strong and fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

1. THEY WERE TAKEN

Daniel 1:1 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

Israel had sinned against God. As a result God used Nebuchadnezzar to bring judgment onto them that in time they would repent.

Nebuchadnezzar always instructed his generals and leaders to bring the smartest and most promising of the young men of each people so that they could be trained in a new Babylonian philosophy and that this new generation of rulers would help him rule his kingdom.

We know the 3 Jewish boys as Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego.

Yet their HEBREW NAMES were Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

They were taken from the land of their youth. Taken from family and friends. Their temple was destroyed, thousands died and they were trained in the Palace in a special leadership academy.

It must have been hard on them BUT they had the Lord and each other.

As students of the word they knew their nation's history and how it was one of those times that God was judging His people.

They knew the promises of God and His faithfulness to protect them and provide for them even if they were in a foreign land.

They were even given foreign names and were required to learn a brand new language and history of the Chaldeans, yet they knew the Lord was with them.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH, YOU TO NEED TO TRUST THAT THE LORD IS WITH YOU AND WILL ESTABLISH YOU. THE WORLD IS IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY YET AS CHILDREN OF THE LORD WE ARE NEVER TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

THAT'S BECAUSE AS A BELIEVER WE ARE FUNCTIONING TO A DIFFERENT TIME CLOCK AND A DIFFERENT WAY OF THINKING AND FINANCIAL PROVISION.

They were taken away from their homeland. Maybe things have been taken away from you in this current situation yet what I am going to share with you will be a roadmap on how to get it back and more.

These Hebrew boys knew the Tenach. They were among the smartest in Israel. They will have read and studied.

Deuteronomy 28:8 "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

2. THEY WERE TRAINED

Daniel 1:3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring **some of the children of Israel** -SUPER SMART AT RUNNING THINGS (from previous point) and **some of the king's descendants** (ROYALTY) and **some of the nobles**, (BUSINESS EMPIRES) 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 (CULTURE) 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.

- This was an elite leadership academy. Like West point. Only the smartest and the best got in

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.

WE NEED TO TRAIN OURSELVES IN WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO.

We need to be intentional.

Takes time, hours each week.

Study, do research.

Have a mentor.

Train with like minded individuals.

That's where academies are great.

Make sure you have a great coach-Pastor in Christianity..

Mental coach.

Physical coach.

Strategic coach.

Top Coaches will cover most of these.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

My son's bible memorization.

Reading the bible..

Sit up, push ups, chin ups, sprints, stretching.

Tennis 6-8 hrs a week.

2 Timothy 2:15 Amplified Bible (AMP) **Study** *and* do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling *and* skillfully teaching the word of truth.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, **thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

My responsibility as your pastor is to train and equip you for the ministry. Yet you need to show up

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

3. THEY WERE TEMPTED

Daniel 1:8 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.

You see, the priests of the temple would strangle the animals as offerings to their gods and then sell them to the butchers in Babylon, so Daniel and the 3 of them didn't want to defile themselves before the Lord.

This shows incredible integrity as they were far from home and you would think they would let their hair down and be footloose and fancy free. Yet they were in covenant with God and He was in covenant with them.

As far as they knew, as long as they followed their part, God would cover His.

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, **7** that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested** by fire...

4. THEY FOUND FAVOR

Daniel 1:9 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."

Psalms 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever.

5. THEY FASTED

Daniel 1:14 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.

We as a church are calling a 21 day fast

- our building
- marriages
- Godly children
- health
- finances
- work, businesses

6. GOD REWARDED THEM

Daniel 1:17 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.

GOD GAVE:

God has a gift for you. It was what you were born to do.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

7. THEY WERE TESTED

Daniel 1:18 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 (TESTED)** 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.

Genesis 22:1 Now it came to pass after these things that God **tested** Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Psalms 66:10 For You, O God, have **tested** us;
You have refined us as silver is refined.

Deuteronomy 8:2 And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* **test** you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

10 times smarter than even the wise men of Babylon

- History
- Military expeditions
- Architecture
- Literature
- Conquests
- Astronomy
- Geography

8. THEY WERE PROMOTED

Daniel 2:48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon.

Daniel 2:49 Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Psalm 75 4 I say to the boastful, 'Do not boast,'
and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn;

5 do not lift up your horn on high,
or speak with haughty neck.'"

6 For not from the east or from the west
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up,

7 but it is God who executes judgment,
putting down one and lifting up another.

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered many lands and territories but no land, nation nor Army was able to resist the force of his mighty army. Each culture had their own false gods yet none of them could protect them from the fierce and vicious Chaldean army.

He brought many of the leaders and gods of each territory back to Babylon yet he reasoned that he was more powerful than these gods and that actually he was a gold.

He therefore issued that a gold statue be built in honor of himself and that all peoples of the world were to bow down at a set time and worship him.

The king was using the unveiling of his statue to test the loyalty and submissiveness of his subjects.