



Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus A Discipleship Journey

The OLD TESTAMENT- Their Story is Our Story

Woman and her 7 Sons
Maccabees 2, Chapter 7

The first and second books of Maccabees are unusual books because they are not included in the Protestant Bible. They are historical books for the Jews, but the Catholics believe they were inspired by God and are included in our Bible. This particular story takes place in the time when the Greeks are ruling Jerusalem and the Israelites. Before the Greeks, the Israelites who had returned from exile had been allowed to practice their religion unharmed, but when the Greeks took over, they tried to force the Israelites to follow their religion and customs. For the Israelite who did not give in, there was torture and death at the hands of the Greeks. The Israelites believed that there was an afterlife and God would reward their faithfulness in His laws. There are a number of stories in great detail that describe the torture and deaths of these faithful servants of God. The story of the Woman and her 7 sons is one of them.

The woman and her sons were arrested and pressured to eat pork which was in violation of God's holy law. They each refused and suffered great torture, the sons first, in front of their mother. They bravely suffered, refusing to break God's law and finally the mother was killed as well. Antiochus, the king, and his soldiers were amazed and very angry at their bravery and faith in their God.

Fortunately, we are not tortured for our faith in modern times. However, it is difficult even in this day and age to choose God over society. There are times in our lives that we need to stand and do the right thing. Look at some of the heroes of our own time such as Dr. Martin Luther King who peacefully protested for the rights of black people, or Saint Oscar Romero who stood up against poverty, social injustice and other violent actions of the government of El Salvador and was martyred for his actions. In our own small ways, we can also stand up and do what God would want of us, even if it means that our friends or society might think otherwise.

Would we stand up to someone being a bully? Do we ignore poverty in our midst? Are we willing to stand up for the oppressed members of our society?

Is our faith strong enough to believe we can do these difficult things and be rewarded for it in the afterlife even if it means some discomfort in this life?