

The Maccabees 1 & 2:
an improved translation

Translated and Published
By Sabbath Keepers Fellowship
P.O. Box 972
Malakoff, TX 75148
www.sabbathkeepersfellowship.org
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First Edition

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Glossary of Terms

Bavel	Babylon
Chevron.....	Hebron
Damasek.....	Damascus
Ephrath.....	Euphrates
Eretz	land
Heykal.....	Temple
Kehunnah	Priesthood
Koheyn.....	Priest
Koheyn Gadol.....	High Priest
Mitzrayim.....	Egypt
Pelishtym.....	Philistine
Shavuoth	Weeks
Shomeron	Samaria
Sukkoth.....	Tabernacles
TaNak.....	Torah, Neviym, Kethuvym
Yapha	Japha
Yarden.....	Jordan
Yehudy /Yehudym.....	Jew / Jews

Foreword to the Books of the Maccabees

Each year, the children of Yisrael celebrate the Chanukkah, or “Feast of Dedication.” Children spin dreidel’s to win “Chanukkah Gelt” – foil-covered chocolate coins. They sing songs and eat sweets to observe the festival. Adults attend Synagogue, and parents tell families the legend of the single cruse of sacred oil that miraculously kept the lights in the Temple lit for the eight days necessary to complete its dedication. Everyone exchanges gifts and shares in the traditional fried foods prepared for the occasion. There is no holiday more uniquely Yehudy than the Chanukkah.

But, Chanukkah is not only important for the Yehudy people. It is important to all who regard the Hebrew scriptures as the Word of the Most High. Chanukkah is a commemoration of events during the so-called “intertestamental period” chronicled in the book of Maccabees. Because they were written in Greek, these books were rejected from belonging in the Yehudy canon. And because they were considered too Yehudy, they were removed from the modern Christian canon, as well. Yet, they and their story are a spiritual connecting link between these two faiths, and a temporal link between the TaNaK and the writings and times of the disciples of Yehoshua our Messiah. Maccabees is the story of the fighting spirit that preserved Hebrew culture in the face of the onslaught of a heathen and polytheistic Greek “civilization.” It is, above all, the history of that tenacious faith of the true remnant of the children of YHWH, and of His own faithful protection of His promised and chosen people. If it had not been for Mattithyahu, his sons and all of the events of the books of the Maccabees, Hebrew culture, the Temple itself, and even the land of Yisrael as a Yehudy nation would have been altogether lost to history. Yehudaism as a religion would have ceased to exist, and Messiah Yehoshua would have had no place and people through which the events of his life and the fulfillment of prophecy could be carried out. For these reasons and others, Chanukkah and the books of the Maccabees are important not only to the Yehudym, but to all the peoples of the world.

Introduction and the Historical Background of the Intertestamental Period

The timeline of the TaNaK ends with the Yehudym newly re-established in their land. During the time from Malaky to the coming of Moshiach, the people of Yisrael lived under six different governments: the Persian Empire, the Greek empire, the Ptolemies of Mitzrayim, the Seleucids of Syria, self-rule under the Maccabees (Hasmonean's), and finally under the rule of the Roman empire. The following is a brief chronology of those six intertestamental eras.

The Persian Empire (549 - 330 *B.C.E.*). Cyrus (559 - 530 *B.C.E.*) inaugurated the Persian Empire with his conquest of Media in 549 *B.C.E.*, and Bavel in 539 *B.C.E.* Cyrus' policy was to allow peoples exiled by the armies of Bavel to return to their homelands, rebuild, and reinstitute their forms of worship. From 538 to 430 *B.C.E.*, many Yehudym returned to erez Yisrael, where they restored Yerushalayim, rebuilt the Heykal, and re-established their lives in relative peace. Those Yehudym who remained in Mesopotamia largely assimilated there and enjoyed prosperity. The very last historical narratives in the TaNaK recount this period.

Greek rule: (331 - 320 *B.C.E.*). When Alexander "the Great" of Macedonia (336 - 323 *B.C.E.*) conquered and annexed the Persian Empire, very little changed for the Yehudym. Alexander's rule, though brief, was nevertheless formative for all of Western culture. He extended the use of the Greek language throughout the Mediterranean world and the Near East. He founded the city of Alexandria in Mitzrayim, which became a Greek cultural center for several hundred years. During his reign, Alexander was recognized as a deity, setting a precedent for later rulers of Greece and Rome. Following Alexander's death, his top generals struggled for dominance, each in their own realms, and by the year 320 *B.C.E.*, the divisions among them were settled. The two of these kingdoms that most impacted the Yehudym were Mitzrayim, under the

Ptolemies (323 - 30 B.C.E.), and Syria, under the Seleucids (321 - 64 B.C.E.).

Mitzry Rule: (*Ptolemies 320 - 198 B.C.E.*). Yisrael fell under the control of the Ptolemy I of Mitzrayim sporadically between 320 and 301 B.C.E. and subsequently Mitzry control was settled for a century. The Ptolemies had a generally peaceable relationship with the Yehudym. Ptolemaic rule brought Greek peoples and culture to the nation of Yisrael. However, this “hellenization,” as it has been called, eventually became an existential challenge to Yehudy culture and religion. The Greek translation of the TaNaK or “Septuagint,” was begun during this time (*c.285 B.C.E.*), and was finally completed sometime during the late second century B.C.E.

Syrian Rule: (*Seleucids 198 - 142 B.C.E.*). When Seleucid King Antiochus III of Syria (223 - 187 B.C.E.) won the Yehudym territories from the Ptolemies in 198 B.C.E., he continued to tolerate the Yehudy religion and the rule of its priesthood over both civil and religious affairs. But these policies ended when his son, Antiochus IV Epiphanies, took the throne in 175 B.C.E. Antiochus Epiphanies sought to ruthlessly impose unified hellenistic culture and religion on the entirety of his kingdom. He gave the Yehudy Koheyn Gadol’s position to the highest bidder sympathetic with his reign. Finally, in 167 B.C.E., during his return to Syria after a humiliating defeat in Mitzrayim at the hands of the Romans, Antiochus lashed out at Yisrael by brutalizing its people, banning the Yehudy faith, and murdering all of the Yehudym who refused to give up their faith and traditions.

The heat of this unwarranted persecution forged Yehudy resistance. A Koheyn in the city of Modin named Mattithyahu, followed by his five sons (*nicknamed the Maccabees, “hammers”*), led a revolt against Syrian rule. In 164 B.C.E., that revolt succeeded in temporarily gaining Yisrael’s freedom. The Heykal was restored to service by the Maccabees and rededicated on the 25th day of the 12th solar month, 164 B.C.E. This day is now celebrated as the festival of Chanukkah, which means

“Dedication.” Antiochus Epiphanies died during this period while on a campaign to reassert his rule in Persia. One of Mattithyahu's sons, Yehudah Maccabeus, was killed in 160 B.C.E. in one of a series of battles that brought the Yehudym once again under Seleucid rule. However, with Antiochus dead and a new ruler in Syria the Yehudym were not immediately subjected to such fierce religious persecution as they previously had been.

Semi-Independence: Hasmonean Dynasty (142 - 63 B.C.E.). In 142 B.C.E., Syria granted Yehudah partial independence. For most of the following century the Yehudym were self-governed under the Hasmonean Dynasty, the descendents of the Maccabees. However, as time went on, the Hasmonean's began to compromise their faith and traditions, and to embrace hellenistic perspectives and policies in order to better integrate with the nations surrounding them. In violation of Torah law, the ruler of Yisrael also became the Kohen Hagadol. Not surprisingly, given this concentration of power, corruption and abuses quickly arose among the Hasmonean rulers. The party of the P'rushym (*or "Pharisees"*) came into ascendancy at this time, opposing hellenization and the absolute power of a single ruler as koheyn-governor. The Tzadoqym (*or "Sadducees"*), descendants of Aharon Hakohayn, Moshe's brother, also arose, supporting hellenization and the power of the new Kehunnah which they controlled.

Roman Rule: (63 B.C.E. – 135 CE). Throughout the first century B.C.E., Rome steadily increased its power over the Mediterranean world. In sixty-three B.C.E. the Roman general Pompey made Yisrael a vassal-state of Rome, and Yehudym independence was no more. When Hyrcanus II, the last Hasmonean ruler, finally died in 40 B.C.E., an Idumean named Herod was well-positioned to take limited control of Yehudah. He was supported in Rome by Octavian and Mark Antony and strengthened by his marriage to the Hasmonean Princess, Miriam, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus II. So Herod the Great became king in 37 B.C.E. and reestablished a separate great Kehunnah - the "Kehunnah Hagadolah." By the turn

of the first century CE, the Pax Romana - the militarily enforced "Peace of Rome" - was fully established, and Yisrael was firmly in its grip under the rule of Herod's successors.

It was in that time and under the Roman hegemony that Yehoshua, our blessed Messiah, was born in Bethlehem, raised in Natzereth, and came into his ministry throughout the land. But, that is another story. This present one begins with Mattithyahu and his sons, kohanym of YHWH Most-High, as they were living in peace in the city of the Modim under Syrian rule...

*Sabbath Keepers Fellowship & Prison Ministry
August 2017*

Maccabees Book 1

*"Not by might, and not by power, but by My Spirit,
saith YHWH Tzava'oth."*

Chapter 1

¹After Alexander the Macedonian, Philip's son, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated Darius, king of the Persians and Medes, he became king in his place, having first ruled in Greece. ²He fought many battles, captured fortresses, and put the kings of the earth to death. ³He advanced to the ends of the earth, gathering plunder from many nations; the earth fell silent before him, and his heart became proud and arrogant. ⁴He collected a very strong army and won dominion over provinces, nations, and rulers, and they paid him tribute.

⁵But after all this he took to his bed, realizing that he was going to die. ⁶So he summoned his noblest officers, who had been brought up with him from his youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. ⁷Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died. ⁸So his officers took over his kingdom, each in his own territory, ⁹and after his death they all put on diadems, and so did their sons after them for many years, multiplying evils on the earth.

¹⁰There sprang from these a sinful offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus, once a hostage at Rome. He became king in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

¹¹In those days there appeared in Yisrael transgressors of the law who seduced many, saying: "Let us go and make a covenant with the gentiles all around us; since we separated from them, many evils have come upon us." ¹²The proposal was agreeable; ¹³some from among the people promptly went to the king, and he authorized them to introduce the ordinances of the gentiles. ¹⁴Thereupon they built a gymnasium in Yerushalayim according to the Gentile custom. ¹⁵They disguised their circumcision and abandoned the set-apart covenant; they allied themselves with the gentiles and sold themselves to wrongdoing.

¹⁶When his kingdom seemed secure, Antiochus undertook to become king of the land of Mitzrayim and to rule over both

kingdoms. ¹⁷He invaded Mitzrayim with a strong force, with chariots, elephants and cavalry, and with a large fleet, ¹⁸to make war on Ptolemy, king of Mitzrayim. Ptolemy was frightened at his presence and fled, and many were wounded and fell dead. ¹⁹The fortified cities in the land of Mitzrayim were captured, and Antiochus plundered the land of Mitzrayim.

²⁰After Antiochus had defeated Mitzrayim in the one hundred and forty-third year, he returned and went up against Yisrael and against Yerushalayim with a strong force. ²¹He insolently entered the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, the lampstand for the light with all its utensils, ²²the offering table, the cups and bowls, the golden censers, and the curtain. The cornices and the golden ornament on the facade of the Temple—he stripped it all off. ²³And he took away the silver and gold and the precious vessels; he also took all the hidden treasures he could find. ²⁴Taking all this, he went back to his own country. He shed much blood and spoke with great arrogance.

²⁵And there was great mourning throughout all Yisrael, ²⁶and the rulers and the elders groaned. Young women and men languished, and the beauty of the women faded. ²⁷Every bridegroom took up lamentation, while the bride sitting in her chamber mourned, ²⁸And the land quaked on account of its inhabitants, and all the house of Ya'akov was clothed with shame.

²⁹Two years later, the king sent the Mysian commander to the cities of Yehudah, and he came to Yerushalayim with a strong force. ³⁰He spoke to them deceitfully in peaceful terms, and they believed him. Then he attacked the city suddenly, in a great onslaught, and destroyed many of the people in Yisrael. ³¹He plundered the city and set fire to it, demolished its houses and its surrounding walls. ³²And they took captive the women and children, and seized the animals. ³³Then they built up the City of David with a high, strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. ³⁴There they installed a sinful race, transgressors of

the law, who fortified themselves inside it. ³⁵They stored up weapons and provisions, depositing there the plunder they had collected from Yerushalayim, and they became a great snare.

³⁶The citadel became an ambush against the sanctuary, and a wicked adversary to Yisrael at all times. ³⁷They shed innocent blood around the sanctuary; they defiled the sanctuary. ³⁸Because of them the inhabitants of Yerushalayim fled away, she became the abode of strangers. She became a stranger to her own offspring, and her children forsook her. ³⁹Her sanctuary became desolate as a wilderness; her feasts were turned into mourning, her Shabbaths to shame, her honor to contempt. ⁴⁰As her esteem had been, so great was her dishonor: her exaltation was turned into mourning.

⁴¹Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, ⁴²and abandon their particular customs. All the gentiles conformed to the command of the king, ⁴³and many Yisraeli delighted in his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Shabbath.

⁴⁴The king sent letters by messenger to Yerushalayim and to the cities of Yehudah, ordering them to follow customs foreign to their land; ⁴⁵to prohibit burnt offerings, sacrifices, and libations in the sanctuary, to profane the Shabbaths and festivals, ⁴⁶to desecrate the sanctuary and the sacred ministers, ⁴⁷to build pagan altars and temples and shrines, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, ⁴⁸to leave their sons uncircumcised, and to defile themselves with every kind of impurity and abomination; ⁴⁹so that they might forget the law and change all its ordinances. ⁵⁰Whoever refused to act according to the command of the king was to be put to death.

⁵¹In words such as these he wrote to his whole kingdom. He appointed inspectors over all the people, and he ordered the cities of Yehudah to offer sacrifices, each city in turn. ⁵²Many of the people, those who abandoned the law, joined them and committed

evil in the land. ⁵³They drove Yisrael into hiding, wherever places of refuge could be found.

⁵⁴On the fifteenth day of the month Kislev, in the year one hundred and forty-five, the king erected the desolating abomination upon the altar of burnt offerings, and in the surrounding cities of Yehudah they built pagan altars. ⁵⁵They also burned incense at the doors of houses and in the streets. ⁵⁶Any scrolls of the law that they found they tore up and burned. ⁵⁷Whoever was found with a scroll of the covenant, and whoever observed the law, was condemned to death by royal decree. ⁵⁸So they used their power against Yisrael, against those who were caught, each month, in the cities. ⁵⁹On the twenty-fifth day of each month they sacrificed on the pagan altar that was over the altar of burnt offerings. ⁶⁰In keeping with the decree, they put to death women who had their children circumcised, ⁶¹and they hung their babies from their necks; their families also and those who had circumcised them were killed.

⁶²But many in Yisrael were determined and resolved in their hearts not to eat anything unclean; ⁶³they preferred to die rather than to be defiled with food or to profane the set-apart covenant; and they did die. ⁶⁴And very great wrath came upon Yisrael.

Chapter 2

¹In those days Mattithyahu, son of Yochanan, son of Shimon, a koheyn of the family of Yoariv, left Yerushalayim and settled in Modein. ²He had five sons: Yochanan, who was called Gaddi; ³Shimon, who was called Thassi; ⁴Yehudah, who was called Maccabeus; ⁵Eleazar, who was called Avaran; and Yonathan, who was called Apphus. ⁶When he saw the sacrileges that were being committed in Yehudah and in Yerushalayim, ⁷he said: “Woe is me! Why was I born to see the ruin of my people, the ruin of the set-apart city - to dwell there as it was given into the hands of enemies, the sanctuary into the hands of strangers? ⁸Her Temple has become like a man disgraced, ⁹her glorious vessels carried off as spoils, her infants murdered in her streets, her youths by the sword of the enemy. ¹⁰What nation has not taken its share of her realm, and laid its hand on her spoils? ¹¹All her adornment has been taken away. Once free, she has become a slave. ¹²We see our sanctuary laid waste, our beauty, our esteem. The gentiles have defiled them! ¹³Why are we still alive?” ¹⁴Then Mattithyahu and his sons tore their garments, put on sackcloth, and mourned bitterly.

¹⁵The officers of the king in charge of enforcing the apostasy came to the city of Modein to make them sacrifice. ¹⁶Many of Yisrael joined them, but Mattithyahu and his sons drew together. ¹⁷Then the officers of the king addressed Mattithyahu: “You are a leader, an honorable and great man in this city, supported by sons and kindred. ¹⁸Come now, be the first to obey the king’s command, as all the gentiles and Yehudym and those who are left in Yerushalayim have done. Then you and your sons shall be numbered among the King’s friends, and you and your sons shall be honored with silver and gold and many gifts.”

¹⁹But Mattithyahu answered in a loud voice: “Although all the gentiles in the king’s realm obey him, so that they forsake the religion of their ancestors and consent to the king’s orders, ²⁰yet I and my sons and my kindred will keep to the covenant of our ancestors. ²¹Heaven forbid that we should forsake the law and the

commandments. ²²We will not obey the words of the king by departing from our religion in the slightest degree.”

²³As he finished saying these words, a certain Yehudy came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein according to the king’s order. ²⁴When Mattithyahu saw him, he was filled with zeal; his heart was moved and his just fury was aroused; he sprang forward and killed him upon the altar. ²⁵At the same time, he also killed the messenger of the king who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. ²⁶Thus he showed his zeal for the law, just as Pynchas did with Zimri, son of Salu.

²⁷Then Mattithyahu cried out in the city, “Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow me!” ²⁸Then he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind in the city all their possessions.

²⁹At that time many who sought righteousness and justice went out into the wilderness to settle there, ³⁰they and their children, their wives and their animals, because misfortunes pressed so hard on them. ³¹It was reported to the officers and soldiers of the king who were in the City of David, in Yerushalayim, that those who had flouted the king’s order had gone out to secret refuges in the wilderness. ³²Many hurried out after them, and having caught up with them, camped opposite and prepared to attack them on the Shabbath. ³³The pursuers said to them, “Enough of this! Come out and obey the king’s command, and you will live.” ³⁴But they replied, “We will not come out, nor will we obey the king’s command to profane the Shabbath.” ³⁵Then the enemy attacked them at once. ³⁶But they did not retaliate; they neither threw stones, nor blocked up their secret refuges. ³⁷They said, “Let us all die in innocence; heaven and earth are our witnesses that you destroy us unjustly.” ³⁸So the officers and soldiers attacked them on the Shabbath, and they died with their wives, their children and their animals, to the number of a thousand persons.

³⁹When Mattithyahu and his friends heard of it, they mourned deeply for them. ⁴⁰They said to one another, “If we all do as our kindred have done, and do not fight against the gentiles for our lives and our laws, they will soon destroy us from the earth.” ⁴¹So on that day they came to this decision: “Let us fight against anyone who attacks us on the Shabbath, so that we may not all die as our kindred died in their secret refuges.”

⁴²Then they were joined by a group of Chassidym, mighty warriors of Yisrael, all of them devoted to the law. ⁴³And all those who were fleeing from the persecutions joined them and supported them. ⁴⁴They gathered an army and struck down sinners in their wrath and the lawless in their anger, and the survivors fled to the gentiles for safety. ⁴⁵Mattithyahu and his friends went about and tore down the pagan altars; ⁴⁶they also forcibly circumcised any uncircumcised boys whom they found in the territory of Yisrael. ⁴⁷They put to flight the arrogant, and the work prospered in their hands. ⁴⁸They saved the law from the hands of the gentiles and of the kings and did not let the sinner triumph.

⁴⁹When the time came for Mattithyahu to die, he said to his sons: “Arrogance and scorn have now grown strong; it is a time of disaster and violent wrath. ⁵⁰Therefore, my children, be zealous for the law and give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors. ⁵¹“Remember the deeds that our ancestors did in their times, and you shall win great honor and an everlasting name. ⁵²Was not Avraham found faithful in trial, and it was credited to him as righteousness? ⁵³Yoseph, when in distress, kept the commandment, and he became master of Mitzrayim. ⁵⁴Pynchas our ancestor, for his burning zeal, received the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. ⁵⁵Yehoshua, for executing his commission, became a judge in Yisrael. ⁵⁶Kalev, for bearing witness before the assembly, received an inheritance in the land. ⁵⁷David, for his loyalty, received as a heritage a throne of eternal kingship. ⁵⁸Eliyahu, for his burning zeal for the law, was taken up to heaven. ⁵⁹Chananyah, Azaryah and Mishael, for their faith, were saved from the fire.

⁶⁰Daniel, for his innocence, was delivered from the mouths of lions. ⁶¹And so, consider this from generation to generation, that none who hope in Heaven shall fail in strength.

⁶²Do not fear the words of sinners, for their esteem ends in corruption and worms. ⁶³Today exalted, tomorrow not to be found, they have returned to dust, their schemes have perished. ⁶⁴Children! be courageous and strong in keeping the law, for by it you shall be honored.

⁶⁵“Here is your brother Shimon who I know is a wise counselor; listen to him always, and he will be a father to you. ⁶⁶And Yehudah Maccabeus, a mighty warrior from his youth, shall be the leader of your army and wage the war against the nations. ⁶⁷Gather about you all who observe the law, and avenge your people. ⁶⁸Pay back the gentiles what they deserve, and observe the precepts of the law.”

⁶⁹Then he blessed them, and he was gathered to his ancestors. ⁷⁰He died in the year one hundred and forty-six, and was buried in the tombs of his ancestors in Modein, and all Yisrael mourned him greatly.

Chapter 3

¹Then his son Yehudah, who was called Maccabeus, took his place. ²All his brothers and all who had joined his father supported him, and they gladly carried on Yisrael's war. ³He spread abroad the esteem of his people, and put on his breastplate like a giant. He armed himself with weapons of war; he fought battles and protected the camp with his sword. ⁴In his deeds he was like a lion, like a young lion roaring for prey. ⁵He pursued the lawless, hunting them out, and those who troubled his people he destroyed by fire. ⁶The lawless were cowed by fear of him, and all evildoers were dismayed. By his hand deliverance was happily achieved, ⁷and he afflicted many kings. He gave joy to Ya'akov by his deeds, and his memory is blessed forever. ⁸He went about the cities of Yehudah destroying the renegades there. He turned away wrath from Yisrael, ⁹was renowned to the ends of the earth; and gathered together those who were perishing. ¹⁰Then Apollonius gathered together the gentiles, along with a large army from Shomeron, to fight against Yisrael. ¹¹When Yehudah learned of it, he went out to meet him and struck and killed him. Many fell wounded, and the rest fled. ¹²They took their spoils, and Yehudah took the sword of Apollonius and fought with it the rest of his life.

¹³But Seron, commander of the Syrian army, heard that Yehudah had mustered an assembly of faithful men ready for war. ¹⁴So he said, "I will make a name for myself and win honor in the kingdom. I will wage war against Yehudah and his followers, who have despised the king's command." ¹⁵And again a large company of renegades advanced with him to help him take revenge on the Yisraeli.

¹⁶When he reached the ascent of Beth-horon, Yehudah went out to meet him with a few men. ¹⁷But when they saw the army coming against them, they said to Yehudah: "How can we, few as we are, fight such a strong host as this? Besides, we are weak since we have not eaten today." ¹⁸But Yehudah said: "Many are easily hemmed in by a few; in the sight of Heaven there is no difference between deliverance by many or by few; ¹⁹for victory in war does

not depend upon the size of the army, but on strength that comes from Heaven.²⁰ With great presumption and lawlessness they come against us to destroy us and our wives and children and to despoil us;²¹ but we are fighting for our lives and our laws.²² He will crush them before us; so do not fear them.”²³ When he finished speaking, he rushed suddenly upon Seron and his army, who were crushed before him.²⁴ He pursued Seron down the descent of Beth-horon into the plain. About eight hundred of their men fell, and the rest fled to the land of the Pelishtym.²⁵ Then Yehudah and his brothers began to be feared, and dread fell upon the gentiles about them.²⁶ His fame reached the king, and the gentiles talked about the battles of Yehudah.

²⁷When King Antiochus heard these reports, he was filled with rage; so he ordered that all the forces of his kingdom be gathered, a very strong army.²⁸ He opened his treasury, gave his soldiers a year's pay, and commanded them to be prepared for anything.²⁹ But then he saw that this exhausted the money in his treasury; moreover the tribute from the province was small because of the dissension and distress he had brought upon the land by abolishing the laws which had been in effect from of old.³⁰ He feared that, as had happened once or twice, he would not have enough for his expenses and for the gifts that he was accustomed to give with a lavish hand—more so than all previous kings.³¹ Greatly perplexed, he decided to go to Persia and levy tribute on those provinces, and so raise a large sum of money.

³²He left Lysias, a noble of royal descent, in charge of the king's affairs from the Ephrath River to the frontier of Mitzrayim,³³ and commissioned him to take care of his son Antiochus until his return.³⁴ He entrusted to him half of his forces, and the elephants, and gave him instructions concerning everything he wanted done. As for the inhabitants of Yehudah and Yerushalayim,³⁵ Lysias was to send an army against them to crush and destroy the power of Yisrael and the remnant of Yerushalayim and efface their memory from the place.³⁶ He was to settle foreigners in all their territory

and distribute their land by lot. ³⁷The king took the remaining half of the army and set out from Antioch, his capital, in the year one hundred and forty-seven; he crossed the Ephrath River and went through the provinces beyond.

³⁸Lysias chose Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes, and Nikanor and Gorgias, powerful men among the King's friends, ³⁹and with them he sent forty thousand foot soldiers and seven thousand cavalry to invade and ravage the land of Yehudah according to the king's orders. ⁴⁰Setting out with their whole force, they came and pitched their camp near Emmaus in the plain. ⁴¹When the merchants of the region heard of their prowess, they came to the camp, bringing a huge sum of silver and gold, along with fetters, to buy the Yisraeli as slaves. A force from Edom and from Pelishtia joined with them.

⁴²Yehudah and his brothers saw that evils had multiplied and that armies were encamped within their territory. They learned of the orders which the king had given to destroy and utterly wipe out the people. ⁴³So they said to one another, "Let us raise our people from their ruin and fight for them and for our sanctuary!"

⁴⁴The assembly gathered together to prepare for battle and to pray and ask for mercy and compassion. ⁴⁵Yerushalayim was uninhabited, like a wilderness; not one of her children came in or went out. The sanctuary was trampled on, and foreigners were in the citadel; it was a habitation for gentiles. Joy had disappeared from Ya'akov, and the flute and the harp were silent.

⁴⁶Thus they assembled and went to Mizpah near Yerushalayim, because formerly at Mizpah there was a place of prayer for Yisrael.

⁴⁷That day they fasted and wore sackcloth; they sprinkled ashes on their heads and tore their garments. ⁴⁸They unrolled the scroll of the law, to learn about the things for which the gentiles consulted the images of their idols. ⁴⁹They brought with them the Kohanym's garments, the first fruits, and the tithes; and they brought forward the naziryim who had completed the time of their vows. ⁵⁰And they

cried aloud to Heaven: “What shall we do with these, and where shall we take them? ⁵¹For your sanctuary has been trampled on and profaned, and your kohanym are in mourning and humbled. ⁵²Now the gentiles are gathered together against us to destroy us. You know what they plot against us. ⁵³How shall we be able to resist them unless you help us?” ⁵⁴Then they blew the trumpets and cried out loudly.

⁵⁵After this Yehudah appointed officers for the people, over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. ⁵⁶He proclaimed that those who were building houses, or were just married, or were planting vineyards, and those who were afraid, could each return home, according to the law. ⁵⁷Then the army moved off, and they camped to the south of Emmaus. ⁵⁸Yehudah said: “Arm yourselves and be brave; in the morning be ready to fight these gentiles who have assembled against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. ⁵⁹It is better for us to die in battle than to witness the evils befalling our nation and our sanctuary. ⁶⁰Whatever is willed in heaven will be done.”

Chapter 4

¹Now Gorgias took five thousand infantry and a thousand picked cavalry, and this detachment set out at night ²in order to fall upon the camp of the Yehudym in a surprise attack. Some from the citadel were his guides. ³Yehudah heard of it and himself set out with his soldiers to attack the king's army at Emmaus ⁴while these forces were still scattered away from the camp. ⁵During the night Gorgias came into the camp of Yehudah, and found no one there; so he sought them in the mountains, saying, "They are fleeing from us."

⁶But at daybreak Yehudah appeared in the plain with three thousand men; furthermore they lacked the helmets and swords they wanted. ⁷They saw the army of the gentiles, strong, breastplated, and flanked with cavalry, and made up of experienced soldiers. ⁸Yehudah said to the men with him: "Do not fear their numbers or dread their attack. ⁹Remember how our ancestors were saved in the Yam Suf, when Pharaoh pursued them with an army. ¹⁰So now let us cry to Heaven in the hope that he will favor us, remember the covenant with our ancestors, and destroy this army before us today. ¹¹All the gentiles shall know that there is One who redeems and delivers Yisrael."

¹²When the foreigners looked up and saw them marching toward them, ¹³they came out of their camp for battle. The men with Yehudah blew the trumpet, and ¹⁴joined the battle. They crushed the gentiles, who fled toward the plain. ¹⁵Their whole rear guard fell by the sword, and they were pursued as far as Gazara and the plains of Idumaea, to Azotus and Yamnia. About three thousand of their men fell.

¹⁶When Yehudah and the army returned from the pursuit, ¹⁷he said to the people: "Do not be greedy for plunder; for there is a fight ahead of us, ¹⁸and Gorgias and his army are near us on the mountain. But now stand firm against our enemies and fight them. Afterward you can freely take the plunder."

¹⁹As Yehudah was finishing this speech, a detachment appeared, looking down from the mountain. ²⁰They saw that their army had been put to flight and their camp was burning. The smoke they saw revealed what had happened. ²¹When they realized this, they completely lost heart; and when they also saw the army of Yehudah in the plain ready to attack, ²²they all fled to the land of the foreigners.

²³Then Yehudah went back to plunder the camp, and they took much gold and silver, cloth dyed blue and purple, and great treasure. ²⁴As they returned, they were singing hymns and giving esteem to Heaven, “who is excellent, whose mercy endures forever.” ²⁵Thus Yisrael experienced a great deliverance that day.

²⁶But those of the foreigners who had escaped went and told Lysias all that had occurred. ²⁷When he heard it he was disturbed and discouraged, because things had not turned out in Yisrael as he intended and as the king had ordered.

²⁸So the following year he gathered together sixty thousand picked men and five thousand cavalry, to fight them. ²⁹They came into Idumea and camped at Beth-zur, and Yehudah met them with ten thousand men.

³⁰Seeing that the army was strong, he prayed thus: “Blessed are you, Savior of Yisrael, who crushed the attack of the mighty one by the hand of your servant David and delivered the foreign camp into the hand of Yonathan, the son of Shaul, and his armor-bearer. ³¹Give this army into the hands of your people Yisrael; make them ashamed of their troops and their cavalry. ³²Strike them with cowardice, weaken the boldness of their strength, and let them tremble at their own destruction. ³³Strike them down by the sword of those who love you, that all who know your name may sing your praise.”

³⁴Then they engaged in battle, and about five thousand of Lysias' army fell in hand-to-hand fighting. ³⁵When Lysias saw the tide of the battle turning, and the increased boldness of Yehudah, whose men were ready either to live or to die nobly, he withdrew to Antioch and began to recruit mercenaries so as to return to Yehudah with greater numbers.

³⁶Then Yehudah and his brothers said, "Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it." ³⁷So the whole army assembled, and went up to Mount Tzion. ³⁸They found the sanctuary desolate, the altar desecrated, the gates burnt, weeds growing in the courts as in a thicket or on some mountain, and the kohanym's chambers demolished. ³⁹Then they tore their garments and made great lamentation; they sprinkled their heads with ashes ⁴⁰and prostrated themselves. And when the signal was given with trumpets, they cried out to Heaven.

⁴¹Yehudah appointed men to attack those in the citadel, while he purified the sanctuary. ⁴²He chose blameless kohanym, devoted to the law; ⁴³these purified the sanctuary and carried away the stones of the defilement to an unclean place. ⁴⁴They deliberated what ought to be done with the altar for burnt offerings that had been desecrated. ⁴⁵They decided it best to tear it down, lest it be a lasting shame to them that the gentiles had defiled it; so they tore down the altar. ⁴⁶They stored the stones in a suitable place on the Temple mount, until the coming of a prophet who could determine what to do with them. ⁴⁷Then they took uncut stones, according to the law, and built a new altar like the former one. ⁴⁸They also repaired the sanctuary and the interior of the Temple and consecrated the courts. ⁴⁹They made new sacred vessels and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the Temple. ⁵⁰Then they burned incense on the altar and lighted the lamps on the lampstand, and these illuminated the Temple. ⁵¹They also put loaves on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken.

⁵²They rose early on the morning of the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, that is, the month of Kislev, in the year one hundred and forty-eight, ⁵³and offered sacrifice according to the law on the new altar for burnt offerings that they had made. ⁵⁴On the anniversary of the day on which the gentiles had desecrated it, on that very day it was rededicated with songs, harps, lyres, and cymbals. ⁵⁵All the people prostrated themselves and adored and praised Heaven, who had given them success.

⁵⁶For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar and joyfully offered burnt offerings and sacrifices of deliverance and praise. ⁵⁷They ornamented the facade of the Temple with gold crowns and shields; they repaired the gates and the kohanym's chambers and furnished them with doors. ⁵⁸There was great joy among the people now that the disgrace brought by the gentiles was removed. ⁵⁹Then Yehudah and his brothers and the entire assembly of Yisrael decreed that every year for eight days, from the twenty-fifth day of the month Kislev, the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness on the anniversary.

⁶⁰At that time they built high walls and strong towers around Mount Tzion, to prevent the gentiles from coming and trampling it as they had done before. ⁶¹Yehudah also placed a garrison there to protect it, and likewise fortified Beth-zur, that the people might have a stronghold facing Idumea.

Chapter 5

¹When the nations round about heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the sanctuary restored as before, they were enraged. ²So they decided to destroy the descendants of Ya'akov who were among them, and they began to kill and eradicate the people. ³Then Yehudah attacked the Edomy at Akrabattene in Idumea, because they were blockading Yisrael; he dealt them a heavy blow, humbled and despoiled them. ⁴He also remembered the malice of the Baean, who had become a snare and a stumbling block to the people by ambushing them along the roads. ⁵He forced them to take refuge in towers, which he besieged; he put them under the ban and burned down their towers along with all who were in them. ⁶Then he crossed over to the Ammony, where he found a strong army and a large body of people with Timotiyos as their leader. ⁷He fought many battles with them, routed them, and struck them down. ⁸After seizing Yazer and its villages, he returned to Yehudah.

⁹The gentiles in Gilead assembled to destroy the Yisraeli who were in their territory; these then fled to the stronghold of Dathema. ¹⁰They sent a letter to Yehudah and his brothers saying: "The gentiles around us have assembled against us to destroy us, ¹¹and they are preparing to come and seize this stronghold to which we have fled. Timotiyos is the leader of their army. ¹²Come at once to rescue us from them, for many of us have fallen. ¹³All our kindred who were in the territory of the Tobiads have been killed; the gentiles have captured their wives, their children and their belongings, and they have slain there about a thousand men."

¹⁴While they were reading this letter, suddenly other messengers, with garments torn, arrived from The Galil to deliver a similar message: ¹⁵that "the inhabitants of Ptolemais, Tyre, and Tzidon, and the whole of gentile The Galil have joined forces to destroy us." ¹⁶When Yehudah and the people heard this, a great assembly convened to consider what they should do for their kindred who were in distress and being attacked by enemies.

¹⁷Yehudah said to his brother Shimon: “Choose men for yourself, and go, rescue your kindred in The Galil; my brother Yonathan and I will go to Gilead.”

¹⁸He left Yoseph, son of Zekaryah, and Azaryah, leader of the people, with the rest of the army in Yehudah to guard it. ¹⁹He commanded them, “Take charge of these people, but do not join battle against the gentiles until we return.” ²⁰Three thousand men were allotted to Shimon to go into The Galil, and eight thousand men to Yehudah, for Gilead.

²¹Shimon went into The Galil and fought many battles with the gentiles. They were crushed before him, ²²and he pursued them to the very gate of Ptolemais. About three thousand of the gentiles fell, and he gathered their spoils. ²³He took with him the Yehudym who were in The Galil and in Arbatta, with their wives and children and all that they had, and brought them to Yehudah with great rejoicing.

²⁴Yehudah Maccabeus and his brother Yonathan crossed the Yarden and marched for three days through the wilderness. ²⁵There they met some Nabateans, who received them peaceably and told them all that had happened to their kindred in Gilead: ²⁶“Many of them are shut up in Botzrah, in Bosor near Alema, in Chaspho, Maked, and Carnaim”—all of these are large, fortified cities - ²⁷“and some are shut up in other cities of Gilead. Tomorrow their enemies plan to attack the strongholds and to seize and destroy all these people in one day.”

²⁸Thereupon Yehudah suddenly changed direction with his army, marched across the wilderness to Botzrah, and captured the city. He put every male to the sword, took all their spoils, and set fire to the city. ²⁹He led his army from that place by night, and they marched toward the stronghold. ³⁰When morning came, they looked ahead and saw a countless multitude, with ladders and machines for capturing the stronghold, beginning to attack. ³¹When

Yehudah perceived that the struggle had begun and that the noise of the battle was resounding to heaven with trumpet blasts and loud shouting, ³²he said to the men of his army, “Fight for our kindred today.” ³³He came up behind them with three columns blowing their trumpets and crying out in prayer. ³⁴When the army of Timotiyos realized that it was Maccabeus, they fled before him, and he inflicted on them a great defeat. About eight thousand of their men fell that day.

³⁵Then he turned toward Alema and attacked and captured it; he killed every male, took spoils, and burned it down. ³⁶From there he moved on and took Chaspho, Maked, Bosor, and the other cities of Gilead.

³⁷After these events Timotiyos assembled another army and camped opposite Raphon, on the other side of the wadi. ³⁸Yehudah sent men to spy on the camp, and they reported to him: “All the gentiles around us have rallied to him, making a very large force; ³⁹they have also hired Arabians to help them, and have camped beyond the wadi, ready to attack you.” So Yehudah went forward to meet them.

⁴⁰As Yehudah and his army were approaching the flowing wadi, Timotiyos said to the officers of his army: “If he crosses over to us first, we shall not be able to resist him; he will certainly defeat us. ⁴¹But if he is hesitant and camps on the other side of the river, we will cross over to him and defeat him.” ⁴²But when Yehudah reached the flowing wadi, he stationed the officers of the people beside it and gave them this order: “Do not allow anyone to encamp; all must go into battle.” ⁴³He was the first to cross to the attack, with all the people behind him, and all the gentiles were crushed before them. They threw away their arms and fled to the temple enclosure at Carnaim. ⁴⁴But Yehudah's troops captured the city and burnt the temple enclosure with all who were in it. So Carnaim was subdued, and Yehudah met with no more resistance.

⁴⁵Then Yehudah assembled all the Yisraeli, great and small, who were in Gilead, with their wives and children and their belongings, a very large company, to go into the land of Yehudah. ⁴⁶When they reached Ephron, a large and strongly fortified city along the way, they found it impossible to go around it on either the right or the left; they would have to march right through it. ⁴⁷But the people in the city shut them out and blocked up the gates with stones. ⁴⁸Then Yehudah sent them this peaceful message: “Let us cross your territory in order to reach our own; no one will harm you; we will only march through.” But they would not open to him. ⁴⁹So Yehudah ordered a proclamation to be made in the camp that everyone should take up positions where they were. ⁵⁰When the men of the army took up their positions, he assaulted the city all that day and night, and it was delivered into his hand. ⁵¹He put every male to the sword, leveled the city, took spoils and passed through it over the slain.

⁵²Then they crossed the Yarden to the great plain in front of Bethshan; ⁵³and Yehudah kept gathering the stragglers and encouraging the people the whole way, until he reached the land of Yehudah. ⁵⁴They ascended Mount Tzion in joy and gladness and sacrificed burnt offerings, because not one of them had fallen; they had returned in safety.

⁵⁵In those days when Yehudah and Yonathan were in the land of Gilead, and Shimon his brother was in The Galil opposite Ptolemais, ⁵⁶Yoseph, son of Zekaryah, and Azaryah, the leaders of the army, heard about the brave deeds and the fighting that they were doing. ⁵⁷They said, “Let us also make a name for ourselves by going out and fighting against the gentiles around us.” ⁵⁸They gave orders to those of their army who were with them, and marched against Yamnia. ⁵⁹But Gorgias and his men came out of the city to meet them in battle. ⁶⁰Yoseph and Azaryah were routed and were pursued to the frontiers of Yehudah, and about two thousand Yisraeli fell that day. ⁶¹It was a great setback for the people, because they had not obeyed Yehudah and his brothers,

thinking that they would do brave deeds. ⁶²But they were not of the family through whom Yisrael's deliverance was given.

⁶³The valiant Yehudah and his brothers were greatly honored in all Yisrael and among all the gentiles, wherever their name was heard; ⁶⁴and people gathered about them and praised them.

⁶⁵Then Yehudah and his brothers went out and attacked the Edomy in the land toward the south; he took Chevron and its villages, and he destroyed its strongholds and burned the towers around it. ⁶⁶He then set out for the land of the foreigners and passed through Marisa. ⁶⁷On that day some kohanyim fell in battle who had gone out rashly to fight in their desire to do brave deeds. ⁶⁸Yehudah then turned toward Azotus in the land of the foreigners. He destroyed their altars and burned the carved images of their elohym; and after plundering their cities he returned to the land of Yehudah.

Chapter 6

¹As King Antiochus passed through the eastern provinces, he heard that in Persia there was a city, Elam, famous for its wealth in silver and gold, ²and that its temple was very rich, containing gold helmets, breastplates, and weapons left there by the first king of the Greeks, Alexander, son of Philip, king of Macedon. ³He went therefore and tried to capture and loot the city. But he could not do so, because his plan became known to the people of the city ⁴who rose up in battle against him. So he fled and in great dismay withdrew from there to return to Bavel.

⁵While he was in Persia, a messenger brought him news that the armies that had gone into the land of Yehudah had been routed; ⁶that Lysias had gone at first with a strong army and been driven back; that the people of Yehudah had grown strong by reason of the arms, wealth, and abundant spoils taken from the armies they had cut down; ⁷that they had pulled down the abomination which he had built upon the altar in Yerushalayim; and that they had surrounded with high walls both the sanctuary, as it had been before, and his city of Beth-zur.

⁸When the king heard this news, he was astonished and very much shaken. Sick with grief because his designs had failed, he took to his bed. ⁹There he remained many days, assailed by waves of grief, for he thought he was going to die. ¹⁰So he called in all his Friends and said to them: "Sleep has departed from my eyes, and my heart sinks from anxiety. ¹¹I said to myself: 'Into what tribulation have I come, and in what floods of sorrow am I now! Yet I was kindly and beloved in my rule.' ¹²But I now recall the evils I did in Yerushalayim, when I carried away all the vessels of silver and gold that were in it, and for no cause gave orders that the inhabitants of Yehudah be destroyed. ¹³I know that this is why these evils have overtaken me; and now I am dying, in bitter grief, in a foreign land."

¹⁴Then he summoned Philip, one of his friends, and put him in charge of his whole kingdom. ¹⁵He gave him his diadem, his robe,

and his signet ring, so that he might guide the king's son Antiochus and bring him up to be king. ¹⁶So King Antiochus died there in the one hundred and forty-ninth year. ¹⁷When Lysias learned that the king was dead, he set up the king's son Antiochus, whom he had reared as a child, to be king in his place; and he gave him the title Eupator.

¹⁸Those in the citadel were hemming Yisrael in around the sanctuary, continually trying to harm them and to strengthen the gentiles. ¹⁹And so Yehudah planned to destroy them, and assembled the people to besiege them. ²⁰So in the one hundred and fiftieth year they assembled and besieged the citadel, for which purpose he constructed platforms and siege engines. ²¹But some of the besieged escaped, and some renegade Yisraeli joined them. ²²They went to the king and said: "How long will you fail to do justice and to avenge our kindred? ²³We agreed to serve your father and to follow his orders and obey his edicts. ²⁴And for this our own people have become our enemies; they have put to death as many of us as they could find and have seized our inheritances. ²⁵They have acted aggressively not only against us, but throughout their whole territory. ²⁶Look! Today they have besieged the citadel in Yerushalayim in order to capture it, and they have fortified the sanctuary and Beth-zur. ²⁷Unless you act quickly to prevent them, they will do even worse things than these, and you will not be able to stop them."

²⁸When the king heard this he was enraged, and he called together all his friends, the officers of his army, and the commanders of the cavalry. ²⁹Mercenary forces also came to him from other kingdoms and from the islands of the seas. ³⁰His army numbered a hundred thousand footsoldiers, twenty thousand cavalry, and thirty-two elephants trained for war. ³¹They passed through Idumea and camped before Beth-zur. For many days they attacked it; they constructed siege engines, but the besieged made a sortie and burned these, and they fought bravely.

³²Then Yehudah marched away from the citadel and moved his camp to Beth-Zekaryah, opposite the king's camp. ³³The king, rising before dawn, moved his force hastily along the road to Beth-Zekaryah; and the troops prepared for battle and sounded the trumpet. ³⁴They made the elephants drunk on the juice of grapes and mulberries to get them ready to fight. ³⁵The beasts were distributed along the phalanxes, each elephant having assigned to it a thousand men in coats of mail, with bronze helmets on their heads, and five hundred picked cavalry. ³⁶These accompanied the beast wherever it was; wherever it moved, they moved too and never left it. ³⁷Each elephant was outfitted with a strong wooden tower, fastened to it by a harness; each tower held three soldiers who fought from it, besides the Indian driver. ³⁸The remaining cavalry were stationed on one or the other of the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy and to be protected by the phalanxes. ³⁹When the sun shone on the gold and bronze shields, the mountains gleamed with their brightness and blazed like flaming torches. ⁴⁰Part of the king's army spread out along the heights, while some were on low ground, and they marched forward steadily in fitting order. ⁴¹All who heard the noise of their numbers, the tramp of their marching, and the clanging of the arms, trembled; for the army was very great and strong.

⁴²Yehudah with his army advanced to fight, and six hundred men of the king's army fell. ⁴³Eleazar, called Avaran, saw one of the beasts covered with royal armor and bigger than any of the others, and so he thought the king was on it. ⁴⁴He gave up his life to save his people and win an everlasting name for himself. ⁴⁵He dashed courageously up to it in the middle of the phalanx, killing men right and left, so that they parted before him. ⁴⁶He ran under the elephant, stabbed it and killed it. The beast fell to the ground on top of him, and he died there. ⁴⁷But when Yehudah's troops saw the strength of the royal army and the ardor of its forces, they retreated from them.

⁴⁸Some of the king's army went up to Yerushalayim to attack them, and the king established camps in Yehudah and at Mount Tzion. ⁴⁹He made peace with the people of Beth-zur, and they evacuated the city, because they had no food there to enable them to withstand a siege, for that was a Shabbath year in the land. ⁵⁰The king took Beth-zur and stationed a garrison there to hold it. ⁵¹For many days he besieged the sanctuary, setting up platforms and siege engines, fire-throwers, catapults and mechanical bows for shooting arrows and projectiles. ⁵²The defenders countered by setting up siege engines of their own, and kept up the fight a long time. ⁵³But there were no provisions in the storerooms, because it was the seventh year, and the reserves had been eaten up by those who had been rescued from the gentiles and brought to Yehudah. ⁵⁴Few men remained in the sanctuary because the famine was too much for them; the rest scattered, each to his own home.

⁵⁵Lysias heard that Philip, whom King Antiochus, before his death, had appointed to train his son Antiochus to be king, ⁵⁶had returned from Persia and Media with the army that accompanied the king, and that he was seeking to take over the government. ⁵⁷So he hastily decided to withdraw. He said to the king, the leaders of the army, and the soldiers: "We are growing weaker every day, our provisions are scanty, the place we are besieging is strong, and it is our duty to take care of the affairs of the kingdom. ⁵⁸Therefore let us now come to terms with these people and make peace with them and all their nation. ⁵⁹Let us grant them freedom to live according to their own laws as formerly; it was on account of their laws, which we abolished, that they became enraged and did all these things."

⁶⁰The proposal pleased the king and the leaders; he sent peace terms to the Yehudym, and they accepted. ⁶¹So the king and the leaders swore an oath to them, and on these terms the Yehudym evacuated the fortification. ⁶²But when the king entered Mount Tzion and saw how the place was fortified, he broke the oath he had sworn and gave orders to tear down the encircling wall. ⁶³Then

he departed in haste and returned to Antioch, where he found Philip in control of the city. He fought against him and took the city by force.

Chapter 7

¹In the one hundred and fifty-first year, Demetrius, son of Seleucus, set out from Rome, arrived with a few men at a coastal city, and began to rule there. ²As he was entering the royal palace of his ancestors, the soldiers seized Antiochus and Lysias to bring them to him. ³When he was informed of this, he said, “Do not show me their faces.” ⁴So the soldiers killed them, and Demetrius assumed the royal throne.

⁵Then all the lawless men and renegades of Yisrael came to him. They were led by Alcimus, who desired to be Koheyn Gadol. ⁶They made this accusation to the king against the people: “Yehudah and his brothers have destroyed all your friends and have driven us out of our land. ⁷So now, send a man whom you trust to go and see all the destruction Yehudah has wrought on us and on the king’s territory, and let him punish them and all their supporters.”

⁸So the king chose Bacchides, one of the King’s friends, who ruled the province of West-of-Ephrath, a great man in the kingdom, and faithful to the king. ⁹He sent him and the renegade Alcimus, to whom he granted the Kehunnah, with orders to take revenge on the Yisraeli. ¹⁰They set out and, on arriving in the land of Yehudah with a great army, sent messengers who spoke deceitfully to Yehudah and his brothers in peaceful terms. ¹¹But these paid no attention to their words, seeing that they had come with a great army.

¹²A group of scribes, however, gathered about Alcimus and Bacchides to ask for a just agreement. ¹³The Chassidym were the first among the Yisraeli to seek peace with them, ¹⁴for they said, “A koheyn of the line of Aharon has come with the army, and he will not do us any wrong.” ¹⁵He spoke with them peacefully and swore to them, “We will not seek to injure you or your friends.” ¹⁶So they trusted him. But he arrested sixty of them and killed them in one day, according to the words that he wrote:

¹⁷“The flesh of your faithful, and their blood they have spilled all around about Yerushalayim, and no one was left to bury them.”

¹⁸Then fear and dread of them came upon all the people, who said: “There is no truth or justice among them; they violated the agreement and the oath that they swore.”

¹⁹Bacchides withdrew from Yerushalayim and camped in Bethzaith. He had many of the men who deserted to him arrested and some of the people. He killed them and threw them into a great cistern. ²⁰He handed the province over to Alcimus, leaving troops to help him, while he himself returned to the king.

²¹Alcimus struggled to maintain his Kehunnah, ²²and all those who were troubling the people gathered about him. They took possession of the land of Yehudah and caused great distress in Yisrael. ²³When Yehudah saw all the evils that Alcimus and those with him were bringing upon the Yisraeli, even more than the gentiles had, ²⁴he went about all the borders of Yehudah and took revenge on the men who had deserted, preventing them from going out into the country. ²⁵But when Alcimus saw that Yehudah and his followers were gaining strength and realized that he could not resist them, he returned to the king and accused them of grave crimes.

²⁶Then the king sent Nikanor, one of his honored officers, who was a bitter enemy of Yisrael, with orders to destroy the people.

²⁷Nikanor came to Yerushalayim with a large force and deceitfully sent to Yehudah and his brothers this peaceable message: ²⁸“Let there be no fight between me and you. I will come with a few men to meet you face to face in peace.”

²⁹So he came to Yehudah, and they greeted one another peaceably. But Yehudah's enemies were prepared to seize him. ³⁰When he became aware that Nikanor had come to him with deceit in mind, Yehudah was afraid of him and would not meet him again. ³¹When Nikanor saw that his plan had been discovered, he went out to fight

Yehudah near Capharsalama. ³²About five hundred men of Nikanor's army fell; the rest fled to the City of David.

³³After this, Nikanor went up to Mount Tzion. Some of the kohanym from the sanctuary and some of the elders of the people came out to greet him peaceably and to show him the burnt offering that was being sacrificed for the king. ³⁴But he mocked and ridiculed them, defiled them, and spoke arrogantly. ³⁵In a rage he swore: "If Yehudah and his army are not delivered to me at once, when I return victorious I will burn this Temple down." He went away in great anger. ³⁶The kohanym, however, went in and stood before the altar and the sanctuary. They wept and said: ³⁷"You have chosen this house to bear your name, to be a house of prayer and supplication for your people. ³⁸Take revenge on this man and his army, and let them fall by the sword. Remember their blasphemies, and do not let them continue."

³⁹Nikanor left Yerushalayim and camped at Beth-horon, where the Syrian army joined him. ⁴⁰But Yehudah camped in Adasa with three thousand men. Here Yehudah uttered this prayer: ⁴¹"When they who were sent by the king blasphemed, your angel went out and killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand of them. ⁴²In the same way, crush this army before us today, and let the rest know that Nikanor spoke wickedly against your sanctuary; judge him according to his wickedness."

⁴³The armies met in battle on the thirteenth day of the month Adar. Nikanor's army was crushed, and he himself was the first to fall in the battle. ⁴⁴When his army saw that Nikanor had fallen, they threw down their weapons and fled. ⁴⁵The Yehudym pursued them a day's journey from Adasa to near Gazara, blowing the trumpets behind them as signals. ⁴⁶From all the surrounding villages of Yehudah people came out and outflanked them. They turned them back, and all the enemies fell by the sword; not a single one escaped.

⁴⁷Then the Yehudym collected the spoils and the plunder; they cut off Nikanor's head and his right arm, which he had lifted up so arrogantly. These they brought and displayed in the sight of Yerushalayim. ⁴⁸The people rejoiced greatly, and observed that day as a day of much joy. ⁴⁹They decreed that it should be observed every year on the thirteenth of Adar. ⁵⁰And so for a few days the land of Yehudah was at rest.

Chapter 8

¹Yehudah had heard of the reputation of the Romans. They were valiant fighters and acted amiably to all who took their side. They established a friendly alliance with all who applied to them. ²He was also told of their battles and the brave deeds that they performed against the Gauls, conquering them and forcing them to pay tribute; ³and what they did in Spain to get possession of the silver and gold mines there. ⁴By planning and persistence they subjugated the whole region, although it was very remote from their own. They also subjugated the kings who had come against them from the far corners of the earth until they crushed them and inflicted on them severe defeat. The rest paid tribute to them every year. ⁵Philip and Perseus, king of the Macedonians, and the others who opposed them in battle they overwhelmed and subjugated. ⁶Antiochus the Great, king of Asia, who fought against them with a hundred and twenty elephants and with cavalry and chariots and a very great army, was defeated by them. ⁷They took him alive and obliged him and the kings who succeeded him to pay a heavy tribute, to give hostages and to cede ⁸Lycia, Mysia, and Lydia from among their best provinces. The Romans took these from him and gave them to King Eumenes. ⁹When the Greeks planned to come and destroy them, ¹⁰the Romans discovered it, and sent against the Greeks a single general who made war on them. Many were wounded and fell, and the Romans took their wives and children captive. They plundered them, took possession of their land, tore down their strongholds and reduced them to slavery even to this day. ¹¹All the other kingdoms and islands that had ever opposed them they destroyed and enslaved; with their friends, however, and those who relied on them, they maintained friendship. ¹²They subjugated kings both near and far, and all who heard of their fame were afraid of them. ¹³Those whom they wish to help and to make kings, they make kings; and those whom they wish, they depose; and they were greatly exalted. ¹⁴Yet with all this, none of them put on a diadem or wore purple as a display of grandeur. ¹⁵But they made for themselves a senate chamber, and every day three hundred and twenty men took counsel, deliberating on all that concerned the people and their well-being. ¹⁶They entrust their

government to one man every year, to rule over their entire land, and they all obey that one, and there is no envy or jealousy among them.

¹⁷So Yehudah chose Eupolemus, son of Yochanan, son of Akkos, and Yason, son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome to establish friendship and alliance with them. ¹⁸He did this to lift the yoke from Yisrael, for it was obvious that the kingdom of the Greeks was subjecting them to slavery. ¹⁹After making a very long journey to Rome, the envoys entered the senate chamber and spoke as follows: ²⁰“Yehudah, called Maccabeus, and his brothers, with the Yehudy people, have sent us to you to establish alliance and peace with you, and to be enrolled among your allies and friends.” ²¹The proposal pleased the Romans, ²²and this is a copy of the reply they inscribed on bronze tablets and sent to Yerushalayim, to remain there with the Yehudym as a record of peace and alliance:

²³“May it be well with the Romans and the Yehudy nation at sea and on land forever; may sword and enemy be far from them. ²⁴But if war is first made on Rome, or any of its allies in any of their dominions, ²⁵the Yehudy nation will fight along with them wholeheartedly, as the occasion shall demand; ²⁶and to those who wage war they shall not give or provide grain, weapons, money, or ships, as seems best to Rome. They shall fulfill their obligations without receiving any recompense. ²⁷In the same way, if war is made first on the Yehudy nation, the Romans will fight along with them willingly, as the occasion shall demand, ²⁸and to those who attack them there shall not be given grain, weapons, money, or ships, as seems best to Rome. They shall fulfill their obligations without deception. ²⁹On these terms the Romans have made an agreement with the Yehudy people. ³⁰But if both parties hereafter agree to add or take away anything, they shall do as they choose, and whatever they shall add or take away shall be valid.

³¹“Moreover, concerning the wrongs that King Demetrius is doing to them, we have written to him thus: ‘Why have you made your

yoke heavy upon our friends and allies the Yehudym? ³²If they petition against you again, we will enforce justice and make war on you by sea and land.”

Chapter 9

¹When Demetrius heard that Nikanor and his army had fallen in battle, he again sent Bacchides and Alcimus into the land of Yehudah, along with the right wing of his army. ²They took the road to The Galil, and camping opposite the ascent at Arbela, they captured it and killed many people. ³In the first month of the one hundred and fifty-second year, they encamped against Yerushalayim. ⁴Then they set out for Berea with twenty thousand men and two thousand cavalry. ⁵Yehudah, with three thousand picked men, had camped at Elasa. ⁶When they saw the great number of the troops, they were very much afraid, and many slipped away from the camp, until only eight hundred of them remained.

⁷When Yehudah saw that his army was melting away just as the battle was imminent, he was brokenhearted, because he had no time to gather them together. ⁸In spite of his discouragement he said to those who remained: "Let us go forward to meet our enemies; perhaps we can put up an excellent fight against them." ⁹They tried to dissuade him, saying: "We certainly cannot. Let us save our own lives now, and come back with our kindred, and then fight against them. Now we are too few." ¹⁰But Yehudah said: "Far be it from me to do such a thing as to flee from them! If our time has come, let us die bravely for our kindred and not leave a stain upon our honor!"

¹¹Then the army of Bacchides moved out of camp and took its position for combat. The cavalry were divided into two squadrons, and the slingers and the archers came on ahead of the army, and in the front line were all the best warriors. Bacchides was on the right wing. ¹²Flanked by the two squadrons, the phalanx attacked as they blew their trumpets. Those who were on Yehudah's side also blew their trumpets. ¹³The earth shook with the noise of the armies, and the battle raged from morning until evening.

¹⁴When Yehudah saw that Bacchides was on the right, with the main force of his army, all the most stouthearted rallied to him,

¹⁵and the right wing was crushed; Yehudah pursued them as far as the mountain slopes. ¹⁶But when those on the left wing saw that the right wing was crushed, they closed in behind Yehudah and those with him. ¹⁷The battle became intense, and many on both sides fell wounded. ¹⁸Then Yehudah fell, and the rest fled.

¹⁹Yonathan and Shimon took their brother Yehudah and buried him in the tomb of their ancestors at Modein. ²⁰All Yisrael wept for him with great lamentation. They mourned for him many days, and they said, ²¹“How the mighty one has fallen, the savior of Yisrael!”^a ²²The other acts of Yehudah, his battles, the brave deeds he performed, and his greatness have not been recorded; but they were very many.

²³After the death of Yehudah, the lawless raised their heads in every part of Yisrael, and all kinds of evildoers appeared. ²⁴In those days there was a very great famine, and the country deserted to them. ²⁵Bacchides chose renegades and made them masters of the country. ²⁶These sought out and hunted down the friends of Yehudah and brought them to Bacchides, who punished and derided them. ²⁷There was great tribulation in Yisrael, the like of which had not been since the time prophets ceased to appear among them.

²⁸Then all the friends of Yehudah came together and said to Yonathan: ²⁹“Ever since your brother Yehudah died, there has been no one like him to lead us against our enemies, both Bacchides and those of our nation who are hostile to us. ³⁰Now therefore we have chosen you today to be our ruler and leader in his place, to fight our battle.” ³¹From that moment Yonathan accepted the leadership, and took the place of Yehudah his brother.

³²When Bacchides learned of it, he sought to kill him. ³³But Yonathan and his brother Shimon and all who were with him discovered this, and they fled to the wilderness of Tekoa and camped by the waters of the pool of Asphar. ^[34]

³⁵Yonathan sent his brother as leader of the convoy to implore his friends, the Nabateans, to let them deposit with them their great quantity of baggage. ³⁶But the tribe of Yambri from Medaba made a raid and seized and carried off Yochanan and everything he had.

³⁷After this, word was brought to Yonathan and his brother Shimon: “The tribe of Yambri are celebrating a great wedding, and with a large escort they are bringing the bride, the daughter of one of the great princes of Kana'an, from Nadabath.” ³⁸Remembering the blood of Yochanan their brother, they went up and hid themselves under cover of the mountain. ³⁹As they watched there appeared a noisy throng with much baggage; then the bridegroom and his friends and kinsmen had come out to meet them with tambourines and musicians with their instruments. ⁴⁰Yonathan and his party rose up against them from their ambush and killed them. Many fell wounded; the rest fled toward the mountain; all their spoils were taken. ⁴¹Thus the wedding was turned into mourning, and the sound of their music into lamentation. ⁴²Having taken their revenge for the blood of their brother, they returned to the marshes of the Yarden.

⁴³When Bacchides heard of it, he came on the Shabbath to the banks of the Yarden with a large force. ⁴⁴Then Yonathan said to his companions, “Let us rise up now and fight for our lives, for today is not like yesterday and the day before. ⁴⁵The battle is before us, behind us are the waters of the Yarden, on either side of us, marsh and thickets; there is no way of escape. ⁴⁶Cry out now to Heaven so that you may be delivered from the hand of our enemies.” ⁴⁷When they joined battle, Yonathan raised his hand to strike Bacchides, but Bacchides backed away from him. ⁴⁸Yonathan and those with him jumped into the Yarden and swam across to the other side, but the enemy did not pursue them across the Yarden. ⁴⁹About a thousand men on Bacchides' side fell that day.

⁵⁰On returning to Yerushalayim, Bacchides built strongholds in Yehudah: the Yericho fortress, as well as Emmaus, Beth-horon, Beth-El, Timnath, Pharathon, and Tephon, with high walls and gates and bars. ⁵¹In each he put a garrison to harass Yisrael. ⁵²He fortified the city of Beth-zur, Gazara and the citadel, and put troops in them and stores of provisions. ⁵³He took as hostages the sons of the leading people of the country and put them in custody in the citadel at Yerushalayim.

⁵⁴In the one hundred and fifty-third year, in the second month, Alcimus ordered the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary to be torn down, thus destroying the work of the prophets. But he only began to tear it down. ⁵⁵Just at that time Alcimus was stricken, and his work was interrupted; his mouth was closed and he was paralyzed, so that he could no longer utter a word or give orders concerning his household. ⁵⁶Alcimus died in great agony at that time. ⁵⁷Seeing that Alcimus was dead, Bacchides returned to the king, and the land of Yehudah was at rest for two years.

⁵⁸Then all the lawless took counsel and said: “Yonathan and those with him are living in peace and security. Now then, let us have Bacchides return, and he will capture all of them in a single night.” ⁵⁹So they went and took counsel with him. ⁶⁰When Bacchides was setting out with a large force, he sent letters secretly to all his allies in Yehudah, telling them to seize Yonathan and his companions. They were not able to do this, however, because their plan became known. ⁶¹In fact, Yonathan’s men seized about fifty of the men of the country who were leaders in the conspiracy and put them to death.

⁶²Then Yonathan and those with him, along with Shimon, withdrew to Beth- Basi in the wilderness; he rebuilt its ruins and fortified it. ⁶³When Bacchides learned of this, he gathered together his whole force and sent word to those who were in Yehudah. ⁶⁴He came and camped before Beth- Basi, and constructing siege engines, he fought against it for many days.

⁶⁵Leaving his brother Shimon in the city, Yonathan, accompanied by a small group of men, went out into the countryside. ⁶⁶He struck down Odomera and his kindred and the tribe of Phasiron in their encampment; these men had begun to attack and they were going up with their forces. ⁶⁷Shimon and those with him then sallied forth from the city and set fire to the siege engines. ⁶⁸They fought against Bacchides, and he was crushed. They caused him great distress, because the enterprise he had planned was in vain. ⁶⁹He was enraged with the lawless men who had advised him to invade the province. He killed many of them and resolved to return to his own country.

⁷⁰Yonathan learned of this and sent ambassadors to agree on peace with him and to obtain the release of the prisoners. ⁷¹He agreed to do as Yonathan asked. He swore an oath to him that he would never try to do him any harm for the rest of his life; ⁷²and he released to him the prisoners he had previously taken from the land of Yehudah. Thereupon he returned to his own land and never came into their territory again. ⁷³Then the sword ceased from Yisrael. Yonathan settled in Michmash; he began to judge the people and he eliminated the renegades from Yisrael.

Chapter 10

¹In the one hundred and sixtieth year, Alexander Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, came up and took Ptolemais. They accepted him as king and he began to reign there. ²When King Demetrius heard of it, he mustered a very large army and marched out to engage him in battle. ³Demetrius sent a letter to Yonathan written in peaceful terms, to exalt him; ⁴for he said: “Let us be the first to make peace with him, before he makes peace with Alexander against us, ⁵since he will remember all the wrongs we have done to him, his brothers, and his nation.”

⁶So Demetrius authorized him to gather an army and procure arms as his ally; and he ordered that the hostages in the citadel be released to him. ⁷Accordingly Yonathan went to Yerushalayim and read the letter to all the people and to those who were in the citadel. ⁸They were struck with fear when they heard that the king had given him authority to gather an army. ⁹Those in the citadel released the hostages to Yonathan, and he gave them back to their parents. ¹⁰Thereafter Yonathan dwelt in Yerushalayim, and began to build and restore the city. ¹¹He ordered those doing the work to build the walls and to encircle Mount Tzion with square stones for its fortification, and they did so. ¹²The foreigners in the strongholds that Bacchides had built took flight; ¹³all of them left their places and returned to their own lands. ¹⁴Only in Beth-zur did some remain of those who had abandoned the law and the commandments, for it was a place of refuge.

¹⁵King Alexander heard of the promises that Demetrius had made to Yonathan; he was also told of the battles and brave deeds of Yonathan and his brothers and of the troubles that they had endured. ¹⁶He said, “Shall we ever find another man like him? Let us now make him our friend and ally.” ¹⁷So he sent Yonathan a letter written in these terms: ¹⁸“King Alexander sends greetings to his brother Yonathan. ¹⁹We have heard of you, that you are a mighty warrior and worthy to be our friend. ²⁰We have therefore appointed you today to be Koheyh Gadol of your nation; you are to be called the King’s Friend, and you are to look after our interests

and preserve friendship with us.” He also sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold. ²¹Yonathan put on the sacred vestments in the seventh month of the one hundred and sixtieth year at the feast of Sukkoth, and he gathered an army and procured many weapons.

²²When Demetrius heard of these things, he was distressed and said: ²³“Why have we allowed Alexander to get ahead of us by gaining the friendship of the Yehudym and thus strengthening himself? ²⁴I too will write them encouraging words and offer honors and gifts, so that they may support me.” ²⁵So he sent them this message: “King Demetrius sends greetings to the Yehudy nation. ²⁶We have heard how you have kept the treaty with us and continued in our friendship and not gone over to our enemies, and we are glad. ²⁷Continue, therefore, to keep faith with us, and we will reward you with favors in return for what you do in our behalf. ²⁸We will grant you many exemptions and will bestow gifts on you.

²⁹“I now free you and exempt all the Yehudym from the tribute, the salt tax, and the crown levies. ³⁰Instead of collecting the third of the grain and the half of the fruit of the trees that should be my share, I renounce the right from this day forward. Neither now nor in the future will I collect them from the land of Yehudah or from the three districts annexed from Shomeron. ³¹Let Yerushalayim and her territory, her tithes and her tolls, be sacred and free from tax. ³²I also yield my authority over the citadel in Yerushalayim, and I transfer it to the Koheyn Gadol, that he may put in it such men as he shall choose to guard it. ³³Every Yehudy who has been carried into captivity from the land of Yehudah into any part of my kingdom I set at liberty without ransom; and let all their taxes, even those on their cattle, be canceled.

³⁴Let all festivals, Shabbaths, new moon festivals, appointed days, and the three days that precede each feast day, and the three days that follow, be days of immunity and exemption for all Yehudym

in my kingdom. ³⁵No one will have authority to exact payment from them or to harass any of them in any matter.

³⁶“Let thirty thousand Yehudym be enrolled in the king’s army and allowances be given them, as is due to all the king’s soldiers. ³⁷Let some of them be stationed in the king’s principal strongholds, and of these let some be given positions of trust in the affairs of the kingdom. Let their superiors and their rulers be chosen from among them, and let them follow their own laws, as the king has commanded in the land of Yehudah.

³⁸“Let the three districts that have been added to Yehudah from the province of Shomeron be annexed to Yehudah so that they may be under one rule and obey no other authority than the Koheyn Gadol. ³⁹Ptolemais and its confines I give as a present to the sanctuary in Yerushalayim for the necessary expenses of the sanctuary. ⁴⁰I make a yearly personal grant of fifteen thousand silver shekels out of the royal revenues, taken from appropriate places. ⁴¹All the additional funds that the officials did not hand over as they had done in the first years shall henceforth be handed over for the services of the Temple. ⁴²Moreover, the dues of five thousand silver shekels that used to be taken from the revenue of the sanctuary every year shall be canceled, since these funds belong to the kohanyim who perform the services. ⁴³All who take refuge in the Temple of Yerushalayim or in any of its precincts, because of money they owe the king, or because of any other debt, shall be released, together with all the belongings they possess in my kingdom. ⁴⁴The cost of rebuilding and restoring the structures of the sanctuary shall be covered out of the royal revenue. ⁴⁵Likewise the cost of building the walls of Yerushalayim and fortifying it all around, and of building walls in Yehudah, shall be donated from the royal revenue.”

⁴⁶When Yonathan and the people heard these words, they neither believed nor accepted them, for they remembered the great evil that Demetrius had done in Yisrael, and the great tribulation he had

brought upon them. ⁴⁷They therefore decided in favor of Alexander, for he had been the first to address them peaceably, and they remained his allies for the rest of his life.

⁴⁸Then King Alexander gathered together a large army and encamped opposite Demetrius. ⁴⁹The two kings joined battle, and when the army of Demetrius fled, Alexander pursued him, and overpowered his soldiers. ⁵⁰He pressed the battle hard until sunset, and Demetrius fell that day.

⁵¹Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemy, king of Mitzrayim, with this message: ⁵²“Now that I have returned to my realm, taken my seat on the throne of my ancestors, and established my rule by crushing Demetrius and gaining control of my country ⁵³for I engaged him in battle, he and his army were crushed by us, and we assumed his royal throne ⁵⁴let us now establish friendship with each other. Give me now your daughter for my wife; and as your son-in-law, I will give to you and to her gifts worthy of you.”

⁵⁵King Ptolemy answered in these words: “Happy the day on which you returned to the land of your ancestors and took your seat on their royal throne! ⁵⁶I will do for you what you have written; but meet me in Ptolemais, so that we may see each other, and I will become your father-in-law as you have proposed.”

⁵⁷So Ptolemy with his daughter Cleopatra set out from Mitzrayim and came to Ptolemais in the one hundred and sixty-second year. ⁵⁸There King Alexander met him, and Ptolemy gave him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. Their wedding was celebrated at Ptolemais with great splendor according to the custom of kings.

⁵⁹King Alexander also wrote to Yonathan to come and meet him. ⁶⁰So he went with pomp to Ptolemais, where he met the two kings and gave them and their friends silver and gold and many gifts and thus won their favor. ⁶¹Some villainous men of Yisrael, transgressors of the law, united against him to accuse him, but the

king paid no heed to them. ⁶²The king ordered Yonathan to be divested of his garments and to be clothed in royal purple; and so it was done. ⁶³The king also had him seated at his side. He said to his magistrates: “Go with him to the center of the city and make a proclamation that no one is to bring charges against him on any grounds or be troublesome to him for any reason.” ⁶⁴When his accusers saw the honor paid to him according to the king’s proclamation, and him clothed in purple, they all fled. ⁶⁵And so the king honored him, enrolling him among his chief friends, and he made him governor and chief of the province. ⁶⁶So Yonathan returned in peace and happiness to Yerushalayim.

⁶⁷In the one hundred and sixty-fifth year, Demetrius, son of Demetrius, came from Crete to the land of his ancestors. ⁶⁸When King Alexander heard of it he was greatly troubled, and returned to Antioch. ⁶⁹Demetrius set Apollonius over Coelesyria. Having gathered a large army, Apollonius encamped at Yamnia. From there he sent this message to Yonathan the Koheyd Gadol:

⁷⁰“You are the only one who resists us. I am laughed at and put to shame on your account. Why are you exercising authority against us in the mountains? ⁷¹If you have confidence in your forces, come down now to us in the plain, and let us test each other’s strength there; for the forces of the cities are on my side. ⁷²Inquire and find out who I am and who the others are who are helping me. People are saying that you cannot make a stand against us because your ancestors were twice put to flight in their own land. ⁷³Now you too will be unable to withstand our cavalry and such a force as this in the plain, where there is not a stone or a pebble or a place to flee.”

⁷⁴When Yonathan heard the message of Apollonius, he was provoked. Choosing ten thousand men, he set out from Yerushalayim, and Shimon his brother joined him to help him. ⁷⁵He encamped near Yapha, but the people of the city shut him out because Apollonius had a garrison in Yapha. When they attacked

it, ⁷⁶the people of the city became afraid and opened the gates, and so Yonathan took possession of Yapha.

⁷⁷When Apollonius heard of it, he drew up three thousand cavalry and a large force of infantry. He marched toward Azotus as though he were going on through, but at the same time he was advancing into the plain, because he had such a large number of cavalry to rely on. ⁷⁸Yonathan pursued him toward Azotus, and the armies engaged in battle. ⁷⁹Apollonius, however, had left a thousand cavalry in hiding behind them. ⁸⁰Yonathan discovered that there was an ambush behind him; his army was surrounded. From morning until evening they showered his troops with arrows. ⁸¹But his troops held their ground, as Yonathan had commanded, while the enemy's horses became tired out.

⁸²Then Shimon brought forward his force, and engaged the phalanx in battle. Since the cavalry were exhausted, the phalanx was crushed by him and fled, ⁸³while the cavalry too were scattered over the plain. They fled to Azotus and entered Beth-dagon, the temple of their idol, to save themselves. ⁸⁴But Yonathan burned and plundered Azotus with its neighboring towns, and destroyed by fire both the temple of Dagon and those who had taken refuge in it. ⁸⁵Those who fell by the sword, together with those who were burned alive, came to about eight thousand.

⁸⁶Then Yonathan left there and encamped at Ashkelon, and the people of that city came out to meet him with great pomp. ⁸⁷Yonathan and those with him then returned to Yerushalayim, with much spoil. ⁸⁸When King Alexander heard of these events, he accorded new honors to Yonathan. ⁸⁹He sent him a gold buckle, such as is usually given to King's Kinsmen; he also gave him Eqrn and all its territory as a possession.

Chapter 11

¹Then the king of Mitzrayim gathered forces as numerous as the sands of the seashore, and many ships; and he sought by deceit to take Alexander's kingdom and add it to his own. ²He set out for Syria with peaceful words, and the people in the cities opened their gates to welcome him, as King Alexander had ordered them to do, since Ptolemy was his father-in-law. ³But when Ptolemy entered the cities, he stationed a garrison of troops in each one.

⁴As they neared Azotus, they showed him the temple of Dagon destroyed by fire, Azotus and its suburbs demolished, corpses lying about, and the charred bodies of those burned in the war, for they had heaped them up along his route. ⁵They told the king what Yonathan had done in order to denigrate him; but the king said nothing. ⁶Yonathan met the king with pomp at Yapha, and they greeted each other and spent the night there. ⁷Yonathan accompanied the king as far as the river called Eleutherus and then returned to Yerushalayim.

⁸And so King Ptolemy took possession of the cities along the seacoast as far as Seleucia by the sea, plotting evil schemes against Alexander all the while. ⁹He sent ambassadors to King Demetrius, saying: "Come, let us make a covenant with each other; I will give you my daughter whom Alexander has married, and you shall reign over your father's kingdom. ¹⁰I regret that I gave him my daughter, for he has sought to kill me." ¹¹He was criticizing Alexander, however, because he coveted his kingdom. ¹²After taking his daughter away, Ptolemy gave her to Demetrius and broke with Alexander; the enmity between them was now evident. ¹³Then Ptolemy entered Antioch and assumed the crown of Asia; thus he set upon his head two crowns, that of Mitzrayim and that of Asia.

¹⁴Now King Alexander was in Cilicia at that time, because the people of that region had revolted. ¹⁵When Alexander heard the news, he came against Ptolemy in battle. Ptolemy marched out and met him with a strong force and routed him. ¹⁶When Alexander

fled to Arabia to seek protection, King Ptolemy was triumphant.¹⁷ Zabdiel the Arabian cut off Alexander's head and sent it to Ptolemy.¹⁸ But three days later King Ptolemy himself died, and his troops in the strongholds were killed by the inhabitants of the strongholds.¹⁹ Thus Demetrius became king in the one hundred and sixty-seventh year.

²⁰In those days Yonathan gathered together the people of Yehudah to attack the citadel in Yerushalayim, and they set up many siege engines against it.²¹ But some transgressors of the law, enemies of their own nation, went to the king and informed him that Yonathan was besieging the citadel.²² When Demetrius heard this, he was enraged; and as soon as he heard it, he set out and came to Ptolemais. He wrote to Yonathan to discontinue the siege and to meet him for a conference at Ptolemais as soon as possible.

²³On hearing this, Yonathan ordered the siege to continue. He selected some elders and kohanim of Yisrael and put himself at risk.²⁴ Taking with him silver, gold and apparel, and many other presents, he went to the king at Ptolemais, and found favor with him.²⁵ Although certain renegades of his own nation kept on bringing charges against him,²⁶ the king treated him just as his predecessors had done and exalted him in the presence of all his friends.²⁷ He confirmed him in the Kehunnah and in the other honors he had previously held, and had him enrolled among his chief friends.

²⁸Yonathan asked the king to exempt Yehudah and the three districts of Shomeron from tribute, promising him in return three hundred talents.²⁹ The king agreed and wrote a letter to Yonathan about all these matters as follows:

³⁰“King Demetrius sends greetings to his brother Yonathan and to the Yehudy nation.³¹ We are sending you, for your information, a copy of the letter that we wrote to Lasthenes our Kinsman concerning you.³² King Demetrius sends greetings to his father

Lasthenes. ³³Upon the Yehudy nation, who are our friends and observe their obligations to us, we have decided to bestow benefits because of the excellence they will show us. ³⁴ Therefore we confirm their possession, not only of the territory of Yehudah, but also of the three districts of Aphairema, Lydda, and Ramathaim. These districts, together with all their dependencies, are hereby transferred from Shomeron to Yehudah for those who offer sacrifices in Yerushalayim in lieu of the royal taxes the king used to receive yearly from the produce of earth and trees. ³⁵From payment of the other things that would henceforth be due to us, namely, the tithes and taxes, as well as the salt tax, and the crown tax—from all these we grant them release. ³⁶Henceforth and forever not one of these provisions shall ever be revoked. ³⁷See to it, therefore, that a copy of these instructions be made and given to Yonathan. Let it be displayed on the set-apart mountain in a conspicuous place.”

³⁸When King Demetrius saw that the land was peaceful under his rule and that he had no opposition, he dismissed his entire army, each to his own home, except the foreign troops which he had hired from the islands of the nations. So all the soldiers who had served under his predecessors became hostile to him. ³⁹When a certain Trypho, who had previously supported Alexander, saw that all the troops were grumbling against Demetrius, he went to Imalkue the Arabian, who was raising Alexander’s young son Antiochus. ⁴⁰Trypho kept urging Imalkue to hand over the boy to him, so that he might succeed his father as king. He told him of all that Demetrius had done and of the hostility his soldiers had for him; and he remained there for many days.

⁴¹Meanwhile Yonathan sent the request to King Demetrius to withdraw the troops in the citadel from Yerushalayim and from the other strongholds, for they were constantly waging war on Yisrael. ⁴²Demetrius, in turn, sent this word to Yonathan: “I will do not only this for you and your nation, but I will greatly honor you and your nation when I find the opportunity. ⁴³Now, therefore, you will

do well to send men to fight for me, because all my troops have revolted.”

⁴⁴So Yonathan sent three thousand excellent fighting men to him at Antioch. When they came to the king, he was delighted over their arrival. ⁴⁵The populace, one hundred and twenty thousand strong, massed in the center of the city in an attempt to kill the king. ⁴⁶So the king took refuge in the palace, while the populace gained control of the main streets of the city and prepared for battle. ⁴⁷Then the king called the Yehudy force to his aid. They all rallied around him and spread out through the city. On that day they killed about a hundred thousand in the city. ⁴⁸At the same time, they set the city on fire and took much spoil. Thus they saved the king. ⁴⁹When the populace saw that the Yehudy force controlled the city, they lost courage and cried out to the king in supplication, ⁵⁰“Extend the hand of friendship to us, and make the Yehudym stop attacking us and the city.” ⁵¹So they threw down their weapons and made peace. The Yehudym thus gained honor in the eyes of the king and all his subjects, and they became renowned throughout his kingdom. Finally they returned to Yerushalayim with much plunder.

⁵²But when King Demetrius was sure of his royal throne, and the land was peaceful under his rule, ⁵³he broke all his promises and became estranged from Yonathan. Instead of repaying Yonathan for all the favors he had received from him, he caused him much distress.

⁵⁴After this, Trypho returned and brought with him the young boy Antiochus, who became king and put on the diadem. ⁵⁵All the soldiers whom Demetrius had discharged rallied around Antiochus and fought against Demetrius, who was routed and fled. ⁵⁶Trypho captured the elephants and occupied Antioch. ⁵⁷Then young Antiochus wrote to Yonathan: “I confirm you in the Kehunnah and appoint you ruler over the four districts, and to be one of the King’s friends.” ⁵⁸He also sent him gold dishes and a table service,

gave him the right to drink from gold cups, to dress in royal purple, and to wear a gold buckle. ⁵⁹Likewise, he made Yonathan's brother Shimon governor of the region from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Mitzrayim.

⁶⁰Yonathan set out and traveled through the province of West-of-Ephrath and its cities, and all the forces of Syria espoused his cause as allies. When he arrived at Ashkelon, the citizens welcomed him with pomp. ⁶¹But when he set out for Gaza, the people of Gaza shut him out. So he besieged it, and burned and plundered its suburbs. ⁶²Then the people of Gaza appealed to Yonathan, and he granted them terms of peace. He took the sons of their leaders as hostages and sent them to Yerushalayim. He then traveled on through the province as far as Damasek.

⁶³Yonathan heard that the generals of Demetrius had come with a strong force to Qadesh in The Galil, intending to remove him from office. ⁶⁴So he went to meet them, leaving his brother Shimon in the province. ⁶⁵Shimon encamped against Beth-zur, attacked it for many days, and shut in the inhabitants. ⁶⁶They appealed to him, and he granted them terms of peace. He expelled them from the city, took possession of it, and put a garrison there.

⁶⁷Meanwhile, Yonathan and his army pitched their camp near the waters of Gennesareth, and at daybreak they went to the plain of Chatzor. ⁶⁸There the army of the foreigners met him on the plain. Having first detached an ambush in the mountains, this army mounted a frontal attack. ⁶⁹Then those in ambush rose out of their places and joined in the battle. ⁷⁰All of Yonathan's men fled; no one stayed except the army commanders Mattithyahu, son of Absalom, and Yehudah, son of Chalphi. ⁷¹Yonathan tore his clothes, threw dust on his head, and prayed. ⁷²Then he went back to the battle and routed them, and they fled. ⁷³Those of his men who were running away saw it and returned to him; and with him they pursued the enemy as far as their camp in Qadesh, and there

they encamped. ⁷⁴About three thousand of the foreign troops fell on that day. Then Yonathan returned to Yerushalayim.

Chapter 12

¹When Yonathan saw that the time was right, he chose men and sent them to Rome to confirm and renew the friendship with the Romans. ²He also sent letters to the Spartans and other places to the same effect.

³After reaching Rome, the men entered the senate chamber and said, “The Koheyn Gadol Yonathan and the Yehudy people have sent us to renew the friendship and alliance of earlier times with them.” ⁴The Romans gave them letters addressed to authorities in various places, with the request to provide them with safe conduct to the land of Yehudah.

⁵This is a copy of the letter that Yonathan wrote to the Spartans: ⁶“Yonathan the Koheyn Gadol, the senate of the nation, the kohanim, and the rest of the Yehudy people send greetings to their brothers the Spartans. ⁷Long ago a letter was sent to the Koheyn Gadol Chon'yah from Arius, who then reigned over you, stating that you are our brothers, as the attached copy shows. ⁸Chon'yah welcomed the envoy with honor and received the letter, which spoke clearly of alliance and friendship. ⁹Though we have no need of these things, since we have for our encouragement the set-apart books that are in our possession, ¹⁰we have ventured to send word to you for the renewal of brotherhood and friendship, lest we become strangers to you; a long time has passed since you sent your message to us. ¹¹We, on our part, have unceasingly remembered you in the sacrifices and prayers that we offer on our feasts and other appropriate days, as it is right and proper to remember brothers. ¹²We likewise rejoice in your renown. ¹³But many tribulations and many wars have beset us, and the kings around us have attacked us. ¹⁴We did not wish to be troublesome to you and to the rest of our allies and friends in these wars. ¹⁵For we have the help of Heaven for our support, and we have been saved from our enemies, and our enemies have been humbled. ¹⁶So we have chosen Numenius, son of Antiochus, and Antipater, son of Yason, and we have sent them to the Romans to renew with them the friendship and alliance of earlier times. ¹⁷We have also ordered

them to come to you and greet you, and to deliver to you our letter concerning the renewal of our brotherhood. ¹⁸Therefore kindly send us an answer on this matter.”

¹⁹This is a copy of the letter that they sent to Chon'yah: ²⁰“Arius, king of the Spartans, sends greetings to Chon'yah the Koheyn Gadol. ²¹A document has been found stating that the Spartans and the Yehudym are brothers and that they are of the family of Avraham. ²²Now that we have learned this, kindly write to us about your welfare. ²³We, for our part, declare to you that your animals and your possessions are ours, and ours are yours. We have, therefore, given orders that you should be told of this.”

²⁴Then Yonathan heard that the officers of Demetrius had returned to attack him with a stronger army than before. ²⁵So he set out from Yerushalayim and met them in the territory of Chamath, giving them no opportunity to enter his province. ²⁶The spies he had sent into their camp came back and reported to him that the enemy were preparing to attack them that night. ²⁷Therefore, when the sun set, Yonathan ordered his men to keep watch, with their weapons at the ready for battle, throughout the night; and he set outposts around the camp. ²⁸When the enemy heard that Yonathan and his men were ready for battle, their hearts sank with fear and dread. They lighted fires in their camp and then withdrew. ²⁹But because Yonathan and his men were watching the campfires burning, they did not know until the morning what had happened. ³⁰Then Yonathan pursued them, but he could not overtake them, for they had crossed the river Eleutherus. ³¹So Yonathan turned aside against the Arabians who are called Zabadeans, and he struck them down and plundered them. ³²Then he broke camp, marched on toward Damasek and traveled through the whole region.

³³Shimon also set out and traveled as far as Ashkelon and its neighboring strongholds. He then turned to Yapha and took it by surprise, ³⁴for he heard that its people intended to hand over the

stronghold to the supporters of Demetrius. He left a garrison there to guard it.

³⁵When Yonathan returned, he assembled the elders of the people, and with them he made plans for building strongholds in Yehudah, ³⁶for making the walls of Yerushalayim still higher, and for erecting a high barrier between the citadel and the city, to separate it from the city and isolate it, so that its garrison could neither buy nor sell. ³⁷The people therefore gathered together to build up the city, for part of the wall of the eastern valley had collapsed. And Yonathan repaired the quarter called Chaphenatha. ³⁸Shimon likewise built up Adida in the Shephelah, and fortified it by installing gates and bars.

³⁹Then Trypho sought to become king of Asia, assume the diadem, and do violence to King Antiochus. ⁴⁰But he was afraid that Yonathan would not permit him, but would fight against him. Looking for a way to seize and kill him, he set out and came to Beth-shan. ⁴¹Yonathan marched out to meet him with forty thousand picked fighting men and came to Beth-shan. ⁴²But when Trypho saw that Yonathan had arrived with a large army he was afraid to do him violence. ⁴³Instead, he received him with honor, introduced him to all his friends, and gave him presents. He also ordered his friends and soldiers to obey him as they would himself. ⁴⁴Then he said to Yonathan: “Why have you put all these people to so much trouble when we are not at war? ⁴⁵Now pick out a few men to stay with you, send the rest to their homes, and then come with me to Ptolemais. I will hand it over to you together with other strongholds and the remaining troops, as well as all the officials; then I will turn back and go home. That is why I came here.”

⁴⁶Yonathan trusted him and did as he said. He dismissed his troops, and they returned to the land of Yehudah. ⁴⁷But he kept with him three thousand men, of whom he left two thousand in The Galil while one thousand accompanied him. ⁴⁸Then as soon as Yonathan entered Ptolemais, the people of Ptolemais closed the gates and

seized him; all who had entered with him, they killed with the sword.^g

⁴⁹Then Trypho sent soldiers and cavalry to The Galil and the Great Plain to destroy all Yonathan's men. ⁵⁰These, upon learning that Yonathan had been captured and killed along with his companions, encouraged one another and went out in close formation, ready to fight. ⁵¹As their pursuers saw that they were ready to fight for their lives, they turned back. ⁵²Thus all Yonathan's men came safely into the land of Yehudah. They mourned Yonathan and those who were with him. They were in great fear, and all Yisrael fell into deep mourning. ⁵³All the nations round about sought to crush them. They said, "Now that they have no leader or helper, let us make war on them and wipe out their memory from the earth."

Chapter 13

¹When Shimon heard that Trypho was gathering a large army to invade and ravage the land of Yehudah, ²and saw that the people were trembling with terror, he went up to Yerushalayim. There he assembled the people ³and exhorted them in these words: “You know what I, my brothers, and my father’s house have done for the laws and the sanctuary; what battles and hardships we have seen. ⁴For the sake of this, for the sake of Yisrael, all my brothers have perished, and I alone am left. ⁵Far be it from me, then, to save my own life in any time of distress, for I am not better than my brothers. ⁶But I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary, as well as your wives and children, for out of hatred all the gentiles have united to crush us.”

⁷As the people heard these words, their spirit was rekindled. ⁸They shouted in reply: “You are our leader in place of your brothers Yehudah and Yonathan. ⁹Fight our battles, and we will do everything that you tell us.” ¹⁰So Shimon mustered all the men able to fight, and hastening to complete the walls of Yerushalayim, fortified it on every side. ¹¹He sent Yonathan, son of Abshalom, to Yapha with a strong force; Yonathan drove out the occupants and remained there.

¹²Then Trypho moved from Ptolemais with a large army to invade the land of Yehudah, bringing Yonathan with him as a prisoner. ¹³Shimon encamped at Adida, facing the plain. ¹⁴When Trypho learned that Shimon had succeeded his brother Yonathan, and that he intended to fight him, he sent ambassadors to him with this message: ¹⁵“It was on account of the money your brother Yonathan owed the royal treasury in connection with the offices that he held, that we have detained him. ¹⁶Now send a hundred talents of silver, and two of his sons as hostages to guarantee that when he is set free he will not revolt against us, and we will release him.”

¹⁷Shimon knew that they were speaking deceitfully to him. Nevertheless, for fear of provoking much hostility among the people, he sent for the money and the boys, ¹⁸lest the people say

“Yonathan perished because I would not send Trypho the money and the boys.”¹⁹ So he sent the boys and the hundred talents; but Trypho broke his promise and would not release Yonathan.

²⁰Next Trypho moved to invade and ravage the country. His troops went around by the road that leads to Adora, but Shimon and his army moved along opposite him everywhere he went.²¹ The people in the citadel kept sending emissaries to Trypho, pressing him to come to them by way of the wilderness, and to send them provisions.²² Although Trypho got all his cavalry ready to go, there was a very heavy snowfall that night, and he could not go on account of the snow. So he left for Gilead.²³ When he was approaching Baskama, he had Yonathan killed and buried him there.²⁴ Then Trypho returned to his own land.

²⁵Shimon sent for the remains of his brother Yonathan, and buried him in Modein, the city of his ancestors.²⁶ All Yisrael bewailed him with solemn lamentation, mourning over him for many days.²⁷ Then Shimon erected over the tomb of his father and his brothers a monument of stones, polished front and back, and raised high enough to be seen at a distance.²⁸ He set up seven pyramids facing one another for his father and his mother and his four brothers.²⁹ For the pyramids he devised a setting of massive columns, which he adorned with suits of armor as a perpetual memorial, and next to the armor carved ships, which could be seen by all who sailed the sea.³⁰ This tomb which he built at Modein is there to the present day.

³¹Trypho dealt treacherously with the young King Antiochus. He killed him³² and became king in his place, putting on the crown of Asia. Thus he brought much evil on the land.³³ Shimon, for his part, built up the strongholds of Yehudah, fortifying them all around with high towers, thick walls, and gates with bars, and he stored up provisions in the strongholds.³⁴ Shimon also chose men and sent them to King Demetrius to obtain for the land an exemption from taxation, since Trypho did nothing but plunder.

³⁵King Demetrius replied favorably and sent him the following letter:

³⁶“King Demetrius sends greetings to Shimon, Koheyn Gadol and friend of kings, and to the elders and the Yehudy people. ³⁷We have received the gold crown and the palm branch that you sent. We are ready to make a lasting peace with you and to write to our officials to grant you exemption. ³⁸Whatever decrees we have made in your regard remain in force, and the strongholds that you have built you may keep. ³⁹We pardon any oversights and offenses committed up to now, as well as the crown tax that you owe. Any other tax that used to be collected in Yerushalayim shall no longer be collected there. ⁴⁰Any of you qualified for enrollment in our service may be enrolled. Let there be peace between us.”

⁴¹Thus in the one hundred and seventieth year, the yoke of the gentiles was removed from Yisrael, ⁴²and the people began to write in their records and contracts, “In the first year of Shimon, great Koheyn Gadol, governor, and leader of the Yehudym.”

⁴³In those days Shimon besieged Gazara and surrounded it with troops. He made a siege machine, brought it up against the city, and attacked and captured one of the towers. ⁴⁴Those in the siege machine leaped down into the city and a great tumult arose there. ⁴⁵Those in the city, together with their wives and children, went up on the wall, with their garments rent, and cried out in loud voices, begging Shimon to grant them terms of peace. ⁴⁶They said, “Treat us not according to our evil deeds but according to your mercy.” ⁴⁷So Shimon came to terms with them and did not attack them. He expelled them from the city, however, and he purified the houses in which there were idols. Then he entered the city with hymns and songs of praise. ⁴⁸After removing from it everything that was impure, he settled there people who observed the law. He improved its fortifications and built himself a residence.

⁴⁹The people in the citadel in Yerushalayim were prevented from going out into the country and back to buy or sell; they suffered greatly from hunger, and many of them died of starvation. ⁵⁰They finally cried out to Shimon, and he gave them terms of peace. He expelled them from the citadel and cleansed it of impurities. ⁵¹On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred and seventy-first year, the Yehudym entered the citadel with shouts of praise, the waving of palm branches, the playing of harps and cymbals and lyres, and the singing of hymns and canticles, because a great enemy of Yisrael had been crushed. ⁵²Shimon decreed that this day should be celebrated every year with rejoicing. He also strengthened the fortifications of the Temple mount alongside the citadel, and he and his people dwelt there. ⁵³Seeing that his son Yochanan was now a grown man, Shimon made him commander of all his soldiers, and he dwelt in Gazara.

Chapter 14

¹In the one hundred and seventy-second year, King Demetrius assembled his army and marched into Media to obtain help so that he could fight Trypho. ²When Arsaces, king of Persia and Media, heard that Demetrius had entered his territory, he sent one of his generals to take him alive. ³The general went forth and attacked the army of Demetrius; he captured him and brought him to Arsaces, who put him under guard.

⁴The land was at rest all the days of Shimon, who sought the welfare of his nation. His rule delighted his people and his esteem all his days. ⁵As his crowning esteem he took Yapha for a port and made it a gateway to the isles of the sea. ⁶He enlarged the borders of his nation and gained control of the country. ⁷He took many prisoners of war and made himself master of Gazara, Beth-zur, and the citadel. He cleansed the citadel of its impurities; there was no one to withstand him. ⁸The people cultivated their land in peace; the land yielded its produce, the trees of the field their fruit. ⁹Old men sat in the squares, all talking about the pleasant times, while the young men put on the glorious raiment of war. ¹⁰He supplied the cities with food and equipped them with means of defense, till his glorious name reached the ends of the earth. ¹¹He brought peace to the land, and Yisrael was filled with great joy. ¹²Every one sat under his vine and fig tree, with no one to disturb them. ¹³No attacker was left in the land; the kings in those days were crushed. ¹⁴He strengthened all the lowly among his people and was zealous for the law; he destroyed the lawless and the wicked. ¹⁵The sanctuary he made splendid and multiplied its furnishings.

¹⁶When people in Rome and even in Sparta heard that Yonathan had died, they were deeply grieved. ¹⁷But when they heard that his brother Shimon had become Koheyn Gadol in his place and was master of the territory and its cities, ¹⁸they sent him inscribed tablets of bronze to renew with him the friendship and alliance that they had established with his brothers Yehudah and Yonathan. ¹⁹These were read before the assembly in Yerushalayim.

²⁰This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent: “The rulers and the city of the Spartans send greetings to Shimon the Koheyn Gadol, the elders, the kohanym, and the rest of the Yehudy people, our brothers. ²¹The ambassadors sent to our people have informed us of your esteem and renown, and we rejoiced at their coming. ²²In accordance with what they said we have recorded the following in the public decrees: Numenius, son of Antiochus, and Antipater, son of Yason, ambassadors of the Yehudym, have come to us to renew their friendship with us. ²³The people have resolved to receive these men with honor, and to deposit a copy of their words in the public archives, so that the people of Sparta may have a record of them. A copy of this decree has been made for Shimon the Koheyn Gadol.”

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

²⁵When the people heard of these things, they said, “How shall we thank Shimon and his sons? ²⁶He and his brothers and his father’s house have stood firm and repulsed Yisrael’s enemies, and so have established its freedom.” So they made an inscription on bronze tablets, which they affixed to pillars on Mount Tzion.

²⁷The following is a copy of the inscription: “On the eighteenth day of Elul, in the one hundred and seventy-second year, that is, the third year under Shimon the great Koheyn Gadol in Asaramel, ²⁸in a great assembly of kohanym, people, rulers of the nation, and elders of the region, the following proclamation was made to us:

²⁹“Since there have often been wars in our country, Shimon, son of the koheyn Mattithyahu, descendant of Yoariv, and his brothers have put themselves in danger and resisted the enemies of their nation, so that their sanctuary and law might be maintained, and they have thus brought great esteem to their nation. ³⁰Yonathan rallied the nation, became their Koheyn Gadol, and was gathered to

his people. ³¹When their enemies sought to invade and ravage their country and to violate their sanctuary, ³²Shimon rose up and fought for his nation, spending large sums of his own money to equip his nation's forces and give them their pay. ³³He fortified the cities of Yehudah, especially the border city of Beth-zur, formerly the site of the enemy's weaponry, and he stationed there a garrison of Yehudy soldiers. ³⁴He also fortified Yapha by the sea and Gazara on the border of Azotus, a place previously occupied by the enemy; these cities he settled with Yehudym and furnished them with all that was necessary for their restoration. ³⁵When the people saw Shimon's fidelity and the esteem he planned to bring to his nation, they made him their leader and Koheyn Gadol because of all he had accomplished and the justice and fidelity he had shown his nation. In every way he sought to exalt his people.

³⁶“In his time and under his guidance they succeeded in driving the gentiles out of their country and those in the City of David in Yerushalayim, who had built for themselves a citadel from which they used to sally forth to defile the environs of the sanctuary and inflict grave injury on its purity. ³⁷In this citadel he stationed Yehudy soldiers, and he strengthened its fortifications for the security of the land and the city, while he also built up the wall of Yerushalayim to a greater height. ³⁸Consequently, King Demetrius confirmed him in the Kehunnah, ³⁹made him one of his friends, and conferred great honor on him. ⁴⁰This was because he had heard that the Romans had addressed the Yehudym as friends, allies, and brothers, that they had received Shimon's envoys with honor, ⁴¹and that the Yehudy people and their kohanym had decided the following: Shimon shall be their leader and Koheyn Gadol forever until a trustworthy prophet arises. ⁴²He shall act as governor over them, and shall have charge of the sanctuary, to make regulations concerning its functions and concerning the country, its weapons and strongholds. ⁴³He shall be obeyed by all. All contracts in the country shall be written in his name, and he shall be clothed in purple and gold. ⁴⁴It shall not be lawful for any of the people or kohanym to nullify any of these decisions, or to contradict the

orders given by him, or to convene an assembly in the country without his consent, to be clothed in purple or wear a gold buckle.⁴⁵ Whoever acts otherwise or violates any of these prescriptions shall be liable to punishment.

⁴⁶“Thus all the people approved of granting Shimon the right to act in accord with these decisions,⁴⁷ and Shimon accepted and agreed to be Koheyn Gadol, governor, and ethnarch of the Yehudy people and kohanyim, and to have authority over all.”

⁴⁸It was decreed that this inscription should be engraved on bronze tablets, to be set up in a conspicuous place in the precincts of the sanctuary,⁴⁹ and that copies of it should be deposited in the treasury, where they would be available to Shimon and his sons.

Chapter 15

¹Antiochus, son of King Demetrius, sent a letter from the islands of the sea to Shimon, the koheyn and ethnarch of the Yehudym, and to all the nation, ²which read as follows:

“King Antiochus sends greetings to Shimon, the Koheyn Gadol and ethnarch, and to the Yehudy nation. ³Whereas certain villains have gained control of the kingdom of our ancestors, I intend to reclaim it, that I may restore it to its former state. I have recruited a large number of mercenary troops and equipped warships. ⁴I intend to make a landing in the country so that I may take revenge on those who have ruined our country and laid waste many cities in my kingdom.

⁵“Now, therefore, I confirm to you all the tax exemptions that the kings before me granted you and whatever other privileges they conceded to you. ⁶I authorize you to coin your own money, as legal tender in your country. ⁷Yerushalayim and its sanctuary shall be free. All the weapons you have prepared and all the strongholds you have built and now occupy shall remain in your possession. ⁸All debts, present or future, due to the royal treasury shall be canceled for you, now and for all time. ⁹When we establish our kingdom, we will greatly honor you and your nation and the Temple, so that your esteem will be manifest in all the earth.”

¹⁰In the one hundred and seventy-fourth year Antiochus invaded the land of his ancestors, and all the troops rallied to him, so that few were left with Trypho. ¹¹Pursued by Antiochus, Trypho fled to Dor, by the sea, ¹²realizing what troubles had come upon him now that his soldiers had deserted him. ¹³Antiochus encamped before Dor with a hundred and twenty thousand infantry and eight thousand cavalry. ¹⁴While he surrounded the city, his ships closed from the sea, so that he pressed it hard by land and sea and let no one go in or out.

¹⁵Meanwhile, Numenius and his companions came from Rome with letters containing this message to various kings and countries:

¹⁶“Lucius, Consul of the Romans, sends greetings to King Ptolemy. ¹⁷Ambassadors of the Yehudym, our friends and allies, have come to us to renew their earlier friendship and alliance. They had been sent by Shimon the Koheyn Gadol and the Yehudy people, ¹⁸and they brought with them a gold shield of a thousand minas. ¹⁹Therefore we have decided to write to various kings and countries, that they are not to venture to harm them, or wage war against them or their cities or their country, and are not to assist those who fight against them. ²⁰We have also decided to accept the shield from them. ²¹If, then, any troublemakers from their country take refuge with you, hand them over to Shimon the Koheyn Gadol, so that he may punish them according to their law.”

²²The consul sent identical letters to Kings Demetrius, Attalus, Ariarthes and Arsaces; ²³to all the countries—Sampsames, the Spartans, Delos, Myndos, Sicyon, Caria, Samos, Pamphylia, Lycia, Halicarnassus, Rhodes, Phaselis, Cos, Side, Aradus, Gortyna, Cnidus, Cyprus, and Cyrene. ²⁴A copy of the letter was also sent to Shimon the Koheyn Gadol.

²⁵When King Antiochus encamped before Dor, he assaulted it continuously both with troops and with the siege engines he had made. He blockaded Trypho by preventing anyone from going in or out. ²⁶Shimon sent to Antiochus’ support two thousand elite troops, together with silver and gold and much equipment. ²⁷But he refused to accept the aid; in fact, he broke all the agreements he had previously made with Shimon and became hostile toward him.

²⁸He sent Athenobius, one of his friends, to confer with Shimon and say: “You are occupying Yapha and Gazara and the citadel of Yerushalayim; these are cities of my kingdom. ²⁹You have laid waste their territories, done great harm to the land, and taken possession of many districts in my kingdom. ³⁰Now, therefore, give up the cities you have seized and the tribute money of the districts you control outside the territory of Yehudah; ³¹or instead, pay me five hundred talents of silver for the devastation you have

caused and five hundred talents more for the tribute money of the cities. If you do not do this, we will come and make war on you.”

³²So Athenobius, the king’s Friend, came to Yerushalayim and on seeing the splendor of Shimon’s court, the gold and silver plate on the sideboard, and his rich display, he was amazed. When he gave him the king’s message, ³³Shimon said to him in reply: “It is not foreign land we have taken nor have we seized the property of others, but only our ancestral heritage which for a time had been unjustly held by our enemies. ³⁴Now that we have the opportunity, we are holding on to the heritage of our ancestors. ³⁵As for Yapha and Gazara, which you demand, those cities were doing great harm to our people and our country. For these we will give you a hundred talents.” Athenobius made no reply, ³⁶but returned to the king in anger. When he told him of Shimon’s words, of his splendor, and of all he had seen, the king fell into a violent rage.

³⁷Trypho had boarded a ship and escaped to Orthosia. ³⁸Then the king appointed Cendebeus commander-in-chief of the seacoast, and gave him infantry and cavalry forces. ³⁹He ordered him to encamp against Yehudah and to fortify Qidron and strengthen its gates, so that he could wage war on the people. Meanwhile the king went in pursuit of Trypho. ⁴⁰When Cendebeus came to Yamnia, he began to harass the people and to make incursions into Yehudah, where he took people captive and massacred them. ⁴¹As the king ordered, he fortified Qidron and stationed cavalry and infantry there, so that they could go out and patrol the roads of Yehudah.

Chapter 16

¹Yochanan then went up from Gazara and told his father Shimon what Cendebeus was doing. ²Shimon called his two oldest sons, Yehudah and Yochanan, and said to them: “I and my brothers and my father’s house have fought the wars of Yisrael from our youth until today, and many times we succeeded in saving Yisrael. ³I have now grown old, but you, by the mercy of Heaven, have come to maturity. Take my place and my brother’s, and go out and fight for our nation; and may the help of Heaven be with you!”

⁴Yochanan then mustered in the land twenty thousand warriors and cavalry. Setting out against Cendebeus, they spent the night at Modein, ⁵rose early, and marched into the plain. There, facing them, was an immense army of foot soldiers and cavalry, and between the two armies was a wadi. ⁶Yochanan and his people took their position against the enemy. Seeing that his people were afraid to cross the wadi, Yochanan crossed first. When his men saw this, they crossed over after him. ⁷Then he divided his infantry and put his cavalry in the center, for the enemy’s cavalry were very numerous. ⁸They blew the trumpets, and Cendebeus and his army were routed; many of them fell wounded, and the rest fled toward the stronghold. ⁹It was then that Yochanan’s brother Yehudah fell wounded; but Yochanan pursued them until Cendebeus reached Qidron, which he had fortified. ¹⁰Some took refuge in the towers on the plain of Azotus, but Yochanan set fire to these, and about two thousand of the enemy perished. He then returned to Yehudah in peace.

¹¹Ptolemy, son of Abubus, had been appointed governor of the plain of Yericho, and he had much silver and gold, ¹²being the son-in-law of the Koheyh Gadol. ¹³But his heart became proud and he was determined to get control of the country. So he made treacherous plans to do away with Shimon and his sons. ¹⁴As Shimon was inspecting the cities of the country and providing for their needs, he and his sons Mattityahu and Yehudah went down to Yericho in the one hundred and seventy-seventh year, in the eleventh month (that is, the month Shebat). ¹⁵The son of Abubus

gave them a deceitful welcome in the little stronghold called Dok which he had built. He served them a sumptuous banquet, but he had his men hidden there. ¹⁶Then, when Shimon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy and his men sprang up, weapons in hand, rushed upon Shimon in the banquet hall, and killed him, his two sons, and some of his servants. ¹⁷By this vicious act of treachery he repaid excellence with evil.

¹⁸Then Ptolemy wrote a report and sent it to the king, asking him to send troops to help him and to turn over to him their country and its cities. ¹⁹He sent other men to Gazara to do away with Yochanan. To the army officers he sent letters inviting them to come to him so that he might present them with silver, gold, and gifts. ²⁰He also sent others to seize Yerushalayim and the Temple mount. ²¹But someone ran ahead and brought word to Yochanan at Gazara that his father and his brothers had perished, and “Ptolemy has sent men to kill you also.” ²²On hearing this, Yochanan was utterly astounded. When the men came to kill him, he seized them and put them to death, for he knew that they sought to kill him.

²³Now the rest of the acts of Yochanan, his wars and the brave deeds he performed, his rebuilding of the walls, and all his achievements - ²⁴these are recorded in the chronicle of his Kehunnah, from the time that he succeeded his father as Koheyn Gadol.

Maccabees Book 2

*I lift up my eyes to the hills;
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from YHWH, Maker of the heavens and earth.*

Chapter 1

Letter 1:124 B.C. ¹The Yehudym in Yerushalayim and in the land of Yehudah send greetings to their kindred, the Yehudym in Mitzrayim, and wish them true peace! ²May Elohyim do excellence to you and remember his covenant with his faithful servants, Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'akov, ³give to all of you a heart to worship him and to do his will wholeheartedly and with a willing spirit, ⁴open your heart to his law and commandments and grant you peace, ⁵hear your prayers, and be reconciled to you, and never forsake you in time of adversity. ⁶Even now we are praying for you here.

⁷In the reign of Demetrius, the one hundred and sixty-ninth year, we Yehudym wrote to you during the height of the distress that overtook us in those years after Yason and his followers revolted against the set-apart land and the kingdom, ⁸set fire to the gatehouse and shed innocent blood. But we prayed to YHWH, and our prayer was heard; we offered sacrifices and fine flour; we lighted the lamps and set out the loaves of bread. ⁹We are now reminding you to celebrate the feast of Sukkoth in the month of Kislev. ¹⁰Dated in the one hundred and eighty-eighth year.

Letter 2: 164 B.C. The people of Yerushalayim and Yehudah, the senate, and Yehudah send greetings and well wishes to Aristobulus, teacher of King Ptolemy and member of the family of the anointed kohanyim, and to the Yehudym in Mitzrayim. ¹¹Since we have been saved by Elohyim from grave dangers, we give him great thanks as befits those who fought against the king; ¹² for it was Elohyim who drove out those who fought against the set-apart city. ¹³When their leader arrived in Persia with his seemingly irresistible army, they were cut to pieces in the temple of the female diety Nanea through a deceitful stratagem employed by Nanea's kohanyim. ¹⁴On the pretext of marrying the female diety, Antiochus with his Friends had come to the place to get its great treasures as a dowry. ¹⁵When the kohanyim of Nanea's temple had displayed the treasures and Antiochus with a few attendants had come inside the wall of the Temple precincts, the kohanyim locked

the Temple as soon as he entered. ¹⁶Then they opened a hidden trapdoor in the ceiling, and hurling stones at the leader and his companions, struck them down. They dismembered the bodies, cut off their heads and tossed them to the people outside. ¹⁷Forever blessed be our Elohyim, who has thus punished the impious!

¹⁸ Since we shall be celebrating the purification of the Temple on the twenty-fifth day of the month Kislev, we thought it right to inform you, that you too may celebrate the feast of Sukkoth and of the fire that appeared when Nechemyah, the rebuilder of the Temple and the altar, offered sacrifices. ¹⁹For when our ancestors were being led into captivity in Persia, devout kohanyim at the time took some of the fire from the altar and hid it secretly in the hollow of a dry cistern, making sure that the place would be unknown to anyone. ²⁰Many years later, when it so pleased Elohyim, Nechemyah, commissioned by the king of Persia, sent the descendants of the kohanyim who had hidden the fire to look for it. ²¹When they informed us that they could not find any fire, but only a thick liquid, he ordered them to scoop some out and bring it. After the material for the sacrifices had been prepared, Nechemyah ordered the kohanyim to sprinkle the wood and what lay on it with the liquid. ²²This was done, and when at length the sun, which had been clouded over, began to shine, a great fire blazed up, so that everyone marveled. ²³While the sacrifice was being burned, the kohanyim recited a prayer, and all present joined in with them. Yonathan led and the rest responded with Nechemyah.

²⁴The prayer was as follows: “Master, Master YHWH, creator of all things, awesome and strong, just and merciful, the only king and benefactor, ²⁵who alone are gracious, just, almighty, and eternal, Yisrael’s savior from all evil, who chose our ancestors and sanctified them: ²⁶accept this sacrifice on behalf of all your people Yisrael and guard and sanctify your portion. ²⁷Gather together our scattered people, free those who are slaves among the gentiles, look kindly on those who are despised and detested, and let the gentiles know that you are our Elohyim. ²⁸Punish those who exert

mastership over us and in their arrogance oppress us. ²⁹Plant your people in your set-apart place, as Moses said.”

³⁰Then the kohanym sang hymns. ³¹After the sacrifice was consumed, Nechemyah ordered the rest of the liquid to be poured upon large stones. ³²As soon as this was done, a flame blazed up, but its light was lost in the brilliance coming from the altar. ³³When the event became known and the king of the Persians was told that, in the very place where the exiled kohanym had hidden the fire, a liquid was found with which Nechemyah and his people had burned the sacrifices, ³⁴the king, after verifying the fact, fenced the place off and declared it sacred. ³⁵To those whom the king favored, he distributed many benefits he received. ³⁶Nechemyah and his companions called the liquid nephthar, meaning purification, but most people named it naphtha.

Chapter 2

¹In the records it will be found that Yirmeyahu the prophet ordered the deportees to take some of the fire with them as indicated, ²and that the prophet, in giving them the law, directed the deportees not to forget the commandments of YHWH or be led astray in their thoughts, when seeing the gold and silver idols and their adornments. ³With other similar words he exhorted them that the law should not depart from their hearts.

⁴The same document also tells how the prophet, in virtue of an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark should accompany him, and how he went to the very mountain that Moses climbed to behold Elohyim's inheritance. ⁵When Yirmeyahu arrived there, he found a chamber in a cave in which he put the tent, the ark, and the altar of incense; then he sealed the entrance. ⁶Some of those who followed him came up intending to mark the path, but they could not find it. ⁷When Yirmeyahu heard of this, he reproved them: "The place is to remain unknown until Elohyim gathers his people together again and shows them mercy. ⁸Then YHWH will disclose these things, and the esteem of YHWH and the cloud will be seen, just as they appeared in the time of Moses and of Shlomo when he prayed that the place might be greatly sanctified."

⁹It is also related how Shlomo in his wisdom offered a sacrifice for the dedication and the completion of the Temple. ¹⁰Just as Moses prayed to YHWH and fire descended from the sky and consumed the sacrifices, so also Shlomo prayed and fire came down and consumed the burnt offerings. ¹¹Moses had said, "Because it had not been eaten, the purification offering was consumed." ¹²Shlomo also celebrated the feast in the same way for eight days.

¹³These same things are also told in the records and in Nechemyah's memoirs, as well as how he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and the prophets, the books of David, and the royal letters about votive offerings. ¹⁴In like manner Yehudah also collected for us all the books that had been scattered

because of the war, and we now have them in our possession. ¹⁵If you need them, send messengers to get them for you.

¹⁶As we are about to celebrate the purification, we are writing: you should celebrate the festivals. ¹⁷It is Elohyim who has saved all his people and has restored to all of them their inheritance, the kingdom, the priesthood, and the sacred rites, ¹⁸as he promised through the law. For we hope in Elohyim, that he will soon have mercy on us and gather us together from everywhere under the heavens to his set-apart place, for he has rescued us from great perils and has purified the place.

¹⁹This is the story of Yehudah Maccabeus and his brothers, of the purification of the great Temple, the dedication of the altar, ²⁰the campaigns against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, ²¹and of the heavenly manifestations accorded to the heroes who fought bravely for the Yehudy people. Few as they were, they plundered the whole land, put to flight the barbarian hordes, ²²regained possession of the Temple renowned throughout the world, and liberated the city. They re-established the laws that were in danger of being abolished, while YHWH favored them with every kindness. ²³All this, detailed by Yason of Cyrene in five volumes, we will try to condense into a single book.

²⁴For in view of the flood of data, and the difficulties encountered, given such abundant material, by those who wish to plunge into accounts of the history, ²⁵we have aimed to please those who prefer simply to read, to make it easy for the studious who wish to commit things to memory, and to be helpful to all. ²⁶For us who have undertaken the labor of making this digest, the task, far from being easy, is one of sweat and of sleepless nights. ²⁷Just so, the preparation of a festive banquet is no light matter for one who seeks to give enjoyment to others. Similarly, to win the gratitude of many we will gladly endure this labor, ²⁸leaving the responsibility for exact details to the historian, and confining our efforts to presenting only a summary outline. ²⁹As the architect of a new

house must pay attention to the whole structure, while the one who undertakes the decoration and the frescoes has to be concerned only with what is needed for ornamentation, so I think it is with us. ³⁰To enter into questions and examine them from all sides and to be busy about details is the task of the historian; ³¹but one who is making an adaptation should be allowed to aim at brevity of expression and to forgo complete treatment of the matter. ³²Here, then, let us begin our account without adding to what has already been said; it would be silly to lengthen the preface to the history and then cut short the history itself.

Chapter 3

¹While the set-apart city lived in perfect peace and the laws were strictly observed because of the piety of the Koheyn Gadol Chon'yah and his hatred of evil, ²the kings themselves honored the place and glorified the Temple with the most magnificent gifts. ³Thus Seleucus, king of Asia, defrayed from his own revenues all the expenses necessary for the liturgy of sacrifice.

⁴But a certain Shimon, of the priestly clan of Bilgah, who had been appointed superintendent of the Temple, had a quarrel with the Koheyn Gadol about the administration of the city market. ⁵Since he could not prevail against Chon'yah, he went to Apollonius of Tarsus, who at that time was governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, ⁶and reported to him that the treasury in Yerushalayim was full of such untold riches that the sum total of the assets was past counting and that since they did not belong to the account of the sacrifices, it would be possible for them to fall under the authority of the king.

⁷When Apollonius had an audience with the king, he informed him about the riches that had been reported to him. The king chose his chief minister Heliodorus and sent him with instructions to seize those riches. ⁸So Heliodorus immediately set out on his journey, ostensibly to visit the cities of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, but in reality to carry out the king's purpose.

⁹When he arrived in Yerushalayim and had been graciously received by the Koheyn Gadol of the city, he told him about the information that had been given, and explained the reason for his presence, and he inquired if these things were really true. ¹⁰The Koheyn Gadol explained that there were deposits for widows and orphans, ¹¹and some was the property of Hyrcanus, son of Tobiyah, a man who occupied a very high position. Contrary to the misrepresentations of the impious Shimon, the total amounted only to four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. ¹²It was utterly unthinkable to defraud those who had placed their trust in

the sanctity of the place and in the sacred inviolability of a Temple venerated all over the world.

¹³But Heliodorus, because of the orders he had from the king, said that in any case this money must be confiscated for the royal treasury. ¹⁴So on the day he had set he went in to take an inventory of the funds. There was no little anguish throughout the city. ¹⁵Kohanyim prostrated themselves before the altar in their priestly robes, and called toward heaven for the one who had given the law about deposits to keep the deposits safe for those who had made them. ¹⁶Whoever saw the appearance of the Koheyn Gadol was pierced to the heart, for the changed complexion of his face revealed his mental anguish. ¹⁷The terror and bodily trembling that had come over the man clearly showed those who saw him the pain that lodged in his heart. ¹⁸People rushed out of their houses and crowded together making common supplication, because the place was in danger of being profaned. ¹⁹Women, girded with sackcloth below their breasts, filled the streets. Young women secluded indoors all ran, some to the gates, some to the walls, others peered through the windows— ²⁰all of them with hands raised toward heaven, making supplication. ²¹It was pitiful to see the populace prostrate everywhere and the Koheyn Gadol full of dread and anguish. ²²While they were imploring the almighty YHWH to keep the deposits safe and secure for those who had placed them in trust, ²³Heliodorus went on with his plan.

²⁴But just as Heliodorus was arriving at the treasury with his bodyguards, YHWH of spirits and all authority produced an apparition so great that those who had been bold enough to accompany Heliodorus were panic-stricken at YHWH's power and fainted away in terror. ²⁵There appeared to them a richly caparisoned horse, mounted by a fearsome rider. Charging furiously, the horse attacked Heliodorus with its front hooves. The rider was seen wearing golden armor. ²⁶Then two other young men, remarkably strong, strikingly handsome, and splendidly attired, appeared before him. Standing on each side of him, they

flogged him unceasingly, inflicting innumerable blows. ²⁷Suddenly he fell to the ground, enveloped in great darkness. His men picked him up and laid him on a stretcher. ²⁸They carried away helpless the man who a moment before had entered that treasury under arms with a great retinue and his whole bodyguard. They clearly recognized the sovereign power of Elohyim.

²⁹As Heliodorus lay speechless because of Elohyim's action and deprived of any hope of recovery, ³⁰the people praised YHWH who had marvelously glorified his own place; and the Temple, charged so shortly before with fear and commotion, was filled with joy and gladness, now that the almighty YHWH had appeared.

³¹Quickly some of the companions of Heliodorus begged Chon'yah to call upon the Most High to spare the life of one who was about to breathe his last. ³²The Koheyn Gadol, suspecting that the king might think that Heliodorus had suffered some foul play at the hands of the Yehudym, offered a sacrifice for the man's recovery.

³³While the Koheyn Gadol was offering the sacrifice of atonement, the same young men dressed in the same clothing again appeared and stood before Heliodorus. "Be very grateful to the Koheyn Gadol Chon'yah," they told him. "It is for his sake that YHWH has spared your life. ³⁴Since you have been scourged by Heaven, proclaim to all YHWH's great power." When they had said this, they disappeared.

³⁵After Heliodorus had offered a sacrifice to YHWH and made most solemn vows to the one who had spared his life, he bade Chon'yah farewell, and returned with his soldiers to the king.

³⁶Before all he gave witness to the deeds of the most high YHWH that he had seen with his own eyes. ³⁷When the king asked Heliodorus what sort of person would be suitable to be sent to Yerushalayim next, he answered: ³⁸"If you have an enemy or one who is plotting against the government, send him there, and you will get him back with a flogging, if indeed he survives at all; for there is certainly some divine power about the place. ³⁹The one whose dwelling is in heaven watches over that place and protects

it, and strikes down and destroys those who come to harm it.”
⁴⁰This was how the matter concerning Heliodorus and the preservation of the treasury turned out.

Chapter 4

¹The Shimon mentioned above as the informer about the funds against his own country slandered Chon'yah as the one who incited Heliodorus and instigated the whole miserable affair. ²He dared to brand as a schemer against the government the man who was the benefactor of the city, the protector of his compatriots, and a zealous defender of the laws. ³When Shimon's hostility reached such a pitch that murders were being committed by one of his henchmen, ⁴Chon'yah saw that the opposition was serious and that Apollonius, son of Menestheus, the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, was abetting Shimon's wickedness. ⁵So he had recourse to the king, not as an accuser of his compatriots, but as one looking to the general and particular welfare of all the people. ⁶He saw that without royal attention it would be impossible to have a peaceful government, and that Shimon would not desist from his folly.

⁷But Seleucus died, and when Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes succeeded him on the throne, Chon'yah's brother Yason obtained the Kehunnah by corrupt means: ⁸in an interview, he promised the king three hundred and sixty talents of silver, as well as eighty talents from another source of income. ⁹Besides this he would undertake to pay a hundred and fifty more, if he was given authority to establish a gymnasium and a youth center for it and to enroll Yerushalayimites as citizens of Antioch.

¹⁰When Yason received the king's approval and came into office, he immediately initiated his compatriots into the Greek way of life. ¹¹He set aside the royal concessions granted to the Yehudym through the mediation of Yochanan, father of Eupolemus (that Eupolemus who would later go on an embassy to the Romans to establish friendship and alliance with them); he set aside the lawful practices and introduced customs contrary to the law. ¹²With perverse delight he established a gymnasium at the very foot of the citadel, where he induced the noblest young men to wear the Greek hat. ¹³The desire for Hellenism and the adoption of foreign customs reached such a pitch, through the outrageous wickedness of Yason, the renegade and would-be Koheyn Gadol, ¹⁴that the

kohanym no longer cared about the service of the altar. Disdaining the Temple and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened, at the signal for the games, to take part in the unlawful exercises at the arena. ¹⁵What their ancestors had regarded as honors they despised; what the Greeks esteemed as esteem they prized highly. ¹⁶For this reason they found themselves in serious trouble: the very people whose manner of life they emulated, and whom they desired to imitate in everything, became their enemies and oppressors. ¹⁷It is no light matter to flout the laws of Elohyim, as subsequent events will show.

¹⁸When the quinquennial games were held at Tyre in the presence of the king, ¹⁹the vile Yason sent representatives of the Antiochians of Yerushalayim, to bring three hundred silver drachmas for the sacrifice to Hercules. But the bearers themselves decided that the money should not be spent on a sacrifice, as that was not right, but should be used for some other purpose. ²⁰So the contribution meant for the sacrifice to Hercules by the sender, was in fact applied to the construction of triremes by those who brought it.

²¹When Apollonius, son of Menestheus, was sent to Mitzrayim for the coronation of King Philometor, Antiochus learned from him that the king was opposed to his policies. He took measures for his own security; so after going to Yapha, he proceeded to Yerushalayim. ²²There he was received with great pomp by Yason and the people of the city, who escorted him with torchlights and acclamations; following this, he led his army into Phoenicia.

²³Three years later Yason sent Menelaus, brother of the aforementioned Shimon, to deliver the money to the king, and to complete negotiations on urgent matters. ²⁴But after his introduction to the king, he flattered him with such an air of authority that he secured the Kehunnah for himself, outbidding Yason by three hundred talents of silver. ²⁵He returned with the royal commission, but with nothing that made him worthy of the

Kehunnah; he had the temper of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a wild beast. ²⁶So Yason, who had cheated his own brother and now saw himself cheated by another man, was driven out as a fugitive to the country of the Ammony. ²⁷But Menelaus, who obtained the office, paid nothing of the money he had promised to the king, ²⁸in spite of the demand of Sostratus, the commandant of the citadel, whose duty it was to collect the taxes. For this reason, both were summoned before the king. ²⁹Menelaus left his brother Lysimachus as his deputy in the Kehunnah, while Sostratus left Crates, commander of the Cypriots.

³⁰While these things were taking place, the people of Tarsus and Mallus rose in revolt, because their cities had been given as a gift to Antiochis, the king's concubine. ³¹So the king hastened off to settle the affair, leaving Andronicus, one of his nobles, as his deputy. ³²Menelaus, for his part, thinking this an excellent opportunity, stole some gold vessels from the Temple and presented them to Andronicus; he had already sold other vessels in Tyre and in the neighboring cities. ³³When Chon'yah had clear evidence, he accused Menelaus publicly, after withdrawing to the inviolable sanctuary at Daphne, near Antioch. ³⁴Thereupon Menelaus approached Andronicus privately and urged him to seize Chon'yah. So Andronicus went to Chon'yah, treacherously reassuring him by offering his right hand in oath, and persuaded him, in spite of his suspicions, to leave the sanctuary. Then, with no regard for justice, he immediately put him to death.

³⁵As a result, not only the Yehudym, but many people of other nations as well, were indignant and angry over the unjust murder of the man. ³⁶When the king returned from the region of Cilicia, the Yehudym of the city, together with the Greeks who detested the crime, went to see him about the murder of Chon'yah. ³⁷Antiochus was deeply grieved and full of pity; he wept as he recalled the prudence and noble conduct of the deceased. ³⁸Inflamed with anger, he immediately stripped Andronicus of his purple robe, tore off his garments, and had him led through the

whole city to the very place where he had committed the outrage against Chon'yah; and there he put the murderer to death. Thus YHWH rendered him the punishment he deserved.

³⁹Many acts of sacrilege had been committed by Lysimachus in the city with the connivance of Menelaus. When word spread, the people assembled in protest against Lysimachus, because a large number of gold vessels had been stolen. ⁴⁰As the crowds, now thoroughly enraged, began to riot, Lysimachus launched an unjustified attack against them with about three thousand armed men under the leadership of a certain Auranus, a man as advanced in folly as he was in years. ⁴¹Seeing Lysimachus' attack, people picked up stones, pieces of wood or handfuls of the ashes lying there and threw them in wild confusion at Lysimachus and his men. ⁴²As a result, they wounded many of them and even killed a few, while they put all to flight. The Temple robber himself they killed near the treasury.

⁴³Charges about this affair were brought against Menelaus. ⁴⁴When the king came to Tyre, three men sent by the senate pleaded the case before him. ⁴⁵But Menelaus, seeing himself on the losing side, promised Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes, a substantial sum of money if he would win the king over. ⁴⁶So Ptolemy took the king aside into a colonnade, as if to get some fresh air, and persuaded him to change his mind. ⁴⁷Menelaus, who was the cause of all the trouble, the king acquitted of the charges, while he condemned to death those poor men who would have been declared innocent even if they had pleaded their case before Scythians. ⁴⁸Thus, those who had prosecuted the case on behalf of the city, the people, and the sacred vessels, quickly suffered unjust punishment. ⁴⁹For this reason, even Tyrians, detesting the crime, provided sumptuously for their burial. ⁵⁰But Menelaus, thanks to the greed of those in power, remained in office, where he grew in wickedness, scheming greatly against his fellow citizens.

Chapter 5

¹About this time Antiochus sent his second expedition into Mitzrayim. ²It then happened that all over the city, for nearly forty days, there appeared horsemen, clothed in garments of a golden weave, charging in midair—companies fully armed with lances and drawn swords; ³squadrons of cavalry in battle array, charges and countercharges on this side and that, with brandished shields and bristling spears, flights of arrows and flashes of gold ornaments, together with armor of every sort. ⁴Therefore all prayed that this vision might be an excellent omen.

⁵But when a false rumor circulated that Antiochus was dead, Yason gathered at least a thousand men and suddenly attacked the city. As the defenders on the walls were forced back and the city was finally being taken, Menelaus took refuge in the citadel. ⁶For his part, Yason continued the merciless slaughter of his fellow citizens, not realizing that triumph over one's own kindred is the greatest calamity; he thought he was winning a victory over his enemies, not over his own people. ⁷Even so, he did not gain control of the government, but in the end received only disgrace for his treachery, and once again took refuge in the country of the Ammony. ⁸At length he met a miserable end. Called to account before Aretas, ruler of the Arabians, he fled from city to city, hunted by all, hated as an apostate from the laws, abhorred as the executioner of his country and his compatriots. Driven into Mitzrayim, ⁹he set out by sea for the Lacedaemonians, among whom he hoped to find protection because of his relations with them. He who had exiled so many from their country perished in exile; ¹⁰and he who had cast out so many to lie unburied went unmourned and without a funeral of any kind, nor any place in the tomb of his ancestors.

¹¹When these happenings were reported to the king, he thought that Yehudah was in revolt. Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Mitzrayim and took Yerushalayim by storm. ¹²He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. ¹³There was a massacre

of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of young women and infants. ¹⁴In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery.

¹⁵Not satisfied with this, the king dared to enter the holiest Temple in the world; Menelaus, that traitor both to the laws and to his country, served as guide. ¹⁶He laid his impure hands on the sacred vessels and swept up with profane hands the votive offerings made by other kings for the advancement, the esteem, and the honor of the place. ¹⁷Antiochus became puffed up in spirit, not realizing that it was because of the sins of the city's inhabitants that the Sovereign YHWH was angry for a little while: hence the disregard of the place. ¹⁸If they had not become entangled in so many sins, this man, like that Heliodorus sent by King Seleucus to inspect the treasury, would have been flogged and turned back from his presumptuous act as soon as he approached. ¹⁹YHWH, however, had not chosen the nation for the sake of the place, but the place for the sake of the nation. ²⁰Therefore, the place itself, having shared in the nation's misfortunes, afterward participated in their excellent fortune; and what the Almighty had forsaken in wrath was restored in all its esteem, once the great Sovereign YHWH became reconciled.

²¹Antiochus carried off eighteen hundred talents from the Temple and hurried back to Antioch, thinking in his arrogance that he could make the land navigable and the sea passable on foot, so carried away was he with pride. ²²He left governors to harass the nation: at Yerushalayim, Philip, a Phrygian by birth, and in character more barbarous than the man who appointed him; ²³at Mount Gerizym, Andronicus; and besides these, Menelaus, who exerted mastership over his fellow citizens more than the others. Out of hatred for the Yehudy citizens, ²⁴the king sent Apollonius, commander of the Mysians, at the head of an army of twenty-two thousand, with orders to kill all the grown men and sell the women and children into slavery. ²⁵When this man arrived in

Yerushalayim, he pretended to be peacefully disposed and waited until the set-apart day of the Shabbath; then, finding the Yehudym refraining from work, he ordered his men to parade fully armed.²⁶ All those who came out to watch, he massacred, and running through the city with armed men, he cut down a large number of people.

²⁷But Yehudah Maccabeus and about nine others withdrew to the wilderness to avoid sharing in defilement; there he and his companions lived like the animals in the hills, eating what grew wild.

Chapter 6

¹Not long after this the king sent an Athenian senator to force the Yehudym to abandon the laws of their ancestors and live no longer by the laws of YHWH, ²also to profane the Temple in Yerushalayim and dedicate it to Olympian Zeus, and the one on Mount Gerizym to Zeus the Host to Strangers, as the local inhabitants were wont to be. ³This was a harsh and utterly intolerable evil. ⁴The gentiles filled the Temple with debauchery and revelry; they amused themselves with prostitutes and had intercourse with women even in the sacred courts. They also brought forbidden things into the Temple, ⁵so that the altar was covered with abominable offerings prohibited by the laws.

⁶No one could keep the Shabbath or celebrate the traditional feasts, nor even admit to being a Yehudy. ⁷Moreover, at the monthly celebration of the king's birthday the Yehudym, from bitter necessity, had to partake of the sacrifices, and when the festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to march in his procession, wearing wreaths of ivy.

⁸Following upon a vote of the citizens of Ptolemais, a decree was issued ordering the neighboring Greek cities to adopt the same measures, obliging the Yehudym to partake of the sacrifices ⁹and putting to death those who would not consent to adopt the customs of the Greeks. It was obvious, therefore, that disaster had come upon them. ¹⁰Thus, two women who were arrested for having circumcised their children were publicly paraded about the city with their babies hanging at their breasts and then thrown down from the top of the city wall. ¹¹Others, who had assembled in nearby caves to observe the seventh day in secret, were betrayed to Philip and all burned to death. In their respect for the set-apartness of that day, they refrained from defending themselves.

¹²Now I urge those who read this book not to be disheartened by these misfortunes, but to consider that these punishments were meant not for the ruin but for the correction of our nation. ¹³It is, in fact, a sign of great kindness to punish the impious promptly

instead of letting them go for long. ¹⁴Thus, in dealing with other nations, the Sovereign YHWH patiently waits until they reach the full measure of their sins before punishing them; but with us he has decided to deal differently, ¹⁵in order that he may not have to punish us later, when our sins have reached their fullness. ¹⁶Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. Although he disciplines us with misfortunes, he does not abandon his own people. ¹⁷Let these words suffice for recalling this truth. Without further ado we must go on with our story.

¹⁸Eleazar, one of the foremost scribes, a man advanced in age and of noble appearance, was being forced to open his mouth to eat pork. ¹⁹But preferring a glorious death to a life of defilement, he went forward of his own accord to the instrument of torture, ²⁰spitting out the meat as they should do who have the courage to reject food unlawful to taste even for love of life.

²¹Those in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside, because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring his own provisions that he could legitimately eat, and only to pretend to eat the sacrificial meat prescribed by the king. ²²Thus he would escape death, and be treated kindly because of his old friendship with them. ²³But he made up his mind in a noble manner, worthy of his years, the dignity of his advanced age, the merited distinction of his gray hair, and of the admirable life he had lived from childhood. Above all loyal to the set-apart laws given by YHWH, he swiftly declared, “Send me to Hades!”

²⁴“At our age it would be unbecoming to make such a pretense; many of the young would think the ninety-year-old Eleazar had gone over to an alien religion. ²⁵If I dissemble to gain a brief moment of life, they would be led astray by me, while I would bring defilement and dishonor on my old age. ²⁶Even if, for the time being, I avoid human punishment, I shall never, whether alive or dead, escape the hand of the Almighty. ²⁷Therefore, by bravely giving up life now, I will prove myself worthy of my old age, ²⁸and

I will leave to the young a noble example of how to die willingly and nobly for the revered and set-apart laws.”

He spoke thus, and went immediately to the instrument of torture. ²⁹Those who shortly before had been kindly disposed, now became hostile toward him because what he had said seemed to them utter madness. ³⁰When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned, saying: “YHWH in his set-apart knowledge knows full well that, although I could have escaped death, I am not only enduring terrible pain in my body from this scourging, but also suffering it with joy in my soul because of my devotion to him.” ³¹This is how he died, leaving in his death a model of nobility and an unforgettable example of virtue not only for the young but for the whole nation.

Chapter 7

¹It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king to force them to eat pork in violation of YHWH's law. ²One of the brothers, speaking for the others, said: "What do you expect to learn by questioning us? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors."

³At that the king, in a fury, gave orders to have pans and caldrons heated. ⁴These were quickly heated, and he gave the order to cut out the tongue of the one who had spoken for the others, to scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of his brothers and his mother looked on. ⁵When he was completely maimed but still breathing, the king ordered them to carry him to the fire and fry him. As a cloud of smoke spread from the pan, the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, with these words: ⁶"YHWH is looking on and truly has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song, when he openly bore witness, saying, 'And YHWH will have compassion on his servants.'"

⁷After the first brother had died in this manner, they brought the second to be made sport of. After tearing off the skin and hair of his head, they asked him, "Will you eat the pork rather than have your body tortured limb by limb?" ⁸Answering in the language of his ancestors, he said, "Never!" So he in turn suffered the same tortures as the first. ⁹With his last breath he said: "You accursed fiend, you are depriving us of this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to live again forever, because we are dying for his laws."

¹⁰After him the third suffered their cruel sport. He put forth his tongue at once when told to do so, and bravely stretched out his hands, ¹¹as he spoke these noble words: "It was from Heaven that I received these; for the sake of his laws I disregard them; from him I hope to receive them again." ¹²Even the king and his attendants marveled at the young man's spirit, because he regarded his sufferings as nothing.

¹³After he had died, they tortured and maltreated the fourth brother in the same way. ¹⁴When he was near death, he said, “It is my choice to die at the hands of mortals with the hope that Elohyim will restore me to life; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.”

¹⁵They next brought forward the fifth brother and maltreated him. ¹⁶Looking at the king, he said: “Mortal though you are, you have power over human beings, so you do what you please. But do not think that our nation is forsaken by Elohyim. ¹⁷Only wait, and you will see how his great power will torment you and your descendants.”

¹⁸After him they brought the sixth brother. When he was about to die, he said: “Have no vain illusions. We suffer these things on our own account, because we have sinned against our Elohyim; that is why such shocking things have happened. ¹⁹Do not think, then, that you will go unpunished for having dared to fight against Elohyim.”

²⁰Most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance was the mother who, seeing her seven sons perish in a single day, bore it courageously because of her hope in YHWH. ²¹Filled with a noble spirit that stirred her womanly reason with manly emotion, she exhorted each of them in the language of their ancestors with these words: ²²“I do not know how you came to be in my womb; it was not I who gave you breath and life, nor was it I who arranged the elements you are made of. ²³Therefore, since it is the Creator of the universe who shaped the beginning of humankind and brought about the origin of everything, he, in his mercy, will give you back both breath and life, because you now disregard yourselves for the sake of his law.”

²⁴Antiochus, suspecting insult in her words, thought he was being ridiculed. As the youngest brother was still alive, the king appealed to him, not with mere words, but with promises on oath, to make

him rich and happy if he would abandon his ancestral customs: he would make him his Friend and entrust him with high office. ²⁵When the youth paid no attention to him at all, the king appealed to the mother, urging her to advise her boy to save his life. ²⁶After he had urged her for a long time, she agreed to persuade her son. ²⁷She leaned over close to him and, in derision of the cruel tyrant, said in their native language: “Son, have pity on me, who carried you in my womb for nine months, nursed you for three years, brought you up, educated and supported you to your present age. ²⁸I beg you, child, to look at the heavens and the earth and see all that is in them; then you will know that Elohyim did not make them out of existing things. In the same way humankind came into existence. ²⁹Do not be afraid of this executioner, but be worthy of your brothers and accept death, so that in the time of mercy I may receive you again with your brothers.”

³⁰She had scarcely finished speaking when the youth said: “What is the delay? I will not obey the king’s command. I obey the command of the law given to our ancestors through Moses. ³¹But you, who have contrived every kind of evil for the Hebrews, will not escape the hands of Elohyim. ³²We, indeed, are suffering because of our sins. ³³Though for a little while our living YHWH has been angry, correcting and chastising us, he will again be reconciled with his servants. ³⁴But you, wretch, most vile of mortals, do not, in your insolence, buoy yourself up with unfounded hopes, as you raise your hand against the children of heaven. ³⁵You have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty and all-seeing Elohyim. ³⁶Our brothers, after enduring brief pain, have drunk of never-failing life, under YHWH's covenant. But you, by the judgment of Elohyim, shall receive just punishments for your arrogance. ³⁷Like my brothers, I offer up my body and my life for our ancestral laws, imploring Elohyim to show mercy soon to our nation, and by afflictions and blows to make you confess that he alone is Elohyim. ³⁸Through me and my brothers, may there be an end to the wrath of the Almighty that has justly fallen on our whole nation.”

³⁹At that, the king became enraged and treated him even worse than the others, since he bitterly resented the boy's contempt. ⁴⁰Thus he too died undefiled, putting all his trust in YHWH. ⁴¹Last of all, after her sons, the mother was put to death. ⁴²Enough has been said about the sacrificial meals and the excessive cruelties.

Chapter 8

¹Yehudah Maccabeus and his companions entered the villages secretly, summoned their kindred, and enlisted others who had remained faithful to Yehudaism. Thus they assembled about six thousand men. ²They implored YHWH to look kindly upon this people, who were being oppressed by all; to have pity on the sanctuary, which was profaned by renegades; ³to have mercy on the city, which was being destroyed and was about to be leveled to the ground; to listen to the blood that cried out to him; ⁴to remember the criminal slaughter of innocent children and the blasphemies uttered against his name; and to manifest his hatred of evil.

⁵Once Maccabeus got his men organized, the gentiles could not withstand him, for the wrath of YHWH had now changed to mercy. ⁶Coming by surprise upon towns and villages, he set them on fire. He captured strategic positions, and put to flight not a few of the enemy. ⁷He preferred the nights as being especially favorable for such attacks. Soon talk of his valor spread everywhere.

⁸When Philip saw that Yehudah was gaining ground little by little and that his successful advances were becoming more frequent, he wrote to Ptolemy, governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, to come to the aid of the king's interests. ⁹Ptolemy promptly selected Nikanor, son of Patroclus, one of the chief friends, and sent him at the head of at least twenty thousand armed men of various nations to wipe out the entire Yehudy nation. With him he associated Gorgias, a general, experienced in the art of war. ¹⁰Nikanor planned to raise the two thousand talents of tribute owed by the king to the Romans by selling captured Yehudym into slavery. ¹¹So he immediately sent word to the coastal cities, inviting them to buy Yehudy slaves and promising to deliver ninety slaves for a talent—little anticipating the punishment that was to fall upon him from the Almighty.

¹²When Yehudah learned of Nikanor's advance and informed his companions about the approach of the army, ¹³those who were fearful and those who lacked faith in Elohyim's justice deserted and got away. ¹⁴But the others sold everything they had left, and at the same time entreated YHWH to deliver those whom the wicked Nikanor had sold before even capturing them. ¹⁵They entreated YHWH to do this, if not for their sake, at least for the sake of the covenants made with their ancestors, and because they themselves invoked his set-apart and glorious name. ¹⁶Maccabeus assembled his forces, six thousand strong, and exhorted them not to be panic-stricken before the enemy, nor to fear the very large number of gentiles unjustly attacking them, but to fight nobly. ¹⁷They were to keep before their eyes the lawless outrage perpetrated by the gentiles against the set-apart place and the affliction of the humiliated city, as well as the subversion of their ancestral way of life. ¹⁸He said, "They trust in weapons and acts of daring, but we trust in almighty Elohyim, who can by a mere nod destroy not only those who attack us but even the whole world." ¹⁹He went on to tell them of the times when help had been given their ancestors: both the time of Sennacherib, when a hundred and eighty-five thousand of his men perished, ²⁰and the time of the battle in Bavel against the Galatians, when only eight thousand Yehudym fought along with four thousand Macedonians; yet when the Macedonians were hard pressed, the eight thousand, by the help they received from Heaven, destroyed one hundred and twenty thousand and took a great quantity of spoils. ²¹With these words he encouraged them and made them ready to die for their laws and their country.

Then Yehudah divided his army into four, ²²placing his brothers, Shimon, Yoseph, and Yonathan, each over a division, assigning them fifteen hundred men apiece. ²³There was also Eleazar. After reading to them from the set-apart book and giving them the watchword, "The help of Elohyim," Yehudah himself took charge of the first division and joined in battle with Nikanor. ²⁴With the Almighty as their ally, they killed more than nine thousand of the enemy, wounded and disabled the greater part of Nikanor's army,

and put all of them to flight. ²⁵They also seized the money of those who had come to buy them as slaves. When they had pursued the enemy for some time, they were obliged to return by reason of the late hour. ²⁶It was the day before the Shabbath, and for that reason they could not continue the pursuit. ²⁷They collected the enemy's weapons and stripped them of their spoils, and then observed the Shabbath with fervent praise and thanks to YHWH who kept them safe for that day on which he allotted them the beginning of his mercy. ²⁸After the Shabbath, they gave a share of the spoils to those who were tortured and to widows and orphans; the rest they divided among themselves and their children.ⁱ ²⁹When this was done, they made supplication in common, imploring the merciful YHWH to be completely reconciled with his servants.

³⁰They also challenged the forces of Timotiyos and Bacchides, killed more than twenty thousand of them, and captured some very high fortresses. They divided the considerable plunder, allotting half to themselves and the rest to victims of torture, orphans, widows, and the aged. ³¹They collected the enemies' weapons and carefully stored them in strategic places; the rest of the spoils they carried to Yerushalayim. ³²They also killed the commander of Timotiyos' forces, a most wicked man, who had done great harm to the Yehudym. ³³While celebrating the victory in their ancestral city, they burned both those who had set fire to the sacred gates and Callisthenes, who had taken refuge in a little house; so he received the reward his wicked deeds deserved.

³⁴The thrice-accursed Nikanor, who had brought the thousand slave dealers to buy the Yehudym, ³⁵after being humbled through YHWH's help by those whom he had thought of no account, laid aside his fine clothes and fled alone across country like a runaway slave, until he reached Antioch. He was eminently successful in destroying his own army. ³⁶So he who had promised to provide tribute for the Romans by the capture of the people of Yerushalayim proclaimed that the Yehudym had a champion, and

that because they followed the laws laid down by him, they were unharmed.

Chapter 9

¹About that time Antiochus retreated in disgrace from the region of Persia. ²He had entered the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temples and gain control of the city. Thereupon the people had swift recourse to arms, and Antiochus' forces were routed, so that in the end Antiochus was put to flight by the people of that region and forced to beat a shameful retreat. ³On his arrival in Ecbatana, he learned what had happened to Nikanor and to Timotiyos' forces. ⁴Overcome with anger, he planned to make the Yehudym suffer for the injury done by those who had put him to flight. Therefore he ordered his charioteer to drive without stopping until he finished the journey. Yet the condemnation of Heaven rode with him, because he said in his arrogance, "I will make Yerushalayim the common graveyard of Yehudym as soon as I arrive there."

⁵So the all-seeing YHWH, the Elohyim of Yisrael, struck him down with an incurable and invisible blow; for scarcely had he uttered those words when he was seized with excruciating pains in his bowels and sharp internal torment, ⁶a fit punishment for him who had tortured the bowels of others with many barbarous torments. ⁷Far from giving up his insolence, he was all the more filled with arrogance. Breathing fire in his rage against the Yehudym, he gave orders to drive even faster. As a result he hurtled from the speeding chariot, and every part of his body was racked by the violent fall. ⁸Thus he who previously, in his superhuman presumption, thought he could command the waves of the sea, and imagined he could weigh the mountaintops in his scales, was now thrown to the ground and had to be carried on a litter, clearly manifesting to all the power of Elohyim. ⁹The body of this impious man swarmed with worms, and while he was still alive in hideous torments, his flesh rotted off, so that the entire army was sickened by the stench of his corruption. ¹⁰Shortly before, he had thought that he could reach the stars of heaven, and now, no one could endure to transport the man because of this intolerable stench.

¹¹At last, broken in spirit, he began to give up his excessive arrogance, and to gain some understanding, under the scourge of Elohim, for he was racked with pain unceasingly. ¹²When he could no longer bear his own stench, he said, “It is right to be subject to YHWH, and not to think one’s mortal self equal to Elohim.” ¹³Then this vile man vowed to him who would never again show him mercy, the Sovereign YHWH, ¹⁴that the set-apart city, toward which he had been hurrying with the intention of leveling it to the ground and making it a common graveyard, he would now set free; ¹⁵that the Yehudym, whom he had judged not even worthy of burial, but fit only to be thrown out with their children to be eaten by vultures and wild animals—all of them he would make equal to the Athenians; ¹⁶that he would adorn with the finest offerings the set-apart Temple which he had previously despoiled, restore all the sacred vessels many times over, and provide from his own revenues the expenses required for the sacrifices. ¹⁷Besides all this, he would become a Yehudy himself and visit every inhabited place to proclaim there the power of Elohim. ¹⁸But since his sufferings were not lessened, for Elohim's just judgment had come upon him, he lost hope for himself and wrote the following letter to the Yehudym in the form of a supplication. It read thus:

¹⁹“To the worthy Yehudy citizens, Antiochus, king and general, sends hearty greetings and best wishes for their health and prosperity. ²⁰If you and your children are well and your affairs are going as you wish, I thank Elohim very much, for my hopes are in heaven. ²¹Now that I am ill, I recall with affection your esteem and benevolence. On returning from the regions of Persia, I fell victim to a troublesome illness; so I thought it necessary to form plans for the general security of all. ²²I do not despair about my health, since I have much hope of recovering from my illness. ²³Nevertheless, I know that my father, whenever he went on campaigns in the hinterland, would name his successor, ²⁴so that, if anything unexpected happened or any unwelcome news came, the people throughout the realm would know to whom the government had been entrusted, and so not be disturbed. ²⁵I am also bearing in mind

that the neighboring rulers, especially those on the borders of our kingdom, are on the watch for opportunities and waiting to see what will happen. I have therefore appointed as king my son Antiochus, whom I have often before entrusted and commended to most of you, when I made hurried visits to the outlying provinces. I have written to him what is written here. ²⁶Therefore I beg and entreat each of you to remember the general and individual benefits you have received, and to continue to show benevolence toward me and my son. ²⁷I am confident that, following my policy, he will treat you with equity and kindness in his relations with you.”

²⁸So this murderer and blasphemer, after extreme sufferings, such as he had inflicted on others, died a miserable death in the mountains of a foreign land. ²⁹His foster brother Philip brought the body home; but fearing Antiochus’ son, he later withdrew into Mitzrayim, to Ptolemy Philometor.

Chapter 10

¹When Maccabeus and his companions, under YHWH's leadership, had recovered the Temple and the city, ²they destroyed the altars erected by the foreigners in the marketplace and the sacred shrines. ³After purifying the Temple, they made another altar. Then, with fire struck from flint, they offered sacrifice for the first time in two years, burned incense, and lighted lamps. They also set out the showbread. ⁴When they had done this, they prostrated themselves and begged YHWH that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, and that if they should sin at any time, he might chastise them with moderation and not hand them over to blasphemous and barbarous gentiles. ⁵On the anniversary of the day on which the Temple had been profaned by the foreigners, that is, the twenty-fifth of the same month Kislev, the purification of the Temple took place. ⁶The Yehudym celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the feast of Sukkoth, remembering how, a little while before, they had spent the feast of Sukkoth living like wild animals in the mountains and in caves. ⁷Carrying rods entwined with leaves, beautiful branches and palms, they sang hymns of grateful praise to him who had successfully brought about the purification of his own place. ⁸By public decree and vote they prescribed that the whole Yehudy nation should celebrate these days every year. ⁹Such was the end of Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes.

¹⁰Now we shall relate what happened under Antiochus Eupator, the son of that heathen man, and shall give a summary of the chief evils caused by the wars. ¹¹When Eupator succeeded to the kingdom, he put a certain Lysias in charge of the government as commander-in-chief of Coelesyria and Phoenicia. ¹²Ptolemy, called Macron, had taken the lead in treating the Yehudym fairly because of the previous injustice that had been done them, and he endeavored to have peaceful relations with them. ¹³As a result, he was accused before Eupator by the King's friends. In fact, on all sides he heard himself called a traitor for having abandoned Cyprus, which Philometor had entrusted to him, and for having gone over to Antiochus Epiphanes. Since he could not command

the respect due to his high office, he ended his life by taking poison.

¹⁴When Gorgias became governor of the region, he employed foreign troops and used every opportunity to attack the Yehudym.

¹⁵At the same time the Idumeans, who held some strategic strongholds, were harassing the Yehudym; they welcomed fugitives from Yerushalayim and endeavored to continue the war.

¹⁶Maccabeus and his companions, after public prayers asking Elohyim to be their ally, moved quickly against the strongholds of the Idumeans. ¹⁷Attacking vigorously, they gained control of the places, drove back all who were fighting on the walls, and cut

down those who opposed them, killing no fewer than twenty thousand. ¹⁸When at least nine thousand took refuge in two very strong towers, well equipped to sustain a siege, ¹⁹Maccabeus left

Shimon and Yoseph, along with Zacchaeus and his forces, in sufficient numbers to besiege them, while he himself went off to places where he was more urgently needed. ²⁰But some of those in

Shimon's force who were lovers of money let themselves be bribed by some of those in the towers; on receiving seventy thousand drachmas, they allowed a number of them to escape. ²¹When

Maccabeus was told what had happened, he assembled the rulers of the people and accused those men of having sold their kindred for money by setting their enemies free to fight against them. ²²So

he put them to death as traitors, and without delay captured the two towers. ²³As he was successful at arms in all his undertakings, he destroyed more than twenty thousand in the two strongholds.

²⁴Timotiyos, who had previously been defeated by the Yehudym, gathered a tremendous force of foreign troops and collected a large number of cavalry from Asia; then he appeared in Yehudah, ready to conquer it by force. ²⁵At his approach, Maccabeus and his

companions made supplication to Elohyim, sprinkling earth upon their heads and girding their loins in sackcloth. ²⁶Lying prostrate at the foot of the altar, they begged him to be gracious to them, and to

be an enemy to their enemies, and a foe to their foes, as the law

declares. ²⁷After the prayer, they took up their weapons and advanced a considerable distance from the city, halting when they were close to the enemy. ²⁸As soon as dawn broke, the armies joined battle, the one having as pledge of success and victory not only their valor but also their reliance on YHWH, and the other taking fury as their leader in the fight.

²⁹In the midst of the fierce battle, there appeared to the enemy five majestic men from the heavens riding on golden-bridled horses, leading the Yehudym. ³⁰They surrounded Maccabeus, and shielding him with their own armor, kept him from being wounded. They shot arrows and hurled thunderbolts at the enemy, who were bewildered and blinded, routed in utter confusion. ³¹Twenty thousand five hundred of their foot soldiers and six hundred cavalry were slain.

³²Timotiyos, however, fled to a well-fortified stronghold called Gazara, where Chaereas was in command. ³³For four days Maccabeus and his forces eagerly besieged the fortress. ³⁴Those inside, relying on the strength of the place, kept repeating outrageous blasphemies and uttering abominable words. ³⁵When the fifth day dawned, twenty young men in the army of Maccabeus, angered over such blasphemies, bravely stormed the wall and with savage fury cut down everyone they encountered. ³⁶Similarly, others climbed up and swung around on the defenders; they put the towers to the torch, spread the fire and burned the blasphemers alive. Still others broke down the gates and let in the rest of the troops, who took possession of the city. ³⁷Timotiyos had hidden in a cistern, but they killed him, along with his brother Chaereas, and Apollophanes. ³⁸On completing these exploits, they blessed, with hymns of grateful praise, YHWH who shows great kindness to Yisrael and grants them victory.

Chapter 11

¹Very soon afterward, Lysias, guardian and kinsman of the king and head of the government, being greatly displeased at what had happened, ²mustered about eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry and marched against the Yehudym. His plan was to make their city a Greek settlement; ³to levy tribute on the Temple, as he did on the shrines of the other nations; and to put the Kehunnah up for sale every year. ⁴He did not take YHWH's power into account at all, but felt exultant confidence in his myriads of foot soldiers, his thousands of cavalry, and his eighty elephants. ⁵So he invaded Yehudah, and when he reached Beth-zur, a fortified place about five stadia from Yerushalayim, launched a strong attack against it.

⁶When Maccabeus and his companions learned that Lysias was besieging the strongholds, they and all the people begged YHWH with lamentations and tears to send a benevolent angel to save Yisrael. ⁷Maccabeus himself was the first to take up arms, and he exhorted the others to join him in risking their lives to help their kindred. Then they resolutely set out together. ⁸Suddenly, while they were still near Yerushalayim, a horseman appeared at their head, clothed in white garments and brandishing gold weapons. ⁹Then all of them together thanked the merciful Elohim, and their hearts were filled with such courage that they were ready to assault not only human beings but even the most savage beasts, or even walls of iron. ¹⁰Now that YHWH had shown mercy toward them, they advanced in battle order with the aid of their heavenly ally. ¹¹Hurling themselves upon the enemy like lions, they laid low eleven thousand foot soldiers and sixteen hundred cavalry, and put all the rest to flight. ¹²Most of those who survived were wounded and disarmed, while Lysias himself escaped only by shameful flight.

¹³But Lysias was not a stupid man. He reflected on the defeat he had suffered, and came to realize that the Hebrews were invincible because the mighty Elohim was their ally. He therefore sent a message ¹⁴persuading them to settle everything on just terms, and promising to persuade the king also, and to induce him to become

their friend. ¹⁵Maccabeus, solicitous for the common welfare, agreed to all that Lysias proposed; and the king granted on behalf of the Yehudym all the written requests of Maccabeus to Lysias.

¹⁶These are the terms of the letter which Lysias wrote to the Yehudym: “Lysias sends greetings to the Yehudy people.

¹⁷Yochanan and Absalom, your envoys, have presented your signed communication and asked about the matters contained in it.

¹⁸Whatever had to be referred to the king I called to his attention, and the things that were acceptable he has granted. ¹⁹If you maintain your loyalty to the government, I will endeavor to further your interests in the future. ²⁰On the details of these matters I have authorized my representatives, as well as your envoys, to confer with you. ²¹Farewell.” The one hundred and forty-eighth year, the twenty-fourth of Dioscorinthius.

²²The king’s letter read thus: “King Antiochus sends greetings to his brother Lysias. ²³Now that our father has taken his place among the elohym, we wish the subjects of our kingdom to be undisturbed in conducting their own affairs. ²⁴We have heard that the Yehudym do not agree with our father’s change to Greek customs but prefer their own way of life. They are petitioning us to let them retain their own customs. ²⁵Since we desire that this people too should be undisturbed, our decision is that their Temple be restored to them and that they live in keeping with the customs of their ancestors. ²⁶Accordingly, please send them messengers to give them our assurances of friendship, so that, when they learn of our decision, they may have nothing to worry about but may contentedly go about their own business.”

²⁷The king’s letter to the people was as follows: “King Antiochus sends greetings to the Yehudy senate and to the rest of the Yehudym. ²⁸If you are well, it is what we desire. We too are in excelent health. ²⁹Menelaus has told us of your wish to return home and attend to your own affairs. ³⁰Therefore, those who return by the thirtieth of Xanthicus will have our assurance of full

permission ³¹to observe their dietary and other laws, just as before, and none of the Yehudym shall be molested in any way for faults committed through ignorance. ³²I have also sent Menelaus to reassure you. ³³Farewell.” In the one hundred and forty-eighth year, the fifteenth of Xanthicus.

³⁴The Romans also sent them a letter as follows: “Quintus Memmius and Titus Manius, legates of the Romans, send greetings to the Yehudy people. ³⁵What Lysias, kinsman of the king, has granted you, we also approve. ³⁶But for the matters that he decided should be submitted to the king, send someone to us immediately with your decisions so that we may present them to your advantage, for we are on our way to Antioch. ³⁷Make haste, then, to send us those who can inform us of your preference. ³⁸Farewell.” In the one hundred and forty-eighth year, the fifteenth of Xanthicus.

Chapter 12

¹After these agreements were made, Lysias returned to the king, and the Yehudym went about their farming. ²But some of the local governors, Timotiyos and Apollonius, son of Gennaesus, as also Hieronymus and Demophon, to say nothing of Nikanor, the commander of the Cyprians, would not allow them to live in peace and quiet.

³Some people of Yapha also committed this outrage: they invited the Yehudym who lived among them, together with their wives and children, to embark on boats which they had provided. There was no hint of enmity toward them. ⁴This was done by public vote of the city. When the Yehudym, wishing to live on friendly terms and not suspecting anything, accepted the invitation, the people of Yapha took them out to sea and drowned at least two hundred of them.

⁵As soon as Yehudah heard of the barbarous deed perpetrated against his compatriots, he summoned his men; ⁶and after calling upon YHWH, the just judge, he marched against the murderers of his kindred. In a night attack he set the harbor on fire, burned the boats, and put to the sword those who had taken refuge there. ⁷Because the gates of the town were shut, he withdrew, intending to come back later and wipe out the entire population of Yapha.

⁸On hearing that the people of Yamnia planned in the same way to wipe out the Yehudym who lived among them, ⁹he attacked the Yamnians by night, setting fire to the harbor and the fleet, so that the glow of the flames was visible as far as Yerushalayim, thirty miles away.

¹⁰When the Yehudym had gone about a mile from there in the march against Timotiyos, they were attacked by Arabians numbering at least five thousand foot soldiers and five hundred cavalry. ¹¹After a hard fight, Yehudah and his companions, with Elohyim's help, were victorious. The defeated nomads begged Yehudah to give pledges of friendship, and they promised to

supply the Yehudym with livestock and to be of service to them in any other way. ¹²Realizing that they could indeed be useful in many respects, Yehudah agreed to make peace with them. After the pledges of friendship had been exchanged, the Arabians withdrew to their tents.

¹³He also attacked a certain city called Caspin, fortified with earthworks and walls and inhabited by a mixed population of gentiles. ¹⁴Relying on the strength of their walls and their supply of provisions, the besieged treated Yehudah and his men with contempt, insulting them and even uttering blasphemies and profanity. ¹⁵But Yehudah and his men invoked the aid of the great Sovereign of the world, who, in the days of Yehoshua, overthrew Yericho without battering rams or siege engines; then they furiously stormed the walls. ¹⁶Capturing the city by the will of Elohim, they inflicted such indescribable slaughter on it that the adjacent pool, which was about a quarter of a mile wide, seemed to be filled with the blood that flowed into it.

¹⁷ When they had gone on some ninety miles, they reached Charax, where there were certain Yehudym known as Toubians. ¹⁸But they did not find Timotiyos in that region, for he had already departed from there without having done anything except to leave behind in one place a very strong garrison. ¹⁹But Dositheus and Sosipater, two of Maccabeus' captains, marched out and destroyed the force of more than ten thousand men that Timotiyos had left in the stronghold. ²⁰Meanwhile, Maccabeus divided his army into cohorts, with a commander over each cohort, and went in pursuit of Timotiyos, who had a force of a hundred and twenty thousand foot soldiers and twenty-five hundred cavalry. ²¹When Timotiyos learned of the approach of Yehudah, he sent on ahead of him the women and children, as well as the baggage, to a place called Karnion, which was hard to besiege and even hard to reach because of the difficult terrain of that region. ²²But when Yehudah's first cohort appeared, the enemy was overwhelmed with fear and terror at the manifestation of the all-seeing One.

Scattering in every direction, they rushed away in such headlong flight that in many cases they wounded one another, pierced by the points of their own swords. ²³Yehudah pressed the pursuit vigorously, putting the sinners to the sword and destroying as many as thirty thousand men.

²⁴Timotiyos himself fell into the hands of those under Dositheus and Sosipater; but with great cunning, he begged them to spare his life and let him go, because he had in his power the parents and relatives of many of them, and would show them no consideration. ²⁵When he had fully confirmed his solemn pledge to restore them unharmed, they let him go for the sake of saving their relatives.

²⁶Yehudah then marched to Karnion and the shrine of Atargatis, where he killed twenty-five thousand people. ²⁷After the defeat and destruction of these, he moved his army to Ephron, a fortified city inhabited by Lysias and people of many nationalities. Robust young men took up their posts in defense of the walls, from which they fought valiantly; inside were large supplies of war machines and missiles. ²⁸But the Yehudym, invoking the Sovereign who powerfully shatters the might of enemies, got possession of the city and slaughtered twenty-five thousand of the people in it.

²⁹Then they set out from there and hastened on to Scythopolis, seventy-five miles from Yerushalayim. ³⁰But when the Yehudym who lived there testified to the benevolence shown by the Scythopolitans and to their kind treatment even in times of adversity, ³¹Yehudah and his men thanked them and exhorted them to be well disposed to their nation in the future also. Finally they arrived in Yerushalayim, shortly before the feast of Shavuoth.

³²After this feast, also called Pentecost, they lost no time in marching against Gorgias, governor of Idumea, ³³who opposed them with three thousand foot soldiers and four hundred cavalry. ³⁴In the ensuing battle, a few of the Yehudym were slain. ³⁵A man called Dositheus, a powerful horseman and one of Bacenor's men,

caught hold of Gorgias, grasped his military cloak and dragged him along by brute strength, intending to capture the vile wretch alive, when a Thracian horseman attacked Dositheus and cut off his arm at the shoulder. Then Gorgias fled to Marisa.

³⁶After Esdris and his men had been fighting for a long time and were weary, Yehudah called upon YHWH to show himself their ally and leader in the battle. ³⁷Then, raising a battle cry in his ancestral language, and with hymns, he charged Gorgias' men when they were not expecting it and put them to flight.

³⁸Yehudah rallied his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was approaching, they purified themselves according to custom and kept the Shabbath there. ³⁹On the following day, since the task had now become urgent, Yehudah and his companions went to gather up the bodies of the fallen and bury them with their kindred in their ancestral tombs. ⁴⁰But under the tunic of each of the dead they found amulets sacred to the idols of Yamnia, which the law forbids the Yehudym to wear. So it was clear to all that this was why these men had fallen. ⁴¹They all therefore praised the ways of YHWH, the just judge who brings to light the things that are hidden. ⁴²Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out. The noble Yehudah exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. ⁴³He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Yerushalayim to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; ⁴⁴for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. ⁴⁵But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in the fear of Elohyim, it was a set-apart and pious thought. ⁴⁶Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.

Chapter 13

¹In the one hundred and forty-ninth year, Yehudah and his men learned that Antiochus Eupator was invading Yehudah with a large force, ²and that with him was Lysias, his guardian, who was in charge of the government. They led a Greek army of one hundred and ten thousand foot soldiers, fifty-three hundred cavalry, twenty-two elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with scythes.

³Menelaus also joined them, and with great duplicity kept urging Antiochus on, not for the welfare of his country, but in the hope of being established in office. ⁴But the King of kings aroused the anger of Antiochus against the scoundrel. When the king was shown by Lysias that Menelaus was to blame for all the trouble, he ordered him to be taken to Beroea and executed there in the customary local method. ⁵There is at that place a tower seventy-five feet high, full of ashes, with a circular rim sloping down steeply on all sides toward the ashes. ⁶Anyone guilty of sacrilege or notorious for certain other crimes is brought up there and then hurled down to destruction. ⁷In such a manner was Menelaus, that transgressor of the law, fated to die, deprived even of burial. ⁸It was altogether just that he who had committed so many sins against the altar with its pure fire and ashes, in ashes should meet his death.

⁹The king was advancing, his mind full of savage plans for inflicting on the Yehudym things worse than those they suffered in his father's time. ¹⁰When Yehudah learned of this, he urged the people to call upon YHWH day and night, now more than ever, to help them when they were about to be deprived of their law, their country, and their set-apart Temple; ¹¹and not to allow this people, which had just begun to revive, to be subjected again to blasphemous gentiles. ¹²When they had all joined in doing this, and had implored the merciful YHWH continuously with weeping and fasting and prostrations for three days, Yehudah encouraged them and told them to stand ready.

¹³After a private meeting with the elders, he decided that, before the king's army could invade Yehudah and take possession of the city, the Yehudym should march out and settle the matter with Elohyim's help. ¹⁴Leaving the outcome to the Creator of the world, and exhorting his followers to fight nobly to death for the laws, the Temple, the city, the country, and the government, he encamped near Modein. ¹⁵Giving his troops the battle cry "Elohyim's Victory," he made a night attack on the king's pavilion with a picked force of the bravest young men and killed about two thousand in the camp. He also stabbed the lead elephant and its rider. ¹⁶Finally they withdrew in triumph, having filled the camp with terror and confusion. ¹⁷Day was just breaking when this was accomplished with the help and protection of YHWH.

¹⁸The king, having had a taste of the Yehudym' boldness, tried to take their positions by a stratagem. ¹⁹So he marched against Beth-zur, a strong fortress of the Yehudym; but he was driven back, checked, and defeated. ²⁰Yehudah sent supplies to the men inside, ²¹but Rhodocus, of the Yehudy army, betrayed military secrets to the enemy. He was found out, arrested, and imprisoned. ²²The king made a second attempt by negotiating with the people of Beth-zur. After giving them his pledge and receiving theirs, he withdrew ²³and attacked Yehudah's men. But he was defeated. Next he heard that Philip, who was left in charge of the government in Antioch, had rebelled. Dismayed, he negotiated with the Yehudym, submitted to their terms, and swore to observe all their rights. Having come to this agreement, he offered a sacrifice, and honored the sanctuary and the place with a generous donation. ²⁴He received Maccabeus, and left Hegemonides as governor of the territory from Ptolemais to the region of the Gerrhenes. ²⁵When he came to Ptolemais, the people of Ptolemais were angered by the peace treaty; in fact they were so indignant that they wanted to annul its provisions. ²⁶But Lysias took the platform, defended the treaty as well as he could and won them over by persuasion. After calming them and gaining their benevolence, he returned to Antioch. That is the story of the king's attack and withdrawal.

Chapter 14

¹Three years later, Yehudah and his companions learned that Demetrius, son of Seleucus, had sailed into the port of Tripolis with a powerful army and a fleet, ²and that he had occupied the country, after doing away with Antiochus and his guardian Lysias.

³A certain Alcimus, a former Koheyn Gadol, who had willfully incurred defilement before the time of the revolt, realized that there was no way for him to be safe and regain access to the set-apart altar. ⁴So he went to King Demetrius around the one hundred and fifty-first year and presented him with a gold crown and a palm branch, as well as some of the customary olive branches from the Temple. On that day he kept quiet. ⁵But he found an opportunity to further his mad scheme when he was invited to the council by Demetrius and questioned about the dispositions and intentions of the Yehudym. He replied: ⁶“Those Yehudym called Chassidym, led by Yehudah Maccabeus, are warmongers, who stir up sedition and keep the kingdom from enjoying peace. ⁷For this reason, now that I am deprived of my ancestral dignity, that is to say, the Kehunnah, I have come here, ⁸first, out of my genuine concern for the king’s interests, and second, out of consideration for my own compatriots, since our entire nation is suffering no little affliction from the rash conduct of the people just mentioned. ⁹When you have informed yourself in detail on these matters, O king, provide for our country and its hard-pressed people with the same gracious consideration that you show toward all. ¹⁰As long as Yehudah is around, it is impossible for the government to enjoy peace.” ¹¹When he had said this, the other friends who were hostile to Yehudah quickly added fuel to Demetrius’ indignation.

¹²The king immediately chose Nikanor, who had been in command of the elephants, and appointed him governor of Yehudah. He sent him off ¹³with orders to put Yehudah to death, to disperse his followers, and to set up Alcimus as Koheyn Gadol of the great Temple. ¹⁴The gentiles from Yehudah, who had fled before Yehudah, flocked to Nikanor, thinking that the misfortunes and calamities of the Yehudym would mean prosperity for themselves.

¹⁵When the Yehudym heard of Nikanor's coming, and that the gentiles were rallying to him, they sprinkled themselves with earth and prayed to him who established his people forever, and who always comes to the aid of his heritage by manifesting himself. ¹⁶At their leader's command, they set out at once from there and came upon the enemy at the village of Adasa. ¹⁷Yehudah's brother Shimon had engaged Nikanor, but he suffered a slight setback because of the sudden appearance of the enemy.

¹⁸However, when Nikanor heard of the valor of Yehudah and his companions, and the great courage with which they fought for their country, he shrank from deciding the issue by bloodshed. ¹⁹So he sent Posidonius, Theodotus and Mattithyahu to exchange pledges of friendship. ²⁰After a long discussion of the terms, each leader communicated them to his troops; and when general agreement was expressed, they assented to the treaty. ²¹A day was set on which the leaders would meet by themselves. From each side a chariot came forward, and thrones were set in place. ²²Yehudah had posted armed men in readiness at strategic points for fear that the enemy might suddenly commit some treachery. But the conference was held in the proper way.

²³Nikanor stayed on in Yerushalayim, where he did nothing out of place. He disbanded the throngs of people who gathered around him; ²⁴and he always kept Yehudah in his company, for he felt affection for the man. ²⁵He urged him to marry and have children; so Yehudah married and settled into an ordinary life.

²⁶When Alcimus saw their mutual benevolence, he took the treaty that had been made, went to Demetrius, and said that Nikanor was plotting against the government, for he had appointed Yehudah, that conspirator against the kingdom, as his successor. ²⁷Stirred up by the villain's slander, the king became enraged. He wrote to Nikanor, stating that he was displeased with the treaty, and ordering him to send Maccabeus at once as a prisoner to Antioch. ²⁸When this message reached Nikanor he was dismayed and

troubled at the thought of annulling his agreement with a man who had done no wrong.²⁹ However, there was no way of opposing the king, so he watched for an opportunity to carry out this order by a stratagem.³⁰ But Maccabeus, noticing that Nikanor was more harsh in his dealings with him, and acting with unaccustomed rudeness when they met, concluded that this harshness was not a benevolent sign. So he gathered together not a few of his men, and went into hiding from Nikanor.

³¹When Nikanor realized that he had been cleverly outwitted by the man, he went to the great and set-apart Temple, at a time when the kohanym were offering the customary sacrifices, and ordered them to surrender Yehudah.³² As they declared under oath that they did not know where the man they sought was,³³ he stretched out his right arm toward the Temple and swore this oath: “If you do not hand Yehudah over to me as prisoner, I will level this shrine of Elohyim to the ground; I will tear down the altar, and erect here a splendid temple to Dionysus.”

³⁴With these words he went away. The kohanym stretched out their hands toward heaven, calling upon the unfailing defender of our nation in these words:³⁵ “Master of all, though you are in need of nothing, you were pleased to have a Temple for your dwelling place among us.³⁶ Therefore, Set-apart One, Master of all set-apartness, preserve forever undefiled this house, which has been so recently purified.”

³⁷A certain Razis, one of the elders of Yerushalayim, was denounced to Nikanor as a patriot. A man highly regarded, he was called a father of the Yehudym because of his benevolence towards them.³⁸ In the days before the revolt, he had been convicted of being a Yehudy, and had risked body and soul in his ardent zeal for Yehudaism.³⁹ Nikanor, to show his disdain for the Yehudym, sent more than five hundred soldiers to arrest him.⁴⁰ He thought that by arresting that man he would deal the Yehudym a hard blow.

⁴¹But when the troops, on the point of capturing the tower, were forcing the outer gate and calling for fire to set the door ablaze, Razis, now caught on all sides, turned his sword against himself, ⁴²preferring to die nobly rather than fall into the hands of vile men and suffer outrages unworthy of his noble birth. ⁴³In the excitement of the struggle he failed to strike exactly. So while the troops rushed in through the doors, he gallantly ran up to the top of the wall and courageously threw himself down into the crowd. ⁴⁴But as they quickly drew back and left an opening, he fell into the middle of the empty space. ⁴⁵Still breathing, and inflamed with anger, he got up and ran through the crowd, with blood gushing from his frightful wounds. Then, standing on a steep rock, ⁴⁶as he lost the last of his blood, he tore out his entrails and flung them with both hands into the crowd, calling upon YHWH of life and of spirit to give these back to him again. Such was the manner of his death.

Chapter 15

¹When Nikanor learned that Yehudah and his companions were in the territory of Shomeron, he decided he could attack them in complete safety on the day of rest. ²The Yehudym who were forced to accompany him pleaded, “Do not massacre them so savagely and barbarously, but show respect for the day which the All-seeing has exalted with set-apartness above all other days.” ³At this the thrice-accursed wretch asked if there was a ruler in heaven who prescribed the keeping of the Shabbath day. ⁴They replied, “It is the living YHWH, the ruler in heaven, who commands the observance of the Shabbath day.” ⁵Then he said, “I, the ruler on earth, command you to take up arms and carry out the king’s business.” Nevertheless he did not succeed in carrying out his cruel plan.

⁶In his utter boastfulness and arrogance Nikanor had determined to erect a public victory monument over Yehudah and his companions. ⁷But Maccabeus remained confident, fully convinced that he would receive help from YHWH. ⁸He urged his men not to fear the attack of the gentiles, but mindful of the help they had received in the past from Heaven, to expect now the victory that would be given them by the Almighty. ⁹By encouraging them with words from the law and the prophets, and by reminding them of the battles they had already won, he filled them with fresh enthusiasm. ¹⁰Having stirred up their courage, he gave his orders and pointed out at the same time the perfidy of the gentiles and their violation of oaths. ¹¹When he had armed each of them, not so much with the security of shield and spear as with the encouragement of noble words, he cheered them all by relating a dream, a kind of waking vision, worthy of belief.

¹²What he saw was this: Chon'yah, the former Koheyn Gadol, a noble and excellent man, modest in bearing, gentle in manner, distinguished in speech, and trained from childhood in all that belongs to excellence, was praying with outstretched arms for the whole Yehudy community. ¹³Then in the same way another man appeared, distinguished by his white hair and dignity, and with an

air of wondrous and majestic authority. ¹⁴Chon'yah then said of him, “This is a man who loves his fellow Yehudym and fervently prays for the people and the set-apart city—the prophet of YHWH, Yirmeyahu.” ¹⁵Stretching out his right hand, Yirmeyahu presented a gold sword to Yehudah. As he gave it to him he said, ¹⁶“Accept this set-apart sword as a gift from YHWH; with it you shall shatter your adversaries.”

¹⁷Encouraged by Yehudah's words, so noble and capable of instilling valor and stirring young hearts to courage, they determined not merely to march, but to charge gallantly and decide the issue by hand-to-hand combat with the utmost courage, since city, sanctuary and Temple were in danger. ¹⁸They were not so much concerned about wives and children, or family and relations; their first and foremost fear was for the consecrated sanctuary. ¹⁹Those who were left in the city suffered no less an agony, anxious as they were about the battle in the open country. ²⁰Everyone now awaited the decisive moment. The enemy were already drawing near with their troops drawn up in battle line, their beasts placed in strategic positions, and their cavalry stationed on the flanks.

²¹Maccabeus, surveying the hosts before him, the variety of weaponry, and the fierceness of their beasts, stretched out his hands toward heaven and called upon YHWH who works wonders; for he knew that it is not weapons but the decision of YHWH that brings victory to those who deserve it. ²²Calling upon Elohyim, he spoke in this manner: “You, master, sent your angel in the days of King Chizqiyahu of Yehudah, and he slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand men of Sennacherib’s camp. ²³And now, Sovereign of the heavens, send a benevolent angel to spread fear and trembling ahead of us. ²⁴By the might of your arm may those be struck down who have blasphemously come against your set-apart people!” With these words he ended his prayer.

²⁵Nikanor and his troops advanced to the sound of trumpets and battle songs. ²⁶But Yehudah and his troops met the enemy with supplication and prayers. ²⁷Fighting with their hands and praying to Elohym with their hearts, they laid low at least thirty-five thousand, and rejoiced greatly over this manifestation of YHWH's power. ²⁸When the battle was over and they were joyfully departing, they discovered Nikanor fallen there in all his armor; ²⁹so they raised tumultuous shouts in their ancestral language in praise of the divine Sovereign.

³⁰Then Yehudah, that man who was ever in body and soul the chief defender of his fellow citizens, and had maintained from youth his affection for his compatriots, ordered Nikanor's head and right arm up to the shoulder to be cut off and taken to Yerushalayim. ³¹When he arrived there, he assembled his compatriots, stationed the kohanym before the altar, and sent for those in the citadel. ³²He showed them the vile Nikanor's head and the wretched blasphemer's arm that had been boastfully stretched out against the set-apart dwelling of the Almighty. ³³He cut out the tongue of the heathen Nikanor, saying he would feed it piecemeal to the birds and would hang up the other wages of his folly opposite the Temple. ³⁴At this, everyone looked toward heaven and praised YHWH who manifests himself: "Blessed be the one who has preserved undefiled his own place!" ³⁵Yehudah hung Nikanor's head and arm on the wall of the citadel, a clear and evident sign to all of YHWH's help. ³⁶By public vote it was unanimously decreed never to let this day pass unobserved, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, called Adar in Aramaic, the eve of Mordekay's Day.

³⁷Since Nikanor's doings ended in this way, with the city remaining in the possession of the Hebrews from that time on, I will bring my story to an end here too. ³⁸If it is well written and to the point, that is what I wanted; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that is the best I could do. ³⁹Just as it is unpleasant to drink wine by itself or just water, whereas wine mixed with water makes a

delightful and pleasing drink, so a skillfully composed story delights the ears of those who read the work. Let this, then, be the end.