



Additions to Daniel

The original book of Daniel was written in both Hebrew (1.1-21 and 8–12) and Aramaic (2–7). There are, however, three additional chapters that exist only in Greek. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Holy Children (Sometimes called the Song of the Three Jews inserted between Daniel 3.23 and 3.24); the Story of Susanna (sometimes found before 1.1 and sometimes as chapter 13) and the story of Bel and the Dragon (sometimes found after 12.13 and sometimes as chapter 14 of the book).

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Holy Children: this has three parts. The first is a prayer of Azariah (also known as Abednego in Babylon) while the three youths were in the fiery furnace (verses 1-22); an account of an angel of the Lord who drive out the fiery flame from the furnace (verses 23-27) and the song the three sang when they had been delivered from the furnace (28-68).

The Story of Susanna is the story of a beautiful but virtuous woman who some unscrupulous men tried to blackmail into having sex with them. She refused and was arrested and awaiting the death penalty, when Daniel intervened and challenged her accusers. Under questioning it became clear that they were lying and were themselves put to death.

The story of Bel and the Dragon has three strands to it. A confrontation between Daniel and the King about whether the idol 'Bel' was real or not; the story of a dragon which Daniel slayed and an additional story of Daniel in the lion's den in which the prophet Habakkuk fed him some stew.



How long will it take?

Reading time: Around 30 mins
Short of time? The stories are too short to pull verses out, you will need to read them all.



Genre

Historical fiction



Anything tricky?

You might find that some details of the story stretch your credibility a little.



Inspiring quotes

⁶⁷Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. ⁶⁸All who worship the Lord, bless the God of gods, sing praise to him and give thanks to him, for his mercy endures forever.

(Prayer of Azariah 1.67-68)

Then the whole assembly raised a great shout and blessed God, who saves those who hope in him.

(Susanna 1.60)



About the Author

Nothing is known about any of the authors of the three additions to Daniel, not even whether they were the same person or a different person.



What kind of Book is it?

It is probably best described as historical fiction. A set of stories set in the past but which, at most, embellished the events that took place.



About the times

Nothing is known about the date of these additions either. They are most likely to have been written sometime in the second and centuries BC but beyond that a more specific date is almost impossible to identify.



Look out for...

The three additions are each very different from each other. As you read, see if you can find any themes at all that connect them.

Reflect as you read on what these extra stories add to the original story of Daniel.



What could this mean for me?

It's hard to identify any themes in the additions to Daniel that might be relevant today – see if you can find any!



Discussion group questions

- Were there any parts of the book that you particularly liked or which inspired you?
- Were there any parts of the book that you disliked or which troubled you?
- What did *you* think the book was about?
- What did you think of these stories – were they too fantastical to relate to or did you find elements in them that you enjoyed/were inspired by?
- Why do you think these three additions to Daniel were written? What do they add to the original text?
- Did you read anything in the book that touched you, expanded your faith or made you think more deeply about your life and how you live it?



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