

Introduction to the Apocrypha – 1 Maccabees Session Three – “JUDAS”



*Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld's (1794-1872) depiction of Judas and his army preparing to cleanse the temple.
Credit: Wikimedia Commons.*

Dating the Rededication of the Temple; The Campaign in Galilee and Gilead; Chronological Table of Seleucid Rulers; The First Book of Maccabees (4:1 – 6:63)

Dating the Rededication of the Temple

On the Problem of Dating

1 Maccabees describes how in the forty and more years from 176 to 134 BCE the Jews, through much suffering, established their religious and political independence from Seleucid control under the leadership of the Maccabean family. The author of 1 Maccabees has told the story in a relatively factual and precise way, dating events with considerable care. Many of the events are given with reference to a particular year of ‘the kingdom of the Greeks’, (1:10) and the starting point for this chronology was the foundation of the Seleucid era by its first ruler, Seleucus I. Seleucus dated his reign from his conquest of Babylon in the sixth year of Alexander IV, the son of Alexander the Great. By our calendar, that year may be dated April 312 – April 311 BCE. But this left an awkward legacy in that, while Babylon and the eastern part of the Empire began its calendar year in the spring with the month Nisan (approximately April), Macedonia and the western part of the Seleucid Empire began their year in the autumn (in Jewish and Semitic terms, with the month Tishri, approximately October).

The Seleucid era, thus might be counted in the west from autumn 312 BCE (this is the usage of, e.g., 1 Mac 6:16, which dates Antiochus IV's death to the Seleucid year 149), and in the east from either spring 312 BCE or from spring 311 BCE (this latter is the usage of the Hellenistic Babylonian kinglist recording the death of Antiochus IV in Seleucid year 148, published by Sachs and Wiseman).

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

The event is dated by 1 Macc. 4:52 to the 25th day of the 9th month, Chislew, in the 148th year. On the Seleucid Babylonian era calculated from spring 312 BCE, this gives December 165 BCE; on the same era calculated from spring 311 BCE, December 164 BCE. On this latter date, it is unlikely that Antiochus IV could have heard of the event before his death (1 Macc. 6:5 – 8) and Bringmann (K. Bringmann, *Hellenistische Reform und Religionsverfolgung in Judaa*, 1983) argues strongly for the earlier date of 165 BCE. This would mean that the priests restored the sanctuary in autumn 165 BCE, while negotiations were beginning between Antiochus IV and the Jews, which seems likely.

– edited from *1 Maccabees* by John R. Bartlett, Bloomsbury Publishing, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, England, 1998

An Alternative View on Dating of the Rededication of the Temple

The rededication of the Jerusalem temple (4:52 – 55) took place on December 14 of 164 B.C., three years to the day from when it had been defiled to make way for the new cult of Baal Shamen. The celebration of the first Hanukkah (4:56 – 59) lasted eight days, as did earlier consecrations of the Jerusalem temple under Solomon and Hezekiah. There was great rejoicing because “the disgrace brought by the Gentiles” (4:58) had been removed. Therefore, Judas and his supporters decreed that Hanukkah should be an annual observance to last for eight days from the from the 25th of Chislew. They also fortified Mount Zion to protect against further attacks from the citadel, and Beth-zur to prevent more invasions of Judea from the south.

Antiochus IV died (6:16) in October or November of 164 B.C., shortly before the rededication of the Jerusalem temple. But news of his death may not have reached Judas and his supporters before the dedication. The author of 1 Maccabees, by placing his death after 4:36 – 61 (in December 164) and Judas' spectacular military successes in 5:1 – 68 (in 163) has him die with full knowledge of these setbacks.

– from *First and Second Maccabees* by Daniel J. Harrington

The Campaign in Galilee and Gilead (Chapter 5)

There are some passages that do not link smoothly into the surrounding text: thus chapter five, about Judas' s attacks on the surrounding Gentiles, appears to separate chapter four and chapter six. 1 Maccabees 5 is devoted to campaigns of Judas and others in territories surrounding Judaea: Idumaea, Ammanitis, Galilee, Gilead, Jamnia, the land to the south, and Philistia. It is a distinct block of material, linked to 4:61 by the reference to Idumaea (4:61; cf.5:3), and to the dedication of the

sanctuary by the introduction (5:1-2), but clearly intervening between the rededication (4:36 – 59) and the death of Antiochus (6:1 – 17). It is itself an organized collection of stories, with vs. 9 – 64 at its heart. Verses 9 – 64 have been clearly planned as can be seen from the following synopsis:

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| 5:9 – 15 | Pleas for help from Jews in Gilead and Galilee |
| 5:16 – 20 | Arrangements made: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Simon to go to Galileeii. Judas to go to Gileadiii. Joseph and Azariah to defend Judaea |
| 5:21 – 23 | i. Simon in Galilee; battles; brings Jews to Judaea |
| 5:24 – 54 | ii. Judas in Gilead; battles; brings Jews to Judaea |
| 5:55 – 62 | iii. Joseph and Azariah are defeated and pursued to borders of Judaea |
| 5:63 – 64 | Judas and brothers honored in Israel and among Gentiles |

Surrounding this central block, the author has placed the following pericopes:

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|------------|--|
| 5:3 – 5 | Judas makes war on the descendants of Esau in Idumea |
| 5:6 – 7 | Judas attacks the Ammonites and takes Jazer |
| [5:9 – 64] | [as above] |
| 5:65 | Judas makes war on the sons of Esau in the south and struck Hebron |
| 5:66 – 68 | Judas enters Philistia, attacks the cult at Azotus, plunders town and returns to Judah |

The whole chapter as thus been carefully planned, the central campaigns in Galilee and Gilead (in which Judas gets the lion's share of attention) being flanked by attacks on Idumaea and Transjordan at the beginning and 'the land to the south' and the Philistines at the end. There is no reference anywhere to the date of these events; like the campaigns of chapters 3 – 4, the date of these events depends entirely on the editorial context. The author of 1 Maccabees may be right in setting these events between the rededication and the death of Antiochus IV, but the author of 2 Maccabees locates them elsewhere, and in a different sequence, and neither 1 Maccabees' dating nor sequence should be taken for granted.

Reconstructing a clear topography and chronology of Judas's campaigns from this chapter is hazardous. The chapter's purpose is to demonstrate Judas's success as a military leader in Idumaea and east of the Jordan, perhaps with an eye to the similar successes of John Hyrcanus (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13;254 – 58)

– from *1 Maccabees* by John R. Bartlett, Bloomsbury Publishing, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, England, 1998

Chronological Table of Seleucid Rulers

223 – 187:	Antiochus III
187 – 175:	Seleucus IV Philopator
175 – 164:	Antiochus IV Epiphanes
164 – 162:	Antiochus V Eupator (and Lysias)
162 – 150:	Demetrius I Soter
150 – 145:	Alexander I Balas
145 – 139:	Demetrius II Nicator
139 – 142:	Antiochus VI (and Trypho)
138 – 129:	Antiochus VII Sidetes

– from First and Second Maccabees by Daniel J. Harrington

First Book of Maccabees: Chapters Four, Five and Six

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

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

¹² When the foreigners looked up and saw them coming against them, ¹³ they went out from their camp to battle. Then the men with Judas blew their trumpets ¹⁴ and engaged in battle. The Gentiles were crushed, and fled into the plain, ¹⁵ and all those in the rear fell by the sword. They pursued them to Gazara, and to the plains of Idumea, and to Azotus and Jamnia; and three thousand of them fell.

¹⁶ Then Judas and his force turned back from pursuing them, ¹⁷ and he said to the people, “Do not be greedy for plunder, for there is a battle before us; ¹⁸ Gorgias and his force are near us in the hills. But stand now against our enemies and fight them, and afterward seize the plunder boldly.”

¹⁹ Just as Judas was finishing this speech, a detachment appeared, coming out of the hills. ²⁰ They saw that their army had been put to flight, and that the Jews were burning the camp, for the smoke that was seen showed what had happened. ²¹ When they perceived this, they were greatly frightened, and when they also saw the army of Judas drawn up in the plain for battle, ²² they all fled into the land of the Philistines.

²³ Then Judas returned to plunder the camp, and they seized a great amount of gold and silver, and cloth dyed blue and sea purple, and great riches. ²⁴ On their return they sang hymns and praises to Heaven—“For he is good, for his mercy endures forever.” ²⁵ Thus Israel had a great deliverance that day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁵² Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year, ⁵³ they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. ⁵⁴ At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. ⁵⁶ So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests, and fitted them with doors. ⁵⁸ There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the Gentiles was removed. ⁵⁹ Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.

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

5 When the Gentiles all around heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the sanctuary dedicated as it was before, they became very angry, ² and they determined to destroy the descendants of Jacob who lived among them. So they began to kill and destroy among the people. ³ But Judas made war on the descendants of Esau in Idumea, at Akkrabattene, because they kept lying in wait for Israel. He dealt them a heavy blow and humbled them and despoiled them. ⁴ He also remembered the

wickedness of the sons of Baean, who were a trap and a snare to the people and ambushed them on the highways. ⁵ They were shut up by him in their towers; and he encamped against them, vowed their complete destruction, and burned with fire their towers and all who were in them. ⁶ Then he crossed over to attack the Ammonites, where he found a strong band and many people, with Timothy as their leader. ⁷ He engaged in many battles with them, and they were crushed before him; he struck them down. ⁸ He also took Jazer and its villages; then he returned to Judea.

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

¹⁴ While the letter was still being read, other messengers, with their garments torn, came from Galilee and made a similar report; ¹⁵ they said that the people of Ptolemais and Tyre and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles had gathered together against them “to annihilate us.” ¹⁶ When Judas and the people heard these messages, a great assembly was called to determine what they should do for their kindred who were in distress and were being attacked by enemies.

¹⁷ Then Judas said to his brother Simon, “Choose your men and go and rescue your kindred in Galilee; Jonathan my brother and I will go to Gilead.” ¹⁸ But he left Joseph, son of Zechariah, and Azariah, a leader of the people, with the rest of the forces, in Judea to guard it; ¹⁹ and he gave them this command, “Take charge of this people, but do not engage in battle with the Gentiles until we return.” ²⁰ Then three thousand men were assigned to Simon to go to Galilee, and eight thousand to Judas for Gilead.

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

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

attack the strongholds tomorrow and capture and destroy all these people in a single day.”

²⁸ Then Judas and his army quickly turned back by the wilderness road to Bozrah; and he took the town, and killed every male by the edge of the sword; then he seized all its spoils and burned it with fire. ²⁹ He left the place at night, and they went all the way to the stronghold of Dathema. ³⁰ At dawn they looked out and saw a large company, which could not be counted, carrying ladders and engines of war to capture the stronghold, and attacking the Jews within ³¹ So Judas saw that the battle had begun and that the cry of the town went up to Heaven, with trumpets and loud shouts, ³² and he said to the men of his forces, “Fight today for your kindred!” ³³ Then he came up behind them in three companies, who sounded their trumpets and cried aloud in prayer. ³⁴ And when the army of Timothy realized that it was Maccabeus, they fled before him, and he dealt them a heavy blow. As many as eight thousand of them fell that day.

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

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

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

⁴⁵ Then Judas gathered together all the Israelites in Gilead, the small and the great, with their wives and children and goods, a very large company, to go to the land of Judah. ⁴⁶ So they came to Ephron. This was a large and very strong town on the road, and they could not go around it to the right or to the left; they had to go through it. ⁴⁷ But the people of the town shut them out and blocked up the gates with stones. ⁴⁸ Judas sent them this friendly message, “Let us pass through your land to get to our land. No one will do you harm; we will simply pass by on foot.” But they refused to

open to him. ⁴⁹ Then Judas ordered proclamation to be made to the army that all should encamp where they were. ⁵⁰ So the men of the forces encamped, and he fought against the town all that day and all the night, and the town was delivered into his hands. ⁵¹ He destroyed every male by the edge of the sword, and razed and plundered the town. Then he passed through the town over the bodies of the dead.

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

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

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

⁶⁵ Then Judas and his brothers went out and fought the descendants of Esau in the land to the south. He struck Hebron and its villages and tore down its strongholds and burned its towers on all sides. ⁶⁶ Then he marched off to go into the land of the Philistines, and passed through Marisa. ⁶⁷ On that day some priests, who wished to do a brave deed, fell in battle, for they went out to battle unwisely. ⁶⁸ But Judas turned aside to Azotus in the land of the Philistines; he tore down their altars, and the carved images of their gods he burned with fire; he plundered the towns and returned to the land of Judah.

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

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

⁸ When the king heard this news, he was astounded and badly shaken. He took to his bed and became sick from disappointment, because things had not turned out for him as he had planned. ⁹ He lay there for many days, because deep disappointment continually gripped him, and he realized that he was dying. ¹⁰ So he called all his Friends and said to them, "Sleep has departed from my eyes and I am downhearted with worry. ¹¹ I said to myself, 'To what distress I have come! And into what a great flood I now am plunged! For I was kind and beloved in my power.' ¹² But now I remember the wrong I did in Jerusalem. I seized all its vessels of silver and gold, and I sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judah without good reason. ¹³ I know that it is because of this that these misfortunes have come upon me; here I am, perishing of bitter disappointment in a strange land."

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

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

²⁸ The king was enraged when he heard this. He assembled all his Friends, the commanders of his forces and those in authority ²⁹ Mercenary forces also came to

him from other kingdoms and from islands of the seas. ³⁰ The number of his forces was one hundred-thousand-foot soldiers, twenty thousand horsemen, and thirty-two elephants accustomed to war. ³¹ They came through Idumea and encamped against Beth-zur, and for many days they fought and built engines of war; but the Jews sallied out and burned these with fire, and fought courageously.

³² Then Judas marched away from the citadel and encamped at Beth-zechariah, opposite the camp of the king. ³³ Early in the morning the king set out and took his army by a forced march along the road to Beth-zechariah, and his troops made ready for battle and sounded their trumpets. ³⁴ They offered the elephants the juice of grapes and mulberries, to arouse them for battle. ³⁵ They distributed the animals among the phalanxes; with each elephant they stationed a thousand men armed with coats of mail, and with brass helmets on their heads; and five hundred picked horsemen were assigned to each beast. ³⁶ These took their position beforehand wherever the animal was; wherever it went, they went with it, and they never left it. ³⁷ On the elephants were wooden towers, strong and covered; they were fastened on each animal by special harness, and on each were four armed men who fought from there, and also its Indian driver. ³⁸ The rest of the cavalry were stationed on either side, on the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy while being themselves protected by the phalanxes. ³⁹ When the sun shone on the shields of gold and brass, the hills were ablaze with them and gleamed like flaming torches. ⁴⁰ Now a part of the king's army was spread out on the high hills, and some troops were on the plain, and they advanced steadily and in good order. ⁴¹ All who heard the noise made by their multitude, by the marching of the multitude and the clanking of their arms, trembled, for the army was very large and strong.

⁴² But Judas and his army advanced to the battle, and six hundred of the king's army fell. ⁴³ Now Eleazar, called Avaran, saw that one of the animals was equipped with royal armor. It was taller than all the others, and he supposed that the king was on it. ⁴⁴ So he gave his life to save his people and to win for himself an everlasting name. ⁴⁵ He courageously ran into the midst of the phalanx to reach it; he killed men right and left, and they parted before him on both sides. ⁴⁶ He got under the elephant, stabbed it from beneath, and killed it; but it fell to the ground upon him and he died. ⁴⁷ When the Jews saw the royal might and the fierce attack of the forces, they turned away in flight.

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

consumed the last of the stores. ⁵⁴ Only a few men were left in the sanctuary; the rest scattered to their own homes, for the famine proved too much for them.

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

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

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