

God's reasons for the 70-year exile in Babylon were given in prophecy

Judah was sent to Babylon as specific judgment for idolatry.

Jer.7:24-8:3 [God said to Jeremiah about the people of Judah] they did not obey... From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me... you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you... say to them, 'This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God'... the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the Lord. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it... the land shall become a waste... Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them, declares the Lord

Jer.44:20-23 Then Jeremiah said to all the people... The Lord could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore, your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse... It is because you made offerings and because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey the voice of the Lord that this disaster has happened to you.

The deportation of the Jews to Babylon fulfilled many warnings from Israel's prophets. As far back as Moses (Lev.27, Deut.28 & 32) the warnings had been clearly stated.

The prophet Habakkuk was given a vivid vision of the coming Babylonian invasion. He lived in Judah and was deeply concerned about wickedness in his society. He was also concerned that God seemed to be letting it continue without judgment.

Hab.1:1-6 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?... justice never goes forth; the wicked surround the righteous... God said, "Look among the nations and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if I told you. I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation."

God answered Habakkuk's complaint by raising up Babylon to punish Judah.

The Babylonian Empire seemed to *form overnight*, then took Judah captive for 70 years. At the end of 70 years, the empire *died overnight*, as quickly as it had been born.

The southern kingdom of Judah had forsaken God's law and disobeyed His Word.

Their attitude toward God was like the people around Noah – they didn't listen or care.

Judah worshipped idols. 1 Kings 11:5, 12:28, 16:31, 18:19; 2 Kings 21:3-5; 2 Chron.28:2-3

They had ignored the covenant and the Sabbath. Isa.24:1-6; Jer.34:12-22

God's Law specified that every 7th year, the land was not to be farmed (sabbatical year).

Lev.25:3-5 For 6 years you shall sow your field, and for 6 years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, but in the 7th year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall not sow your field. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.

Israelites had ignored this law for 490 years; they owed the land 70 years. "Lifeguard's whistle"
2 Chron.36:20-21 [Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that the land lay desolate, it kept Sabbath, to fulfill 70 years.

God used the 70 years away from Judah to reclaim the Sabbath, to give the land rest.

God had been patient for nearly 500 years; the army was God’s instrument of judgment. The outcome was not determined by the military power of Babylon; God is in control.

God said, “You want idols? I’ll give you idols.” Babylon was the center of idolatry, the most wicked city in the ancient world. Babylonia is called “Shinar”; the name literally implies “a place hostile to faith”. Babylon was the city of Nimrod and the tower of Babel. Gen.10:10, 11:2 Archaeologists have traced humanity’s earliest inventions to this area (the wheel, writing). Nimrod’s land became known as Mesopotamia (between the rivers), the “cradle of civilization”.

1:3-7 – Jewish Youths Selected for Training

Dan.1:3-7 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, from the royal family and the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding, learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Daniel and friends were given new names

Hebrew	Meaning	Babylonian	Meaning
Daniel	God is my judge	Belteshazzar	May Bel (god of Babylon) protect him
Hananiah	Jehovah is gracious	Shadrach	Command of Aku, the moon-god
Mishael	Who is what God is?	Meshach	Who is what the moon-god is?
Azariah	The Lord is my help	Abed-nego	Servant of Nebo (son of Bel)

Primary reason for captives: king wanted “a few good men” for Jewish administration. Their names indicate they were born to godly parents of royal descent, raised in the faith. 2 Tim.1:5 Each Hebrew name refers to the true God; each new name refers to a pagan god.

Others that were given new names in pagan cultures: Joseph (Gen.41:45), Esther in 2:7.

Satan wants to change our patterns of living and thinking until we conform to culture. Rom.12:2

In contrast to the other captives, these 4 stayed true to God while in Babylon. Their faithfulness shines even brighter in the context of Israel’s captivity & apostasy. Dan.12:3; Matt.5:16, 13:43; Phil.2:15 In every age, God is looking for people of prayer & moral integrity that He can use as instruments. Daniel & friends are among the best role models for teenagers of every generation.

Hitler used indoctrination and mind control; today the subversion of youth is more subtle.

Captives were likely age 14 to 17; mature enough to leave home, ripe for re-education.

The captives had to be brainwashed to think and act like Babylonians - to forget their heritage.

The king intended to change their ways of thinking, worshipping & living. So does *our* culture.

Babylon was the world center of learning; the 3-year crash course was broad & intense.

The Hanging Gardens were *air-conditioned* (1 of the 7 Wonders of the ancient world).

The captives' training included a constant barrage of propaganda, like prisoners of war.

All the Chaldean learning would prove useless in the interpretation of the king’s dream. Dan.2