

1 MACCABEES

Alexander the Great

1 After Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated^a King Darius of the Persians and the Medes, he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.) **2** He fought many battles, conquered strongholds, and put to death the kings of the earth. **3** He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations. When the earth became quiet before him, he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up. **4** He gathered a very strong army and ruled over countries, nations, and princes, and they became tributary to him.

5 After this he fell sick and perceived that he was dying. **6** So he summoned his most honored officers, who had been brought up with him from youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. **7** And after Alexander had reigned twelve years, he died.

8 Then his officers began to rule, each in his own place. **9** They all put on crowns after his death, and so did their descendants after them for many years; and they caused many evils on the earth.

Antiochus Epiphanes and Renegade Jews

(2 Macc 4:7-17)

10 From them came forth a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.^b

11 In those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, “Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us.” **12** This proposal pleased them, **13** and some of the people eagerly went to the king, who authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. **14** So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, **15** and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.

^a Gk adds *and he defeated*

^b 175 B.C.

Antiochus in Egypt

(2 Macc 5:1, 11-26)

¹⁶ When Antiochus saw that his kingdom was established, he determined to become king of the land of Egypt, in order that he might reign over both kingdoms. ¹⁷ So he invaded Egypt with a strong force, with chariots and elephants and cavalry and with a large fleet. ¹⁸ He engaged King Ptolemy of Egypt in battle, and Ptolemy turned and fled before him, and many were wounded and fell. ¹⁹ They captured the fortified cities in the land of Egypt, and he plundered the land of Egypt.

Persecution of the Jews

²⁰ After subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the **one hundred forty-third year.**^c He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. ²¹ He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. ²² He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. ²³ He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures that he found. ²⁴ Taking them all, he went into his own land.

He shed much blood,
and spoke with great arrogance.

²⁵ Israel mourned deeply in every community,

²⁶ rulers and elders groaned,
young women and young men became faint,
the beauty of the women faded.

²⁷ Every bridegroom took up the lament;
she who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning.

²⁸ Even the land trembled for its inhabitants,
and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame.

The Occupation of Jerusalem

²⁹ Two years later the king sent to the cities of Judah a chief collector of tribute, and he came to Jerusalem with a large force. ³⁰ Deceitfully he spoke peaceable words to them,

^c 169 B.C.

and they believed him; but he suddenly fell upon the city, dealt it a severe blow, and destroyed many people of Israel. ³¹He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. ³²They took captive the women and children, and seized the livestock. ³³Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. ³⁴They stationed there a sinful people, men who were renegades. These strengthened their position; ³⁵they stored up arms and food, and collecting the spoils of Jerusalem they stored them there, and became a great menace,

³⁶ for the citadel^d became an ambush against the sanctuary,
an evil adversary of Israel at all times.

³⁷ On every side of the sanctuary they shed innocent blood;
they even defiled the sanctuary.

³⁸ Because of them the residents of Jerusalem fled;
she became a dwelling of strangers;
she became strange to her offspring,
and her children forsook her.

³⁹ Her sanctuary became desolate like a desert;
her feasts were turned into mourning,
her sabbaths into a reproach,
her honor into contempt.

⁴⁰ Her dishonor now grew as great as her glory;
her exaltation was turned into mourning.

Installation of Gentile Cults

(Cp 2 Macc 6:1-17; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14)

⁴¹Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, ⁴²and that all should give up their particular customs. ⁴³All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath. ⁴⁴And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, ⁴⁵to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and festivals, ⁴⁶to defile the sanctuary and the priests, ⁴⁷to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and other unclean animals, ⁴⁸and to

^dGk it

leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, ⁴⁹ so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances. ⁵⁰ He added, ^e “And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die.”

⁵¹ In such words he wrote to his whole kingdom. He appointed inspectors over all the people and commanded the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice, town by town. ⁵² Many of the people, everyone who forsook the law, joined them, and they did evil in the land; ⁵³ they drove Israel into hiding in every place of refuge they had.

⁵⁴ Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-fifth year, ^f they erected a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding towns of Judah, ⁵⁵ and offered incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. ⁵⁶ The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. ⁵⁷ Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law, was condemned to death by decree of the king. ⁵⁸ They kept using violence against Israel, against those who were found month after month in the towns. ⁵⁹ On the twenty-fifth day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar that was on top of the altar of burnt offering. ⁶⁰ According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, ⁶¹ and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks.

⁶² But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. ⁶³ They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. ⁶⁴ Very great wrath came upon Israel.

Mattathias and His Sons

2 In those days Mattathias son of John son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein. ² He had five sons, John surnamed Gaddi, ³ Simon called Thassi, ⁴ Judas called Maccabeus, ⁵ Eleazar called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus. ⁶ He saw the blasphemies being committed in Judah and Jerusalem, ⁷ and said,

“Alas! Why was I born to see this,
the ruin of my people, the ruin of the holy city,
and to live there when it was given over to the enemy,

^e Gk lacks *He added*

^f 167 B.C.

the sanctuary given over to aliens?
⁸ Her temple has become like a person without honor;^a
⁹ her glorious vessels have been carried into exile.
 Her infants have been killed in her streets,
 her youths by the sword of the foe.
¹⁰ What nation has not inherited her palaces^b
 and has not seized her spoils?
¹¹ All her adornment has been taken away;
 no longer free, she has become a slave.
¹² And see, our holy place, our beauty,
 and our glory have been laid waste;
 the Gentiles have profaned them.
¹³ Why should we live any longer?”
¹⁴ Then Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned greatly.

Pagan Worship Refused

¹⁵ The king’s officers who were enforcing the apostasy came to the town of Modein to make them offer sacrifice. ¹⁶ Many from Israel came to them; and Mattathias and his sons were assembled. ¹⁷ Then the king’s officers spoke to Mattathias as follows: “You are a leader, honored and great in this town, and supported by sons and brothers. ¹⁸ Now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles and the people of Judah and those that are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honored with silver and gold and many gifts.”

¹⁹ But Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice: “Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, and have chosen to obey his commandments, everyone of them abandoning the religion of their ancestors, ²⁰ I and my sons and my brothers will continue to live by the covenant of our ancestors. ²¹ Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances. ²² We will not obey the king’s words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left.”

²³ When he had finished speaking these words, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to

^a Meaning of Gk uncertain

^b Other ancient authorities read *has not had a part in her kingdom*

offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein, according to the king's command. ²⁴When Mattathias saw it, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred. He gave vent to righteous anger; he ran and killed him on the altar. ²⁵At the same time he killed the king's officer who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. ²⁶Thus he burned with zeal for the law, just as Phinehas did against Zimri son of Salu.

²⁷Then Mattathias cried out in the town with a loud voice, saying: "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" ²⁸Then he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the town.

²⁹At that time many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to live there, ³⁰they, their sons, their wives, and their livestock, because troubles pressed heavily upon them. ³¹And it was reported to the king's officers, and to the troops in Jerusalem the city of David, that those who had rejected the king's command had gone down to the hiding places in the wilderness. ³²Many pursued them, and overtook them; they encamped opposite them and prepared for battle against them on the sabbath day. ³³They said to them, "Enough of this! Come out and do what the king commands, and you will live." ³⁴But they said, "We will not come out, nor will we do what the king commands and so profane the sabbath day." ³⁵Then the enemy^c quickly attacked them. ³⁶But they did not answer them or hurl a stone at them or block up their hiding places, ³⁷for they said, "Let us all die in our innocence; heaven and earth testify for us that you are killing us unjustly." ³⁸So they attacked them on the sabbath, and they died, with their wives and children and livestock, to the number of a thousand persons.

³⁹When Mattathias and his friends learned of it, they mourned for them deeply. ⁴⁰And all said to their neighbors: "If we all do as our kindred have done and refuse to fight with the Gentiles for our lives and for our ordinances, they will quickly destroy us from the earth." ⁴¹So they made this decision that day: "Let us fight against anyone who comes to attack us on the sabbath day; let us not all die as our kindred died in their hiding places."

Counter-Attack

⁴²Then there united with them a company of Hasideans, mighty warriors of Israel, all who offered themselves willingly for the law. ⁴³And all who became fugitives to escape their troubles joined them and reinforced them. ⁴⁴They organized an army, and struck

^cGk *they*

down sinners in their anger and renegades in their wrath; the survivors fled to the Gentiles for safety. ⁴⁵And Mattathias and his friends went around and tore down the altars; ⁴⁶they forcibly circumcised all the uncircumcised boys that they found within the borders of Israel. ⁴⁷They hunted down the arrogant, and the work prospered in their hands. ⁴⁸They rescued the law out of the hands of the Gentiles and kings, and they never let the sinner gain the upper hand.

The Last Words of Mattathias

(Gen 22:1-18; 39:1-45:28; Num 13:1-14:10; Josh 1:1-9)

⁴⁹Now the days drew near for Mattathias to die, and he said to his sons: “Arrogance and scorn have now become strong; it is a time of ruin and furious anger. ⁵⁰Now, my children, show zeal for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors.

⁵¹“Remember the deeds of the ancestors, which they did in their generations; and you will receive great honor and an everlasting name. ⁵²Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness? ⁵³Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandment, and became lord of Egypt. ⁵⁴Phinehas our ancestor, because he was deeply zealous, received the covenant of everlasting priesthood. ⁵⁵Joshua, because he fulfilled the command, became a judge in Israel. ⁵⁶Caleb, because he testified in the assembly, received an inheritance in the land. ⁵⁷David, because he was merciful, inherited the throne of the kingdom forever. ⁵⁸Elijah, because of great zeal for the law, was taken up into heaven. ⁵⁹Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael believed and were saved from the flame. ⁶⁰Daniel, because of his innocence, was delivered from the mouth of the lions.

⁶¹“And so observe, from generation to generation, that none of those who put their trust in him will lack strength. ⁶²Do not fear the words of sinners, for their splendor will turn into dung and worms. ⁶³Today they will be exalted, but tomorrow they will not be found, because they will have returned to the dust, and their plans will have perished. ⁶⁴My children, be courageous and grow strong in the law, for by it you will gain honor.

⁶⁵“Here is your brother Simeon who, I know, is wise in counsel; always listen to him; he shall be your father. ⁶⁶Judas Maccabeus has been a mighty warrior from his youth; he shall command the army for you and fight the battle against the peoples.^d ⁶⁷You shall rally around you all who observe the law, and avenge the wrong done to your people.

^dOr of the people

⁶⁸ Pay back the Gentiles in full, and obey the commands of the law.”

⁶⁹ Then he blessed them, and was gathered to his ancestors. ⁷⁰ He died in the one hundred forty-sixth year^e and was buried in the tomb of his ancestors at Modein. And all Israel mourned for him with great lamentation.

The Early Victories of Judas

(2 Macc 8:1-7)

3 Then his son Judas, who was called Maccabeus, took command in his place. ² All his brothers and all who had joined his father helped him; they gladly fought for Israel.

³ He extended the glory of his people.

Like a giant he put on his breastplate;
he bound on his armor of war and waged battles,
protecting the camp by his sword.

⁴ He was like a lion in his deeds,
like a lion’s cub roaring for prey.

⁵ He searched out and pursued those who broke the law;
he burned those who troubled his people.

⁶ Lawbreakers shrank back for fear of him;
all the evildoers were confounded;
and deliverance prospered by his hand.

⁷ He embittered many kings,
but he made Jacob glad by his deeds,
and his memory is blessed forever.

⁸ He went through the cities of Judah;
he destroyed the ungodly out of the land;^a
thus he turned away wrath from Israel.

⁹ He was renowned to the ends of the earth;
he gathered in those who were perishing.

¹⁰ Apollonius now gathered together Gentiles and a large force from Samaria to fight against Israel. ¹¹ When Judas learned of it, he went out to meet him, and he defeated and killed him. Many were wounded and fell, and the rest fled. ¹² Then they seized their

^e 166 B.C.

^a Gk *it*

spoils; and Judas took the sword of Apollonius, and used it in battle the rest of his life.

¹³ When Seron, the commander of the Syrian army, heard that Judas had gathered a large company, including a body of faithful soldiers who stayed with him and went out to battle, ¹⁴ he said, “I will make a name for myself and win honor in the kingdom. I will make war on Judas and his companions, who scorn the king’s command.” ¹⁵ Once again a strong army of godless men went up with him to help him, to take vengeance on the Israelites.

¹⁶ When he approached the ascent of Beth-horon, Judas went out to meet him with a small company. ¹⁷ But when they saw the army coming to meet them, they said to Judas, “How can we, few as we are, fight against so great and so strong a multitude? And we are faint, for we have eaten nothing today.” ¹⁸ Judas replied, “It is easy for many to be hemmed in by few, for in the sight of Heaven there is no difference between saving by many or by few. ¹⁹ It is not on the size of the army that victory in battle depends, but strength comes from Heaven. ²⁰ They come against us in great insolence and lawlessness to destroy us and our wives and our children, and to despoil us; ²¹ but we fight for our lives and our laws. ²² He himself will crush them before us; as for you, do not be afraid of them.”

²³ When he finished speaking, he rushed suddenly against Seron and his army, and they were crushed before him. ²⁴ They pursued them^b down the descent of Beth-horon to the plain; eight hundred of them fell, and the rest fled into the land of the Philistines. ²⁵ Then Judas and his brothers began to be feared, and terror fell on the Gentiles all around them. ²⁶ His fame reached the king, and the Gentiles talked of the battles of Judas.

The Policy of Antiochus

²⁷ When King Antiochus heard these reports, he was greatly angered; and he sent and gathered all the forces of his kingdom, a very strong army. ²⁸ He opened his coffers and gave a year’s pay to his forces, and ordered them to be ready for any need. ²⁹ Then he saw that the money in the treasury was exhausted, and that the revenues from the country were small because of the dissension and disaster that he had caused in the land by abolishing the laws that had existed from the earliest days. ³⁰ He feared that he might not have such funds as he had before for his expenses and for the gifts that he used to give more lavishly than preceding kings. ³¹ He was greatly perplexed in mind;

^b Other ancient authorities read *him*

then he determined to go to Persia and collect the revenues from those regions and raise a large fund.

³² He left Lysias, a distinguished man of royal lineage, in charge of the king's affairs from the river Euphrates to the borders of Egypt. ³³ Lysias was also to take care of his son Antiochus until he returned. ³⁴ And he turned over to Lysias^c half of his forces and the elephants, and gave him orders about all that he wanted done. As for the residents of Judea and Jerusalem, ³⁵ Lysias was to send a force against them to wipe out and destroy the strength of Israel and the remnant of Jerusalem; he was to banish the memory of them from the place, ³⁶ settle aliens in all their territory, and distribute their land by lot. ³⁷ Then the king took the remaining half of his forces and left Antioch his capital in the one hundred and forty-seventh year.^d He crossed the Euphrates river and went through the upper provinces.

Preparations for Battle

(2 Macc 8:8-20)

³⁸ Lysias chose Ptolemy son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor and Gorgias, able men among the Friends of the king, ³⁹ and sent with them forty thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry to go into the land of Judah and destroy it, as the king had commanded. ⁴⁰ So they set out with their entire force, and when they arrived they encamped near Emmaus in the plain. ⁴¹ When the traders of the region heard what was said to them, they took silver and gold in immense amounts, and fetters,^e and went to the camp to get the Israelites for slaves. And forces from Syria and the land of the Philistines joined with them.

⁴² Now Judas and his brothers saw that misfortunes had increased and that the forces were encamped in their territory. They also learned what the king had commanded to do to the people to cause their final destruction. ⁴³ But they said to one another, "Let us restore the ruins of our people, and fight for our people and the sanctuary." ⁴⁴ So the congregation assembled to be ready for battle, and to pray and ask for mercy and compassion.

⁴⁵ Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness;
not one of her children went in or out.

^c Gk *him*

^d 165 B.C.

^e Syr: Gk *Mss*, Vg *slaves*

The sanctuary was trampled down,
and aliens held the citadel;
it was a lodging place for the Gentiles.
Joy was taken from Jacob;
the flute and the harp ceased to play.

⁴⁶ Then they gathered together and went to Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, because Israel formerly had a place of prayer in Mizpah. ⁴⁷ They fasted that day, put on sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on their heads, and tore their clothes. ⁴⁸ And they opened the book of the law to inquire into those matters about which the Gentiles consulted the likenesses of their gods. ⁴⁹ They also brought the vestments of the priesthood and the first fruits and the tithes, and they stirred up the nazirites^f who had completed their days; ⁵⁰ and they cried aloud to Heaven, saying,

“What shall we do with these?
Where shall we take them?

⁵¹ Your sanctuary is trampled down and profaned,
and your priests mourn in humiliation.

⁵² Here the Gentiles are assembled against us to destroy us;
you know what they plot against us.

⁵³ How will we be able to withstand them,
if you do not help us?”

⁵⁴ Then they sounded the trumpets and gave a loud shout. ⁵⁵ After this Judas appointed leaders of the people, in charge of thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens. ⁵⁶ Those who were building houses, or were about to be married, or were planting a vineyard, or were fainthearted, he told to go home again, according to the law. ⁵⁷ Then the army marched out and encamped to the south of Emmaus.

⁵⁸ And Judas said, “Arm yourselves and be courageous. Be ready early in the morning to fight with these Gentiles who have assembled against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. ⁵⁹ It is better for us to die in battle than to see the misfortunes of our nation and of the sanctuary. ⁶⁰ But as his will in heaven may be, so shall he do.”

The Battle at Emmaus

(2 Macc 8:21–29, 34–36)

^f That is *those separated* or *those consecrated*

4 Now Gorgias took five thousand infantry and one thousand picked cavalry, and this division moved out by night ²to fall upon the camp of the Jews and attack them suddenly. Men from the citadel were his guides. ³But Judas heard of it, and he and his warriors moved out to attack the king's force in Emmaus ⁴while the division was still absent from the camp. ⁵When Gorgias entered the camp of Judas by night, he found no one there, so he looked for them in the hills, because he said, "These men are running away from us."

⁶ At daybreak Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men, but they did not have armor and swords such as they desired. ⁷And they saw the camp of the Gentiles, strong and fortified, with cavalry all around it; and these men were trained in war. ⁸But Judas said to those who were with him, "Do not fear their numbers or be afraid when they charge. ⁹Remember how our ancestors were saved at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh with his forces pursued them. ¹⁰And now, let us cry to Heaven, to see whether he will favor us and remember his covenant with our ancestors and crush this army before us today. ¹¹Then all the Gentiles will know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel."

¹² When the foreigners looked up and saw them coming against them, ¹³they went out from their camp to battle. Then the men with Judas blew their trumpets ¹⁴and engaged in battle. The Gentiles were crushed, and fled into the plain, ¹⁵and all those in the rear fell by the sword. They pursued them to Gazara, and to the plains of Idumea, and to Azotus and Jamnia; and three thousand of them fell. ¹⁶Then Judas and his force turned back from pursuing them, ¹⁷and he said to the people, "Do not be greedy for plunder, for there is a battle before us; ¹⁸Gorgias and his force are near us in the hills. But stand now against our enemies and fight them, and afterward seize the plunder boldly."

¹⁹Just as Judas was finishing this speech, a detachment appeared, coming out of the hills. ²⁰They saw that their army^a had been put to flight, and that the Jews^b were burning the camp, for the smoke that was seen showed what had happened. ²¹When they perceived this, they were greatly frightened, and when they also saw the army of Judas drawn up in the plain for battle, ²²they all fled into the land of the Philistines. ²³Then Judas returned to plunder the camp, and they seized a great amount of gold and silver, and cloth dyed blue and sea purple, and great riches. ²⁴On their return they sang hymns and praises to Heaven—"For he is good, for his mercy endures forever." ²⁵Thus Israel

^a Gk *they*

^b Gk *they*

had a great deliverance that day.

First Campaign of Lysias

(2 Macc 11:1-12)

²⁶ Those of the foreigners who escaped went and reported to Lysias all that had happened. ²⁷ When he heard it, he was perplexed and discouraged, for things had not happened to Israel as he had intended, nor had they turned out as the king had ordered. ²⁸ But the next year he mustered sixty thousand picked infantry and five thousand cavalry to subdue them. ²⁹ They came into Idumea and encamped at Beth-zur, and Judas met them with ten thousand men.

³⁰ When he saw that their army was strong, he prayed, saying, “Blessed are you, O Savior of Israel, who crushed the attack of the mighty warrior by the hand of your servant David, and gave the camp of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan son of Saul, and of the man who carried his armor. ³¹ Hem in this army by the hand of your people Israel, and let them be ashamed of their troops and their cavalry. ³² Fill them with cowardice; melt the boldness of their strength; let them tremble in their destruction. ³³ Strike them down with the sword of those who love you, and let all who know your name praise you with hymns.”

³⁴ Then both sides attacked, and there fell of the army of Lysias five thousand men; they fell in action.^c ³⁵ When Lysias saw the rout of his troops and observed the boldness that inspired those of Judas, and how ready they were either to live or to die nobly, he withdrew to Antioch and enlisted mercenaries in order to invade Judea again with an even larger army.

Cleansing and Dedication of the Temple

(2 Macc 10:1-9)

³⁶ Then Judas and his brothers said, “See, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it.” ³⁷ So all the army assembled and went up to Mount Zion. ³⁸ There they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket, or as on one of the mountains. They saw also the chambers of the priests in ruins. ³⁹ Then they tore their clothes and mourned with great lamentation; they sprinkled themselves with ashes

^c Or *and some fell on the opposite side*

⁴⁰ and fell face down on the ground. And when the signal was given with the trumpets, they cried out to Heaven.

⁴¹ Then Judas detailed men to fight against those in the citadel until he had cleansed the sanctuary. ⁴² He chose blameless priests devoted to the law, ⁴³ and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. ⁴⁴ They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been profaned. ⁴⁵ And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar, ⁴⁶ and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. ⁴⁷ Then they took unhewn^d stones, as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. ⁴⁸ They also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple, and consecrated the courts. ⁴⁹ They made new holy vessels, and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. ⁵⁰ Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, and these gave light in the temple. ⁵¹ They placed the bread on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken.

⁵² Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year,^e ⁵³ they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. ⁵⁴ At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. ⁵⁶ So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests, and fitted them with doors. ⁵⁸ There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the Gentiles was removed.

⁵⁹ Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.

⁶⁰ At that time they fortified Mount Zion with high walls and strong towers all around, to keep the Gentiles from coming and trampling them down as they had done before. ⁶¹ Judas^f stationed a garrison there to guard it; he also fortified Beth-zur to guard

^d Gk *whole*

^e 164 B.C.

it, so that the people might have a stronghold that faced Idumea.

Wars with Neighboring Peoples

(2 Macc 10:14-33)

5 When the Gentiles all around heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the sanctuary dedicated as it was before, they became very angry, ²and they determined to destroy the descendants of Jacob who lived among them. So they began to kill and destroy among the people. ³But Judas made war on the descendants of Esau in Idumea, at Akra-battene, because they kept lying in wait for Israel. He dealt them a heavy blow and humbled them and despoiled them. ⁴He also remembered the wickedness of the sons of Baean, who were a trap and a snare to the people and ambushed them on the highways. ⁵They were shut up by him in their^a towers; and he encamped against them, vowed their complete destruction, and burned with fire their towers and all who were in them. ⁶Then he crossed over to attack the Ammonites, where he found a strong band and many people, with Timothy as their leader. ⁷He engaged in many battles with them, and they were crushed before him; he struck them down. ⁸He also took Jazer and its villages; then he returned to Judea.

Liberation of Galilean Jews

(2 Macc 12:10-25)

⁹Now the Gentiles in Gilead gathered together against the Israelites who lived in their territory, and planned to destroy them. But they fled to the stronghold of Dathema, ¹⁰and sent to Judas and his brothers a letter that said, “The Gentiles around us have gathered together to destroy us. ¹¹They are preparing to come and capture the stronghold to which we have fled, and Timothy is leading their forces. ¹²Now then, come and rescue us from their hands, for many of us have fallen, ¹³and all our kindred who were in the land of Tob have been killed; the enemy^b have captured their wives and children and goods, and have destroyed about a thousand persons there.”

¹⁴While the letter was still being read, other messengers, with their garments torn,

^f Gk *He*

^a Gk *her*

^b Gk *they*

came from Galilee and made a similar report; ¹⁵ they said that the people of Ptolemais and Tyre and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles, ^c had gathered together against them “to annihilate us.” ¹⁶ When Judas and the people heard these messages, a great assembly was called to determine what they should do for their kindred who were in distress and were being attacked by enemies. ^d ¹⁷ Then Judas said to his brother Simon, “Choose your men and go and rescue your kindred in Galilee; Jonathan my brother and I will go to Gilead.” ¹⁸ But he left Joseph, son of Zechariah, and Azariah, a leader of the people, with the rest of the forces, in Judea to guard it; ¹⁹ and he gave them this command, “Take charge of this people, but do not engage in battle with the Gentiles until we return.” ²⁰ Then three thousand men were assigned to Simon to go to Galilee, and eight thousand to Judas for Gilead.

²¹ So Simon went to Galilee and fought many battles against the Gentiles, and the Gentiles were crushed before him. ²² He pursued them to the gate of Ptolemais; as many as three thousand of the Gentiles fell, and he despoiled them. ²³ Then he took the Jews ^e of Galilee and Arbatta, with their wives and children, and all they possessed, and led them to Judea with great rejoicing.

Judas and Jonathan in Gilead

²⁴ Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan and made three days’ journey into the wilderness. ²⁵ They encountered the Nabateans, who met them peaceably and told them all that had happened to their kindred in Gilead: ²⁶ “Many of them have been shut up in Bozrah and Bosor, in Alema and Chaspho, Maked and Carnaim”—all these towns were strong and large— ²⁷ “and some have been shut up in the other towns of Gilead; the enemy ^f are getting ready to attack the strongholds tomorrow and capture and destroy all these people in a single day.”

²⁸ Then Judas and his army quickly turned back by the wilderness road to Bozrah; and he took the town, and killed every male by the edge of the sword; then he seized all its spoils and burned it with fire. ²⁹ He left the place at night, and they went all the way to the stronghold of Dathema. ^g ³⁰ At dawn they looked out and saw a large company,

^c Gk *aliens*

^d Gk *them*

^e Gk *those*

^f Gk *they*

^g Gk lacks of *Dathema*. See [verse 9](#)

which could not be counted, carrying ladders and engines of war to capture the stronghold, and attacking the Jews within.^h ³¹ So Judas saw that the battle had begun and that the cry of the town went up to Heaven, with trumpets and loud shouts, ³² and he said to the men of his forces, “Fight today for your kindred!” ³³ Then he came up behind them in three companies, who sounded their trumpets and cried aloud in prayer. ³⁴ And when the army of Timothy realized that it was Maccabeus, they fled before him, and he dealt them a heavy blow. As many as eight thousand of them fell that day.

³⁵ Next he turned aside to Maapha,ⁱ and fought against it and took it; and he killed every male in it, plundered it, and burned it with fire. ³⁶ From there he marched on and took Chaspho, Maked, and Bosor, and the other towns of Gilead.

³⁷ After these things Timothy gathered another army and encamped opposite Raphon, on the other side of the stream. ³⁸ Judas sent men to spy out the camp, and they reported to him, “All the Gentiles around us have gathered to him; it is a very large force. ³⁹ They also have hired Arabs to help them, and they are encamped across the stream, ready to come and fight against you.” And Judas went to meet them.

⁴⁰ Now as Judas and his army drew near to the stream of water, Timothy said to the officers of his forces, “If he crosses over to us first, we will not be able to resist him, for he will surely defeat us. ⁴¹ But if he shows fear and camps on the other side of the river, we will cross over to him and defeat him.” ⁴² When Judas approached the stream of water, he stationed the officers^j of the army at the stream and gave them this command, “Permit no one to encamp, but make them all enter the battle.” ⁴³ Then he crossed over against them first, and the whole army followed him. All the Gentiles were defeated before him, and they threw away their arms and fled into the sacred precincts at Carnaim. ⁴⁴ But he took the town and burned the sacred precincts with fire, together with all who were in them. Thus Carnaim was conquered; they could stand before Judas no longer.

The Return to Jerusalem

(2 Macc 12:26–31)

⁴⁵ Then Judas gathered together all the Israelites in Gilead, the small and the great, with their wives and children and goods, a very large company, to go to the land of

^h Gk *and they were attacking them*

ⁱ Other ancient authorities read *Alema*

^j Or *scribes*

Judah. ⁴⁶ So they came to Ephron. This was a large and very strong town on the road, and they could not go around it to the right or to the left; they had to go through it. ⁴⁷ But the people of the town shut them out and blocked up the gates with stones.

⁴⁸ Judas sent them this friendly message, "Let us pass through your land to get to our land. No one will do you harm; we will simply pass by on foot." But they refused to open to him. ⁴⁹ Then Judas ordered proclamation to be made to the army that all should encamp where they were. ⁵⁰ So the men of the forces encamped, and he fought against the town all that day and all the night, and the town was delivered into his hands. ⁵¹ He destroyed every male by the edge of the sword, and razed and plundered the town. Then he passed through the town over the bodies of the dead.

⁵² Then they crossed the Jordan into the large plain before Beth-shan. ⁵³ Judas kept rallying the laggards and encouraging the people all the way until he came to the land of Judah. ⁵⁴ So they went up to Mount Zion with joy and gladness, and offered burnt offerings, because they had returned in safety; not one of them had fallen.

Joseph and Azariah Defeated

⁵⁵ Now while Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead and their^k brother Simon was in Galilee before Ptolemais, ⁵⁶ Joseph son of Zechariah, and Azariah, the commanders of the forces, heard of their brave deeds and of the heroic war they had fought. ⁵⁷ So they said, "Let us also make a name for ourselves; let us go and make war on the Gentiles around us." ⁵⁸ So they issued orders to the men of the forces that were with them and marched against Jamnia. ⁵⁹ Gorgias and his men came out of the town to meet them in battle. ⁶⁰ Then Joseph and Azariah were routed, and were pursued to the borders of Judea; as many as two thousand of the people of Israel fell that day. ⁶¹ Thus the people suffered a great rout because, thinking to do a brave deed, they did not listen to Judas and his brothers. ⁶² But they did not belong to the family of those men through whom deliverance was given to Israel.

⁶³ The man Judas and his brothers were greatly honored in all Israel and among all the Gentiles, wherever their name was heard. ⁶⁴ People gathered to them and praised them.

Success at Hebron and Philistia

⁶⁵ Then Judas and his brothers went out and fought the descendants of Esau in the land to the south. He struck Hebron and its villages and tore down its strongholds and

^kGk his

burned its towers on all sides. ⁶⁶Then he marched off to go into the land of the Philistines, and passed through Marisa.¹ ⁶⁷On that day some priests, who wished to do a brave deed, fell in battle, for they went out to battle unwisely. ⁶⁸But Judas turned aside to Azotus in the land of the Philistines; he tore down their altars, and the carved images of their gods he burned with fire; he plundered the towns and returned to the land of Judah.

The Last Days of Antiochus Epiphanes

(2 Macc 1:11-17; 9:1-29; 10:9-13)

6 King Antiochus was going through the upper provinces when he heard that Elymais in Persia was a city famed for its wealth in silver and gold. ²Its temple was very rich, containing golden shields, breastplates, and weapons left there by Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian king who first reigned over the Greeks. ³So he came and tried to take the city and plunder it, but he could not because his plan had become known to the citizens ⁴and they withstood him in battle. So he fled and in great disappointment left there to return to Babylon.

⁵Then someone came to him in Persia and reported that the armies that had gone into the land of Judah had been routed; ⁶that Lysias had gone first with a strong force, but had turned and fled before the Jews;^a that the Jews^b had grown strong from the arms, supplies, and abundant spoils that they had taken from the armies they had cut down; ⁷that they had torn down the abomination that he had erected on the altar in Jerusalem; and that they had surrounded the sanctuary with high walls as before, and also Beth-zur, his town.

⁸When the king heard this news, he was astounded and badly shaken. He took to his bed and became sick from disappointment, because things had not turned out for him as he had planned. ⁹He lay there for many days, because deep disappointment continually gripped him, and he realized that he was dying. ¹⁰So he called all his Friends and said to them, "Sleep has departed from my eyes and I am downhearted with worry. ¹¹I said to myself, 'To what distress I have come! And into what a great flood I now am plunged! For I was kind and beloved in my power.'¹² But now I remember the wrong I

¹Other ancient authorities read *Samaria*

^aGk *them*

^bGk *they*

did in Jerusalem. I seized all its vessels of silver and gold, and I sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judah without good reason. ¹³ I know that it is because of this that these misfortunes have come upon me; here I am, perishing of bitter disappointment in a strange land.”

¹⁴ Then he called for Philip, one of his Friends, and made him ruler over all his kingdom. ¹⁵ He gave him the crown and his robe and the signet, so that he might guide his son Antiochus and bring him up to be king. ¹⁶ Thus King Antiochus died there in the one hundred forty-ninth year. ^c ¹⁷ When Lysias learned that the king was dead, he set up Antiochus the king’s ^d son to reign. Lysias ^e had brought him up from boyhood; he named him Eupator.

Renewed Attacks from Syria

(2 Macc 11:22–26; 13:1–26)

¹⁸ Meanwhile the garrison in the citadel kept hemming Israel in around the sanctuary. They were trying in every way to harm them and strengthen the Gentiles. ¹⁹ Judas therefore resolved to destroy them, and assembled all the people to besiege them. ²⁰ They gathered together and besieged the citadel ^f in the one hundred fiftieth year; ^g and he built siege towers and other engines of war. ²¹ But some of the garrison escaped from the siege and some of the ungodly Israelites joined them. ²² They went to the king and said, “How long will you fail to do justice and to avenge our kindred? ²³ We were happy to serve your father, to live by what he said, and to follow his commands. ²⁴ For this reason the sons of our people besieged the citadel ^h and became hostile to us; moreover, they have put to death as many of us as they have caught, and they have seized our inheritances. ²⁵ It is not against us alone that they have stretched out their hands; they have also attacked all the lands on their borders. ²⁶ And see, today they have encamped against the citadel in Jerusalem to take it; they have fortified both the sanctuary and Beth-zur; ²⁷ unless you quickly prevent them, they will do still greater things, and you will not be able to stop them.”

^c 163 B.C.

^d Gk his

^e Gk He

^f Gk it

^g 162 B.C.

^h Meaning of Gk uncertain

²⁸ The king was enraged when he heard this. He assembled all his Friends, the commanders of his forces and those in authority.ⁱ ²⁹ Mercenary forces also came to him from other kingdoms and from islands of the seas. ³⁰ The number of his forces was one hundred thousand foot soldiers, twenty thousand horsemen, and thirty-two elephants accustomed to war. ³¹ They came through Idumea and encamped against Beth-zur, and for many days they fought and built engines of war; but the Jews^j sallied out and burned these with fire, and fought courageously.

The Battle at Beth-zechariah

³² Then Judas marched away from the citadel and encamped at Beth-zechariah, opposite the camp of the king. ³³ Early in the morning the king set out and took his army by a forced march along the road to Beth-zechariah, and his troops made ready for battle and sounded their trumpets. ³⁴ They offered the elephants the juice of grapes and mulberries, to arouse them for battle. ³⁵ They distributed the animals among the phalanxes; with each elephant they stationed a thousand men armed with coats of mail, and with brass helmets on their heads; and five hundred picked horsemen were assigned to each beast. ³⁶ These took their position beforehand wherever the animal was; wherever it went, they went with it, and they never left it. ³⁷ On the elephants^k were wooden towers, strong and covered; they were fastened on each animal by special harness, and on each were four^l armed men who fought from there, and also its Indian driver. ³⁸ The rest of the cavalry were stationed on either side, on the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy while being themselves protected by the phalanxes. ³⁹ When the sun shone on the shields of gold and brass, the hills were ablaze with them and gleamed like flaming torches.

⁴⁰ Now a part of the king's army was spread out on the high hills, and some troops were on the plain, and they advanced steadily and in good order. ⁴¹ All who heard the noise made by their multitude, by the marching of the multitude and the clanking of their arms, trembled, for the army was very large and strong. ⁴² But Judas and his army advanced to the battle, and six hundred of the king's army fell. ⁴³ Now Eleazar, called Avaran, saw that one of the animals was equipped with royal armor. It was taller than

ⁱ Gk *those over the reins*

^j Gk *they*

^k Gk *them*

^l Cn: Some authorities read *thirty*; others *thirty-two*

all the others, and he supposed that the king was on it. ⁴⁴So he gave his life to save his people and to win for himself an everlasting name. ⁴⁵He courageously ran into the midst of the phalanx to reach it; he killed men right and left, and they parted before him on both sides. ⁴⁶He got under the elephant, stabbed it from beneath, and killed it; but it fell to the ground upon him and he died. ⁴⁷When the Jews^m saw the royal might and the fierce attack of the forces, they turned away in flight.

The Siege of the Temple

⁴⁸The soldiers of the king's army went up to Jerusalem against them, and the king encamped in Judea and at Mount Zion. ⁴⁹He made peace with the people of Beth-zur, and they evacuated the town because they had no provisions there to withstand a siege, since it was a sabbatical year for the land. ⁵⁰So the king took Beth-zur and stationed a guard there to hold it. ⁵¹Then he encamped before the sanctuary for many days. He set up siege towers, engines of war to throw fire and stones, machines to shoot arrows, and catapults. ⁵²The Jewsⁿ also made engines of war to match theirs, and fought for many days. ⁵³But they had no food in storage,^o because it was the seventh year; those who had found safety in Judea from the Gentiles had consumed the last of the stores. ⁵⁴Only a few men were left in the sanctuary; the rest scattered to their own homes, for the famine proved too much for them.

Syria Offers Terms

⁵⁵Then Lysias heard that Philip, whom King Antiochus while still living had appointed to bring up his son Antiochus to be king, ⁵⁶had returned from Persia and Media with the forces that had gone with the king, and that he was trying to seize control of the government. ⁵⁷So he quickly gave orders to withdraw, and said to the king, to the commanders of the forces, and to the troops, "Daily we grow weaker, our food supply is scant, the place against which we are fighting is strong, and the affairs of the kingdom press urgently on us. ⁵⁸Now then let us come to terms with these people, and make peace with them and with all their nation. ⁵⁹Let us agree to let them live by their laws as they did before; for it was on account of their laws that we abolished that they became angry and did all these things."

^m Gk *they*

ⁿ Gk *they*

^o Other ancient authorities read *in the sanctuary*

⁶⁰ The speech pleased the king and the commanders, and he sent to the Jews^p an offer of peace, and they accepted it. ⁶¹ So the king and the commanders gave them their oath. On these conditions the Jews^q evacuated the stronghold. ⁶² But when the king entered Mount Zion and saw what a strong fortress the place was, he broke the oath he had sworn and gave orders to tear down the wall all around. ⁶³ Then he set off in haste and returned to Antioch. He found Philip in control of the city, but he fought against him, and took the city by force.

Expedition of Bacchides and Alcimus

(2 Macc 14:1-14)

7 In the one hundred fifty-first year^a Demetrius son of Seleucus set out from Rome, sailed with a few men to a town by the sea, and there began to reign. ² As he was entering the royal palace of his ancestors, the army seized Antiochus and Lysias to bring them to him. ³ But when this act became known to him, he said, “Do not let me see their faces!” ⁴ So the army killed them, and Demetrius took his seat on the throne of his kingdom.

⁵ Then there came to him all the renegade and godless men of Israel; they were led by Alcimus, who wanted to be high priest. ⁶ They brought to the king this accusation against the people: “Judas and his brothers have destroyed all your Friends, and have driven us out of our land. ⁷ Now then send a man whom you trust; let him go and see all the ruin that Judas^b has brought on us and on the land of the king, and let him punish them and all who help them.”

⁸ So the king chose Bacchides, one of the king’s Friends, governor of the province Beyond the River; he was a great man in the kingdom and was faithful to the king. ⁹ He sent him, and with him he sent the ungodly Alcimus, whom he made high priest; and he commanded him to take vengeance on the Israelites. ¹⁰ So they marched away and came with a large force into the land of Judah; and he sent messengers to Judas and his brothers with peaceable but treacherous words. ¹¹ But they paid no attention to their words, for they saw that they had come with a large force.

^p Gk *them*

^q Gk *they*

^a 161 B.C.

^b Gk *he*

¹² Then a group of scribes appeared in a body before Alcimus and Bacchides to ask for just terms. ¹³ The Hasideans were first among the Israelites to seek peace from them, ¹⁴ for they said, “A priest of the line of Aaron has come with the army, and he will not harm us.” ¹⁵ Alcimus^c spoke peaceable words to them and swore this oath to them, “We will not seek to injure you or your friends.” ¹⁶ So they trusted him; but he seized sixty of them and killed them in one day, in accordance with the word that was written,

¹⁷ “The flesh of your faithful ones and their blood
they poured out all around Jerusalem,
and there was no one to bury them.”

¹⁸ Then the fear and dread of them fell on all the people, for they said, “There is no truth or justice in them, for they have violated the agreement and the oath that they swore.”

¹⁹ Then Bacchides withdrew from Jerusalem and encamped in Beth-zaiton. And he sent and seized many of the men who had deserted to him,^d and some of the people, and killed them and threw them into a great pit. ²⁰ He placed Alcimus in charge of the country and left with him a force to help him; then Bacchides went back to the king.

²¹ Alcimus struggled to maintain his high priesthood, ²² and all who were troubling their people joined him. They gained control of the land of Judah and did great damage in Israel. ²³ And Judas saw all the wrongs that Alcimus and those with him had done among the Israelites; it was more than the Gentiles had done. ²⁴ So Judas^e went out into all the surrounding parts of Judea, taking vengeance on those who had deserted and preventing those in the city^f from going out into the country. ²⁵ When Alcimus saw that Judas and those with him had grown strong, and realized that he could not withstand them, he returned to the king and brought malicious charges against them.

Nicanor in Judea

(2 Macc 14:15-15:19)

²⁶ Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his honored princes, who hated and detested Israel, and he commanded him to destroy the people. ²⁷ So Nicanor came to Jerusalem with a large force, and treacherously sent to Judas and his brothers this peaceable message, ²⁸ “Let there be no fighting between you and me; I shall come with a few men

^c Gk *He*

^d Or *many of his men who had deserted*

^e Gk *he*

^f Gk *and they were prevented*

to see you face to face in peace.”

²⁹ So he came to Judas, and they greeted one another peaceably; but the enemy were preparing to kidnap Judas. ³⁰ It became known to Judas that Nicanor^g had come to him with treacherous intent, and he was afraid of him and would not meet him again. ³¹ When Nicanor learned that his plan had been disclosed, he went out to meet Judas in battle near Caphar-salama. ³² About five hundred of the army of Nicanor fell, and the rest^h fled into the city of David.

Nicanor Threatens the Temple

³³ After these events Nicanor went up to Mount Zion. Some of the priests from the sanctuary and some of the elders of the people came out to greet him peaceably and to show him the burnt offering that was being offered for the king. ³⁴ But he mocked them and derided them and defiled them and spoke arrogantly, ³⁵ and in anger he swore this oath, “Unless Judas and his army are delivered into my hands this time, then if I return safely I will burn up this house.” And he went out in great anger. ³⁶ At this the priests went in and stood before the altar and the temple; they wept and said,

³⁷ “You chose this house to be called by your name,
and to be for your people a house of prayer and supplication.
³⁸ Take vengeance on this man and on his army,
and let them fall by the sword;
remember their blasphemies,
and let them live no longer.”

The Death of Nicanor

(2 Macc 15:20–37)

³⁹ Now Nicanor went out from Jerusalem and encamped in Beth-horon, and the Syrian army joined him. ⁴⁰ Judas encamped in Adasa with three thousand men. Then Judas prayed and said, ⁴¹ “When the messengers from the king spoke blasphemy, your angel went out and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians.ⁱ ⁴² So also crush this army before us today; let the rest learn that Nicanor^j has spoken

^g Gk *he*

^h Gk *they*

ⁱ Gk *of them*

wickedly against the sanctuary, and judge him according to this wickedness.”

⁴³ So the armies met in battle on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. The army of Nicanor was crushed, and he himself was the first to fall in the battle. ⁴⁴ When his army saw that Nicanor had fallen, they threw down their arms and fled. ⁴⁵ The Jews^k pursued them a day’s journey, from Adasa as far as Gazara, and as they followed they kept sounding the battle call on the trumpets. ⁴⁶ People came out of all the surrounding villages of Judea, and they outflanked the enemy^l and drove them back to their pursuers,^m so that they all fell by the sword; not even one of them was left. ⁴⁷ Then the Jewsⁿ seized the spoils and the plunder; they cut off Nicanor’s head and the right hand that he had so arrogantly stretched out, and brought them and displayed them just outside Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ The people rejoiced greatly and celebrated that day as a day of great gladness. ⁴⁹ They decreed that this day should be celebrated each year on the thirteenth day of Adar. ⁵⁰ So the land of Judah had rest for a few days.

A Eulogy of the Romans

8 Now Judas heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were very strong and were well-disposed toward all who made an alliance with them, that they pledged friendship to those who came to them, ² and that they were very strong. He had been told of their wars and of the brave deeds that they were doing among the Gauls, how they had defeated them and forced them to pay tribute, ³ and what they had done in the land of Spain to get control of the silver and gold mines there, ⁴ and how they had gained control of the whole region by their planning and patience, even though the place was far distant from them. They also subdued the kings who came against them from the ends of the earth, until they crushed them and inflicted great disaster on them; the rest paid them tribute every year. ⁵ They had crushed in battle and conquered Philip, and King Perseus of the Macedonians,^a and the others who rose up against them. ⁶ They also had defeated Antiochus the Great, king of Asia, who went to fight against them with one

^jGk *he*

^kGk *they*

^lGk *them*

^mGk *these*

ⁿGk *they*

^a Or *Kittim*

hundred twenty elephants and with cavalry and chariots and a very large army. He was crushed by them; ⁷ they took him alive and decreed that he and those who would reign after him should pay a heavy tribute and give hostages and surrender some of their best provinces, ⁸ the countries of India, Media, and Lydia. These they took from him and gave to King Eumenes. ⁹ The Greeks planned to come and destroy them, ¹⁰ but this became known to them, and they sent a general against the Greeks^b and attacked them. Many of them were wounded and fell, and the Romans^c took captive their wives and children; they plundered them, conquered the land, tore down their strongholds, and enslaved them to this day. ¹¹ The remaining kingdoms and islands, as many as ever opposed them, they destroyed and enslaved; ¹² but with their friends and those who rely on them they have kept friendship. They have subdued kings far and near, and as many as have heard of their fame have feared them. ¹³ Those whom they wish to help and to make kings, they make kings, and those whom they wish they depose; and they have been greatly exalted. ¹⁴ Yet for all this not one of them has put on a crown or worn purple as a mark of pride, ¹⁵ but they have built for themselves a senate chamber, and every day three hundred twenty senators constantly deliberate concerning the people, to govern them well. ¹⁶ They trust one man each year to rule over them and to control all their land; they all heed the one man, and there is no envy or jealousy among them.

An Alliance with Rome

¹⁷ So Judas chose Eupolemus son of John son of Accos, and Jason son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome to establish friendship and alliance, ¹⁸ and to free themselves from the yoke; for they saw that the kingdom of the Greeks was enslaving Israel completely. ¹⁹ They went to Rome, a very long journey; and they entered the senate chamber and spoke as follows: ²⁰ “Judas, who is also called Maccabeus, and his brothers and the people of the Jews have sent us to you to establish alliance and peace with you, so that we may be enrolled as your allies and friends.” ²¹ The proposal pleased them, ²² and this is a copy of the letter that they wrote in reply, on bronze tablets, and sent to Jerusalem to remain with them there as a memorial of peace and alliance:

²³ “May all go well with the Romans and with the nation of the Jews at sea and on land forever, and may sword and enemy be far from them. ²⁴ If war comes first to Rome or to any of their allies in all their dominion, ²⁵ the nation of the Jews shall act as their allies

^b Gk *them*

^c Gk *they*

wholeheartedly, as the occasion may indicate to them. ²⁶To the enemy that makes war they shall not give or supply grain, arms, money, or ships, just as Rome has decided; and they shall keep their obligations without receiving any return. ²⁷In the same way, if war comes first to the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall willingly act as their allies, as the occasion may indicate to them. ²⁸And to their enemies there shall not be given grain, arms, money, or ships, just as Rome has decided; and they shall keep these obligations and do so without deceit. ²⁹Thus on these terms the Romans make a treaty with the Jewish people. ³⁰If after these terms are in effect both parties shall determine to add or delete anything, they shall do so at their discretion, and any addition or deletion that they may make shall be valid.

³¹“Concerning the wrongs that King Demetrius is doing to them, we have written to him as follows, ‘Why have you made your yoke heavy on our friends and allies the Jews? ³²If now they appeal again for help against you, we will defend their rights and fight you on sea and on land.’”

Bacchides Returns to Judea

9 When Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army had fallen in battle, he sent Bacchides and Alcimus into the land of Judah a second time, and with them the right wing of the army. ²They went by the road that leads to Gilgal and encamped against Mesaloth in Arbela, and they took it and killed many people. ³In the first month of the one hundred fifty-second year^a they encamped against Jerusalem; ⁴then they marched off and went to Berea with twenty thousand foot soldiers and two thousand cavalry.

⁵Now Judas was encamped in Elasa, and with him were three thousand picked men. ⁶When they saw the huge number of the enemy forces, they were greatly frightened, and many slipped away from the camp, until no more than eight hundred of them were left.

⁷When Judas saw that his army had slipped away and the battle was imminent, he was crushed in spirit, for he had no time to assemble them. ⁸He became faint, but he said to those who were left, “Let us get up and go against our enemies. We may have the strength to fight them.” ⁹But they tried to dissuade him, saying, “We do not have the strength. Let us rather save our own lives now, and let us come back with our kindred and fight them; we are too few.” ¹⁰But Judas said, “Far be it from us to do such a thing as

^a 160 B.C.

to flee from them. If our time has come, let us die bravely for our kindred, and leave no cause to question our honor.”

The Last Battle of Judas

¹¹Then the army of Bacchides^b marched out from the camp and took its stand for the encounter. The cavalry was divided into two companies, and the slingers and the archers went ahead of the army, as did all the chief warriors. ¹²Bacchides was on the right wing. Flanked by the two companies, the phalanx advanced to the sound of the trumpets; and the men with Judas also blew their trumpets. ¹³The earth was shaken by the noise of the armies, and the battle raged from morning until evening.

¹⁴Judas saw that Bacchides and the strength of his army were on the right; then all the stouthearted men went with him, ¹⁵and they crushed the right wing, and he pursued them as far as Mount Azotus. ¹⁶When those on the left wing saw that the right wing was crushed, they turned and followed close behind Judas and his men. ¹⁷The battle became desperate, and many on both sides were wounded and fell. ¹⁸Judas also fell, and the rest fled.

¹⁹Then Jonathan and Simon took their brother Judas and buried him in the tomb of their ancestors at Modein, ²⁰and wept for him. All Israel made great lamentation for him; they mourned many days and said,

²¹ “How is the mighty fallen,
the savior of Israel!”

²²Now the rest of the acts of Judas, and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and his greatness, have not been recorded, but they were very many.

Jonathan Succeeds Judas

²³After the death of Judas, the renegades emerged in all parts of Israel; all the wrongdoers reappeared. ²⁴In those days a very great famine occurred, and the country went over to their side. ²⁵Bacchides chose the godless and put them in charge of the country. ²⁶They made inquiry and searched for the friends of Judas, and brought them to Bacchides, who took vengeance on them and made sport of them. ²⁷So there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.

²⁸Then all the friends of Judas assembled and said to Jonathan, ²⁹“Since the death of

^bGk of *Bacchides*

your brother Judas there has been no one like him to go against our enemies and Bacchides, and to deal with those of our nation who hate us. ³⁰ Now therefore we have chosen you today to take his place as our ruler and leader, to fight our battle.” ³¹ So Jonathan accepted the leadership at that time in place of his brother Judas.

The Campaigns of Jonathan

³² When Bacchides learned of this, he tried to kill him. ³³ But Jonathan and his brother Simon and all who were with him heard of it, and they fled into the wilderness of Tekoa and camped by the water of the pool of Asphar. ³⁴ Bacchides found this out on the sabbath day, and he with all his army crossed the Jordan.

³⁵ So Jonathan^c sent his brother as leader of the multitude and begged the Nabateans, who were his friends, for permission to store with them the great amount of baggage that they had. ³⁶ But the family of Jambri from Medeba came out and seized John and all that he had, and left with it.

³⁷ After these things it was reported to Jonathan and his brother Simon, “The family of Jambri are celebrating a great wedding, and are conducting the bride, a daughter of one of the great nobles of Canaan, from Nadabath with a large escort.” ³⁸ Remembering how their brother John had been killed, they went up and hid under cover of the mountain. ³⁹ They looked out and saw a tumultuous procession with a great amount of baggage; and the bridegroom came out with his friends and his brothers to meet them with tambourines and musicians and many weapons. ⁴⁰ Then they rushed on them from the ambush and began killing them. Many were wounded and fell, and the rest fled to the mountain; and the Jews^d took all their goods. ⁴¹ So the wedding was turned into mourning and the voice of their musicians into a funeral dirge. ⁴² After they had fully avenged the blood of their brother, they returned to the marshes of the Jordan.

⁴³ When Bacchides heard of this, he came with a large force on the sabbath day to the banks of the Jordan. ⁴⁴ And Jonathan said to those with him, “Let us get up now and fight for our lives, for today things are not as they were before. ⁴⁵ For look! the battle is in front of us and behind us; the water of the Jordan is on this side and on that, with marsh and thicket; there is no place to turn. ⁴⁶ Cry out now to Heaven that you may be delivered from the hands of our enemies.” ⁴⁷ So the battle began, and Jonathan stretched out his hand to strike Bacchides, but he eluded him and went to the rear. ⁴⁸ Then

^cGk *he*

^dGk *they*

Jonathan and the men with him leaped into the Jordan and swam across to the other side, and the enemy^e did not cross the Jordan to attack them. ⁴⁹ And about one thousand of Bacchides' men fell that day.

Bacchides Builds Fortifications

⁵⁰ Then Bacchides^f returned to Jerusalem and built strong cities in Judea: the fortress in Jericho, and Emmaus, and Beth-horon, and Bethel, and Timnath, and^g Pharathon, and Tephon, with high walls and gates and bars. ⁵¹ And he placed garrisons in them to harass Israel. ⁵² He also fortified the town of Beth-zur, and Gazara, and the citadel, and in them he put troops and stores of food. ⁵³ And he took the sons of the leading men of the land as hostages and put them under guard in the citadel at Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ In the one hundred and fifty-third year,^h in the second month, Alcimus gave orders to tear down the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary. He tore down the work of the prophets! ⁵⁵ But he only began to tear it down, for at that time Alcimus was stricken and his work was hindered; his mouth was stopped and he was paralyzed, so that he could no longer say a word or give commands concerning his house. ⁵⁶ And Alcimus died at that time in great agony. ⁵⁷ When Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead, he returned to the king, and the land of Judah had rest for two years.

The End of the War

⁵⁸ Then all the lawless plotted and said, "See! Jonathan and his men are living in quiet and confidence. So now let us bring Bacchides back, and he will capture them all in one night." ⁵⁹ And they went and consulted with him. ⁶⁰ He started to come with a large force, and secretly sent letters to all his allies in Judea, telling them to seize Jonathan and his men; but they were unable to do it, because their plan became known. ⁶¹ And Jonathan's menⁱ seized about fifty of the men of the country who were leaders in this treachery, and killed them.

⁶² Then Jonathan with his men, and Simon, withdrew to Bethbasi in the wilderness; he rebuilt the parts of it that had been demolished, and they fortified it. ⁶³ When Bacchides

^e Gk *they*

^f Gk *he*

^g Some authorities omit *and*

^h 159 B.C.

ⁱ Gk *they*

learned of this, he assembled all his forces, and sent orders to the men of Judea. ⁶⁴Then he came and encamped against Bethbasi; he fought against it for many days and made machines of war.

⁶⁵But Jonathan left his brother Simon in the town, while he went out into the country; and he went with only a few men. ⁶⁶He struck down Odomera and his kindred and the people of Phasiron in their tents. ⁶⁷Then he^j began to attack and went into battle with his forces; and Simon and his men sallied out from the town and set fire to the machines of war. ⁶⁸They fought with Bacchides, and he was crushed by them. They pressed him very hard, for his plan and his expedition had been in vain. ⁶⁹So he was very angry at the renegades who had counseled him to come into the country, and he killed many of them. Then he decided to go back to his own land.

⁷⁰When Jonathan learned of this, he sent ambassadors to him to make peace with him and obtain release of the captives. ⁷¹He agreed, and did as he said; and he swore to Jonathan^k that he would not try to harm him as long as he lived. ⁷²He restored to him the captives whom he had taken previously from the land of Judah; then he turned and went back to his own land, and did not come again into their territory. ⁷³Thus the sword ceased from Israel. Jonathan settled in Michmash and began to judge the people; and he destroyed the godless out of Israel.

Revolt of Alexander Epiphanes

10 In the one hundred sixtieth year^a Alexander Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, landed and occupied Ptolemais. They welcomed him, and there he began to reign. ²When King Demetrius heard of it, he assembled a very large army and marched out to meet him in battle. ³Demetrius sent Jonathan a letter in peaceable words to honor him; ⁴for he said to himself, “Let us act first to make peace with him^b before he makes peace with Alexander against us, ⁵for he will remember all the wrongs that we did to him and to his brothers and his nation.” ⁶So Demetrius^c gave him authority to recruit troops, to equip them with arms, and to become his ally; and he commanded that the hostages in

^jOther ancient authorities read *they*

^kGk *him*

^a152 B.C.

^bGk *them*

^cGk *he*

the citadel should be released to him.

⁷ Then Jonathan came to Jerusalem and read the letter in the hearing of all the people and of those in the citadel. ⁸ They were greatly alarmed when they heard that the king had given him authority to recruit troops. ⁹ But those in the citadel released the hostages to Jonathan, and he returned them to their parents.

¹⁰ And Jonathan took up residence in Jerusalem and began to rebuild and restore the city. ¹¹ He directed those who were doing the work to build the walls and encircle Mount Zion with squared stones, for better fortification; and they did so.

¹² Then the foreigners who were in the strongholds that Bacchides had built fled; ¹³ all of them left their places and went back to their own lands. ¹⁴ Only in Beth-zur did some remain who had forsaken the law and the commandments, for it served as a place of refuge.

¹⁵ Now King Alexander heard of all the promises that Demetrius had sent to Jonathan, and he heard of the battles that Jonathan^d and his brothers had fought, of the brave deeds that they had done, and of the troubles that they had endured. ¹⁶ So he said, “Shall we find another such man? Come now, we will make him our friend and ally.” ¹⁷ And he wrote a letter and sent it to him, in the following words:

Jonathan Becomes High Priest

¹⁸ “King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, greetings. ¹⁹ We have heard about you, that you are a mighty warrior and worthy to be our friend. ²⁰ And so we have appointed you today to be the high priest of your nation; you are to be called the king’s Friend and you are to take our side and keep friendship with us.” He also sent him a purple robe and a golden crown.

²¹ So Jonathan put on the sacred vestments in the seventh month of the one hundred sixtieth year,^e at the festival of booths,^f and he recruited troops and equipped them with arms in abundance. ²² When Demetrius heard of these things he was distressed and said, ²³ “What is this that we have done? Alexander has gotten ahead of us in forming a friendship with the Jews to strengthen himself. ²⁴ I also will write them words of encouragement and promise them honor and gifts, so that I may have their help.” ²⁵ So he sent a message to them in the following words:

^d Gk *he*

^e 152 B.C.

^f Or *tabernacles*

A Letter from Demetrius to Jonathan

“King Demetrius to the nation of the Jews, greetings. ²⁶Since you have kept your agreement with us and have continued your friendship with us, and have not sided with our enemies, we have heard of it and rejoiced. ²⁷Now continue still to keep faith with us, and we will repay you with good for what you do for us. ²⁸We will grant you many immunities and give you gifts.

²⁹“I now free you and exempt all the Jews from payment of tribute and salt tax and crown levies, ³⁰and instead of collecting the third of the grain and the half of the fruit of the trees that I should receive, I release them from this day and henceforth. I will not collect them from the land of Judah or from the three districts added to it from Samaria and Galilee, from this day and for all time. ³¹Jerusalem and its environs, its tithes and its revenues, shall be holy and free from tax. ³²I release also my control of the citadel in Jerusalem and give it to the high priest, so that he may station in it men of his own choice to guard it. ³³And everyone of the Jews taken as a captive from the land of Judah into any part of my kingdom, I set free without payment; and let all officials cancel also the taxes on their livestock.

³⁴“All the festivals and sabbaths and new moons and appointed days, and the three days before a festival and the three after a festival—let them all be days of immunity and release for all the Jews who are in my kingdom. ³⁵No one shall have authority to exact anything from them or annoy any of them about any matter.

³⁶“Let Jews be enrolled in the king’s forces to the number of thirty thousand men, and let the maintenance be given them that is due to all the forces of the king. ³⁷Let some of them be stationed in the great strongholds of the king, and let some of them be put in positions of trust in the kingdom. Let their officers and leaders be of their own number, and let them live by their own laws, just as the king has commanded in the land of Judah.

³⁸“As for the three districts that have been added to Judea from the country of Samaria, let them be annexed to Judea so that they may be considered to be under one ruler and obey no other authority than the high priest. ³⁹Ptolemais and the land adjoining it I have given as a gift to the sanctuary in Jerusalem, to meet the necessary expenses of the sanctuary. ⁴⁰I also grant fifteen thousand shekels of silver yearly out of the king’s revenues from appropriate places. ⁴¹And all the additional funds that the government officials have not paid as they did in the first years,^g they shall give from

^gMeaning of Gk uncertain

now on for the service of the temple.^h 42 Moreover, the five thousand shekels of silver that my officialsⁱ have received every year from the income of the services of the temple, this too is canceled, because it belongs to the priests who minister there. 43 And all who take refuge at the temple in Jerusalem, or in any of its precincts, because they owe money to the king or are in debt, let them be released and receive back all their property in my kingdom.

44 “Let the cost of rebuilding and restoring the structures of the sanctuary be paid from the revenues of the king. 45 And let the cost of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and fortifying it all around, and the cost of rebuilding the walls in Judea, also be paid from the revenues of the king.”

Death of Demetrius

46 When Jonathan and the people heard these words, they did not believe or accept them, because they remembered the great wrongs that Demetrius^j had done in Israel and how much he had oppressed them. 47 They favored Alexander, because he had been the first to speak peaceable words to them, and they remained his allies all his days.

48 Now King Alexander assembled large forces and encamped opposite Demetrius. 49 The two kings met in battle, and the army of Demetrius fled, and Alexander^k pursued him and defeated them. 50 He pressed the battle strongly until the sun set, and on that day Demetrius fell.

Treaty of Ptolemy and Alexander

51 Then Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemy king of Egypt with the following message: 52 “Since I have returned to my kingdom and have taken my seat on the throne of my ancestors, and established my rule—for I crushed Demetrius and gained control of our country; 53 I met him in battle, and he and his army were crushed by us, and we have taken our seat on the throne of his kingdom— 54 now therefore let us establish friendship with one another; give me now your daughter as my wife, and I will become your son-in-law, and will make gifts to you and to her in keeping with your position.”

55 Ptolemy the king replied and said, “Happy was the day on which you returned to the

^h Gk *house*

ⁱ Gk *they*

^j Gk *he*

^k Other ancient authorities read *Alexander fled, and Demetrius*

land of your ancestors and took your seat on the throne of their kingdom. ⁵⁶ And now I will do for you as you wrote, but meet me at Ptolemais, so that we may see one another, and I will become your father-in-law, as you have said.”

⁵⁷ So Ptolemy set out from Egypt, he and his daughter Cleopatra, and came to Ptolemais in the one hundred sixty-second year. ¹ ⁵⁸ King Alexander met him, and Ptolemy^m gave him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, and celebrated her wedding at Ptolemais with great pomp, as kings do.

⁵⁹ Then King Alexander wrote to Jonathan to come and meet him. ⁶⁰ So he went with pomp to Ptolemais and met the two kings; he gave them and their Friends silver and gold and many gifts, and found favor with them. ⁶¹ A group of malcontents from Israel, renegades, gathered together against him to accuse him; but the king paid no attention to them. ⁶² The king gave orders to take off Jonathan’s garments and to clothe him in purple, and they did so. ⁶³ The king also seated him at his side; and he said to his officers, “Go out with him into the middle of the city and proclaim that no one is to bring charges against him about any matter, and let no one annoy him for any reason.” ⁶⁴ When his accusers saw the honor that was paid him, in accord with the proclamation, and saw him clothed in purple, they all fled. ⁶⁵ Thus the king honored him and enrolled him among his chiefⁿ Friends, and made him general and governor of the province. ⁶⁶ And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem in peace and gladness.

Apollonius Is Defeated by Jonathan

⁶⁷ In the one hundred sixty-fifth year^o Demetrius son of Demetrius came from Crete to the land of his ancestors. ⁶⁸ When King Alexander heard of it, he was greatly distressed and returned to Antioch. ⁶⁹ And Demetrius appointed Apollonius the governor of Coelesyria, and he assembled a large force and encamped against Jamnia. Then he sent the following message to the high priest Jonathan:

⁷⁰ “You are the only one to rise up against us, and I have fallen into ridicule and disgrace because of you. Why do you assume authority against us in the hill country? ⁷¹ If you now have confidence in your forces, come down to the plain to meet us, and let us match strength with each other there, for I have with me the power of the cities. ⁷² Ask

¹ 150 B.C.

^m Gk *he*

ⁿ Gk *first*

^o 147 B.C.

and learn who I am and who the others are that are helping us. People will tell you that you cannot stand before us, for your ancestors were twice put to flight in their own land. ⁷³ And now you will not be able to withstand my cavalry and such an army in the plain, where there is no stone or pebble, or place to flee.”

⁷⁴ When Jonathan heard the words of Apollonius, his spirit was aroused. He chose ten thousand men and set out from Jerusalem, and his brother Simon met him to help him. ⁷⁵ He encamped before Joppa, but the people of the city closed its gates, for Apollonius had a garrison in Joppa. ⁷⁶ So they fought against it, and the people of the city became afraid and opened the gates, and Jonathan gained possession of Joppa.

⁷⁷ When Apollonius heard of it, he mustered three thousand cavalry and a large army, and went to Azotus as though he were going farther. At the same time he advanced into the plain, for he had a large troop of cavalry and put confidence in it. ⁷⁸ Jonathan^P pursued him to Azotus, and the armies engaged in battle. ⁷⁹ Now Apollonius had secretly left a thousand cavalry behind them. ⁸⁰ Jonathan learned that there was an ambush behind him, for they surrounded his army and shot arrows at his men from early morning until late afternoon. ⁸¹ But his men stood fast, as Jonathan had commanded, and the enemy’s^q horses grew tired.

⁸² Then Simon brought forward his force and engaged the phalanx in battle (for the cavalry was exhausted); they were overwhelmed by him and fled, ⁸³ and the cavalry was dispersed in the plain. They fled to Azotus and entered Beth-dagon, the temple of their idol, for safety. ⁸⁴ But Jonathan burned Azotus and the surrounding towns and plundered them; and the temple of Dagon, and those who had taken refuge in it, he burned with fire. ⁸⁵ The number of those who fell by the sword, with those burned alive, came to eight thousand.

⁸⁶ Then Jonathan left there and encamped against Askalon, and the people of the city came out to meet him with great pomp.

⁸⁷ He and those with him then returned to Jerusalem with a large amount of booty. ⁸⁸ When King Alexander heard of these things, he honored Jonathan still more; ⁸⁹ and he sent to him a golden buckle, such as it is the custom to give to the King’s Kinsmen. He also gave him Ekron and all its environs as his possession.

Ptolemy Invades Syria

^PGk *he*

^qGk *their*

11 Then the king of Egypt gathered great forces, like the sand by the seashore, and many ships; and he tried to get possession of Alexander's kingdom by trickery and add it to his own kingdom. ²He set out for Syria with peaceable words, and the people of the towns opened their gates to him and went to meet him, for King Alexander had commanded them to meet him, since he was Alexander's^a father-in-law. ³But when Ptolemy entered the towns he stationed forces as a garrison in each town.

⁴When he^b approached Azotus, they showed him the burnt-out temple of Dagon, and Azotus and its suburbs destroyed, and the corpses lying about, and the charred bodies of those whom Jonathan^c had burned in the war, for they had piled them in heaps along his route. ⁵They also told the king what Jonathan had done, to throw blame on him; but the king kept silent. ⁶Jonathan met the king at Joppa with pomp, and they greeted one another and spent the night there. ⁷And Jonathan went with the king as far as the river called Eleutherus; then he returned to Jerusalem.

⁸So King Ptolemy gained control of the coastal cities as far as Seleucia by the sea, and he kept devising wicked designs against Alexander. ⁹He sent envoys to King Demetrius, saying, "Come, let us make a covenant with each other, and I will give you in marriage my daughter who was Alexander's wife, and you shall reign over your father's kingdom. ¹⁰I now regret that I gave him my daughter, for he has tried to kill me." ¹¹He threw blame on Alexander^d because he coveted his kingdom. ¹²So he took his daughter away from him and gave her to Demetrius. He was estranged from Alexander, and their enmity became manifest.

¹³Then Ptolemy entered Antioch and put on the crown of Asia. Thus he put two crowns on his head, the crown of Egypt and that of Asia. ¹⁴Now King Alexander was in Cilicia at that time, because the people of that region were in revolt. ¹⁵When Alexander heard of it, he came against him in battle. Ptolemy marched out and met him with a strong force, and put him to flight. ¹⁶So Alexander fled into Arabia to find protection there, and King Ptolemy was triumphant. ¹⁷Zabdiel the Arab cut off the head of Alexander and sent it to Ptolemy. ¹⁸But King Ptolemy died three days later, and his troops in the strongholds were killed by the inhabitants of the strongholds. ¹⁹So Demetrius became king in the one hundred sixty-seventh year.^e

^aGk *his*

^bOther ancient authorities read *they*

^cGk *he*

^dGk *him*

Jonathan's Diplomacy

²⁰In those days Jonathan assembled the Judeans to attack the citadel in Jerusalem, and he built many engines of war to use against it. ²¹But certain renegades who hated their nation went to the king and reported to him that Jonathan was besieging the citadel. ²²When he heard this he was angry, and as soon as he heard it he set out and came to Ptolemais; and he wrote Jonathan not to continue the siege, but to meet him for a conference at Ptolemais as quickly as possible.

²³When Jonathan heard this, he gave orders to continue the siege. He chose some of the elders of Israel and some of the priests, and put himself in danger, ²⁴for he went to the king at Ptolemais, taking silver and gold and clothing and numerous other gifts. And he won his favor. ²⁵Although certain renegades of his nation kept making complaints against him, ²⁶the king treated him as his predecessors had treated him; he exalted him in the presence of all his Friends. ²⁷He confirmed him in the high priesthood and in as many other honors as he had formerly had, and caused him to be reckoned among his chief^f Friends. ²⁸Then Jonathan asked the king to free Judea and the three districts of Samaria^g from tribute, and promised him three hundred talents. ²⁹The king consented, and wrote a letter to Jonathan about all these things; its contents were as follows:

³⁰“King Demetrius to his brother Jonathan and to the nation of the Jews, greetings. ³¹This copy of the letter that we wrote concerning you to our kinsman Lasthenes we have written to you also, so that you may know what it says. ³²‘King Demetrius to his father Lasthenes, greetings. ³³We have determined to do good to the nation of the Jews, who are our friends and fulfill their obligations to us, because of the goodwill they show toward us. ³⁴We have confirmed as their possession both the territory of Judea and the three districts of Aphairema and Lydda and Rathamin; the latter, with all the region bordering them, were added to Judea from Samaria. To all those who offer sacrifice in Jerusalem we have granted release from^h the royal taxes that the king formerly received from them each year, from the crops of the land and the fruit of the trees. ³⁵And the other payments henceforth due to us of the tithes, and the taxes due to us, and the salt pits and the crown taxes due to us—from all these we shall grant them

^e 145 B.C.

^f Gk *first*

^g Cn: Gk *the three districts and Samaria*

^h Or *Samaria, for all those who offer sacrifice in Jerusalem, in place of*

release. ³⁶ And not one of these grants shall be canceled from this time on forever. ³⁷ Now therefore take care to make a copy of this, and let it be given to Jonathan and put up in a conspicuous place on the holy mountain.’ ”

The Intrigue of Trypho

³⁸ When King Demetrius saw that the land was quiet before him and that there was no opposition to him, he dismissed all his troops, all of them to their own homes, except the foreign troops that he had recruited from the islands of the nations. So all the troops who had served under his predecessors hated him. ³⁹ A certain Trypho had formerly been one of Alexander’s supporters; he saw that all the troops were grumbling against Demetrius. So he went to Imalkue the Arab, who was bringing up Antiochus, the young son of Alexander, ⁴⁰ and insistently urged him to hand Antiochusⁱ over to him, to become king in place of his father. He also reported to Imalkue^j what Demetrius had done and told of the hatred that the troops of Demetrius^k had for him; and he stayed there many days.

⁴¹ Now Jonathan sent to King Demetrius the request that he remove the troops of the citadel from Jerusalem, and the troops in the strongholds; for they kept fighting against Israel. ⁴² And Demetrius sent this message back to Jonathan: “Not only will I do these things for you and your nation, but I will confer great honor on you and your nation, if I find an opportunity. ⁴³ Now then you will do well to send me men who will help me, for all my troops have revolted.” ⁴⁴ So Jonathan sent three thousand stalwart men to him at Antioch, and when they came to the king, the king rejoiced at their arrival.

⁴⁵ Then the people of the city assembled within the city, to the number of a hundred and twenty thousand, and they wanted to kill the king. ⁴⁶ But the king fled into the palace. Then the people of the city seized the main streets of the city and began to fight. ⁴⁷ So the king called the Jews to his aid, and they all rallied around him and then spread out through the city; and they killed on that day about one hundred thousand. ⁴⁸ They set fire to the city and seized a large amount of spoil on that day, and saved the king. ⁴⁹ When the people of the city saw that the Jews had gained control of the city as they pleased, their courage failed and they cried out to the king with this entreaty: ⁵⁰ “Grant us peace, and make the Jews stop fighting against us and our city.” ⁵¹ And they threw

ⁱ Gk *him*

^j Gk *him*

^k Gk *his troops*

down their arms and made peace. So the Jews gained glory in the sight of the king and of all the people in his kingdom, and they returned to Jerusalem with a large amount of spoil.

⁵² So King Demetrius sat on the throne of his kingdom, and the land was quiet before him. ⁵³ But he broke his word about all that he had promised; he became estranged from Jonathan and did not repay the favors that Jonathan^l had done him, but treated him very harshly.

Trypho Seizes Power

⁵⁴ After this Trypho returned, and with him the young boy Antiochus who began to reign and put on the crown. ⁵⁵ All the troops that Demetrius had discharged gathered around him; they fought against Demetrius,^m and he fled and was routed. ⁵⁶ Trypho captured the elephantsⁿ and gained control of Antioch. ⁵⁷ Then the young Antiochus wrote to Jonathan, saying, "I confirm you in the high priesthood and set you over the four districts and make you one of the king's Friends." ⁵⁸ He also sent him gold plate and a table service, and granted him the right to drink from gold cups and dress in purple and wear a gold buckle. ⁵⁹ He appointed Jonathan's^o brother Simon governor from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt.

Campaigns of Jonathan and Simon

⁶⁰ Then Jonathan set out and traveled beyond the river and among the towns, and all the army of Syria gathered to him as allies. When he came to Askalon, the people of the city met him and paid him honor. ⁶¹ From there he went to Gaza, but the people of Gaza shut him out. So he besieged it and burned its suburbs with fire and plundered them. ⁶² Then the people of Gaza pleaded with Jonathan, and he made peace with them, and took the sons of their rulers as hostages and sent them to Jerusalem. And he passed through the country as far as Damascus.

⁶³ Then Jonathan heard that the officers of Demetrius had come to Kadesh in Galilee with a large army, intending to remove him from office. ⁶⁴ He went to meet them, but left his brother Simon in the country. ⁶⁵ Simon encamped before Beth-zur and fought

^lGk *he*

^mGk *him*

ⁿGk *animals*

^oGk *his*

against it for many days and hemmed it in. ⁶⁶ Then they asked him to grant them terms of peace, and he did so. He removed them from there, took possession of the town, and set a garrison over it.

⁶⁷ Jonathan and his army encamped by the waters of Gennesaret. Early in the morning they marched to the plain of Hazor, ⁶⁸ and there in the plain the army of the foreigners met him; they had set an ambush against him in the mountains, but they themselves met him face to face. ⁶⁹ Then the men in ambush emerged from their places and joined battle. ⁷⁰ All the men with Jonathan fled; not one of them was left except Mattathias son of Absalom and Judas son of Chalphi, commanders of the forces of the army. ⁷¹ Jonathan tore his clothes, put dust on his head, and prayed. ⁷² Then he turned back to the battle against the enemy^p and routed them, and they fled. ⁷³ When his men who were fleeing saw this, they returned to him and joined him in the pursuit as far as Kadesh, to their camp, and there they encamped. ⁷⁴ As many as three thousand of the foreigners fell that day. And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem.

Alliances with Rome and Sparta

12 Now when Jonathan saw that the time was favorable for him, he chose men and sent them to Rome to confirm and renew the friendship with them. ² He also sent letters to the same effect to the Spartans and to other places. ³ So they went to Rome and entered the senate chamber and said, “The high priest Jonathan and the Jewish nation have sent us to renew the former friendship and alliance with them.” ⁴ And the Romans^a gave them letters to the people in every place, asking them to provide for the envoys^b safe conduct to the land of Judah.

⁵ This is a copy of the letter that Jonathan wrote to the Spartans: ⁶ “The high priest Jonathan, the senate of the nation, the priests, and the rest of the Jewish people to their brothers the Spartans, greetings. ⁷ Already in time past a letter was sent to the high priest Onias from Arius,^c who was king among you, stating that you are our brothers, as the appended copy shows. ⁸ Onias welcomed the envoy with honor, and received the letter, which contained a clear declaration of alliance and friendship. ⁹ Therefore,

^p Gk *them*

^a Gk *they*

^b Gk *them*

^c Vg Compare [verse 20](#): Gk *Darius*

though we have no need of these things, since we have as encouragement the holy books that are in our hands,¹⁰ we have undertaken to send to renew our family ties and friendship with you, so that we may not become estranged from you, for considerable time has passed since you sent your letter to us.¹¹ We therefore remember you constantly on every occasion, both at our festivals and on other appropriate days, at the sacrifices that we offer and in our prayers, as it is right and proper to remember brothers.¹² And we rejoice in your glory.¹³ But as for ourselves, many trials and many wars have encircled us; the kings around us have waged war against us.¹⁴ We were unwilling to annoy you and our other allies and friends with these wars,¹⁵ for we have the help that comes from Heaven for our aid, and so we were delivered from our enemies, and our enemies were humbled.¹⁶ We therefore have chosen Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, and have sent them to Rome to renew our former friendship and alliance with them.¹⁷ We have commanded them to go also to you and greet you and deliver to you this letter from us concerning the renewal of our family ties.¹⁸ And now please send us a reply to this.”

¹⁹This is a copy of the letter that they sent to Onias:²⁰ “King Arius of the Spartans, to the high priest Onias, greetings.²¹ It has been found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers and are of the family of Abraham.²² And now that we have learned this, please write us concerning your welfare;²³ we on our part write to you that your livestock and your property belong to us, and ours belong to you. We therefore command that our envoys^d report to you accordingly.”

Further Campaigns of Jonathan and Simon

²⁴Now Jonathan heard that the commanders of Demetrius had returned, with a larger force than before, to wage war against him.²⁵ So he marched away from Jerusalem and met them in the region of Hamath, for he gave them no opportunity to invade his own country.²⁶ He sent spies to their camp, and they returned and reported to him that the enemy^e were being drawn up in formation to attack the Jews^f by night.²⁷ So when the sun had set, Jonathan commanded his troops to be alert and to keep their arms at hand so as to be ready all night for battle, and he stationed outposts around the camp.²⁸ When the enemy heard that Jonathan and his troops were prepared for battle, they

^dGk *they*

^eGk *they*

^fGk *them*

were afraid and were terrified at heart; so they kindled fires in their camp and withdrew.^g ²⁹ But Jonathan and his troops did not know it until morning, for they saw the fires burning. ³⁰ Then Jonathan pursued them, but he did not overtake them, for they had crossed the Eleutherus river. ³¹ So Jonathan turned aside against the Arabs who are called Zabadeans, and he crushed them and plundered them. ³² Then he broke camp and went to Damascus, and marched through all that region.

³³ Simon also went out and marched through the country as far as Askalon and the neighboring strongholds. He turned aside to Joppa and took it by surprise, ³⁴ for he had heard that they were ready to hand over the stronghold to those whom Demetrius had sent. And he stationed a garrison there to guard it.

³⁵ When Jonathan returned he convened the elders of the people and planned with them to build strongholds in Judea, ³⁶ to build the walls of Jerusalem still higher, and to erect a high barrier between the citadel and the city to separate it from the city, in order to isolate it so that its garrison^h could neither buy nor sell. ³⁷ So they gathered together to rebuild the city; part of the wall on the valley to the east had fallen, and he repaired the section called Chaphenatha. ³⁸ Simon also built Adida in the Shephelah; he fortified it and installed gates with bolts.

Trypho Captures Jonathan

³⁹ Then Trypho attempted to become king in Asia and put on the crown, and to raise his hand against King Antiochus. ⁴⁰ He feared that Jonathan might not permit him to do so, but might make war on him, so he kept seeking to seize and kill him, and he marched out and came to Beth-shan. ⁴¹ Jonathan went out to meet him with forty thousand picked warriors, and he came to Beth-shan. ⁴² When Trypho saw that he had come with a large army, he was afraid to raise his hand against him. ⁴³ So he received him with honor and commended him to all his Friends, and he gave him gifts and commanded his Friends and his troops to obey him as they would himself. ⁴⁴ Then he said to Jonathan, “Why have you put all these people to so much trouble when we are not at war? ⁴⁵ Dismiss them now to their homes and choose for yourself a few men to stay with you, and come with me to Ptolemais. I will hand it over to you as well as the other strongholds and the remaining troops and all the officials, and will turn around and go home. For that is why I am here.”

^g Other ancient authorities omit *and withdrew*

^h Gk *they*

⁴⁶ Jonathanⁱ trusted him and did as he said; he sent away the troops, and they returned to the land of Judah. ⁴⁷ He kept with himself three thousand men, two thousand of whom he left in Galilee, while one thousand accompanied him. ⁴⁸ But when Jonathan entered Ptolemais, the people of Ptolemais closed the gates and seized him, and they killed with the sword all who had entered with him.

⁴⁹ Then Trypho sent troops and cavalry into Galilee and the Great Plain to destroy all Jonathan's soldiers. ⁵⁰ But they realized that Jonathan had been seized and had perished along with his men, and they encouraged one another and kept marching in close formation, ready for battle. ⁵¹ When their pursuers saw that they would fight for their lives, they turned back. ⁵² So they all reached the land of Judah safely, and they mourned for Jonathan and his companions and were in great fear; and all Israel mourned deeply. ⁵³ All the nations around them tried to destroy them, for they said, "They have no leader or helper. Now therefore let us make war on them and blot out the memory of them from humankind."

Simon Takes Command

13 Simon heard that Trypho had assembled a large army to invade the land of Judah and destroy it, ² and he saw that the people were trembling with fear. So he went up to Jerusalem, and gathering the people together ³ he encouraged them, saying to them, "You yourselves know what great things my brothers and I and the house of my father have done for the laws and the sanctuary; you know also the wars and the difficulties that my brothers and I have seen. ⁴ By reason of this all my brothers have perished for the sake of Israel, and I alone am left. ⁵ And now, far be it from me to spare my life in any time of distress, for I am not better than my brothers. ⁶ But I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children, for all the nations have gathered together out of hatred to destroy us."

⁷ The spirit of the people was rekindled when they heard these words, ⁸ and they answered in a loud voice, "You are our leader in place of Judas and your brother Jonathan. ⁹ Fight our battles, and all that you say to us we will do." ¹⁰ So he assembled all the warriors and hurried to complete the walls of Jerusalem, and he fortified it on every side. ¹¹ He sent Jonathan son of Absalom to Joppa, and with him a considerable army; he drove out its occupants and remained there.

ⁱ Gk *he*

Deceit and Treachery of Trypho

¹² Then Trypho left Ptolemais with a large army to invade the land of Judah, and Jonathan was with him under guard. ¹³ Simon encamped in Adida, facing the plain. ¹⁴ Trypho learned that Simon had risen up in place of his brother Jonathan, and that he was about to join battle with him, so he sent envoys to him and said, ¹⁵ “It is for the money that your brother Jonathan owed the royal treasury, in connection with the offices he held, that we are detaining him. ¹⁶ Send now one hundred talents of silver and two of his sons as hostages, so that when released he will not revolt against us, and we will release him.”

¹⁷ Simon knew that they were speaking deceitfully to him, but he sent to get the money and the sons, so that he would not arouse great hostility among the people, who might say, ¹⁸ “It was because Simon^a did not send him the money and the sons, that Jonathan^b perished.” ¹⁹ So he sent the sons and the hundred talents, but Trypho^c broke his word and did not release Jonathan.

²⁰ After this Trypho came to invade the country and destroy it, and he circled around by the way to Adora. But Simon and his army kept marching along opposite him to every place he went. ²¹ Now the men in the citadel kept sending envoys to Trypho urging him to come to them by way of the wilderness and to send them food. ²² So Trypho got all his cavalry ready to go, but that night a very heavy snow fell, and he did not go because of the snow. He marched off and went into the land of Gilead. ²³ When he approached Baskama, he killed Jonathan, and he was buried there. ²⁴ Then Trypho turned and went back to his own land.

Jonathan's Tomb

²⁵ Simon sent and took the bones of his brother Jonathan, and buried him in Modein, the city of his ancestors. ²⁶ All Israel bewailed him with great lamentation, and mourned for him many days. ²⁷ And Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers; he made it high so that it might be seen, with polished stone at the front and back. ²⁸ He also erected seven pyramids, opposite one another, for his father and mother and four brothers. ²⁹ For the pyramids^d he devised an elaborate set-

^a Gk *I*

^b Gk *he*

^c Gk *he*

^d Gk *For these*

ting, erecting about them great columns, and on the columns he put suits of armor for a permanent memorial, and beside the suits of armor he carved ships, so that they could be seen by all who sail the sea. ³⁰This is the tomb that he built in Modein; it remains to this day.

Judea Gains Independence

³¹Trypho dealt treacherously with the young King Antiochus; he killed him ³²and became king in his place, putting on the crown of Asia; and he brought great calamity on the land. ³³But Simon built up the strongholds of Judea and walled them all around, with high towers and great walls and gates and bolts, and he stored food in the strongholds. ³⁴Simon also chose emissaries and sent them to King Demetrius with a request to grant relief to the country, for all that Trypho did was to plunder. ³⁵King Demetrius sent him a favorable reply to this request, and wrote him a letter as follows, ³⁶“King Demetrius to Simon, the high priest and friend of kings, and to the elders and nation of the Jews, greetings. ³⁷We have received the gold crown and the palm branch that you^e sent, and we are ready to make a general peace with you and to write to our officials to grant you release from tribute. ³⁸All the grants that we have made to you remain valid, and let the strongholds that you have built be your possession. ³⁹We pardon any errors and offenses committed to this day, and cancel the crown tax that you owe; and whatever other tax has been collected in Jerusalem shall be collected no longer. ⁴⁰And if any of you are qualified to be enrolled in our bodyguard,^f let them be enrolled, and let there be peace between us.”

⁴¹In the one hundred seventieth year^g the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel, ⁴²and the people began to write in their documents and contracts, “In the first year of Simon the great high priest and commander and leader of the Jews.”

The Capture of Gazara by Simon

⁴³In those days Simon^h encamped against Gazaraⁱ and surrounded it with troops. He made a siege engine, brought it up to the city, and battered and captured one tower.

^e The word *you* in [verses 37-40](#) is plural

^f Or *court*

^g 142 B.C.

^h Gk *he*

ⁱ Cn: Gk *Gaza*

⁴⁴The men in the siege engine leaped out into the city, and a great tumult arose in the city. ⁴⁵The men in the city, with their wives and children, went up on the wall with their clothes torn, and they cried out with a loud voice, asking Simon to make peace with them; ⁴⁶they said, “Do not treat us according to our wicked acts but according to your mercy.” ⁴⁷So Simon reached an agreement with them and stopped fighting against them. But he expelled them from the city and cleansed the houses in which the idols were located, and then entered it with hymns and praise. ⁴⁸He removed all uncleanness from it, and settled in it those who observed the law. He also strengthened its fortifications and built in it a house for himself.

Simon Regains the Citadel at Jerusalem

⁴⁹Those who were in the citadel at Jerusalem were prevented from going in and out to buy and sell in the country. So they were very hungry, and many of them perished from famine. ⁵⁰Then they cried to Simon to make peace with them, and he did so. But he expelled them from there and cleansed the citadel from its pollutions. ⁵¹On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred seventy-first year,^j the Jews^k entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel. ⁵²Simon^l decreed that every year they should celebrate this day with rejoicing. He strengthened the fortifications of the temple hill alongside the citadel, and he and his men lived there. ⁵³Simon saw that his son John had reached manhood, and so he made him commander of all the forces; and he lived at Gazara.

Capture of Demetrius

14 In the one hundred seventy-second year^a King Demetrius assembled his forces and marched into Media to obtain help, so that he could make war against Trypho. ²When King Arsaces of Persia and Media heard that Demetrius had invaded his territory, he sent one of his generals to take him alive. ³The general^b went and defeated the army of

^j141 B.C.

^kGk *they*

^lGk *He*

^a140 B.C.

^bGk *He*

Demetrius, and seized him and took him to Arsaces, who put him under guard.

Eulogy of Simon

- 4 The land^c had rest all the days of Simon.
He sought the good of his nation;
his rule was pleasing to them,
as was the honor shown him, all his days.
- 5 To crown all his honors he took Joppa for a harbor,
and opened a way to the isles of the sea.
- 6 He extended the borders of his nation,
and gained full control of the country.
- 7 He gathered a host of captives;
he ruled over Gazara and Beth-zur and the citadel,
and he removed its uncleanness from it;
and there was none to oppose him.
- 8 They tilled their land in peace;
the ground gave its increase,
and the trees of the plains their fruit.
- 9 Old men sat in the streets;
they all talked together of good things,
and the youths put on splendid military attire.
- 10 He supplied the towns with food,
and furnished them with the means of defense,
until his renown spread to the ends of the earth.
- 11 He established peace in the land,
and Israel rejoiced with great joy.
- 12 All the people sat under their own vines and fig trees,
and there was none to make them afraid.
- 13 No one was left in the land to fight them,
and the kings were crushed in those days.
- 14 He gave help to all the humble among his people;
he sought out the law,
and did away with all the renegades and outlaws.

^cOther ancient authorities add *of Judah*

¹⁵ He made the sanctuary glorious,
and added to the vessels of the sanctuary.

Diplomacy with Rome and Sparta

¹⁶ It was heard in Rome, and as far away as Sparta, that Jonathan had died, and they were deeply grieved. ¹⁷ When they heard that his brother Simon had become high priest in his stead, and that he was ruling over the country and the towns in it, ¹⁸ they wrote to him on bronze tablets to renew with him the friendship and alliance that they had established with his brothers Judas and Jonathan. ¹⁹ And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem.

²⁰ This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent:

“The rulers and the city of the Spartans to the high priest Simon and to the elders and the priests and the rest of the Jewish people, our brothers, greetings. ²¹ The envoys who were sent to our people have told us about your glory and honor, and we rejoiced at their coming. ²² We have recorded what they said in our public decrees, as follows, ‘Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, envoys of the Jews, have come to us to renew their friendship with us. ²³ It has pleased our people to receive these men with honor and to put a copy of their words in the public archives, so that the people of the Spartans may have a record of them. And they have sent a copy of this to the high priest Simon.’ ”

²⁴ After this Simon sent Numenius to Rome with a large gold shield weighing one thousand minas, to confirm the alliance with the Romans.^d

Official Honors for Simon

²⁵ When the people heard these things they said, “How shall we thank Simon and his sons? ²⁶ For he and his brothers and the house of his father have stood firm; they have fought and repulsed Israel’s enemies and established its freedom.” ²⁷ So they made a record on bronze tablets and put it on pillars on Mount Zion.

This is a copy of what they wrote: “On the eighteenth day of Elul, in the one hundred seventy-second year,^e which is the third year of the great high priest Simon, ²⁸ in Asaramel,^f in the great assembly of the priests and the people and the rulers of the

^d Gk *them*

^e 140 B.C.

^f This word resembles the Hebrew words for *the court of the people of God* or *the prince of*

nation and the elders of the country, the following was proclaimed to us:

²⁹“Since wars often occurred in the country, Simon son of Mattathias, a priest of the sons^g of Joarib, and his brothers, exposed themselves to danger and resisted the enemies of their nation, in order that their sanctuary and the law might be preserved; and they brought great glory to their nation. ³⁰Jonathan rallied the^h nation, became their high priest, and was gathered to his people. ³¹When their enemies decided to invade their country and lay hands on their sanctuary, ³²then Simon rose up and fought for his nation. He spent great sums of his own money; he armed the soldiers of his nation and paid them wages. ³³He fortified the towns of Judea, and Beth-zur on the borders of Judea, where formerly the arms of the enemy had been stored, and he placed there a garrison of Jews. ³⁴He also fortified Joppa, which is by the sea, and Gazara, which is on the borders of Azotus, where the enemy formerly lived. He settled Jews there, and provided in those townsⁱ whatever was necessary for their restoration.

³⁵“The people saw Simon’s faithfulness^j and the glory that he had resolved to win for his nation, and they made him their leader and high priest, because he had done all these things and because of the justice and loyalty that he had maintained toward his nation. He sought in every way to exalt his people. ³⁶In his days things prospered in his hands, so that the Gentiles were put out of the^k country, as were also those in the city of David in Jerusalem, who had built themselves a citadel from which they used to sally forth and defile the environs of the sanctuary, doing great damage to its purity. ³⁷He settled Jews in it and fortified it for the safety of the country and of the city, and built the walls of Jerusalem higher.

³⁸“In view of these things King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood, ³⁹made him one of his Friends, and paid him high honors. ⁴⁰For he had heard that the Jews were addressed by the Romans as friends and allies and brothers, and that the Romans^l had received the envoys of Simon with honor.

⁴¹“The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high

the people of God

^g Meaning of Gk uncertain

^h Gk *their*

ⁱ Gk *them*

^j Other ancient authorities read *conduct*

^k Gk *their*

^l Gk *they*

priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise, ⁴² and that he should be governor over them and that he should take charge of the sanctuary and appoint officials over its tasks and over the country and the weapons and the strongholds, and that he should take charge of the sanctuary, ⁴³ and that he should be obeyed by all, and that all contracts in the country should be written in his name, and that he should be clothed in purple and wear gold.

⁴⁴“None of the people or priests shall be permitted to nullify any of these decisions or to oppose what he says, or to convene an assembly in the country without his permission, or to be clothed in purple or put on a gold buckle. ⁴⁵Whoever acts contrary to these decisions or rejects any of them shall be liable to punishment.”

⁴⁶ All the people agreed to grant Simon the right to act in accordance with these decisions. ⁴⁷ So Simon accepted and agreed to be high priest, to be commander and ethnarch of the Jews and priests, and to be protector of them all.^m ⁴⁸ And they gave orders to inscribe this decree on bronze tablets, to put them up in a conspicuous place in the precincts of the sanctuary, ⁴⁹ and to deposit copies of them in the treasury, so that Simon and his sons might have them.

Letter of Antiochus VII

15 Antiochus, son of King Demetrius, sent a letter from the islands of the sea to Simon, the priest and ethnarch of the Jews, and to all the nation; ² its contents were as follows: “King Antiochus to Simon the high priest and ethnarch and to the nation of the Jews, greetings. ³ Whereas certain scoundrels have gained control of the kingdom of our ancestors, and I intend to lay claim to the kingdom so that I may restore it as it formerly was, and have recruited a host of mercenary troops and have equipped warships, ⁴ and intend to make a landing in the country so that I may proceed against those who have destroyed our country and those who have devastated many cities in my kingdom, ⁵ now therefore I confirm to you all the tax remissions that the kings before me have granted you, and a release from all the other payments from which they have released you. ⁶ I permit you to mint your own coinage as money for your country, ⁷ and I grant freedom to Jerusalem and the sanctuary. All the weapons that you have prepared and the strongholds that you have built and now hold shall remain yours. ⁸ Every debt you owe to the royal treasury and any such future debts shall be canceled for you from

^m Or *to preside over them all*

henceforth and for all time. ⁹When we gain control of our kingdom, we will bestow great honor on you and your nation and the temple, so that your glory will become manifest in all the earth.”

¹⁰ In the one hundred seventy-fourth year^a Antiochus set out and invaded the land of his ancestors. All the troops rallied to him, so that there were only a few with Trypho. ¹¹ Antiochus pursued him, and Trypho^b came in his flight to Dor, which is by the sea; ¹² for he knew that troubles had converged on him, and his troops had deserted him. ¹³ So Antiochus encamped against Dor, and with him were one hundred twenty thousand warriors and eight thousand cavalry. ¹⁴ He surrounded the town, and the ships joined battle from the sea; he pressed the town hard from land and sea, and permitted no one to leave or enter it.

Rome Supports the Jews

¹⁵ Then Numenius and his companions arrived from Rome, with letters to the kings and countries, in which the following was written: ¹⁶ “Lucius, consul of the Romans, to King Ptolemy, greetings. ¹⁷ The envoys of the Jews have come to us as our friends and allies to renew our ancient friendship and alliance. They had been sent by the high priest Simon and by the Jewish people ¹⁸ and have brought a gold shield weighing one thousand minas. ¹⁹ We therefore have decided to write to the kings and countries that they should not seek their harm or make war against them and their cities and their country, or make alliance with those who war against them. ²⁰ And it has seemed good to us to accept the shield from them. ²¹ Therefore if any scoundrels have fled to you from their country, hand them over to the high priest Simon, so that he may punish them according to their law.”

²² The consul^c wrote the same thing to King Demetrius and to Attalus and Ariarathes and Arsaces, ²³ and to all the countries, and to Sampsames,^d and to the Spartans, and to Delos, and to Myndos, and to Sicyon, and to Caria, and to Samos, and to Pamphylia, and to Lycia, and to Halicarnassus, and to Rhodes, and to Phaselis, and to Cos, and to Side, and to Aradus and Gortyna and Cnidus and Cyprus and Cyrene. ²⁴ They also sent a copy of these things to the high priest Simon.

^a 138 B.C.

^b Gk *he*

^c Gk *He*

^d The name is uncertain

Antiochus VII Threatens Simon

²⁵King Antiochus besieged Dor for the second time, continually throwing his forces against it and making engines of war; and he shut Trypho up and kept him from going out or in. ²⁶And Simon sent to Antiochus^e two thousand picked troops, to fight for him, and silver and gold and a large amount of military equipment. ²⁷But he refused to receive them, and broke all the agreements he formerly had made with Simon, and became estranged from him. ²⁸He sent to him Athenobius, one of his Friends, to confer with him, saying, “You hold control of Joppa and Gazara and the citadel in Jerusalem; they are cities of my kingdom. ²⁹You have devastated their territory, you have done great damage in the land, and you have taken possession of many places in my kingdom. ³⁰Now then, hand over the cities that you have seized and the tribute money of the places that you have conquered outside the borders of Judea; ³¹or else pay me five hundred talents of silver for the destruction that you have caused and five hundred talents more for the tribute money of the cities. Otherwise we will come and make war on you.”

³²So Athenobius, the king’s Friend, came to Jerusalem, and when he saw the splendor of Simon, and the sideboard with its gold and silver plate, and his great magnificence, he was amazed. When he reported to him the king’s message, ³³Simon said to him in reply: “We have neither taken foreign land nor seized foreign property, but only the inheritance of our ancestors, which at one time had been unjustly taken by our enemies. ³⁴Now that we have the opportunity, we are firmly holding the inheritance of our ancestors. ³⁵As for Joppa and Gazara, which you demand, they were causing great damage among the people and to our land; for them we will give you one hundred talents.”

Athenobius^f did not answer him a word, ³⁶but returned in wrath to the king and reported to him these words, and also the splendor of Simon and all that he had seen. And the king was very angry.

Victory over Cendebeus

³⁷Meanwhile Trypho embarked on a ship and escaped to Orthosia. ³⁸Then the king made Cendebeus commander-in-chief of the coastal country, and gave him troops of infantry and cavalry. ³⁹He commanded him to encamp against Judea, to build up

^e Gk *him*

^f Gk *He*

Kedron and fortify its gates, and to make war on the people; but the king pursued Trypho. ⁴⁰So Cendebeus came to Jamnia and began to provoke the people and invade Judea and take the people captive and kill them. ⁴¹He built up Kedron and stationed horsemen and troops there, so that they might go out and make raids along the high-ways of Judea, as the king had ordered him.

16 John went up from Gazara and reported to his father Simon what Cendebeus had done. ²And Simon called in his two eldest sons Judas and John, and said to them: “My brothers and I and my father’s house have fought the wars of Israel from our youth until this day, and things have prospered in our hands so that we have delivered Israel many times. ³But now I have grown old, and you by Heaven’s^a mercy are mature in years. Take my place and my brother’s, and go out and fight for our nation, and may the help that comes from Heaven be with you.”

⁴So John^b chose out of the country twenty thousand warriors and cavalry, and they marched against Cendebeus and camped for the night in Modein. ⁵Early in the morning they started out and marched into the plain, where a large force of infantry and cavalry was coming to meet them; and a stream lay between them. ⁶Then he and his army lined up against them. He saw that the soldiers were afraid to cross the stream, so he crossed over first; and when his troops saw him, they crossed over after him. ⁷Then he divided the army and placed the cavalry in the center of the infantry, for the cavalry of the enemy were very numerous. ⁸They sounded the trumpets, and Cendebeus and his army were put to flight; many of them fell wounded and the rest fled into the stronghold. ⁹At that time Judas the brother of John was wounded, but John pursued them until Cendebeus^c reached Kedron, which he had built. ¹⁰They also fled into the towers that were in the fields of Azotus, and John^d burned it with fire, and about two thousand of them fell. He then returned to Judea safely.

Murder of Simon and His Sons

¹¹Now Ptolemy son of Abubus had been appointed governor over the plain of Jericho; he had a large store of silver and gold, ¹²for he was son-in-law of the high priest. ¹³His

^aGk *his*

^bOther ancient authorities read *he*

^cGk *he*

^dGk *he*

heart was lifted up; he determined to get control of the country, and made treacherous plans against Simon and his sons, to do away with them. ¹⁴ Now Simon was visiting the towns of the country and attending to their needs, and he went down to Jericho with his sons Mattathias and Judas, in the one hundred seventy-seventh year,^e in the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat. ¹⁵ The son of Abubus received them treacherously in the little stronghold called Dok, which he had built; he gave them a great banquet, and hid men there. ¹⁶ When Simon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy and his men rose up, took their weapons, rushed in against Simon in the banquet hall and killed him and his two sons, as well as some of his servants. ¹⁷ So he committed an act of great treachery and returned evil for good.

John Succeeds Simon

¹⁸ Then Ptolemy wrote a report about these things and sent it to the king, asking him to send troops to aid him and to turn over to him the towns and the country. ¹⁹ He sent other troops to Gazara to do away with John; he sent letters to the captains asking them to come to him so that he might give them silver and gold and gifts; ²⁰ and he sent other troops to take possession of Jerusalem and the temple hill. ²¹ But someone ran ahead and reported to John at Gazara that his father and brothers had perished, and that “he has sent men to kill you also.” ²² When he heard this, he was greatly shocked; he seized the men who came to destroy him and killed them, for he had found out that they were seeking to destroy him.

²³ The rest of the acts of John and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and the building of the walls that he completed, and his achievements, ²⁴ are written in the annals of his high priesthood, from the time that he became high priest after his father.

^e 134 B.C.