

Week 23, Lecture 64.¹ The Greek Versions of Daniel, Chapter 3

Comparison of RSV & NABRE in Daniel 3	
RSV	NABRE
²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace .	²³ But these three fell, bound, into the midst of the white-hot furnace .
²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king."	⁹¹ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was startled and rose in haste, asking his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" "Certainly, O king," they answered.

Daniel 3:23 in the RSV and the NABRE are fairly close. The names of the three men are not in the NABRE, but there are three of them. It is a "burning fiery furnace" in the RSV, a "white-hot furnace" in the NABRE. **It's the same verse.**

Daniel 3:24 (RSV) and 3:91 (NABRE)²
 In the RSV, King Nebuchadnezzar was "astonished." In the NABRE he was "startled."
 In both verses he gets up "in haste" and speaks to "his counselors."
 He asks exactly the same question in both: "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire."
 And in both translations he gets an affirmative answer.
It's the same verse. But note the **different verse number** in the NABRE!

Number of Verses: 30 verses || 100 verses!
 Chapter 3 of Daniel has **30 verses** in the RSV (KJV, NRSV), but **100 verses** in the NABRE!
 What are the extra 70 verses about, and where do they come from?

The Greek Old Testament. Let's take the second question first: they come from the Greek OT. The problem is, we have **two different GREEK versions of the OT in Daniel**. The Septuagint is the older of the 2 translations. It comes from about **200 B.C.** The other version was done by a Jewish scholar named Theodotion about **150 A.D.**, ca 350 years later. Let's take a look at them side-by-side (in English translation, of course!) The NETS (New English Translation of the Septuagint) provides **both** versions.³

Comparison of Septuagint (200 B.C.) with Theodotion (150 A.D.)	
Septuagint (NETS)	Theodotion (NETS)
²² . . . , and the men who had been selected, after they had tied and brought them to the furnace, threw them into it.	²³ and these three, Sedrach, Misach, Abdenago, fell down, bound, into the middle of the blazing furnace.

There's some verse confusion (22 or 23) but that comes from later editors, so we will ignore it for now. Notice that the Septuagint does not mention the three names, but that Theodotion does. It is clear that the NABRE is following the LXX in this verse. It is also clear that Theodotion is closer to the RSV (which is translating the Hebrew) Theodotion, in fact, is often **more literal than the Septuagint**. It was probably made by a Jewish scholar who was not happy with all of the "theological hay" that Christians were making from the Septuagint!

¹ Lectures are numbered consecutively. Although this is this week's first lecture, its number reflects its place in the **total** sequence.

² In these lectures on "Greek Daniel" all quotes are from the NABRE, unless specified otherwise.

³ "Hard copy" is available through bookstores. The online version is free: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>

What is in these 70 Verses?

I am not going to attempt a detailed comparison of the two Greek versions in this short lecture.

They contain two versions of the following materials:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1) The Prayer of Azariah | 3:24-45 |
| 2) Brief narrative about angelic protection | 3:46-51 |
| 3) The Song of the 3 Young Men in the fiery furnace | 3:52-90 |

Prayer of Azariah, Part 1, A confession of Sin. Verses 29-33 give the flavor

For we have sinned and transgressed by departing from you, and we have done every kind of evil. ³⁰ Your commandments we have not heeded or observed, nor have we done as you ordered us for our good. ³¹ Therefore all you have brought upon us, all you have done to us, you have done by a proper judgment. ³² You have handed us over to our enemies, lawless and hateful rebels; to an unjust king, the worst in all the world. ³³ Now we cannot open our mouths; shame and reproach have come upon us, your servants, who revere you. (NABRE)

The theology is Deuteronomistic. God rewards fidelity to the covenant and punishes infidelity.

Prayer of Azariah, Part 2, A Plea for Mercy. Here are a few excerpts: verses 35, 38-40

³⁵ Do not take away your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham, your beloved, Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one, . . . ³⁸ **We have** in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, **no burnt offering, sacrifice**, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you. ³⁹ But with **contrite heart and humble spirit** let us be received; As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bulls, or tens of thousands of fat lambs, ⁴⁰ So let **our sacrifice** be in your presence today and find favor before you; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame. (NABRE)

Meaning of "Sacrifice" begins to Change

During the Exile the Jews have no "real" sacrifices.

The only people who can offer sacrifices (priests) are now in a place where they cannot offer it (Babylon).

Azariah pays that God will accept the people themselves "let us be received."

The people "**with contrite heart and humble spirit**," whose lives are now purified.

Sacrifice of Praise. The Christian metaphor of "sacrifice" for the cross does not come directly from animal sacrifices.

This metaphorical language prepared Christians to use sacrificial language for the cross.

And thereby to consider the Christian life a "sacrifice"

EP I (The "Roman" Canon) "We offer you **this sacrifice of praise** for ourselves and for those who are dear to us."

The sacrifice of **praise** is a **life** that praises God,

the **life** of perfect obedience of **Jesus Christ**

to which are now joined the **members of his body**.

The "Whole" Christ

When "Christ" is offered to the Father, He sees the **whole** Christ: his Son Jesus, all the saints who believe in him.

In traditional Catholic thought: the saints on earth, the saints in "purgatory," and the saints in heaven.

One reason the Eucharist is a "perfect sacrifice" is that one cannot offer it **instead of** oneself.

One can only truly offer the Eucharist by offering oneself: a life in union with Jesus Christ that praises God.

Week 23, Lecture 65. Daniel 13, The Greek Versions, Susanna

12 Chapters. The version of Daniel found in the Massoretic Text contain 12 chapters: 6 in Hebrew & 6 in Aramaic.

Daniel begins in Hebrew, switches to Aramaic in the middle of 2:4, and continues in Aramaic until the end of chapter 7.

Additional Stories. The Greek versions of Daniel contain additional folklore about him: Susanna and Bel & the Dragon. These have traditionally been regarded as chapters 13 and 14 of Daniel in Catholic Bibles.

This lecture will give an overview of Daniel 13.

Introduction, Dan 13:1-4

The scene is set in Babylon. The main characters are two pious Jews, Joakim and his wife Susanna. Joakim is described as very wealthy; Susanna has been "trained according to the law of Moses" by her parents.

The Villains Are Introduced, verses 5-14

That year, two elders of the people were appointed judges, of whom the Lord said, "Lawlessness has come out of Babylon, that is, from the elders who were to govern the people as judges." (NABRE)

These two men come to Joakim's large estate, where people brought their cases to be judged.

When the people leave at noon, Susanna is accustomed to walk in their private garden.

The two "dirty old men" begin to lust after her in secret.

One day they say at noon they leave for lunch, but both come back only to meet each other!

They confess their lust, and begin to plot how they can take advantage of Susanna.

Their Chance Finally Comes, verses 15-21

One day, while they were waiting for the right moment, she entered as usual, with two maids only, wanting to bathe in the garden, for the weather was warm. ¹⁶ Nobody else was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her. ¹⁷ "Bring me oil and soap," she said to the maids, "and shut the garden gates while I bathe."

¹⁸ They did as she said; they shut the garden gates and left by the side gate to fetch what she had ordered, unaware that the elders were hidden inside. ¹⁹ As soon as the maids had left, the two old men got up and ran to her.

²⁰ "Look," they said, "the garden doors are shut, no one can see us, and we want you. So give in to our desire, and lie with us. ²¹ If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was here with you and that is why you sent your maids away."

Susanna's Response, verses 22-23

Susanna responds as any woman surprised in her bath would respond. She gives a theological speech.

"I am completely trapped," Susanna groaned. "If I yield, it will be my death; if I refuse, I cannot escape your power."

²³ Yet it is better for me not to do it and to fall into your power than to sin before the Lord."

Only **then** does she scream.

The two men also raise a cry. When people arrive, they make good on their threat, and accuse her.

The Trial of Susanna, verses 34-41

The next day there is a formal trial. The two dirty old men repeat their accusations.

³⁶ The old men said, "As we were walking in the garden alone, this woman entered with two servant girls, shut the garden gates and sent the servant girls away. ³⁷ A young man, who was hidden there, came and lay with her. ³⁸

When we, in a corner of the garden, saw this lawlessness, we ran toward them. ³⁹ We saw them lying together, but the man we could not hold, because he was stronger than we; he opened the gates and ran off. ⁴⁰ Then we seized this one and asked who the young man was, ⁴¹ but she refused to tell us. We testify to this." The assembly believed them, since they were elders and judges of the people, and they condemned her to death.

Susanna's Prayer, verses 42-43

⁴² But Susanna cried aloud: "Eternal God, you know what is hidden and are aware of all things before they come to be: ⁴³ you know that they have testified falsely against me. Here I am about to die, though I have done none of the things for which these men have condemned me."

Daniel's Intervention, vv. 44-49

God hears her prayer, and raises up Daniel to defend her.

Acting as the first "Perry Mason," on the way to her execution Daniel cries out that he is innocent of her blood.

When the people ask him what he means he responds

⁴⁸ He stood in their midst and said, "Are you such fools, you Israelites, to condemn a daughter of Israel without investigation and without clear evidence? ⁴⁹ Return to court, for they have testified falsely against her."

The Second Trial, verses, 52-59

Daniel demands that the two dirty old men be separated.

Then he interrogates each of them separately before the assembly.

He asks under which tree Susanna and her lover committed adultery.

The first replies that it was under a mastic tree (v. 55); the second that it was under an oak tree (v. 59). Their lie is obvious, Susanna is acquitted.

The Aftermath of the Acquittal, vv 60-63

The whole assembly cried aloud, **blessing God** who saves those who hope in him. ⁶¹ They rose up against the two old men, for by their own words Daniel had convicted them of bearing false witness. They condemned them to the fate they had planned for their neighbor: ⁶² in accordance with **the law of Moses** they put them to death. Thus was innocent blood spared that day. ⁶³ Hilkiah and his wife **praised God** for their daughter Susanna, with Joakim her husband and all her relatives, because she was found innocent of any shameful deed.

The response is 3-fold: The praise of God forms a "frame" the enforcement of the law of Moses.

Recall that historically the full **Law of Moses** does not exist until **late in the Exile, or even afterward.**

1) **The Assembly blesses God**

2) The Wicked are condemned and punished according to the Law of Moses

3) **Susanna & her entire family praise God**

The Final Verse, v. 64

And from that day onward Daniel was greatly esteemed by the people. (Dan 13:63-64 NAB)

According to this version of the story, this is when Daniel first came to prominence.

It is near the end of Daniel in the Catholic Bible.

Obviously when it was part of the oral tradition, it belonged closer to the beginning of the story.

Liturgical Reading

If you are a "Sunday Catholic," you will never hear this story -- unless you read it from the Bible yourself.

If you attend daily Mass, during Lent you **might** hear this story. It is assigned to Monday of the 5th Week of Lent.

However there is an **optional Mass** for the 5th week, that can be read on any day of that week.

This Mass couples Elisha's raising of the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4) with the raising of Lazarus (John 11).

If the priest chooses the optional Mass for Monday of the 5th week of Lent, Susanna's story will not be heard that year.

Week 23, Lecture 66. Daniel 14, The Greek Versions: Bel, and The Dragon

Chapter 14 of Greek Daniel contains **Two Independent Stories.**

1) The story of Daniel's unmasking of the idol Bel, 14:1-22

2) The story of Daniel's Slaying of a Dragon, 14:23-42

FIRST STORY: Bel. The Introduction of the Characters, 1:1-2

After King Astyages was gathered to his ancestors, Cyrus the Persian succeeded to his kingdom. ² Daniel was a **companion of the king** and was held in higher honor than any of the Friends of the King.

Daniel appears to be a companion of "the King," presumably Cyrus! -- who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.

If this is the same Daniel who was a young man in "the 3rd year of King Jehoiakim (Dan 1:1, ca. 606 / 605 B.C.)

he is at least 66 years older than he was in chapter 1.

Daniel is introduced as if we have never heard of him, even though this is the last chapter of Greek Daniel.

NABRE note to "King Astyges."

[14:1-3a] These verses in the Septuagint Greek text read: "From the prophecy of Habakkuk, son of Joshua, of the tribe of Levi. ² There was a certain man, a priest, whose name was Daniel, son of Abal, a companion of the king of Babylon. ³ There was an idol, Bel, which the Babylonians revered,..." This may represent an earlier form of the story, before it was attached to the Book of Daniel. King Astyages: the last of the Median kings, defeated by Cyrus in 550 B.C. **This story preserves the fiction of a successive Median and Persian rule of Babylon.**

Comment. Historically, the kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians were **simultaneous** rivals to Babylon.

The Medes never conquered Babylon. Cyrus the Persian, who defeated the Medes, conquered Babylon

Like most of Daniel the 6th century B.C. "history" in this story is "hazy," at best. The parts of Daniel that refer to events of the 2nd century B.C. are generally "spot on." This is why most critical scholars date the Book of Daniel to the 2nd century B.C. More on this next week.

The Last Character to be introduced, Bel, v. 3

The Babylonians had an idol called Bel, and every day they provided for it six bushels of fine flour, forty sheep, and six measures of wine.

Conversation between Daniel and "the King," vv. 4-9

The King (Cyrus? -- he is never named) wonders why Daniel does not worship Bel. Daniel replies that he does not worship idols made by hands, but only the true God. When the King points out to the great amount of food that Bel eats every day, Daniel laughs. He claims that Bel has never eaten anything. The King is enraged, and calls his priests. There is to be a contest.

- 1) If the 70 priests of Bel **do not** prove that Bel eats the food, they will die.
- 2) If they **do** prove that Bel eats the food, Daniel will die for blaspheming Bel.

The Contest, vv. 10-15

The priests bring the food, and instruct the king to set it out before Bel, then to shut & sealed the door with his ring. Then priests depart. The king follows their instructions. Daniel orders that ashes be scattered around the interior of the Temple. That night, using a secret entrance, the priests enter -- along with their wives and children -- and eat the food.

The Conclusion, vv. 16-22

Daniel and the king arrive. The seals are unbroken. They open the door. The king is impressed, but not Daniel!

¹⁸ . . . , the king looked at the table and cried aloud, "You are great, O Bel; there is no deceit in you." ¹⁹ But Daniel laughed and kept the king from entering. He said, "Look at the floor and consider whose footprints these are." ²⁰ "I see the footprints of men, women, and children!" said the king. ²¹ In his wrath the king arrested the priests, their wives, and their children. They showed him the secret door by which they used to enter to consume what was on the table. ²² The king put them to death, and handed Bel over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.

Presumably the wives & children were also put to death.

This bothers moderns (Jews and Christians) more than it would have bothered the original audience.

SECOND STORY: The Dragon. Introductory Scene: Daniel Slays the Dragon, vv 23-27

²³ There was a great dragon which the Babylonians revered. ²⁴ The king said to Daniel, "You cannot deny that this is a living god, so worship it." ²⁵ But Daniel answered, "I worship the Lord, my God, for he is the living God. ²⁶ Give me permission, O king, and I will kill this dragon without sword or club." "I give you permission," the king said. ²⁷ Then Daniel took some pitch, fat, and hair; these he boiled together and made into cakes. He put them into the mouth of the dragon, and when the dragon ate them, he burst. "This," he said, "is what you revered."

This story, like the previous one, is written for Jews who are surrounded by pagans who do not share their monotheism. As in the previous story, "the king" is anonymous, never named.

Reaction of the Babylonians, vv. 28-32

The Babylonians tell the king if he does not hand over Daniel to them, they will kill him and his family (Never mind if this is not too plausible. It moves the story along.) The king complies, and Daniel is thrown into the Lion's Den.

NABRE Note to Dan 14:31

this story provides a different account from chap. 6 as to why Daniel was associated with the lions' den.

This is a clear sign that this story is an **addition** to the Massoretic Text's version of Daniel. It does **not** settle the question which version is earlier.

The Role of Habakkuk, vv. 33-39 (not in the Daniel 6 version of the Lion's Den)

The prophet Habakkuk was in Judea. He mixed some bread in a bowl with the stew he had boiled, and was going to bring it to the reapers in the field,

³⁴ when an angel of the Lord told him, "Take the meal you have to Daniel in the lions' den at Babylon." ³⁵ But Habakkuk answered, "Sir, I have never seen Babylon, and I do not know the den!" ³⁶ The angel of the Lord seized him by the crown of his head and carried him by the hair; with the speed of the wind, he set him down in Babylon above the den.

³⁷ "Daniel, Daniel," cried Habakkuk, "take the meal God has sent you."

³⁸ "You have remembered me, O God," said Daniel; "you have not forsaken those who love you."

³⁹ So Daniel ate, but the angel of God at once brought Habakkuk back to his own place.

Here we have a bit of "comic relief" from the dramatic tension of the lion's den.

Conclusion 14:42

The conclusion is briefer, and not quite as graphic as that of chapter 6

Daniel 6:24-25 (NABRE)	Daniel 14:42 (NABRE)
At his order Daniel was brought up from the den; he was found to be unharmed because he trusted in his God. ²⁵ The king then ordered the men who had accused Daniel, along with their children and their wives, to be cast into the lions' den. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.	He brought Daniel out, but those who had tried to destroy him he threw into the den, and they were devoured in a moment before his eyes.

Note that the wives & children of the bad guys are not explicitly mentioned. Nor do we have the image of crunching bones.

Liturgical Reading

Neither the story of Bel nor the story of the Dragon is ever read at Mass.