

Taken Into Babylon: Daniel 1's Beginning of Exile

Scriptures for Today

""Daniel 1:1-7

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. 3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; 4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. 6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.""

When God Lets Babylon Win

If tomorrow your world fell apart — if your home, freedom, and church were taken — would your faith survive? Listen, I've been thinking a lot about people who tell me that it's impossible for a believer to stop believing. In the new man, that's true because the new man doesn't sin. But we have the old man who doesn't believe and has ZERO faith.

So, these people who act like they can never stop believing are the greatest men alive. They are at the level of Job. Or, that's what they think. These people who say a believer can never stop believing are the ones who have never lost much. Most of them would be the first to turn their backs and run when times get very difficult.

Imagine your entire world falling apart. Home gone. Family gone. Carried away into another country. Freedom gone. Church gone. That's the test Daniel faced.

His world ended in one verse. Jerusalem fell. The temple burned. The enemy marched in and claimed victory. Daniel is in the Bible because he was like Job. Others lost faith during these tough times. Job's wife lost faith.

""Job 2:9-10

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. 10 But he

said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.""

When we have tough times, our faith in God is tested. Sometimes we lose faith. Sometimes people never get it back. But men like Job and Daniel stayed strong in faith. Babylon marched in and changed Daniel's life for good.

Babylon didn't win themselves. God allowed Babylon to take over. When it looks like the world is in control, God is setting the stage. He allowed this to happen. Again, think about everything Daniel lost as a young man.

What if your hardest loss is the beginning of your greatest lesson?

Introduction – Faith in a Foreign Land

We've seen the fire fall in Jeremiah, the tears in Lamentations, and the glory roll in Ezekiel. Now we follow the story of the captives — the ones who walked into Babylon, not as warriors, but as witnesses.

The Book of Daniel begins in **605 B.C.**, during one of the darkest hours in Israel's history. The southern kingdom of **Judah** has fallen. The northern tribes of **Israel** were already gone — scattered by Assyria over a century earlier.

God had warned them again and again through prophets — Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah — *“Turn from your idols, or judgment will come.”*

But they ignored His Word. They worshiped Baal. They defiled the temple. I want to say something about defiling the house of God. For example, don't bring marijuana on this property. Don't bring drugs on this property. Don't bring alcohol on this property and defile the house of God. They defiled the temple. They trusted Egypt instead of the Lord.

Finally, judgment came. **Nebuchadnezzar**, king of Babylon, marched on Jerusalem. He didn't destroy it all at once — he took it piece by piece.

The First Invasion (605 B.C.) – He carried away the royal seed — the best, brightest, and youngest men of Judah. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

The Second Invasion (597 B.C.) – He took King Jehoiachin and ten thousand captives, including Ezekiel.

The Final (586 B.C.) – He burned the temple, tore down the walls, and left Jerusalem in ashes.

That's where we are when Daniel opens — at the **beginning of the Babylonian captivity**. The land of promise has become a land of exile. The vessels of gold are now trophies in a pagan temple. And yet — **God isn't finished**.

It looks like Heaven went silent. But Daniel shows us the truth: The world can take your freedom, but it can't take your faith — unless you give it up.

God's plan didn't end when the walls came down. He just moved the classroom from Jerusalem to Babylon.

If you quit when you're carried away, you'll miss the miracle God planned to do while you're there. Look, you have to look at things in a different light. I've learned to do this in my life only by the help that God has given me. When tough times come, keep your faith strong and God takes care of it. Rejoice in the tough times. God will show Himself strong.

Don't miss out on miracles from God by giving up when you're carried away.

Verse 1 – The Siege of Sin

""Daniel 1:1

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.""

Every fall begins with a siege. Before Babylon surrounded Jerusalem, sin surrounded Judah's heart. This was the siege. Sin will siege you and take you captive. I see it around here constantly. Sin has captured so many people. They try to get loose but they go right back to the same things again and again.

Jeremiah preached repentance for years. He warned that pride would bring destruction — but the people plugged their ears. You can plug your ears any time you want when the sin you're committing is preached against. But it won't matter because destruction still comes.

It wasn't Babylon that destroyed Judah — it was rebellion against God. The outside siege only revealed the inside sin. It's not the enemy at your gate that destroys you — it's the compromise already inside your walls. **RIGHT INSIDE OF YOU**. Every time you continue in sin that you know is wrong, this destroys you.

Jerusalem's walls fell when the people stopped building on God's Word. Identify one "siege" in your life — one area where sin is wearing you down — and surrender it to God today before it breaks through and totally destroys you.

So, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon comes right in and takes over Jerusalem.

Verse 2 – God Still Reigns

""Daniel 1:2

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.""

That phrase changes everything — “the Lord gave.” Nebuchadnezzar didn’t take anything that God didn’t allow. Even in judgment, God was in control. Every vessel carried away, every chain forged — Heaven measured them all.

When it looked like Babylon was conquering, God was conducting. The same God who allowed His temple to be emptied was about to fill Babylon with His glory.

The Vessels of the House of God: These weren’t ordinary objects — they were holy vessels from Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 7:48–51). Each one was designed for worship — golden cups, silver bowls, lampstands, censers, and basins — all consecrated to God’s service.

When Nebuchadnezzar carried them away, it looked like a total defeat. But Daniel tells us the truth behind the scene: “The Lord gave.” Nebuchadnezzar thought he was stealing treasures; he was actually fulfilling prophecy. Isaiah 39:6 had already warned: “Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house... shall be carried to Babylon.”

And here’s the beauty — those same vessels will show up again later in Daniel 5. When King Belshazzar uses them for a drunken party, God writes His judgment across the wall in fire. Those cups may have left the temple, but they never left God’s ownership. They still belonged to Him. You might be in Babylon, but you still belong to God.

The Land of Shinar: Daniel says the vessels were carried into “the land of Shinar.” That name is not random — it’s the ancient name for Babylonia, first seen in Genesis 10:10 and Genesis 11:2. It was in the plain of Shinar that men said, “Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven” (Genesis 11:4). That’s Babel, the place of rebellion, the birthplace of human pride.

So now, centuries later, God’s holy things are being carried back to the same ground where man once tried to exalt himself above God. That’s not defeat — that’s divine irony. The same soil that once hosted rebellion will soon see revelation. The same empire that mocked God will become the stage where His power is displayed.

When you see “Shinar,” think “Babel reborn.” Mankind rises up again — and God still rules above them all.

The Treasure House of His God: Daniel adds, “He brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.” This refers to the temple of Merodach (also called Bel), Babylon’s chief deity.

Nebuchadnezzar believed his god had given him victory — so he placed the sacred vessels of God in his false god's treasury as proof that Babylon's god had triumphed.

But God wasn't defeated — He was demonstrating dominion. He let the pagans borrow His property to show who really owned the stage of history. Soon, the God of Israel would speak from inside Babylon itself.

The same city that thought it had captured God was about to become the very place where God revealed Himself in fire, dreams, and deliverance.

You're not losing — God's repositioning you. When you're following God and still having trouble, stick with it. When it looks like everything you worked for is in someone else's hands, remember: it's still in His plan. Imagine a chess board with all the pieces. Judah versus Babylon. "It looked like checkmate for Judah, but God was still playing the board."

This week, reframe your struggle. Instead of saying, "I lost," ask, "What is God trying to win?" Sometimes God will move your surroundings to move your spirit. Sometimes He'll let your plans fall apart so He can rebuild your purpose. Because even in Babylon — God still reigns.

Verses 3–4 – The Enemy's Recruitment Plan

""Daniel 1:3–4

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.""

Babylon's plan wasn't to destroy these young men — it was to **redefine** them. Don't kill the next generation — just reprogram them. That's what's happening out here.

They wanted their minds, not their corpses. If they could change their language, they could change their loyalty. That's still the world's plan today. It doesn't have to persecute the church — it just has to *distract* it.

What's discipling you more — the Word of God or the world's content feed? Hey, listen, what are you following in your life? Write these things down. What are you doing each day? TV, phones, video games. Or the Bible? Which one?

Daniel was probably sixteen. He lost everything — his home, his future, his freedom — yet he refused to lose his faith.

Swap 15 minutes of social scrolling for 15 minutes of Scripture. Start retraining your mind before Babylon does. Think about all the minutes you have each day. How much do you spend in the

actual Bible? What's really important to you? The world is reprogramming you just as you see in the verses right there. And yes, it's happening.

Verse 5 – The King's Table

""Daniel 1:5

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.""

This was no ordinary meal. It was food offered to idols — and it was meant to make them forget where they came from. The devil still does this. He offers comfort before compromise. He feeds you before he fools you.

The world doesn't starve Christians — it sedates them.

The king's table was temptation disguised as opportunity. Daniel could've said, "It's just food." But he knew — small bites lead to big falls.

Set two plates — one with bread, one with dirt. "They both fill you — but only one feeds your soul."

Ask yourself: What "meal" am I taking from Babylon that's dulling my hunger for God?

The king gives the best children from Judah a daily serving of the king's meat and wine — the stuff he thought was the best. He wanted to feed them this way for three years. And, at the end of that three years, he wants to see them stand before him. He thinks his ways are the best ways.

Verses 6–7 – Identity Under Fire

""Daniel 1:6–7

Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.""

Changing their names was Babylon's last move — change who they are.

- *Daniel* means "God is my judge." Babylon renamed him *Belteshazzar* — "Baal protects his life."
- *Hananiah* means "The Lord is gracious." They changed it to *Shadrach* — "Illuminated by the sun god."
- *Mishael* means "Who is like God?" They changed it to *Meshach* — "Who is like Aku."
- *Azariah* means "The Lord has helped." They changed it to *Abednego* — "Servant of Nebo."

Babylon tried to overwrite Heaven's identity file — but you can't rename what God has already sealed.

What name has the world tried to stick on you? Failure? Addict? Unworthy? God calls you *His*. The world might call you dumb, stupid, ugly, loser, and more BUT God doesn't call you that. We will not call you that. You're with us now. We are the children of God.

The world can label you, but it can't own you.

Speak your identity this week: "I am chosen, I am clean, I am called." And you live that way this week.

Closing – Conviction in Captivity

Daniel's story doesn't start in the lion's den — it starts in a dining hall. The test was smaller but the faith was the same. If you won't stand at the table, you won't stand in the trial.

The furnace, the lions, the visions — they all begin here, with four young men who said "no" when everyone else said "why not." Bow down to this false god. Bow down to these drugs. Bow down to this false religion. Bow down to the government. Bow down to laziness. Bow down. Bow down. Bow down. What are you going to do?

Daniel didn't escape Babylon — he outlasted it. And so can you. The Book of Daniel will greatly increase faith in God as we study this awesome book together.

Stand strong. Stay pure. Because when Babylon falls, those who stood for truth will still be standing with God.

Next-Sermon – "Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi: Hosea 1's Children of Judgment"

We just saw Daniel taken into Babylon — a young man standing faithful in a foreign land. But next time, we'll travel back home to a prophet who preached to a nation before the captivity ever came.

""Hosea 1:2

The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.""

While Daniel lived the judgment, Hosea warned of it. Before Babylon's chains, there were broken vows. Before the captivity, there was spiritual adultery.

God told Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman — not to shame him, but to **show Israel how they had treated Him**. And through their children's names — *Lo-Ruhamah* (“no mercy”) and *Lo-Ammi* (“not my people”) — God spoke the heartbreak of Heaven.

Don't miss this message later today — “**Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi: Hosea 1's Children of Judgment.**” You'll see how sin breaks God's heart, how mercy waits even in rejection, and how the same Lord who said “not my people” still promises, “I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people.” (*Hosea 2:23*)

Come ready — because before judgment falls, **grace always calls.**

Let's pray.