

Bel and the Dragon

Bel and the Dragon (Daniel 14; Daniel, Bel, and the Snake)

by Don Falkos

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Cyrus king of Babylon insisted his god Bel was alive, "How else could he eat all the food left for him each day?"

Daniel replied, "Don't be deceived. Bel is only clay on the inside and bronze on the outside; it never ate or drank anything."

Cyrus and Daniel went to the temple of Bel. Cyrus himself supervised the laying out of Bel's huge daily feast. Then Daniel had ashes secretly spread over the floor of the temple. When they left, the king placed his seal on the door.

Early in the morning, Cyrus and Daniel were back. The king's seal was intact. They opened the door and discovered the food was gone. Cyrus began to praise Bel, but Daniel laughed, pointing to the floor. There were footprints in the ashes, lots of footprints. The priests of Bel and their wives and children had entered the temple during the night through a secret trap door and had eaten all the food. Cyrus ordered the execution of the priests and their families as well as the destruction of the temple.

There was a dragon the Babylonians revered. Cyrus insisted, "Surely this dragon is a living god!" Daniel coaxed the beast into eating a strange concoction that killed it.

An angry mob threw Daniel into a pit with seven hungry lions. But the lions never touched him.

On the seventh day the king came to mourn for his friend. He looked into the pit, and there sat Daniel. Cyrus shouted, "The God of Daniel is the living God, the only true God!" He pulled Daniel out of the pit and threw in his assailants. They were instantly devoured.