



straighten itself" (27). Reassurance is offered at the end of the section again; *"since you know by these things that they are not gods, do not fear them"* (29).

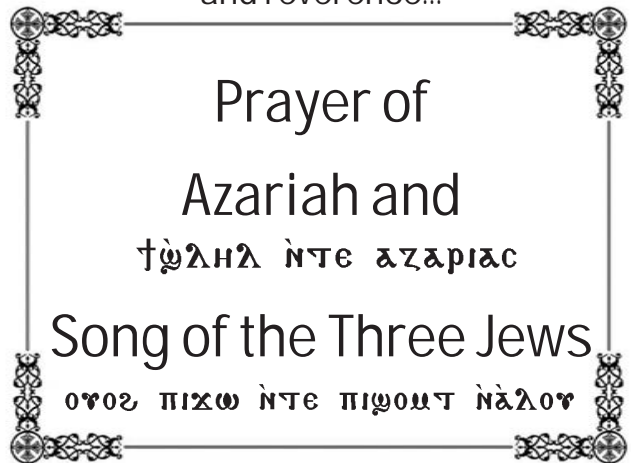
Idols cannot repay good or evil, or help worshipers. Their followers serve them meals and sit in their temples with torn clothes, yet they do not respond. *"They cannot save anyone from death or rescue the weak from the strong. They cannot restore sight to the blind; they cannot rescue one who is in distress"* (36-37). A result to those who make and serve these gods will be one of shame.

Chaldeans, those who worship these idols, bring *disbonor to their idols*. They're humiliated when they bring the mute idols to heal those who cannot speak or pray as if stones are able to understand. These *idols are but the work of human hands*. They are made as the worshiper wishes his god to be. Often times the god does not live as long as the man that created it! The *impotence of the idols* is evident in their lack of power. They cannot control nature, judge the wicked, or flee from their temples when a fire breaks.

The Letter final explains that the *idols are helpless, useless, and not to be compared with celestial phenomena*. *"So it is better to be a king who shows his courage, or a household utensil that serves its owner's need, than to be these false gods; better even the door of a house that protects its contents, than these false gods; better also a wooden pillar in a palace, than these false gods"* (59). When the One True God commands the sun, the moon, and the stars they obey. He commands when and where the lightning strikes and flashes; where the wind blows and the fire consumes...these gods shall never compare to the One who has power over the world. The wild animals are better than these idols, for they can at least flee when they are in danger.

The Letter concludes *comparing the false idols to scarecrows, thorn bushes, and corpses*. They guard nothing, provide nothing, and will be thrown out in darkness.

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This prayer and song is included in the Holy Book of Daniel and resumes the remainder of the story of the three Jewish youth thrown into the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar. In the Greek text (Septuagint) Abednego retains his original name, Azariah. Praying for deliverance Azariah summons forth an Angel of the Lord, *"the Angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Azariah and his companions..."* (Prayer of Azariah 26) The angel extinguishes the flames of the furnace and the three Holy Youth sing praise to God.

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This story is included in the Holy Book of Daniel and centers on a beautiful married woman. Two elders told Susanna that unless she commits adultery with them they would publicly tell others that she had done so with a young man. *"...The two elders, full of their wicked plot to have Susanna put to death."* (Susanna 28)



She refused and the deceitful elders did what they threatened to do. Susanna was sentenced to death for committing adultery with a fictitious young man. She prayed to God for help and Daniel presented himself asking each elder to identify the type of tree under which the deed took place. Answers differed and the elders were sentenced to death.

When finishing this meal the dragon burst. “...*The King has become a Jew; He has destroyed Bel, and killed the dragon...*” (*Bel and the Dragon 28*) It was at this specific point in time that the Babylonians insisted Daniel be handed to them by the king and they promptly threw Daniel into the lion’s den.

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Bel and
the Dragon
ΒΗΛ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΔΡΑΚΩΝ

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Additions
to Esther

Concluding the Holy Book of Daniel, the Prophet Daniel proves that Bel, the god of the Babylonians was not a “living” god who could eat and drink by scattering ashes on the temple floor and the next day showing King Cyrus the footprints of the priests who had entered through a hidden passage and eaten the food left for Bel.

Includes additional passages related to the visions and prayers of Esther and Mordecai proclaiming God’s active role in the Jew’s deliverance.

Daniel also destroyed the “great dragon” worshiped by the Babylonians by feeding it cakes of fat, tar, and hair.

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Esdras (Ezra)
1 & 2
ΕΣΔΡΑΣ Α ΝΕΜ Β



Daniel and the Lion's Den

Esdras 1 draws its background from the Holy Book of Ezra. A debate is found within this writing which occurred among Persian guardsmen as to what was the most powerful force upon the earth. Among the answers were wine, the king, women, and truth. Truth was decided upon.