

The Second Book of the Maccabees

The Second Book of the Maccabees is recognised as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox Churches.

¹ The kindred, the Jews who are in Jerusalem and those who are in the country of Judea, send greetings and good peace to the kindred, the Jews who are throughout Egypt.

² May God do good to you, and remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his faithful servants,

³ and give you all a heart to worship him and do his will with a strong heart and a willing soul.

⁴ May God open your heart to his law and his statutes, and make peace,

⁵ and listen to your requests, and be reconciled with you, and not forsake you in an evil time.

⁶ Now we are praying for you here.

⁷ In the reign of Demetrius, in the one hundred and sixty-ninth year, we the Jews have already written to you in the suffering and in the distress that has come upon us in these years, from the time that Jason and his company revolted from the holy land and the kingdom,

⁸ and set the gate on fire, and shed innocent blood. We prayed to the Lord, and were heard. We

offered sacrifices and meal offerings. We lit the lamps. We set out the show bread.†

⁹ Now see that you keep the days of the feast of tabernacles in the month Chislev in the one hundred and eighty-eighth year.

¹⁰ The people of Jerusalem and those who are in Judea, with the senate and Judas, to Aristobulus, King Ptolemy's teacher, who is also of the stock of the anointed priests, and to the Jews who are in Egypt, we send greetings and health.

¹¹ Having been saved by God out of great perils, as men arrayed against a king, we thank him greatly.

¹² For he threw out into Persia those who fought against us in the holy city.

¹³ For when the prince had come there, with an army that seemed irresistible, they were cut to pieces in the temple of Nanaea by the treachery of Nanaea's priests.

¹⁴ For Antiochus, on the pretence that he would marry her, came into the place, he and his friends who were with him, that they might take a large part of the treasures as a dowry.

¹⁵ And when the priests of Nanaea's temple had set the treasures out, and he had come there with a small company within the wall of the sacred precinct, they locked the temple when Antiochus had come in.

¹⁶ Opening the secret door of the panelled ceiling, they threw stones and struck down the prince. They cut him and his company in pieces,

† **1:8:** Gr. *loaves*

and cut off their heads, and threw them to the people who were outside.

¹⁷ Blessed be our God in all things, who handed over those who had committed impiety.

¹⁸ Since we are now about to celebrate the purification of the temple in the month Chislev, on the twenty-fifth day, we thought it necessary to notify you, so that you may also keep a feast of tabernacles, and remember the fire which was given when Nehemiah offered sacrifices, after he had built both the temple and the altar.

¹⁹ For indeed when our fathers were about to be led into the land of Persia, the godly priests of that time took some of the fire of the altar, and hid it secretly in the hollow of a well that was without water, where they made sure that the place was unknown to anyone.

²⁰ Now after many years, when it pleased God, Nehemiah, having received a charge from the king of Persia, sent in quest of the fire the descendants of the priests who hid it. When they declared to us that they had found no fire, but thick liquid,

²¹ he commanded them to draw some of it out and bring it to him. When the sacrifices had been offered, Nehemiah commanded the priests to sprinkle with that liquid both the wood and the things laid on it.

²² When that was done and some time had passed, and the sun shone out, which before was hidden with clouds, a great blaze was kindled, so that all men marvelled.

²³ The priests made a prayer while the sacrifice

was being consumed—both the priests and all the others. Jonathan led and the rest responded, as Nehemiah did.

²⁴ The prayer was like this: “O Lord, Lord God, the Creator of all things, who are awesome, strong, righteous, and merciful, who alone are King and gracious,

²⁵ who alone supply every need, who alone are righteous, almighty, and eternal, you who save Israel out of all evil, who chose the ancestors and sanctified them,

²⁶ accept the sacrifice for all your people Israel, and preserve your own portion, and consecrate it.

²⁷ Gather together our scattered people, set at liberty those who are in bondage amongst the heathen, look upon those who are despised and abhorred, and let the heathen know that you are our God.

²⁸ Punish those who oppress us and in arrogance shamefully entreat us.

²⁹ Plant your people in your holy place, even as Moses said.”

³⁰ Then the priests sang the hymns.

³¹ As soon as the sacrifice was consumed, then Nehemiah commanded that the rest of the liquid be poured on large stones.

³² When this was done, a flame was kindled; but when the light from the altar shone back, it went out.

³³ When the matter became known, and it was told the king of the Persians that, in the place where the priests who were led away had hid the fire, the liquid appeared which Nehemiah and those who were with him purified the sacrifice,

³⁴ then the king enclosed the place and made it sacred after he had investigated the matter.

³⁵ When the king would show favour to any, he would exchange many presents and give them some of this liquid.

³⁶ Nehemiah and those who were with him called this thing “Nephthar”, which is by interpretation, “Cleansing”; but most men call it Nephthai.

2

¹ It is also found in the records that Jeremiah the prophet commanded those who were carried away to take some of the fire, as has been mentioned,

² and how that the prophet charged those who were carried away, having given them the law, that they should not forget the statutes of the Lord or be led astray in their minds when they saw images of gold and silver, and their adornment.

³ With other such words exhorted he them, that the law should not depart from their hearts.

⁴ It was in the writing that the prophet, being warned by God, commanded that the tabernacle and the ark should follow with him,[†] when he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up and saw God’s inheritance.

⁵ Jeremiah came and found a cave, he brought the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense into it; then he sealed the entrance.

⁶ Some of those who followed with him came there that they might mark the way, and could not find it.

[†] **2:4:** Gr. *and when*. The Greek text here is probably corrupt.

⁷ But when Jeremiah learnt about that, he rebuked them, saying, “The place shall be unknown until God gathers the people together again and shows mercy.

⁸ Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen with the cloud, as it was also shown to Moses, also as Solomon implored that the place might be consecrated greatly,

⁹ and it was also declared that he, having wisdom, offered a sacrifice of dedication, and of the finishing of the temple.

¹⁰ As Moses prayed to the Lord and fire came down out of heaven and consumed the sacrifice, even so Solomon also prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the burnt offerings.

¹¹ †Moses said, ‘Because the sin offering had not been eaten, it was consumed in like manner.’

¹² Likewise Solomon kept the eight days.”

¹³ The same things were reported both in the public archives and in Nehemiah’s records, and also how he, founding a library, gathered together the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about sacred gifts.

¹⁴ In like manner Judas also gathered together for us all those books that had been scattered by reason of the war, and they are still with us.

¹⁵ If therefore you have need of them, send some people to bring them to you.

¹⁶ Seeing then that we are about to celebrate the

† **2:11:** See Leviticus 10:16 and 9:24.

purification, we write to you. You will therefore do well if you celebrate the days.

¹⁷ Now God, who saved all his people, and restored the heritage to all, with the kingdom, the priesthood, and the consecration,

¹⁸ even as he promised through the law—in God have we hope, that he will soon have mercy upon us, and gather us together out of everywhere under heaven into his holy place; for he delivered us out of great evils, and purified the place.

¹⁹ Now the things concerning Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, the purification of the greatest temple, the dedication of the altar,

²⁰ and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and Eupator his son,

²¹ and the manifestations that came from heaven to those who fought with one another in brave deeds for the religion of the Jews; so that, being but a few, they seized the whole country, chased the barbarous multitudes,

²² recovered again the temple renowned all the world over, freed the city, and restored the laws which were about to be overthrown, seeing the Lord became gracious to them with all kindness.

²³ These things which have been declared by Jason of Cyrene in five books, we will attempt to abridge in one book.

²⁴ For having in view the confused mass of the numbers, and the§ difficulty which awaits those

§ 2:24: Or, weariness

who would enter into the narratives of the history, by reason of the abundance of the matter,

²⁵ we were careful that those who choose to read may be attracted, and that those who wish us well may find it easy to recall, and that all readers may benefit.

²⁶ Although to us, who have taken upon ourselves the painful labour of the abridgement, the task is not easy, but a matter of sweat and sleeplessness,

²⁷ even as it is no light thing to him who prepares a banquet, and seeks the benefit of others. Nevertheless, for the sake of the gratitude of the many we will gladly endure the painful labour,

²⁸ leaving to the historian the exact handling of every particular, and again having no strength to fill in the outlines of our abridgement.

²⁹ For as the masterbuilder of a new house must care for the whole structure, and again he who undertakes to decorate and paint it must seek out the things fit for its adorning; even so I think it is also with us.

³⁰ To occupy the ground, and to indulge in long discussions, and to be curious in particulars, is fitting for the first author of the history;

³¹ but to strive after brevity of expression, and to avoid a laboured fullness in the treatment, is to be granted to him who would bring a writing into a new form.

³² Here then let's begin the narration, only adding this much to that which has already been said; for it is a foolish thing to make a long prologue to the history, and to abridge the history

itself.

3

¹ When the holy city was inhabited with unbroken peace and the laws were kept very well because of the godliness of Onias the high priest and his hatred of wickedness,

² it came to pass that even the kings themselves honoured the place and glorified the temple with the noblest presents,

³ so that even King Seleucus of Asia bore all the costs belonging to the services of the sacrifices out of his own revenues.

⁴ But a man named Simon of the tribe of Benjamin, having been made guardian of the temple, disagreed with the high priest about the ruling of the market in the city.

⁵ When he couldn't overcome Onias, he went to Apollonius of †Tarsus, who at that time was governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia.

⁶ He brought him word how that the treasury in Jerusalem was full of untold sums of money, so that the multitude of the funds was innumerable, and that they didn't pertain to the account of the sacrifices, but that it was possible that these should fall under the king's power.

⁷ When Apollonius met the king, he informed him of the money about which he had been told. So the king appointed Heliodorus, who was his chancellor, and sent him with a command to accomplish the removal of the reported money.

† 3:5: Greek *Thraseas*

⁸ So Heliodorus set out on his journey at once, ostensibly to visit the cities of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, but in fact to execute the king's purpose.

⁹ When he had come to Jerusalem and had been courteously received by the high priest of the city, he told him about the information which had been given, and declared why he had come; and he enquired if in truth these things were so.

¹⁰ The high priest explained to him that there were in the treasury deposits of widows and orphans,

¹¹ and moreover some money belonging to Hyrcanus the son of Tobias, a man in very high place, not as that impious Simon falsely alleged; and that in all there were four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold,

¹² and that it was altogether impossible that wrong should be done to those who had put trust in the holiness of the place, and in the majesty and inviolable sanctity of the temple, honoured over all the world.

¹³ But Heliodorus, because of the king's command given him, said that in any case this money must be confiscated for the king's treasury.

¹⁴ So having appointed a day, he entered in to direct the enquiry concerning these matters; and there was no small distress throughout the whole city.

¹⁵ The priests, prostrating themselves before the altar in their priestly garments, and called towards heaven upon him who gave the law concerning deposits, that he should preserve these

treasures safe for those who had deposited them.

¹⁶ Whoever saw the appearance of the high priest was wounded in mind; for his countenance and the change of his colour betrayed the distress of his soul.

¹⁷ For a terror and a shuddering of the body had come over the man, by which the pain that was in his heart was plainly shown to those who looked at him.

¹⁸ Those who were in the houses rushed out in crowds to make a universal supplication, because the place was about to come into dishonour.

¹⁹ The women, girded with sackcloth under their breasts, thronged the streets. The virgins who were kept indoors ran together, some to the gates, others to the walls, and some looked out through the windows.

²⁰ All, stretching out their hands towards heaven, made their solemn supplication.

²¹ Then it was pitiful to see the multitude prostrating themselves all mixed together, and the anxiety of the high priest in his great distress.

²² While therefore they called upon the Almighty Lord to keep the things entrusted to them † safe and secure for those who had entrusted them,

²³ Heliodorus went on to execute that which had been decreed.

²⁴ But when he was already present there with his guards near the treasury, the Sovereign of spirits and of all authority caused a great manifestation, so that all who had presumed to come with

† 3:22: Gr. *safe with all security.*

him, stricken with dismay at the power of God, fainted in terror.

²⁵ For they saw a horse with a frightening rider, adorned with beautiful trappings, and he rushed fiercely and struck at Heliodorus with his forefeet. It seemed like he who sat on the horse had complete armour of gold.

²⁶ Two others also appeared to him, young men notable in their strength, and beautiful in their glory, and splendid in their apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him unceasingly, inflicting on him many sore stripes.

²⁷ When he had fallen suddenly to the ground, and great darkness had come over him, his guards picked him up and put him on a stretcher,

²⁸ and carried him—this man who had just now entered with a great retinue and all his guard into the aforesaid treasury, himself now brought to utter helplessness, manifestly made to recognise the sovereignty of God.

²⁹ So, while he, through the working of God, speechless and bereft of all hope and deliverance, lay prostrate,

³⁰ they blessed the Lord who acted marvellously for his own place. The temple, which a little before was full of terror and alarm, was filled with joy and gladness after the Almighty Lord appeared.

³¹ But quickly some of Heliodorus's familiar friends implored Onias to call upon the Most High to grant life to him who lay quite at the last gasp.

³² The high priest, secretly fearing lest the king might come to think that some treachery towards

Heliodorus had been perpetrated by the Jews, brought a sacrifice for the recovery of the man.

³³ But as the high priest was making the atoning sacrifice, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus, arrayed in the same garments. They stood and said, "Give Onias the high priest great thanks, for for his sake the Lord has granted you life.

³⁴ See that you, since you have been scourged from heaven, proclaim to all men the sovereign majesty of God." When they had spoken these words, they vanished out of sight.

³⁵ So Heliodorus, having offered a sacrifice to the Lord and vowed §great vows to him who had saved his life, and having bidden Onias farewell, returned with his army to the king.

³⁶ He testified to all men the works of the greatest God, which he had seen with his eyes.

³⁷ When the king asked Heliodorus what sort of man was fit to be sent yet once again to Jerusalem, he said,

³⁸ "If you have any enemy or conspirator against the state, send him there, and you will receive him back well scourged, if he even escapes with his life; because truly there is some power of God in that place.

³⁹ For he who has his dwelling in heaven himself has his eyes on that place and helps it. Those who come to hurt it, he strikes and destroys."

⁴⁰ This was the history of Heliodorus and the keeping of the treasury.

§ 3:35: Gr. *greatest*.

4

¹ The previously mentioned Simon, who had given information about the money against his country, slandered Onias, saying that it was he who had incited Heliodorus and had been the real cause of these evils.

² He dared to call him a conspirator against the state who was actually the benefactor of the city, the guardian of his fellow countrymen, and a zealot for the laws.

³ When his hatred grew so great that even murders were perpetrated through one of Simon's approved agents,

⁴ Onias, seeing the danger of the contention, and that †Apollonius the son of Menestheus, the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, was increasing Simon's malice,

⁵ appealed to the king, not to be an accuser of his fellow-citizens, but looking to the good of all the‡ people, both public and private;

⁶ for he saw that without the king's involvement it was impossible for the state to obtain peace any more, and that Simon would not cease from his madness.

⁷ When Seleucus was deceased, and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias supplanted his brother in the high priesthood,

⁸ having promised to the king at an audience three hundred and sixty talents of silver, and out

† 4:4: Compare 2 Maccabees 4:21. See also 2 Maccabees 3:5. The Greek as commonly read means *Apollonius*, as being *the governor...Phoenicia, did dare, and increase etc.* ‡ 4:5: Gr. *multitude*.

of another fund eighty talents.

⁹ In addition to this, he undertook to assign one hundred and fifty more, if it might be allowed him *§*through the king's authority to set him up a gymnasium and a body of youths to be trained in it, and to register the inhabitants of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch.

¹⁰ When the king had assented, and Jason had taken possession of the office, he immediately shifted those of his own race to the Greek way of life.

¹¹ Setting aside the royal ordinances of special favour to the Jews, granted by the means of John the father of Eupolemus, who went on the mission to the Romans to establish friendship and alliance, and seeking to overthrow the lawful ways of living, he brought in new customs forbidden by the law.

¹² For he eagerly established a gymnasium under the citadel itself, and caused the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat.

¹³ Thus there was an extreme of hellenization, and an advance of a foreign religion, by reason of the exceeding profaneness of Jason, who was an ungodly man and not a high priest;

¹⁴ so that the priests had no more any zeal for the services of the altar; but despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened to enjoy that which was unlawfully provided in the wrestling arena, after the summons to the discus-throwing.

¹⁵ They despised the honours of their fathers,

§ 4:9: *Gr. through his.*

and valued the prestige of the Greeks best of all.

¹⁶ For this reason, severe calamity overtook them. The men whose ways of living they earnestly followed, and to whom they desired to be made like in all things, these became their enemies and punished them.

¹⁷ For it is not a light thing to show irreverence to God's laws, but later events will make this clear.

¹⁸ Now when certain games that came every fifth year were kept at Tyre, and the king was present,

¹⁹ the vile Jason sent sacred envoys,[†] as being Antiochians of Jerusalem, bearing three hundred drachmas of silver to the sacrifice of Hercules, which even the bearers thereof thought not right to use for any sacrifice, because it was not fit, but to spend it for another purpose.

²⁰ Although the intended purpose of the sender this money was for the sacrifice of Hercules, yet on account of [‡]present circumstances it went to the construction of trireme warships.

²¹ Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the [§]enthronement of Philometor as king, Antiochus, learning that Philometor had shown himself hostile towards the government, took precautions for the security of his realm. Therefore, going to Joppa, he travelled on to Jerusalem.

²² Being magnificently received by Jason and

[†] **4:19:** See ver. 9. [‡] **4:20:** Some authorities read *the bearers*.

[§] **4:21:** The exact meaning of the Greek word is uncertain.

the city, he was brought in with torches and shouting. Then he led his army down into Phoenicia.

²³ Now after a space of three years, Jason sent Menelaus, the previously mentioned Simon's brother, to carry the money to the king, and to make reports concerning some necessary matters.

²⁴ But he being commended to the king, and having been glorified by the display of his authority, secured the high priesthood for himself, outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver.

²⁵ After receiving the royal mandates, he returned bringing nothing worthy of the high priesthood, but having the passion of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a savage animal.

²⁶ So Jason, who had supplanted his own brother, was supplanted by another and driven as a fugitive into the country of the Ammonites,

²⁷ Menelaus had possession of the office; but of the money that had been promised to the king nothing was regularly paid, even though Sostratus the governor of the citadel demanded it—

²⁸ for his job was the gathering of the revenues—so they were both called by the king to his presence.

²⁹ Menelaus left his own brother Lysimachus for his[†] deputy in the high priesthood; and Sostratus left Crates, who was over the Cyprians.

³⁰ Now while this was the state of things, it came to pass that the people of Tarsus and Mallus revolted because they were to be given as a present to Antiochis, the king's concubine.

[†] **4:29:** Gr. *successor*.

³¹ The king therefore quickly came to settle matters, leaving for his †deputy Andronicus, a man of high rank.

³² Then Menelaus, supposing that he had gotten a favourable opportunity, presented to Andronicus certain vessels of gold belonging to the temple, which he had stolen. He had already sold others into Tyre and the neighbouring cities.

³³ When Onias had sure knowledge of this, he sharply reproved him, having withdrawn himself into a sanctuary at Daphne, that lies by Antioch.

³⁴ Therefore Menelaus, taking Andronicus aside, asked him to kill Onias. Coming to Onias, and being persuaded to use treachery, and being received as a friend, Andronicus gave him his right hand with oaths and, though he was suspicious, persuaded him to come out of the sanctuary. Then, with no regard for justice, he immediately put him to death.

³⁵ For this reason not only Jews, but many also of the other nations, had indignation and displeasure at the unjust murder of the man.

³⁶ And when the king had come back from the places in Cilicia, the Jews who were in the city appealed to him against Andronicus (the Greeks also joining with them in hatred of the wickedness), urging that Onias had been wrongfully slain.

³⁷ Antiochus therefore was heartily sorry, and was moved to pity, and wept, because of the sober and well ordered life of him who was dead.

³⁸ Being inflamed with anger, he immediately stripped off Andronicus's purple robe, and tore

† 4:31: Gr. *successor*.

off his under garments, and when he had led him round through the whole city to that very place where he had committed the outrage against Onias, there he put the murderer out of the way, the Lord rendering to him the punishment he had deserved.

³⁹ Now when many sacrileges had been committed in the city by Lysimachus with the consent of Menelaus, and when the report of them had spread abroad outside, the people gathered themselves together against Lysimachus, after many vessels of gold had already been stolen.

⁴⁰ When the multitudes were rising against him and were filled with anger, Lysimachus armed about three thousand men, and with unrighteous violence began the attack under the leadership of Hauran, a man far gone in years and no less also in folly.

⁴¹ But when they perceived the assault of Lysimachus, some caught up stones, others logs of wood, and some took handfuls of the ashes that lay near, and they flung them all in wild confusion at Lysimachus and those who were with him.

⁴² As a result, they wounded many of them, they killed some, and they forced the rest of them to flee, but the author of the sacrilege himself they killed beside the treasury.

⁴³ But about these matters, there was an accusation laid against Menelaus.

⁴⁴ When the king had come to Tyre, the three men who were sent by the senate pleaded the cause before him.

⁴⁵ But Menelaus, seeing himself now defeated, promised much money to Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes, that he might win over the king.

⁴⁶ Therefore Ptolemy taking the king aside into a cloister, as if to get some fresh air, convinced him to change his mind.

⁴⁷ He who was the cause of all the evil, Menelaus, he discharged from the accusations; but these hapless men, who, if they had pleaded even before Scythians, would have been discharged uncondemned, them he sentenced to death.

⁴⁸ Those who were spokesmen for the city and the families of Israel and the holy vessels soon suffered that unrighteous penalty.

⁴⁹ Therefore even certain Tyrians, moved with hatred of the wickedness, provided magnificently for their burial.

⁵⁰ But Menelaus, through the covetous dealings of those who were in power, remained still in his office, growing in wickedness, established as a great conspirator against his fellow-citizens.

5

¹ Now about this time Antiochus made his second invasion into Egypt.

² It happened that throughout all the city, for almost forty days, cavalry appeared in the midst of the sky in swift motion, wearing robes woven with gold and carrying spears, equipped with troops for battle—

³ drawing swords, squadrons of cavalry in array, encounters and pursuits of both armies, shak-

ing shields, multitudes of lances, throwing of missiles, flashing of golden trappings, and putting on all sorts of armour.

⁴ Therefore everyone prayed that the manifestation might have been given for good.

⁵ When a false rumour had arisen that Antiochus was dead, Jason took not less than a thousand men, and suddenly made an assault upon the city. When those who were on the wall were being routed, and the city was at length nearly taken, Menelaus took refuge in the citadel.

⁶ But Jason slaughtered his own citizens without mercy, not considering that good success against kinsmen is the greatest misfortune, but supposing himself to be setting up trophies over enemies, and not over fellow-countrymen.

⁷ He didn't win control of the government, but receiving shame as the result of his conspiracy, he fled again as a fugitive into the country of the Ammonites.

⁸ At last therefore he met with a miserable end. Having been imprisoned at the court of Aretas the prince of the Arabians, fleeing from city to city, pursued by all men, hated as a rebel against the laws, and abhorred as the executioner of his country and his fellow citizens, he was cast ashore in Egypt.

⁹ He who had driven many from their own country into exile perished in exile, having crossed the sea to the Lacedaemonians, hoping to find shelter there because they were[†] near of kin.

¹⁰ He who had thrown out a multitude unburied

[†] 5:9: See 1 Maccabees 12:7.

had none to mourn for him. He didn't have any funeral at all and no place in the tomb of his ancestors.

¹¹ Now when news came to the king concerning that which was done, he thought that Judea was in revolt. So, setting out from Egypt in a rage, he took the city by force of weapons,

¹² and commanded his soldiers to cut down without mercy those who came in their way, and to kill those who went into their houses.

¹³ Then there was killing of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaying of virgins and infants.

¹⁴ In a total of three days, eighty thousand were destroyed, of which forty thousand were slain in close combat, and no fewer were sold into slavery than slain.

¹⁵ Not content with this, he presumed to enter into the most holy temple of all the earth, having Menelaus for his guide (who had proved himself a traitor both to the laws and to his country),

¹⁶ even taking the sacred vessels with his polluted hands, and dragging down with his profane hands the offerings that had been dedicated by other kings to enhance the glory and honour of the place.

¹⁷ Antiochus was lifted up in mind, not seeing that because of the sins of those who lived in the city the Sovereign Lord had been provoked to anger a little while, and therefore his eye was turned away from the place.

¹⁸ But had it not been so that they were already bound by many sins, this man, even as Heliodorus

who was sent by King Seleucus to view the treasury, would, as soon as he came forward, have been scourged and turned back from his daring deed.

¹⁹ However the Lord didn't choose the nation for the place's sake, but the place for the nation's sake.

²⁰ Therefore also the place itself, having shared in the calamities that happened to the nation, did afterward share in its benefits; and the place which was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty was, at the reconciliation of the great Sovereign, restored again with all glory.

²¹ As for Antiochus, when he had carried away out of the temple one thousand and eight hundred talents, he hurried away to Antioch, thinking in his arrogance that he could sail on land and walk on the sea, because his heart was lifted up.

²² Moreover he left governors to afflict the race: at Jerusalem, Philip, by race a Phrygian, and in character more barbarous than him who set him there;

²³ and at Gerizim, Andronicus; and besides these, Menelaus, who worse than all the rest, exalted himself against his fellow-citizens. Having a malicious mind[‡] towards the Jews[§] whom he had made his citizens,

²⁴ he sent that[†] lord of pollutions Apollonius with an army of twenty-two thousand, commanding him to kill all those who were of full age, and

[‡] **5:23:** Some authorities read *towards the Jews, he sent*. The Greek text of this sentence is uncertain. **§ 5:23:** Compare 2 Maccabees 4:9, 19; 9:19. [†] **5:24:** Gr. *Μυσάρχη*, which also may mean *ruler of the Mysians*.

to sell the women and the boys as slaves.

²⁵ He came to Jerusalem, and pretending to be a man of peace, waited till the holy day of the Sabbath, and finding the Jews at rest from work, he commanded his men to parade fully armed.

²⁶ He put to the sword all those who came out to the spectacle. Running into the city with the armed men, he killed great multitudes.

²⁷ But Judas, who is also called Maccabaeus, with about nine others, withdrew himself, and with his company kept himself alive in the mountains like wild animals do. They continued feeding on what grew wild, that they might not be partakers of the defilement.

6

¹ Not long after this, the king sent out †an old man of Athens to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers and not to live by the laws of God,

² and also to pollute the sanctuary in Jerusalem and to call it by the name of Olympian Zeus, and to call the sanctuary in Gerizim by the name of Zeus the Protector of foreigners, even as the people who lived in that place did.

³ The visitation of this evil was harsh and utterly grievous.

⁴ For the temple was filled with debauchery and revelling by the heathen, who ‡ dallied with prostitutes, and had intercourse with women within

† **6:1:** Or, *Geron an Athenian* ‡ **6:4:** Or, *idled with their fellows*

the sacred precincts, and moreover brought inside things that were not appropriate.

⁵ The altar was filled with those abominable things which had been prohibited by the laws.

⁶ A man could neither keep the Sabbath, nor observe the feasts of their ancestors, nor so much as confess himself to be a Jew.

⁷ On the day of the king's birth every month, they were led along with bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices. When the feast of Dionysia came, they were compelled to go in procession in honour of Dionysus, wearing wreaths of ivy.

⁸ A decree went out to the neighbouring Greek cities, by the suggestion of Ptolemy, that they should observe the same conduct against the Jews, and should make them eat of the sacrifices,

⁹ and that they should kill those who didn't choose to go over to the Greek rites. So the present misery was for all to see.

¹⁰ For example, two women were brought in for having circumcised their children. These, when they had led them publicly around the city with the babes hung from their breasts, they threw down headlong from the wall.

¹¹ Others who had run together into the caves nearby to keep the seventh day secretly, were betrayed to Philip and were all burnt together, because their piety kept them from defending themselves, in view of the honour of that most solemn day.

¹² I urge those who read this book to not be discouraged because of the calamities, but recognise

that these punishments were not for the destruction, but for the chastening of our race.

¹³ For indeed it is a sign of great kindness that those who act impiously are not let alone for a long time, but immediately meet with retribution.

¹⁴ For in the case of the other nations, the Sovereign Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have attained to the full measure of their sins; but not with us,

¹⁵ that he may not take vengeance on us afterward, § when we have come to the † height of our sins.

¹⁶ Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us; but though he chastens with calamity, he doesn't forsake his own people.

¹⁷ However let this that we have spoken suffice to remind you; but after a few words, we must come to the narrative.

¹⁸ Eleazar, one of the principal scribes, a man already well advanced in years, and of a noble countenance, was compelled to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh.

¹⁹ But he, welcoming death with honour rather than life with defilement, advanced of his own accord to the instrument of torture, but first spat out the flesh,

²⁰ as men ought to come who are resolute to repel such things as not even for the natural love of life is it lawful to taste.

²¹ But those who had the charge of that forbidden sacrificial feast took the man aside, for the acquaintance which of old times they had with

§ 6:15: Or, *when our sins have come to their height* † 6:15: Gr. *end.*

him, and privately implored him to bring flesh of his own providing, such as was proper for him to use, and to make as if he did eat of the flesh from the sacrifice, as had been commanded by the king;

²² that by so doing he might be delivered from death, and so his ancient friendship with them might be treated kindly.

²³ But he, having formed a high resolve, and one that became his years, the dignity of old age, and the grey hairs‡ which he had reached with honour, and his excellent§ education from a child, or rather the holy laws† of God’s ordaining, declared his mind accordingly, bidding them to quickly send him to Hades.

²⁴ “For it doesn’t become our years to dissemble,” he said, “that many of the young should suppose that Eleazar, the man of ninety years, had gone over to an alien religion;

²⁵ and so they, by reason of my deception, and for the sake of this brief and momentary life, would be led astray because of me, and I defile and disgrace myself in my old age.

²⁶ For even if for the present time I would remove from me the punishment of men, yet whether I live or die, I wouldn’t escape the hands of the Almighty.

²⁷ Therefore, by bravely parting with my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age,

²⁸ and †leave behind a noble example to the young to die willingly and nobly a glorious death

‡ 6:23: The Greek text appears to be corrupt. § 6:23: Some authorities read *manner of life*. † 6:23: Gr. *legislation*. ‡ 6:28: Gr. *one that has left behind*.

for the revered and holy laws.”

When he had said these words, he went immediately to the instrument of torture.

²⁹ § When they changed the good will they bore towards him a little before into ill will because these words of his were, as they thought, sheer madness,

³⁰ and when he was at the point to die with the† blows, he groaned aloud and said, “To the Lord, who has the holy knowledge, it is manifest that, while I might have been delivered from death, I endure severe pains in my body by being scourged; but in soul I gladly suffer these things because of my fear of him.”

³¹ So this man also died like this, leaving his death for an example of nobleness and a memorial of virtue, not only to the young but also to the great body of his nation.

7

¹ It came to pass that seven brothers and their mother were at the king’s command taken and shamefully handled with scourges and cords, to compel them to taste of the abominable swine’s flesh.

² One of them made himself the spokesman and said, “What would you ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors.”

³ The king fell into a rage, and commanded that pans and cauldrons be heated.

§ 6:29: The Greek text of this verse is uncertain. † 6:30: Or, *blows*

4 When these were immediately heated, he gave orders to cut out the tongue of him who had been their spokesman, and to scalp him, and to cut off his extremities, with the rest of his brothers and his mother looking on.

5 And when he was utterly† maimed, the king gave orders to bring him to the fire, being yet alive, and to fry him in the pan. And as the smoke from the pan spread far, they and their mother also exhorted one another to die nobly, saying this:

6 “The Lord God sees, and in truth is‡ entreated for us, as Moses declared in §his song, which witnesses against the people to their faces, saying, ‘And he will have compassion on his servants.’ ”

7 And when the first had died like this, they brought the second to the mocking; and they pulled off the skin of his head with the hair and asked him, “Will you eat, before your body is punished in every limb?”

8 But he answered in the language of his ancestors and said to them, “No.” Therefore he also underwent the next torture in succession, as the first had done.

9 When he was at the last gasp, he said, “You, miscreant, release us out of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us who have died for his laws up to an everlasting renewal of life.”

10 After him, the third was made a victim of their mocking. When he was required, he quickly

† 7:5: Gr. *useless*. ‡ 7:6: Or, *comforted in* § 7:6: See Deuteronomy 31:21 and 32:36.

put out his tongue, and stretched out his hands courageously,

¹¹ and nobly said, “I got these from heaven. For his laws’ sake I treat these with contempt. From him, I hope to receive these back again.”

¹² As a result, the king himself and those who were with him were astonished at the young man’s soul, for he regarded the pains as nothing.

¹³ When he too was dead, they shamefully handled and tortured the fourth in the same way.

¹⁴ Being near to death he said this: “It is good to die at the hands of men and look for the hope which is given by God, that we will be raised up again by him. For as for you, you will have no resurrection to life.”

¹⁵ Next after him, they brought the fifth and shamefully handled him.

¹⁶ But he looked towards †the king and said, “Because you have authority amongst men, though you are corruptible, you do what you please. But don’t think that our race has been forsaken by God.

¹⁷ But hold on to your ways, and see how his sovereign majesty will torture you and your descendants!”

¹⁸ After him they brought the sixth. When he was about to die, he said, “Don’t be vainly deceived, for we suffer these things for our own doings, as sinning against our own God. Astounding things have come to pass;

¹⁹ but don’t think you that you will be unpunished, having tried to fight against God!”

† 7:16: Gr. *him*.

20 But above all, the mother was marvellous and worthy of honourable memory; for when she watched seven sons perishing within the space of one day, she bore the sight with a good courage because of her hope in the Lord.

21 She exhorted each one of them in the language of their fathers, filled with a noble spirit and stirring up her woman's thoughts with manly courage, saying to them,

22 "I don't know how you came into my womb. It wasn't I who gave you your spirit and your life. It wasn't I who brought into order the first elements of each one of you.

23 Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the first origin of man and devised the first origin of all things, in mercy gives back to you again both your spirit and your life, as you now treat yourselves with contempt for his laws' sake."

24 But Antiochus, thinking himself to be despised, and suspecting the reproachful voice, while the youngest was yet alive didn't only make his appeal to him by words, but also at the same time promised with oaths that he would enrich him and raise him to high honour if he would turn from the ways of his ancestors, and that he would take him for his friend and entrust him with public affairs.

25 But when the young man would in no way listen, the king called to him his mother, and urged her to advise the youth to save himself.

‡ 7:22: Or, *breath* § 7:23: Or, *breath* † 7:24: Gr. *make him one that is counted happy.* ‡ 7:24: See 2 Maccabees 8:9.

²⁶ When he had urged her with many words, she undertook to persuade her son.

²⁷ But bending towards him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, she spoke this in the language of her fathers: “My son, have pity upon me who carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you three years, and nourished and brought you up to this age, and sustained you.

²⁸ I beg you, my child, to lift your eyes to the sky and the earth, and to see all things that are in it, and thus to recognise that God made them not of things that were, and that the race of men in this way comes into being.

²⁹ Don’t be afraid of this butcher, but, proving yourself worthy of your brothers, accept your death, that in God’s mercy I may receive you again with your brothers.”

³⁰ But before she had finished speaking, the young man said, “What are you all waiting for? I don’t obey the commandment of the king, but I listen to the commandment of the law that was given to our fathers through Moses.

³¹ But you, who have devised all kinds of evil against the Hebrews, will in no way escape God’s hands.

³² For we are suffering because of our own sins.

³³ If for rebuke and chastening, our living Lord has been angered a little while, yet he will again be reconciled with his own servants.

³⁴ But you, O unholy man and of all most vile, don’t be vainly lifted up in your wild pride with uncertain hopes, raising your hand against the heavenly children.

35 For you have not yet escaped the judgement of the Almighty God who sees all things.

36 For these our brothers, having endured a § short pain that brings everlasting life, have now † died under God's covenant. But you, through God's judgement, will receive in just measure the penalties of your arrogance.

37 But I, as my brothers, give up both body and soul for the laws of our fathers, calling upon God that he may speedily become ‡gracious to the nation, and that you, amidst trials and plagues, may confess that he alone is God,

38 and that in me and my brothers § you may bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has been justly brought upon our whole race."

39 But the king, falling into a rage, handled him worse than all the rest, being exasperated at his mocking.

40 So he also died pure, putting his whole trust in the Lord.

41 Last of all, after her sons, the mother died.

42 Let it then suffice to have said thus much concerning the sacrificial feasts and the extreme tortures.

8

1 But Judas, who is also called Maccabaeus, and those who were with him, making their way secretly into the villages, called together their

§ 7:36: Gr. *short pain of ever-flowing life*. † 7:36: Gr. *fallen*. By the omission of one Greek letter the words would signify *having endured a short pain, have now drunk of ever-flowing life under God's covenant*. ‡ 7:37: Gr. *propitious*. § 7:38: Some authorities read *may be stayed*.

kindred. Enlisting those who had continued in the Jews' religion, they gathered together about six thousand.

² They called upon the Lord to look at the people who were oppressed by all, and to have compassion on the sanctuary that had been profaned by the ungodly men,

³ and to have pity on the city that was suffering ruin and ready to be levelled to the ground, and to listen to the blood that cried out to him,

⁴ and to remember the lawless destruction of the innocent infants, and concerning the blasphemies that had been committed against his name, and to show his hatred of wickedness.

⁵ When Maccabaeus had trained his men for service, the heathen at once found him irresistible, for the wrath of the Lord was turned into mercy.

⁶ †Coming without warning, he set fire to cities and villages. And in winning back the most important positions, putting to flight no small number of the enemies,

⁷ he especially took advantage of the nights for such assaults. His courage was loudly talked of everywhere.

⁸ But when Philip saw the man gaining ground little by little, and increasing more and more in his success, he wrote to Ptolemy, the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, that he should support the king's cause.

⁹ Ptolemy quickly appointed Nicanor the son of

† **8:6:** The Greek text of verses 6 and 7 is uncertain.

Patroclus, one of the king's † chief friends, and sent him, in command of no fewer than twenty thousand of all nations, to destroy the whole race of Judea. With him he joined Gorgias also, a captain and one who had experience in matters of war.

¹⁰ Nicanor resolved by the sale of the captive Jews to make up for the king the tribute of two thousand talents which he was to pay to the Romans.

¹¹ Immediately he sent to the cities upon the sea coast, inviting them to buy Jewish §slaves, promising to deliver seventy †slaves for a talent, not expecting the judgement that was to overtake him from the Almighty.

¹² News came to Judas concerning Nicanor's invasion. When he communicated to those who were with him the presence of the army,

¹³ those who were cowardly and distrustful of God's judgement †ran away and left the country.

¹⁴ Others sold all that they had left, and at the same time implored the Lord to deliver those who had been sold as slaves by the impious Nicanor before he ever met them,

¹⁵ if not for their own sakes, then for the covenants made with their ancestors, and because he had called them by his holy and glorious name.

¹⁶ So Maccabaeus gathered his men together, six thousand in number, and exhorted them not to be frightened by the enemy, nor to fear the great

‡ **8:9:** See 1 Maccabees 10:65. Compare 2 Maccabees 1:14; 7:24; 10:13; 14:11; 1 Maccabees 2:18. § **8:11:** Gr. *bodies*. † **8:11:** Gr. *bodies*. ‡ **8:13:** The Greek text here is uncertain.

multitude of the heathen who came wrongfully against them, but to fight nobly,

¹⁷ setting before their eyes the outrage that had been lawlessly perpetrated upon the holy place, and the torture of the city that had been turned to mockery, and further the overthrow of the way of life received from their ancestors.

¹⁸ “For they,” he said, “trust their weapons and daring deeds, but we trust in the almighty God, since he is able at a nod to cast down those who are coming against us, and even the whole world.”

¹⁹ Moreover, he recounted to them the help given from time to time in the days of their ancestors, both in the days of Sennacherib, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand perished,

²⁰ and in the land of Babylon, in the battle that was fought against the§ Gauls, how they came to the battle with eight thousand in all, with four thousand Macedonians, and how, the Macedonians being hard pressed, the †six thousand destroyed the hundred and twenty thousand because of the help which they had from heaven, and took a great deal of plunder.

²¹ And when he had with these words filled them with courage and made them ready to die for the laws and their country, he divided his army into four parts.

²² He appointed his brothers, Simon, Joseph, and Jonathan, to be leaders of the divisions with him, giving each the command of one thousand and five hundred men.

§ 8:20: *Gr. Galatians.* † 8:20: Some authorities read *eight*.

23 Moreover Eleazer also, having read aloud the sacred book, and having given as watchword, “THE HELP OF GOD”, leading the first band himself, joined battle with Nicanor.

24 Since the Almighty fought on their side, they killed more than nine thousand of the enemy, and wounded and‡ disabled most of Nicanor’s army, and compelled them all to flee.

25 They took the money of those who had come there to buy them as slaves. After they had pursued them for some §distance, they returned, being constrained by the time of the day;

26 for it was the day before the Sabbath, and for this reason they made no effort to chase them far.

27 † When they had gathered ‡the weapons of the enemy together, and had stripped off their spoils, they kept the Sabbath, greatly blessing and thanking the Lord who had saved them to this day, because he had begun to show mercy to them.

28 After the Sabbath, when they had given some of the spoils to the § maimed, and to the widows and orphans, they distributed the rest amongst themselves and their children.

29 When they had accomplished these things and had made a common supplication, they implored the merciful Lord to be wholly reconciled with his servants.

30 Having had an encounter with the forces of Timotheus and Bacchides, they killed more than

‡ 8:24: Gr. *disabled in their limbs*. § 8:25: Or, *while* † 8:27: The exact meaning of this clause is uncertain. ‡ 8:27: Gr. *their weapons...the spoils of the enemy*. § 8:28: Or, *wounded* Gr. *shamefully handled*.

twenty thousand of them, and made themselves masters of exceedingly high strongholds, and divided very much plunder, giving the †maimed, orphans, widows, and the aged an equal share with themselves.

31 ‡ When they had gathered the weapons § of the enemy together, they stored them all up carefully in the most strategic positions, and they carried the rest of the spoils to Jerusalem.

32 They killed the †phylarch of Timotheus's forces, a most unholy man, and one who had done the Jews much harm.

33‡ As they celebrated the feast of victory in the § city of their fathers, they burnt those who had set the sacred †gates on fire, including Callisthenes, who had fled into ‡a little house. So they received the proper reward for their impiety.

34 The thrice-accursed Nicanor, who had brought the thousand merchants to buy the Jews as slaves,

35 being through the help of the Lord humbled by them who in his eyes were held to be of least account, took off his glorious apparel, and passing through the country, §shunning all company like a fugitive slave, arrived at Antioch, † having, as he

† 8:30: Or, *wounded* Gr. *shamefully handled*. ‡ 8:31: The exact meaning of this clause is uncertain. § 8:31: Gr. *of them*. † 8:32: That is, probably, the captain of an irregular auxiliary force. Some write *Phylarches*, as a proper name. ‡ 8:33: The Greek text here is perhaps corrupt. § 8:33: Or, *country* † 8:33: Or, *porches*

‡ 8:33: Or, *a solitary hut* § 8:35: Gr. *having made himself solitary*. † 8:35: Or, *having won the greatest possible favour by reason of the destruction of his army*

thought, had the greatest possible good fortune, though his army was destroyed.

³⁶ He who had taken upon himself to make tribute sure for the Romans by the captivity of the men of Jerusalem published abroad that the Jews had One who fought for them, and that †because this was so, the Jews were invulnerable, because they followed the laws ordained by him.

9

¹ Now about that time, Antiochus retreated †in disorder from the region of Persia.

² For he had entered into the city called Persepolis, and he attempted to rob †a temple and to control the city. Therefore the multitudes rushed in and the people of the country turned to defend themselves with weapons; and it came to pass that Antiochus was put to flight by the people of the country and broke his camp with disgrace.

³ While he was at Ecbatana, news was brought to him about what had happened to Nicanor and the forces of Timotheus.

⁴ Being overcome by his anger, he planned to make the Jews suffer for the evil deeds of those who had put him to flight. Therefore, with judgment from heaven even now accompanying him, he ordered his charioteer to drive without ceasing until he completed the journey; for he arrogantly said this: "I will make Jerusalem a common graveyard of Jews when I come there."

‡ 8:36: Or, *because of this their way of life* Gr. *because of this manner.*

† 9:1: Or, *with dishonour* ‡ 9:2: Or, *temples*

⁵ But the All-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him with a §fatal and invisible stroke. As soon as he had finished speaking this word, an incurable pain of the bowels seized him, with bitter torments of the inner parts—

⁶ and that most justly, for he had tormented other men's bowels with many and strange sufferings.

⁷ But he in no way ceased from his rude insolence. No, he was filled with even more arrogance, breathing fire in his passion against the Jews, and giving orders to hasten the journey. But it came to pass moreover that he fell from his chariot as it rushed along, and having a grievous fall was tortured in all of the members of his body.

⁸ He who had just supposed himself to have the waves of the sea at his bidding because he was so superhumanly arrogant, and who thought to weigh the heights of the mountains in a balance, was now brought to the ground and carried in a litter, †showing to all that the power was obviously God's,

⁹ so that worms swarmed out of the impious man's body, and while he was still living in anguish and pains, his flesh fell off, and by reason of the stench all the army turned with loathing from his decay.

¹⁰ The man who a little before supposed himself to touch the stars of heaven, no one could endure to carry because of his intolerable stench.

¹¹ Therefore he began in great part to cease from

§ 9:5: Gr. *remediless*. † 9:8: Or, *showing manifestly to all the power of God*

his arrogance, being broken in spirit, and to come to knowledge under the scourge of God, his pains increasing every moment.

¹² When he himself could not stand his own smell, he said these words: “It is right to be subject to God, and that one who is mortal should not think they are equal to God.”

¹³ The vile man vowed to the sovereign Lord, who now no more would have pity upon him, saying

¹⁴ that the holy city, to which he was going in haste to lay it even with the ground and to †make it a common graveyard, he would declare free.

¹⁵ Concerning the Jews, whom he had decided not even to count worthy of burial, but to cast them out to the animals with their infants for the birds to devour, he would make them all equal to citizens of Athens.

¹⁶ The holy sanctuary, which before he had plundered, he would adorn with best offerings, and would restore all the sacred vessels many times multiplied, and out of his own revenues would defray the charges that were required for the sacrifices.

¹⁷ Beside all this, he said that he would become a Jew and would visit every inhabited place, proclaiming the power of God.

¹⁸ But when his sufferings did in no way cease, for the judgement of God had come upon him in righteousness, having given up all hope for himself, he wrote to the Jews the letter written below, having the nature of a supplication, to this

† 9:14: Gr. *build*.

effect:

¹⁹ “To the worthy Jewish citizens, Antiochus, king and general, wishes much joy and health and prosperity.

²⁰ May you and your children fare well, and may your affairs be as you wish. Having my hope in heaven,

²¹ I remembered with affection your honour and good will. Returning out of the region of Persia, and being taken with an annoying sickness, I deemed it necessary to take thought for the common safety of all,

²² not despairing of myself, but having great hope to escape from the sickness.

²³ But considering that my father also, at the time he led an army into the upper country, appointed his successor,

²⁴ to the end that, if anything fell out contrary to expectation, or if any unwelcome tidings were brought, the people in the country, knowing to whom the state had been left, might not be troubled,

²⁵ and, moreover, observing how the princes who are along the borders and neighbours to my kingdom watch for opportunities and look for the future event, I have appointed my son Antiochus to be king, whom I often entrusted and commended to most of you when I was hurrying to the upper provinces. I have written to him what is written below.

²⁶ I therefore urge you and beg you, having in your remembrance the benefits done to you in common and severally, to preserve your present

good will, each of you, towards me and my son.

²⁷ For I am persuaded that he in gentleness and kindness will follow my purpose and treat you with moderation and kindness.

²⁸ So the murderer and blasphemer, having endured the most intense sufferings, even as he had dealt with other men, ended his life amongst the mountains by a most piteous fate in a strange land.

²⁹ Philip his foster brother took the body home and then, fearing the son of Antiochus, he withdrew himself to Ptolemy Philometor in Egypt.

10

¹ Then Maccabaeus and those who were with him, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city.

² They pulled down the altars that had been built in the marketplace by the foreigners, and also the sacred enclosures.

³ Having cleansed the sanctuary, they made another altar of sacrifice. †Striking flint and starting a fire, they offered sacrifices after they had ceased for two years, burnt incense, lit lamps, and set out the show bread.

⁴ When they had done these things, they fell prostrate and implored the Lord that they might fall no more into such evils; but that, if they ever did sin, they might be chastened by him with forbearance, and not be delivered to blaspheming and barbarous heathen.

⁵ Now on the same day that the sanctuary was profaned by foreigners, upon that very day it

† 10:3: Gr. *firing*.

came to pass that the sanctuary was cleansed, even on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which is Chislev.

⁶ They observed eight days with gladness in the manner of the feast of tabernacles, remembering how †not long before, during the feast of tabernacles, they were wandering in the mountains and in the caves like wild animals.

⁷ Therefore carrying wands wreathed with leaves, and beautiful branches, and palm fronds also, they offered up hymns of thanksgiving to him who had successfully brought to pass the cleansing of his own place.

⁸ They ordained also with a public statute and decree, for all the nation of the Jews, that they should observe these days every year.

⁹ Such were the events of the end of Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes.

¹⁰ Now we will declare what came to pass under Antiochus †Eupator, who proved himself a son of that ungodly man, and will summarize the main evils of the wars.

¹¹ For this man, when he succeeded to the kingdom, appointed one Lysias to be chancellor and supreme governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia.

¹² For Ptolemy who was called Macron, setting an example of observing justice towards the Jews because of the wrong that had been done to them, endeavored to deal with them on peaceful terms.

† **10:6:** Or, *not long before they kept the feast of tabernacles by wandering* § **10:10:** That is, *son of a good father*.

13 Whereupon being accused by the king's †friends before Eupator, and hearing himself called traitor at every turn because he had abandoned Cyprus which Philometor had entrusted to him, and had withdrawn himself to Antiochus Epiphanes, and ‡ failing to uphold the honour of his office, he took poison and did away with himself.

14 But when Gorgias was made governor of the district, he maintained a force of mercenaries, and at every turn kept up war with the Jews.

15 Together with him the Idumaeans also, being masters of important strongholds, harassed the Jews; and received those who had taken refuge from Jerusalem, they endeavored to keep up the war.

16 But Maccabaeus and his men, having made solemn supplication and having implored God to fight on their side, rushed upon the strongholds of the Idumaeans.

17 Assaulting them vigorously, they took control of the positions, and kept off all who fought upon the wall, and killed those whom they encountered, killing no fewer than twenty thousand.

18 Because no fewer than nine thousand had fled into two very strong towers having everything needed for a seige,

19 Maccabaeus, having left Simon and Joseph, and also Zacchaeus and those who were with him, a force sufficient to besiege them, departed himself to places where he was most needed.

† 10:13: See 2 Maccabees 8:9

‡ 10:13: The Greek text here is corrupt.

²⁰ But Simon and those who were with him, yielding to covetousness, were bribed by some of those who were in the towers, and receiving seventy thousand drachmas, let some of them slip away.

²¹ But when word was brought to Maccabaeus of what was done, he gathered the leaders of the people together, and accused those men of having sold their kindred for money by setting their enemies free to fight against them.

²² So he killed these men for having turned traitors, and immediately took possession of the two towers.

²³ Prospering with his weapons in everything he undertook, he destroyed more than twenty thousand in the two strongholds.

²⁴ Now Timotheus, who had been defeated by the Jews before, having gathered together foreign forces in great multitudes, and having collected the cavalry which belonged to Asia, not a few, came as though he would take Judea by force of weapons.

²⁵ But as he drew near, Maccabaeus and his men sprinkled dirt on their heads and girded their loins with sackcloth, in supplication to God,

²⁶ and falling down upon the step in front of the altar, implored him to become §gracious to them, and †be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries, as the law declares.

²⁷ Rising from their prayer they took up their weapons, and advanced some distance from the

§ 10:26: *Gr. propitious.* † 10:26: See Exodus 23:22.

city. When they had come near to their enemies, they‡ halted.

28 When the dawn was now breaking, the two armies joined in battle, the one part having this, beside virtue, for a pledge of success and victory, that they had fled to the Lord for refuge, the others making their passion their leader in the fight.

29 When the battle became strong, there appeared out of heaven to their adversaries five splendid men on horses with bridles of gold, § and two of them, leading on the Jews,

30 and taking Maccabaeus in the midst of them, and covering him with their own armour, guarded him from wounds, while they shot arrows and thunderbolts at the enemies. For this reason, they were blinded and thrown into confusion, and were cut to pieces, filled with bewilderment.

31 Twenty thousand and five hundred were slain, beside six hundred cavalry.

32 Timotheus himself fled into a stronghold called Gazara, a fortress of great strength, † where Chaereas was in command.

33 Then Maccabaeus and his men were glad and laid siege to the fortress for four days.

34 Those who were within, trusting in the strength of the place, blasphemed exceedingly, and hurled out impious words.

35 But at dawn of the fifth day, certain young men of Maccabaeus' company, inflamed with

‡ 10:27: Gr. *were by themselves*. § 10:29: Some authorities read *and leading on the Jews; who also, taking*. † 10:32: See ver. 37.

anger because of the blasphemies, assaulted the wall with masculine force and with †furious anger, and cut down whoever came in their way.

³⁶ Others climbing up in the same way, while the enemies were distracted with those who had made their way within, set fire to the towers, and kindled fires that burnt the blasphemers alive, while others broke open the gates, and, having given entrance to the rest of the band, occupied the city.

³⁷ They killed Timotheus, who was hidden in a cistern, and his brother Chaereas, and Apollonphanes.

³⁸ When they had accomplished these things, they blessed the Lord with hymns and thanksgiving, blessing him who provides great benefits to Israel and gives them the victory.

11

¹ Now after a very little time, Lysias, the king's guardian, kinsman, and chancellor, being very displeased about the things that had happened,

² collected about eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry and came against the Jews, planing to make the city a home for Greeks,

³ and to levy tribute on the temple, as †on the other sacred places of the nations, and to put up the high priesthood for sale every year.

⁴ He took no account of God's power, but was puffed up with his ten thousands of infantry, his thousands of cavalry, and his eighty elephants.

‡ **10:35:** Gr. *passion as of wild animals.* † **11:3:** Or, *on all the sacred places of the heathen*

⁵ Coming into Judea and approaching Bethsuron, which was a strong place and about five stadia[‡] away from Jerusalem, he pressed it hard.

⁶ When Maccabaeus and his men learnt that he was besieging the strongholds, they and all the people with lamentations and tears made supplication to the Lord to send a good angel to save Israel.

⁷ Maccabaeus himself took up weapons first, and exhorted the others to put themselves in jeopardy together with him and help their kindred; and they went out with him very willingly.

⁸ As they were there, close to Jerusalem, a horseman appeared at their head in white apparel, brandishing[§] weapons of gold.

⁹ They all together praised the merciful God, and were yet more strengthened in heart, being ready to †assail not only men but the wildest animals and walls of iron,

¹⁰ they advanced in array, having him who is in heaven to fight on their side, for the Lord had mercy on them.

¹¹ Hurling themselves like lions against the enemy, they killed eleven thousand infantry and one thousand and six hundred cavalry, and forced all the rest to flee.

¹² Most of them escaped wounded and naked. Lysias himself also escaped by shameful flight.

¹³ But as he was a man not void of understanding, pondering the defeat which had befallen him,

[‡] **11:5:** One stadia was roughly 189 metres or 618 feet, so 5 stadia was about a little less than 1 km or a little more than half a mile.

[§] **11:8:** Gr. *a panopy*. † **11:9:** Gr. *wound*.

and considering that the Hebrews could not be overcome because the Almighty God fought on their side, he sent again

¹⁴ and persuaded them to come to terms on condition that all their rights were acknowledged, and † promised that he would also persuade the king to become their friend.

¹⁵ Maccabaeus gave consent upon all the conditions which Lysias proposed to him, being careful of the common good; for whatever requests Maccabaeus delivered in writing to Lysias concerning the Jews the king allowed.

¹⁶ The letter written to the Jews from Lysias was to this effect:

“Lysias to the §people of the Jews, greetings.

¹⁷ John and Absalom, who were sent from you, having delivered the document written below, made request concerning the things written therein.

¹⁸ Whatever things therefore needed to be brought before the king I declared to him, and what things were possible he allowed.

¹⁹ If then you will all preserve your good will towards the government, I will also endeavour in the future to contribute to your good.

²⁰ Concerning this, I have given order in detail, both to these men and to those who are sent from me, to confer with you.

²¹ Farewell. Written in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, on the twenty-fourth day of the

† **11:14:** The Greek text here is corrupt. § **11:16:** Gr. *multitude*.

month †Dioscorinthius.”

²² And the king’s letter contained these words:

“King Antiochus to his brother Lysias, greetings.

²³ Seeing that our father passed to the gods having the wish that the subjects of his kingdom ‡should be undisturbed and give themselves to the care of their own affairs,

²⁴ we, having heard that the Jews do not consent to our father’s purpose to turn them to the customs of the Greeks, but choose rather their own way of living, and make request that the customs of their law be allowed to them—

²⁵ choosing therefore that this nation also should be free from disturbance, we determine that their temple is to be restored to them, and that they live according to the customs that were in the days of their ancestors.

²⁶ You will therefore do well to send messengers to them and give them the right hand of friendship, that they, knowing our mind, may be of good heart, and gladly occupy themselves with the conduct of their own affairs.”

²⁷ And to the nation, the king’s letter was as follows:

“King Antiochus to the senate of the Jews and to the other Jews, greetings.

²⁸ If you are all well, it is as we desire. We ourselves also are in good health.

²⁹ Menelaus informed us that your desire was to return home and follow your own business.

† **11:21:** This month name is not found elsewhere, and is perhaps corrupt. ‡ **11:23:** Or, *should not be disquieted but*

³⁰ They therefore who depart home up to the thirtieth day of Xanthicus shall have our friendship, with full permission

³¹ that the Jews use their own foods and observe their own laws, even as formerly. None of them shall be in any way molested for the things that have been done in ignorance.

³² Moreover I have sent Menelaus also, that he may encourage you.

³³ Farewell. Written in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, on the fifteenth day of Xanthicus.”

³⁴ The Romans also sent to them a letter in these words:

“Quintus Memmius and Titus Manius, ambassadors of the Romans, to the people of the Jews, greetings.

³⁵ In regard to the things which Lysias the king’s kinsman granted you, we also give consent.

³⁶ But as for the things which he judged should be referred to the king, send someone promptly, after you have considered them, that we may publish such decrees as are appropriate for your case; for we are on our way to Antioch.

³⁷ Therefore send someone with speed, that we also may learn what is your mind.

³⁸ †Farewell. Written in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, on the fifteenth day of Xanthicus.

12

¹ So when this agreement had been made,

§ 11:30: Gr. *right hand*. † 11:38: Gr. *Be in good health*.

Lysias departed to the king, and the Jews went about their farming.

² But some of the governors of districts, Timotheus and Apollonius the son of Gennaesus, and also Hieronymus and Demophon, and beside them Nicanor the governor of Cyprus, would not allow them to enjoy tranquillity and live in peace.

³ Men of Joppa perpetrated this great impiety: they invited the Jews who lived amongst them to go with their wives and children into the boats which they had provided, as though they had no ill will towards them.

⁴ When[†] the Jews,[‡] relying on the public vote of the city, accepted the invitation, as men desiring to live in peace and suspecting nothing, they took them out to sea and drowned not less than two hundred of them.

⁵ When Judas heard of the cruelty done to his fellow-countrymen, giving command to the men that were with him

⁶ and calling upon God the righteous Judge, he came against the murderers of his kindred, and set the harbour on fire at night, burnt the boats, and put to the sword those who had fled there.

⁷ But when the town gates were closed, he withdrew, intending to come again to root out the whole community of the men of Joppa.

⁸ But learning that the men of Jamnia intended to do the same thing to the Jews who lived amongst them,

⁹ he attacked the Jamnites at night, and set fire to the harbour together with the fleet, so that

[†] 12:4: Gr. *they also*. [‡] 12:4: Gr. *after*.

the glare of the light was seen at Jerusalem, two hundred and forty furlongs[§] distant.

¹⁰ Now when they had drawn off nine furlongs[†] from there, as they marched against Timotheus, an army of Arabians attacked him, no fewer than five thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry.

¹¹ And when a hard battle had been fought, and Judas and his company, by the help of God, had good success, the nomads being overcome implored Judas to grant them friendship, promising to give him livestock, and to help [‡]his people in all other ways.

¹² So Judas, thinking that they would indeed be profitable in many things, agreed to live in peace with them; and receiving pledges of friendship they departed to their tents.

¹³ He also attacked a certain city, strong and fenced with earthworks and walls, and inhabited by a mixed multitude of various nations. It was named Caspin.

¹⁴ Those who were within, trusting in the strength of the walls and their store of provisions, behaved themselves rudely towards Judas and those who were with him, railing, and furthermore blaspheming and speaking impious words.

¹⁵ But Judas and his company, calling upon the great Sovereign of the world, who without rams and cunning engines of war hurled down Jericho

§ **12:9:** a furlong is about 201 metres or 220 yards, so 240 furlongs is about 48 km. or 30 miles † **12:10:** a furlong is about 201 metres or 220 yards, so 9 furlongs is about 1.8 km. or 1 1/8 miles ‡ **12:11:** Gr. *them*.

in the times of Joshua, rushed wildly against the wall.

¹⁶ Having taken the city by the will of God, they made unspeakable slaughter, so much that the adjoining lake, which was two furlongs§ broad, appeared to be filled with the deluge of blood.

¹⁷ When they had gone seven hundred and fifty furlongs† from there, they made their way to Charax, to the Jews that are called ‡Tubieni.

¹⁸ They didn't find Timotheus in that district, for he had by then departed from the district without accomplishing anything, but had left behind a very strong garrison in one place.

¹⁹ But Dositheus and Sosipater, who were captains under Maccabaeus, went out and destroyed those who had been left by Timotheus in the stronghold, more than ten thousand men.

²⁰ Maccabaeus, arranging his own army in divisions, set §these two over the bands, and marched in haste against Timotheus, who had with him one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and two thousand and five hundred cavalry.

²¹ When Timotheus heard of the approach of Judas, he at once sent away the women and the children with the baggage into the fortress called †Carnion; for the place was hard to besiege and

§ **12:16:** a furlong is about 201 metres or 220 yards, so 2 furlongs is about 402 metres or 1/4 mile † **12:17:** a furlong is about 201 metres or 220 yards, so 750 furlongs is about 151 km. or 94 miles

‡ **12:17:** That is, *men of Tob*: see Judges 11:3, 2 Samuel 10:6, and compare 1 Maccabees 5:13. § **12:20:** Gr. *them*. † **12:21:** Compare *Carnain*, 1 Maccabees 5:26, 43, 44.

difficult of access by reason of the narrowness of the approaches on all sides.

²² When the band of Judas, who led the first division, appeared in sight, and when terror and fear came upon the enemy, because the manifestation of him who sees all things came upon them, they fled in every direction, carried this way and that, so that they were often injured by their own men, and pierced with the points of their own swords.

²³ Judas continued the pursuit more vigorously, putting the wicked wretches to the sword, and he destroyed as many as thirty thousand men.

²⁴ Timotheus himself, falling in with the company of Dositheus and Sosipater, implored them with much crafty guile to let him go with his life, because he had in his power the parents of many of them and the kindred of some. † “Otherwise, he said, little regard will § be shown to these.”

²⁵ So when he had with many words confirmed the agreement to restore them without harm, they let him go that they might save their kindred.

²⁶ Then Judas, marching against † Carnion and the temple of Atergatis, killed twenty-five thousand people.

²⁷ After he had put these to flight and destroyed them, he marched against Ephron also, a strong city, † wherein were multitudes of people of all nations. Stalwart young men placed § on the walls

‡ **12:24:** Gr. *and the result will be that these be disregarded.* The Greek text here is perhaps corrupt. § **12:24:** Or, *have been shown* † **12:26:** Compare *Carnain*, 1 Maccabees 5:26, 43, 44.

‡ **12:27:** The Greek text here is perhaps corrupt. § **12:27:** Gr. *in front of.*

made a vigorous defence. There were great stores of war engines and darts there.

²⁸ But calling upon the Sovereign who with might shatters the †strength of ‡the enemy, they took the city into their hands, and killed as many as twenty-five thousand of those who were in it.

²⁹ Setting out from there, they marched in haste against Scythopolis, which is six hundred furlongs§ away from Jerusalem.

³⁰ But when the Jews who were settled there testified of the good will that the Scythopolitans had shown towards them, and of their kind treatment of them in the times of their misfortune,

³¹ they gave thanks, and further exhorted them to remain well disposed towards the race for the future. Then they went up to Jerusalem, the feast of weeks being close at hand.

³² But after the feast called Pentecost, they marched in haste against Gorgias the governor of Idumaea.

³³ He came out with three thousand infantry and four hundred cavalry.

³⁴ When they had set themselves in array, it came to pass that a few of the Jews fell.

³⁵ A certain Dositheus, one † of Bacenor's company, who was on horseback and was a strong man, pressed hard on Gorgias, and taking hold of his cloke dragged him along by main force. While he planned to take the accursed man alive, one

† 12:28: Some authorities read *weight*. ‡ 12:28: Or, *his enemies*

§ 12:29: a furlong is about 201 metres or 220 yards, so 600 furlongs is about 121 km. or 75 miles † 12:35: The Greek text is uncertain.

of the Thracian cavalry bore down on him and disabled his shoulder, and so Gorgias escaped to †Marisa.

³⁶ When those who were with Esdris had been fighting long and were weary, Judas called upon the Lord to show himself, fighting on their side and leading in the battle.

³⁷ Then in the language of his ancestors he raised the battle cry joined with hymns. Then he rushed against Gorgias' troops when they were not expecting it, and put them to flight.

³⁸ Judas gathered his army and came to the city of §Adullam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and kept the Sabbath there.

³⁹ On the following day, †when it had become necessary, Judas and his company came to take up the bodies of those who had fallen, ‡and in company with their kinsmen to bring them back to the sepulchres of their ancestors.

⁴⁰ But under the garments of each one of the dead they found §consecrated tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to have anything to do with. It became clear to all that it was for this cause that they had fallen.

⁴¹ All therefore, blessing the ways of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who makes manifest the things that are hidden,

‡ **12:35:** Compare 1 Maccabees 5:65. § **12:38:** Gr. *Odollam*.

† **12:39:** The Greek text here is uncertain. ‡ **12:39:** Or, *and to bring them back to be with their kinsmen in the sepulchres*

§ **12:40:** Perhaps these were consecrated images of the idols.

⁴² turned themselves to supplication, praying that the sin committed might be wholly blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the multitude to keep themselves from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what happened because of the sin of those who had fallen.

⁴³ When he had made a collection man by man to the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver, he sent to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice for sin, doing very well and honourably in this, in that he took thought for the resurrection.

⁴⁴ For if he wasn't expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would be superfluous and idle to pray for the dead.

⁴⁵ But if he was looking forward to an honourable memorial of gratitude laid up for those who †die ‡in godliness, then the thought was holy and godly. Therefore he made the atoning sacrifice for those who had died, that they might be released from their sin.

13

¹ In the one hundred and forty-ninth year, news was brought to Judas and his company that Antiochus Eupator was coming with multitudes against Judea,

² and with him Lysias his guardian and chancellor, each having a Greek force of one hundred and ten thousand infantry, five thousand and three hundred cavalry, twenty-two elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with scythes.

† 12:45: Gr. *fall asleep*. ‡ 12:45: Or, *on the side of godliness*

³ And Menelaus also joined himself with them, and with great hypocrisy encouraged Antiochus, not for the saving of his country, but because he thought that he would be set over the government.

⁴ But the King of kings stirred up the anger of Antiochus against the wicked wretch. When Lysias informed him that this man was the cause of all the evils, the king commanded to bring him to Beroea, and to put him to death in the way customary in that place.

⁵ Now there is in that place a tower that is fifty cubits high, full of ashes, and it had all around it a †circular rim sloping steeply on every side into the ashes.

⁶ Here one who is guilty of sacrilege or notorious for other crimes is pushed down to destruction.

⁷ By such a fate it happened that the breaker of the law, Menelaus, died, without obtaining so much as a grave in the earth, and that justly;

⁸ for inasmuch as he had perpetrated many sins ‡ against the altar, whose fire and whose ashes were holy, he received his death in ashes.

⁹ Now the king, § infuriated in spirit, was coming with intent to inflict on the Jews the very worst of the sufferings that had been done in his father's time.

¹⁰ But when Judas heard of these things, he commanded the multitude to call upon the Lord day and night, if ever at any other time, so now to help those who were at the point of being deprived of the law, their country, and the holy temple,

† 13:5: Gr. *contrivance or machine*. ‡ 13:8: Gr. *about*. § 13:9: Some authorities read *indignant*.

11 and not to allow the people who had just begun to be revived to fall into the hands of those profane heathen.

12 So when they had all done the same thing together, † begging the merciful Lord with weeping and fastings and prostration for three days without ceasing, Judas exhorted them and commanded they should join him.

13 Having consulted privately with the elders, he resolved that before the king's army entered into Judea and made themselves masters of the city, they should go out and decide the matter by the help of †God.

14 And committing the decision to the §Lord of the world, and exhorting those who were with him to contend nobly even to death for laws, temple, city, country, and way of life, he pitched his camp by Modin.

15 He gave out to his men the watchword, "VICTORY IS GOD'S", with a chosen force of the bravest young men he attacked by the king's pavilion by night, and killed of his army as many as two thousand men, and †brought down the leading elephant with him who was in the †tower on him.

16 At last they filled the §army with terror and alarm, and departed with good success.

17 This had been accomplished when the day was just dawning, because of the Lord's protec-

† 13:12: Gr. *and implored*. ‡ 13:13: Some authorities read *the Lord*. § 13:14: Some authorities read *Creator*. † 13:15: The Greek text here is probably corrupt. ‡ 13:15: Gr. *house*.
 § 13:16: Gr. *camp*.

tion that gave †Judas help.

¹⁸ But the king, having had a taste of the exceeding boldness of the Jews, made strategic attacks on their positions,

¹⁹ and on a strong fortress of the Jews at Bethsura. He advanced, was turned back, failed, and was defeated.

²⁰ Judas sent the things that were necessary to those who were within.

²¹ But Rhodocus, from the Jewish ranks, made secrets known to the enemy. He was sought out, arrested, and shut up in prison.

²² The king negotiated with them in Bethsura the second time, gave his hand, took theirs, departed, attacked the forces of Judas, was put to the worse,

²³ heard that Philip who had been left as chancellor in Antioch had become reckless, was confounded, made to the Jews an overture of peace, submitted himself and swore to acknowledge all their rights, came to terms with them and offered sacrifice, honoured the sanctuary and the place,

²⁴ showed kindness and graciously received Maccabaeus, left Hegemonides governor from Ptolemais even to the ‡ Gerrenians,

²⁵ and came to Ptolemais. The men of Ptolemais were displeased at the treaty, for they had exceedingly great indignation against the Jews. They desired to annul the articles of the agreement.

²⁶ Lysias §came forward to speak, made the best

† **13:17:** Gr. *him*. ‡ **13:24:** The form of this word is uncertain. Compare *Girzites* (or *Gizrites*), 1 Samuel 27:8. One manuscript reads *Gerarenes*. § **13:26:** Gr. *came forward to the tribune or judgement seat*.

defence that was possible, persuaded, pacified, gained their good will, and departed to Antioch. This was the issue of the attack and departure of the king.

14

¹ Three years later, news was brought to Judas and his company that Demetrius the son of Seleucus, having sailed into the harbour of Tripolis with a mighty army and a fleet,

² had taken possession of the country, having made away with Antiochus and his guardian Lysias.

³ But one Alcimus, who had formerly been high priest, and had wilfully polluted himself in the times when there was no mingling with the Gentiles, considering that there was no deliverance for him in any way, nor any more access to the holy altar,

⁴ came to King Demetrius in about the one hundred and fifty-first year, presenting to him a crown of gold and a palm, and beside these some of the festal olive boughs of the temple. For that day, he held his peace;

⁵ but having gotten opportunity to further his own madness, being called by Demetrius into a meeting of his council, and asked how the Jews stood affected and what they intended, he answered:

⁶ “Those of the Jews called †Hasidaeans, whose leader is Judas Maccabaeus, keep up war and

† 14:6: That is, *Chasidim*.

are seditious, not allowing the kingdom to find tranquillity.

⁷ Therefore, having laid aside my ancestral glory—I mean the high priesthood—I have now come †here,

⁸ first for the genuine care I have for the things that concern the king, and secondly because I have regard also to my own fellow citizens. For through the unadvised dealing of those of whom I spoke before, our whole race is in no small misfortune.

⁹ O king, having informed yourself of these things, take thought both for our country and for our race, which is surrounded by enemies, according to the gracious kindness with which you receive all.

¹⁰ For as long as Judas remains alive, it is impossible for the government to find peace.

¹¹ When he had spoken such words as these, at once §the rest of the king's †friends, having ill will against Judas, inflamed Demetrius yet more.

¹² He immediately appointed Nicanor, who had been master of the elephants, and made him governor of Judea. He sent him out,

¹³ giving him written instructions to kill Judas himself and to scatter those who were with him, and to set up Alcimus as high priest of the †great temple.

¹⁴ Those in Judea who §had driven Judas into

‡ 14:7: Some authorities read *a second time*. § 14:11: Or, *the king's friends likewise* † 14:11: See 2 Maccabees 8:9. ‡ 14:13: Gr. *greatest*. § 14:14: See 2 Maccabees 5:27.

exile thronged to Nicanor in flocks, supposing that the misfortunes and calamities of the Jews would be successes to themselves.

¹⁵ But when the Jews heard of Nicanor's advance and the assault of the heathen, they sprinkled dirt on their heads and made solemn prayers to him who had established his own people for evermore, and who always, making manifest his presence, upholds those who are his own heritage.

¹⁶ †When the leader had given orders, he immediately set out from there and joined battle with them at a village called Lessau.

¹⁷ But Simon, the brother of Judas, had encountered Nicanor, yet not till late, having been delayed by reason of the sudden consternation caused by his adversaries.

¹⁸ Nevertheless Nicanor, hearing of the valour of those who were with Judas, and their courage in fighting for their country, shrank from bringing the matter to the decision of the sword.

¹⁹ Therefore he sent Posidonius, Theodotus, and Mattathias to give and receive pledges of friendship.

²⁰ So when these proposals had been long considered, and the leader had made the ‡troops acquainted with them, and it appeared that they were all of like mind, they consented to the covenants.

²¹ They appointed a day on which to meet together by themselves. A chariot came forward

† **14:16:** The Greek text of this verse and the next is corrupt.

‡ **14:20:** Or, *people* Gr. *multitudes*.

from each army. They set up seats of honour.

²² Judas stationed armed men ready in convenient places, lest perhaps there should suddenly be treachery on the part of the enemy. They held a conference as was appropriate.

²³ Nicanor waited in Jerusalem, and did nothing to cause disturbance, but dismissed the flocks of people that had gathered together.

²⁴ He kept Judas always in his presence. He had gained a hearty affection for the man.

²⁵ He urged him to marry and have children. He married, settled quietly, and took part in common life.

²⁶ But Alcimus, perceiving the good will that was between them, and having taken possession of the covenants that had been made, came to Demetrius and told him that Nicanor was disloyal to the government, for he had appointed that conspirator against his kingdom, Judas, to be his successor.

²⁷ The king, falling into a rage, and being exasperated by the false accusations of that most wicked man, wrote to Nicanor, signifying that he was displeased at the covenants, and commanding him to send Maccabaeus prisoner to Antioch in all haste.

²⁸ When this message came to Nicanor, he was confounded, and was very troubled at the thought of annulling the articles that had been agreed upon, the man having done no wrong;

²⁹ but because there was no opposing the king,

§ 14:26: Or, *and the covenants that had been made, took occasion and came*

he watched his time to execute this purpose by strategy.

³⁰ But Maccabaeus, when he perceived that Nicanor was behaving more harshly in his dealings with him, and that he had become ruler in his customary bearing, understanding that this harshness came not of good, gathered together not a few of his men, and concealed himself from Nicanor.

³¹ But the other,[†] when he became aware that he had been bravely defeated by the strategy of Judas,[‡] came to the great[§] and holy temple, while the priests were offering the usual sacrifices, and commanded them to hand over the man.

³² When they declared with oaths that they had no knowledge where the man was whom he sought,

³³ he stretched out his right hand towards the sanctuary, and swore this oath: “If you won’t deliver up to me Judas as a prisoner, I will level this [†]temple of God even with the ground, break down the altar, and I will erect here a temple to Dionysus for all to see.

³⁴ And having said this, he departed. But the priests, stretching forth their hands towards heaven, called upon him who always fights for our nation, in these words:

³⁵ “You, O Lord of the universe, who in yourself have need of nothing, were well pleased that

[†] 14:31: Or, *though he was conscious that he had been nobly defeated by* [‡] 14:31: Gr. *the man* [§] 14:31: Gr. *greatest*. [†] 14:33: Or, *chapel* Gr. *enclosure*.

a sanctuary of your habitation‡ should be set amongst us.

³⁶ So now, O holy Lord of all holiness, keep undefiled forever this house that has been recently cleansed.”

³⁷ Now information was given to Nicanor against one Razis, an elder of Jerusalem, who was a lover of his countrymen and a man of very good report, and one called Father of the Jews for his good will.

³⁸ For in the former times when there was no mingling with the Gentiles, he had been accused of following the Jews’ religion, and had risked body and life with all earnestness for the religion of the Jews.

³⁹ Nicanor, wishing to make evident the ill will that he bore against the Jews, sent above five hundred soldiers to seize him;

⁴⁰ for he thought by seizing him to inflict an injury on them.

⁴¹ But when the Stroops were at the point of taking the tower, and were forcing the door of the court, and asked for fire to burn the doors, he, being surrounded on every side, fell upon his sword,

⁴² choosing rather to die nobly than to fall into the hands of the wicked wretches, and suffer outrage unworthy of his own nobleness.

⁴³ But since he missed his stroke through the excitement of the struggle, and the crowds were now rushing within the door, he ran bravely up to

‡ 14:35: Gr. *tabernacling*. § 14:41: Or, *people* Gr. *multitudes*.

the wall and cast himself down bravely amongst the crowds.

⁴⁴ But as they quickly gave back, a space was made, and he fell on the middle of †his side.

⁴⁵ Still having breath within him, and being inflamed with anger, he rose up, and though his blood gushed out in streams and his wounds were grievous, he ran through the crowds, and standing upon a steep rock,

⁴⁶ when as his blood was now well near spent, he drew forth his bowels through the wound, and taking them in both his hands he shook them at the crowds. Calling upon him who is Lord of life and spirit to restore him ‡these again, he died like this.

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¹ But Nicanor, hearing that Judas and his company were in the region of Samaria, resolved to attack them with complete safety on the day of rest.

² When the Jews who were compelled to follow him said, “Don’t destroy so savagely and barbarously, but give due glory to the day which he who sees all things has honoured and hallowed above other days.”

³ Then the thrice-accursed wretch asked if there were a Sovereign in heaven who had commanded to keep the Sabbath day.

⁴ When they declared, “There is the Lord, living himself as Sovereign in heaven, who told us observe the seventh day.”

† **14:44:** Or, *the void place* ‡ **14:46:** Some authorities read *the same*.

⁵ He replied, “I also am a sovereign on the earth, who commands you to take up weapons and execute the king’s business.” Nevertheless he didn’t prevail to execute his cruel plan.

⁶ And Nicanor, † in his utter boastfulness and arrogance, had determined to set up a monument of complete victory over Judas and all those who were with him.

⁷ But Maccabaeus still trusted unceasingly, with all hope that he should obtain help from the Lord.

⁸ He exhorted his company not to be fearful at the assault of the heathen, but keeping in mind the help which in former times they had often received from heaven, so now also to look for the victory which would come to them from the Almighty,

⁹ and encouraging them out of the law and the prophets, and reminding them of the conflicts that they had won, he made them more eager.

¹⁰ And when he had aroused their courage, he gave them orders, at the same time pointing out the faithlessness of the heathen and their breach of their oaths.

¹¹ Arming each one of them, not so much with the sure defence of shields and spears as with the encouragement of good words, and moreover relating to them a dream worthy to be believed, he made them all exceedingly glad.

¹² The vision of that dream was this: Onias, he who had been high priest, a noble and good man, modest in bearing, yet gentle in manner and well-spoken, and trained from a child in all

† 15:6: Gr. *carrying his neck high*.

points of virtue, with outstretched hands invoking blessings on the whole body of the Jews.

¹³ Then he saw a man appear, of venerable age and exceeding glory, and the dignity around him was wonderful and most majestic.

¹⁴ Onias answered and said, “This is the lover of the kindred, he who prays much for the people and the holy city: Jeremiah the prophet of God.

¹⁵ Jeremiah stretched out his right hand and delivered to Judas a gold sword, and in giving it addressed him thus:

¹⁶ “Take this holy sword, a gift from God, with which you shall strike down the adversaries.”

¹⁷ Being encouraged by the words of Judas, which were noble and effective, and able to incite to virtue and to stir the souls of the young to manly courage, they determined not to carry on a campaign, but nobly to bear down upon the enemy, and fighting hand to hand with all courage bring the matter to a conclusion, because the city, the sanctuary, and the temple were in danger.

¹⁸ For their fear for wives and children, and furthermore for family and relatives, was less important to them; but greatest and first was their fear for the consecrated sanctuary.

¹⁹ Also those who were shut up in the city were in no light distress, being troubled because of the encounter in the open country.

²⁰ When all were now waiting for the decision of the issue, and the enemy had already joined battle, and the army had been set in array, and the

elephants‡ brought back to a convenient post,§ and the cavalry deployed on the flanks,

²¹ Maccabaeus, perceiving the presence of the †troops, and the various weapons with which they were equipped, and the savageness of the ‡elephants, holding up his hands to heaven called upon the Lord who works wonders, knowing that success comes not by weapons, but that, according to how the Lord judges, he gains the victory for those who are worthy.

²² And calling upon God, he said this: “You, O Sovereign Lord, sent your angel in the time of King Hezekiah of Judea, and he killed of the §army of Sennacherib as many as one hundred and eighty-five thousand.

²³ So now also, O Sovereign of the heavens, send a good angel before us to bring terror and trembling.

²⁴ Through the greatness of your arm let them be stricken with dismay who with blasphemy have come here against your holy people.” As he finished these words,

²⁵ Nicanor and his company advanced with trumpets and victory songs;

²⁶ but Judas and his company joined battle with the enemy with invocation and prayers.

²⁷ Fighting with their hands and praying to God with their hearts, they killed no less than thirty-five thousand men, being made exceedingly glad by the manifestation of God.

‡ 15:20: Gr. *animals*. § 15:20: Or, *stationed for convenient action*

† 15:21: Gr. *multitudes*. ‡ 15:21: Gr. *animals*. § 15:22: Gr. *camp*.

²⁸ When the engagement was over and they were returning again with joy, they recognised Nicanor lying dead in full armour.

²⁹ Then there was shouting and noise, and they blessed the Sovereign Lord in the language of their ancestors.

³⁰ He who in all things was in body and soul the foremost champion of his fellow-citizens, he who kept through life the good will of his youth towards his countrymen, ordered that Nicanor's head be cut off with his hand and arm, and that they be brought to Jerusalem.

³¹ When he had arrived there and had called his countrymen together and set the priests before the altar, he sent for those who were in the citadel.

³² Showing the head of the vile Nicanor and the hand of that profane man, which with proud brags he had stretched out against the holy house of the Almighty,

³³ and cutting out the tongue of the impious Nicanor, he said that he would give it in pieces to the birds, and hang up these rewards of his folly near the sanctuary.

³⁴ They all, looking up to heaven, blessed the Lord who had manifested himself, saying, "Blessed is he who has preserved his own place undefiled!"

³⁵ He hung Nicanor's head and shoulder from the citadel, a clear sign evident to all of the help of the Lord.

³⁶ They all ordained with a common decree to in no way let this day pass undistinguished, but to mark with honour the thirteenth day of

the twelfth month (it is called Adar in the Syrian language), the day before the day of Mordecai.

³⁷ This then having been the account of the attempt of Nicanor, and the city having from those times been held by the Hebrews, I also will here make an end of my book.

³⁸ If I have written well and to the point in my story, this is what I myself desired; but if its poorly done and mediocre, this is the best I could do.

³⁹ For as it is †distasteful to drink wine alone and likewise to drink water alone, ‡while the mingling of wine with water at once gives full pleasantness to the flavour; so also the fashioning of the language delights the ears of those who read the story.

Here is the end.

† 15:39: Or, *hurtful* ‡ 15:39: Gr. *but even as*.

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