

# The Challenges of Babylon

The story of Daniel being delivered by God from the lions' den is famous (Daniel 6:1-28). It is a story that many Christian parents begin teaching their children early. It provides lessons about God's power, God's protection, prayer, and the need to always trust in the Lord. Many forget that Daniel wasn't a young person when he was thrown into the den of lions. Since the Babylonian captivity was over, Daniel was probably around 90 years old!

When the book of Daniel opens, the 70 years of captivity has just begun (Daniel 1:1-2). In 605 B.C. the king of Babylon began besieging Jerusalem. He took some of the finest and brightest Hebrew boys captive. These youths (Daniel being among them) were selected to be educated for three years and be trained to become advisors to the king.

How was Daniel going to deal with the challenges attached with living as a captive in Babylon?

## What were the challenges?

- Would Daniel compromise his faith? Daniel was taken away from his family and way of living in Judea. He was transported to Babylon where he was ordered to be trained and educated in the ways of people who did not know God (Daniel 1:3-4). Daniel would also be required to change his diet (Daniel 1:5). He would be required to eat the food ordered by King Nebuchadnezzar. This would be a problem for Daniel because in the Law Moses there were certain foods God forbade the Hebrews to eat. How is Daniel going to respond to this situation?
- Would Daniel lose his identity? Daniel was a Hebrew. He was descendant of the patriarchs and born into the family of God under the Law. He spoke the Hebrew language, had a Hebrew name, and worshipped the one true God. Upon arriving in Babylon, Daniel and his friends had their Hebrew names stripped and they were given Babylonian names (Daniel 1:6-7). Hebrews were often given names that expressed what they believed about God and his promises. By taking Daniel's name, the Babylonians were clearly trying to get him to fully assimilate.
- Would Daniel be wise in difficult situations? Daniel had to figure out how to avoid defiling himself with the king's choice food, while also finding reasonable solution that both he and the overseer could agree on.

## How did Daniel overcome the challenges?

- He resolved to serve God. (Daniel 1:8). He refused to defile himself and compromise his faith. Daniel's story is very similar to Joseph's (Genesis 39:9). No matter what challenges they were faced with they were determined to be faithful to the Lord.
- He retained this identity. The Babylonians could change Daniel's name, but not his heart. They could not stop him from believing in God's power and promises. Like Daniel, do we also embrace our identity in a world where so many don't know God (John 15:18-19; 1 Peter 2:11; 4:16)?
- He applied wisdom (Daniel 1:9-16). In addition to trusting God, Daniel also proposed a wise and reasonable solution to the overseer. The ability to have wisdom in challenging times is something worthy of our prayers (Colossians 4:5-6).

## Conclusion:

Daniel was a remarkable young person who found favor with God. Do you have favor with God?

- Shawn Jeffries