

## Week 1 Journal questions

### The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men (Apocrypha)

How did this reflect some of the beliefs about God that I have? I believe that God will do what it takes to save His people, I believe that He wants us to praise and worship Him, not because it makes Him feel good, but that it energizes Him to be able to do what He does for us, like make the fire feel like a cool breeze. Singing or speaking His praise helps us to remember what God has done.

I'm not sure that there is anything in this that reflects what I think about sin and its consequences. I mean I know that it does have its consequences, but I do not believe that God shames us because of our sin, man shames man because of sin, to "lord" it over each other. By confessing our sin, acknowledging it fully and completely, I know it is forgiven, I know there may be consequences but the forgiveness from God gives me the strength to deal with those consequences.

I think I may have been encouraged by the document. I think remembering who God is and what He has done before is very encouraging, its our testimony about what God has done and it says if He did it before He can and will do it again because He does not change. This document would have also encouraged the Jews to stand strong, do not give away who you are, do not break God's Laws, commands, remember what has been, we are suffering now because of what our people did before, but God will not abandon us, He will rescue us, He will be with us and make these consequences easier for us because we are His people.

I think I answered this question a bit above, but I know that hearing about God is encouraging. I did this, but God is doing this to help me out of the fire I stepped into, we did this, but God will save us because He has done it before, and He has promised He will not forsake us. I think its encouraging no matter what time you live in.

## Week 2 Journal Questions

I learned that the Jewish people have so much history that I know nothing about. So often that had to go somewhere else or were conquered and had to choose who they were going to continue to be, to continue to follow/believe in the one true God.

I learned that martyrdom, is the ultimate way to show your faith. To not compromise when it is demanded of you to do so, to change how you believe, or do, or think just to survive. Martyrs would rather die than go against what they believe God has given them as truth. (Side Note: It's interesting how a lot of the Church today has accepted as truth/doctrine things that even less than 100 years ago would have been thought of as heresy. I think fear to stand firm, or speak up for the truth we know, is the enemy's way of stopping the believer from fighting back, standing firm on the Word, and becoming martyrs.)

What have I learned about God? He is never changing, ever faithful, a rewarder. He does not ask for martyrdom, but he asks for everything including and up to our very life. He deserves no less.

Sin? Missing the mark of perfection, therefore we all are sinners. The things we have read show me that being afraid to stand, to give all, is sin for me. Scares me even more, 😊.

The author felt the Greeks were terrible people, trying to force someone to do something went against what he believed, as it pertained to his being Jewish. I also think he felt they were the deliverers of the discipline he felt God was sending the Jews for their disobedience.

I always knew the Jewish suffered, it seemed like every time they turned around, some calamity fell on them, and someone wanted to destroy them because they were different. I had never thought it was because of their stubbornly held beliefs. They had to be stubborn, if they weren't willing to do what they did, fight, become martyrs, they could have disappeared as a people.

I now understand why they were waiting for Messiah, one who would lead them, free them, protect them. They had suffered so much in the time before Jesus' birth. God had promised them a Messiah, and they were praying He would come soon to save them. I bet they all thought, if we can hold on just a little bit longer... that hope, and for so many of them today, they are still waiting, still hoping. That has been an eye opener for me.

I think the author of Hebrews was trying to remind them what those before had suffered, and what God had done for them. That God provides them with all they need to get through the trials they were suffering, even up to death, because God had provided something better for them, so the martyrs from before, would not be in heaven without them. They needed the encouragement to stand firm, they were being persecuted.

### **Week 3 Journal Questions**

Herod was only half Jewish and his family have been forced to convert to Judaism, so the people had never accepted him as king. So Matthew was showing that even the Magi knew Herod was not the true king, but that Jesus was, hence the genealogy in Chapter 1. Also, that Jesus was in Bethlehem, when he was a newborn, was to point back to the prophets and David being from Bethlehem and being chosen of God for the kingship. I love that the story shows Herod was afraid

of a newborn, he knew he was not a real king, just a false king, who bought his position from Rome.

I had never thought of Egypt as refuge, even though I know Joseph was told to take Mary and Jesus there to hide from Herod. I am still trying to figure out why God told them to go to Egypt, except that so many Jews lived in Alexandria, so is that where they went? Jesus would still learn the culture, the Torah, and learn to remain Jewish/faithful to God in a foreign land. In a way, he had to learn that as he came from the Father, and he had to learn to remain who He is on earth so he was true to the mission He had been given, not allowing Himself to be assimilated to the extent that he was no longer aware of who He is, what He was to do and why.