

And so it happened that one day the King of Babylon saw what a wonderful place the Promised Land was.

And he decided he wanted it.

He sent his armies to attack the Israelites - and this time God let the Israelites fight for themselves. They didn't do so well. The armies of Babylon were too strong. They took the Israelite's land, and their houses, and their VCRs and TVs and Video games (well, if they HAD VCRs and TVs and video games way back then - I don't think they did). But, worst of all, they took the people of Israel from their homes, and carried them away to the land of Babylon.

And that (finally!) is where the story of Daniel begins.

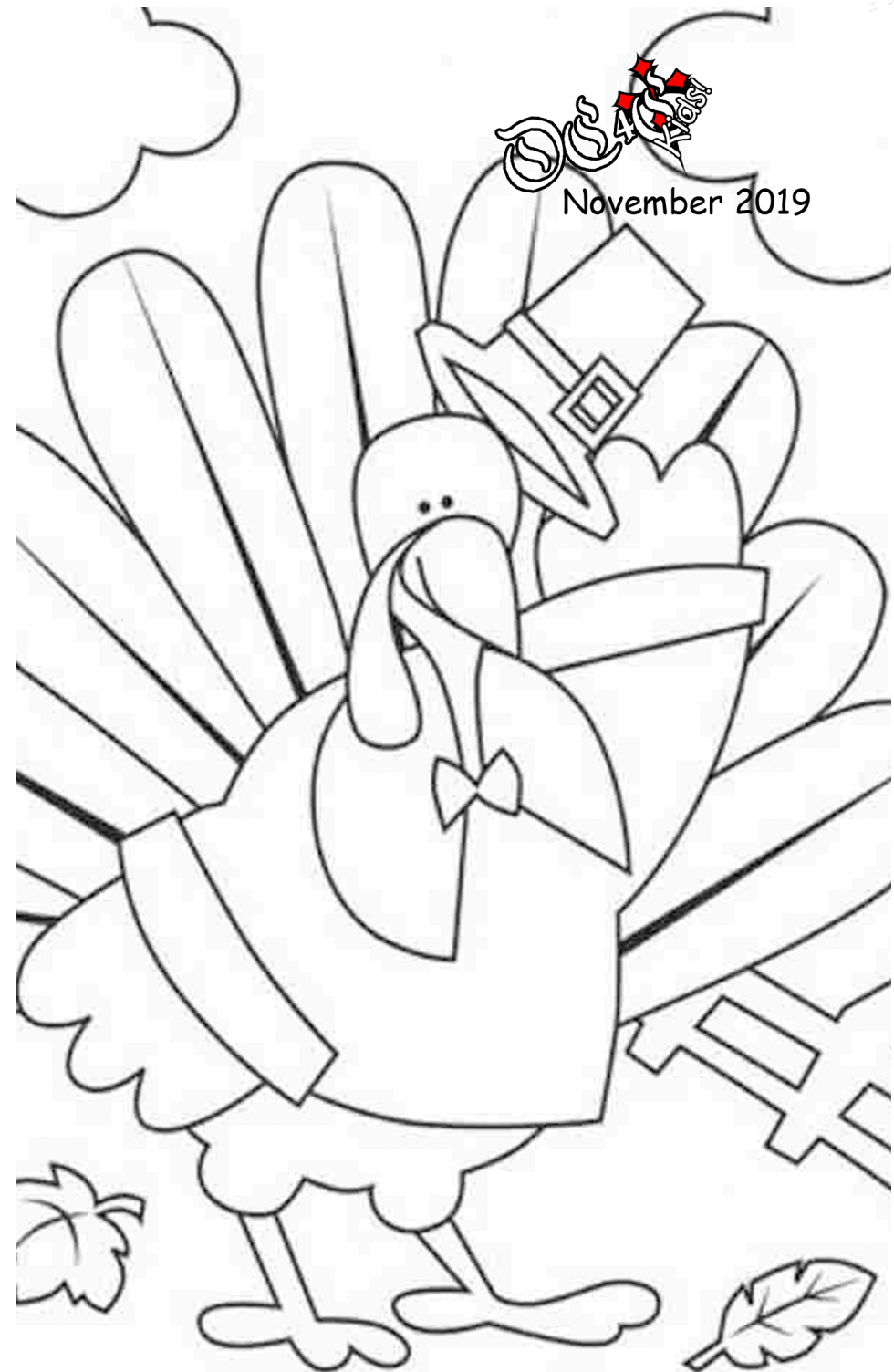
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ABED-NEGO
CHIEF
DANIEL
DEFILE

FAVOR
GOD
KING

MESHACH
NEBUCHADNEZZAR
SHADRACH

TEST
VEGETABLES
WATER



The Story of Daniel

(But First things First...)

(Part 2)

By Paul Dallgas-Frey

No one can see God.

God is everywhere in the universe all at one time. That is much too great and wonderful and powerful for anyone to see. But we CAN see the things that God does. So when we see all the things God has done for the people of Israel, we know that God is real.

And God has done some amazing, wonderful things.

He gave the people of Israel the Promised Land for their home. The Promised Land was a country that was so rich they said it was "flowing with milk and honey." The fruits and vegetables grew so big there, it took two men to carry them.

And when their enemies attacked, God was on Israel's side. Israel always won (well, mostly always, but we will get to that later!). Even though their enemies were bigger and stronger and more powerful, they were no match for God!

But there was another important thing that God did. God gave the people of Israel rules to live by.

I know, I know. Rules just ruin the fun.

At least, that's what we think sometimes.

But think about it. Your dad says, "Don't run out into the street." If your ball rolled out into the street, and you ran after it, and got hit by a car, how much fun would that be?

Or your mom says, "Go brush your teeth!" and you say, "Ah, Mom, do I have to?" But suppose your mom didn't care about you, and didn't make you brush your teeth. One day they will get all rotten so they hurt all the time, and you won't be able to eat your favorite things (like Rice Krispie Treats, maybe). How much fun will that be?

Or suppose your brother kept smacking you and pinching you and poking you - and your mom never did anything about it, because there wasn't a "No smacking, pinching and poking" rule. How much fun would that be?

Our parents give us rules because they love us. They want to keep us safe, and healthy, and they want to help us get along with each other.

Rules are really good.

But there is an even more important reason why rules are good.

When you follow your parents' rules, your friends see what kind of person you are. But your friends also see what kind of people your parents are too, because they teach you the things that are important to them.

And so, when your parents teach you God's rules, and your friends see that you are good and honest and thoughtful, they are really seeing what God is like too.

And maybe one day they will want to know God better and believe in him - all because of you.

And that is what God wants more than anything.

That is why it is so important to follow God's rules as best as we can. We wouldn't want our friends to think that God is mean, or selfish, or says or does nasty things.

So God gave the Israelites rules because he loves them. He gave them rules to keep them safe and healthy and to help them get along with each other - and, most importantly, so we could see what God is like.

Only, sometimes the Israelites didn't follow God's rules. Sometimes they thought they could do just fine on their own.