

Chapter 12

Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *Who is Cyrus, and why is he an unexpected savior to the Jewish People?*

Cyrus is the King of Persia who conquers the Babylonians and allows the Jewish People to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Cyrus is an unexpected savior not only because he is not Jewish but also because he is the king of another country.

2. *What effects does the Babylonian Exile have on Judaism?*

The Babylonian Exile triggers an examination of the Jewish People's history and relationship with God. This in turn brings about new writings and the formation of most of the Old Testament. *The Jewish People* who are no longer bound to a particular place, so those without the Temple center their faith life around the synagogues.

3. *In what ways does the Chronicler view Israel's past history differently than the Deuteronomist writers?*

The Deuteronomist authors view their history through the lens of faithfulness to the Law and God's covenant, but the Chroniclers emphasizes that faithfulness to proper worship in the Temple is necessary for the people's well-being.

4. *What is the Ark of the Covenant, and why is it so important to the Jewish People?*

The Ark of the Covenant is a container that allows the Israelites to carry the tablets and other sacred items as they travel through the desert toward the Promised Land. The Ark of the Covenant is considered the dwelling place of God by the Israelites. To be in its presence is to be in the presence of God.

5. *Why do the Jewish People have such dislike for the Samaritans?*

When the Assyrians conquer the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, some of the Israelites remain in Samaria, where they intermarry with foreigners from other religions. They become known as the Samaritans. Their worship of the one true God, Yahweh, is mingled with other outside religious practices. They also reject the idea that worship is to be done at the Jerusalem Temple only and thus begin worshipping instead at Mount Gerizim.

6. *Why does Ezra demand that the men who have married foreign women abandon their wives and children?*

Ezra demands that the Jewish men who have married foreign women leave their wives and children because he wants to preserve their religion and way of life. He knows that intermarriage weakens the Jewish faith by introducing beliefs and practices from other religions. He feels that the only way to stop this is by removing all foreign influences.

7. *What role do the Psalms play in the communal life of the Church today?*

The Psalms are used in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. The chanting or recitation of the Psalms play a major role in the Liturgy of the Hours too.

8. *Describe some of the different types of psalms and how the ancient Israelites used them.*

The Jewish People sing psalms in their Temple worship. Because psalms address different occasions as well as the ups and downs of life, we sometimes group them into categories like these:

- hymns of praise or thanksgiving
- liturgical or worship psalms
- songs of lament (sorrow) or petition
- historical psalms
- wisdom hymns

