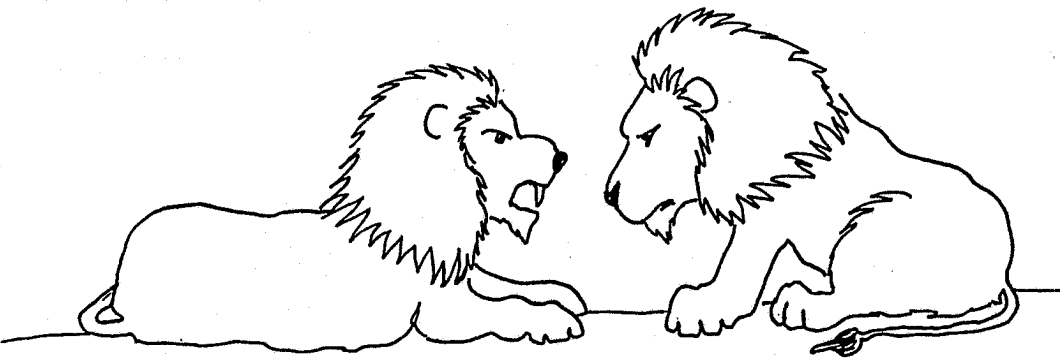


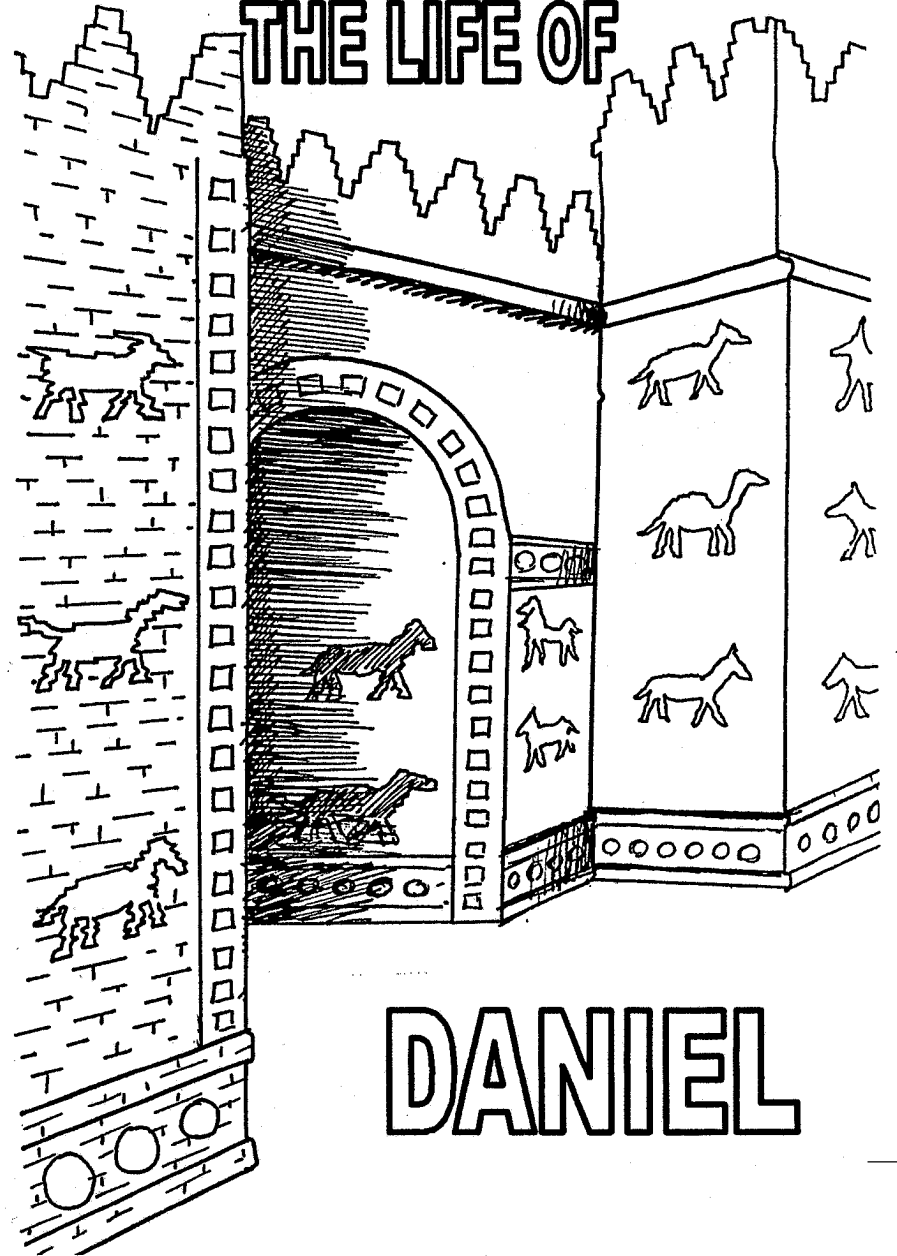
law of Medes and Persians could not be altered. The king felt proud and signed the writing. Daniel knew that the law had been signed but still prayed three times a day at his open window which faced Jerusalem, as he had always done.

The men watched cruelly and went back to the king. Poor Darius had been tricked and was very upset. Sadly he gave orders for Daniel to be cast into the den of lions. The king told Daniel that God would deliver him. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, a large stone was put over the opening and he was left alone with the hungry, fierce lions. The king sealed the stone with his signet and some of the nobles did the same. King Darius couldn't eat or sleep realizing what trouble his foolish pride had caused. Very early next morning he went to the den of lions and cried out hoping that Daniel might still be alive. Imagine how glad he was when Daniel called back that God had sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths. The seals were broken and Daniel was set free. He was not hurt at all. The cruel presidents and princes were punished by being thrown to the lions themselves and were all attacked before they reached the bottom of the lions' den. Their wives and children were also killed. This teaches us that a wrong action by us may result in great harm in one way or another to other people. A new law was made that everyone was to trust and follow the God of Daniel, the living God.



BIBLE HEROES : 17

THE LIFE OF



DANIEL

THE LIFE OF DANIEL

Long ago king Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest ruler in the East. He lived in the city of Babylon where he had a beautiful palace with "hanging gardens". Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the city of Jerusalem and taken gold and silver from the temple of the Lord. Hundreds of prisoners were taken and the king asked the master of the household to choose from among them some bright and good looking boys to live in his palace where they would learn the Chaldean language. They were to have the best food and drink and be brought to him in three years time. Among the young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mischael and Azariah who were given the Aramaic names of Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When they were given meat Daniel said that the young men wouldn't eat heathen food but they would have limited vegetables and water instead. The master of the household was worried because he was responsible for them and would be in trouble if they got ill. He agreed to let them have a trial period just eating the vegetables and after ten days Daniel and his friends looked healthier than those who had eaten the king's meat. God was pleased with them because they wanted to obey Him and not eat heathen food so He kept them well. After three years Daniel and his friends were brought before the king who found that they were much wiser and knowledgeable than all his advisers.

One night Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream. When he woke up he had forgotten it. The wise men and magicians couldn't tell the king what the dream was or what it meant. In the dream there was a huge statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. A huge stone knocked the statue off its feet and it lay broken in pieces. A wind carried the pieces away but the stone grew and grew until it became a great mountain and filled the whole world. God made this dream known to Daniel who then told the king what it meant. The dream was to show that after king Nebuchadnezzar, other

kingdoms would come, some strong and some weak. The stone was God's kingdom which would never be destroyed and would last for ever. When Daniel had finished speaking the king honoured him, making him a ruler and chief governor and gave him many expensive gifts. Daniel's friends also became rulers in Babylon and for all Nebuchadnezzar's reign Daniel was the king's most trusted friend, who advised him and explained God's word to him.

When Nebuchadnezzar died his son Belshazzar became king. He cared nothing for God and spent his time in pleasures and feasting. He wasn't interested in Daniel's advice. Belshazzar made a feast for a thousand of his lords. He had the gold and silver cups which had been taken from the temple in Jerusalem brought in and filled with wine for the guests and himself. At that moment there came the fingers of a man's hand and wrote on the plaster of the wall. The words were, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN". Then the hand vanished. The king shook with fright. Belshazzar promised that anyone who could read the writing and tell its meaning would be clothed in purple and made third ruler of the kingdom. The queen suggested Daniel be called. Daniel spoke sternly to the king and explained the words: MENE - God has numbered your kingdom and finished it; TEKEL - You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting; PERES (Daniel used the Hebrew word rather than the Aramaic) - Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Although he was afraid, for once the king acted fairly and Daniel was rewarded. That very night Belshazzar died when Darius king of the Medes attacked the city of Babylon and captured it. Darius was wise and thoughtful. He divided the kingdom into provinces with governors. Over these were three presidents, one being Daniel. Daniel was the wisest of them and could be trusted. The other presidents and princes were jealous and made a wicked plan. They asked the king to agree that no one was to pray or ask anything of any God or man, except the king Darius, for thirty days. It was written down to be signed by the king and anyone disobeying was to be thrown into a den of lions. Once signed the