

# 1 Maccabees

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Chapters 1-4

(Based on the translation by the NAS 1901)





# Introduction

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The story of Hanukkah is often missed in today's society. With the hustle and bustle of the holidays it is often portrayed as the Jewish Christmas. If asked, most would say that it is the celebration of the "Miracle of the Oil" that lasted for eight days, when it should have lasted for one. But many would be surprised to learn that this miracle wasn't recorded in the Talmud (Jewish oral law) until some 600 years after the events of the Maccabees.

The history of Hanukkah is a compelling one. It is the account of a small outnumbered band of soldiers fighting for their way of life. When Israel was conquered in the past by Babylon and even Greece originally, they were allowed to keep their identity as Jews. While they were required to pay tribute and give allegiance to foreign king, they were permitted to continue their religion. With the reign of King Antiochus IV, however, this changed. He decided that every culture that wasn't Greek was inherently bad, and outlawed them. Much of his kingdom at that time had already become Hellenized and were mostly Greek in culture. But the Jews stood apart. While some had chosen to forget their ancestral heritage, many were committed to keeping the history and faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob alive.

The struggle was compounded when Antiochus declared himself to be "Epiphanes". He declared himself to be a god. Behind his back the people called him Epimanes, "The Madman". It was shortly thereafter that he entered the Temple in Jerusalem to sacrifice a pig, a forbidden and unclean animal, on the alter of God. This desecration invalidated the entire temple for use according to the Torah, and left the Jews without a place to worship and fulfill their religious duty. It was because of this final injustice that the city of Modin, led by Mattathias, revolted.

The selection below is the most famous portion of the Maccabean history. It recounts the first three years of their struggle to regain Jerusalem and ends with the rededication of the temple, and the institution of the eight-day celebration of Hanukkah. Hanukkah in Hebrew means rededication. During these eight nights it is this victory that is celebrated and remembered.

While, by the very nature of the history of the Jews, the account below contains many religious references, but this book is not in itself a religious book. It is not included in the Hebrew canon of Scripture. It is a book of history, and it is in this light that I give it.

For those of you that Celebrate Christmas from a religious perspective, remembering the birth of Jesus should take special meaning consider the events of Hanukkah. This history set the stage for Yeshua (Jesus' Hebrew name) to begin his ministry. Much of the social issues that he fought against came from this time. In fact, if the Maccabees had not begun their revolt Israel would have been destroyed and the birth of Yeshua would never have happened.

Chag Sameach! (Happy Holiday)



# 1 Maccabees

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## *Chapter 1*

(1) It came to pass, after that Alexander the Macedonian, the son of Philip, who came out of the land of Chittim<sup>1</sup>, and struck Darius king of the Persians and Medes, it came to pass, after he had struck him, that he reigned in his stead, in former time, over Greece. (2) And he fought many battles, and won many strongholds, and killed the kings of the earth, (3) and went through to the ends of the earth, and took the spoils of many nations. And the earth was quiet before him, and he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up, (4) and he gathered together an exceedingly strong army, and ruled over countries and nations and principalities, and they became tributary to him. (5) And after these things he fell sick, and perceived that he would die. (6) And he called his servants, which were honorable, which had been brought up with him from his youth, and he divided to them his kingdom, while he was yet alive. (7) And Alexander reigned twelve years, and he died. (8) And his servants ruled, each one in his place. (9) And they did all put crowns upon themselves after he was dead, and so did their sons after them many years: and they multiplied evils in the earth. (10) And there came forth out of them a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty-seventh year<sup>2</sup> of the kingdom of the Greeks. (11) In those days there came out of Israel transgressors of the law, and persuaded many, saying, "Let's go and make a covenant with the Gentiles that are around us; for since we parted from them many evils have come upon us." (12) And this was good in their eyes. (13) And certain of the people went to the king, and he gave them license to do after the ordinances of the Gentiles. (14) And they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the laws of the Gentiles;<sup>3</sup> (15) and they made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil. (16) And the kingdom was well ordered in the sight of Antiochus, and he thought to reign over Egypt, that he might reign over the two kingdoms.<sup>4</sup> (17) And he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and with elephants, and with horsemen, and with a great navy; (18) and he made war against Ptolemy king of Egypt; and Ptolemy was put to shame before him, and fled; and many fell wounded to death. (19) And they got possession of the strong cities in the land of Egypt; and he took the spoils of Egypt. (20) And Antiochus, after that he had struck Egypt, returned in the hundred and forty-third year<sup>5</sup>, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, (21) and entered presumptuously into the sanctuary<sup>6</sup>, and took the golden altar, and the candlestick of the light, and all that pertained thereto, (22) and the table of the show bread, and in addition the cups to pour, and the bowls, and the golden censers, and the veil, and the crowns, and the adorning of gold which was on the face of the temple, and he scaled it all off. (23) And he took the silver and the gold and the precious vessels; and he took the hidden treasures which he found. (24) And when he had taken all, he went away into his own land, and he made a great slaughter, and spoke very presumptuously. (25) And there came great mourning upon Israel, in every place where they were; (26) and the rulers and elders groaned, the virgins and

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<sup>1</sup> Modern day Cyprus

<sup>2</sup> 175 BCE

<sup>3</sup> This was so egregious to the Jews because gymnasiums were a form of worship to the Greek gods and often were done without clothing.

<sup>4</sup> King Antiochus ruled in Syria over the Seleucid Kingdom

<sup>5</sup> 169 BCE

<sup>6</sup> The Temple in Jerusalem

young men were made feeble, and the beauty of the women was changed. (27) Every bridegroom took up lamentation, she that sat in the marriage chamber was in heaviness. (28) And the land was moved for the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame. (29) And after two full years the king sent a chief collector of tribute to the cities of Judah, and he came to Jerusalem with a great multitude. (30) And he spoke words of peace to them in subtlety, and they gave him credence: and he fell upon the city suddenly, and struck it, and destroyed many people in Israel. (31) And he took the spoils of the city, and set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and the walls on every side. (32) And they led captive the women and the children, and the cattle they took in possession. (33) And they built the city of David with a great and strong wall, with strong towers, and it became their citadel. (34) And they put there a sinful nation, transgressors of the Torah, and they strengthened themselves therein. (35) And they stored up arms and food, and gathering together the spoils of Jerusalem, they laid them up there, and they became a sore snare: (36) and it became a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and it was evil adversary to Israel continually. (37) And they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled the sanctuary. (38) And the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them; and she became a habitation of strangers, and she became strange to those who were born in her, and her children forsook her. (39) Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness; her feasts were turned into mourning, her Sabbaths into reproach, her honor into contempt. (40) According to her glory, so was her dishonor multiplied, and her high estate was turned into mourning. (41) And king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, (42) and that each should forsake his own laws. And all the nations agreed according to the word of the king; (43) and many of Israel consented to his worship, and sacrificed to the idols, and profaned the Sabbath. (44) And the king sent letters by the hand of messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, that they should follow laws strange to the land, (45) and should forbid whole burnt offerings and sacrifice and drink offerings in the sanctuary; and should profane the Sabbaths and feasts, (46) and pollute the sanctuary and those who were holy; (47) that they should build altars, and temples, and shrines for idols, and should sacrifice swine's flesh and unclean beasts: (48) and that they should leave their sons uncircumcised, that they should make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation; (49) so that they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. (50) And whoever shall not do according to the word of the king, he shall die. (51) According to all these words he wrote to his whole kingdom; and he appointed overseers over all the people, and he commanded the cities of Judah to sacrifice to idols, city by city. (52) And from the people were gathered together, every one that had forsaken the Torah; and they did evil things in the land; (53) and they made Israel to hide themselves in every place of refuge which they had. (54) And on the fifteenth day of Chislev,<sup>7</sup> in the hundred and forty-fifth year<sup>8</sup>, they built an abomination of desolation<sup>9</sup> upon the altar, and in the cities of Judah on every side they built idol altars. (55) And at the doors of the houses and in the streets they burned incense. (56) And they tore in pieces the books of the Torah which they found, and set them on fire. (57) And wherever was found with any a book of the covenant, and if any consented to the law, the king's sentence delivered him to death. (58) Thus did they in their might to Israel, to those that were found month by month in the cities. (59) And on the twenty-fifth day of the month they sacrificed upon the idol altar of God.<sup>10</sup> (60) And the women that had circumcised their children they put to death according to the commandment. (61) And they hung their babes about their necks, and destroyed their

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<sup>7</sup> November or December on the Gregorian calendar

<sup>8</sup> 167 BCE

<sup>9</sup> Daniel 12:11

<sup>10</sup> They sacrificed a pig

houses, and those who had circumcised them. (62) And many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat unclean things.<sup>11</sup> (63) And they chose to die, that they might not be defiled with the meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: and they died. (64) And there came exceeding great wrath upon Israel.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Leviticus 11

<sup>12</sup> 2 Maccabees contains greater description of the atrocities performed by Antiochus upon the Jews



## Chapter 2

(1) In those days rose up Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem; and he lived at Modin. (2) And he had five sons, John, who was surnamed Gaddis; (3) Simon, who was called Thassi; (4) Judah, who was called Maccabaeus; (5) Eleazar, who was called Avaran; Jonathan, who was called Apphus. (6) And he saw the blasphemies that were committed in Judah and in Jerusalem, (7) and he said, "Woe is me! wherefore was I born to see the destruction of my people, and the destruction of the holy city, and to dwell there, when it was given into the hand of the enemy, the sanctuary into the hand of aliens? (8) Her temple is become as a man that was glorious: (9) her vessels of glory are carried away into captivity, her infants are slain in her streets, her young men with the sword of the enemy. (10) What nation has not inherited her palaces, and gotten possession of her spoils? (11) her adorning is all taken away; instead of a free woman she is become a slave: (12) and, behold, our holy things and our beauty and our glory are laid waste, and the Gentiles have profaned them. (13) Wherefore should we live any longer?" (14) And Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourned. (15) And the king's officers, that were enforcing the apostasy, came into the city Modin to sacrifice. (16) And many of Israel came to them, and Mattathias and his sons were gathered together. (17) And the king's officers answered and spoke to Mattathias, saying, "You are a ruler and an honorable and great man in this city, and strengthened with sons and kindred: (18) now therefore come first and do the commandment of the king, as all the nations have done, and the men of Judah, and those who remain in Jerusalem: and you and your house shall be in the number of the king's Friends,<sup>13</sup> and you and your sons shall be honored with silver and gold and many gifts." (19) And Mattathias answered and said with a loud voice, "If all the nations that are in the house of the king's dominion listen to him, to fall away each one from the worship of his fathers, and have made choice to follow his commandments, (20) yet I and my sons and my kindred will walk in the covenant of our fathers. (21) Heaven forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances. (22) We will not listen to the king's words, to go aside from our worship, on the right hand, or on the left." (23) And when he had left speaking these words, there came a Jew in the sight of all to sacrifice on the altar which was at Modin, according to the king's commandment. (24) And Mattathias saw it, and his zeal was kindled, and his reins trembled, and he showed forth his wrath according to judgment, and ran, and killed him upon the altar. (25) And the king's officer, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and pulled down the altar. (26) And he was zealous for the law, even as Phinehas did to Zimri the son of Salu.<sup>14</sup> (27) And Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying, "Whosoever is zealous for the Torah, and maintains the covenant, let him come forth after me." (28) And he and his sons fled into the mountains, and forsook all that they had in the city. (29) Then many that sought after justice and judgment went down into the wilderness, to dwell there, (30) they, and their sons, and their wives, and their cattle; because evils were multiplied upon them. (31) And it was told the king's officers, and the forces that were in Jerusalem, the city of David, that certain men, who had broken the king's commandment, were gone down into the secret places in the wilderness; (32) and many pursued after them, and having overtaken them, they encamped against them, and set the battle in array against them on the Sabbath day. (33) And they said to them, "Come forward, and do according to the word of the king, and you shall live." (34) And they said, "We will not, neither will we do the word of the king, to profane the Sabbath day." (35) And they hurried to give them battle. (36) And they

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<sup>13</sup> An official title for those the King chose to reward

<sup>14</sup> Numbers 25

did not answer them, neither did they cast a stone at them, nor stopped up the secret places, (37) saying, "Let us die all in our innocence: heaven and earth witness over us, that you put us to death without trial." (38) And they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they died, they and their wives and their children, and their cattle, to the number of a thousand souls. (39) And Mattathias and his friends knew it, and they mourned over them exceedingly. (40) And one said to another, "If we all do as our kindred have done, and do not fight against the Gentiles for our lives and our laws, they will now quickly destroy us from the earth." (41) And they took counsel on that day, saying, "Whoever comes against us to battle on the Sabbath day, let us fight against him, so that we shall not all die, as our kindred died in the secret places." (42) Then were gathered together to them a company of Hasidaeans,<sup>15</sup> mighty men of Israel, every one that offered himself willingly for the Torah. (43) And all those who fled from the evils were added to them, and became a stay to them. (44) And they mustered an army, and struck sinners in their anger, and lawless men in their wrath: and the rest fled to the Gentiles for safety. (45) And Mattathias and his friends went, and pulled down the altars; (46) and they circumcised by force the children that were uncircumcised, as many as they found in the coasts of Israel. (47) And they pursued after the sons of pride, and the work prospered in their hand. (48) And they rescued the Torah out of the hand of the Gentiles, and out of the hand of the kings, and they did not allow the sinner to triumph. (49) And the days of Mattathias drew near that he should die, and he said to his sons, "Now have pride and rebuke gotten strength, and a season of overthrow, and wrath of indignation. (50) And now, my children, be you zealous for the Torah, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. (51) And call to remembrance the deeds of our fathers which they did in their generations; and receive great glory and an everlasting name. (52) Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness?<sup>16</sup> (53) Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandment, and became lord of Egypt.<sup>17</sup> (54) Phinehas our father, for that he was zealous exceedingly, obtained the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.<sup>18</sup> (55) Joshua for fulfilling the word became a judge in Israel.<sup>19</sup> (56) Caleb for bearing witness in the congregation obtained a heritage in the land.<sup>20</sup> (57) David for being merciful inherited the throne of a kingdom forever and ever.<sup>21</sup> (58) Elijah, for that he was exceeding zealous for the law, was taken up into heaven.<sup>22</sup> (59) Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael<sup>23</sup>, believed, and were saved out of the flame.<sup>24</sup> (60) Daniel for his innocence was delivered from the mouth of lions.<sup>25</sup> (61) And thus consider you from generation to generation, that none that put their trust in him shall lack for strength. (62) And be not afraid of the words of a sinful man; for his glory shall be dung and worms. (63) Today he shall be lifted up, and tomorrow he shall not be found, because he is returned to dust, and his thought is perished. (64) And you, my children, be strong, and show yourselves men in behalf of the Torah; for therein you will obtain glory. (65) And, behold, Simon your brother, I know that he is a man of counsel; give ear to him always: he shall be a father to you. (66) And Judah Maccabaeus, he has been strong and mighty from his youth: he shall be your captain, and shall fight the battle of the people. (67) And take to yourselves all those who are

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<sup>15</sup> Ultra-Orthodox

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 22

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 39-41

<sup>18</sup> Numbers 25

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 34

<sup>20</sup> Joshua 21

<sup>21</sup> 2 Samuel 7

<sup>22</sup> 2 Kings 2

<sup>23</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego

<sup>24</sup> Daniel 3

<sup>25</sup> Daniel 6

doers of the law, and avenge the wrong done on your people. (68) Render recompense to the Gentiles, and take heed to the commandments of the Torah.” (69) And he blessed them, and was gathered to his fathers. (70) And he died in the hundred and forty-sixth year<sup>26</sup>, and his sons buried him in the tombs of his fathers at Modin, and all Israel made great lamentation for him.

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<sup>26</sup> 166 BCE



## ***Chapter 3***

(1) And his son Judah, who was called Maccabaeus, rose up in his stead. (2) And all his kindred helped him, and so did all those who clung to his father, and they fought with gladness the battle of Israel. (3) And he got for his people great glory, and put on a breastplate as a giant, and girded his warlike harness about him, and set battles in array, protecting the army with his sword. (4) And he was like a lion in his deeds, and as a lion's whelp roaring for prey. (5) And he pursued the lawless, seeking them out, and he burned up those that troubled his people. (6) And the lawless shrunk for fear of him, and all the workers of lawlessness were greatly troubled, and salvation prospered in his hand. (7) And he angered many kings, and made Jacob glad with his acts, and his memorial is blessed forever. (8) And he went about among the cities of Judah, and destroyed the ungodly out of the land, and turned away wrath from Israel: (9) and he was renowned to the utmost part of the earth, and he gathered together such as were ready to perish. (10) And Apollonius gathered the Gentiles together and a great army from Samaria, to fight against Israel. (11) And Judah discovered it, and he went out to meet him, and struck him, and killed him: and many fell wounded to death, and the rest fled. (12) And they took their spoils, and Judah took the sword of Apollonius, and with it he fought all his days. (13) And Seron, the commander of the army of Syria, heard that Judah had gathered a congregation of faithful men with him, such as went out to war; (14) And he said, "I will make myself a name and get me glory in the kingdom; and I will fight against Judah and those who are with him, that make the word of the king as nothing." (15) And there went up with him also a mighty army of the ungodly to help him, to take vengeance on the children of Israel. (16) And he came near to the going up of Beit-Horon, and Judah went forth to meet him with a small company. (17) But when they saw the army coming to meet them, they said to Judah, "What? Shall we be able, being a small company, to fight against so great and strong a multitude? And we for our part are faint, having tasted no food this day." (18) And Judah said, "It is an easy thing for many to be shut up in the hands of a few; and with heaven it is all one, to save by many or by few: (19) for victory in battle stands not in the multitude of an army; but strength is from heaven. (20) They come to us in fullness of insolence and lawlessness, to destroy us and our wives and our children, for to plunder us: (21) but we fight for our lives and our laws. (22) And he himself will unsettle them before our face: but as for you, be not afraid of them." (23) Now when he had left off speaking, he leapt suddenly upon them, and Seron and his army were defeated before him. (24) And they pursued them in the going down of Beit-Horon to the plain, and there fell of them about eight hundred men; but the rest fled into the land of the Philistines. (25) And the fear of Judah and his kindred, and the dread of them, began to fall upon the nations around them: (26) and his name came even to the king, and every nation told of the battles of Judah. (27) But when king Antiochus heard these words, he was full of indignation: and he sent and gathered together all the forces of his realm, an exceeding strong army. (28) And he opened his treasury, and gave his forces pay for a year, and commanded them to be ready for every need. (29) And he saw that the money failed from his treasures, and that the tributes of the country were small, because of the dissension and plague which he had brought upon the land, for the purpose of taking away the laws which had been from the first days; (30) and he feared that he should not have enough as at other times for the charges and the gifts which he gave previously with a liberal hand, and he more than the kings that were before him. (31) And he was very perplexed of mind, and he determined to go into Persia, and to take the tributes of the countries, and to gather much money. (32) And he left Lysias, an honorable man, and one of the royal lineage, to be over the affairs of the king from the river Euphrates to the borders of Egypt, (33)

and to bring up his son Antiochus, until he came again. (34) And he delivered to him the half of his forces, and the elephants, and gave him charge of all the things that he would have done, and concerning those who lived in Judea and in Jerusalem, (35) that he should send an army against them, to root out and destroy the strength of Israel, and the remnant of Jerusalem, and to take away their memory from the place; (36) And that he should make strangers to dwell on all their coasts, and should divide their land to them randomly. (37) And the king took the half that remained of the forces, and removed from Antioch, from his royal city, the hundred and forty-seventh year; and he passed over the river Euphrates, and went through the upper countries. (38) And Lysias chose Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor, and Gorgias, mighty men of the king's Friends; (39) and with them he sent forty thousand footmen, and seven thousand horses, to go into the land of Judah, and to destroy it, according to the word of the king. (40) And they removed with all their army, and came and pitched near to Emmaus in the plain country. (41) And the merchants of the country heard the fame of them, and took much silver and gold, with chains, and came into the camp to take the children of Israel for slaves: and there were added to them the forces of Syria and of the land of the Philistines. (42) And Judah and his kindred saw that evils were multiplied, and that the forces were encamping in their borders; and they took knowledge of the king's words which he had commanded, to destroy the people and make an end of them; (43) and they said each man to his neighbor, "Let's raise up the ruin of our people, and let's fight for our people and the holy place." (44) And the congregation was gathered together, that they might be ready for battle and that they might pray, and ask for mercy and compassion. (45) And Jerusalem was without inhabitant as a wilderness, there was none of her offspring that went in or went out; and the sanctuary was trodden down, and the sons of strangers were in the citadel, the Gentiles lodged therein; and joy was taken away from Jacob, and the pipe and the harp ceased. (46) And they gathered themselves together, and came to Mizpeh, near Jerusalem; for in Mizpeh there was previously a place of prayer for Israel. (47) And they fasted that day, and put on sackcloth, and put ashes upon their heads, and tore their clothes, (48) and laid open the book of the Torah, concerning which the Gentiles inquired, seeking the likenesses of their idols. (49) And they brought the priests' garments, and the first fruits, and the tithes: and they stirred up the Nazarites, who had accomplished their days. (50) And they cried aloud toward heaven, saying, "What shall we do with these men, and to where shall we carry them away? (51) And your holy place is trodden down and profaned, and your priests are in heaviness and brought low. (52) And, behold, the Gentiles are assembled together against us to destroy us: you know what things they imagine against us. (53) How shall we be able to stand before them, except if you are our help?" (54) And they sounded with the ram's horn, and cried with a loud voice. (55) And after this Judah appointed leaders of the people, captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens. (56) And he said to those who were building houses, and were betrothing wives, and were planting vineyards, and were fearful, that they should return, each man to his own house, according to the Torah. (57) And the army removed, and encamped upon the south side of Emmaus. (58) And Judah said, "Gird yourselves, and be valiant men, and be in readiness against the morning, that you may fight with these Gentiles, that are assembled together against us to destroy us, and our holy place: (59) for it is better for us to die in battle, than to look upon the evils of our nation and the holy place. (60) Nevertheless, as may be the will in heaven, so shall he do."

## Chapter 4

(1) And Gorgias took five thousand footmen, and a thousand chosen horses, and the army left by night, (2) that it might fall upon the army of the Jews and strike them suddenly: and the men of the citadel were his guides. (3) And Judah heard of it, and went away, he and the valiant men, that he might strike the king's army which was at Emmaus, (4) while the forces were dispersed from the camp. (5) And Gorgias came into the camp of Judah by night, and found no man; and he sought them in the mountains; for he said, "These men flee from us." (6) And as soon as it was day, Judah appeared in the plain with three thousand men: however they had neither armor nor swords. (7) And they saw the camp of the Gentiles strong and fortified, and horsemen compassing it round about; and these were experts in war. (8) And Judah said to the men that were with him, "Do not fear their multitude, neither be afraid of the battle. (9) Remember how our fathers were saved in the Red sea, when Pharaoh pursued them with an army.<sup>27</sup> (10) And now let's cry to heaven, if he will have us, and will remember the covenant of our fathers, and destroy this army before our face today: (11) and all the Gentiles shall know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel." (12) And the strangers lifted up their eyes, and saw them coming near them: (13) and they went out of the camp to battle. And those who were with Judah sounded their ram's horns, (14) and joined battle, and the Gentiles panicked, and fled into the plain. (15) But the entire rearguard fell by the sword: and they pursued them to Gazara, and to the plains of Idumaea<sup>28</sup> and Azotus and Jamnia, and there fell of them about three thousand men. (16) And Judah and his army returned from pursuing after them, (17) and he said to the people, "Do not be greedy of the spoils, Because there is a battle before us; (18) and Gorgias and his army are near to us in the mountain. But stand now against our enemies, and fight against them, and afterwards take the spoils with boldness." (19) While Judah was yet making an end of these words, there appeared a part of them looking out from the mountain: (20) and they saw that their army had been put to flight, and that the Jews were burning the camp; for the smoke that was seen declared what was done. (21) But when they perceived these things, they were very afraid; and realized also that the army of Judah was in the plain and ready for battle, (22) they fled, all of them, into the land of the Philistines. (23) And Judah returned to plunder the camp, and they captured much gold, and silver, and blue, and sea purple, and great riches. (24) And they returned home, and sang a song of thanksgiving, and gave praise to heaven; because his mercy is good, because his mercy endures forever. (25) And Israel had a great deliverance that day. (26) But the strangers, as many as had escaped, came and told Lysias all the things that had happened: (27) but when he heard thereof, he was confounded and discouraged, because neither had such things as he would be done to Israel, nor had such things as the king commanded him come to pass. (28) And in the next year he gathered together sixty thousand chosen footmen, and five thousand horses, that he might subdue them. (29) And they came into Idumaea, and encamped at Beit-Sura; and Judah met them with ten thousand men. (30) And he saw that the army was strong, and he prayed and said, "Blessed are you, O Savior of Israel, who quelled the onset of the mighty man by the hand of your servant David, and delivered the army of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan the son of Saul, and of his armor bearer:<sup>29</sup> (31) shut up this army in the hand of your people Israel, and let them be ashamed for their army and their horsemen: (32) give them faintness of heart, and cause the boldness of their strength to melt away, and let them quake at their destruction:

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<sup>27</sup> Exodus 13-14

<sup>28</sup> Ancient Edom, modern day Jordan

<sup>29</sup> 1 Samuel 14

(33) cast them down with the sword of those who love you, and let all that know your name praise you with thanksgiving.” (34) And they joined battle; and there fell from the army of Lysias about five thousand men. (35) But when Lysias saw that his army was put to flight, and the boldness that had come upon those who were with Judah, and how they were ready either to live or to die nobly, he retreated to Antioch, and gathered together hired soldiers, that he might come again into Judea with even a greater company. (36) But Judah and his kindred said, “Behold, our enemies are uneasy: let’s go up to cleanse the holy place, and to rededicate it.”<sup>30</sup> (37) And all the army was gathered together and they went up to Mount Zion. (38) And they saw the sanctuary laid desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates bu<sup>31</sup>rned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest or as on one of the mountains, and the priests’ chambers pulled down; (39) and they tore their clothes, and made great lamentation, and put ashes upon their heads, (40) and fell on their faces to the ground, and blew with the solemn trumpets, and cried toward heaven. (41) Then Judah appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the citadel, until he should have cleansed the holy place. (42) And he chose blameless priests, such as had pleasure in the Torah: (43) and they cleansed the holy place, and took out the stones of defilement into an unclean place. (44) And they took counsel concerning the altar of burnt offerings, which had been profaned, what they should do with it: (45) and there came into their mind a good counsel, that they should pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the Gentiles had defiled it: and they pulled down the altar, (46) and laid up the stones in the mountain of the house in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to give an answer concerning them. (47) And they took whole stones according to the Torah, and built a new altar after the fashion of the former; (48) and they built the holy place, and the inner parts of the house; and they hallowed the courts. (49) And they made the holy vessels new, and they brought the Menorah, and the altar of burnt offerings and of incense, and the table, into the temple. (50) And they burned incense upon the altar, and they lighted the lamps that were upon the Menorah, and they gave light in the temple. (51) And they set loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they made. (52) And they rose up early in the morning, on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month,<sup>32</sup> which is the month Chislew, in the hundred and forty and eighth year,<sup>33</sup> (53) and offered sacrifice according to the Torah upon the new altar of burned offerings which they had made. (54) At the same time and day that the Gentiles had profaned it, even on that day was it dedicated afresh, with songs and harps and lutes, and with cymbals. (55) And all the people fell upon their faces, and worshipped, and gave praise to heaven, which had given them good success. (56) And they kept the dedication of the altar eight days,<sup>34</sup> and offered burned offerings with gladness, and sacrificed a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. (57) And they decorated the front of the temple with crowns of gold and small shields, and dedicated afresh the gates and the priests’ chambers, and made doors for them. (58) And there was great gladness among the people, and the reproach of the Gentiles was turned away. (59) And Judah and his kindred and the whole congregation of Israel ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their seasons from year to year by the space of eight days, from the twenty-fifth day of the month Chislew, with gladness and joy. (60) And at that season they built up the Mount Zion with high walls and strong towers round about, lest haply the Gentiles should come and tread them down,

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<sup>30</sup> Hanukkah in Hebrew

<sup>31</sup> Jerusalem

<sup>32</sup> The first day of Hanukkah

<sup>33</sup> 164 BCE

<sup>34</sup> According to 2 Maccabees this was because they could not celebrate the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles), an eight day celebration in the fall. Historically this feast was often celebrated later when it could not be celebrated at the appointed time.

as they had done previously. (61) And he set there a force to keep it, and they fortified Beit-Sura to keep it; that the people might have a stronghold near Idumaea.