

Chapter 13

Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *Explain why Judith and Esther are such unique Old Testament heroes.*

The Jewish community is very patriarchal. Men are the leaders, hold the power, and have authority over the women and children. Judith and Esther are unexpected heroes because they are powerful and courageous women who overcome their male enemies.

2. *How do the Books of Tobit, Judith, and Esther offer hope to the Jewish People of the second and first century BC?*

The Jewish People of the second and first century BC are suffering under the hands of an oppressive Greek ruler. The happy endings provided by the Books of Tobit, Judith, and Esther offer its listeners hope and a reason to persevere. They encourage faithfulness to God's commandments; the value of marriage and family; God's special care for the lowly; and the importance of prayer, fasting, and trust in God.

3. *How does the Greek King Antiochus IV treat the Jewish People?*

King Antiochus IV comes into power in 175 BC and begins a period of harsh persecution of the Jews. He forbids the practice of Jewish religion and forces the Jews to embrace his religion, desecrates and robs the Temple, and murders the families who have circumcised their children.

4. *Who are the Maccabees, and what do they do?*

The Maccabees are a Jewish family who lead a successful revolt against their Greek oppressors. A faithful Jewish priest named Mattathias and his five sons form an army to fight the Greeks. Judas is the original leader. He wins many battles, thus allowing the Jewish People to go to Jerusalem and rededicate the Temple. His brother Jonathan succeeds Judas, is made governor of the province by Alexander, son of Antiochus, and is able to garner some independence for the Jewish People. The Maccabees family makes it possible for Judaism to survive.

5. *What are some differences between the First and Second Books of Maccabees?*

The First Book of Maccabees offers a broader historical look at that time period, while the Second Book of Maccabees delves into the variety of ways the Jewish People face their persecution. The Second Book also emphasizes following the Law, and it honors the faithful ones who accept death rather than break the Law.

6. *Describe why Eleazar is honored among the Jewish People.*

Eleazar is an old man and a faithful Jew who wants to be a good role model to the young people. Instead of eating the pork, he chooses to be tortured and die. He is an example of virtue for the whole nation.

7. *How does the Second Book of Maccabees address the belief of life after death?*

Second Maccabees describes the belief in the resurrection of the dead in the account of the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons. Before they die, almost all of the sons confidently profess their faith in the resurrection of the dead.

8. *Explain how the Second Book of Maccabees presents prayer as a "two-way street" between the living and the dead.*

Second Maccabees tells the account of Judas and his army gathering up the bodies of their fellow soldiers and finding idols to false gods in their tunics. Instead of writing them off as pagans, Judas leads his people to pray for them, and they make an offering to God on behalf of these dead soldiers. Judas also relates a vision in which both the former high priest and the prophet Jeremiah are praying for the Jewish community.

