

A Jew In Babylon

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I recently preached out of the book of Daniel and was so encouraged studying through such a rich and wonderful book in the Bible. The book of Daniel begins with a group of Jews who had been taken in captivity by the Babylonians in three different waves (606 B.C., 597, and 586). They found themselves as Jews or aliens in a pagan culture surrounded by a corrupt government system and corrupt religion so far different than their own. How were they supposed to respond to these new cultural surroundings with all the new political, social, cultural, and extreme religious pressure? They were dead smack in the middle of the false god's being worshiped, gods like *Bel* or *Marduk* (Dan. 4:8; Isa. 46:1). This all sounds a lot like our own culture, doesn't it? There is no doubt about we are living in a secular progressive society, where the religion of humanism seems to be prevailing. As Robert E. Weber states so clearly in his book '*Secular Humanism*', "The Christian religion once was the force that gave shape to our societal values, but it is no longer. A new mindset emerged that now gives a different shape to our values." This sounds like the troubles Daniel in the Bible had to face as well.

I do not know of any message that is so valuable for Christians living in a secular age as the message of Daniel. In the person of Daniel, we have an example of one who not only lived through a secular and materialistic age but, also survived them and triumphed for God's glory. In a day and age where many are bowing down to the government control and medical dictatorship in America, Daniel is an example of one who did not compromise. Daniel did not bow down to the world's idols. In return, Daniel was hated and plotted against for taking such a strong stand for the truth. Daniel was victorious because he knew God and trusted him to do with his life whatever was best. One of the best passages in the book of Daniel is in Daniel 3:16-18, which states Daniel's friends have been summoned before the king Nebuchadnezzar for the refusal to bow before the golden statue and explain why they will not bow down. We need people like that today. Many professing Christians are compromising right and left. The real people who make a difference in this world are the ones who regardless of appearances, and in the last analysis, stand for the truth. Many people are bowing down to the secular globalist image of self and destruction. May God raise up more and more Daniel's who know that their God is the only one who endures forever, whose kingdom will not be destroyed, and whose dominion will never end (Dan. 6:26).