

MaryBeth Hoffman

June 7, 2022

Professor Cox

Journal Question week 1, Journal questions #1

1. I was surprised that the story of Bel and the Dragon was a detective story! I did not have any concerns about what I read, as I found it very fascinating.
2. Living under the rule of the Gentiles, I believe that the Jews may have been encouraged by the story since it showed how God helped Daniel escape the lions, while the others who were encouraging people to worship false gods through trickery were eaten immediately in the end by the lions.
3. We can learn that during this time period, people were struggling to figure out what and who to believe in. They were also believing in idols and many gods instead of the one true God.
4. I think people today could benefit from reading this story as it points out the need to be cautious about people who act like they know about who to follow but are in fact deceiving others and creating idols. We need to follow the one true God and the trinity.

Journal questions week 2

1. I learned that the Jewish people had to endure barbaric torture by Antiochus's soldiers. They endured incredible hardships and were not permitted to worship God, and yet, many still held onto their faith- amazing.
2. Martyrdom is not just done to obtain sympathy. It can also be done as an example or to demonstrate integrity and faith in God. For example, Eleazar refused to eat unlawful meat (pork) and instead endured torture and finally death in order to be..."an example of virtue not only for the youth but also for the majority of his nation." I learned that God is present even in the most unimaginable horrors, such as when the seven brothers were maimed and tortured for their beliefs in God. They remained faithful. I learned that sin takes place in many forms. It can be a small temptation or a barbaric act toward another human being. It's amazing to think that God forgives all sin if you ask Him and really mean it.
3. The attitude of this writer toward the Greeks was that they did terrible acts to the Jewish people, but that the Jewish people were to be merciful to them the way that God was.

4. I now understand that the Jews living before the time of Jesus were persecuted greatly and yet they had magnificent and steadfast faith in God.
5. When I read in Hebrews 11:1, "faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see," I understand that the author is focusing on the great faith that the Jewish people had, despite their tormenting times, their exile, and the destruction of their very temple. In addition, the Jewish people had faith in a God they had never seen. God had not yet appeared in human form as Jesus. I think the author included these well-known stories about the Jewish martyrs from this time to show how people stood their ground while they were suffering and enduring enormous amounts of pressure (Hebrews 10: 32).