

1 MACCABEES

1

Alexander and His Kingdom

¹ The events in this book began after Philip's son, Alexander from Macedonia, marched from Greece and defeated Darius, king of Persia and Media. Alexander succeeded Darius as king and became the first king of the Greek Empire. ² Alexander fought many battles, took control of fortifications, and killed any king who got in his way. ³ As he continued his campaign to conquer the whole world, he looted many nations. When the world was at peace, he became conceited and arrogant. ⁴ With a very powerful army, which he had recruited, he ruled territories, nations, and local rulers and made them pay taxes to him.

⁵ Eventually, Alexander became sick and realized that he was about to die. ⁶ So he summoned his generals. They were well-known men who had grown up with him. He divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. ⁷ Alexander had been king for 12 years at the time of his death. ⁸ After Alexander died, each general began to rule his own region. ⁹ All of the generals, as well as their descendants, ruled for many years and caused a lot of trouble in the world.

The Rule of Antiochus IV—2 Maccabees 4:7-17

¹⁰ One of the descendants of these generals was a wicked man named Antiochus IV, who was also called Epiphanes. He was the son of King Antiochus III of Syria and had been held hostage in Rome until he became king of the Syrian part of the Greek Empire in the year 175 B.C.

¹¹ At that time, there were some Israelites who didn't follow Moses' Teachings. They misled many people by saying, "Let's make a treaty with the surrounding nations. Ever since we've separated ourselves from them, we've had nothing but trouble." ¹² The people liked what they heard. ¹³ Some of them were so enthusiastic that they went to see King Antiochus, who gave them permission to live like non-Jewish people. ¹⁴ So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem like those that were found in other nations, ¹⁵ and they had operations to hide the fact that they were circumcised. They disregarded the terms of God's holy promise,^a married people from other nations, and became devoted to doing wicked things.

¹⁶ When Antiochus had firm control of his kingdom in Syria, he was determined to make himself king of Egypt as well. He wanted to rule both kingdoms. ¹⁷ So he invaded Egypt with a large army made up of chariots, elephants, and cavalry. In addition, he was assisted by a large fleet. ¹⁸ He fought a battle with Egypt's King Ptolemy VI, and Ptolemy fled from him. Many of Ptolemy's soldiers were killed. ¹⁹ Then Antiochus and his army captured Egypt's fortified cities and looted the country.

²⁰ Antiochus defeated Egypt in the year 169 B.C. As he returned to Syria, he attacked Israel by entering Jerusalem with his large army. ²¹ He arrogantly entered the holy place and took the gold altar and the lamp stand with its utensils. ²² He also took the table for the bread of the presence, the cups for wine offerings, the bowls, the gold incense burners, and the curtain. He also stripped the gold molding and the gold decorations from the front of the temple ²³ and took the silver, the gold, the precious utensils, and all the treasures he found deposited there. ²⁴ Then Antiochus returned to his own country with all these things. He had murdered a lot of people and had bragged about everything he had done. ²⁵ Wherever the people of Israel lived, they mourned.

²⁶ Their rulers and leaders groaned.

Their young men and women became weak.

Their women no longer wore beautiful clothes.

²⁷ Every groom sang a funeral song.

Every bride sat in her room and cried.

²⁸ The earth and those who lived on it trembled.

All of Jacob's descendants felt ashamed.

Antiochus Sends a Tax Collector to Judea

²⁹ Two years later, King Antiochus sent a tax collector to the cities in Judea. This official came to Jerusalem with a large army. ³⁰ He gained the people's trust because he spoke to them in a friendly way, but he was really trying to deceive them. Then he

^a 1:15 Or "covenant."

suddenly attacked the city and killed many Israelites. The defeat was overwhelming. ³¹ He looted the city, set it on fire, and tore down its houses and surrounding walls. ³² He and his army took women and children as prisoners and seized the livestock. ³³ Then he had his soldiers build a fortress in David's city. It had large walls and towers. ³⁴ In the fortress he stationed a group of men who didn't follow Moses' Teachings. These men strengthened their position in the fortress. ³⁵ They stored weapons and food there along with the loot they had collected from Jerusalem. These men became a real danger to the people in the city.

³⁶ The fortress was a threat to the holy place
and a constant source of evil to Israel.

³⁷ Men from the fortress murdered innocent people around the holy place.
So the holy place was dishonored.

³⁸ People who lived in Jerusalem fled.
Jerusalem became a colony of foreign soldiers.
It became a foreign city to those who were born there.
Its citizens left.

³⁹ Its holy place was abandoned like a desert.
Its festivals were turned into times of grief.
Its days of worship were turned into times of disgrace.
Its honor was turned into insults.

⁴⁰ Its dishonor became as great as its former glory.
Its pride was turned into grief.

⁴¹ King Antiochus wrote to all the nations in his kingdom. He wrote that everyone should be united ⁴² and that each nation should give up its traditions. ⁴³ Every nation accepted what King Antiochus wrote. Many people from Israel approved of his religion, sacrificed to false gods, and did things on the day of worship that the Jewish religion didn't allow.

⁴⁴ The king sent messengers with a written order to Jerusalem and the cities in Judea. He ordered the people to follow foreign traditions. ⁴⁵ He ordered them not to sacrifice burnt offerings, grain offerings, or wine offerings in the holy place. He also ordered them to do things that the Jewish religion didn't allow on the days of worship and on festival days. ⁴⁶ He ordered them to dishonor the holy place and the priests, ⁴⁷ to build altars, illegal worship sites, and temples to false gods, and to sacrifice pigs and other unclean ^b animals. ⁴⁸ He forbid them to circumcise their sons and ordered them to do disgusting things that would make them unclean. ⁴⁹ He wanted them to do things that the Jewish religion didn't allow so that they would forget Moses' Teachings and change their religious practices. ⁵⁰ Whoever disobeyed the king would be put to death.

⁵¹ King Antiochus sent all these orders to his entire kingdom, appointed officials to watch everyone, and ordered every city in Judea to offer sacrifices to false gods. ⁵² Many of the people (that is, everyone who had abandoned Moses' Teachings), joined the officials. They did so many terrible things in their own country ⁵³ that they forced their own people to find a safe place to hide.

⁵⁴ On the fifteenth day of the month of Chislew in the year 167 B.C., King Antiochus built a disgusting thing on top of the temple altar for burnt offerings. People built altars in the surrounding cities of Judea ⁵⁵ and offered sacrifices at the entrances to their houses and in the streets. ⁵⁶ Wherever the officials found a copy of the Book of Moses' Teachings, they tore it up and burned it.

⁵⁷ The king decreed that whenever people were found with the Book of the Promise in their possession or were found practicing what Moses taught, they must be put to death. ⁵⁸ Month after month the officials intimidated the Israelites whom they found in the cities. ⁵⁹ On the twenty-fifth day of the month, the officials offered sacrifices on the pagan altar that was on top of the temple altar for burnt offerings. ⁶⁰ In keeping with the king's order, women who had their children circumcised were put to death. ⁶¹ Infants were hung from their mothers' necks. The women's families were also put to death along with those who had circumcised the infants.

⁶² Many people in Israel were absolutely determined not to eat unclean food. ⁶³ They chose to die rather than to dishonor themselves by eating unclean food or by breaking the terms of God's holy promise. So they died. ⁶⁴ God unleashed his furious anger on Israel.

^b 1:47 "Unclean" refers to anything that Moses' Teachings say is not presentable to God.

Mattathias and His Five Sons

¹ At that time a priest named Mattathias, who was a descendant of Jorib, moved from Jerusalem to the city of Modein. Mattathias was the son of John and the grandson of Simeon. ² He had five sons: John (who was nicknamed Gaddi), ³ Simon (who was called Thassi), ⁴ Judas (who was called Maccabeus), ⁵ Eleazar (who was called Avaran), and Jonathan (who was called Apphus). ⁶ When Mattathias saw all the disgusting things that were happening in Judea and Jerusalem, ⁷ he said,

“What a tragedy this is!

Why was I born to see the ruin of my people
and the ruin of the holy city?

Why was I born to live in Jerusalem
when it was taken over by enemies
and the holy place was taken over by foreigners?

⁸ Jerusalem’s temple has become like a person who has been dishonored.

⁹ Its splendid utensils have been carried off as loot.

Its infants have been killed in the streets.

Its young people have been killed in battle.

¹⁰ Every nation in the world has occupied Jerusalem’s palaces
or taken its loot.

¹¹ All its beautiful decorations have been taken away.

Jerusalem is no longer free. It has become a slave.

¹² Look around! Our beautiful holy place, which we honor,

has been destroyed.

Nations have treated our holy place

in ways that our Jewish religion doesn’t allow.

¹³ We have nothing left to live for!”

¹⁴ Then Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes in grief and put on sackcloth, because they were overwhelmed with sorrow.

Mattathias Refuses to Sacrifice to False Gods

¹⁵ The king’s officials, who were trying to force the Israelites to abandon their religion, came to the city of Modein to make the people offer sacrifices to false gods. ¹⁶ Many Israelites went willingly to talk with the officials, but the officials had to send for Mattathias and his sons. ¹⁷ The king’s officials said to Mattathias, “You’re a highly respected leader in this city, and you have the support of your sons and relatives. ¹⁸ Be the first to come forward and do what the king has ordered. Be like all the people in the other nations, like the people in Judea, and like the people who are left in Jerusalem. Then you and your sons will receive the title ‘Friend of the King.’ You will be honored with silver, gold, and many other gifts.”

¹⁹ Mattathias shouted, “All the nations in the king’s empire may have obeyed him. They may have chosen to follow his orders by abandoning the religion of their ancestors. ²⁰ But even if they have, my sons, my relatives, and I will keep the terms of the promise ^c God made to our ancestors. ²¹ It’s unthinkable for us to desert our teachings and religious practices. ²² We won’t obey the king’s orders, and we won’t worship in any other way.”

²³ When Mattathias had finished speaking, a Jewish man came forward in front of everyone to offer a sacrifice on the altar in Modein as the king had ordered. ²⁴ Because Mattathias was so devoted to his religion, he was shocked to see this. He lost his temper, ran up to the man, and killed him on the altar. ²⁵ He also killed the king’s official, who was forcing the people to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. ²⁶ He showed his devotion to Moses’ Teachings just as Phinehas had done when he killed Zimri, who was Salu’s son.

²⁷ Mattathias went throughout the city and shouted, “Everyone who is devoted to Moses’ Teachings and is willing to stand up for God’s promise, follow me!” ²⁸ Then he and his sons fled to the mountains and left everything they owned in the city.

²⁹ At that time, many people were looking for God to punish the foreigners justly. Because these people were suffering severe persecutions, they went into the desert to live. ^d ³⁰ They took their children, wives, and livestock with them. ³¹ A report about

^c 2:20 Or “covenant.”

^d 2:29 The last part of verse 30 has been placed in verse 29 to express the complex Greek sentence structure more clearly in English.

them reached the king's officials and the troops in Jerusalem, David's city. The officials were told that some Jewish people had rejected the king's order and had gone to hide in the caves in the desert. ³² Many troops quickly pursued them and caught up with them. The troops set up their camp facing the people and prepared for a battle that would take place on the day of worship. ³³ The troops said to the people, "Come out right now! Do what the king has ordered, and we'll let you live!"

³⁴ But the people replied, "We won't come out. We refuse to do things that our religion doesn't allow on the day of worship. We won't obey the king's order." ³⁵ So the troops quickly attacked them. ³⁶ But the people didn't fight back. They didn't even throw a stone at the troops or block the entrances to the caves where they were hiding. ³⁷ They simply said, "Let's all die with clear consciences. Heaven and earth will be our witnesses that you are killing us unjustly." ³⁸ So the troops attacked them on the day of worship. The men died along with their wives, children, and livestock. About 1,000 people were killed.

Mattathias Organizes an Army

³⁹ When Mattathias and his friends found out about this, they were overwhelmed with sorrow. ⁴⁰ They said to each other, "If all of us do what they did and refuse to fight these foreigners to save ourselves and our religious practices, these foreigners will quickly destroy us." ⁴¹ So that day they decided that if anyone attacked them on a day of worship, they would fight back. They decided that they would never die hiding in caves as the others had.

⁴² At that time, Mattathias and his friends were joined by a group of Jewish people called the Hasidim. The Hasidim were the strongest people in Israel. All of them volunteered for the sake of Moses' Teachings. ⁴³ Everyone who had fled because of the persecutions also joined Mattathias and his friends. This made their forces stronger. ⁴⁴ They organized an army, and in their fury they killed people who sinned by not following Moses' Teachings. The people who survived their attacks fled to the foreigners for safety. ⁴⁵ Mattathias and his friends also went around the countryside tearing down the altars dedicated to false gods. ⁴⁶ They forced every uncircumcised boy that they found in Israel to be circumcised. ⁴⁷ They were also successful in hunting down arrogant foreign officials. ⁴⁸ They didn't allow foreigners and kings to do away with Moses' Teachings. They didn't allow sinners to gain any power.

Mattathias Instructs His Sons Before He Dies

⁴⁹ The time came for Mattathias to die. So he said to his sons, "We're living in disastrous and violent times because arrogant foreigners are treating us with contempt. ⁵⁰ My children, now is the time for you to show your devotion to Moses' Teachings. Offer your lives for the sake of the promise God made to our ancestors.

⁵¹ "Remember what our ancestors did when they were alive. If you do what they did, you will always be highly honored and famous. ⁵² Didn't Abraham prove that he was faithful when he was tested? Didn't Abraham's faith receive God's approval?

⁵³ When Joseph was in a difficult situation, he obeyed God's command and eventually became ruler of Egypt. ⁵⁴ Our ancestor Phinehas received the promise of a permanent priesthood because he was very devoted to God. ⁵⁵ Joshua became a judge in Israel because he did everything Moses had told him to do. ⁵⁶ Caleb received a part of the land as his inheritance because of his report to the community of Israel. ⁵⁷ David inherited the throne of an eternal kingdom because he was merciful. ⁵⁸ Elijah was taken to heaven because of his devotion to Moses' Teachings. ⁵⁹ Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael believed and were saved from the fire. ⁶⁰ Daniel was rescued from the lion's mouth because he was innocent.

⁶¹ "So keep in mind that in every generation those who trust God will have the strength they need. ⁶² Don't be afraid of a sinful king who threatens you. His honor will come to an end when he dies and his body is covered with manure and worms.

⁶³ Today he may be honored, but tomorrow no one will be able to find him because he will have returned to dust, and his plans will be ruined. ⁶⁴ My children, be strong and courageous while defending Moses' Teachings because you will receive honor.

⁶⁵ "I know that your brother Simon is wise. Listen to him as long as you live. He will serve as your father. ⁶⁶ Judas Maccabeus has been very strong ever since he was young. He will be the commander of your army and will fight against the foreigners.

⁶⁷ Recruit everyone who follows Moses' Teachings, and punish the enemies of your people. ⁶⁸ Take revenge on the foreigners, and do everything that Moses' Teachings require.

⁶⁹ Then Mattathias blessed his sons and joined his ancestors in death. ⁷⁰ He died in the year 166 B.C. and was placed in his ancestors' tomb at Modein. All the people in Israel held a solemn ceremony to mourn his death.

3

Judas Maccabeus Takes Mattathias' Place—2 Maccabees 8:1-7

¹ Then Mattathias' son Judas (who was called Maccabeus) took his father's place. ² All of Judas' brothers and all who had faithfully supported his father helped Judas. They were happy to fight for Israel.

- 3** Judas brought his people widespread honor.
He wore his breastplate like a hero.
He put on his weapons, fought battles,
and used his sword to protect his camp.
- 4** He was like a lion in everything he did,
like a young lion when it roars at its prey.
- 5** He hunted down those who didn't follow Moses' Teachings.
He set fire to the cities of those who caused trouble for his people.
- 6** Those who didn't follow Moses' Teachings retreated in fear.
Everyone who rejected Moses' Teachings became confused.
He used his own power to successfully rescue his people.
- 7** He made life bitter for many kings,
but he made Jacob's descendants happy with everything he did.
He will be remembered and praised forever.
- 8** He went through the cities of Judea
and destroyed Jews who had betrayed their religion.
He turned God's anger away from Israel.
- 9** His name became known throughout the world.
He united those who were about to be destroyed.

Judas Defeats Apollonius

¹⁰ Then Apollonius recruited some foreigners (including a large army from Samaria) to fight Israel. ¹¹ When Judas found out about this, he attacked Apollonius. He defeated Apollonius and killed him. Many of Apollonius' soldiers were killed, and the rest of them fled. ¹² Judas and his men looted the enemy. Judas took Apollonius' sword and used it in battle for the rest of his life.

Judas Defeats Seron

¹³ Seron, the commander of the Syrian army, heard that Judas had gathered a group of followers. This group was made up of men who were loyal to God and who were ready to help Judas fight. ¹⁴ Seron thought to himself, "I can become famous and honored in the kingdom. I'll fight Judas and his men, since they have no respect for the king's orders." ¹⁵ A powerful army of Jews who had betrayed their religion went with Seron to help him punish the people of Israel.

¹⁶ When Seron reached the pass at Beth Horon, Judas went to attack him with the few men that he had. ¹⁷ But when Judas' men saw Seron's army coming to attack them, they said to Judas, "We don't have enough men. How can we fight such a large and powerful army? Besides, we're weak because we haven't eaten anything today."

¹⁸ Judas replied, "A few men can easily surround and overpower many. The LORD^e doesn't care if the rescue is made by many men or by a few. ¹⁹ Victory doesn't depend on the size of the armies that are fighting but on the strength that comes from the LORD. ²⁰ Seron and his army are coming to attack us. They'll do anything to kill us, our wives, and our children. They want to take everything we have. ²¹ We're fighting for our lives and our religious traditions. ²² The LORD will defeat Seron and his army right in front of our eyes, so don't be afraid of them."

²³ When Judas finished speaking, he and his men suddenly attacked Seron and his army. Seron and his army were defeated right in front of them. ²⁴ Judas and his men chased them down the pass at Beth Horon and into the plain. About 800 of Seron's soldiers were killed. The rest of them fled into Philistine territory. ²⁵ Then the nations around them became afraid. They were

^e 3:18 Greek "Heaven." The author of 1 Maccabees uses the word *Heaven* in place of God's name, the LORD.

terrified of Judas and his brothers. ²⁶ Even King Antiochus heard about Judas' reputation, and people in foreign countries talked about the battles that Judas had fought.

King Antiochus Plans to Destroy Judea

²⁷ When King Antiochus heard the reports about Judas, he became furious. So he ordered all the armies in his kingdom to assemble into one large, powerful army. ²⁸ He took money from his treasury, gave a year's pay to his soldiers, and ordered them to be ready for duty. ²⁹ Afterward, he realized that his treasury was out of money because tax revenues from his territory had decreased. This decrease was due to the disorder and disaster he had caused by doing away with the religious traditions that people had been following for a long time. ³⁰ He was afraid that he wouldn't have sufficient funds. This had happened once or twice before when he needed the funds for his expenses and for the gifts that he gave. (He used to give people more generous gifts than previous kings.) ³¹ Antiochus didn't know what to do. Eventually, he decided to raise a lot of money by going to the country of Persia to collect taxes from the territories there.

³² Antiochus appointed Lysias as his chief of state. Lysias was responsible for an area that extended from the Euphrates River to the borders of Egypt. He was a respected man who held the title "Relative of the King." ³³ Lysias was also responsible for taking care of the king's son, Antiochus V, until the king returned. ³⁴ King Antiochus gave his elephants and half of his army to Lysias. He told Lysias everything he wanted done, especially what he wanted done to the people who lived in Judea and Jerusalem. ³⁵ He ordered Lysias to send an army to wipe out Israel's soldiers and the people left in Jerusalem. He also ordered Lysias to make sure that no one would remember that the Israelites ever lived there. ³⁶ He told Lysias to make foreigners settle throughout Israelite territory and to redistribute the land. ³⁷ Then, in the year 165 B.C., King Antiochus took the other half of his army and left Antioch, his capital city. He crossed the Euphrates River and marched through the inland territories.

Lysias Sends Troops to Judea—2 Maccabees 8:8-29, 34-36

³⁸ Lysias chose Nicanor, Gorgias, and Ptolemy (who was the son of Dorymenes) to command his army. They were influential men who held the title "Friend of the King." ³⁹ Lysias sent them with 40,000 infantrymen and 7,000 cavalrymen into Judea to destroy it as the king had ordered. ⁴⁰ So these men left with their entire army and eventually camped in the plain near the city of Emmaus. ⁴¹ An army from Syria and Philistia joined them there. The slave traders in the region heard about this impressive army. So they took a lot of money and chains and went to the camp. They wanted to buy Israelites to sell as slaves.

⁴² Judas and his brothers saw that they were in a lot of trouble because of the armies that were camped in their territory. In addition, they found out that the king had ordered Lysias to destroy the Jewish people. ⁴³ So they said to each other, "Let's get back everything that our nation has lost. Let's fight for our nation and our holy place." ⁴⁴ Then the Jewish community gathered to prepare for battle and to pray for God's mercy and compassion.

⁴⁵ Jerusalem was as difficult to live in as a desert.
None of its citizens entered or left the city.
People were trampling its holy place.
Foreigners controlled the fortress
and made it a place for other foreigners to stay.
Jacob's descendants were no longer happy.
No one played flutes and harps anymore.

⁴⁶ Then Judas, his brothers, and the Jewish community went to Mizpah because Mizpah was a place where the Israelites went to pray in the past. From Mizpah they could see Jerusalem. ^{f 47} All day long they fasted, wore sackcloth, sprinkled ashes on their heads, and tore their clothes in grief. ⁴⁸ They opened the Book of Moses' Teachings and searched for answers. (People in other nations search for answers from the statues of their false gods.) ^{g 49} Israelites brought the clothes that the priests wear, the first produce harvested, and one-tenth of their income. They even encouraged the Nazirites who had completed their vows to go to Mizpah. ⁵⁰ Everyone there prayed loudly to the LORD, "What should we do with all these things that we've brought? Where should we take them?" ⁵¹ Your holy place has been trampled and dishonored. Your priests are in mourning and are humiliated. ⁵² Look around at the nations! They have assembled to destroy us. You know what they plan to do to us. ⁵³ How can we stand up to them if you don't help us?" ⁵⁴ Then they blew trumpets and shouted.

^f 3:46 Or "Mizpah faces Jerusalem."

^g 3:48 Greek meaning of this sentence uncertain.

55 After this, Judas divided his men into groups of 10, 50, 100, and 1,000 and appointed a leader for each group. **56** He sent home those who were building houses, those who were engaged to be married, those who were planting a vineyard, and those who were scared. This is what Moses' Teachings required. **57** Then Judas' army left Mizpah and camped south of the city of Emmaus.

58 Judas said, "Prepare to fight with all your might! Be ready early in the morning to fight these foreigners who have assembled to destroy us and our holy place. **59** Dying in battle is better than standing by and watching the terrible things that will be done to our nation and our holy place. **60** But the LORD will do whatever he wants."

4

Judas Defeats Gorgias

1 During the night, Gorgias left his camp with a division of 5,000 infantrymen and 1,000 of his best cavalrymen. **2** He wanted to take the Jewish camp by surprise, so he had some men from the fortress in Jerusalem as his guides. **3** When Judas heard about this, he and his soldiers left the camp. Judas wanted to attack the king's army at Emmaus **4** while Gorgias' troops were still separated from the rest of the army. **5** Gorgias entered Judas' camp during the night, but he didn't find anyone there. So he began looking for Judas and his soldiers in the mountains because he thought that they were running away.

6 At dawn Judas appeared in the plain with 3,000 soldiers. The soldiers didn't have as many weapons as they would have liked. **7** They saw that the foreigners' camp was strongly fortified and had cavalry surrounding it. They knew that these foreign soldiers were well trained. **8** But Judas said to his men, "Don't be afraid of how many men they have or get scared when they attack. **9** Remember how our ancestors were rescued at the Red Sea when Pharaoh was chasing them with his army. **10** Let's pray loudly to the LORD ^h now. If it pleases him, he will remember us and the promise ⁱ he made to our ancestors and will defeat the army we're going to face today. **11** Then every nation will know that Israel has someone to rescue it and set it free."

12 When the foreign soldiers ^j saw Judas and his army coming to attack them, **13** they marched out of their camp to fight. Then Judas' soldiers blew their trumpets, **14** and the battle began. The foreign soldiers were defeated. They ran into the plain, **15** and all who trailed behind were killed. Judas and his army chased the rest of them as far as the city of Gezer, the plains of Idumea, and the cities of Azotus and Jamnia. About 3,000 foreign soldiers were killed. **16** When Judas and his army returned from chasing them, **17** he said to his army, "Forget about taking loot right now. There's still more fighting ahead of us. **18** Gorgias and his army are in the mountains nearby. So for now, we have to stand up to our enemies and fight them. After that, take all the loot you want."

19 As soon as Judas had finished saying this, a division of foreign soldiers appeared. They were surveying the situation from the mountains. **20** When they saw smoke coming from their camp, they realized that their army had been defeated and that Judas' soldiers were burning the camp. **21** So they became really scared. When they also saw Judas' army ready to fight them in the plain, **22** all of them fled into Philistine territory. **23** Then Judas returned to loot their camp. He and his men took a lot of silver and gold, blue and purple cloth, and other riches. **24** As they returned to their own camp, they sang this hymn of praise to the LORD: "The LORD is good, because his mercy endures forever." **25** That day Israel was rescued in a wonderful way.

Judas Defeats Lysias—2 Maccabees 11:1-12

26 The foreign soldiers who survived reported to Lysias. When he heard everything that had happened, **27** he became upset and discouraged. Things in Israel had not turned out the way he had intended or as the king had ordered.

28 During the following year, Lysias organized 60,000 of his best infantrymen and 5,000 cavalrymen to fight Judas' army. **29** They advanced into Idumea and set up camp near the city of Beth Zur, where Judas met them with 10,000 soldiers.

30 Judas saw that Lysias had a powerful army, so he prayed, "Savior of Israel, we praise you! You used your servant David to defeat the mighty warrior Goliath, and you handed over the Philistine camp to Saul's son Jonathan and to the man who carried his weapons. **31** Do the same for us! Let your people Israel surround this army, and let the foreigners' army and cavalry be put to shame. **32** Scare them and make them powerless. Let them suffer a crushing defeat. **33** Use the weapons of those who love you to destroy them. Let everyone who knows your name sing hymns of praise to you."

^h 4:10 Greek "to Heaven." The author of 1 Maccabees uses the word *Heaven* in place of God's name, the LORD.

ⁱ 4:10 Or "covenant."

^j 4:12 Greek "the Philistines."

34 Then both sides attacked. About 5,000 of Lysias' men were killed in the front lines. **35** Lysias saw that his troops were being defeated and that Judas' troops had courage and were ready to live or die honorably. So he retreated to the city of Antioch and began hiring an even larger number of foreign soldiers so that he could invade Judea again.

The Holy Place Is Cleansed and the New Altar Is Dedicated

—2 Maccabees 10:1-8

36 Then Judas and his brothers said, "Our enemies have been defeated. Let's go to Jerusalem to cleanse and rededicate the holy place." **37** So all the soldiers in Judas' army assembled and went to Mount Zion. **38** They saw that the holy place was deserted, that the altar had been dishonored, and that the gates had been burned down. Weeds were growing all over the courtyards like in a forest or on a mountainside, and the priests' rooms were in ruins. **39** Judas and his soldiers tore their clothes in grief, mourned, sprinkled ashes on themselves, **40** and bowed with their faces touching the ground. When the signal was given with trumpets, the people prayed loudly to the LORD.

41 Judas ordered some of his soldiers to fight the enemy troops who were in the fortress while he cleansed the holy place. **42** Judas chose some priests who led holy lives and were devoted to Moses' Teachings. **43** These priests cleansed the holy place. They removed the stones that had been dishonored and put them in an unclean^k place. **44** Then they discussed what they should do with the altar used for burnt offerings since it had been dishonored. **45** They came up with a good plan. They decided to tear down the altar so that they wouldn't be disgraced by the way the nations had dishonored it. So they tore down the altar. **46** They stored its stones in a suitable place on the temple mountain and left them there until a prophet would come to tell them what to do with them. **47** They took uncut stones, as Moses' Teachings required, and built a new altar like the original one. **48** They also rebuilt the holy place and cleansed the interior of the temple and its courtyards. **49** They made new utensils that were holy, and they brought the lamp stand, the altar for incense, and the table for the bread of the presence into the temple. **50** Then they burned incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lamp stand to light up the temple. **51** They put bread on the table, hung the curtains, and finished all their work.

52 On the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month (the month of Chislew) in the year 164 B.C., **53** the people got up early in the morning. As Moses' Teachings required, they offered a sacrifice on the new altar that they had built. **54** While the altar was being dedicated, people sang and played music on harps, lyres, and cymbals. The dedication took place on the anniversary of the day that the foreigners had dishonored the original altar. **55** All the people bowed with their faces touching the ground. They worshiped and praised the LORD for the success he had given them.

56 The people celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days. They joyfully offered burnt offerings, fellowship offerings, and thank offerings. **57** They redecorated the front of the temple with gold molding and decorations. They even rededicated the gates and the priests' rooms and installed new doors. **58** The people were extremely happy because they had removed the disgrace brought on them by the foreigners.

59 Then Judas, his brothers, and the entire assembly of Israel established these days as holidays for the Jews to celebrate the altar's dedication. At the same time every year, eight days were celebrated with joy and happiness. The celebration was to begin on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislew.

60 At that time they also rebuilt the high walls and fortified towers that surrounded Mount Zion. Never again did they want foreigners to trample the holy place. **61** Judas assigned a special army to guard Mount Zion. He also fortified the city of Beth Zur so that the people would have a fortress that faced Idumea.

5

Wars With the Surrounding Nations

—2 Maccabees 10:14-33; 12:10-45

1 When the surrounding nations heard that the Jews had built a new altar and had rededicated the holy place, they became very angry. **2** They decided to destroy Jacob's descendants who lived among them. So they began to murder people to get rid of them.

3 Judas went to war with Esau's descendants in the region called Akrabattene in Idumea. He did this because they were trying to set up a blockade around Israel. He overwhelmingly defeated them and then humiliated them by taking all their weapons.

4 After that, Judas remembered how badly the descendants of Baean had treated the Israelites. The descendants of Baean caused

^k 4:43 "Unclean" refers to anything that Moses' Teachings say is not presentable to God.

serious problems for the Israelites because they ambushed them on the highways. ⁵ So Judas surrounded them and forced them into their fortified towers. He set up camp by the towers so that they couldn't get out. He vowed to destroy them completely and did so by burning up their fortified towers and everyone who was in them.

⁶ Next, Judas went to attack the Ammonites. He found out that they had a very large, powerful army and that Timothy was their leader. ⁷ Judas fought many battles with them and eventually defeated them. ⁸ He took possession of the city of Jazer and the villages around it. Then he returned to Judea.

⁹ The foreigners in Gilead joined forces to attack the Israelites who lived in their territory. They wanted to get rid of them. But the Israelites fled to the fortification in the city of Dathema. ¹⁰ From there they sent the following message to Judas and his brothers: "The foreigners who live around us have joined forces. They want to get rid of us. ¹¹ They are preparing to take possession of the fortification where we have fled for protection. Timothy is the leader of their army. ¹² Come immediately and rescue us because they have already killed many of our people. ¹³ All our relatives who were soldiers for Tobias have been killed. The foreigners have taken their wives and children as prisoners and have also taken their property and destroyed a division of about 1,000 soldiers here."

¹⁴ While Judas and his brothers were reading the letter, other messengers arrived from Galilee with their clothes torn in grief. These messengers reported ¹⁵ that the people from Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, and all the foreigners ¹ in Galilee had also joined forces to wipe them out. ¹⁶ When Judas and his army heard these messages, they held a meeting that everyone attended. They wanted to decide what to do to help the Jewish people who were in trouble because of enemy attacks. ¹⁷ Then Judas said to his brother Simon, "Choose some soldiers, and go to rescue the people in Galilee. Jonathan and I will go to Gilead." ¹⁸ Judas left the rest of his soldiers in Judea to defend it and placed Azariah and Joseph (who was Zechariah's son) in charge of them. ¹⁹ Judas gave Azariah and Joseph this order: "You are in charge of these soldiers. Don't fight any battles with the foreigners until we return." ²⁰ Then a division of 3,000 soldiers went with Simon to Galilee, and a division of 8,000 soldiers went with Judas to Gilead.

²¹ Simon went to Galilee and fought a number of battles against the foreigners and defeated them. ²² He chased them to the city gate of Ptolemais. About 3,000 foreign soldiers were killed, and Simon took their weapons. ²³ Then he led the men, women, and children out of Galilee and the Arbatta region. Simon took them and all their possessions back to Judea. Everyone was very happy.

²⁴ Meanwhile, Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan River and marched for three days into the desert. ²⁵ They met the Nabateans and exchanged friendly greetings with them. The Nabateans told them everything that had happened to the Jewish people in Gilead. ²⁶ They told Judas and Jonathan that many Jewish people were trapped in the fortified cities of Bozrah, Bosor (in Alema), Chaspho, Maked, and Karnaim. ²⁷ In addition, the Nabateans said that some Jewish people were trapped in other cities in Gilead, that the enemy was going to attack these fortifications the next day, and that the enemy intended to capture and get rid of all these Jewish people in a single day.

²⁸ Then Judas and his army quickly changed direction and took a desert road that led to the city of Bozrah. He captured Bozrah, killed all the men there, took all their weapons, and burned down the city. ²⁹ During the night, Judas and his army left Bozrah and marched to the fortress at the city of Dathema. ³⁰ Early in the morning, they saw an army so large that they couldn't even count the soldiers. The soldiers were carrying ladders to climb over the walls of the city. They were also carrying large weapons to capture the fortification. These soldiers were just starting to fight the people inside the fortification. ³¹ When Judas heard battle cries, loud shouting, and the sound of trumpets coming from the city, he knew that the battle had begun.

³² So Judas said to the soldiers in his army, "Fight for your people today!" ³³ Then Judas marched with three companies of soldiers to attack the enemy from the rear. They blew their trumpets and prayed loudly for help. ³⁴ When Timothy's soldiers saw Judas Maccabeus, they fled and were overwhelmingly defeated. About 8,000 of Timothy's troops were killed that day.

³⁵ Next, Judas marched to the city of Maapha. He fought against Maapha, captured it, and killed every man there. Then he looted and burned down the city. ³⁶ He left Maapha and took possession of the cities of Chaspho, Maked, Bosor, and the other cities in Gilead.

³⁷ After this, Timothy recruited another army and set up camp on the other side of a river facing the city of Raphon. ³⁸ Judas sent men to spy on Timothy's camp. The spies reported to Judas that all the foreigners in the surrounding territories had formed a very large army under Timothy's command. ³⁹ They also reported that Timothy had hired Arab soldiers to help him and that Timothy and his army had set up camp across the river and were ready to attack. So Judas went to attack them.

⁴⁰ As Judas and his army approached the river, Timothy said to the commanders of his army, "If Judas crosses the river before we do, we won't be able to stand up to him, and he'll overpower us. ⁴¹ But if he's scared and stops on the other side, we'll cross the river and overpower him."

⁴² When Judas arrived at the river, he placed officers there and ordered them not to let the soldiers stop but to make all of them cross the river and fight. ⁴³ Judas was the first to cross the river to attack the foreigners, and his whole army followed him. He and his men defeated the entire foreign army. The foreigners threw down their weapons and fled to the city of Karnaim, where they

¹ 5:15 Greek "the Philistines."

went into a temple dedicated to false gods. ⁴⁴ Judas captured the city and burned down the temple with everyone in it. After the defeat at Karnaim, the foreigners could no longer stand up to Judas.

⁴⁵ Then Judas gathered all the Israelites living in Gilead to take them back with him to Judea. This very large group consisted of rich and poor men with their wives, children, and personal belongings. ⁴⁶ They went as far as Ephron, a large and heavily fortified city. Since the city was built on the road, they couldn't go around it. They had to go through it. ⁴⁷ But the citizens of Ephron wouldn't let them enter their city, and they blocked the city gates with stones.

⁴⁸ Judas sent the citizens of Ephron this message: "We come in peace. Let us pass through your territory to get to our own. No one will harm you. All we want to do is to walk through." But the citizens of Ephron wouldn't allow Judas to enter their city. ⁴⁹ Then Judas ordered the entire army to camp right where they were. ⁵⁰ So the army set up camp there. Judas fought against the city all day and all night until he captured it. ⁵¹ He had all the men in the city killed. Then he looted and leveled the city and marched through it over the dead bodies.

⁵² Judas and the people crossed the Jordan River into the large plain that faced the city of Beth Shan. ⁵³ Along the way Judas kept the stragglers together and encouraged the people until they arrived in Judea. ⁵⁴ They went joyfully and happily to Mount Zion. There they sacrificed burnt offerings because they had returned safely without suffering any casualties.

⁵⁵ While Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead and their brother Simon was in Galilee near the city of Ptolemais, ⁵⁶ Joseph (who was Zechariah's son) and Azariah were in charge of the army left in Judea. Joseph and Azariah heard about the brave things that Judas, Jonathan, and Simon had done and about the wars they had fought. ⁵⁷ So Joseph and Azariah said, "We can become famous too. Let's fight the foreigners who live around us." ⁵⁸ They ordered the part of the army that they were in charge of to attack the city of Jamnia. ⁵⁹ Gorgias and his soldiers marched out of Jamnia to meet them in battle. ⁶⁰ Gorgias defeated Joseph and Azariah and chased them to the borders of Judea. About 2,000 men from Israel's army died that day. ⁶¹ So part of Israel's army was decisively defeated because Joseph and Azariah thought they, too, could be heroes and didn't obey Judas and his brothers. ⁶² Besides, Joseph and Azariah were not part of the family through whom Israel was to be rescued.

⁶³ Judas and his brothers were highly honored wherever their reputation spread. Throughout Israel and the nations, ⁶⁴ people crowded around them and praised them.

⁶⁵ Then Judas and his brothers went south to fight Esau's descendants. Judas defeated the city of Hebron and the villages around it. He also tore down its fortifications and burned up the towers that surrounded it. ⁶⁶ Then he left that foreign territory and marched through the city of Marisa. ⁶⁷ That day some priests recklessly went into battle and died, because they, too, wanted to become heroes. ⁶⁸ Next, Judas marched to the Philistine city of Azotus. He tore down its altars, burned up the carved statues of its gods, and looted other Philistine cities. Then he returned to Judea.

6

The Death of Antiochus IV

—2 Maccabees 1:11-17; 9:1-29; 10:9-11

¹ As King Antiochus was marching through the inland territories, he heard about a city famous for its large amounts of silver and gold. The city was located in the territory of Elymais in Persia. ² He also heard that the temple in Elymais was very rich. In the temple were gold helmets, breastplates, and weapons left by Macedonia's King Alexander, Philip's son. Alexander was the first king to rule the Greek Empire. ³ So Antiochus went to Elymais and tried to capture and loot the city. But he was unable to do this because the people in the city found out about his plan. ⁴ They resisted him in battle. So he fled from there to return to Babylon. He was very depressed.

⁵ While Antiochus was in Persia, a messenger came to him and reported that the armies which had marched to Judea had been defeated. ⁶ The messenger reported that Lysias led a powerful army into battle against the Israelites and had suffered a humiliating defeat. So the Israelites were even more powerful now because of the weapons, supplies, and the large amount of loot they had taken from the armies they had destroyed. ⁷ The Israelites had torn down the disgusting thing that Antiochus had built on the altar in Jerusalem. They had built high walls around the holy place as in the past, and they had even built walls around Beth Zur, his city.^m

⁸ The king was stunned and very upset when he heard this report. He was so depressed about things not turning out the way he had planned that he became sick and went to bed. ⁹ He couldn't get over his depression, and he realized that he was about to die. So he stayed in bed for many days. ¹⁰ He summoned all those who held the title "Friend of the King" and said to them, "I'm very worried, and I can't sleep." ¹¹ I thought to myself, 'How did I ever get into the kind of trouble I'm in now? After all, I've always

^m6:7 Some manuscripts read "their city."

been kind, and people loved the way I ruled.” **12** But then I remembered all the terrible things I did to Jerusalem. I took all its silver and gold utensils. Without any good reason, I sent armies to destroy the people who live in Judea. **13** Now I know that all these things are happening to me because of the terrible things I’ve done. I’m being destroyed by depression in a foreign land.”

14 Then Antiochus summoned Philip, who held the title “Friend of the King,” and put him in charge of his entire kingdom.

15 Antiochus wanted Philip to raise his son Antiochus V and to train him to be the next king. So he gave his crown, robe, and signet ring to Philip. **16** King Antiochus died in Persia in the year 163 B.C.

17 When Lysias learned that the king was dead, he appointed the king’s son Antiochus V to be king. Lysias had raised the king’s son from childhood and named him Eupator.

Judas Maccabeus Attacks the Fortress in Jerusalem

—*2 Maccabees 13:1-26; 11:22-26*

18 Meanwhile, the men from the fortress surrounded the people of Israel in the holy place. They wanted to harm the people in every way possible and to give support to the foreigners. **19** Judas decided to get rid of these men. So he assembled his entire army to set up a blockade against them. **20** The army set up the blockade around the fortress in the year 162 B.C. Judas had catapults and other large weapons built.

21 Even though the fortress was surrounded, some of the men escaped, and some Israelites who had betrayed their religion joined them. **22** They went to King Antiochus V and asked him, “How long are you going to wait before you take revenge for what has been done to the people of our country?” **23** We willingly served your father, obeyed everything he said, and followed his official orders. **24** As a result, our own people have set up a blockade around the fortress and have become our enemies. In addition, they have killed as many of us as they could find and have looted our possessions. **25** We’re not the only ones they’ve attacked. They’ve also attacked the people who live on their borders. **26** Just look at what they’ve done! Today they’ve attacked the fortress in Jerusalem and are planning to capture it. They’ve fortified the holy place and the city of Beth Zur. **27** Unless you stop them immediately, they’ll do things that are even worse, and you’ll never be able to stop them.”

King Antiochus V Defeats Judas

28 When King Antiochus V heard this, he became angry. He assembled all the commanders of his troops and cavalry, the commanders who held the title “Friend of the King.” **29** He also hired troops from other kingdoms and from the Greek islands. **30** He had 100,000 infantrymen, 20,000 cavalymen, and 32 elephants that were trained for war. **31** They marched through Idumea, set up camp at the city of Beth Zur, made large weapons, and fought against the city for a long time. But the Jews marched out of the city, burned the weapons, and fought bravely.

32 Then Judas left the fortress and moved to a position that blocked the king’s army near the city of Beth Zechariah. **33** Early in the morning the king left his camp and quickly positioned his troops along the road that led to Beth Zechariah. His troops prepared for battle and blew their trumpets. **34** They used grape and mulberry wine to arouse the elephants for battle. **35** They positioned the elephants throughout the battle lines. Stationed with each elephant were 1,000 well-equipped soldiers wearing brass helmets and 500 of the best cavalymen. **36** These soldiers always went wherever the elephants went. They never left them. **37** A wooden shield was fastened by special straps on the back of each elephant. Each elephant carried an elephant driver and four soldiers, who fought from behind the shield. **38** Lysias stationed the rest of the cavalry on each end of the battle line. The cavalry would harass the enemy and protect the battle lines. **39** When sunlight reflected off the soldiers’ polished bronze shields, the hillside sparkled like flaming torches.

40 One division of the king’s army marched in formation on the hillsides. The other division marched in formation in the valley. Their orderly movement showed that they were well-organized. **41** All the soldiers in Judas’ army were afraid when they heard the king’s soldiers shouting, marching, and clashing their weapons. The king’s army was very large and powerful.

42 Judas and his army advanced into battle and killed 600 of the king’s soldiers. **43** Eleazar Avaran saw that one of the elephants was covered with royal armor and that it was taller than all the other elephants. So he thought that the king was riding on it. **44** Eleazar risked his life to save his people and make himself famous forever. **45** He boldly ran into the middle of the battle line and cut a path to the elephant by killing soldiers on his right and left. **46** When he got to the elephant, he stabbed and killed it. But the elephant fell to the ground on top of Eleazar and killed him. **47** Judas and his soldiers retreated because they saw how powerful the king’s troops were and how fiercely they were fighting.

King Antiochus V Makes a Peace Treaty With the Jews

48 The king and his army went to Jerusalem to fight the Jews. The king set up military camps in Judea and at Mount Zion. **49** He made a peace treaty with the citizens of Beth Zur. After this, the citizens of Beth Zur left the city because they didn't have enough food to withstand a blockade. The land had not been cultivated that year because that year was a festival year for the land. **50** The king captured Beth Zur and stationed soldiers there to guard it. **51** Then he camped near the holy place for a long time. He set up many kinds of catapults and other large weapons to throw flaming objects, stones, and arrows. **52** The Jews made large weapons to match the king's and fought the king and his army for a long time. **53** But they had no food in storage, because that year was a festival year for the land. Those who had been rescued from the foreigners and brought back to Judea had eaten the last of the food supply. **54** Only a few men were left in the holy place. The rest scattered to their homes because the food shortage was so severe.

55 While King Antiochus IV was still alive, he had appointed Philip to train his son Antiochus V to be the next king. Now Lysias heard that Philip had returned from Persia and Media with the king's armyⁿ **56** and was trying to take over the government. **57** So he quickly ordered his soldiers to withdraw. He said to the king, the army commanders, and the soldiers, "We are growing weaker every day. We're running short of supplies, and the place that we're fighting is strong. We have more important matters to take care of in the kingdom. **58** So let's make a peace treaty with the Jews and their entire nation. **59** Let's make an agreement that will allow them to live by their own religious traditions as they did before. They became angry and did all these things because we abolished their traditions."

60 The king and his commanders liked what Lysias said. So the king sent the terms for a peace treaty to the Jews, and the Jews accepted them. **61** After the king and his commanders had promised with an oath to abide by the peace treaty, the Jews came out of the fortress. **62** But when the king was on Mount Zion and saw how the Jews had fortified the place, he broke his promise and ordered his soldiers to tear down the wall that surrounded it. **63** Then he quickly left and returned to the city of Antioch, where he found Philip in control of the city. The king and his army fought Philip and captured the city by force.

7

Demetrius I Becomes King—2 Maccabees 14:1-36; 15:1-36

1 In the year 161 B.C., Demetrius I (who was the son of Seleucus) left Rome and sailed with a few men to Tripolis, a city on the coast, where he began to rule as king. **2** As Demetrius was marching into Antioch, the capital city of his ancestors, his soldiers arrested Antiochus and Lysias and intended to bring them to him. **3** But when Demetrius found out about this, he told his soldiers, "I don't want to see them!" **4** So the soldiers killed Antiochus and Lysias, and Demetrius took control of the kingdom.

5 Then all the Israelites who betrayed their religion by not following Moses' Teachings went to Demetrius. Alcimus, who wanted to be chief priest, was their leader. **6** They brought accusations to the king against their own people. They said, "Judas and his brothers have killed all your friends, and they have forced us to leave our country. **7** Send someone you trust to inspect all the destruction that Judas has caused to our property and to your territory, Your Majesty. Let him punish Judas, Judas' brothers, and everyone who supports them."

Demetrius Sends Bacchides and Alcimus to Punish Judea

8 So King Demetrius chose Bacchides. Bacchides was one of the people who held the title "Friend of the King" and was governor of the territory west of the Euphrates River. He was an important man in the kingdom and was loyal to the king. **9** Demetrius sent Bacchides and Alcimus to punish the people of Israel. (Demetrius had appointed Alcimus as chief priest even though Alcimus had betrayed the Jewish religion.) **10** So Bacchides and Alcimus left Antioch with a large army and marched into Judea. Bacchides sent messengers to Judas and his brothers with a friendly greeting, but he was really trying to deceive them. **11** Judas and his brothers didn't pay any attention to what the messengers said because they saw that Bacchides and Alcimus had come with a large army.

12 Then a group of scribes went to Alcimus and Bacchides and asked for a fair agreement. **13** These scribes, who belonged to a group of Jewish people called the Hasidim, were the first Israelites to seek a peace treaty with Alcimus and Bacchides. **14** They thought, "Alcimus is with the army. He is a priest and a descendant of Aaron. He won't harm us."

ⁿ 6:55 The first part of verse 56 has been placed in verse 55 to express the complex Greek sentence structure more clearly in English.

15 Alcimus spoke in a friendly way to the scribes. He promised with an oath not to harm them or their friends. **16** So the Hasidim trusted him. But Alcimus had 60 of them arrested and killed on the same day. The passage that Alcimus himself wrote came true.

17 "They poured out the blood of your Hasidim
and left their dead bodies lying around Jerusalem.
There is no one to bury your people."

18 After this, all the Israelites were terrified. They said, "These men don't know anything about truth or justice. They broke our agreement. They didn't keep their promise."

19 Bacchides left Jerusalem and set up camp near the city of Beth Zaith. He seized many of the Jews who had deserted to his side and some other Jewish people. He had them slaughtered and thrown into a large cistern. **20** He put Alcimus in charge of the country and left an army with him to give him support. Then Bacchides returned to the king.

21 Alcimus continually struggled to remain chief priest. **22** All the troublemakers in the country joined him. They overwhelmingly defeated Israel and took control of Judea. **23** Judas saw all the terrible things that Alcimus and his men had done to the people of Israel. He realized that these things were much worse than anything the foreigners were doing. **24** So Judas went throughout the entire territory of Judea and punished those who had deserted, and he prevented people from leaving the city to go into the countryside. **25** Alcimus saw that Judas and his men had become powerful. He realized that he couldn't stand up to Judas and his men anymore, so he returned to the king and brought criminal charges against them.

King Demetrius Sends Nicanor to Get Rid of the Israelites

26 Then King Demetrius sent Nicanor, who was one of his most respected commanders, to Judea. Nicanor had a bitter hatred for the people of Israel. The king ordered Nicanor to get rid of the Israelites. **27** So Nicanor went to Jerusalem with a large army. He sent messengers to Judas and his brothers with a friendly greeting, but he was really trying to deceive them. He said, **28** "Let's not fight. I'll come with a few men to meet with you peacefully."

29 When Nicanor went to meet Judas, both men greeted each other peacefully. But Judas' enemies were ready to take him by force. **30** Judas found out that Nicanor had deceived him. So Judas was afraid of him and refused to meet with him again.

31 When Nicanor found out that Judas knew about his plan, he attacked Judas near the city of Caphar Salama. **32** About 500 of Nicanor's soldiers were killed. The rest of his soldiers fled into David's city.

Nicanor Threatens to Burn Down the Temple

33 After this, Nicanor went to Mount Zion. Some of the priests from the holy place and some of the leaders of the Jewish people went to greet him peacefully. They wanted to show him the burnt offering that was being sacrificed for the king. **34** But Nicanor mocked the priests, laughed at them, and made them unclean^o (by spitting on them). He spoke arrogantly, **35** and he angrily swore this oath: "Unless Judas and his army are handed over to me right now, I'll burn down this temple when I come back from my victory." He was extremely angry when he left.

36 The priests went back to the holy place and stood in front of the altar and the temple. They cried and prayed,

37 "LORD, you chose this temple and placed your name here.
You chose it to be a house of prayer,
a house where your people can pray to you.

38 Punish Nicanor and his army.
Let them die in battle.
Remember the slanderous things they said,
and don't let any of them survive."

Nicanor Is Killed in Battle

39 Nicanor marched from Jerusalem and set up camp near the city of Beth Horon. The Syrian army joined him there. **40** Judas had 3,000 soldiers with him and set up camp near the city of Adasa. Then Judas prayed, **41** "LORD, when King Sennacherib's messengers said disgusting things, your angel killed 185,000 of his soldiers. **42** In the same way, defeat the army we're

^o 7:34 "Unclean" refers to anything that Moses' Teachings say is not presentable to God.

going to face today. Let everyone know that Nicanor said terrible things about your holy place. Judge him for the terrible things he has done.”

43 The armies fought on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. Nicanor’s army was defeated, and he was the first one killed in battle. **44** When the soldiers in Nicanor’s army saw that he had been killed, they threw down their weapons and fled. **45** Judas and his soldiers chased them all day long from the city of Adasa to the city of Gezer. They kept sounding the battle call on their trumpets as they chased Nicanor’s soldiers. **46** People came from all the surrounding Judean villages, outflanked Nicanor’s soldiers, and forced them to turn back toward those who were chasing them. As a result, all of Nicanor’s soldiers were killed in battle. Not even one of them survived. **47** Then the people stripped them of their valuables and looted their camp. They cut off Nicanor’s head and his right hand, which he had raised so arrogantly (when he threatened to burn down the temple). The people brought his head and hand to a place near Jerusalem and put them on display. **48** The people were very happy. They set that day apart as a special day for joyful celebration. **49** They established the thirteenth day of the month of Adar to celebrate as an annual holiday. **50** So Judea had peace for a short time.

8

Judas Learns About the Romans

1 Judas heard about the reputation of the Romans. He heard that they were very powerful, that they welcomed anyone who wanted to become their allies, and that they had established friendly relations with everyone who approached them. **2** People had told Judas about the wars the Romans had fought, about the brave things that they had done in their war against the Gauls, and about how they had conquered the Gauls and forced them to pay taxes. **3** People had also told Judas what the Romans had done in Spain to take control of the silver and gold mines there. **4** By using careful planning and patience, the Romans had taken over that whole region, even though it was far away from Rome. The Romans had fought kings who had come from distant places to attack them. They fought these kings until they had overwhelmingly defeated and conquered them. The survivors still pay taxes to them every year.

5 The Romans had also fought and conquered Philip, Macedonia’s King Perseus, and everyone else who had opposed them. **6** They had defeated Syria’s King Antiochus the Great,^P even though he had a very large army consisting of cavalry, chariots, and 120 elephants. **7** They took Antiochus alive and forced him and the kings who ruled after him to pay high taxes, to give them hostages, and to turn over to them **8** India, Media, and Lydia, which were some of the best provinces. The Romans took these provinces from Antiochus and gave them to King Eumenes.

9 The Greeks had planned to destroy the Romans, **10** but the Romans found out about their plan and sent a general to fight them. The Romans wounded and killed many Greeks, took their wives and children as prisoners, looted their property, took possession of their land, tore down their fortresses, and made them slaves, as they are today. **11** The Romans had also destroyed all the other kingdoms and Greek islands that opposed them, and they made the people in these places slaves. **12** But the Romans maintained friendly relations with those who were on good terms with them and who relied on them. They conquered kings from far and near, and everyone who heard about their reputation was afraid of them. **13** Whoever the Romans wanted to become king was made king, and whoever they didn’t want to be king was removed from office and killed.

So the Romans had become very powerful. **14** Yet, no Roman ever put on a crown or wore royal robes to show off his power. **15** The Romans had formed a senate. Every day 320 senators met to discuss issues that affected the Roman people in order to govern their people well. **16** Each year the Romans relied on one man to rule them and to control all their land. Everyone obeyed that man, and no one was envious or jealous of him.

Judas Makes an Alliance With Rome

17 Judas chose Eupolemus (who was John’s son and Accos’ grandson) and Jason (who was Eleazar’s son) and sent them to Rome. He wanted to establish friendly relations with the Romans and make an alliance that would **18** free the Jewish people from oppression. The Romans knew that the Greeks were making slaves out of the people of Israel. **19** That’s why Eupolemus and Jason made the long trip to Rome. They entered the senate and addressed it as follows: **20** “Judas Maccabeus, his brothers, and the Jewish people have sent us to make an alliance and a peace treaty with you. We want to be included in your list of friends and allies.”

21 The Romans were pleased with the Jews’ proposal. **22** The following letter is a copy of the reply that the Romans wrote on bronze plaques. They sent these plaques to Jerusalem to remain there as a record of the peace treaty and the alliance. The letter read:

^P 8:6 Antiochus the Great is another name for Antiochus III.

23 “May everything always go well on land and sea between the Romans and the Jewish nation. May we never become enemies and go to war against each other.

24 “If war breaks out against Rome or against Rome’s allies, wherever they may be, **25** the Jewish nation, as Rome’s ally, must lend complete support to Rome as the situation requires. **26** As both parties agreed in Rome, the Jewish nation must not supply food, weapons, money, or ships to Rome’s enemy and must keep its commitments to Rome without expecting anything in return. **27** In the same way, if war breaks out against the Jewish nation, Rome, as its ally, must lend full support to the Jewish nation as the situation requires. **28** As both parties agreed in Rome, the Romans must not give food, weapons, money, or ships to an enemy of the Jewish nation and must keep their commitments to the Jewish nation in good faith.

29 “These are the terms of the treaty that the Romans made with the Jewish people. **30** If both parties agree to add or delete anything from this treaty after these terms are in effect, they may do so as they chose. Any addition or deletion that they make will be valid.

31 “We have written the following to King Demetrius about the way he is treating you: ‘Why have you oppressed the Jewish people? They are our friends and allies. **32** If they complain about you one more time, we will defend them. We will go to war against you on land and sea.’ ”

9

Judas Maccabeus Dies in Battle

1 Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army had been defeated in battle. So Demetrius sent Bacchides, Alcimus, and the right flank of his army to Judea again. **2** They marched on the road that leads to Gilgal and set up camp near Mesaloth in the vicinity of the city of Arbela. They took possession of Mesaloth and killed many people there. **3** In the first month of the year 160 B.C., they set up camp near Jerusalem. **4** Later, they left Jerusalem and went to the city of Berea with 20,000 infantrymen and 2,000 cavalrymen.

5 Judas set up camp near the city of Elasa. He had 3,000 of his best soldiers with him. **6** When Judas’ soldiers saw how many enemy troops there were, they became terrified. Many soldiers sneaked out of Judas’ camp until only 800 soldiers were left.

7 Judas realized that many of his soldiers had sneaked away and that he was going to be forced into battle. So he became worried because he didn’t have enough time to regroup. **8** Although he was discouraged, he said to the soldiers who were left, “Quick! Let’s attack our enemies. Maybe we still have enough men to fight them.”

9 His men tried to change his mind. They said to him, “We don’t have enough men. Let’s save our own lives and come back to fight them when the other men are with us. We just don’t have enough men right now.”

10 But Judas replied, “That’s unthinkable! We can’t run away. If it’s time for us to die, then let’s die bravely for our people. Let’s not give anyone a reason to question our honor.”

11 Bacchides’ army left its camp and got ready to attack Judas and his men. Bacchides’ cavalry was divided into two divisions. The soldiers who had slings for weapons, the archers, and all the best soldiers marched in the front lines. **12** Two infantry divisions formed the battle line, and Bacchides was on the right flank. Soldiers in both armies blew trumpets as they advanced. **13** The ground shook from all the noise that these armies made. The battle lasted from morning until evening.

14 Judas saw that Bacchides and the strongest part of his army were on the right. So all of Judas’ bravest men went with him. **15** They defeated the soldiers in the right flank, and chased them as far as Mount Azotus. **16** When the soldiers on the left flank saw that the right flank was defeated, they turned around, chased Judas and his men, and attacked them from behind. **17** The battle became fierce, and many soldiers on both sides were killed. **18** Eventually, Judas was killed, and the rest of his soldiers fled.

19 Jonathan and Simon took their brother Judas and placed him in their ancestors’ tomb in the city of Modein. **20** His brothers cried for him, and all the people in Israel held a solemn ceremony for many days to mourn his death. They said,

21 “How can this be?
Our hero Judas, the savior of Israel, is dead.”

22 Many other things about Judas—the wars he fought, the brave things he did, and the important things he accomplished—have not been recorded. There are just too many of them to write down.

Jonathan Takes Judas’ Place

23 After Judas died, the people who didn’t follow Moses’ Teachings came out of hiding throughout Israel, and all the wicked people reappeared. **24** At that time there was a severe famine, and the whole country deserted Judas’ brothers and sided with these

wicked people. **25** Bacchides chose Jews who had betrayed their religion and appointed them to be in charge of the country. **26** These men investigated Judas' friends, searched for them, and brought them to Bacchides, who punished and tortured them. **27** So the people of Israel were in serious trouble. This trouble was worse than any they had experienced since the last time prophets appeared to them.

28 Then all of Judas' friends went to Jonathan and said, **29** "Since your brother Judas died, we have no one like him to fight our enemies, enemies like Bacchides and our own people who hate us. **30** Today we have chosen you to be our commander and leader. We want you to take Judas' place and fight for us." **31** So Jonathan became their leader that day and took the place of his brother Judas.

32 When Bacchides found out about this, he wanted to kill Jonathan. **33** But Jonathan, his brother Simon, and everyone who was with them found out what Bacchides wanted to do. So they fled into the desert of Tekoa and camped by the pond of Asphar. **34** Bacchides learned about this on the day of worship, and he and his entire army marched across the Jordan River.

35 Jonathan sent his brother John, who was in charge of the common people, to his friends the Nabateans. He wanted John to ask the Nabateans if they would store all the personal belongings that the people were carrying with them. **36** But the Jambrates, who were from the city of Medeba, captured John and took everything he had.

37 Later, some people told Jonathan and his brother Simon that the Jambrates were about to celebrate an important marriage. The bride was a daughter from one of the most important families in Canaan. She was to be escorted by a large procession from the city of Nadabath. **38** Jonathan and Simon remembered that the Jambrates had murdered their brother. They went up a mountain and hid. **39** As they watched, they saw a noisy procession carrying a lot of personal belongings. The groom came to meet the procession with his friends and his brothers. There were also musicians playing drums and many other musical instruments. **40** Jonathan and his men ambushed the people in the procession and began to kill them. Many people were killed, and those who survived fled into the mountains. Then Jonathan and his men took all their possessions. **41** So the wedding turned into a funeral, and the wedding songs turned into funeral songs. **42** After Jonathan and Simon had taken revenge on the Jambrates for the murder of their brother, they returned to the marshes along the Jordan River.

43 When Bacchides heard about this, he went with a large army to the banks of the Jordan River on the day of worship. **44** Jonathan said to his men, "Quick! Let's fight for our lives! We've never been in a situation like this before. **45** Look around! Enemy soldiers are in front of us, the Jordan River is behind us, and marshes and thickets are on both sides of us. There's no way out! **46** So pray to the LORD^q for help. Pray that he will rescue us from our enemies."

47 The battle began. Jonathan tried to kill Bacchides, but Bacchides got away from him by escaping to the back of his army. **48** Then Jonathan and his men jumped into the Jordan River and swam to the other side. The enemy didn't cross the river to attack them. **49** About 1,000 of Bacchides' soldiers were killed that day.

50 Bacchides returned to Jerusalem. He began to fortify some Judean cities with high walls, gates, and iron bars. These cities were: Jericho, Emmaus, Beth Horon, Bethel, Timnath, Pharathon, and Tephon. **51** Bacchides placed soldiers in these cities to harass the people of Israel. **52** He also fortified the cities of Beth Zur and Gezer and strengthened the fortress in Jerusalem. He placed troops and food supplies in these locations. **53** Then he took the sons of the country's leaders as hostages and imprisoned them in the fortress in Jerusalem.

54 In the second month of the year 159 B.C., Alcimus ordered that the wall in the inner courtyard of the holy place be torn down. But as soon as Alcimus began to tear down what the prophets had built, **55** he had a stroke, and the work was stopped. He was paralyzed and couldn't talk anymore. He couldn't say a word or even tell his family what to write in his will. **56** Then Alcimus died in severe pain. **57** When Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead, he returned to the king. So Judea had peace for two years.

Jonathan Defeats Bacchides

58 Then all the Jewish people who didn't follow Moses' Teachings came up with a plan. They said, "Look! Jonathan and his men are confident. They are living in peace. If we bring Bacchides back here, he could capture all of them in one night." **59** They went to tell Bacchides their plan. **60** Bacchides left the city of Antioch with a large army and marched to Judea. He secretly sent letters to all his allies in Judea and ordered them to capture Jonathan and his men. But his allies were unable to capture them because Jonathan found out about their plan. **61** Jonathan and his men captured and killed about 50 Jewish men who had organized this wicked plan.

62 Then Jonathan, Simon, and their men withdrew to the desert city of Beth Basi. They rebuilt the city's ruins and strengthened its fortifications. **63** When Bacchides found out about this, he gathered his entire army and asked his allies in Judea for help. **64** He marched to Beth Basi, set up camp there, and built large weapons. He attacked the city for many days.

^q 9:46 Greek "to Heaven." The author of 1 Maccabees uses the word *Heaven* in place of God's name, the LORD.

65 Then Jonathan left his brother Simon in charge of the city and went into the countryside with only a few men. **66** He arrived at the place where Odomera, Odomera's relatives, and the descendants of Phasiron had set up camp. He ordered them to start harassing and attacking Bacchides' troops. ^r **67** Meanwhile, Simon and his men left the city to set fire to Bacchides' large weapons. **68** They fought Bacchides and defeated him. They put so much pressure on Bacchides that his planned invasion failed. **69** Bacchides became furious with the Jewish people who didn't follow Moses' Teachings, because they had advised him to come to their country. So he killed many of them.

Afterward, Bacchides decided to return to his own country. **70** When Jonathan realized that Bacchides was going home, he sent ambassadors to make a peace treaty with him and arrange for the release of Jewish prisoners. **71** Bacchides agreed to make a peace treaty and release the prisoners. In addition, he promised with an oath that he would never again harm Jonathan. **72** Bacchides released the prisoners he had taken from Judea. Then he returned to his own country and never entered Jewish territory again. **73** So the war in Israel ended. Jonathan settled in the city of Michmash. He began to serve as the judge, getting rid of all the Israelites who had betrayed their religion.

10

Alexander Epiphanes Appoints Jonathan Chief Priest

1 In the year 152 B.C., Alexander Epiphanes (who was the son of Antiochus IV) sailed to the city of Ptolemais and captured it. The people of Ptolemais welcomed him, and he began to rule there as king. **2** When King Demetrius heard about this, he recruited a very large army and went to attack Alexander Epiphanes. **3** Demetrius sent Jonathan a friendly letter in which he praised him highly. **4** Demetrius thought, "I want to make a peace treaty with Jonathan before he makes a peace treaty with Alexander. **5** I'm sure he remembers all the terrible things that I did to him, his brothers, and his nation." **6** So Demetrius made Jonathan his ally and gave him the right to recruit troops and make weapons. Also, Demetrius ordered all hostages in the fortress to be released to Jonathan.

7 Jonathan went to Jerusalem and read the letter to all the people, even to the soldiers in the fortress. **8** The soldiers in the fortress became terrified when they heard that the king had given Jonathan the right to recruit troops. **9** So they released the hostages to Jonathan, and he returned them to their families.

10 Jonathan stayed in Jerusalem. He began to rebuild and restore the city. **11** He told the workers to use square stones to reinforce the walls around the city and Mount Zion. So that's what the workers did.

12 The foreigners who lived in the fortifications that Bacchides had built fled. **13** Each person deserted his post and went back to his own country. **14** Some of the Jews who had abandoned Moses' Teachings and commands remained behind but only in Beth Zur, because Beth Zur served as a city of refuge.

15 King Alexander heard about all the promises that Demetrius had made to Jonathan. He also heard about the battles that Jonathan and his brothers had fought, the brave things they had done, and the hard times that they had gone through. **16** King Alexander said, "I'll never find another man like Jonathan. I should make him my friend and ally right away." **17** So King Alexander wrote the following letter and sent it to Jonathan:

18 "From King Alexander.
To my dear friend Jonathan.
Greetings!

19 "I've heard all about you. I've heard that you are known for your strength and that you deserve to be one of my friends. **20** So today I have appointed you chief priest of your nation and have given you the title 'Friend of the King.' I want you to support my policies and maintain our friendship."

King Alexander also sent Jonathan royal robes and a gold crown.

21 So in the seventh month of the year 152 B.C., at the Festival of Booths, Jonathan, as the chief priest, put on his holy clothes. He also recruited troops and provided many weapons for them.

King Demetrius I Sends a Letter to Jonathan

22 When Demetrius heard what Alexander had done, he became worried and thought, **23** "What have I done? I let Alexander gain an advantage over me. He made a peace treaty with the Jews before I did. **24** I, too, am going to write to the Jews

^r 9:66 Some manuscripts read "He killed them."

and encourage them. I'll promise them positions of honor and other gifts so that they'll continue to give me their support." ²⁵ So Demetrius sent the following letter to them:

"From Demetrius.
To the Jewish people.
Greetings!

²⁶ "I am very happy to hear that you have kept your treaty with my nation, that you have maintained friendly relations with us, and that you haven't supported our enemies. ²⁷ Stay loyal to us now, and we will reward you generously for everything you do for us. ²⁸ We will no longer require you to pay a lot of taxes, and we will give you other gifts.

²⁹ "Starting today, I will no longer require all Jewish people to pay national taxes, salt tax, and the taxes I personally impose. ³⁰ In addition, I will no longer require you to pay the 33 percent tax on the grain you harvest and the 50 percent tax on the fruit you grow, even though I have the right to receive these taxes. From now on I won't collect these taxes from Judea, Samaria, Galilee, or the three districts annexed to Judea. ³¹ I will no longer require Jerusalem and the areas around it to pay me one-tenth of all their income. Jerusalem, the areas around it, and one-tenth of all their income will be set apart as holy. ³² I will also give up my authority over the fortress in Jerusalem and give the chief priest the right to choose his own men to guard it. ³³ Also, I will free all Jewish people who are imprisoned throughout my kingdom. (When they return to Judea,) I will not require them to pay taxes, even on their livestock.

³⁴ "All Jewish people who live in my kingdom will no longer be required to pay taxes on all festival days, days of worship, New Moon Festivals, and special holy days. In addition, no taxes will be collected from them three days before or after these holy days. ³⁵ No one will have the right to collect taxes from them or bother them in any way.

³⁶ "Up to 30,000 Jewish men may enlist in my army. They will be paid the same amount as all the other soldiers in my army. ³⁷ Some will be stationed in my most important fortifications, and others will be appointed to serve throughout the kingdom in military positions that require security clearance. These Jewish soldiers will have Jewish officers and leaders. I will allow them to follow their own traditions, as I have allowed the people in Judea.

³⁸ "The three districts that Judea has annexed from the territory of Samaria will be placed under the control of one ruler, the chief priest. All the people in these districts must obey only him. ³⁹ I will give the city of Ptolemais and the land around it to the holy place in Jerusalem to cover its expenses. ⁴⁰ I will even include an annual grant of 15,000 silver coins from my royal treasury. ⁴¹ I will give you all the extra money that my government has not paid in recent years for work on the temple.

⁴² "In addition to this, I will no longer require the 5,000 silver coins that I have received yearly from the treasury of the holy place. This money belongs to the priests who perform their duties in the holy place.

⁴³ All those who owe anything to the government and have taken refuge in the temple complex in Jerusalem will be released from their debts. Everything in my kingdom that was taken from them will be given back.

⁴⁴ "Government funds will be used to rebuild the holy place ⁴⁵ and Jerusalem's walls. They will also be used to fortify the area around the city and rebuild the walls around other cities in Judea."

⁴⁶ When Jonathan and the Jewish people heard the promises that King Demetrius made, they didn't believe them or accept them. They remembered the terrible things that Demetrius had done to them and how severely he had oppressed them. ⁴⁷ But they liked Alexander, because he was friendly to them before Demetrius was. So they remained his allies as long as he lived.

King Demetrius I Is Killed in Battle

⁴⁸ King Alexander recruited a large army and set up camp facing Demetrius' army. ⁴⁹ The two kings fought, and Demetrius' ^s army fled. Alexander pursued Demetrius' ^t and his army and defeated them. ⁵⁰ Alexander fought a fierce battle until sunset, and Demetrius was killed that day.

⁵¹ Then Alexander sent ambassadors to King Ptolemy VI of Egypt with the following message: ⁵² "I have returned to my kingdom, taken my place on my ancestors' throne, and begun to rule. I have defeated Demetrius and have taken control of my

^s 10:49 Some manuscripts read "Alexander's."

^t 10:49 Some manuscripts read "Demetrius pursued Alexander."

country. **53** I fought him, defeated his army, and have taken control of his kingdom. **54** We need to establish friendly relations now. Let me marry your daughter and become your son-in-law. I will give to both of you the kind of gifts you deserve.”

55 King Ptolemy replied, “The day you returned to your ancestors’ country and took control of their kingdom was a great day. **56** I’ll do what you wrote in your message. Let’s meet in the city of Ptolemais so that we can get acquainted first. Then I’ll become your father-in-law as you have suggested.”

57 So Ptolemy and his daughter Cleopatra left Egypt and arrived in Ptolemais in the year 150 B.C. **58** King Alexander met Ptolemy, and Ptolemy let Alexander marry his daughter Cleopatra in Ptolemais. Like other kings, Ptolemy held a magnificent wedding reception for his daughter.

59 Afterward, King Alexander wrote to Jonathan and mentioned that he would like to meet with him. **60** So Jonathan traveled in style to the city of Ptolemais. There he met the two kings, Ptolemy and Alexander. He gave them and their friends silver, gold, and many other gifts and made a good impression on them. **61** Meanwhile, some Israelite troublemakers who didn’t follow Moses Teachings came and brought charges against Jonathan. But King Alexander didn’t pay any attention to them. **62** Instead, the king ordered his servants to take off Jonathan’s clothes and to put royal robes on him. The servants did what the king had ordered.

63 The king also had Jonathan sit next to him. The king told his officials, “Take Jonathan to the center of the city. Tell everyone there that no one is to bring charges against him for any reason and that no one is to bother him in any way.” **64** When Jonathan’s accusers saw how the king honored him in public and that Jonathan was wearing royal robes, all of them fled. **65** The king also honored him by including him among those who held the title “Most Important Friend of the King.” He appointed Jonathan to be general and governor of the province of Judea. **66** Then Jonathan returned joyfully and safely to Jerusalem.

Jonathan Defeats Apollonius

67 In the year 147 B.C., Demetrius II (who was the son of King Demetrius I) went from the island of Crete to his ancestors’ country. **68** When King Alexander heard about this, he was very worried and returned to the city of Antioch. **69** Demetrius

reappointed Apollonius as the governor of Coelesyria. Apollonius recruited a large army and set up camp near the city of Jamnia. Then he sent the following message to the chief priest Jonathan: **70** “You are the only one who rebels against me. I’ve been ridiculed and disgraced because of you. In the mountains where you live, you’re using your authority against me! Why are you doing that? **71** If you

have any confidence in your army, come down and fight me in the plain. Let’s see who has the stronger army. I have the backing of the cities on my side. **72** Ask around! People will tell you about the kind of fighter I am and about the others who are helping me. They’ll tell you that you have no way of defeating us. Remember, your ancestors were defeated twice in their own country. **73** Likewise, you won’t be able to defeat my cavalry and my powerful army in the plain. In the plain you won’t find so much as a

stone, pebble, or place to hide behind.” **74** Jonathan was upset when he heard Apollonius’ message. He chose 10,000 soldiers and marched out of Jerusalem. His brother Simon joined him with reinforcements. **75** Jonathan and his soldiers set up camp near the city of Joppa, but the citizens of Joppa wouldn’t let them enter, because Apollonius had stationed soldiers there. **76** So Jonathan and his army fought against Apollonius’ soldiers. The citizens of Joppa opened the city gates because they were afraid, and Jonathan took control of the city.

77 When Apollonius heard about this, he left camp with 3,000 cavalymen and a large army. He went to the city of Azotus and pretended that he was going to march through the city. Instead, he advanced into the plain because he had confidence in his large cavalry. **78** Jonathan chased Apollonius to Azotus, where they fought. **79** Apollonius had secretly left 1,000 cavalymen behind Jonathan and his army. **80** Soon Jonathan realized that he was caught in an ambush. The enemy surrounded his army and shot arrows at his men from early morning until late afternoon. **81** But Jonathan’s soldiers held their ground, as he had ordered, and the enemy’s cavalry grew tired.

82 When the enemy’s cavalry was exhausted, Simon’s soldiers attacked. They fought the enemy soldiers and defeated them. The enemy soldiers fled, **83** and their cavalry was scattered all over the plain. Many enemy soldiers fled into the city of Azotus and ran for safety into the temple of their god Dagon. **84** But Jonathan burned the temple of Dagon along with the enemy soldiers who ran there for safety. Then Jonathan set fire to the city of Azotus and the surrounding towns and looted them. **85** About 8,000 people were either killed in battle or burned to death.

86 After that, Jonathan left there and set up camp near the city of Ashkelon. The people formed a parade and marched out of the city to welcome him.

87 Jonathan and his men returned to Jerusalem with a lot of loot. **88** When King Alexander heard about this, he gave Jonathan even more honors **89** and sent him a gold shoulder clasp. This kind of clasp was given only to people who hold the title “Relative of the King.” The king also gave Jonathan the city of Ekron and all the area around it.

11

The Deaths of Alexander Epiphanes and Ptolemy VI

¹ Then King Ptolemy VI of Egypt assembled an army with troops as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore. He also gathered a large fleet of ships. He wanted to take over Alexander's kingdom and secretly annex it to his own. ² So he left for Syria as though he were on a peace mission. The people opened their cities to him and welcomed him, because King Alexander told them to. After all, Ptolemy was Alexander's father-in-law. ³ But when Ptolemy entered the cities, he stationed his own soldiers in each of them.

⁴ When King Ptolemy arrived in the city of Azotus, the people showed him Dagon's temple (which had been burned down) and all the destruction in Azotus and the villages around it. The bodies of the people Jonathan had burned to death in the war were lying everywhere. The people had piled the bodies in heaps on the road that the king was taking. ⁵ They told the king about everything Jonathan had done, and they blamed Jonathan for everything that had happened. But the king said nothing. ⁶ Later, Jonathan met the king in the city of Joppa, and the king was impressed with him. They greeted each other and stayed there that night. ⁷ Jonathan traveled with the king until they reached the Eleutherus River. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

⁸ King Ptolemy kept plotting against Alexander. He took control of the cities along the coast as far as the city of Seleucia. ⁹ He sent ambassadors to King Demetrius with this message: "Let's get together and come to an agreement. I'll let you marry my daughter, who is now Alexander's wife, and let you rule your father's kingdom." ¹⁰ I'm really sorry that I ever let my daughter marry Alexander, because he has tried to kill me." ¹¹ Ptolemy accused Alexander of this only because he wanted Alexander's kingdom. ¹² So Ptolemy took his daughter away from Alexander and let Demetrius marry her. Ptolemy ended his friendship with Alexander, and their hatred for each other became well-known.

¹³ After that, Ptolemy entered the city of Antioch and made himself king. So now he was the ruler of two kingdoms, the kingdom of Egypt and the kingdom of Syria.

¹⁴ Meanwhile, King Alexander was in Cilicia because the people in that region were rebelling against him. ¹⁵ When Alexander heard what Ptolemy had done, he went to attack him. Ptolemy had a powerful army. He marched from Antioch, fought Alexander, and defeated him. ¹⁶ So Alexander fled to Arabia for safety while King Ptolemy enjoyed his victory. ¹⁷ An Arab named Zabdiel cut off Alexander's head and sent it to Ptolemy. ¹⁸ Three days later King Ptolemy died, and the local soldiers who lived in the fortifications killed the soldiers that Ptolemy had stationed in them. ¹⁹ As a result, Demetrius II became king in the year 145 B.C.

Jonathan Meets With King Demetrius II

²⁰ At that time Jonathan recruited soldiers from Judea to attack the fortress in Jerusalem. He built many large weapons to use in the attack. ²¹ But some Jewish men who hated their own nation and didn't follow Moses' Teachings went to the king and told him that Jonathan had set up a blockade around the fortress. ²² When the king heard this, he became angry and immediately left for the city of Ptolemais. He wrote to Jonathan and ordered him to call off the blockade and to meet with him for a conference in Ptolemais as quickly as possible.

²³ When Demetrius' letter was read to Jonathan, he ordered his soldiers to continue the blockade. Then he did something very dangerous: He went to Ptolemais to meet with the king. He chose some of Israel's leaders and priests ²⁴ and took some silver, gold, clothes, and a lot of other gifts with him. Jonathan made a good impression on the king. ²⁵ Even though some Israelites who didn't follow Moses' Teachings had brought charges against Jonathan, ²⁶ the king treated Jonathan well. Like the earlier kings, Demetrius honored Jonathan in front of everyone who held the title "Friend of the King." ²⁷ The king reappointed Jonathan as chief priest and restored all the other honors Jonathan previously had. The king also included him among those who held the title "Most Important Friend of the King."

²⁸ Jonathan asked the king not to force Judea, the three districts, and Samaria to pay taxes. ^u He promised the king 22,500 pounds of silver if the king would do as he asked. ²⁹ The king agreed and wrote the following letter to Jonathan to document all of these things.

³⁰ "From King Demetrius.
To my dear friend Jonathan and to the Jewish people.
Greetings!

^u 11:28 Some manuscripts read "Jonathan asked the king not to force Judea and the three districts of Samaria to pay taxes."

31 "For your information, I am sending you a copy of the letter that I sent to Lasthenes, who holds the title 'Relative of the King.'

32 " From King Demetrius.
To Lasthenes, a gentleman I highly respect.
Greetings!

33 " I have decided to reward the Jewish people for the loyalty they have shown us. They are our friends because they have kept their agreement with us. **34** So I have assured them that the territory of Judea as well as the three districts of Aphairema, Lydda, and Rathamin belong to them. These three districts, along with the areas that border them, were annexed to Judea from Samaria. This was done for the benefit of all those who offer sacrifices in Jerusalem to make up for the annual taxes they paid to the government from their crops and orchards. **35** From now on they will not have to pay the ten percent tax on their income, the toll tax, the salt tax, and all the other taxes I personally impose. I will allow the Jewish people all of these tax exemptions. **36** None of these tax exemptions may ever be canceled. **37** Be sure to make a copy of this agreement. Give the copy to Jonathan to post in Jerusalem on the holy mountain where everyone can see it.' "

Jonathan Sends Soldiers to Help King Demetrius II

38 King Demetrius saw that the land was at peace under his rule. Since he had no further opposition, he discharged all his soldiers and sent them home, except the foreign soldiers he had hired from the Greek islands. As a result, all the soldiers who had served the previous rulers hated him. **39** A man named Trypho, who had been one of Alexander's supporters, noticed that all of Demetrius' soldiers were complaining about what Demetrius had done to them. So Trypho went to see a man named Imalkue, an Arab who was raising Alexander's young son Antiochus VI. **40** Trypho stayed with Imalkue for many days. He kept telling Imalkue to hand over Antiochus. Trypho wanted Antiochus to take his father's place as king. He explained to Imalkue what Demetrius had done and how Demetrius' soldiers hated him.

41 Meanwhile, Jonathan asked King Demetrius to remove his soldiers from the fortress in Jerusalem and from the fortifications in Judea, because these soldiers were constantly fighting the people of Israel. **42** Demetrius sent this reply to Jonathan: "Not only will I do this for you and your nation, but I'll also honor you and your nation when I find an opportunity. **43** Do me a special favor. Send some soldiers to help me right away, because all my soldiers have revolted." **44** So Jonathan sent 3,000 of his best soldiers to Demetrius in the city of Antioch. The king was happy when they arrived.

45 Then 120,000 citizens who wanted to kill the king gathered in the center of Antioch. **46** The king fled into his palace, but the citizens took control of the main streets of Antioch and began to revolt. **47** So the king called the Jewish soldiers for help. All of them rallied around the king. They went throughout the city and killed about 100,000 people that day. **48** They burned down the city, took a lot of loot, and saved the king's life. **49** When the citizens of Antioch saw that the Jewish soldiers had easily gained control of their city, they lost their courage and made this appeal to the king: **50** "Let's call a truce! Order the Jewish soldiers to stop attacking us and our city." **51** Then the people laid down their weapons and made a peace treaty. Now the king and all the people in his kingdom had high respect for the Jewish soldiers. The soldiers returned to Jerusalem with a lot of loot.

52 So King Demetrius regained control of his kingdom, and the land was at peace under his rule. **53** But Demetrius lied about everything he had said and became hostile to Jonathan. He didn't repay Jonathan for his loyalty. Instead, he caused him a lot of trouble.

Jonathan Attacks King Demetrius II

54 Later, Trypho returned to Antioch with Antiochus VI, who was a very young boy. Even though Antiochus was young, he took over the kingdom and began to rule as king. **55** All the troops that Demetrius had discharged rallied around young Antiochus and fought against Demetrius. Demetrius fled and was defeated. **56** Trypho captured Demetrius' elephants and took control of Antioch. **57** Then young Antiochus wrote Jonathan a letter, which read, "I'm reappointing you as chief priest. In addition, I'm putting you in charge of the four districts and giving you the title 'Friend of the King.' " **58** Antiochus also sent Jonathan gold table settings and gave him the right to drink from gold cups and to wear royal robes with a gold shoulder clasp. **59** He appointed Jonathan's brother Simon as governor of the territory extending from the mountainous coast of Tyre to the Egyptian border.

60 Then Jonathan marched through the cities west of the Euphrates River. The entire Syrian army joined him as allies. When he arrived in the city of Ashkelon, the citizens gave him a royal welcome. **61** From Ashkelon he went to the city of Gaza. The citizens of Gaza wouldn't let him enter their city. So Jonathan set up a blockade, looted the villages around Gaza, and burned them.

62 Eventually, the citizens of Gaza begged Jonathan to call a truce. Jonathan called a truce, but he took their rulers' sons as hostages and sent them to Jerusalem. He continued to march through the country as far as the city of Damascus.

63 Jonathan heard that Demetrius' generals were in the city of Kadesh in Galilee. They had a large army and intended to stop him from what he was doing. **64** Jonathan left his brother Simon in Judea and went to attack Demetrius. **65** Simon set up camp near the city of Beth Zur. He attacked Beth Zur for many days and set up a blockade around it. **66** Eventually, the citizens of Beth Zur begged Simon to call a truce, so he did. However, he forced the people out of the city, took control of the city, and stationed soldiers there.

67 Jonathan and his army camped by Lake Gennesaret. Early in the morning they marched into the plain near the city of Hazor. **68** In the plain of Hazor the army of foreigners^v attacked Jonathan. However, the foreigners had left soldiers in the mountains in order to ambush him. The main part of the army met Jonathan head-on. **69** Then the soldiers came out of their ambush and attacked. **70** All of Jonathan's soldiers fled. Mattathias (who was Absalom's son) and Judas (who was Chalphi's son) were the only soldiers who stayed with Jonathan. These two men were commanders in Jonathan's army. **71** Jonathan tore his clothes in grief, put dirt on his head, and prayed. **72** Then he returned to the battle and defeated the foreign soldiers, and they fled. **73** When Jonathan's soldiers (who were running away) saw this, they returned and chased the enemy as far as the enemy's campsite, which was near the city of Kadesh. Then Jonathan and his army set up camp there. **74** About 3,000 foreign soldiers were killed that day. After that, Jonathan returned to Jerusalem.

12

Jonathan Sends Ambassadors to Rome and Sparta

1 When Jonathan saw that the time was right, he chose ambassadors and sent them to Rome. He wanted these ambassadors to renew friendly relations with the Romans. **2** He sent letters to Sparta and to some other places to renew friendly relations with them too. **3** So the ambassadors made the trip to Rome. They entered the senate and addressed it as follows: "The chief priest Jonathan and the Jewish nation have sent us to renew our previous friendship and alliance with you." **4** Then the Romans gave the ambassadors letters to present to the leaders in every country they would travel through. The letters asked these leaders to support the ambassadors on their trip so that they could return safely to Judea.

5 This is a copy of the letter that Jonathan wrote to the Spartans:

6 "From the chief priest Jonathan, the Jewish council, and the rest of the Jewish people.
To our dear friends in Sparta.
Greetings!

7 "Some time ago your king Arius sent our chief priest Onias a letter. In this letter Arius stated that you are related to us. (See the enclosed copy.) **8** Onias gave your ambassador a royal welcome and accepted your letter, which outlined the terms for a friendship and an alliance. **9** We don't need alliances and friendships with other nations, because we have our holy books to encourage us. **10** Nevertheless, we have sent our ambassadors to you in an attempt to renew our relationship with you. A lot of time has passed since you sent your letter to us, and we don't want to lose those ties of friendship with you. **11** We remember you every time we celebrate our festivals and other holy days and when we offer sacrifices or pray. It is only right to remember relatives. **12** We are happy that you have a good reputation.

13 "However, we have had many difficult times and have had to fight many wars because neighboring kings have been constantly attacking us. **14** We didn't want to involve you, our other allies, or our friends when we were fighting these wars. **15** The LORD^w sent us the help we needed and rescued us from our enemies. So our enemies have been humiliated. **16** We have chosen Numenius (who is Antiochus' son) and Antipater (who is Jason's son) and have sent them to Rome to renew our previous friendship and alliance with the Romans. **17** Also, we have ordered them to visit you, greet you, and deliver our letter about renewing our relationship with you. **18** Please send us a reply."

19 This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent to Onias:

^v 11:68 Greek "Philistines."

^w 12:15 Greek "Heaven." The author of 1 Maccabees uses the word *Heaven* in place of God's name, the LORD.

20 "From King Arius of Sparta.
To the chief priest Onias.
Greetings!

21 "I have discovered a document which states that the Spartans and the Jews are related. We are all descendants of Abraham. **22** Now that I have found out about this, please write me and tell me how you are doing. **23** As far as I'm concerned, we can share our livestock and property. So I've ordered my ambassadors to work out the details with you."

The Activities of Jonathan and Simon

24 Jonathan heard that Demetrius' commanders had returned to attack him with an army that was larger than before. **25** Because Jonathan didn't want to give them an opportunity to invade his own country, he left Jerusalem and met them in the region of Hamath. **26** Jonathan sent spies into their camp, and the spies reported to him that the enemy was planning to attack that night. **27** So when the sun had set, Jonathan ordered his troops to stay awake all night and be ready to fight. He stationed troops at a distance outside the camp to prevent a surprise attack. **28** When the enemy soldiers heard that Jonathan and his troops were ready to fight, they were panic-stricken. They lit fires in their camp and then left. **29** Jonathan and his troops saw the fires burning and didn't realize until morning that the enemy soldiers had left. **30** Jonathan pursued them, but he couldn't catch up with them because they had already crossed the Eleutherus River. **31** So Jonathan changed direction and attacked a group of Arabs called the Zabadeans. He defeated them in battle and looted them. **32** Then he left there and marched through that region on his way toward the city of Damascus.

33 Meanwhile, Simon marched through the country as far as the city of Ashkelon and its nearby fortifications. Then he changed direction, attacked the city of Joppa, and took it by surprise. **34** He had heard that the citizens wanted to turn over the fortification to the soldiers Demetrius had sent. Simon stationed soldiers at Joppa to guard the city.

35 When Jonathan returned to Jerusalem, he called the leaders of the people together. He made plans with them to build fortifications in Judea, **36** increase the height of Jerusalem's walls, and build a high wall between the fortress and the city. He wanted to separate the fortress from the city and isolate it so that he could stop the soldiers in the fortress from buying or selling in the city. **37** The people came together to begin the building projects. They repaired a section of the wall that had collapsed in the eastern valley. That section of the wall was called the Chaphenatha. **38** In addition, Simon rebuilt the city of Adida, which was located in the foothills. He fortified the city and put up gates that could be secured with iron bars.

Trypho Captures Jonathan

39 Then Trypho wanted to assassinate King Antiochus VI, take over his kingdom, and become the next king of Syria. **40** But Trypho was afraid because he thought that Jonathan would fight him and prevent him from doing this. So Trypho looked for a way to arrest Jonathan and kill him. He marched to the city of Beth Shan, **41** and Jonathan marched there with 40,000 of his best soldiers to fight Trypho. **42** When Trypho saw that Jonathan had arrived with a large army, he was afraid to assassinate him. **43** So Trypho gave Jonathan a royal welcome, introduced him to all his friends, and gave him gifts. Trypho also ordered his friends and troops to obey Jonathan the same way they would obey him. **44** Then he said to Jonathan, "Why have you forced your whole army to march so hard when we're not even at war?" **45** Choose a few soldiers to stay with you, and send the rest of your soldiers home. Then let's go to the city of Ptolemais. I came here so that I could give you the city, its other fortresses, soldiers, and officials. After that, I'll go home."

46 Jonathan believed Trypho and did what Trypho suggested. He kept 3,000 soldiers and sent the rest of his soldiers back to Judea. **47** He left 2,000 soldiers in Galilee and took 1,000 with him to Ptolemais. **48** When Jonathan entered Ptolemais, the citizens closed the gates, arrested him, and killed all the soldiers who were with him.

49 Trypho sent infantrymen and cavalrymen into Galilee and into the valley of Zezreel to kill the rest of Jonathan's soldiers. **50** But Jonathan's soldiers assumed that Jonathan and all the soldiers who were with him had been captured and killed. So they encouraged each other and marched in battle formation, ready to fight. **51** When the enemy troops were approaching, they saw that Jonathan's soldiers were ready to fight for their lives, so they turned back. **52** Then Jonathan's soldiers returned safely to Judea. The soldiers and all the people of Israel mourned for Jonathan and the soldiers who had been with him. They were terrified because **53** all the surrounding nations wanted to destroy the people of Israel. These nations said, "The people of Israel don't have a leader to help them. Let's attack them now. Let's make sure that no one will remember that they ever existed."

^x 12:46 The first part of verse 47 has been placed in verse 46 to express the complex Greek sentence structure more clearly in English.

13

Simon Takes Jonathan's Place

¹ Simon heard that Trypho had recruited a large army to invade and destroy Judea, ² and he saw that the people were trembling and afraid. So he went to Jerusalem, gathered the people together, ³ and encouraged them. He told them, "You know about all the things that my father's family, my brothers, and I have done. We did those things for the sake of Moses' Teachings and the holy place. You also know about the wars and difficult times that my brothers and I have been through. ⁴ All my brothers have died for Israel, and I'm the only one left. ⁵ It would be unthinkable for me not to risk my own life in a time of trouble. I'm not any better than my brothers. ⁶ Since all the nations have gathered together to destroy us because they hate us, I will get revenge for my nation, the holy place, and your wives and children."

⁷ When the people heard what Simon said, they regained their courage. ⁸ They responded by shouting, "You're our leader! Take over for Judas and your brother Jonathan. ⁹ Fight for us! We'll do whatever you tell us." ¹⁰ So Simon recruited all the soldiers he could find. He quickly finished repairing Jerusalem's walls and fortifying the city. ¹¹ He sent Jonathan (who was Absalom's son) to the city of Joppa with an army large enough to force out the people who lived there and to occupy the city.

Trypho Kills Jonathan

¹² Then Trypho left the city of Ptolemais with a large army to invade Judea. He took Jonathan with him as a prisoner. ¹³ Simon set up camp near Adida, a city that overlooked the plain. ¹⁴ Trypho found out that Simon had taken his brother Jonathan's place and that Simon was ready to attack him. So he sent ambassadors to Simon. The ambassadors said, ¹⁵ "We have your brother Jonathan under arrest because of the money he owes to the government for the offices he held. ¹⁶ We'll release him if you send us 7,500 pounds of silver and two of his sons as hostages. If we hold his sons hostage, he won't revolt against us when we release him."

¹⁷ Even though Simon knew that they were trying to deceive him, he sent for the silver and the children. ¹⁸ He was afraid that if Jonathan was killed, the Jewish people would despise him for not paying the ransom. ¹⁹ So he sent the children and the 7,500 pounds of silver. But Trypho lied and didn't release Jonathan.

²⁰ After this, Trypho set out to invade Judea and destroy it. He and his army marched around the country on a road that led to the city of Adora. But everywhere that Trypho and his army went, Simon and his army were there to confront them. ²¹ Meanwhile, the soldiers in the fortress in Jerusalem kept sending messengers to Trypho. They wanted him to come to them quickly through the desert and bring them supplies. ²² Trypho got his entire cavalry ready to go. But a big snowstorm during the night prevented him from going. So he left there and marched into Gilead. ²³ When Trypho came near the city of Baskama, he killed Jonathan and buried him there. ²⁴ Then he returned to his own country.

²⁵ Simon had some men bring back the body of his brother Jonathan to Modein, the city of his ancestors. There they buried Jonathan. ²⁶ All the people in Israel held a solemn ceremony for many days to mourn his death. ²⁷ Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers. The monument was so large that people could see it from far away. Simon covered the front and the back of the monument with polished stones. ²⁸ He also had seven pyramids built for his father, mother, and four brothers. The pyramids faced each other. ²⁹ He created an elaborate layout by setting up large columns around the pyramids. He placed suits of armor on the columns to honor the memory of his family forever. Next to the suits of armor he had ships carved so that everyone who sailed by could see them. ³⁰ This tomb that he built in Modein still exists today.

³¹ Trypho pretended to support young King Antiochus VI, but he eventually killed him. ³² Then he took his place as king, ruled the kingdom of Syria, and caused a lot of trouble.

King Demetrius II Makes a Treaty With Simon

³³ Simon built fortifications in Judea. He surrounded them with high walls and towers, put up gates with iron bars, and stored food in them. ³⁴ Simon chose some ambassadors and sent them to King Demetrius. He didn't want the king to collect taxes from the people in Judea anymore, because Trypho was robbing them by overtaxing them. ³⁵ King Demetrius wrote the following letter and sent it to Simon.

³⁶ "From King Demetrius.

To Simon, chief priest and friend of kings, to the Jewish leaders, and to the Jewish people.
Greetings!

37 "I received the gold crown and the palm branch that you sent. I'm ready to make a peace treaty with you and order my officials to stop collecting taxes from you. **38** Every agreement that I have made with you in the past is still valid. You may keep every fortification that you have built. **39** I will pardon you for all the things you have done wrong, intentionally or unintentionally, up to the present. I will also cancel any taxes that you still owe me. I will no longer require you to pay the other taxes I have collected from Jerusalem in the past. **40** Any of your friends who would like to work in my government may apply for positions. Let's have peace."

41 In the year 142 B.C., the people of Israel had relief from foreign oppression. **42** They began to date their documents and contracts as follows: "In the first year of Simon, the highly respected chief priest, commander, and leader of the Jewish people."

Simon Captures the City of Gezer

43 At that time Simon set up camp near the city of Gezer and surrounded the city with his troops. He made a large moveable ramp, brought it up to the city wall, and used it to attack and capture one of the city's fortified towers. **44** The soldiers jumped off the moveable ramp into the city. Panic swept throughout the city. **45** The men in the city, their wives, and their children tore their clothes in grief and climbed on top of the wall. They shouted to Simon and begged him to call a truce. **46** They said, "Be merciful. Don't punish us for the terrible things we've done to you." **47** So Simon reached a settlement with them and stopped the fighting. He made the citizens leave the city and cleansed the houses where there were false gods. After that, he and his troops entered the city singing hymns of praise. **48** He took everything that was unclean^y out of the city and allowed only those who followed Moses' Teachings to live there. He also strengthened the city's fortifications and built a house there for himself.

Simon Takes Over the Fortress in Jerusalem

49 Those who lived in the fortress in Jerusalem were not allowed to go in or out of the fortress to buy or sell in the countryside. So they became very hungry, and many of them starved to death. **50** They shouted to Simon from the fortress. They wanted him to call a truce, so Simon did. But he made the people leave the fortress, and he had it cleansed. **51** On the twenty-third day of the second month in the year 141 B.C., Simon and his soldiers entered the fortress as they sang songs of praise and held palm branches in their hands. They sang hymns and songs and played harps, cymbals, and stringed instruments because a terrible enemy had been defeated and removed from Israel. **52** Simon established the twenty-third day of the second month as a holiday for the Jews to celebrate every year. He strengthened the fortifications on the temple mountain next to the fortress, and he and his soldiers lived there. **53** His son John was now a grown man, so he made him the commander of all the soldiers. Then John began to live in the city of Gezer.

14

Demetrius II Is Captured and Put in Prison

1 In the year 140 B.C., King Demetrius II recruited some soldiers and marched into Media. He wanted to get some additional help for his war against Trypho. **2** When King Arsaces of Persia and Media heard that Demetrius had entered his territory, he sent one of his commanders to capture Demetrius and bring him back alive. **3** The commander defeated Demetrius' army, captured Demetrius, and brought him back to Arsaces, who put him in prison.

A Poem About Simon

- 4** Judea had peace throughout Simon's lifetime.
Simon wanted only good things for his nation.
His rule and reputation pleased the people throughout his lifetime.
- 5** Simon was highly honored for capturing the city of Joppa.
He made its harbor a gateway to the Greek islands.
- 6** He took control of his country
and extended his nation's borders.
- 7** He brought back a lot of Jewish people who had been taken prisoner.

^y 13:48 "Unclean" refers to anything that Moses' Teachings say is not presentable to God.

- He took control of Gezer, Beth Zur, and the fortress in Jerusalem.
 He removed from the fortress everything that was unclean,^z
 and no one opposed him.
- 8** The Jewish people farmed their land in peace.
 The ground produced crops,
 and the trees in the valleys produced fruit.
- 9** Old men sat in the city's parks,
 and all of them talked about their blessings.
 Young men proudly wore their military uniforms.
- 10** Simon supplied the cities with food
 and provided the people with weapons to defend themselves.
 His fame spread to the ends of the earth.
- 11** Simon brought peace to his country,
 and the people of Israel were extremely happy.
- 12** People sat under their grapevines and fig trees,
 and no one made them afraid.
- 13** No one was left in the land to fight them.
 The enemy kings had been defeated at that time.
- 14** Simon supported all the poor people in his nation.
 He studied Moses' Teachings
 and got rid of every evil person who didn't follow them.
- 15** Simon made the holy place a place of splendor
 and added more furnishings.

The Spartans Renew Their Alliance With Simon

- 16** When the people in Rome and as far away as Sparta heard that Jonathan had died, they were very worried. **17** The Spartans heard that Simon had taken his brother's place as chief priest and that he was ruling the country and its cities. **18** So the Spartans wrote a letter on bronze plaques and sent it to Simon. They wanted to renew the friendship and the alliance that they had made with his brothers Judas and Jonathan. **19** The plaques were read in front of the assembly in Jerusalem.
- 20** This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent:

"From the city of Sparta and its rulers.
 To the chief priest Simon, to the Jewish leaders and priests, and to the rest of the Jewish people, who are our relatives.
 Greetings!

21 "The ambassadors you sent to our people arrived and told us about your honorable reputation. We are happy that they came. **22** Based on everything the ambassadors said, we have written down the following entry in our official records: 'The Jewish ambassadors, Numenius (who is Antiochus' son) and Antipater (who is Jason's son) have visited us in an effort to renew their friendly relations with us. **23** The Spartan people were pleased to give these ambassadors a royal welcome. Our people were also pleased to place a copy of everything the ambassadors said in our public archives so that the citizens of Sparta have these things on record. In addition, we have made copies for the chief priest Simon.' "

- 24** After this, Simon sent Numenius to Rome to confirm the alliance with the Romans. Numenius brought along a large gold shield as a gift. The shield weighed 1,250 pounds.

The Jewish People Pass a Resolution About Simon's Position

- 25** When the Jewish people heard these things, they asked, "How can we ever thank Simon and his sons enough? **26** Simon, his brothers, and his father's family have supported us. They have fought off our enemies and set Israel free." So they recorded the following resolution on bronze plaques and mounted the plaques on columns on Mount Zion. **27** This is a copy of the resolution:

^z 14:7 "Unclean" refers to anything that Moses' Teachings say is not presentable to God.

On the eighteenth day of the month of Elul, in the year 140 B.C., the third year that Simon was the highly respected chief priest and prince of God's people, ²⁸ at a large assembly of priests, citizens, national rulers, and our country's leaders, the following resolution was made:

²⁹ Whereas, Whenever wars broke out in our country, Simon, who is Mattathias' son and a priest from the family of Joarib, and his brothers risked their lives to defend us. They stood up to our nation's enemies to ensure that the holy place and Moses' Teachings would last forever. They have brought honor to our nation because of their reputations.

³⁰ Jonathan brought our nation together and became our chief priest. Then he joined his ancestors in death. ³¹ Our enemies decided to invade our country and destroy our holy place. ³² But Simon stood up to our enemies and fought for his nation. He spent a lot of his

own money to provide weapons for his soldiers and to pay their wages. ³³ He fortified the cities in Judea, even the city of Beth Zur, which is on the border of Judea. Simon stationed Jewish soldiers there. (Previously, our enemies stored their weapons in Beth Zur.) ³⁴ Simon also fortified the cities of Joppa, which is on the coast, and Gezer, which borders the city of Azotus. (Previously, our enemies lived in Gezer.) Simon had Jewish people settle in these cities, and he gave the people whatever was needed to restore them.

³⁵ Whereas, The people saw Simon's loyalty and that he wanted to bring honor to his nation, so they appointed him to be their leader and chief priest. They did this because of everything he had done and because of the decency and loyalty he had shown to his nation. Simon wanted to bring honor to his people in every way. He has been successful his whole life.

³⁶ He removed foreigners from the country and those who had built the fortress in Jerusalem, David's city. The people who used to live in the fortress would leave it and go throughout the holy place. They would dishonor the holy place and do terrible things to make it unclean. ³⁷ So Simon had Jewish soldiers live in the fortress. He fortified it to make the country and the city safe. He also built Jerusalem's walls higher.

³⁸ Whereas, Based on all of Simon's accomplishments, King Demetrius appointed Simon to be chief priest, ³⁹ gave him the title "Friend of the King," and highly honored him.

⁴⁰ Demetrius did this because he heard that the Romans had called the Jews their friends, allies, and relatives and that the Romans had given Simon's ambassadors a royal welcome. Therefore, be it

⁴¹ *Resolved*, That we, the Jewish people and priests, appoint Simon to be our permanent leader and chief priest until a true prophet appears. Be it further

⁴² *Resolved*, That we appoint Simon to be our commander so that he can take charge of the holy place and appoint people to work in it, to govern the country, to make weapons, and to supervise the fortifications. Be it finally

⁴³ *Resolved*, That everyone is to obey Simon, that all contracts in the country are to be drawn up in his name, and that he has the right to wear royal robes and a gold medallion.

⁴⁴ Neither the people nor the priests will have the right to cancel any part of this resolution, oppose any of Simon's orders, have meetings in the country without his permission, or wear royal robes with a gold shoulder clasp. ⁴⁵ Whoever disobeys this resolution or cancels any part of it will be given the death penalty.

⁴⁶ All the people agreed to give Simon the right to carry out this resolution. ⁴⁷ Simon agreed to be the chief priest, commander, and ruler of the Jewish people and priests. He also agreed to protect everyone. ⁴⁸ The people inscribed this resolution on bronze plaques and hung the plaques on the wall that surrounds the holy place so that everyone could see them. ⁴⁹ They also placed copies of the resolution in the treasury so that Simon and his sons could have access to it.

15

King Antiochus VII Sends a Letter to Simon

¹ While Antiochus VII (who was the son of King Demetrius I) was in the Greek islands, he sent a letter to Simon, the priest and ruler of the Jewish people, and to the entire Jewish nation. ² This is a copy of the letter:

"From King Antiochus.

To Simon, the chief priest and ruler, and to the Jewish people.
Greetings!

3 "Some dangerous men have taken control of my ancestors' kingdom. I intend to regain control of the kingdom so that I can restore it to what it once was. So I hired a large number of soldiers and prepared warships for battle. **4** I plan to invade the country so that I can attack those who have ruined my country and have destroyed many cities in my kingdom.

5 "Therefore, I have decided to give you the same tax exemptions that the other kings have given you. **6** I will also give you permission to mint your own coins as money for your country. **7** I will free Jerusalem and the holy place from foreign control. In addition, all the weapons that you have made and the fortifications that you have built and control will remain yours. **8** Finally, as of today, all your debts to the government, both now and in the future, will be canceled. **9** As soon as I regain control of my kingdom, I will make you, your nation, and the temple highly honored everywhere in the world."

10 In the year 138 B.C., Antiochus marched into his ancestors' country. All the soldiers in the country joined Antiochus, so Trypho had only a few soldiers. **11** Antiochus chased Trypho, and Trypho fled to the city of Dor, which is on the coast. **12** Trypho knew that he was in danger because his soldiers had deserted him. **13** Antiochus attacked the city of Dor with 120,000 infantrymen and 8,000 cavalymen. **14** He surrounded the city, and his ships joined the attack from the sea. He used his army and navy to blockade the city and wouldn't allow anyone to enter or leave.

The Jewish Ambassadors Return From Rome

15 Then Numenius and those who were with him arrived in Judea from Rome with letters to various kings and countries. One of the letters read as follows:

16 "From Lucius, the Roman consul.
To King Ptolemy.
Greetings!

17 "The Jewish ambassadors, who are our friends and allies, have visited us to renew the friendship and the alliance that we made in the past. The chief priest Simon and the Jewish people sent them to us. **18** They brought a gold shield that weighs 1,250 pounds. **19** We have decided to write to you as well as to various kings and countries to warn you not to harm the Jews. You must not attack them, their cities, or their country or make alliances with those who attack them. **20** We have also decided to accept the shield from them. **21** If any dangerous men have fled to you from their country, turn them over to the chief priest Simon so that he can punish them according to the laws of the Jewish people."

22 The consul Lucius wrote the same letter to the following kings: Demetrius, Attalus, Ariarathes, and Arsaces. **23** He also sent the same letter to each of the following places: Sampsames, Sparta, Delos, Myndos, Sicyon, Caria, Samos, Pamphylia, Lycia, Halicarnassus, Rhodes, Phaselis, Cos, Side, Aradus, Gortyna, Cnidus, Cyprus, and Cyrene. **24** He also had a copy of the letter sent to the chief priest Simon.

King Antiochus VII Becomes Hostile to Simon

25 On the second day of his attack on Dor, King Antiochus sent one unit of soldiers after another against the city. He also used large weapons, which he had made. As a result, Trypho was trapped in the city and couldn't escape. **26** Simon sent 2,000 of his best soldiers to help Antiochus. He also sent him silver, gold, and a lot of weapons. **27** But Antiochus refused to accept any of these things. In fact, he broke all his previous agreements with Simon and became hostile to him. **28** He sent Athenobius, who held the title "Friend of the King," to deliver the following message to Simon: "You control Joppa, Gezer, and the fortress in Jerusalem. These places belong to my kingdom. **29** You destroyed these territories, caused a lot of trouble in Judea, and took control of many places in my kingdom. **30** Give back the cities you took and the taxes you collected from the places you conquered outside Judea, **31** or pay me 37,500 pounds of silver for the destruction you caused and another 37,500 pounds of silver for the taxes you took from those cities. Otherwise, I will come and attack you."

Cendebeus Invades Judea

32 Athenobius, the king's friend, went to Jerusalem. He was shocked to see Simon's luxurious lifestyle, his gold and silver table settings, and all the servants Simon had. After Athenobius delivered the king's message, **33** Simon replied, "We haven't stolen land

from any foreign countries. All we've done is take back the land that our enemies had unjustly taken from our ancestors at one time or another. ³⁴ Now that we have the opportunity, we're going to hold on to our ancestors' land. ³⁵ You're demanding that we give you Joppa and Gezer, the cities that caused our people and country a lot of trouble. We will give you 7,500 pounds of silver for them." Athenobius didn't say a word to Simon. ³⁶ He was very angry. He returned to the king and told him everything Simon had said. He also told him about Simon's luxurious lifestyle and everything else he had seen. When the king heard all this, he became furious.

³⁷ Meanwhile, Trypho got on a ship and escaped to the city of Orthosia. ³⁸ King Antiochus appointed Cendebeus commander of the territory along the coast and gave him infantrymen and cavalrymen. ³⁹ The king ordered Cendebeus to set up camps throughout Judea, rebuild the city of Kedron, and fortify the city gates so that Cendebeus could attack the Jewish people. Then the king pursued Trypho.

⁴⁰ Cendebeus arrived in the city of Jamnia and began to harass the Jewish people. He invaded Judea, took prisoners, and murdered them. ⁴¹ He rebuilt Kedron and stationed cavalrymen and infantrymen there so that they could use the Judean roads for the attacks the king had ordered.

16

Simon Defeats Cendebeus

¹ John left the city of Gezer and went to Jerusalem. He told his father Simon everything Cendebeus had done. ² So Simon said to his two oldest sons, Judas and John, "My father's family, my brothers, and I have been fighting for Israel ever since we were young. We have been successful many times in our attempts to rescue Israel. ³ I'm old now, but you, because of our merciful God, are old enough to assume responsibility. So take my place and my brother's place. Fight for our nation. May the LORD ^{aa} help you and be with you."

⁴ Then Simon chose 20,000 of the nation's infantrymen and cavalrymen and went to fight Cendebeus. They spent the night in the city of Modein. ⁵ Early in the morning, they marched into the plain. They saw a large number of enemy infantrymen and cavalrymen coming to attack them. A river separated the two armies. ⁶ Simon and his army stopped at the river. Simon saw that his soldiers were too scared to cross, so he went across first. When his soldiers saw him do this, they followed him. ⁷ Then Simon divided the army into cavalry and infantry units, since the enemy had a large cavalry. ^{bb} ⁸ Simon's soldiers blew their trumpets. Cendebeus and his army were defeated. Many enemy soldiers were killed, and the rest fled into the fortification at Kedron. ⁹ Even though Judas (who was John's brother) was wounded in the battle, John chased Cendebeus and his soldiers until they reached Kedron, the city that Cendebeus had rebuilt. ¹⁰ John burned down the city. Some of the enemy soldiers ran inside the towers located in the fields around the city of Azotus. About 2,000 enemy soldiers were killed. Then John returned safely to Judea.

Simon and His Sons Are Killed

¹¹ Ptolemy (who was the son of Abubus) was the governor of the Plain of Jericho. He was a wealthy man who owned a lot of silver and gold ¹² because he was the chief priest's son-in-law. ¹³ But he became arrogant and wanted to gain control of the country. So he secretly plotted to kill Simon and his sons. ¹⁴ Simon was visiting the cities throughout the country. He was inspecting the cities and taking note of what each city needed. In the eleventh month (the month of Shebat) in the year 134 B.C., Simon went to the city of Jericho. His sons Mattathias and Judas went with him. ¹⁵ Ptolemy (who was the son of Abubus) made Simon and his sons think they were welcome. He invited them into the Dok, which was a small fortification that he had built, and he threw a big party for them. However, he had assassins hidden in the fortification. ¹⁶ When Simon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy and his armed assassins rushed into the party and killed Simon, his two sons, and some of his servants. ¹⁷ Ptolemy committed a terrible act of treason by doing something wicked to Simon, even though Simon had been good to him.

¹⁸ Then Ptolemy sent a letter to King Antiochus VII and told him what had happened. He asked the king to send some soldiers to help him so that he could turn over the cities and the country to the king. ¹⁹ He also sent letters to Jewish military leaders. He asked them to meet with him. He wanted them to join him, so he planned to bribe them with silver, gold, and other gifts. Ptolemy sent some soldiers to Gezer to kill John. ²⁰ He also sent some soldiers to take possession of Jerusalem and the temple mountain. ²¹ But someone ran to Gezer ahead of Ptolemy's soldiers and told John that his father and brothers had been killed and that Ptolemy had sent men to kill him too. ²² When John heard this, he was stunned. Because he knew that Ptolemy's men were intending to kill him, he arrested them and killed them when they arrived.

^{aa} 16:3 Greek "May Heaven." The author of 1 Maccabees uses the word *Heaven* in place of God's name, the LORD.

^{bb} 16:7 Greek meaning of this verse uncertain.

23 Many other things about John—the wars he fought, the brave things he did, the walls he rebuilt, and all the other things he accomplished from the time he succeeded his father as chief priest—**24** are written in the official records of his priesthood.