

1 Maccabees 1

Good News Translation

Alexander the Great

¹ This history begins when Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedonia, marched from Macedonia and attacked Darius, king of Persia and Media. Alexander enlarged the Greek Empire by defeating Darius and seizing his throne. ² He fought many battles, captured fortified cities, and put the kings of the region to death. ³ As he advanced to the ends of the earth, he plundered many nations; and when he had conquered the world, he became proud and arrogant. ⁴ By building up a strong army, he dominated whole nations and their rulers, and forced everyone to pay him taxes.

⁵⁻⁷ When Alexander had been emperor for twelve years, he fell ill and realized that he was about to die. He called together his generals, noblemen who had been brought up with him since his early childhood, and he divided his empire, giving a part to each of them. ⁸ After his death, the generals took control, ⁹ and each had himself crowned king of his own territory. The descendants of these kings ruled for many generations and brought a great deal of misery on the world.

Antiochus Epiphanes and the Renegade Jews

¹⁰ The wicked ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus the Third of Syria, was a descendant of one of Alexander's generals. Antiochus Epiphanes had been a hostage in Rome before he became king of Syria in the year 137. ^[a]

¹¹ At that time there appeared in the land of Israel a group of traitorous Jews who had no regard for the Law and who had a bad influence on many of our people. They said, Let's come to terms with the Gentiles, for our refusal to associate with them has brought us nothing but trouble. ¹² This proposal appealed to many people, ¹³ and some of them became so enthusiastic about it that they went to the king and received from him permission to follow Gentile customs. ¹⁴ They built in Jerusalem a stadium like those in the Greek cities. ¹⁵ They had surgery performed to hide their circumcision, abandoned the holy covenant, started associating with ^[b] Gentiles, and did all sorts of other evil things.

Antiochus Attacks Egypt

¹⁶ When Antiochus had firmly established himself as king, he decided to conquer Egypt and rule that country as well as Syria. ¹⁷ He invaded Egypt with a large fleet of ships and a powerful army, including chariots, elephants, and cavalry. ¹⁸ When the attack came, King Ptolemy of Egypt turned and fled, and many of his soldiers were killed.

¹⁹ Antiochus was able to capture the fortified cities of Egypt and plunder the whole land.

Antiochus Persecutes the Jews

²⁰ In the year 143, ^[c] after the conquest of Egypt, Antiochus marched with a great army against the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. ²¹ In his arrogance, he entered the Temple and took away the gold altar, the lampstand with all its equipment, ²² the table for the bread offered to the Lord, the cups and bowls, the gold fire pans, the curtain, and the crowns. He also stripped all the gold from the front of the Temple ²³ and carried off the silver and gold and everything else of value, including all the treasures that he could find stored there. ²⁴ Then he took it all to his own country. He had also murdered many people and boasted arrogantly about it. ²⁵ There was great mourning everywhere in the land of Israel.

²⁶ Rulers and leaders groaned in sorrow.
Young men and young women grew weak.
The beauty of our women faded.

²⁷ Every bridegroom sang a funeral song,
and every bride sat mourning in her room.

²⁸ All our people were clothed with shame,
and our land trembled for them.

²⁹ Two years later Antiochus sent a large army from Mysia ^[d] against the towns of Judea. When the soldiers entered Jerusalem, ³⁰ their commander spoke to the people, offering them terms of peace and completely deceiving them. Then he suddenly launched a fierce attack on the city, dealing it a major blow and killing many of the people. ³¹ He plundered the city, set it on fire, and tore down its buildings and walls. ³² He and his army took the women and children as prisoners and seized the cattle.

³³ Then Antiochus and his forces built high walls and strong towers in the area north of the Temple, turning it into a fort. ³⁴ They brought in a group of traitorous Jews and installed them there. ³⁵ They also brought in arms and supplies and stored in the fort all the loot that they had taken in Jerusalem. This fort became a great threat to the city.

³⁶ The fort was a threat to the Temple,
a constant, evil menace for Israel.

³⁷ Innocent people were murdered around the altar;
the Holy Place was defiled by murderers.

³⁸ The people of Jerusalem fled in fear,
and the city became a colony of foreigners.

Jerusalem was foreign to its own people,
who had been forced to abandon the city.

³⁹ Her Temple was as empty as a wilderness;
her festivals were turned into days of mourning,
her Sabbath joy into shame.

Her honor became an object of ridicule.

⁴⁰ Her shame was as great as her former glory,
and her pride was turned into deepest mourning.

⁴¹⁻⁴³ Antiochus now issued a decree that all nations in his empire should abandon their own customs and become one people. All the Gentiles and even many of the Israelites submitted to this decree. They adopted the official pagan religion, offered sacrifices to idols, and no longer observed the Sabbath.

⁴⁴ The king also sent messengers with a decree to Jerusalem and all the towns of Judea, ordering the people to follow customs that were foreign to the country. ⁴⁵ He ordered them not to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, or wine offerings in the Temple, and commanded them to treat Sabbaths and festivals as ordinary work days. ⁴⁶ They were even ordered to defile the Temple and the holy things in it. ⁴⁷ They were commanded to build pagan altars, temples, and shrines, and to sacrifice pigs and other unclean animals there. ⁴⁸ They were forbidden to circumcise their sons and were required to make themselves ritually unclean in every way they could, ⁴⁹ so that they would forget the Law which the Lord had given through Moses and would disobey all its commands. ⁵⁰ The penalty for disobeying the king's decree was death.

⁵¹ The king not only issued the same decree throughout his whole empire, but he also appointed officials to supervise the people and commanded each town in Judea to offer pagan sacrifices. ⁵² Many of the Jews were ready to forsake the Law and to obey these officials. They defiled the land with their evil, ⁵³ and their conduct forced all true Israelites to hide wherever they could.

⁵⁴ On the fifteenth day of the month of Kislev in the year 145, ¹ King Antiochus set up The Awful Horror on the altar of the Temple, and pagan altars were built in the towns throughout Judea. ⁵⁵ Pagan sacrifices were offered in front of houses and in the streets. ⁵⁶ Any books of the Law which were found were torn up and burned, ⁵⁷ and anyone who was caught with a copy of the sacred books or who obeyed the Law was put to death by order of the king. ⁵⁸ Month after month these wicked people used their power against the Israelites caught in the towns.

⁵⁹ On the twenty-fifth of the month, these same evil people offered sacrifices on the pagan altar erected on top of the altar in the Temple. ⁶⁰ Mothers who had allowed their babies to be circumcised were put to death in accordance with the king's decree. ⁶¹ Their babies were hung around their necks, and their families and those who had circumcised them were put to death. ⁶² But many people in Israel firmly resisted the king's decree and refused to eat food that was ritually unclean. ⁶³ They preferred to die rather than break the holy covenant and eat unclean food—and many did die. ⁶⁴ In his anger God made Israel suffer terribly.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 1:10](#) *the year 137*: The dates in this book are counted from the beginning of the Syrian Kingdom in 312 B.C. The year 137 corresponds to 175 B.C.
2. [1 Maccabees 1:15](#) started associating with; or married.
3. [1 Maccabees 1:20](#) *the year 143*: This corresponds to 169 B.C.

4. [1 Maccabees 1:29](#) Probable text a large army from Mysia; Greek a tax collector with a large army.
5. [1 Maccabees 1:46](#) the holy things in it; or the priests.
6. [1 Maccabees 1:54](#) *the year 145*: This corresponds to 167 B.C.

1 Maccabees 2

The Faithfulness of Mattathias

² During that time, a priest of the Jehoiarib family named Mattathias, who was the son of John and the grandson of Simeon, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein.

² Mattathias had five sons: John (also called Gaddi), ³ Simon (also called Thassi), ⁴ Judas (also called Maccabeus), ⁵ **Eleazar** (also called Avaran), and Jonathan (also called Apphus).

⁶ When Mattathias saw all the sins that were being committed in Judea and Jerusalem, ⁷ he said:

Why was I born to see these terrible things,
the ruin of my people and of the holy city?

Must I sit here helpless
while the city is surrendered to enemies
and the Temple falls into the hands of foreigners?

⁸ The Temple is like someone without honor.

⁹ Its splendid furnishings
have been carried away as loot.

Our children have been killed in the streets,
and our young men by the sword of the enemy.

¹⁰ Every nation in the world has occupied the city
and robbed her of her possessions.

¹¹ All her ornaments have been stripped away;
she is now a slave, no longer free.

¹² Look at our Temple, profaned by the Gentiles,
emptied of all its splendor.

¹³ Why should we go on living?

¹⁴ In their grief, Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes, put on sackcloth, and continued in deep mourning.

¹⁵ Then the king's officials, who were forcing the people to turn from God, came to the town of Modein to force the people there to offer pagan sacrifices. ¹⁶ Many of the

Israelites came to meet them, including Mattathias and his sons. ¹⁷ The king's officials said to Mattathias,

You are a respected leader in this town, and you have the support of your sons and relatives. ¹⁸ Why not be the first one here to do what the king has commanded? All the Gentiles, the people of Judea, and all the people left in Jerusalem have already done so. If you do, you and your sons will be honored with the title of Friends of the King, and you will be rewarded with silver and gold and many gifts.

¹⁹ Mattathias answered in a loud voice,

I don't care if every Gentile in this empire has obeyed the king and yielded to the command to abandon the religion of his ancestors. ²⁰ My children, my relatives, and I will continue to keep the covenant that God made with our ancestors. ²¹ With God's help we will never abandon his Law or disobey his commands. ²² We will not obey the king's decree, and we will not change our way of worship in the least.

²³ Just as he finished speaking, one of the men from Modein decided to obey the king's decree and stepped out in front of everyone to offer a pagan sacrifice on the altar that stood there. ²⁴ When Mattathias saw him, he became angry enough to do what had to be done. Shaking with rage, he ran forward and killed the man right there on the altar. ²⁵ He also killed the royal official who was forcing the people to sacrifice, and then he tore down the altar. ²⁶ In this way Mattathias showed his deep devotion for the Law, just as Phinehas had done when he killed Zimri son of Salu.

The Guerrilla Warfare of Mattathias

²⁷ Then Mattathias went through the town shouting,

Everyone who is faithful to God's covenant and obeys his Law, follow me! ²⁸ With this, he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind all they owned.

²⁹⁻³⁰ At that time also many of the Israelites who were seeking to be right with God through obedience to the Law went out to live in the wilderness, taking their children, their wives, and their livestock with them, because of the terrible oppression they were suffering. ³¹ The report soon reached the king's officials and the soldiers in the fort at Jerusalem that some men who had defied the king's command had gone into hiding in the wilderness. ³² A large force of soldiers pursued them, caught up with them, set up camp opposite them, and prepared to attack them on the Sabbath.

³³ There is still time, they shouted out to the Jews. Come out and obey the king's command, and we will spare your lives.

³⁴ We will not come out, they answered. We will not obey the king's command, and we will not profane the Sabbath.

³⁵ The soldiers attacked them immediately, ³⁶ but the Jews did nothing to resist; they did not even throw stones or block the entrances to the caves where they were hiding. ³⁷ They said,

We will all die with a clear conscience. Let heaven and earth bear witness that you are slaughtering us unjustly. ³⁸ So the enemy attacked them on the Sabbath and killed the men, their wives, their children, and their livestock. A thousand people died.

³⁹ When Mattathias and his friends heard the news about this, they were greatly saddened ⁴⁰ and said to one another,

If all of us do as these other Jews have done and refuse to fight the Gentiles to defend our lives and our religion, we will soon be wiped off the face of the earth. ⁴¹ On that day they decided that if anyone attacked them on the Sabbath, they would defend themselves, so that they would not all die as other Jews had died in the caves.

⁴² Then Mattathias and his friends were joined by a group of devout and patriotic Jews, the strongest and bravest men in Israel, who had all volunteered to defend the Law. ⁴³ In addition, everyone who was fleeing from the persecution joined them and strengthened their forces. ⁴⁴ Now that they had an army, they gave vent to their anger by attacking the renegade Jews. Those who escaped were forced to flee to the Gentiles for safety.

⁴⁵ Mattathias and his friends went everywhere tearing down pagan altars ⁴⁶ and circumcising by force every uncircumcised boy they found within the borders of Israel. ⁴⁷ They were also successful in hunting down the arrogant Gentile officials. ⁴⁸ They rescued the Law of Moses from the Gentiles and their kings and broke the power of the wicked King Antiochus.

The Death of Mattathias

⁴⁹ When the time came for Mattathias to die, he said to his sons,

These are times of violence and distress. Arrogant people are in control and have made us an object of ridicule. ⁵⁰ But you, my sons, must be devoted to the Law and ready to die to defend God's covenant with our ancestors. ⁵¹ Remember what our ancestors did and how much they accomplished in their day. Follow their example, and you will be rewarded with great glory and undying fame. ⁵² Remember how Abraham put his trust in the Lord when he was tested and how the Lord was pleased with him and accepted him. ⁵³ Joseph, in his time of trouble, obeyed God's commands and became ruler over the land of Egypt. ⁵⁴ Phinehas, our ancestor, because of his burning devotion, was given the promise that his descendants would always be priests. ⁵⁵ Joshua was made a judge in Israel because he obeyed the command of Moses. ⁵⁶ Caleb brought back a good report to the community and was given a part of the land as a reward. ⁵⁷ David was made king and was given the promise that his descendants would always be kings because of his steadfast loyalty to God. ⁵⁸ Elijah, because of his great devotion to the Law, was taken up into heaven. ⁵⁹ Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were saved from the flames because they had faith. ⁶⁰ Daniel was a man of integrity, and the Lord rescued him from the mouth of the lions. ⁶¹ Take each of these ancestors of ours as an example, and you will realize that

no one who puts his trust in the Lord will ever lack strength. ⁶² Don't be afraid of the threats of a wicked man. Remember that he will die and all his splendor will end with worms feeding on his decaying body. ⁶³ Today he may be highly honored, but tomorrow he will disappear; his body will return to the earth and his scheming will come to an end. ⁶⁴ But you, my sons, be strong and courageous in defending the Law, because it is through the Law that you will earn great glory.

⁶⁵ Your brother Simon is wise, so always listen to him as you would to me. ⁶⁶ Judas Maccabeus has been strong all his life; he will be your commander and will lead you in battle against the enemy. ⁶⁷ Call everyone who obeys God's Law to rally around you; then avenge the wrongs done to your people. ⁶⁸ Pay back the Gentiles for what they have done, and always obey the Law and its commands.

⁶⁹ Then Mattathias gave them his blessing and died. ⁷⁰ He was buried in the family tomb at Modein, and all the people of Israel went into deep mourning for him. This happened in the year 146. ^[a]

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 2:70](#) *the year 146*: This corresponds to 166 B.C.

1 Maccabees 3

Good News Translation

The Early Victories of Judas

3 Judas Maccabeus took the place of his father Mattathias. ² All his brothers and all the loyal followers of his father gave him their support, and they were happy to carry on Israel's war.

³ Judas brought greater glory to his people.

In his armor, he was like a giant.

He took up his weapons and went to war;

with his own sword he defended his camp.

⁴ He was like a ferocious lion roaring as it attacks.

⁵ Judas hunted down those who broke the Law

and set fire to all who oppressed his people.

⁶ In fear of him, lawless men huddled together in terror,
not knowing which way to turn.

He advanced the cause of freedom by what he did.

⁷ He made life miserable for many kings,
but brought joy to the people of Israel.

We will praise him forever for what he did.

⁸ He went through the towns of Judea
and destroyed all the godless men.

He relieved Israel of its terrible suffering. ^[a]

⁹ His fame spread to the ends of the earth,
as he gathered together those who were threatened with death.

¹⁰ Then Apollonius assembled a Gentile army, including a large force from Samaria, to attack the people of Israel. ¹¹ When Judas learned of this, he marched out to battle, defeated the army, and killed Apollonius. Many Gentiles lost their lives, and the rest fled.

¹² When the spoils of war were collected, Judas took the sword of Apollonius and used it in battle until the day he died.

¹³ Seron, the general of the Syrian forces, learned that Judas had gathered together an army, consisting of a band of loyal men who were ready to fight under his command.

¹⁴ Seron said to himself,

I will make a reputation for myself throughout the empire by defeating Judas and his men, who have no respect for the king's command. ¹⁵ Then he began a new campaign against Judas and was joined by a strong force of godless men who were eager to help him take vengeance on Israel. ¹⁶ When he approached the pass at Beth Horon, Judas went out to meet him with a small group of men. ¹⁷ When Judas' men saw the army coming against them, they asked,

How can our little group of men fight an army as big as that? Besides, we have not eaten all day, and we are tired!

¹⁸ It is not difficult, Judas answered,

for a small group to overpower a large one. It makes no difference to the Lord whether we are rescued by many people or by just a few. ¹⁹ Victory in battle does not depend on who has the largest army; it is the Lord's power that determines the outcome. ²⁰ Our enemies are coming against us with great violence, intending to plunder our possessions and kill our wives and children. ²¹ But we are fighting for our lives and for our religion. ²² When we attack, the Lord will crush our enemies, so don't be afraid of them.

²³ As soon as Judas had finished speaking, he and his men made a sudden attack against Seron and his army and crushed them. ²⁴ They pursued them down the pass at Beth Horon to the plain and killed about 800 men. Those who escaped fled to Philistia. ²⁵ After that, Gentiles everywhere began to be afraid of Judas and his brothers. ²⁶ His fame reached the ears of King Antiochus, and people in every nation talked about Judas and his victories.

The King Appoints Lysias as Governor

²⁷ When Antiochus heard what had happened, he was furious. He ordered all the armies of his empire to assemble in one huge force. ²⁸ From his treasury he paid a full year's wages to his soldiers and ordered them to be prepared for any emergency. ²⁹ But then he found that the funds in his treasury were exhausted. Income from taxes had decreased

because of the disorder and the troubles he had brought on the world by doing away with the laws which had been in force from the earliest times.³⁰ Antiochus had always given presents more lavishly than earlier kings, but now he was worried that he might not be able to continue this, or even to meet expenses—this had happened once or twice before.³¹ He was very disturbed; but finally he decided to go to Persia, collect the taxes from the provinces there, and bring together a large sum of ready cash.

³² He appointed Lysias, an important man who had been granted the title Relative of the King, as governor to take care of the king's affairs in the whole territory between the Euphrates River and the Egyptian border.³³ The king also made Lysias the guardian of his son Antiochus the Fifth until his own return.³⁴ He put Lysias in charge of all the elephants and of half his army, and then gave him detailed instructions about what he wanted done, and in particular, what he wanted done with the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem.³⁵ Lysias was ordered to send an army against the Jews, especially the Jews in Jerusalem, to break their power and destroy them, so that no trace of them would remain.³⁶ He was ordered to take their land and give it to foreigners, who would settle the whole area.³⁷ Taking the other half of his army, the king set out from Antioch, his capital city, in the year 147.^[b] He crossed the Euphrates River and marched through Mesopotamia.

The Victories of Judas

³⁸ Lysias chose Nicanor, Gorgias, and Ptolemy son of Dorymenes as army commanders; all three were able men who bore the title

Friend of the King.³⁹ He put them in charge of 40,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry and ordered them to invade the land of Judea and destroy it as the king had commanded.

⁴⁰ These commanders set out with their entire force, and when they came to the plains near Emmaus, they made camp.⁴¹ A force from Idumea^[c] and Philistia joined them. The merchants of the region heard about the strength of the army, and they came to the camp with chains and a large amount of money, hoping to buy some Jewish slaves.

⁴² Judas and his brothers saw that their situation was getting more and more difficult, with foreign armies camped within their own borders. They also learned that the king had commanded the complete destruction of the people.⁴³ So they determined to rebuild their ruined nation and fight for their country and the Temple.⁴⁴ Then the whole community came together to prepare for war and to pray for God's mercy.

⁴⁵ Jerusalem was as empty as a wilderness;
no citizens left or entered the city.
The holy Temple was profaned by foreigners,
and Gentiles camped in the city's fort;
so joy departed from the people of Israel,
and the sound of music was heard no more.

⁴⁶ Then Judas and his men assembled and marched to Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, because the people of Israel had previously had a place of worship there.⁴⁷ In deep mourning, they fasted all that day, put on sackcloth, threw ashes on their heads, and tore

their clothes. ⁴⁸ The Gentiles would have consulted their idols in such a situation, but the Israelites unrolled *the book of the Law* to search for God's guidance. ⁴⁹ They brought the priests' robes, the offerings of the first grain, and the tithes, and then they brought in some Nazirites who had completed their vows. ⁵⁰ The whole community prayed,

Lord, what shall we do with these things? Where shall we take them, ⁵¹ now that your holy Temple has been trampled and profaned by Gentiles, and your priests mourn in disgrace? ⁵² The Gentiles have come to attack and destroy us. You know what they plan to do! ⁵³ If you don't help us, how can we stand up against them?

⁵⁴ Then they blew trumpets and shouted loudly.

⁵⁵ After that, Judas divided his men into groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand, placing officers in charge of each group. ⁵⁶ Then, in obedience to the Law, he sent home everyone who had recently been married, built a house, or planted a vineyard, as well as anyone who was afraid. ⁵⁷ Finally, the army marched out and took up positions south of Emmaus, ⁵⁸ where Judas said to them:

Prepare yourselves for battle and be courageous! Be ready early tomorrow morning to fight these Gentiles who have joined forces to attack us and destroy us and our Temple. ⁵⁹ It is better for us to die fighting than to stand idly by and watch the destruction of our nation and our Temple. ⁶⁰ But the Lord will do what he pleases.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 3:8](#) relieved Israel of its terrible suffering; or saved Israel from God's anger.
2. [1 Maccabees 3:37](#) *the year 147*: This corresponds to 165 B.C.
3. [1 Maccabees 3:41](#) Probable text Idumea; Greek Syria.

1 Maccabees 4

Good News Translation

4 Gorgias took 5,000 infantry and 1,000 of his most experienced cavalry and left camp by night, ² with men from the fort in Jerusalem as his guides. He had planned to make a surprise attack on the Jewish army, ³ but Judas learned of the plan and moved out with his men to attack the king's army at Emmaus ⁴ while Gorgias and his troops were still away from the camp. ⁵ When Gorgias and his army reached Judas' camp that night, they found no one there. They thought Judas and his men were trying to escape, so they started looking for them in the mountains.

⁶ At dawn Judas appeared in the plain with 3,000 men, not all of them as well armed as they would have liked. ⁷ They saw the huge Gentile army of experienced troops wearing armor and protected by cavalry. ⁸ But Judas said to his men,

Don't worry about the size of their army, and don't be frightened when they attack.

⁹ Remember how our ancestors were saved at the Red Sea when the king of Egypt was pursuing them with his army! ¹⁰ Now let us ask the Lord to have mercy on us. Let us pray that he will honor his covenant with our ancestors and crush this army when we attack today. ¹¹ Then all the Gentiles will know that Israel has a God who rescues and saves them.

¹² When the Gentiles saw Judas and his men preparing for battle, ¹³ they moved out of their camp to fight. Then Judas and his men sounded their trumpets ¹⁴ and attacked. The Gentiles broke ranks and fled to the plain, ¹⁵ but all the stragglers were killed. The Israelites pursued the enemy as far as Gezer, the plains of Idumea, and the towns of Azotus and Jamnia. Altogether they killed about 3,000 of the enemy.

¹⁶ When Judas and his army came back from the pursuit, ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ he said to his men,

Don't be greedy for loot. Gorgias and his army are nearby in the mountains, so there is still heavy fighting ahead of us. We must stand firm and fight. After that, you can safely take all the loot you want. ¹⁹ Judas was just finishing his speech when an enemy patrol on a scouting mission looked down from the mountains ²⁰ and saw that their army had been put to flight; they could tell from the smoke that their camp was burning. ²¹ When they saw all this, they were terrified, and when they also saw that Judas' army was in the plain ready for battle, ²² they all fled to Philistia. ²³ Then Judas returned to loot the enemy camp; he took large amounts of gold and silver, blue and purple cloth, and other rich plunder. ²⁴ When the Jews came back to their own camp, they sang a hymn: The Lord is worthy of praise; his mercy endures forever. ²⁵ That day brought a great victory to the people of Israel.

Victory over Lysias

²⁶ The Gentile troops that escaped went to Lysias and reported all that had happened.

²⁷ When Lysias heard that his troops had lost the battle, he was shocked and disappointed that Israel had not been defeated as the king had commanded.

²⁸ In the following year Lysias gathered an army of 60,000 well-trained infantry and 5,000 cavalry, intending to conquer the Jews. ²⁹ They marched into Idumea and camped at Bethzur. Judas came to meet them with 10,000 men. ³⁰ When Judas saw how strong the enemy's army was, he prayed,

We will praise you, Savior of Israel. You broke the attack of the giant by the hand of your servant David and you let Saul's son Jonathan and the young man who carried his weapons defeat the entire Philistine army. ³¹ Now in the same way let your people Israel defeat our enemy. Put them to shame, in spite of all their confidence in their infantry and

cavalry. ³² Make them afraid; let their bold strength melt away; let them tremble at the prospect of defeat. ³³ We love and worship you; so let us kill our enemies, that we may then sing your praises.

³⁴ The battle began, and in the hand-to-hand fighting about 5,000 of Lysias' men were killed. ³⁵ When Lysias saw that his army was being defeated and when he saw the reckless courage of Judas and his men, who showed that they were ready to live or die with honor, he returned to Antioch. There he recruited some mercenaries and planned to return to Judea later with a much larger army.

The Purification of the Temple

³⁶ Judas and his brothers said,

Now that our enemies have been defeated, let's go to Jerusalem to purify the Temple and rededicate it. ³⁷ So the whole army was assembled and went up to Mount Zion.

³⁸ There they found the Temple abandoned, the altar profaned, the gates burned down, the courtyards grown up in a forest of weeds, and the priests' rooms torn down. ³⁹ In their sorrow, they tore their clothes, cried loudly, threw ashes on their heads, ⁴⁰ and fell face down on the ground. When the signal was given on the trumpets, everyone cried out to the Lord.

⁴¹ Then Judas ordered some of his soldiers to attack the men in the fort, while he purified the Temple. ⁴² He chose some priests who were qualified and who were devoted to the Law. ⁴³ They purified the Temple and took the stones that had been defiled and put them in an unclean place. ⁴⁴ They discussed what should be done with the altar of burnt offerings, which had been desecrated ⁴⁵ by the Gentiles, and decided to tear it down, so that it would not stand there as a monument to their shame. So they tore down the altar ⁴⁶ and put the stones in a suitable place on the Temple hill, where they were to be kept until a prophet should appear and decide what to do with them. ⁴⁷ Then they took uncut stones, as the Law of Moses required, and built a new altar like the old one. ⁴⁸ They repaired the Temple, inside and out, and dedicated its courtyards. ⁴⁹ They made new utensils for worship and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table for the bread into the Temple. ⁵⁰ They burned incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, and there was light in the Temple! ⁵¹ They placed the loaves of bread on the table, hung the curtains, and completed all the work.

⁵²⁻⁵⁴ The twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev, in the year 148^[a] was the anniversary of the day the Gentiles had desecrated the altar. On that day a sacrifice was offered on the new altar in accordance with the Law of Moses. The new altar was dedicated and hymns were sung to the accompaniment of harps, lutes, and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people bowed down with their faces to the ground and worshiped and praised the Lord for giving them victory.

⁵⁶ For eight days they celebrated the rededication of the altar. With great joy they brought burnt offerings and offered fellowship offerings and thank offerings. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the Temple with gold crowns and shields, rebuilt the gates and the priests'

rooms and put doors on them. ⁵⁸ Now that the Jews had removed the shame which the Gentiles had brought, they held a great celebration. ⁵⁹ Then Judas, his brothers, and the entire community of Israel decreed that the rededication of the altar should be celebrated with a festival of joy and gladness at the same time each year, beginning on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev and lasting for eight days.

⁶⁰ Then they built high walls and strong towers around Mount Zion, so that the Gentiles could not come in and trample and defile it again. ⁶¹ Judas placed a detachment of soldiers there to guard the Temple. He also fortified the town of Bethzur, so that the people of Israel would have a fortress facing Idumea.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 4:52](#) *the year 148*: This corresponds to 164 B.C.

1 Maccabees 5

Good News Translation

Wars with Neighboring Nations

5 When the neighboring nations heard that the Jews had built the altar and restored the Temple as it had been before, they were so furious ² that they made up their minds to destroy all the Jews who were living among them. So they began to murder and kill our people.

³ The Idumeans were blockading the Israelites, so Judas went to war against them at Akrabattene, crushed them, and looted them. ⁴ He also dealt with the people of Baean, who were a constant threat to the people of Israel, because they would lie in ambush waiting to trap Israelite travelers. ⁵ He shut the Baeanites up in their forts, took a solemn oath that he would destroy them, and burned their forts with everyone in them. ⁶ Then he marched against the land of Ammon, where he met a large and powerful army under the command of a man named Timothy. ⁷ Judas won many battles against them and finally defeated them. ⁸ He captured Jazer and its surrounding villages and then returned to Judea.

⁹ The Gentiles in Gilead assembled to attack and destroy the Israelites living in their territory. But the Israelites fled to the fortress of Dathema ¹⁰⁻¹¹ and sent the following letter to Judas and his brothers:

The Gentiles around us are joining forces under Timothy. We have fled to this fortress for protection, and now they are getting ready to capture it and destroy us. ¹² Many of us have already been killed. Come rescue us! ¹³ All the Jewish men in the region of Tob^[a] have been killed, their wives and their children have been taken captive, and their possessions have been carried off. A force of about 1,000 men has been destroyed there.

¹⁴ This letter was still being read when other messengers, who had torn their clothes in sorrow, arrived with a report from Galilee. ¹⁵ They said,

An army from Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, and all of Galilee has come together to destroy us.

¹⁶ When Judas and the people heard all this, a great assembly was held to decide what should be done to help these countrymen, who were in such difficulty under enemy attack. ¹⁷ Judas said to his brother Simon,

Choose some men and go rescue our fellow Jews in Galilee; our brother Jonathan and I will go to Gilead. ¹⁸ Judas left the rest of his army to defend Judea and put the two leaders, Azariah and Joseph son of Zechariah, in charge of the people. ¹⁹ He told them: I am leaving you in command here, but don't go out and fight the Gentiles until we get back. ²⁰ Then 3,000 men joined Simon for the march into Galilee, and 8,000 remained with Judas for the march into Gilead.

²¹ Simon went into Galilee and fought many battles with the Gentiles. He defeated them ²² and pursued them all the way to the city of Ptolemais, killing about 3,000 of them, and taking the loot. ²³ Then he took the Jews who were in Galilee and Arbatta, with their wives, their children, and all they owned, and brought them back to Judea with him. There was great rejoicing.

²⁴ During this time, Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan had crossed the Jordan River and had marched for three days through the desert. ²⁵ They met some friendly Nabateans who told them all that had happened to the Jews in Gilead. ²⁶ They reported that many Jews were imprisoned in the fortified cities of Bozrah, Bosor, Alema, Chaspho, Maked, and Karnaim, ²⁷ while others were imprisoned in the smaller towns of Gilead. They also reported that the enemy was drawn up to make an attack the next day on the Jewish fortresses, hoping to destroy all the Jews in a single day.

²⁸ So Judas and his army suddenly turned and attacked Bozrah by the desert road, captured the town, and killed every man in it. They looted the town and set it on fire. ²⁹ They left there and marched all night to the fortress at Dathema. ³⁰ At dawn Judas and his men saw a vast army attacking the fortress; they were bringing up ladders, siege platforms, and battering rams in an effort to capture it. ³¹ When Judas heard the noise, the shouts, and the sound of trumpets coming from the city, he realized that the battle had begun, ³² so he said to his men,

Fight today for our fellow Jews!

³³ He ordered his men to march in three columns and attack the enemy from the rear. As they moved forward, they blew trumpets and shouted prayers. ³⁴ When the army under Timothy's command saw that it was Judas Maccabeus, the soldiers turned and fled. Judas crushed them and killed about 8,000 men that day.

³⁵ Then Judas turned aside to attack the town of Alema; ^[b] he captured it and killed all the men in it. He looted the town and set fire to it. ³⁶ From there he went on and captured Chaspho, Maked, Bosor, and the other towns of Gilead.

³⁷ After this, Timothy gathered another army and camped opposite Raphon, on the other side of a river. ³⁸ Judas sent some men to spy on the camp, and they reported back to him that all the Gentiles in the region had joined Timothy and had formed a large army.

³⁹ Timothy had also hired Arab mercenaries to help him, and these were camped on the other side of the river ready to attack Judas. So Judas went out to meet them in battle.

⁴⁰ As Judas and his army came closer to the water, Timothy said to his officers, If he keeps on coming and crosses the river, we won't be able to turn back his attack, and he will defeat us. ⁴¹ But if he is afraid and stops on the other side of the river, we will cross over to attack and defeat him.

⁴² When Judas reached the bank of the river, he gave orders to his officers to let no one stop but to push everyone forward into battle. ⁴³ Judas was the first to cross the river against the enemy, and all his men followed him. The Gentiles broke ranks before them, threw away their arms, and fled to the pagan temple at Karnaim. ⁴⁴ But Judas and his men took the city and burned down the temple with all who were in it. With Karnaim overthrown, the Gentiles could no longer offer any resistance to Judas.

⁴⁵ Then Judas gathered together all the Jews in Gilead to take them back to Judea with him. It was a large group of all kinds of people, together with their wives and children and all that they owned. ⁴⁶ They went as far as Ephron, a large, well-fortified town. It was impossible to go around it on either side, and the road passed directly through the town.

⁴⁷ But the people there would not let them pass and blocked the town gates with stones.

⁴⁸ Then Judas sent a friendly message to them:

Let us pass through your territory to return home. No one will harm you; we will just pass through. But they still refused to open the gates.

⁴⁹ So Judas told everyone in the group, except the fighting men, to camp where they were.

⁵⁰ The fighting men were ordered to take up their positions and attack the town. They fought all day and all night, until they had taken it. ⁵¹ Judas had all the men of Ephron put to death, plundered the town, and leveled it. Then he and his army marched through the town over the dead bodies. ⁵² They crossed the Jordan into the wide plain opposite Beth Shan. ⁵³ Throughout the whole march Judas kept gathering up the stragglers and encouraging the people until they reached the land of Judea. ⁵⁴ With thanksgiving and rejoicing, they went up to Mount Zion and sacrificed burnt offerings because they had returned safely without a single loss.

⁵⁵ While Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead and their brother Simon was attacking Ptolemais in Galilee, ⁵⁶ Joseph and Azariah, the commanders of the army in Judea, heard about their brave deeds and victories. ⁵⁷ They said to one another,

Let's go to war with the Gentiles around us and win some fame for ourselves. ⁵⁸ So they and their men attacked Jamnia. ⁵⁹ Gorgias and his men went out of the town to meet them in battle. ⁶⁰ They defeated Joseph and Azariah and pursued them as far as the borders of Judea. At least 2,000 Israelite men were killed that day. ⁶¹ This great defeat came about because the Jewish commanders wanted to be heroes and refused to obey Judas and his brothers. ⁶² Besides, they did not belong to the family of the Maccabees, whom God had chosen to bring freedom to the people of Israel.

⁶³ But Judas Maccabeus and his brothers won great respect among all the Israelites and all the Gentiles. When people heard of their fame, ⁶⁴ large crowds gathered to praise them.

⁶⁵ Then Judas and his brothers went to war against the Edomites to the south. He attacked Hebron and its surrounding towns, destroyed its fortifications, and burned down the towers around it. ⁶⁶ Then he marched into the land of the Philistines and passed through Marisa. ⁶⁷ That day a number of priests were killed in battle because they wanted to be heroes and foolishly went out to fight. ⁶⁸ Judas turned aside to Azotus in Philistia. He pulled down the altars, burned the images of their gods, plundered their towns, and then returned to Judea.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 5:13](#) in the region of Tob; or who were fighting with Tobias.
2. [1 Maccabees 5:35](#) *alema*: The name of the town is not certain.
3. [1 Maccabees 5:66](#) Some ancient translations Marisa; Greek Samaria.

1 Maccabees 6

Good News Translation

The Death of Antiochus the Fourth

6 As King Antiochus the Fourth was passing through Mesopotamia, he heard of a city in Persia, named Elymais, which was famous for its riches in silver and gold. ² The temple was very rich, containing gold shields, armor, and weapons left there by Alexander, son of King Philip of Macedonia, who was the first to rule the Greek Empire. ³ Antiochus came and tried to take the city and loot it, but he didn't succeed, because the citizens had

learned what he was planning to do,⁴ and they drew up their troops to resist him. In great frustration he withdrew to return to Babylonia.

⁵ In Persia a messenger reached him with the news that the armies he had sent into Judea had been defeated. ⁶ Lysias and his strong army had been forced to flee from the Jews, who were now reinforced by the additional weapons, supplies, and loot they had taken from the defeated armies. ⁷ The Jews had pulled down the thing they called

The Awful Horror that Antiochus had built on the altar in Jerusalem. They had also surrounded the Temple with high walls, as it had been before, and had taken and fortified the town of Bethzur, one of the king's own towns.

⁸ When the king heard this report, he was so dumbfounded and terribly shaken that he went to bed in a fit of deep depression because things had not turned out as he had hoped. ⁹ He remained ill for a long time, as waves of despair swept over him, until he finally realized that he was going to die. ¹⁰ He called together all those to whom he had given the title

Friends of the King and said to them,

I cannot sleep, and my heart is broken with grief and worry. ¹¹ At first I asked myself why these great waves of trouble were sweeping over me, since I have been kind and well-liked during my reign. ¹² But then I remembered the wrongs I did in Jerusalem when I took all the silver and gold objects from the Temple and tried without any good reason to destroy the inhabitants of Judea. ¹³ I know this is why all these terrible things have happened to me and I am about to die in deep despair here in this foreign land.

¹⁴ Then he called Philip, one of his most trusted advisers, and put him in charge of his whole empire. ¹⁵ He gave him his crown, robe, and official ring, and authorized him to educate his son Antiochus the Fifth and bring him up to be king. ¹⁶ King Antiochus died there in the year 149.^[a]

¹⁷ When Lysias learned that the king had died, he made the young Antiochus king in place of his father. He had brought up Antiochus from childhood and now gave him the name Eupator.

The Campaign of Antiochus the Fifth and Lysias

¹⁸ Meanwhile, the enemies in the fort at Jerusalem had been blockading the people of Israel in the area around the Temple, constantly causing them trouble and giving support to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ So Judas decided to get rid of them and called all the people together to besiege the fort. ²⁰ The people assembled and laid siege to the fort in the year 150.^[b] They built siege platforms and battering rams.

²¹ But some of the men under siege escaped, and together with some of the renegade Jews, they went to the king and said,

²² How long are you going to wait before you take revenge for what was done to our

countrymen?²³ We were willing to serve your father, follow his orders, and obey his decrees.²⁴ But what good did it do us? Now our own countrymen have become our enemies.^[c] In fact, they have killed as many of us as they could find and have stolen our possessions.²⁵ But we are not the only ones they have harmed; they have attacked all their neighbors.²⁶ And now they have laid siege to the fort in Jerusalem and are planning to take it. They have also fortified the Temple and Bethzur.²⁷ Unless you act immediately, they will do even more, and you will not be able to stop them.

²⁸ When the king heard this, he was furious. He brought together all the army commanders, the cavalry officers, and his most trusted advisers.²⁹ He also hired mercenary soldiers from other countries and from the Greek islands.³⁰ His forces numbered 100,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, and 32 elephants trained for war.³¹ The king and his army passed through Idumea and laid siege to Bethzur, where they fought for a long time. They built battering rams and siege platforms, but the defenders fought bravely and came out of the town and burned down the platforms.

³² Then Judas withdrew his troops from the fort in Jerusalem and set up his camp at Beth Zechariah, blocking the advance of the king's army.³³ Early the next morning, the king rapidly moved his army along the road to Beth Zechariah, where his troops took up battle positions and blew trumpets.³⁴ They got the elephants ready for battle by showing them grape juice and mulberry juice.³⁵ The huge animals were distributed among the infantry units. A thousand men, protected by chain armor and bronze helmets, were stationed with each elephant. Each animal was also accompanied by a special force of 500 cavalry,³⁶ which always remained with the elephant.³⁷ A strong, protected wooden platform was securely fastened by a special harness to the back of each elephant. Three^[d] soldiers rode on each animal, in addition to the elephant driver.³⁸ Lysias placed the rest of the cavalry on the two flanks of the army where they could be protected by the infantry while harassing the enemy.³⁹ The sunlight, reflected off the bronze and gold shields, shone on the mountains and flashed like burning torches.⁴⁰ Part of the king's army was spread out over the higher ground of the mountain slopes and part over the lower land, but they all moved forward steadily and in good order.⁴¹ All the people were terrified when they heard the noise made by the clashing of weapons and the marching of that great and powerful army.

⁴² Judas and his army advanced into battle, and immediately killed 600 of the king's army.
⁴³ When **Eleazar** Avaran saw that one of the elephants was larger than the others and that it was covered with royal armor, he thought that the king was riding on it.⁴⁴ Eleazar sacrificed his life to save his people and to gain eternal fame.⁴⁵ He ran boldly toward the elephant, which was in the middle of a battalion of infantry. He rushed forward killing men to the right and left, so that the enemy soldiers fell back before him on both sides.⁴⁶ He slipped in under the elephant and stabbed it to death, and it fell on him and killed him.⁴⁷ But when the Jews realized how strong the royal army was and how determined it was to fight, they retreated.

⁴⁸ The king and his army advanced to fight the Jews at Jerusalem and laid siege to the whole of Judea and Jerusalem.⁴⁹ He made peace with the Jews of Bethzur, who then left

the town. There had not been enough food in the town for them to withstand the siege because it was the sabbatical year, when no crops were planted.⁵⁰ The king occupied Bethzur and stationed a body of troops there to guard it.⁵¹ Then he surrounded the Temple and besieged it for a long time. He set up siege platforms, battering rams, catapults for throwing fire and stones, and other weapons to throw spears and rocks.⁵² The defenders also made war machines to oppose those of the enemy, and so the battle went on for a long time.⁵³ But there was no food left in the Temple storage bins because it was the sabbatical year, and the people who had fled from the Gentiles and taken refuge in Judea had eaten all the food that had been stored there.⁵⁴ The shortage of food had been so severe that many people had scattered to their homes, and only a few men were left in the Temple.

⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Philip, who had been appointed by King Antiochus before his death to educate his son to be king,⁵⁶ returned from Persia and Media. He had come back with the royal army and planned to take control of the government. When Lysias heard this news,⁵⁷ he made rapid preparations to depart. He said to the young king, to his officers, and to his men,

We are growing weaker each day; we are short of provisions, and this place we are besieging is strong. Besides, there are pressing government affairs which need our attention.⁵⁸ So now let's arrange a truce and make a peace treaty with the Jews and their whole nation.⁵⁹ We will allow them to follow their own laws and customs as they did before. All this trouble started when we provoked them by abolishing their laws and customs.

⁶⁰ This recommendation was well received by the king and the officers, so Lysias proposed peace terms to the Jews, and they accepted them.⁶¹ When the king and his officers solemnly agreed to abide by these terms, the Jews came out of their fortress.⁶² But when the king entered the Temple area on Mount Zion and saw the strong fortifications, he broke his word and ordered the walls surrounding the Temple to be torn down.⁶³ Then he hurriedly left and returned to Antioch, where he found Philip in control of the city. The king attacked the city and took it by force.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 6:16](#) *the year 149*: This corresponds to 163 B.C.
2. [1 Maccabees 6:20](#) *the year 150*: This corresponds to 162 B.C.
3. [1 Maccabees 6:24](#) enemies; some manuscripts add and besieged the fort.
4. [1 Maccabees 6:37](#) Probable text Three; Greek Thirty or Thirty-two.

1 Maccabees 7

Good News Translation

The High Priest Alcimus and the Campaign of Nicanor

7 In the year 151,^[a] Demetrius son of Seleucus left Rome and with a few men landed at a town on the Mediterranean coast, where he proclaimed himself king.² As he was making his way to the royal palace of his ancestors, the soldiers arrested Antiochus the Fifth and Lysias, planning to take them to Demetrius.³ When Demetrius heard about it, he said,

I don't want to see them.⁴ So the soldiers killed them, and Demetrius took the throne.

⁵ Then all the godless traitorous Jews led by Alcimus, who wanted to be High Priest, went to Demetrius.⁶ They brought accusations against the other Jews and said,

Judas and his brothers have killed everybody who supported you, and they have driven us out of our country.⁷ We advise you to send someone whom you can trust to go and inspect all the damage done to our property and the king's territory and to punish Judas, his brothers, and all who support them.

⁸ King Demetrius chose one of his advisers, a man by the name of Bacchides, who was the governor of Greater Syria. He was an important man in the empire and loyal to the king.⁹ He was sent along with the godless Alcimus, whom the king had appointed High Priest; Alcimus had orders to take revenge on the Jews.¹⁰ They left Antioch and arrived in Judea with a large army. Bacchides tried to trick Judas and his brothers by sending to them messengers with offers of peace.¹¹ But when Judas and his brothers saw what a large army they had brought, they did not believe what the messengers said.

¹² A group of teachers of the Law came to Alcimus and Bacchides, asking for justice.

¹³ These devout and patriotic men were the first of the Jews to try to make peace with Alcimus and Bacchides.¹⁴ They trusted Alcimus, who was a priest descended from Aaron, and they thought he would not cause them any harm.¹⁵ Alcimus assured them of his peaceful intentions and solemnly promised that no harm would come to them or their friends.¹⁶ But as soon as they began to trust him, he arrested 60 of them and put them all to death on the same day. As the scripture says,

17

The blood of your faithful people was poured out,
their bodies were scattered around Jerusalem,
and there was no one left to bury the dead.

¹⁸ When this happened, all the people were afraid of Alcimus and Bacchides, and they said,

They don't know what truth or justice means. They gave their solemn word and then broke it!¹⁹ Bacchides left Jerusalem and set up his headquarters at Beth Zaith. He ordered

the arrest of some of the faithful Jews and even many of the renegades who had willingly joined him; he had them killed and thrown into a deep pit. ²⁰ Bacchides put the country under the control of Alcimus, left troops there to help him, and returned to the king.

²¹ Alcimus then began his struggle to establish himself as High Priest. ²² Every troublemaker in the country joined him. They gained control of the land of Judea and caused great difficulties for the Jews. ²³ Judas saw that the trouble Alcimus and his men had caused was even worse than the damage done by the Gentiles. ²⁴ So he went around the whole country of Judea taking revenge on all the men who had willingly joined Alcimus and preventing them from leaving the towns and going into the country. ²⁵ When Alcimus saw that Judas and his men were growing more powerful and when he realized that he would not be able to stand against them, he returned to the king and accused them of great crimes.

²⁶ Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his most honored officers, who hated the Jews, with orders to exterminate them. ²⁷ Nicanor came to Jerusalem with a big army. He tried to trick Judas and his brothers by sending peace offers. He said,

²⁸ There need not be any quarrel between you and me. I will come to you with a small escort for a friendly private conversation. ²⁹ When he came to Judas, they exchanged polite greetings, but Judas' enemies were ready to kidnap him. ³⁰ When Judas learned that Nicanor's visit was part of a plot against him, he was afraid and decided not to meet him again. ³¹ Nicanor realized that his plan had been discovered, so he left Jerusalem to meet Judas in battle near Capharsalama. ³² About 500 of Nicanor's men were killed, and the rest of the army escaped to the fort in Jerusalem.

³³ Some time later Nicanor went to Mount Zion. Some of the priests left the Temple and, along with some of the leaders of the people, went to welcome him with words of peace and to show him the burnt offering that was being sacrificed on behalf of the king. ³⁴ But he ridiculed them and made them ceremonially unclean by spitting on them. He spoke proudly ³⁵ and angrily threatened them with an oath,

Unless Judas and his army are surrendered to me immediately, I will burn this Temple down as soon as I return after my victory. And he left in a rage.

³⁶ The priests went into the courtyard and stood facing the altar and the Temple. They started weeping and prayed,

³⁷ Lord, you chose this Temple to bear your name and to be a place of prayer and intercession for your people. ³⁸ Now, take vengeance on this man and his army; let them die in battle. Remember how they spoke evil of you, and let none of them survive.

³⁹ Nicanor left Jerusalem and set up his headquarters at Beth Horon, where the Syrian army joined him. ⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Judas set up camp at Adasa with 3,000 men. There Judas prayed, ⁴¹

Lord, the Scriptures tell us that when a king sent messengers to insult you, your angel went out and killed 185,000 of his soldiers.⁴² Now, in the same way, crush this army before us today and let everyone know that Nicanor is being punished because he insulted your holy Temple. Punish him as his wickedness deserves.

⁴³ The armies met in battle on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and Nicanor's army was defeated. Nicanor himself was the first to be killed in the battle,⁴⁴ and when his soldiers saw that he was dead, they threw down their weapons and fled.⁴⁵ The Jews pursued them all day long from Adasa to Gezer. As they followed, they kept sounding the call to battle on the trumpets,⁴⁶ and from all the surrounding villages of Judea people came out and attacked the fleeing enemy from the sides. This forced them back toward the Jews who were chasing them, and all of the enemy were killed in the fight. Not one of them survived.

⁴⁷ The Jews took the loot and then cut off Nicanor's head and his right arm, which he had extended so arrogantly. They brought his head and his arm to be put on display outside Jerusalem.⁴⁸ There was great rejoicing among the Jews. They set that day aside as a special day of celebration,⁴⁹ and decreed that the thirteenth day of Adar should be observed as an annual day of celebration.⁵⁰ There was peace in the land of Judea for a little while.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 7:1](#) *the year 151*: This corresponds to 161 B.C.

1 Maccabees 8

Good News Translation

The Treaty with the Romans

8 Judas had heard about the Romans and their reputation as a military power. He knew that they welcomed all those who joined them as allies and that those who came to them could be sure of the friendship of Rome.² People had told him about the wars the Romans had fought and their heroic acts among the Gauls, whom they had conquered and forced to pay taxes.³ He had been told what they had done in Spain when they captured the silver mines and the gold mines there.⁴ By careful planning and persistence, they had conquered the whole country, even though it was far from Rome. They had overcome the kings from distant lands who had fought against them; they had defeated them so badly that the survivors had to pay annual taxes.⁵ They had fought and conquered Philip and

Perseus, kings of Macedonia, and all who had joined them against Rome. ⁶ They had even defeated Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, who had attacked them with 120 elephants, cavalry, chariots, and a powerful army. ⁷ They took him alive and forced him and his successors to pay heavy taxes, to give hostages, and to surrender ⁸ India, Media, Lydia, and some of their best lands. They took these and gave them to King Eumenes. ^[a]

⁹ When the Greeks made plans to attack and destroy them, ¹⁰ the Romans learned of the plans and sent a general to fight against them. The Romans killed many of the Greeks, took their wives and children captive, plundered their possessions, occupied their land, tore down their fortresses, and made them slaves, as they are today. ¹¹ They also destroyed or made slaves of other kingdoms, the islands, and everyone who had ever fought against them. ¹² But they maintained their friendship with their allies and those who relied on them for protection. They conquered kings near and far, and everyone who heard of their reputation was afraid of them. ¹³ They helped some men to become kings, while they deposed others; they had become a world power. ¹⁴ In spite of all this, no Roman ever tried to advance his own position by wearing a crown or putting on royal robes. ¹⁵ They created a senate, and each day 320 senators came together to deliberate about the affairs of the people and their well-being. ¹⁶ Each year they entrusted to one man the responsibility of governing them and controlling their whole territory. Everyone obeyed this one man, and there was no envy or jealousy among them.

¹⁷ Judas chose Eupolemus, the son of John and grandson of Accos, and Jason son of **Eleazar** and sent them to Rome to make a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Romans. ¹⁸ He did this to eliminate Syrian oppression, since the Jews clearly saw that they were being reduced to slavery. ¹⁹ After a long and difficult journey, Eupolemus and Jason reached Rome and entered the Senate. They addressed the assembly in these terms:

²⁰ Judas Maccabeus, his brothers, and the Jewish people have sent us here to make a mutual defense treaty with you, so that we may be officially recorded as your friends and allies.

²¹ The Romans accepted the proposal, ²² and what follows is a copy of the letter which was engraved on bronze tablets and sent to Jerusalem to remain there as a record of the treaty:

²³ May things go well forever for the Romans and for the Jewish nation on land and sea! May they never have enemies, and may they never go to war! ²⁴ But if war is declared first against Rome or any of her allies anywhere, ²⁵ the Jewish nation will come to her aid with wholehearted support, as the situation may require. ²⁶ And to those at war with her, the Jews shall not give or supply food, arms, money, or ships, as was agreed in Rome. The Jews must carry out their obligations without receiving anything in return.

²⁷ In the same way, if war is declared first against the Jewish nation, the Romans will come to their aid with hearty support, as the situation may require. ²⁸ And to their enemies there shall not be given or supplied food, arms, money, or ships, as was agreed in Rome. The Romans must carry out their obligations without deception.

²⁹ These are the terms of the treaty that the Romans have made with the Jewish people.

³⁰ But if, in the future, both parties shall agree to add or remove anything, they shall act on their decision, and whatever they add or remove shall be valid.

³¹ Furthermore, concerning the wrongs which King Demetrius is doing against the Jews, we have written him as follows,

Why have you treated our friends and allies, the Jews, so harshly? ³² If they complain to us about you one more time, we will support their cause and go to war against you on land and sea.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 8:8](#) *king eumenes*: This is King Eumenes II, king of Pergamum from 197–158 B.C.

1 Maccabees 9

Good News Translation

The Death of Judas

9 When Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army had been annihilated, he again sent Bacchides and Alcimus to the land of Judea, this time with the Syrian wing of the army.

² They moved along Gilgal Road, laid siege to Mesaloth in Arbela, captured it, and killed many people. ³ In the first month of the year 152, ^[a] they set up camp opposite Jerusalem.

⁴ From there they marched to Berea with 20,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry.

⁵ Judas had camped at Elasa, with 3,000 experienced soldiers. ⁶ But when they saw the enormous size of the enemy army, they were terrified. So many men deserted that only 800 Jewish soldiers were left. ⁷ When Judas saw that his army was dwindling away and that the battle was about to begin, he was worried because there was not enough time to bring his army together. ⁸ He was discouraged, but he said to those who were still with him,

Let's prepare for the attack; maybe we can still defeat them.

⁹ His men tried to talk him out of it.

We are not strong enough, they said.

Let's retreat now and save our lives. Then we can return with reinforcements and fight the enemy. We don't have enough men now.

¹⁰ Judas replied,

Never let it be said that I ran from a battle. If our time has come, let's die bravely for our fellow Jews and not leave any stain on our honor.

¹¹ The Syrian army came out of the camp and took up battle positions against the Jews. The cavalry was divided into two parts. The shock troops were in the front lines, but the archers and those who used slings went ahead of the main formation. ¹² Bacchides took his position on the right. The infantry advanced, protected on both sides by the cavalry, and the war trumpets were blown. The soldiers of Judas also sounded their trumpets.

¹³ The ground shook from the noise when the two armies met, and they fought from morning until evening.

¹⁴ When Judas saw that Bacchides and the main force of the Syrian army was on the right, all his bravest men joined him, ¹⁵ and they crushed the Syrians' right wing. They pursued them as far as the foothills. ¹⁶ But when the Syrians on the left wing saw that their right wing had been crushed, they turned to attack Judas and his men from the rear. ¹⁷ The fighting became very fierce, and many on both sides were killed. ¹⁸ Finally Judas himself was killed. Then all his men fled. ¹⁹ Jonathan and Simon took their brother's body and buried it in the family tomb at Modein, ²⁰ and there at the tomb they wept for him. All Israel mourned for him in great sorrow for many days. They said,

²¹ It can't be! The mighty hero and savior of Israel has been killed!

²² The other deeds of Judas, his battles, his courageous deeds, and his great accomplishments, were too many to write down.

Jonathan Succeeds Judas

²³ After the death of Judas, the lawless traitors began to reappear everywhere in Judea, and all the wicked people returned. ²⁴ Also at that time there was a severe famine, and the whole country went over to the side of the renegades. ²⁵ Bacchides deliberately appointed some renegade Jews as rulers over the country. ²⁶ These men hunted down the friends of Judas and brought them all before Bacchides, and he subjected them to torture and humiliation. ²⁷ It was a time of great trouble for Israel, worse than anything that had happened to them since the time prophets ceased to appear among them.

²⁸ Then all the friends of Judas came together and said to Jonathan,

²⁹ Since your brother Judas died, there has been no one like him to lead us against our enemies, against Bacchides and those of our own nation who oppose us. ³⁰ So today we choose you to succeed him as our ruler and commander to carry on our war.

³¹ Jonathan accepted the leadership that day and took the place of his brother Judas.

The Campaigns of Jonathan

³² When Bacchides learned of this, he made up his mind to kill Jonathan. ³³ But when this news reached Jonathan, he fled, with his brother Simon and their men, to the wilderness of Tekoa and set up camp at the pool of Asphar. (³⁴ Bacchides learned about this on the Sabbath and crossed the Jordan with his whole army. ^[c]) ³⁵ Jonathan sent his brother John, who was responsible for the soldiers' families, to ask the Nabateans, with whom he was on friendly terms, for permission to store with them the large amount of baggage they had. ³⁶ But the Jambrites of Medeba attacked John, took him captive, and carried off all the baggage. ³⁷ Some time later Jonathan and his brother Simon learned that the Jambrites were about to celebrate an important wedding and that there would be a bridal procession from the town of Nadabath. The bride was the daughter of one of the great princes of Canaan. ³⁸ Jonathan and Simon had wanted revenge for the death of their brother John, so they and their men went up on one of the mountains and hid. ³⁹ They kept watch and saw a noisy crowd loaded down with baggage. The bridegroom, his friends, and his relatives were on their way to meet the bride's party. They were heavily armed and were playing musical instruments and drums. ⁴⁰ The Jews attacked from their ambush and killed many of them; the rest escaped into the mountains, while the Jews carried off all their possessions. ⁴¹ So the wedding was turned into a time of mourning and their joyful music into funeral songs. ⁴² Jonathan and Simon had taken full revenge for the death of their brother, and they returned to the marshes along the Jordan.

⁴³ Bacchides heard about this and arrived on the Sabbath at the banks of the Jordan with a large army. ⁴⁴ Jonathan said to his men,

Now we must fight for our lives. We are in a worse situation than we have ever been in before. ⁴⁵ The enemy is in front of us, the river is behind us, and marshes and thickets are on both sides of us; there is no way out. ⁴⁶ So pray now for the Lord to save us from our enemies.

⁴⁷ The battle began and Jonathan and his men were just about to kill Bacchides, when he escaped to the rear of the army. ⁴⁸ So Jonathan and his men jumped into the Jordan and swam to the other side to escape, and the Syrian army did not cross the river to follow them. ⁴⁹ That day Bacchides lost about 1,000 men.

⁵⁰ After Bacchides returned to Jerusalem, the Syrians built fortifications with high walls and barred gates for a number of towns in Judea: Emmaus, Beth Horon, Bethel, Timnath, Pirathon, Tephon, and the fortress in Jericho. ⁵¹ In all of these he placed troops to harass the Jews. ⁵² He also strengthened the fortifications of the towns of Bethzur and Gezer and of the fort in Jerusalem. He placed army units in them and stored up supplies there. ⁵³ Then he took the sons of the leading men of the country as hostages and imprisoned them in the fort.

⁵⁴ In the second month of the year 153, ^[d] the High Priest Alcimus ordered that the wall of the inner court of the Temple be torn down. This would have destroyed what the prophets had accomplished; but just as the work began, ⁵⁵ he had a stroke, and work was stopped. Paralyzed and unable to open his mouth, he could not speak or even make a will for his

family.⁵⁶ He died in great torment.⁵⁷ When Bacchides learned that Alcimus was dead, he returned to King Demetrius, and the land of Judea had peace for two years.

⁵⁸ Then all the renegades got together and said,

Look, Jonathan and his men are living in peace and security. If we bring Bacchides here now, he can capture them all in a single night.⁵⁹ They went to discuss the matter with Bacchides,⁶⁰ and he set out with a large army. He sent secret letters to all his allies in Judea, asking them to seize Jonathan and his men. But they were not able to do so because the plot was discovered.⁶¹ Jonathan and his men captured 50 of the traitorous leaders who had been involved in the plot and put them to death.⁶² Then Jonathan, Simon, and their forces withdrew to Bethbasi in the wilderness. They rebuilt the fallen fortifications and strengthened the town's defenses.⁶³ When Bacchides learned about all this, he got his whole army together and alerted his supporters in Judea.⁶⁴ He attacked Bethbasi from all sides and built siege platforms. After the battle had gone on for a long time,⁶⁵ Jonathan slipped out into the country with a small body of men and left his brother Simon in charge of the town.⁶⁶ Jonathan defeated Odomera and his people, and then attacked and destroyed the Phasirite camp. Once defeated, they joined Jonathan and advanced with him in his attack against Bacchides.⁶⁷ At the same time, Simon and his men rushed from the town and burned the siege platforms.⁶⁸ In the battle Bacchides was pressed so hard that all his plans came to nothing, and he was defeated.⁶⁹ He was so furious with the traitorous Jews who had urged him to come to Judea that he put many of them to death.

Then Bacchides decided to return to his own country,⁷⁰ but when Jonathan learned of this, he sent ambassadors to Bacchides to arrange for peace terms and the return of Jewish prisoners.⁷¹ Bacchides agreed to do as Jonathan asked and gave him his solemn promise that he would let him live in peace the rest of his life.⁷² Bacchides handed over the prisoners and returned to his own country. Never again did he come into Jewish territory.⁷³ War came to an end in Israel. Jonathan settled in Michmash and began to govern the people and to eliminate the renegade Jews from Israel.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 9:3](#) *the year 152*: This corresponds to 160 B.C.
2. [1 Maccabees 9:15](#) Probable text the foothills; Greek Mount Azotus.
3. [1 Maccabees 9:34](#) Verse 34 is probably misplaced and belongs with verse 43.
4. [1 Maccabees 9:54](#) *the year 153*: This corresponds to 159 B.C.

1 Maccabees 10

Good News Translation

Alexander Epiphanes Makes Jonathan High Priest

¹⁰ In the year 160,^[a] Alexander Epiphanes,^[b] son of Antiochus the Fourth, landed at Ptolemais and captured it. The people welcomed him as their king. ² When King Demetrius heard of it, he gathered a large army and went out to meet him in battle. ³ At that time Demetrius sent Jonathan a friendly letter full of flattery, ⁴ in the hope of winning Jonathan over to his side and making peace with the Jews before Alexander made a treaty with them against him. ⁵ Demetrius thought that Jonathan would certainly remember all the wrongs he had done to him, his brothers, and the entire Jewish nation. ⁶ And so Demetrius made Jonathan his ally and gave him authority to raise an army and equip it. He also ordered that the hostages held in the fort at Jerusalem should be handed over to Jonathan. ⁷ So Jonathan went to Jerusalem and read the letter to all the people and to the men in the fort. ⁸ These men were terrified when they learned that the king had given Jonathan authority to raise an army. ⁹ They handed the hostages over to him, and he returned them to their parents.

¹⁰ Jonathan set up headquarters in Jerusalem and began to rebuild and restore the city.

¹¹ He ordered the builders to use squared stones for the city walls and for the protecting wall around Mount Zion. This was done. ¹² The foreigners deserted the fortresses that Bacchides had built; ¹³ each man left his post and returned to his own country. ¹⁴ But some of the Jews who had abandoned the Law of Moses and its commands were still left in Bethzur, which served as their last place of refuge.

¹⁵ King Alexander learned of the promises Demetrius had made to Jonathan and he also learned about Jonathan himself, about the battles he had fought, his courageous deeds, and the troubles he and his brothers had endured. ¹⁶ He was certain that he would never find another man like Jonathan and so decided to make him his friend and ally. ¹⁷ He wrote Jonathan a letter:

¹⁸ King Alexander to his friend Jonathan, greetings. ¹⁹ I have heard that you are a brave man who has earned the right to be a friend of the king. ²⁰ I have this day appointed you as High Priest of your nation and conferred upon you the title of

Friend of the King. You are to be our ally and give us your support.

He also sent him a royal robe and a gold crown. ²¹ Jonathan put on the robes of the High Priest in the seventh month of the year 160^[c] at the Festival of Shelters. He raised an army and stored up a large supply of weapons.

Jonathan Supports Alexander Epiphanes

²² When Demetrius heard this, he was distressed and said,

²³ How did we manage to let Alexander get ahead of us? He has strengthened his position by making an alliance with the Jews. ²⁴ I also will write them a friendly letter offering high positions and gifts, so that they will support me.

²⁵ He wrote:

King Demetrius to the nation of the Jews, greetings. ²⁶ We are delighted to learn that you have kept your obligations under our treaty, remained loyal to us, and have not gone over to the side of our enemies. ²⁷ Now if you continue to remain loyal to us, we will reward you well. ²⁸ We will grant you exemptions from many taxes and allow you other privileges. ²⁹ I hereby grant all the Jewish people release and exemption from payment of regular taxes, salt taxes, and other special taxes. ³⁰ Furthermore, from this day I release you from your obligation to pay me one third of the grain harvest and one half of the fruit harvest. From now on I will not demand these payments from Judea or from the three districts that have been added to Judea from Samaria and Galilee. ³¹ Jerusalem and its surrounding territory is to be recognized as a holy city and to be exempt from the payment of all taxes. ³² I also give up my authority over the fort in Jerusalem and place it under the High Priest, who may station there anyone he wishes to guard it. ³³ I freely grant release to all Jews who are prisoners of war anywhere in my kingdom. All of them will be exempt from taxes, even on their cattle. ³⁴ No taxes shall be collected from any Jew anywhere in my kingdom on Sabbaths, New Moon Festivals, and other holy days. Furthermore, no taxes shall be collected three days before or after the major holy days. ³⁵ No one has the right on any of these days to demand payment or to trouble you in any way.

³⁶ Jews may be enlisted in the royal army up to a total of 30,000 men, and they will receive the same pay as other royal troops. ³⁷ Some of them may be stationed in the great royal fortresses, and others assigned to responsible positions in the government. They shall have Jews as their leaders and officers, and they shall be allowed to follow their own laws and customs, just as the king has permitted for the people of Judea.

³⁸ The three districts added to Judea from the territory of Samaria will be completely incorporated into Judea and placed under the authority of the High Priest alone. ³⁹ I give to the Temple in Jerusalem for its operating expenses the revenues from the city of Ptolemais and the lands belonging to it. ⁴⁰ I also promise to make an annual gift of 15,000 silver coins from appropriate accounts within the royal treasury. ⁴¹ The total accumulated state subsidy, which we have failed to pay in recent years, shall be paid, and the payments continued from now on for the work of the Temple. ⁴² In addition to this, we will no longer require the 5,000 silver coins annually from the Temple income. This money belongs to the priests serving in the Temple. ⁴³ Whoever owes a debt to the king or any other debt and takes refuge in the Temple in Jerusalem or in any area that belongs to it may not be arrested nor may his property anywhere in my kingdom be confiscated. ⁴⁴ The expenses for rebuilding and renovating the Temple shall be provided from the royal treasury. ⁴⁵ Likewise, the expenses for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and its

surrounding fortifications, as well as the walls of designated towns in Judea, shall be provided from the royal treasury.

⁴⁶ When Jonathan and the people heard the proposals made by King Demetrius, they refused to believe them or accept them, because they remembered how harshly he had treated them and what terrible troubles he had caused them. ⁴⁷ They preferred to give their allegiance to Alexander because he had been the first to open peace negotiations, and they remained his allies as long as he lived.

⁴⁸ King Alexander raised a large army and took up battle positions facing Demetrius. ⁴⁹ But when the armies of the two kings met in battle, the army of Alexander^[e] turned and ran. Demetrius^[f] pursued them and won the battle. ⁵⁰ Alexander^[g] fought bitterly until sundown, but Demetrius was killed that day.

⁵¹ Then Alexander sent ambassadors to King Ptolemy the Sixth of Egypt with this message:

⁵² I have returned to my kingdom and taken my seat on the throne of my ancestors. I have taken over the government, and I am now in control of the country. ⁵³ I made war on Demetrius, defeated him and his army, and I have taken over his kingdom. ⁵⁴ Now I am ready to make an alliance. Give me your daughter in marriage, and I will give both of you such gifts as you deserve.

⁵⁵ King Ptolemy replied,

It was a great day when you returned to your country and took the throne of your ancestors. ⁵⁶ I agree to your proposals, but first meet me at Ptolemais. We can get acquainted there, and I will give you my daughter in marriage.

⁵⁷ So in the year 162^[h] Ptolemy and his daughter Cleopatra^[i] left Egypt and arrived at Ptolemais. ⁵⁸ King Alexander met them, and Ptolemy gave him his daughter in marriage. The wedding was celebrated there in Ptolemais with royal splendor.

⁵⁹ King Alexander wrote asking Jonathan to come to meet him. ⁶⁰ So Jonathan, in a show of splendor, went to Ptolemais and met the two kings. He presented them with gifts of silver and gold, and he also gave many gifts to the high officials who had accompanied them. Everyone was favorably impressed with him. ⁶¹ At the same time some traitorous Jews who wanted to make trouble for Jonathan made accusations against him, but King Alexander paid no attention to them. ⁶² He gave orders that Jonathan should be given royal robes to wear, ⁶³ and he honored him by letting him sit at his side. Alexander told his officers to take Jonathan into the center of the city and to announce that no one was to bring charges against him for any reason and no one was to cause him any kind of trouble. ⁶⁴ When his accusers saw the honors given to him, heard the announcement, and saw him clothed in royal robes, they all fled. ⁶⁵ The king further honored Jonathan by enrolling him in the First Order of the

Friends of the King and by making him general and governor of his province. ⁶⁶ Jonathan returned to Jerusalem pleased and successful.

Jonathan's Victory over Apollonius

⁶⁷ In the year 165^[1] Demetrius the Second, the son of Demetrius the First, left Crete and arrived in Syria, the land of his ancestors. ⁶⁸ When King Alexander heard about this, he was worried and returned to Antioch, the capital of Syria. ⁶⁹ Demetrius reappointed Apollonius governor of Greater Syria. Apollonius raised a large army, set up camp near Jamnia, and sent the following message to Jonathan the High Priest:

⁷⁰ Because of you I am being ridiculed, but why do you, there in your mountains, continue this rebellion when no one supports you? ⁷¹ If you really have any confidence in your army, come down here on the plain and fight, where we can test each other's strength. Study the situation, and you will find that I have the support of the forces from the cities. ⁷² You will learn who I am and who our allies are, and you will discover that you have no chance of standing against us. Your predecessors have already been beaten twice on their own ground; ⁷³ so how do you expect to defeat my cavalry and the kind of army I have here on the plain? Down here there is not so much as a pebble to hide behind and no way to escape.

⁷⁴ When Jonathan received this message from Apollonius, he became angry. He took 10,000 elite troops from Jerusalem; his brother Simon also brought troops, and their two forces ⁷⁵ set up camp outside of Joppa. The men of the city refused to let them in because there was a detachment of Apollonius' troops there, but Jonathan attacked, ⁷⁶ and the men in the city became so frightened that they opened the gates, allowing Jonathan to capture Joppa. ⁷⁷ When Apollonius heard what had happened, he took 3,000 cavalry and a large army of infantry and pretended to retreat south toward Azotus. However, relying upon the strength of his cavalry, he marched into the plain with his main force, ⁷⁸⁻⁷⁹ positioning 1,000 cavalry where they could attack Jonathan's forces from the rear. Jonathan continued his pursuit as far as Azotus, where the two armies met in battle. ⁸⁰ Not until then did Jonathan realize that he was caught in an ambush. His army was surrounded, and enemy arrows rained down on them from morning until evening. ⁸¹ But Jonathan's men stood firm, as he had ordered, and the attacking cavalry grew tired. ⁸² Then, when the cavalry was exhausted, Simon appeared on the scene with his forces and attacked and overwhelmed the enemy infantry, who broke ranks and fled. ⁸³ The cavalry, which by now was scattered all over the battlefield, fled to Azotus, where they took refuge in the temple of Dagon, their god. ⁸⁴ But Jonathan set fire to the city and to the temple of Dagon, burning to death all those who had taken refuge there. Then he set fire to the surrounding towns and looted them. ⁸⁵ That day about 8,000 were either killed in the battle or burned to death. ⁸⁶ Jonathan left and set up camp at Ascalon, where the people of the city came out to welcome him with great honors. ⁸⁷ Jonathan and his men returned to Jerusalem with large quantities of loot.

⁸⁸ When King Alexander heard what Jonathan had done, he gave him even greater honors. ⁸⁹ He sent him a gold shoulder buckle, which is given only to those honored with the title

Relative of the King. He also gave him the city of Ekron and its surrounding territory.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 10:1](#) *the year 160*: This corresponds to 152 B.C.
2. [1 Maccabees 10:1](#) *alexander epiphanes*: Alexander Epiphanes is more widely known as Alexander Balas.
3. [1 Maccabees 10:21](#) *the year 160*: This corresponds to 152 B.C.
4. [1 Maccabees 10:33](#) This sentence in Greek is unclear.
5. [1 Maccabees 10:49](#) Alexander; some manuscripts have Demetrius.
6. [1 Maccabees 10:49](#) Demetrius; some manuscripts have Alexander.
7. [1 Maccabees 10:50](#) Alexander; some manuscripts have Demetrius.
8. [1 Maccabees 10:57](#) *the year 162*: This corresponds to 150 B.C.
9. [1 Maccabees 10:57](#) *cleopatra*: This was Cleopatra Thea, also known as Cleopatra the Third, and not to be confused with Cleopatra the Seventh (69–30 B.C.), who was involved in the history of Caesar and Mark Antony.
10. [1 Maccabees 10:67](#) *the year 165*: This corresponds to 147 B.C.

1 Maccabees 11

Good News Translation

The Fall of Alexander Epiphanes

11 King Ptolemy the Sixth of Egypt assembled an army of soldiers more numerous than the grains of sand along the seashore, and he also gathered a great fleet of ships. He intended to trap Alexander, take his kingdom, and add it to his own,² so he went to Syria with promises of peace, and the citizens opened their gates to him and welcomed him. King Alexander had ordered them to do this because Ptolemy was his father-in-law.³ But as Ptolemy moved north, he stationed a detachment of troops in each town.⁴ When he reached Azotus, the people there showed him the burned ruins of the temple of Dagon and all the destruction in the city and the surrounding towns. There were corpses everywhere. The bodies of the men Jonathan had burned to death during the battle were now stacked up along Ptolemy's route.⁵ The people told him what Jonathan had done, hoping that he would hold him responsible, but Ptolemy said nothing.⁶ Jonathan, with all the proper ceremony, went to Joppa to meet him. They exchanged greetings and spent the

night there. ⁷ Jonathan accompanied him as far as the Eleutherus River before returning to Jerusalem. ⁸ In this way King Ptolemy, in his plot against Alexander, took control of the towns along the coast as far north as Seleucia-by-the-sea.

⁹ From there King Ptolemy sent this message to King Demetrius:

Let's make a treaty. My daughter is now Alexander's wife, but I will take her back and give her to you and let you rule over your father's kingdom. ¹⁰ I regret that I ever gave her to Alexander, because he has tried to kill me.

¹¹ Ptolemy made this accusation against Alexander because he wanted to take over his kingdom. ¹² So he took his daughter away from Alexander and gave her to Demetrius; he broke off all relations with Alexander, and they became open enemies. ¹³ Then Ptolemy entered Antioch and assumed the crown of Syria; so he wore both the crown of Egypt and the crown of Syria.

¹⁴ King Alexander was in Cilicia at the time because the people of that region were in a state of rebellion. ¹⁵ But when he heard what Ptolemy had done, he moved to attack him. Ptolemy met him with a large force and won a decisive victory. ¹⁶ While Ptolemy reached the peak of his power, Alexander fled to Arabia to find protection, ¹⁷ but an Arab named Zabdiel cut off his head and sent it to Ptolemy. ¹⁸ Two days later Ptolemy himself died, and the troops he had left in the fortresses were then killed by the local citizens. ¹⁹ So in the year 167^[a] Demetrius the Second became king.

Jonathan Wins the Favor of Demetrius the Second

²⁰ About that time Jonathan gathered the men of Judea to attack the fort in Jerusalem. They built many siege platforms to use in the attack. ²¹ But some traitorous Jews who hated their own nation went to King Demetrius the Second and told him that Jonathan was laying siege to the fort in Jerusalem. ²² When Demetrius heard this, he was furious and immediately moved his headquarters to Ptolemais. He wrote to Jonathan and ordered him to lift the siege and to meet him for a conference in Ptolemais without a moment's delay.

²³ When Jonathan got the message, he gave orders for the siege to continue, and then chose some Jewish leaders and some priests to go with him. At the risk of his life, ²⁴ he went to the king in Ptolemais, taking along robes, silver and gold, and many other gifts. He made a good impression on the king. ²⁵ Although some lawless traitors of his own nation had made accusations against Jonathan, ²⁶ the king still treated him just as his predecessors had done. He honored him in the presence of all his advisers, ²⁷ and confirmed him as High Priest, restoring all his former honors and appointing him to the highest rank among the

Friends of the King.

²⁸ Jonathan asked the king to release the territory of Judea and the three regions of Samaria^[b] from the payment of taxes, promising that if Demetrius would do that, he

would pay him a lump sum of 22,000 pounds of silver. ²⁹ The king agreed and wrote a letter to Jonathan to confirm all this:

³⁰ King Demetrius to King Jonathan and to the Jewish nation, greetings.

³¹ For your information I am sending a copy of the letter I have written to the Honorable Lasthenes about you:

³² King Demetrius to the Honorable Lasthenes, greetings. ³³ I have decided to grant the Jewish nation certain benefits because they are our loyal allies and keep their treaty obligations. ³⁴ I confirm their rights to the land of Judea and the three regions of Ephraim, Lydda, and Arimathea, which are hereby annexed to Judea from Samaria with all the lands belonging to them. This will be of benefit to everyone who goes to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice, since payments of the annual tax on produce and fruit from these lands will no longer be made to the king, but to the Temple. ³⁵ And I also grant them relief from the payment of revenues now due me from tithes, tolls, salt taxes, and special taxes.

³⁶ None of the provisions mentioned in this letter shall ever be canceled in the future.

³⁷ You are required to see that a complete copy of this decree is made and given to Jonathan, to be posted in a prominent place on the Temple hill.

Jonathan Helps Demetrius the Second

³⁸ When King Demetrius saw that the land was peaceful under his rule and there was no further resistance, he disbanded his whole army and sent everyone home, except the soldiers he had hired from the Greek islands. This made all the soldiers who had served under his predecessors hate him because they had lost their source of income. ³⁹ One of Alexander's former supporters, Trypho, saw that all the soldiers were complaining about Demetrius, so he went to Imalkue, the Arab who was responsible for bringing up Alexander's young son Antiochus. ⁴⁰ Trypho stayed there for a long time and kept urging Imalkue to hand the boy over to him, so that he could make him king in place of his father. He also told Imalkue about the decrees of Demetrius and how the soldiers hated him.

⁴¹ Jonathan sent a message to King Demetrius asking him to remove his troops from the fort in Jerusalem and from the fortresses in Judea, since they kept harassing the Jews.

⁴² Demetrius replied: I will do what you request, and when the opportunity presents itself, I will bestow upon you and your nation the highest honors. ⁴³ But now you can help me by sending soldiers to fight for me, because all of my troops have revolted.

⁴⁴ So Jonathan sent 3,000 trained soldiers to Antioch. The king was delighted when they arrived, ⁴⁵ because a mob of 120,000 had gathered in the city determined to kill him.

⁴⁶ But he escaped to the palace while the mob took control of the streets and began to riot.

⁴⁷ Then the king called on the Jewish soldiers for help, and they all rushed to his aid.

They went through the whole city and killed at least 100,000 people. ⁴⁸ They saved the king's life, but they plundered and burned the city. ⁴⁹ When the people saw that the Jews

had complete control of the city, they lost courage and appealed to the king, requesting⁵⁰ him to arrange a truce and stop the Jewish attack.⁵¹ The rebels threw down their arms and surrendered. The king and everyone in his kingdom now had great respect for the Jews, who returned to Jerusalem with a great deal of loot.⁵² Demetrius was firmly established as king, and the country was at peace under his rule,⁵³ but he broke all his promises and turned against Jonathan. He did not reward him for his loyal service, but instead continued to harass him.

Jonathan Supports Antiochus the Sixth

⁵⁴ Some time later, Trypho returned with the young boy Antiochus and crowned him king.⁵⁵ All the soldiers that Demetrius had dismissed then came to the support of the young king. They defeated Demetrius, and he fled.⁵⁶ Trypho captured the elephants and took control of Antioch.⁵⁷ The young King Antiochus wrote to Jonathan and confirmed him as High Priest and as ruler over the four regions and gave him the title

Friend of the King.⁵⁸ He sent him a set of gold tableware and authorized him to drink from gold cups, to wear a royal robe, and to wear the gold shoulder buckle awarded to Relatives of the King.⁵⁹ He also appointed Jonathan's brother Simon as governor of the territory from the Phoenician coast to the Egyptian border.

⁶⁰ Jonathan then marched with his army through the towns of Greater Syria, and all the Syrian forces joined him as allies. He went to Ascalon, where the people welcomed him with great honors.⁶¹ Then he went to Gaza, but the people there barred their gates against him. So he laid siege to the city and burned and looted the surrounding area.⁶² The people of Gaza then asked for peace, and Jonathan arranged a truce. He took the sons of the leaders and sent them to Jerusalem as hostages. After that he marched on as far as Damascus.

⁶³ Jonathan learned that the officers of Demetrius had come to Kedesh in Galilee with a large army, intending to keep him from carrying out his plan.⁶⁴ So he left his brother Simon in Judea and set out to meet them in battle.⁶⁵ Then Simon laid siege to Bethzur and fought against it for a long time.⁶⁶ The people asked for peace terms, and Simon agreed. He then took over the town, drove the people out, and stationed a detachment of troops there.

⁶⁷ Jonathan and his army set up camp by Lake Galilee. Early the next morning he marched his troops to the plain of Hazor,⁶⁸ where the main force of the foreign army was advancing to meet him. Unknown to Jonathan, they had left a detachment of troops in ambush in the mountains,⁶⁹ and when the men in ambush came out and attacked,⁷⁰ Jonathan's entire army turned and ran. No one was left, except two officers, Mattathias son of Absalom and Judas son of Chalphi.⁷¹ Jonathan was humiliated, so he tore his clothes, threw dust on his head, and prayed.⁷² Then he turned back to the battle, crushed the enemy, and put them to flight.⁷³ When his own fleeing soldiers saw this, they turned back and joined him in pursuit. They chased the enemy all the way back to their camp at

Kedesh and then took over the camp. ⁷⁴ At least 3,000 enemy soldiers were killed that day. Jonathan then returned to Jerusalem.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 11:19](#) *the year 167*: This corresponds to 145 B.C.
2. [1 Maccabees 11:28](#) Probable text three regions of Samaria; Greek three regions and Samaria.

1 Maccabees 12

Good News Translation

Alliances with Rome and Sparta

¹² When Jonathan saw that things were working out to his advantage, he chose ambassadors and sent them to Rome to confirm and renew friendship with the Romans. ² He also sent letters with a similar message to Sparta and other places. ³ The ambassadors went to Rome, where they were admitted to the Senate chamber, and reported that the High Priest Jonathan and the Jewish nation had sent them to renew the earlier ties of friendship and alliance with Rome. ⁴ The Romans provided them with letters to the authorities in each country through which they would pass, guaranteeing them safe conduct in their return to the land of Judea.

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

⁶ Jonathan the High Priest, the national council of leaders, the priests, and the rest of the people of Judea, to our brothers in Sparta, greetings. ⁷ At an earlier time, your King Arius sent a letter to our High Priest Onias, stating that our two nations are related, as the attached copy shows. ⁸ Onias received your ambassador with full honors and acknowledged receipt of your letter, which declared our alliance and friendship. ⁹ And now, although we are not in need of such alliances, since we find our source of strength in the holy books we possess, ¹⁰ we have written to renew our ties of brotherhood and friendship with you. We do not wish to become total strangers, and it has now been many years since your last communication. ¹¹ Throughout the years we have taken every opportunity, on our festival days and other suitable days, to remember you when we have offered our sacrifices and made our prayers, as it is fitting and proper for brothers to do. ¹² We also are pleased that fame has come to you. ¹³ But we have had one series of troubles after another and have had to fight many wars, because we have been under constant attack by surrounding nations. ¹⁴ During this time of war, we did not wish to

trouble you or our other allies and friends,¹⁵ since we do have the help of the Lord, who has defeated our enemies and rescued us from them.¹⁶ So we have chosen Numenius son of Antiochus together with Antipater son of Jason and sent them as ambassadors to Rome to renew our ties of friendship and alliance with the Romans.¹⁷ We have also ordered them to go to you with our greetings and deliver this letter about the renewal of our ties of brotherhood.¹⁸ And now we request an answer to this letter.

¹⁹The following is a copy of the earlier letter:

²⁰King Arius of Sparta to Onias the High Priest, greetings.²¹ We have found a document about the Spartans and the Jews indicating that we are related and that both of our nations are descended from Abraham.²² Now that we have discovered this, please send us a report about your situation.²³ In reply, we will send you a letter indicating that we are willing to share our possessions, including cattle and property, if you will do the same. We have given orders to our ambassadors to give you a full report about these matters.

Campaigns of Jonathan and Simon

²⁴Jonathan learned that the officers of Demetrius had returned to attack him with an even larger army than before.²⁵ Jonathan did not want to give them an opportunity to penetrate his own territory, so he left Jerusalem and went to meet them in the region of Hamath.

²⁶Jonathan sent spies into the enemy camp, who reported to him that the enemy forces were making plans to attack the Jews by night.²⁷ At sunset Jonathan ordered all his soldiers to be on the alert and to have their weapons ready for a surprise attack any time during the night. He also stationed guards all around the camp.²⁸ When the enemy soldiers learned that Jonathan and his men were ready for battle, they were panic-stricken and fled, leaving their campfires burning.²⁹ Jonathan and his men saw the campfires but did not realize what had happened until the next morning.³⁰ Jonathan then set out after them, but he could not overtake them because they had already crossed the Eleutherus River.³¹ Then Jonathan turned aside and attacked a tribe of Arabs called Zabadeans. He defeated them and plundered their possessions.³² Then he broke camp and went to Damascus, inspecting the entire area along the way.

³³Meanwhile, Simon had also set out on a campaign and had advanced as far as Ascalon and the neighboring fortresses. Then he turned aside to Joppa³⁴ and stationed a detachment of soldiers there because he had heard that the people were planning to hand over the fortress of Joppa to the soldiers of Demetrius.

³⁵When Jonathan returned, he called the council of the leaders together and made plans with them to build fortresses in Judea,³⁶ to increase the height of the walls of Jerusalem, and to build a high wall to separate the fort from the city. This would isolate the fort, making it impossible for the enemy to buy or sell anything.³⁷ The people worked together to strengthen the city's defenses because a part of the east wall along the Kidron Valley had collapsed and the Chaphenatha section was in need of repair.³⁸ Simon also rebuilt the town of Adida in the foothills. He fortified it and constructed barred gates for it.

Trypho Captures Jonathan

³⁹ Then Trypho plotted a rebellion against King Antiochus so that he could make himself king of Syria. ⁴⁰ He was afraid, however, that Jonathan would not agree to this and would go to war against him to prevent it. So Trypho got his army ready and went to Beth Shan in the hope of capturing Jonathan and putting him to death. ⁴¹ But Jonathan also came to Beth Shan with 40,000 well-trained soldiers. ⁴² When Trypho saw how large an army Jonathan had brought with him, he was afraid to take action. ⁴³ So he received Jonathan with all honors, presented him to all his advisers, gave him gifts, and ordered his advisers and soldiers to obey Jonathan as they would him. ⁴⁴ He asked Jonathan,

Why have you put these soldiers to so much trouble when we are not at war? ⁴⁵ Why don't you send them home? Choose a few men to stay with you, and then accompany me to Ptolemais. I will hand the city over to you, as well as the rest of the fortresses, the troops, and all the officials. Then I will turn around and leave. In fact, that's why I am here.

⁴⁶ Jonathan believed him, and following his advice, sent his soldiers back to Judea. ⁴⁷ He took 3,000 men with him, but left 2,000 of them in Galilee, while only 1,000 accompanied him the rest of the way. ⁴⁸ But when Jonathan entered Ptolemais, the people of the city locked the gates, arrested him, and killed everyone who had come with him.

⁴⁹ Trypho sent infantry and cavalry units to Galilee and Jezreel Valley to kill the rest of Jonathan's soldiers. ⁵⁰ The Jewish troops thought that Jonathan had been captured and killed, along with all those who had accompanied him, so they encouraged one another and marched out in battle formation. ⁵¹ When the approaching enemy forces saw that the Jews were ready to fight for their lives, they turned back. ⁵² Then the Jewish soldiers returned to Judea safely, but terribly afraid. The whole nation was in deep mourning, assuming that Jonathan and all his men had been killed. ⁵³ All the surrounding nations now tried to destroy them. They thought that the Jews had no leaders or allies and that the time was ripe to annihilate them and put an end to their history.

1 Maccabees 14

Good News Translation

In Praise of Simon

14 In the year 172^[a] King Demetrius the Second gathered his army and went to Media to seek additional help for his war against Trypho. ² When King Arsaces the Sixth of Persia and Media heard that Demetrius had entered his territory, he sent one of his commanders

with some troops to capture Demetrius alive. ³ They attacked and defeated the army of Demetrius, took him captive, and brought him back to King Arsaces, who threw him in prison.

⁴ The land of Judea was at peace as long as Simon lived. During his entire reign, he used his position of power and influence to do what was good for his people, and they were always pleased with him as their ruler. ⁵ He added to his reputation when he captured the port of Joppa and opened up the route to the Greek islands. ⁶ He not only enlarged the territory of his nation and gained control of the whole country, ⁷ but he brought back many prisoners of war and captured Gezer, Bethzur, and the fort in Jerusalem. He purified the fort, and there was no one to oppose him.

⁸ The Jews farmed their land in peace; the land produced its crops and the trees bore fruit. ⁹ The young men showed off their splendid military uniforms, while the old men sat around the city squares and talked about the great things that had happened. ¹⁰ Simon supplied the cities with food and provided them with weapons of defense. His fame spread everywhere. ¹¹ He brought peace to the country, and Israel's joy knew no bounds. ¹² Everyone lived in peace among his own grapevines and fig trees, and no one made them afraid. ¹³ In those days all the enemy kings had been defeated, and there was no one left in the land to fight the Jews. ¹⁴ Simon provided help for all the poor among his people, and guided by the Law of Moses, he eliminated all wicked and lawless men. ¹⁵ He provided the Temple with splendid furnishings and added a large number of utensils for use in worship.

¹⁶ When the news that Jonathan had died reached Rome and Sparta, it brought great sorrow. ¹⁷ But when the Spartans heard that Simon had succeeded his brother as High Priest and that he was in control of the country and its towns, ¹⁸ they engraved on bronze tablets a renewal of the treaty of friendship which they had made with his brothers Judas and Jonathan and sent the tablets to him. ¹⁹ These were read to the assembly in Jerusalem. ²⁰ What follows is a copy of the letter sent by the Spartans:

The people of Sparta and their rulers to Simon the High Priest, to the leaders and the priests of the Jews, and to all our Jewish brothers, greetings. ²¹ The delegation that you sent to our people has told us how respected and renowned you are. Their visit has been a source of joy for us, ²² and a report of their visit has been written down in our public records, as follows:

Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, honored representatives of the Jews, appeared before us to renew their treaty of friendship. ²³ The assembly of the people was pleased to receive these men with all honors and to place a copy of their report in the public archives, so that the people of Sparta may have it on record. A copy of this document has been made for the High Priest Simon.

²⁴ Later, Simon sent Numenius to Rome with the gift of a large gold shield weighing half a ton, to confirm the Jews' alliance with the Romans.

²⁵ When the people of Israel heard about all this, they asked themselves,

How can we express our thanks to Simon and his sons? ²⁶ He, his brothers, and his father's whole family have been towers of strength for our nation. They have fought off our enemies and set the nation free.

So they recorded this on bronze tablets and set them up on columns on Mount Zion.

²⁷ The inscription read as follows:

On the eighteenth day of the month of Elul in the year 172, ^[b] that is, in the third year of Simon, the High Priest, ^[c] ²⁸ at a great assembly of priests, people, officials, and national leaders the following facts were made known to us: ²⁹ Often when wars broke out in the country, Simon son of Mattathias, a priest of the Jehoiarib family, and his brothers risked their lives in protecting our nation, our Temple, and our Law against our enemies. They have brought great glory to our nation. ³⁰ Jonathan united our people and became the High Priest before he died. ³¹ The enemies of the Jews plotted to invade the land and defile the Temple. ³² Then Simon assumed command and fought for his country. He spent a large amount of his own money to provide weapons and wages for his nation's armed forces. ³³ He fortified the towns of Judea, and especially Bethzur on the border, where enemy weapons had previously been stored. He stationed a detachment of soldiers there. ³⁴ He fortified the seaport of Joppa and the city of Gezer on the border of Azotus, which was previously occupied by enemy soldiers. He settled Jews there and provided the towns with everything that the people needed. ^[d] ³⁵ When the people saw Simon's patriotism and how he wanted to bring glory to his nation, they made him their leader and High Priest. They did this because of all that he had accomplished through his loyalty and because he had brought about justice and had tried in every way to bring glory to his nation.

³⁶ Under his leadership the Gentiles were driven out of the land. Enemy soldiers were forced out of the area north of the Temple, where they had built the fort, from which the soldiers used to go out and defile the holy Temple. ³⁷ Simon settled Jews in the fort, strengthened it for the security of the country and the city of Jerusalem, and increased the height of the city walls. ³⁸ As a result, King Demetrius confirmed him as High Priest, ³⁹ gave him the title of

Friend of the King, and treated him with great honor. ⁴⁰ Demetrius did this because he had heard that the Romans were calling the Jews their friends, allies, and brothers and that they had received Simon's delegation with full honors.

⁴¹ Therefore, ^[e] the Jews and their priests are happy to have Simon and his descendants as their leaders and High Priests, until a true prophet appears. ⁴² Simon shall govern their country, have charge of the Temple, and shall be their military commander. He shall be in charge of military supplies, fortifications, and public works. ⁴³ The people must obey him in everything. All government contracts shall be drawn up in his name. He shall have the right to wear royal robes with the gold shoulder buckle.

⁴⁴ No one, priest or people, shall have the legal right to annul any of these decisions, to alter or change any of Simon's orders, to convene any assembly in the country without his

permission, or to wear royal robes with the gold shoulder buckle. ⁴⁵ Anyone who disobeys or disregards these regulations shall be subject to punishment.

⁴⁶ The people gave their unanimous approval to grant Simon the right to act in accordance with these regulations. ⁴⁷ Simon consented and agreed to be supreme leader: High Priest, commander of the armies, and governor of the Jews and the priests.

⁴⁸ It was decided that this declaration should be engraved on bronze tablets and set up in a prominent place within the Temple area ⁴⁹ and that copies should be placed in the Temple treasury, where Simon and his sons would have access to them.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 14:1](#) *the year 172*: This corresponds to 140 B.C.
2. [1 Maccabees 14:27](#) *the year 172*: This corresponds to 140 B.C.
3. [1 Maccabees 14:27](#) Greek has an additional word, the meaning of which is unclear.
4. [1 Maccabees 14:34](#) that the people needed; or that was needed to keep them in repair.
5. [1 Maccabees 14:41](#) Therefore; some manuscripts have and that.

1 Maccabees 15

Good News Translation

Antiochus the Seventh Asks for Simon's Support

15 From the Greek islands Antiochus son of King Demetrius wrote the following letter to Simon the High Priest and governor of the Jews and to the whole nation:

² King Antiochus to Simon, the High Priest and governor, and to the Jewish nation, greetings. ³ As you know, the kingdom of my ancestors has been seized by traitors. I have decided to reclaim it and restore its former greatness. I have raised a large army of mercenary troops and have fitted out warships. ⁴ I plan to invade the land and to attack those who have destroyed many of the towns and ruined the country.

⁵ Now therefore, I confirm all exemptions from taxes and payments granted you by former kings. ⁶ I authorize you to mint your own coins as legal currency in your own country. ⁷ Jerusalem and the Temple shall be free of taxation. All the weapons that you have manufactured and the defenses you have built and now occupy shall remain yours.

⁸ In addition, all debts now owed to the royal treasury, or which may in the future fall due, are permanently canceled. ⁹ As soon as I have regained control of my kingdom, I will confer upon you, your nation, and the Temple such great honors that the glory of your country will be evident to the whole world.

¹⁰ In the year 174^[a] Antiochus invaded the land of his ancestors. Most of the soldiers came over to his side, so that there were very few left with Trypho. ¹¹ Trypho, pursued by Antiochus, fled to the coastal city of Dor, ¹² realizing that he was in a desperate situation, now that all his troops had deserted him. ¹³ Then Antiochus laid siege to Dor with 120,000 well-trained soldiers and 8,000 cavalry. ¹⁴ With his ships joining the attack, he completely surrounded the town and brought such pressure on it that no one was able to enter or leave.

Rome Supports the Jews

¹⁵ Meanwhile, Numenius and those with him arrived in Jerusalem from Rome with the following letter addressed to various kings and countries:

¹⁶ From Lucius, consul of the Romans, to King Ptolemy, greetings. ¹⁷ A delegation from our friends and allies the Jews has come to us to renew the earlier treaty of friendship and alliance. They were sent by the High Priest Simon and the Jewish people, ¹⁸ and they have brought as a gift a gold shield weighing half a ton. ¹⁹ So we have decided to write to various kings and countries urging them not to harm the Jews, their towns, or their country in any way. They must not make war against the Jews or give support to those who attack them. ²⁰ We have decided to accept the shield and grant them protection. ²¹ Therefore if any traitors escape from Judea and seek refuge in your land, hand them over to Simon the High Priest, so that he may punish them according to Jewish law.

²² Lucius wrote the same letter to King Demetrius, to Attalus, Ariarathes, and Arsaces, ²³ and to all the following countries: Sampsames, Sparta, Delos, Myndos, Sicyon, Caria, Samos, Pamphylia, Lycia, Halicarnassus, Rhodes, Phaselis, Cos, Side, Aradus, Gortyna, Cnidus, Cyprus, and Cyrene. ²⁴ A copy of the letter was also sent to Simon the High Priest.

Antiochus the Seventh Breaks with Simon

²⁵ King Antiochus laid siege to Dor for a second time, keeping it under constant attack. He built siege platforms, and his blockade kept Trypho and his men from going in or out. ²⁶ Simon sent 2,000 well-trained soldiers to help Antiochus, as well as silver and gold and a great deal of equipment. ²⁷ But Antiochus refused to accept them, canceled all the previous agreements that he had made with Simon, and became his enemy. ²⁸ Then Antiochus sent his trusted official Athenobius to negotiate with Simon. He told Simon,

You are occupying Joppa, Gezer, and the fort in Jerusalem, cities that belong to my kingdom. ²⁹ You have devastated those regions and brought great trouble to the country. You have seized control of many places in my kingdom. ³⁰ Now you must hand back

these cities that you have captured, and you must give me the tax money that you have taken from places that you occupied outside the territory of Judea. ³¹ If you are unwilling to do this, then you must pay me 30,000 pounds of silver, and 30,000 additional pounds of silver to compensate me for damages and for lost taxes. If you refuse to do either of these, we will go to war against you.

³² When Athenobius came to Jerusalem and saw the splendor of Simon's court, the gold and silver tableware in his banquet hall, and the rest of the display of great wealth, he was amazed. He delivered the king's message to Simon, ³³ and Simon answered,

We have never taken land away from other nations or confiscated anything that belonged to other people. On the contrary, we have simply taken back property that we inherited from our ancestors, land that had been unjustly taken away from us by our enemies at one time or another. ³⁴ We are now only making use of this opportunity to recover our ancestral heritage. ³⁵ As for Joppa and Gezer, which you claim, we will give you 6,000 pounds of silver, in spite of the fact that the people of those cities have done great harm to our nation.

Athenobius made no reply, ³⁶ but he returned to the king in a rage. When he told the king what Simon had said, and reported on the splendor of Simon's court and all that he had seen, the king became violently angry.

John's Victory over Cendebeus

³⁷ In the meantime, Trypho had boarded a ship and escaped to the town of Orthosia.

³⁸ King Antiochus appointed Cendebeus as commander of the coastal area, provided him with infantry and cavalry, ³⁹ and gave him orders to move against Judea. He also ordered him to rebuild the town of Kedron and fortify its gates, so that he could fight against the Jewish people. The king himself continued to pursue Trypho.

⁴⁰ Cendebeus then came to Jamnia and began to harass the Jews by invading Judea, capturing people, and murdering them. ⁴¹ He rebuilt Kedron and stationed some cavalry and infantry units there, so that they could make attacks and patrol the roads of Judea, as the king had ordered.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 15:10](#) *the year 174*: This corresponds to 138 B.C.

1 Maccabees 16

Good News Translation

16 Simon's son John left Gezer and went to report to his father what Cendebeus had done.

² Simon said to John and Judas, his two oldest sons,

All my father's family, my brothers, and I have fought Israel's battles all our lives, and many times we have been successful in saving Israel. ³ I am old now, but you, thanks to God, are in the prime of life. You must take my place and that of my brother in fighting for our nation. And may God himself be with you.

⁴ Then John raised an Israelite army of 20,000 trained soldiers and cavalry and marched out against Cendebeus. They spent the night in Modein, ⁵ and then early the next morning they moved into the plain. There a large army of infantry and cavalry moved to meet them, but there was a river between the two armies. ⁶ John and his army took up battle positions facing the enemy, but when John saw that his soldiers were afraid to cross the river, he crossed ahead of them, and his men saw him and followed. ⁷ John divided his army and placed his cavalry in the middle of the infantry, because there was a large number of enemy cavalry. ⁸ The trumpets sounded the attack, and Cendebeus and his army were defeated, and many of them were killed. The rest ran back to their fortress at Kedron. ⁹ Judas was wounded in the battle, but his brother John continued to pursue the enemy as far as Kedron, which Cendebeus had rebuilt. ¹⁰ The escaping soldiers fled to the towers in the fields at Azotus, and John set fire to the city. On that day, 2,000 enemy soldiers were killed, and John returned safely to Judea.

The Murder of Simon and Two of His Sons

¹¹ Simon the High Priest had appointed Ptolemy son of Abubus commander for the Plain of Jericho. Ptolemy was very rich, ¹² because he was Simon's son-in-law. ¹³ But he became too ambitious and wanted to take over the country. So he devised a plan to assassinate Simon and his sons. ¹⁴ Simon, together with his sons Mattathias and Judas, was visiting the towns in the area, in order to take care of their needs. They arrived in Jericho in the month of Shebat, the eleventh month, in the year 177. ¹⁵ Ptolemy, still plotting to murder Simon and his two sons, received them in a small fortress called Dok, which he had built. He gave a great banquet for them, but he had men hidden within the fortress. ¹⁶ When Simon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy and his men came out of hiding and with swords in hand rushed into the banquet hall, where they killed Simon, his two sons, and some of the servants. ¹⁷ With this horrible act of treachery, Ptolemy returned evil for good.

¹⁸ Then Ptolemy wrote a report of what he had done and sent it to the king. In the letter he requested that troops be sent to help him and that the country and the cities be turned over to him. ¹⁹ He wrote a letter to the army officers inviting them to join him and promising them silver, gold, and gifts. Then he sent some of his men to Gezer to kill John, ²⁰ and others to take control of Jerusalem and the Temple hill. ²¹ But someone ran to Gezer

ahead of Ptolemy's men and reported to John that his father and his brothers had been killed and that Ptolemy was sending his soldiers to kill him.²² John was horrified at this news, but, because he had been warned in advance, he was able to capture and put to death the men who had been sent to kill him.

²³ Now the rest of what John did from the time he succeeded his father: his wars, his deeds of courage, his rebuilding of walls, and his other accomplishments,²⁴ are all written in the chronicles of his reign as High Priest.

Footnotes

1. [1 Maccabees 16:14](#) *the year 177*: This corresponds to 134 B.C.

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