

2 MAKKABEES

TO THE READER

EDITION OF THE GREEK TEXT

The Greek text used as the basis of the present translation is R. Hanhart's Göttingen edition, *Maccabaeorum libri I-IV, 2: Maccabaeorum liber II, copis usus quas reliquit Werner Kappler edidit Robert Hanhart (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Göttingensis editum IX [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd ed., 1976 (1959)]*), which forms part of the Göttingen Septuagint and is the standard critically established text of contemporary Septuagint scholarship. The texts provided by H. B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek, According to the Septuagint* (vol. 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (9th ed.; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935) and F.-M. Abel, *Les livres des Maccabées (Etudes Bibliques; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1949)* were also consulted.

It was not always possible to follow the text reconstructed by Hanhart. Wherever the present translator's textual-critical decisions differ from those of Hanhart, this has been indicated in the footnotes. Some of the considerations that necessitated such decisions are laid out in the next section.

THE NETS TRANSLATION OF 2 MAKKABEES

The Text of 2 Makkabees

Any critical edition of 2 Makkabees relies mainly on two famous Greek uncial manuscripts: the Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century) and the Codex Venetus (eighth century). There is also a rich tradition of Greek minuscule manuscripts, as well as manuscript witnesses to Syriac, Armenian and Latin translations. There also is a Coptic fragment of some passages from 2 Makk 5–6.¹ Hanhart's edition is based mainly on Alexandrinus and on minuscules 55, 347 and 771.

The body of the text of 2 Makkabees, that is, 3.1–15.36, is a literary creation in its own right without a Hebrew parent text. It is an epitome drawn from the five-volume work of Jason of Cyrene produced by an epitomator who introduces the results of his labors in the prooemium found in 2.19–32. In 1.1–10a and 1.10b–2.18 two letters referring to the feast of Succoth in the month of Kislev are made to introduce the main part. The letters most likely are translations of Hebrew or Aramaic originals, but the parent texts are not known. An epilogue, which was produced by the epitomator, follows in 15.37–39.

The main body of the text (3.1–15.36) goes back to Jason of Cyrene, the author whose five-volume history was abbreviated (or "epitomised"). However, Jason could not possibly have produced some passages: 4.17; 5.17–20; and 6.12–17. The epitomator authored them. The whole of chapter 7, 12.43–45 and 14.37–46 also seem alien in the context of Jason's history.² Furthermore, two versions of the Heliodorus narrative exist side by side in chapter 3. Version A, as identified by E. Bickerman (3.24, 25, 27, 28, 30),³ must have been produced by a post-Jasonic author.⁴

Some Observations Pertinent to the NETS Translation

The NETS translation of 2 Makkabees obviously has to address textual-critical problems and does so on the basis of the Göttingen edition. This takes us back to the exemplary debate between P. Katz and R. Hanhart. It was provoked by Katz's review⁵ of Hanhart's critical edition. Building on the work of his pre-

¹ On the textual witnesses, see Hanhart, *Maccabaeorum liber II*, 7–11.

² See the arguments put forward by C. Habicht, *2. Makkabäerbuch (Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 1/3; Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 21979 [1976])* 171.

³ E. J. Bickerman, "Héliodore au temple de Jérusalem," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientale* 7 (1939–1944) 18–40.

⁴ C. Habicht (*2. Makkabäerbuch*, 173) convincingly dates Heliodoros version A to the time after Jason (against Bickerman!).

⁵ P. Katz, "The Text of 2 Maccabees Reconsidered," *ZNW* 51 (1960) 10–30. Hanhart responded in idem, *Zum Text des 2. und 3. Makkabäerbuches. Probleme der Überlieferung, der Auslegung und der Ausgabe* (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, I. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Nr. 13; Göttingen, 1961). See also the article by G. D. Kilpatrick, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* 215 (1963) 10–22.

decessors, especially on the research done by A. Wilhelm,⁶ Katz discussed Hanhart's edition and made a number of conjectural and other suggestions, which a translator of 2 Makkabees ignores at his or her peril. Some of the passages in question are 2 Makk 5.8; 6.2; 12.34; 13.2; 14.17, all of which are noted in the footnotes of our translation.

I should like to discuss one particular problem as an exemplar.⁷ It is taken from 2 Makk 1.19. The Göttingen edition reads:

καὶ γὰρ ὅτε εἰς τὴν Περσικὴν ἦγοντο ἡμῶν οἱ πατέρες οἱ τότε εὐσεβεῖς ἱερεῖς λαβόντες ἀπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου λαθραίως κατέκρυψαν ἐν κοιλώματι φρέατος τάξιιν ἔχοντος ἄνυδρον, ἐν ᾧ κατησφάλισαντο ὥστε πᾶσιν ἄγνωστον εἶναι τὸν τόπον.

For the italicized part the NRSV reads: ". . . and secretly hid it in the hollow of a dry cistern . . ."

The NRSV is based on the Hanhart edition,⁸ and there is no note in the NRSV indicating that an alternative reading was preferred. We therefore conclude that the committee of NRSV translators thought that its rendering represented a faithful rendering of the text established by Hanhart. However, Hanhart's text here does not quite make sense. Generations of scholars have felt this passage to be difficult. The NRSV follows the example of such scholars as James Moffatt, who translated, ". . . hid it secretly in the hollow of an empty cistern . . ."⁹ However, nobody is really able to make sense of τάξιιν and how it relates to the preceding ἐν κοιλώματι φρέατος, on the one hand, and to ἔχοντος ἄνυδρον on the other. The NRSV translators seem to have read φρέατος and ἔχοντος in conjunction, thus understanding something like "in the hollow of a cistern that had a dry τάξιιν," which did not quite make sense and was simply paraphrased as "a dry cistern."

Contrary to such forced efforts to make sense of an obviously corrupt text, A. Wilhelm suggested the reading ἐν κοιλώματι φρέατος τάξιιν ἔχοντι ἄνυδρον. His conjecture takes seriously that, in 2 Makk 9.18 and other passages of Hellenistic Greek literature, τάξις is used in a similar way. Thus we read, in 9.18:

Οὐδαμῶς δὲ ληγόντων τῶν πόνων—ἐπεληλύθει γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτὸν δικαία ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κρίσις—τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ἀπελπίσας ἔγραψεν πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τὴν ὑπογεγραμμένην ἐπιστολὴν ἰκετηρίας τάξιιν ἔχουσαν περιέχουσαν δὲ οὕτως.

But when his sufferings did not in any way abate, for the judgment of God had justly come upon him, he gave up all hope for himself and wrote to the Jews the following letter, in the form of a supplication. This was its content (NRSV).

Wilhelm points out that the participle is in accordance with the term that designates the object that is being compared, with regard to its τάξις, with another object. This is a fine example of a conjectural reading that is not warranted by any of the manuscripts but seems to be, after careful consideration, the only possibility to make sense of the text. This is why it was accepted by P. Katz in his review article. I have taken it over and have accordingly rendered the text as "[they] hid it in a cavity, which had the appearance of a waterless cistern." Other such cases might be cited.¹⁰

Generally speaking, Hanhart's critical edition is marked by an exceedingly conservative attitude towards emendations.¹¹ It has rightly been pointed out against Hanhart that 2 Makkabees should not be

⁶ A. Wilhelm, "Zu einigen Stellen der Bücher der Makkabäer," in *Anzeiger der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien* (Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 74 [1937]; Vienna and Leipzig, 1938) 15–30.

⁷ More examples are discussed in J. Schaper, "Translating 2 Maccabees for NETS" (forthcoming).

⁸ NRSV (Anglicized Edition), "To the Reader," xiii: "For the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament the Committee has made use of a number of texts. For most of these books the basic Greek text from which the present translation was made is the edition of the Septuagint prepared by Alfred Rahlfs For several of the books the more recently published individual volumes of the Göttingen Septuagint project were utilized."

⁹ In Charles, 1.133.

¹⁰ In the commentary literature, see, to name just one example, J. A. Goldstein, (*II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*) (AB 41A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983) 176, following A. Wilhelm and stating with regard to 2 Makk. 1.19 and the transmission of the Greek text "The scribes of the Greek manuscripts, however, were led by a series of corruptions away from the construction which otherwise they would have recognized."

¹¹ See Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch*, 192, "Der wesentliche Punkt der Kritik . . . ist der extreme Konservatismus, den Hanhart hinsichtlich derjenigen Handschriften beweist, die nach seinem Urteil den Text am reinsten bewahrt haben, das sind A und die Minuskelhandschriften 55, 347 und 771. Er ist gepaart mit äußerster Zurückhaltung

compared to Septuagint texts with a Semitic parent text but to "pagan" Hellenistic literature and inscriptions, especially with regard to the book's style and vocabulary.¹² The consequences for the critical reconstruction of its text are obvious.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In addition to tools like the standard lexica and grammars, I made use especially of the translations and commentaries provided by C. Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch* (*Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* I/3; Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 21979 [1976]) and J. A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 41A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1983). With regard to matters of textual criticism, P. Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint: Its Corruptions and Their Emendation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) proved especially helpful.

JOACHIM SCHAPER

1 The fellow Judeans in Hierosolyma and those in the land of Judea, to their Judean brothers in Egypt, greetings and true peace.

2 May God do good to you, and may he remember his covenant with Abraam and Isaak and Jakob, his faithful slaves. **3** May he give you all a heart to worship him and to do his will with a strong heart and a willing spirit. **4** May he open your heart to his law and his ordinances, and may he bring peace. **5** May he heed your prayers and be reconciled to you, and may he not forsake you in a time of evil. **6** We are now praying for you here.

7 In the reign of Demetrius, in the one hundred sixty-ninth year, we Judeans wrote to you in the critical distress that came upon us in those years after Jason and his company revolted from the holy land and the kingdom **8** and burned the gate and shed innocent blood. We prayed to the Lord and were heard, and we offered sacrifice and grain offering, and we lit the lamps and set out the loaves. **9** And now see that you keep the days of the feast of tent pitching in the month of Chaseleu. **10** In the one hundred eighty-eighth year.

The people of Hierosolyma and of Judea and the senate and Ioudas, to Aristobulus, who is of the family of the anointed priests, teacher of King Ptolemy, and to the Judeans in Egypt, greetings and good health.

11 Having been saved by God out of grave dangers we thank him greatly as men drawing up in battle-order against the king. **12** For he drove out those who drew up in battle-order against the holy

city. **13** When the leader and his army, which seemed irresistible, reached Persia, they were cut to pieces in the temple of Nanea by a deception employed by the priests of the goddess Nanea. **14** On the pretext of intending to marry her, Antiochus came to the place together with his Friends, to take most of the money in name of a dowry. **15** When the priests of the temple of Nanea had set it out and that man had come with a few men inside the wall of the sacred precinct, they closed the temple as soon as he had entered it. **16** Opening a secret door in the paneled ceiling, they threw stones and struck down the leader, and they dismembered them and cut off their heads and threw them to the people outside. **17** Blessed in every way be our God, who has delivered up those who have behaved impiously.

18 Since we intend to celebrate the purification of the temple on the twenty-fifth of Chaseleu, we thought it necessary to notify you in order that you also may celebrate it, as the feast of tent pitching and of the fire, given when Neemias, who built both the temple and the altar and offered sacrifices.

19 For when our fathers were being led captive to Persia, the pious priests of that time took some of the fire of the altar and secretly hid it in a cavity, which had the appearance of a waterless cistern, where they kept it safe so that the place was unknown to anyone. **20** But after many years had passed, when it pleased God, Neemias, having been sent by the king of Persia, sent the descendants of the priests who had hidden it after the fire. When they reported to us that they had not

gegenüber abweichenden Lesungen, die von anderen Handschriften geboten werden, und insbesondere von solchen, die durch die Rezension des Lukian von Antiocheia . . . beeinflusst worden sind, endlich von einer ebenso weit getriebenen Zurückhaltung gegenüber modernen Konjekturen auch da, wo nur eine Konjektur den Text verstehbar macht."

¹² See Habicht, 2. *Makkabäerbuch*, 193, "In diesem Zusammenhang ist für 2 Makk von entscheidender Bedeutung, daß die Schrift, von einigen Partien abgesehen . . . , als ein griechisches Original beurteilt werden muß, d. h. anders als die übrigen Bücher der Septuaginta, die als Übersetzungen aus dem Hebräischen Übersetzungsgriechisch, zudem noch aus einer anderen Zeit, bieten. Hanhart hat diesem besonderen Umstand des Buches nicht oder nur unzulänglich Rechnung getragen. Die Kriterien sind nicht die richtigen, wenn etwa ein bestimmtes Wort deshalb verworfen wird, weil es sonst im Übersetzungsgriechisch der Septuaginta nicht vorkommt. Das richtige Kriterium wäre die Frage, ob es bei den vergleichbaren griechischen Autoren der Zeit wie Polybios und ob es im Urkundenstil des Hellenismus begegnet, wie ihn die Inschriften zeigen."

found fire but only marsh water, he ordered them to draw it up and bring it. ²¹When the materials for the sacrifices were presented, Neemias ordered the priests to sprinkle the water on the wood and on the things laid upon it. ²²When this had been done and some time had passed and when the sun, which had been clouded over, shone out, a great fire was kindled so that all marveled. ²³And while the sacrifice was being consumed, the priests offered prayer—the priests and everyone. Ionathas led, and the rest responded, as did Neemias. ²⁴The prayer was to this effect:

“O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, you are awe-inspiring and strong and just and merciful; you alone are king and are kind; ²⁵you alone are bountiful; you alone are just and almighty and everlasting. You rescue Israel from every evil; you chose the fathers and sanctified them. ²⁶Accept this sacrifice on behalf of all your people Israel, and preserve your portion, and make it holy. ²⁷Gather together our scattered people; set free those who are slaves among the nations; look on those who are rejected and despised, and let the nations know that you are our God. ²⁸Punish those who oppress and are insolent with pride. ²⁹Plant your people in your holy place, as Moyses said.”

³⁰ Then the priests sang the hymns. ³¹After the materials of the sacrifice had been consumed, Neemias ordered that the water that was left should be poured on large stones. ³²When this was done, a flame blazed up, but when the light from the altar shone back, it was consumed. ³³When this matter became known and it was reported to the king of the Persians that, in the place where the exiled priests had hidden the fire, the water had appeared, with which Neemias' men had purified the materials of the sacrifice, ³⁴the king investigated the matter and enclosed the place and made it sacred. ³⁵And with those persons whom the king favoured he exchanged many excellent gifts. ³⁶Neemias' men called this “nephthar,” which means purification, but by most people it is called “nephthai.”

2 One finds in the records that the prophet Jeremias ordered those who were being deported to take some of the fire, as has been mentioned, ²and that the prophet, after giving them the law, commanded those who were being deported not to forget the ordinances of the Lord or to be led astray in their thoughts on seeing the gold and silver statues and their adornment. ³And with other similar words he exhorted them that the law should not depart from their hearts.

4 It was also in the document that the prophet, having received an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark should follow with him and that he went out to the mountain where Moyses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God. ⁵Jeremias came and found a cave dwelling, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense; then he sealed up the entrance. ⁶Some of those

who followed him came up intending to mark the way but could not find it. ⁷When Jeremias learned of it, he rebuked them and declared, “The place shall remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. ⁸Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord will appear, and the cloud, as it showed itself to Moyses, and as Salomon prayed that the place be specially sanctified.”

⁹ It was also told that, possessing wisdom, he offered sacrifice for the dedication and completion of the temple. ¹⁰Just as Moyses prayed to the Lord and fire came down from heaven and ate up the sacrifices, so also Salomon prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings. ¹¹And Moyses said, “They were eaten up because the sin offering had not been eaten.” ¹²Likewise Salomon also kept the eight days.

¹³ The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Neemias, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of Daud, and letters of kings about votive offerings. ¹⁴In the same way Ioudas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war that had come upon us, and they are in our possession. ¹⁵So if you have need of them, send people to get them for you.

¹⁶ Since, therefore, we are about to celebratethe purification, we write to you. You would do well to keep the days too. ¹⁷It is God who has saved all his people and has returned the inheritance to all, and the kingship and the priesthood and the sanctification, ¹⁸as he promised through the law. We therefore have hope in God that he will soon have mercy on us and will gather us from what is under heaven to his holy place, for he has rescued us from great evils and has cleansedthe place.

¹⁹ The story of Ioudas Makkabaios and his brothers and the purification of the greatest temple and the dedication of the altar^a ²⁰and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator²¹ and the appearances that came from heaven to those who behaved themselves manfully for Judaism so that though few in number they seized the whole land and pursued the barbarian hordes ²²and regained possession of the temple famous throughout the world and liberated the city and re-established the laws that were about to be abolished, while the Lord with great kindness became gracious to them—²³all this, which has been set forth by Jason of Cyrene in five volumes, we shall attempt to condense into a single book. ²⁴For considering the flood of figures involved and the difficulty there is for those who wish to enter upon the narratives of history because of the mass of material, ²⁵we have aimed to please those who wish to read, to make it easy for those who are inclined to memorize and to profit all those who happen to read this. ²⁶For us who have undertaken the toil of

^aGk = *bōmos*

abbreviating, it is no light matter but calls for sweat and loss of sleep,²⁷ just as it is not easy for one who prepares a banquet and seeks the benefit of others. Nevertheless, to secure the gratitude of many we will gladly endure the uncomfortable toil,²⁸ leaving the responsibility for exact details to the compiler, while devoting our effort to arriving at the outlines of the condensation.²⁹ For as the master builder of a new house must be concerned with the whole construction, while the one who undertakes its painting and decoration has to consider only what is suitable for its adornment, such in my judgment is the case with us.³⁰ It is the duty of the original historian to occupy the ground, to discuss matters from every side and to take trouble with details,³¹ but the one who recasts the narrative should be allowed to strive for brevity of expression and to forego exhaustive treatment.³² At this point, therefore, let us begin our narrative, while adding just this to what has already been said; for it would be foolish to lengthen the preface while cutting short the narrative itself.

3 While the holy city was inhabited in unbroken peace and the laws were strictly observed because of the piety of the high priest Onias and his hatred of wickedness,² it came about that the kings themselves honored the place and glorified the temple with the finest presents,³ even to the extent that Seleucus, the king of Asia, defrayed from his own revenues all the expenses connected with the ministry of the sacrifices.

4 But a man named Simon, of the tribe of Balgea, who had been made captain of the temple, had a disagreement with the high priest about the administration of the city market.⁵ Since he could not prevail over Onias, he went to Apollonius son of Thraseas^a, who at that time was governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia,⁶ and reported to him that the treasury in Hierosolyma was full of untold sums of money, so that the amount of the funds could not be reckoned, and that they did not belong to the account of the sacrifices, but that it was possible for them to fall under the control of the king.⁷ When Apollonius met the king, he told him of the money about which he had been informed. And he^b chose Heliodorus, who was in charge of his affairs, and sent him with commands to effect the removal of the reported wealth.⁸ Heliodorus at once set out on his journey, ostensibly to make a tour of inspection of the cities of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia but in fact to carry out the king's purpose.

9 When he had arrived at Hierosolyma and had been kindly welcomed by the high priest of the city, he told about the disclosure that had been made and stated why he had come. But he inquired whether this really was the situation.¹⁰ The high priest explained that there were some deposits belonging to widows and orphans¹¹ and also some money of Hyrcanus son of Tobias, a man of very prominent position, and that it to-

talled in all four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. To such an extent the impious Simon had misrepresented the facts.¹² And he said that it was utterly impossible that wrong should be done to those people who had trusted in the holiness of the place and in the sanctity and inviolability of the temple that is honored throughout the whole wide world.

13 But the other one, because of the commands he had from the king, said that this money must in any case be confiscated for the king's treasury.¹⁴ So he set a day and went in to direct the inspection of these funds.

There was no little distress throughout the whole city.¹⁵ The priests prostrated themselves before the altar in their priestly vestments and called toward heaven upon him who had given the law about deposits, that he should keep them safe for those who had deposited them.¹⁶ To see the appearance of the high priest was to be wounded at heart, for his face and the change in his color disclosed the anguish of his soul.¹⁷ For terror and bodily trembling had come over the man, which plainly showed to those who looked at him the pain lodged in his heart.¹⁸ People also were hurrying out of their houses in crowds to the supplication of the entire people because the holy place was about to be brought into dishonor.¹⁹ Women, girded with sackcloth under their breasts, thronged the streets. Of the virgins who were kept indoors, some ran together to the gates and some to the walls, while others peered out of the windows.²⁰ And holding up their hands to heaven, they all made supplication.²¹ There was something pitiable in the prostration of the whole populace and the anxiety of the high priest in his great anguish.

22 While they were calling upon the Almighty Lord that he would keep what had been entrusted safe and secure for those who had entrusted it,²³ Heliodorus went on with what had been decided.²⁴ But when he was present at the treasury with his bodyguards, then and there the Sovereign of spirits and of all authority caused so great a manifestation, that all who had been so bold as to accompany him were astounded by the power of God and became faint with terror.²⁵ For there appeared to them a magnificently caparisoned horse with a frightening rider; it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hoofs. He who sat upon it was seen to have a full golden harness.²⁶ Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed, who stood on either side of him and flogged him continuously, inflicting many blows on him.²⁷ When he suddenly fell to the ground and deep darkness came over him, they took him up, put him on a stretcher²⁸ and carried him, who had just entered the aforesaid treasury with a great retinue and all his bodyguard but was now with all his weapons unable to help himself, away. They^c thus clearly recognized the dominance of God.

29 While he lay prostrate, speechless because of

^aThrasaios = Ha ^bi.e. the king ^che = Ha

the divine intervention and deprived of any hope of recovery,³⁰ they praised the Lord who had acted marvelously for his own place. And the temple, which a little while before was full of fear and disturbance, was filled with joy and gladness now that the Almighty Lord had appeared.

31 Some of Heliodorus' friends quickly begged Onias to call upon the Most High to grant life to one who was lying quite at his last breath.³² So the high priest having become suspicious that the king might get the notion that some foul play had been perpetrated by the Judeans with regard to Heliodorus, offered sacrifice for the man's recovery.³³ While the high priest was making an atonement, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus dressed in the same clothing, and they stood and said, "Be very grateful to the high priest Onias, since for his sake the Lord has granted you your life.³⁴ And see that you, who have been flogged by heaven, report to all people the majestic power of God." Having said this they vanished.

35 Then Heliodorus offered sacrifice to the Lord and made very great vows to the Savior of his life, and having bidden Onias farewell, he marched off with his forces to the king.³⁶ He bore testimony to all concerning the deeds of the supreme God, which he had seen with his own eyes.³⁷ When the king asked Heliodorus what sort of person would be suitable to be sent on another mission to Hierosolyma, he replied,³⁸ "If you have any enemy or plotter against your government, send him there, for you will get him back thoroughly flogged, if he survives at all, for there is certainly some divine power about the place.³⁹ For he who has his dwelling in heaven watches over that place himself and brings it aid, and he strikes and destroys those who come to do it injury."⁴⁰ This was the outcome of the episode of Heliodorus and the protection of the treasury.

4 The previously mentioned Simon, who had informed about the money against his own country, slandered Onias, saying that it was he who had incited Heliodorus and had been the real cause of the evils.² He dared to designate as a plotter against the government the man who was the benefactor of the city, the protector of his compatriots and a zealot for the laws.³ When his hatred progressed to such a degree that even murders were committed by one of Simon's approved agents,⁴ Onias recognized that the rivalry was serious and that Apollonius son of Menestheus, and governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, was intensifying the malice of Simon.⁵ So he appealed to the king, not accusing his compatriots but having in view the welfare, both public and private, of all the people.⁶ For he saw that without the king's attention public affairs could not again reach a peaceful settlement and that Simon would not stop his folly.

7 When Seleucus died and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Jason

the brother of Onias obtained the high priesthood by corruption,⁸ promising the king at an interview three hundred sixty talents of silver and from another source of revenue eighty talents.⁹ In addition to this he promised to pay one hundred fifty more, if permission were given to establish by his authority a gymnasium and a body of youth for it and to draw up the list of the 'Antiochenes' amongst those in Hierosolyma.¹⁰ When the king assented and he came to office, he at once shifted his compatriots over to the Greek way of life.

11 He set aside the existing humane royal concessions to the Judeans, secured through Ioannes the father of Eupolemus, who went on the mission to establish friendship and alliance with the Romans, and he destroyed the polity's lawful ways of living and introduced new customs contrary to the law.¹² He took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the acropolis, and subjugating them, he induced the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat.¹³ There was such an extreme of hellenization and increase in the adoption of allophylism^a because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was impious and no true high priest,¹⁴ that the priests were no longer intent upon their ministry at the altar. Rather, despising the shrine and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful distribution of the oil^b in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus throwing,¹⁵ disdaining the honors prized by their ancestors and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige.¹⁶ For this reason heavy disaster overtook them, and those whose ways of living they admired and wished to imitate completely became their enemies and avengers.¹⁷ It is no light thing to show impiety to the divine laws—a fact that later events will make clear.

18 When the quinquennial games were being held at Tyre and the king was present,¹⁹ the vile Jason sent envoys, chosen as being 'Antiochian' citizens from Hierosolyma, to carry three hundred silver drachmas for the sacrifice to Heracles. Those who carried the money, however, thought best not to use it for sacrifice, because that was inappropriate, but to expend it for another purpose.²⁰ So this money was intended by the sender for the sacrifice to Heracles, but by the decision of its carriers it was applied to the construction of triremes.

21 When Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent to Egypt for the coronation of Philometor as king, Antiochus learned that the other had become hostile to his government, and he took measures for his own security. Therefore upon arriving at Joppe he proceeded to Hierosolyma.²² He was welcomed magnificently by Jason and the city and ushered in with a blaze of torches and with shouts. Then he marched off to Phoenicia in the same manner.

23 After a period of three years Jason sent Menelaus, the brother of the previously mentioned Simon, to carry the money to the king and to complete the records of essential business.²⁴ But

^aI.e. alien ways ^bPossibly of ointments

he, when presented to the king, extolled him with an air of authority and secured the high priesthood for himself, outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver. ²⁵After receiving the king's commands he returned, possessing no qualification for the high priesthood but having the hot temper of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a savage wild beast. ²⁶So Jason, who after supplanting his own brother was supplanted by another man, was driven as a fugitive into the land of Ammon. ²⁷Although Menelaus continued to hold the office, he did not pay regularly any of the money promised to the king. ²⁸So when Sostratus the captain of the acropolis kept requesting payment—for the collection of the revenue was his responsibility—the two of them were summoned by the king on account of this issue. ²⁹Menelaus left his own brother Lysimachus as deputy in the high priesthood, while Sostratus left Crates, the commander of the Cyprian troops.

³⁰ While such was the state of affairs, it happened that the people of Tarsus and of Mallus revolted because their cities had been given as a present to Antiochis, the king's concubine. ³¹So the king went hurriedly to settle the trouble, leaving Andronicus, a man of high rank, to act as his deputy. ³²But Menelaus, thinking he had obtained a suitable opportunity, stole some of the gold vessels of the temple and gave them to Andronicus; other vessels, as it happened, he had sold to Tyre and the neighboring cities. ³³When Onias became fully aware of these acts, he publicly exposed them, having first withdrawn to a place of sanctuary at Daphne near Antioch. ³⁴Therefore Menelaus, taking Andronicus aside, urged him to kill Onias. Andronicus came to Onias, and resorting to treachery, offered him sworn pledges and gave him his right hand; he persuaded him, though still suspicious, to come out from the place of sanctuary; then, with no regard for justice, he immediately put him out of the way.

³⁵ For this reason not only Judeans, but many also of other nations, were grieved and displeased at the unjust slaughter of the man. ³⁶When the king returned from the region of Cilicia, the Judeans in the city appealed to him with regard to the unreasonable murder of Onias, and the Greeks shared their hatred of the crime. ³⁷Therefore Antiochus was grieved at heart and filled with pity and wept because of the moderation and good conduct of the deceased. ³⁸Inflamed with anger, he immediately stripped off the purple robe from Andronicus, tore off his clothes and led him around the whole city to that very place where he had committed the outrage against Onias, and there he removed the bloodthirsty fellow from the world. The Lord thus repaid him with the punishment he deserved.

³⁹ When many acts of sacrilege had been committed in the city by Lysimachus with the connivance of Menelaus and when report of them had spread abroad, the populace gathered against Lysi-

machus, because many of the gold vessels had already been stolen. ⁴⁰Since the crowds were becoming aroused and filled with anger, Lysimachus armed about three thousand men and launched an unjust attack under the leadership of a certain Auranus, a man advanced in years and no less advanced in folly. ⁴¹But when they became aware that Lysimachus was attacking them, some picked up stones, some blocks of wood, and others took handfuls of the ashes that were lying around and threw them in wild confusion at Lysimachus' men. ⁴²As a result, they wounded many of them and killed some and put all the rest to flight; the temple robber himself they killed close by the treasury.

⁴³ Charges were brought against Menelaus about this incident. ⁴⁴When the king came to Tyre, three men sent by the senate presented the case before him. ⁴⁵But Menelaus, already as good as beaten, promised a substantial bribe to Ptolemy son of Dorymenes to win over the king. ⁴⁶Therefore, Ptolemy, taking the king aside into a colonnade as if for refreshment, induced the king to change his mind. ⁴⁷Menelaus, the cause of all the trouble, he acquitted of the charges against him, while he sentenced to death those unfortunate men, who would have been freed uncondemned, if they had pleaded even before Scythians. ⁴⁸And so those who had spoken for the city and the villages and the holy vessels quickly suffered the unjust penalty. ⁴⁹Therefore even the Tyrians, showing their hatred of the crime, provided magnificently for their funeral. ⁵⁰But Menelaus, because of the greed of those in power, remained in office, growing in wickedness, having become the chief plotter against his compatriots.

5 About this time Antiochus made his second invasion of Egypt. ²And it happened that, for almost forty days, there appeared over all the city golden-clad cavalry charging through the air, in companies fully armed with lances and drawn daggers—³troops of cavalry drawn up, attacks and counterattacks made on this side and on that, brandishing of shields, massing of spears, hurling of missiles, the flash of golden trappings and armor of all kinds. ⁴Therefore everyone prayed that the apparition might prove to have been a good omen.

⁵ When a false rumor arose that Antiochus was dead, Jason took no fewer than a thousand men and suddenly made an assault on the city. When the troops on the wall had been forced back and at last the city was being taken, Menelaus took refuge in the acropolis. ⁶But Jason kept relentlessly slaughtering his compatriots, not realizing that success at the cost of one's kindred is the greatest misfortune but imagining that he was setting up trophies of victory over enemies and not over compatriots. ⁷He did not, however, gain control of the government; in the end he got only disgrace from his conspiracy and fled again into the Ammanitis. ⁸Finally he met a miserable end. Accused^a before

^aconfined = Ha

Aretas the ruler of the Arabs, fleeing from city to city, pursued by everyone, hated as a rebel against the laws and abhorred as the executioner of his country and his compatriots, he was cast ashore in Egypt. ⁹There he, who had driven many from their own country into exile, died in exile, having embarked to go to the Spartans in hope of finding protection because of their kinship. ¹⁰He who had cast out many to lie unburied had no one to mourn for him; he had no funeral of any sort and no place in his ancestral tomb.

¹¹When news of what had happened reached the king, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt. So, raging inwardly, he left Egypt and took the city by force. ¹²He commanded his soldiers to cut down relentlessly everyone they met and to kill those who went into their houses. ¹³Then there were massacres of young and old, destruction of women and children, slayings of virgins and infants. ¹⁴Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed.

¹⁵Not content with this, Antiochus dared to enter the most holy temple in all the world, guided by Menelaus, who had become a traitor both to the laws and to his country, ¹⁶taking the sacred vessels with his polluted hands and pulling down with profane hands the votive offerings that other kings had made to enhance the glory and honor of the place. ¹⁷Antiochus was elated in spirit and did not perceive that the Lord was angered for a little while because of the sins of those who lived in the city and that this was the reason he was disregarding the place. ¹⁸But if it had not happened that they were involved in many sins, this man would have been flogged and turned back from his rash act as soon as he came forward, just as Heliodorus had been, whom King Seleucus sent to inspect the treasury. ¹⁹But the Lord did not choose the nation for the sake of the place, but the place for the sake of the nation. ²⁰Therefore the place itself shared in the misfortunes that befell the nation and afterward participated in its benefits, and what was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty was restored again in all its glory when the great Lord became reconciled.

²¹So Antiochus carried off eighteen hundred talents from the temple and hurried away to Antioch, thinking in his arrogance that he could make the land navigable and the sea passable on foot, because his heart was elated. ²²He left governors to oppress the people: at Hierosolyma, Philip, by birth a Phrygian and in character more barbarous than the man who appointed him; ²³and on Garizim^a, Andronicus, and besides these Menelaus, who lorded it over the citizens worse than the others did because of his malice toward the Judean citizens. ²⁴Antiochus sent Apollonius, the captain of the Mysians, with an army of twenty-two thousand and ordered him to kill all the grown men and to sell the women and boys as slaves. ²⁵When

this man arrived in Hierosolyma, he pretended to be peaceably disposed and waited until the holy sabbath day; then, finding the Judeans not at work, he ordered his troops to parade under arms. ²⁶He put to the sword all those who came out to see them, then rushed into the city with his armed warriors and killed great numbers of people.

²⁷But Ioudas Makkabaios, with about nine others, got away to the wilderness and kept himself and his companions alive in the mountains as wild animals do; they continued to live on what grew wild so that they might not share in the defilement.

6 Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Judeans to forsake their ancestral laws and no longer to live by the laws of God—²also to pollute the shrine in Hierosolyma and to call it the shrine of Olympian Zeus and to call the one on Garizim^a the shrine of Zeus-the-Friend-of-Strangers, as the people who lived in that place had petitioned.

³Harsh and utterly grievous was the onslaught of evil. ⁴For the temple was filled with debauchery and revelling by the nations, who dallied with prostitutes and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit. ⁵The altar was covered with abominable offerings that were forbidden by the laws. ⁶People could neither keep the sabbath nor observe their ancestral feasts nor so much as confess themselves to be Judeans.

⁷On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, the Judeans were taken, under bitter constraint, to partake of the sacrifices, and when a feast of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreathes of ivy and to walk in the procession in honor of Dionysus. ⁸At the suggestion of Ptolemy a vote was issued to the neighboring Greek cities that they should adopt the same policy toward the Judeans and make them partake of the sacrifices ⁹and should kill those who did not choose to change over to Greek customs. One could see, therefore, the misery that had come upon them. ¹⁰For example, two women were brought in for having circumcised their children. They publicly paraded them around the city with their babies hanging at their breasts and then hurled them down headlong from the wall. ¹¹Others who had assembled in the caves nearby in order to observe the seventh day secretly were betrayed to Philip and were all burned together, because their piety kept them from defending themselves, in view of their regard for that most holy day.

¹²Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people. ¹³In fact, it is a sign of great kindness not to let the impious alone for long but to punish them immediately. ¹⁴For in the case of the other nations the Lord waits pa-

^aArgarizin = Ha

tiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins, but he does not deal in this way with us ¹⁵in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward, when our sins have reached their height. ¹⁶Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. While he disciplines us with calamities, he does not forsake his own people. ¹⁷Let what we have said serve as a reminder; we must go on briefly with the story.

18 Eleazaros, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. ¹⁹But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack of his own accord, spitting out the flesh, ²⁰as all ought to do who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life.

21 Those who were in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside because of their long acquaintance with him and privately urged him to bring meat of his own providing, proper for him to use, and to pretend that he was eating the flesh of the sacrificial meal that had been ordered by the king ²²so that by doing this he might be saved from death and be treated kindly on account of his old friendship with them. ²³But making a high resolve, worthy of his years and the dignity of his old age and the gray hairs that he had reached with distinction and his excellent bearing even from childhood, and moreover according to the holy God-given law, he declared himself quickly, telling them to send him to Hades.

24 "To pretend is not worthy of our time of life," he said, "for many of the young might suppose that Eleazaros in his ninetieth year had gone over to allophylisma, ²⁵and through my pretence, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they would be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age. ²⁶Even if for the present I would avoid the punishment of mortals, yet whether I live or die I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty. ²⁷Therefore, by bravely giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age ²⁸and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws."

When he had said this, he went at once to the rack. ²⁹Those who a little before had acted toward him with goodwill now changed to ill will, because the words he had uttered were in their opinion sheer madness. ³⁰When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned aloud and said: "It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things, because I fear him."

31 So in this way he died, leaving in his death an example of nobility and a memorial of courage, not only to the young but also to the great body of his nation.

7 It happened also that seven brothers and their mother were arrested and were being compelled by the king, under torture with whips and thongs, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh. ²One of them, acting as their spokesman, said, "What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress our ancestral laws."

3 The king fell into a rage and ordered to have frying-pans and cauldrons heated. ⁴These were heated immediately, and he ordered that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out and that they scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother looked on. ⁵When he was utterly helpless, the king ordered them to take him to the fire, still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. The smoke from the frying-pan spread widely, but the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, saying, ⁶"The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moyses declared in his song that bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, 'And he will have compassion on his slaves.'"

7 After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair and asked him, "Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?" ⁸He replied in his ancestral language and said to them, "No." Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first had done. ⁹And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws."

10 After him, the third was the victim of their sport. When it was demanded, he quickly put out his tongue and courageously stretched forth his hands ¹¹and said nobly, "I got these from heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again." ¹²As a result the king himself and those with him were astonished at the young man's spirit, for he regarded his sufferings as nothing.

13 After he too had died, they maltreated and tortured the fourth in the same way. ¹⁴When he was near death, he said, "It is desirable that those who die at the hands of human beings should cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!"

15 Next they brought forward the fifth and maltreated him. ¹⁶But he looked at him and said, "Because you have authority among human beings, though you also are mortal, you do what you please. But do not think that our people have been forsaken by God. ¹⁷Keep on, and see how his mighty power will torture you and your descendants!"

18 After him they brought forward the sixth. And when he was about to die, he said, "Do not

^aI.e. alien ways

deceive yourself in vain. For we are suffering these things on our own account, because of our sins against our own God. Therefore astounding things have happened. ¹⁹But do not think that you will go unpunished for having tried to fight against God!"

²⁰The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honorable memory. Although she saw her seven sons perish within the course of a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord. ²¹She encouraged each of them in their ancestral language. Filled with a noble spirit, she reinforced her woman's reasoning with a man's courage and said to them, ²²"I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. ²³Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the origin of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws."

²⁴Antiochus felt that he was being treated with contempt, and he was suspicious of her reproachful tone. The youngest brother being still alive, Antiochus not only appealed to him in words but also promised with oaths that he would make him rich and enviable, if he would turn from his ancestral ways, and that he would take him for his Friend and entrust him with public affairs. ²⁵Since the young man would not listen to him at all, the king called the mother to him and urged her to advise the youth to save himself. ²⁶After much urging on his part, she undertook to persuade her son. ²⁷But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their ancestral language as follows, deriding the cruel tyrant: "My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb and nursed you for three years and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life and have taken care of you. ²⁸I implore you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being. ²⁹Do not fear this hangman, but prove worthy of your brothers and accept death so that in his mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers."

³⁰While she was still speaking, the young man said, "What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king's ordinance, but I obey the ordinance of the law that was given to our fathers through Moyses. ³¹But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God. ³²For we are suffering because of our own sins. ³³And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own slaves. ³⁴But you, unholy wretch, you most defiled of all mortals, do not be elated in vain and puffed up by uncertain hopes, when you raise your hand against the children of heaven. ³⁵You have not yet escaped the judgment of the Almighty, all-seeing God. ³⁶For

our brothers, after enduring a brief suffering, have fallen heir to everlasting life under the power of a divine covenant, but you, by the judgment of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance. ³⁷I, like my brothers, give up body and life for our ancestral laws, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by torments and plagues to make you acknowledge that he alone is God ³⁸and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty that has justly fallen on our whole nation."

³⁹The king fell into a rage and handled him worse than the others, being exasperated at his scorn. ⁴⁰So he died in his integrity, putting his whole trust in the Lord.

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

⁴²Let this be enough, then, about the eating of sacrifices and the extreme tortures.

8 Meanwhile Ioudas, who was also called Makkabaios, and his companions secretly entered the villages and summoned their kindred and enlisted those who had continued in the Judean faith, and so they gathered about six thousand. ²They implored the Lord to look upon the people who were oppressed by all and to have pity on the shrine that had been profaned by the impious, ³to have mercy on the city that was being destroyed and about to be leveled to the ground and to hearken to the blood that cried out to him, ⁴to remember also the lawless slaughter of the innocent babies and the blasphemies committed against his name and to show his hatred of evil.

⁵As soon as Makkabaios got his army organized, he became insuperable for the nations, for the wrath of the Lord had turned to mercy. ⁶Coming without warning, he would set fire to towns and villages. He captured strategic positions and put to flight not a few of the enemy. ⁷He found the nights most advantageous for such attacks. And talk of his valor spread everywhere.

⁸When Philip saw that the man was gaining ground little by little and that he was pushing ahead with more frequent successes, he wrote to Ptolemy, the governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, to come to the aid of the king's government. ⁹Then Ptolemy promptly appointed Nicanor son of Patroclus, one of the king's chief Friends, and sent him, in command of no fewer than twenty thousand nations of all races, to wipe out the whole race of Judea. He associated with him Gorgias, a general and a man of experience in military service. ¹⁰Nicanor determined to make up for the king the tribute due to the Romans, two thousand talents, by selling the captured Judeans into slavery. ¹¹So he immediately sent to the towns on the seacoast, inviting them to buy Judean slaves and promising to hand over ninety slaves for a talent, not expecting the judgment from the Almighty that was about to overtake him.

¹²Word came to Ioudas concerning Nicanor's invasion, and when he told his companions of the arrival of the army, ¹³those who were cowardly and distrustful of God's justice ran off and got away.

¹⁴Others sold all their remaining property and at the same time implored the Lord to rescue those who had been sold by the ungodly Nicanor before he ever met them, ¹⁵if not for their own sake, then for the sake of the covenants made with their fathers and because he had called them by his holy and glorious name. ¹⁶But Makkabaios gathered his forces together, to the number six thousand, and exhorted them not to be frightened by the enemy and not to fear the great multitude of nations, who were wickedly coming against them, but to fight nobly, ¹⁷keeping before their eyes the outrage that they had lawlessly committed against the holy place and the torture of the derided city and, besides, the destruction of the ancestral polity. ¹⁸"For they trust to arms and acts of daring," he said, "but we trust in the Almighty God, who is able with a single nod to strike down those who are coming against us and even, if necessary, the whole world."

¹⁹Moreover, he told them of the occasions when help came to their ancestors; how, in the time of Sennacherim, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand perished, ²⁰and the time of the battle against the Galatians that took place in Babylonia, how they saw action, eight thousand of them in all, along with four thousand Macedonians; yet when the Macedonians were at a loss, the eight thousand, by the help that came to them from heaven, destroyed one hundred twenty thousand Galatians and took a great amount of booty.

²¹With these words he filled them with courage and made them ready to die for the laws and the fatherland; then he divided his army into four parts. ²²He appointed his brothers also, Simon and Iosepos and Jonathan, as leaders of each division, putting fifteen hundred men under each. ²³Besides, he appointed Eleazaros to read aloud from the holy book and gave the watchword, "Divine Help"; then, leading the first maniple himself, he joined battle with Nicanor.

²⁴With the Almighty as their ally, they killed more than nine thousand of the enemy and wounded and disabled most of Nicanor's army and forced them all to flee. ²⁵They captured the money of those who had come to buy them as slaves. After pursuing them for quite some time, they returned because they were pressed for time. ²⁶It was the day before the sabbath, and for that reason they did not continue their pursuit. ²⁷When they had gathered their own arms together and had stripped the arms off their enemies, they kept the sabbath, giving great praise and acknowledgement to the Lord, who had preserved them until this day and allotted it to them as the beginning of mercy. ²⁸After the sabbath, they gave some of the spoils to those who had been tortured and to the widows and orphans and distributed the rest among themselves and their children. ²⁹When they had done this, they made common supplication and implored the merciful Lord to be wholly reconciled with his slaves.

³⁰In encounters with the forces of Timothy and Bacchides they killed more than twenty thousand of them and very easily got possession of

some exceedingly high strongholds, and they divided a very large amount of spoils, giving to those who had been tortured and to the orphans and widows and also to the aged shares equal to their own. ³¹Having gathered their armor together, and they carefully stored all of them in strategic places; the rest of the spoils they carried to Hierosolyma. ³²They killed the commander of Timothy's forces, a most wicked man, and one who had greatly troubled the Judeans. ³³While they were celebrating the victory in the fatherland, they burned those who had set fire to the sacred gates and Callisthenes, who had fled into one little house; so these received the proper reward for their impiety.

³⁴The thrice-accursed Nicanor, who had brought the thousand merchants to buy the Judeans, ³⁵having been humbled with the help of the Lord by opponents whom he regarded as of the least account, took off his splendid uniform and made his way alone like a runaway slave through the interior and reached Antioch, having succeeded chiefly in the destruction of his army! ³⁶So he who had taken it upon himself to secure tribute for the Romans by the capture of the people of Hierosolyma proclaimed that the Judeans had a Defender and that therefore the Judeans were invulnerable, because they followed the laws ordained by him.

9 About that time, as it happened, Antiochus had retreated in disorder from the region of Persia. ²He had entered the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temples and control the city. Therefore the people rushed to the rescue with arms and put him to flight, and it happened that Antiochus, having been put to flight by the inhabitants, beat a shameful retreat. ³While he was in Ecbatana, news came to him of what had happened to Nicanor and the forces of Timothy. ⁴Transported with rage, he conceived the idea of turning upon the Judeans the injury done by those who had put him to flight; so he instructed his charioteer to drive without stopping until he completed the journey. But the judgment of heaven rode with him! For in his arrogance he said, "When I get there I will make Hierosolyma a cemetery of Judeans."

⁵But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him with an incurable and invisible blow. As soon as he stopped speaking he was seized with a pain in his bowels for which there was no relief, and with sharp internal tortures—⁶and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions. ⁷Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Judeans and giving orders to speed up the journey. And so it came about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along and that, through the grievous fall, all the limbs of the body were racked. ⁸Thus he, who only a little while before had thought in his superhuman arrogance that he could command the waves of the sea and had imagined that he could weigh the high moun-

tains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, making the power of God manifest to all, ⁹so that worms broke out of the unbeliever's eyes, and while he was still living in anguish and pain, his flesh rotted away, and because of his stench the whole army felt revulsion at the decay. ¹⁰Because of the unbearable oppressiveness of the stench no one was able to carry the man who a little while before had thought that he could touch the stars of heaven. ¹¹Then it was that, broken in spirit, he began to lose much of his arrogance and to come to his senses under the divine scourge, for he was tortured with pain every moment. ¹²And when he could not endure his own stench, he uttered these words, "It is right to be subject to God and that a mortal should not think haughtily."

¹³ Then the abominable fellow made a vow to the Lord, who would no longer have mercy on him, stating ¹⁴that the holy city, which he was hurrying to level to the ground and to make a cemetery, he was now declaring to be free, ¹⁵and the Judeans, whom he had not considered worthy even of a grave but had planned to throw out with their children for the wild animals and for the birds to eat, he would make, all of them, equal to citizens of Athens, ¹⁶and the holy shrine, which he had formerly plundered, he would adorn with the finest offerings, and all the holy vessels he would give back many times over, and the expenses incurred for the sacrifices he would provide from his own revenues, ¹⁷and in addition to all this he also would become a Judean and would visit every inhabited place to proclaim the power of God. ¹⁸But when his sufferings did not in any way abate, for the just judgment of God had justly come upon him, he gave up all hope for himself and wrote to the Judeans the following letter in the form of a supplication. This was its content:

¹⁹ "To his worthy Judean citizens, Antiochus, their king and general, sends hearty greetings and good wishes for their health and prosperity. ²⁰If you and your children are well and your affairs are as you wish, I profess very great thanks to God, having my hope in heaven. ²¹As for me, I was weakly disposed, but I remember with affection your esteem and goodwill. On my way back from the region of Persia I suffered an annoyance suffering from a disease, and I have deemed it necessary to take thought for the common security of all. ²²Not giving myself up as hopeless but having good hope of recovering from my illness, ²³I nevertheless observed that even my father, on the occasions when he made expeditions into the upper country, appointed his successor ²⁴so that, if anything unexpected happened or any unwelcome news came, the people throughout the realm would not be troubled, for they would know to whom the government was left. ²⁵Moreover, since I understand how the princes along the borders and the neighbors of my kingdom keep watching for opportunities and waiting to see what will hap-

pen, I have appointed my son Antiochus to be king, whom I have often entrusted and commended to most of you when I hurried off to the upper provinces, and I have written to him what is written here. ²⁶I therefore urge and implore you to remember the public and private services rendered to you and to maintain your present goodwill, each of you, toward me and my son. ²⁷For I am sure that he will follow my policy and will accommodate himself to you mildly and with kindness."

²⁸ So the murderer and blasphemer, having endured the most intense suffering, such as he had inflicted on others, came to the end of his life by a most pitiable fate among the mountains in a strange land. ²⁹And Philip, who had been brought up with him, took his body home; then, fearing the son of Antiochus, he withdrew to Ptolemy Philometor in Egypt.

10 Now Makkabaios and his followers, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city; ²they tore down the altars^a that had been built in the public square by the allophytes and also destroyed the sacred precincts. ³And having purified the shrine, they made another altar of sacrifice; then, igniting flint stones and taking fire out of them, they offered sacrifices, after a lapse of two years, and they offered incense and put up lamps and set out the presentation of the loaves. ⁴When they had done this, they fell prostrate and implored the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, but that, if they should ever sin, they might be disciplined by him with forbearance and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations. ⁵It happened that on the same day on which the shrine had been profaned by allophytes the purification of the shrine took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chaseleu. ⁶They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of coverts, remembering how not long before, during the feast of tents, they had been inhabiting the mountains and caves like wild animals. ⁷Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. ⁸They decreed by public ordinance and by vote that the whole nation of the Judeans should observe these days every year.

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

¹⁰ Now we will make known what took place under Antiochus Eupator, who was the son of that impious man, and will give a brief summary of the calamities of the wars. ¹¹This man, when he succeeded to the kingdom, appointed a certain Lysias, the chief governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, to be in charge of the government. ¹²Ptolemy, who was called Macron, taking the lead in observing justice towards the Judeans because of the wrong that had been done to them, attempted to main-

^aGk = *bōmos*

tain peaceful relations with them. ¹³As a result he was accused before Eupator by the king's Friends. He heard himself called a traitor at every turn, because he had abandoned Cyprus, which Philometor had entrusted to him, and had gone over to Antiochus Epiphanes. Unable to execute his noble office honorably, he took poison and ended his life.

¹⁴ When Gorgias became governor of the region, he maintained mercenaries, and at every turn kept attacking the Judeans. ¹⁵Besides this, the Idumeans, too, who had control of strategic strongholds, were harassing the Judeans; they received those who were banished from Hierosolyma and endeavored to keep up the war. ¹⁶But Makkabaios and his forces, after making solemn supplication and imploring God to fight on their side, moved towards the strongholds of the Idumeans. ¹⁷Attacking them vigorously, they gained possession of the places and beat off all who fought upon the wall and slaughtered those whom they encountered, killing no fewer than twenty thousand.

¹⁸ When at least nine thousand took refuge in two fortified towers exceedingly well equipped to withstand a siege, ¹⁹Makkabaios left Simon and Iosepos and also Zakchaios and his troops, a force sufficient to besiege them, and he himself set off for places where he was more urgently needed. ²⁰But those with Simon, who were money-hungry, were bribed with silver by some of those who were in the towers, and on receiving seventy thousand drachmas, let some of them slip away. ²¹When word of what had happened came to Makkabaios, he gathered the leaders of the people and accused these men of having sold their kindred for money by setting free those who were hostile to them. ²²Then he killed these men who had turned traitor and immediately captured the two towers. ²³Having success at arms in everything he undertook, he destroyed more than twenty thousand in the two strongholds.

²⁴ Now Timothy, who had been defeated by the Judeans before, having gathered a tremendous force of mercenaries and having collected the cavalry from Asia in no small number, came on, intending to take Judea by storm. ²⁵As he drew near, Makkabaios and his men sprinkled dust on their heads and girded their loins with sackcloth in supplication to God, and ²⁶falling down at the foot of the altar, they implored him to be gracious to them and to be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries, as the law shows plainly. ²⁷And rising from their prayer, they took up their arms and advanced a considerable distance from the city, and when they came near the enemy, they halted. ²⁸Just as morning was breaking both attacked, the one having as pledge of success and victory not only their valor but also their recourse to the Lord, while the other made rage their leader in the fight.

²⁹ When the battle became fierce, there appeared to the enemy from heaven five illustrious

men on horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Judeans. ³⁰Two of them took Makkabaios between them, and shielding him with their own suits of armor and weapons, they kept him unharmed. They showered arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy so that, confounded by blindness, they fled in complete disorder. ³¹Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered, besides six hundred cavalry.

³² Timothy himself fled to a stronghold called Gazara, especially well garrisoned, where Chaereas was commander. ³³Then Makkabaios and his men were glad, and they besieged the fort for four days. ³⁴The men within, relying on the strength of the place, kept blaspheming terribly and uttering wicked words. ³⁵But at dawn of the fifth day, twenty young men of those who were with Makkabaios, fired with anger because of the blasphemies, bravely stormed the wall and with savage fury cut down everyone they met. ³⁶Others who came up in the same way wheeled around against the defenders and set fire to the towers; they kindled fires and burned the blasphemers alive. Others broke open the gates and let in the rest of the force, and they captured the city. ³⁷They killed Timothy, who was hiding in a cistern, and his brother Chaereas and Apollophanes. ³⁸When they had accomplished these things, with hymns and thanksgivings they blessed the Lord who shows great kindness to Israel and gives them the victory.

11 Very soon after this, Lysias, the king's guardian and kinsman, who was in charge of the government, being vexed at what had happened, ²gathered about eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry and came against the Judeans. He intended to make the city a home for Greeks ³and to levy tribute on the temple as he did on the other sacred precincts of the nations and to put up the high priesthood for sale every year. ⁴He took no account whatever of the power of God but was elated with his ten thousands of infantry and his thousands of cavalry and his eighty elephants. ⁵In invading Judea, he approached Baithsoura, which was a fortified place about five stadia^a from Hierosolyma, and pressed it hard.

⁶ When Makkabaios and his men heard that he was besieging the strongholds, they prayed to the Lord, together with the masses, with lamentations and tears, to send a good angel to save Israel. ⁷Makkabaios himself was the first to take up arms, and he urged the others to run the risk, together with him, of aiding their brothers. Then they eagerly rushed off together. ⁸And there, while they were near Hierosolyma, a horseman appeared as their leader, in a white garment, brandishing weapons of gold. ⁹Together they all praised the merciful God and were strengthened in spirit, ready to assail not only humans but also the wildest animals or walls of iron. ¹⁰They advanced in battle order, having their heavenly ally, for the Lord had mercy on them. ¹¹They hurled themselves like lions against the enemy and

^aGk 1 stadion = 200 meters

laid low eleven thousand of them and sixteen hundred cavalry and forced all the rest to flee. ¹²Most of them were preserved wounded and naked, and Lysias himself escaped by disgraceful flight.

¹³ As he was not without intelligence, he pondered over the defeat that had befallen him and realized that the Hebrews were invincible, because the mighty God fought on their side. So he sent to them ¹⁴and persuaded them to agree to all just conditions, since he would persuade the king, constraining him to be their friend. ¹⁵Makkabaios, having regard for the common good, agreed to all that Lysias urged. For the king granted every request which Makkabaios delivered to Lysias in writing concerning the Judeans.

¹⁶ The letters written to the Judeans by Lysias were to this effect:

"Lysias to the multitude of the Judeans, greetings. ¹⁷Ioannes and Abessalom, who were sent by you, have delivered your petition copied below and have implored about the matters indicated in it. ¹⁸I have informed the king of everything that needed to be brought before him, and he has agreed to what was possible. ¹⁹If you will maintain your goodwill toward the government, I will endeavour in the future to help promote your welfare. ²⁰And concerning details, I have commanded these men and my members of staff to confer with you. ²¹Farewell. The one hundred forty-eighth year, Dioscorinthius twenty-fourth."

²² The king's letter ran thus:

"King Antiochus to his brother Lysias, greetings. ²³Now that our father has gone on to the gods, we, desiring that the subjects of the kingdom be undisturbed in caring for their own affairs, ²⁴hearing that the Judeans do not consent to our father's change to Greek customs but prefer their own way of living and implore that their own precepts be allowed them, ²⁵thus choosing that this nation also should be free from disturbance, judge that their temple be restored to them and that they shall live according to the customs of their ancestors. ²⁶You will do well, therefore, to send word to them and give them pledges of friendship so that they may know our policy and be of good cheer and turn happily to the conduct of their own affairs."

²⁷ To the nation the king's letter was as follows:

"King Antiochus to the senate of the Judeans and to the other Judeans, greetings. ²⁸If you are well, it is as we desire. We also are in good health. ²⁹Menelaus has informed us that you wish to return and look after your own affairs. ³⁰Therefore those who go home by the thirtieth of Xanthikos will have our pledge of friendship and safe conduct ³¹for the Judeans to enjoy their own way of living and laws, just as formerly, and none of them shall be molested in any way for errors made through ignorance. ³²And I have also sent Menelaus to encourage you. ³³Farewell. The one hundred forty-eighth year, Xanthikos fifteenth."

³⁴ The Romans also sent them a letter, which read thus:

"Quintus Memmius, Titus Manius, envoys of the Romans, to the people of the Judeans, greetings. ³⁵With regard to what Lysias the Kinsman of the king has granted you, we also give consent. ³⁶But as to the matters that he decided are to be referred to the king: Having considered them, send someone immediately so that we can outline how it would be appropriate for you, since we are on our way to Antioch. ³⁷Therefore make haste and send messengers so that we, too, may get to know what your viewpoint is. ³⁸Farewell. The one hundred forty-eighth year, Xanthikos fifteenth."

12 When these agreements had been reached, Lysias departed on his way to the king, and the Judeans went about their farming.

² But some of the local governors, Timothy and Apollonius son of Gennaïos, as well as Hieronymos and Demophon, and in addition to these Nicanor the governor of Cyprus, would not let them live quietly and in peace. ³And the Joppites did so ungodly a deed as this: they invited the Judeans who lived among them to embark, with their wives and children, on boats that they had provided, as though there were no ill will towards them, ⁴and this was done by public vote of the city. When they accepted, because they wished to live peaceably and suspected nothing, they drowned them as soon as they had gone out to sea, at least two hundred. ⁵When Ioudas heard of the abomination inflicted on his compatriots, he gave orders to his men ⁶and, calling upon God the righteous judge, attacked the murderers of his kindred. He set fire to the harbor by night, burned the boats and massacred those who had taken refuge there. ⁷Then, because the town was shut in its walls, he withdrew, intending to come again and root out the whole community of the Joppites. ⁸But learning that the people in Jamnia, too, meant in the same way to wipe out the Judeans who were living among them, ⁹he attacked the Jamnites by night and set fire to the harbor and the fleet so that the gleam of the light was seen in Hierosolyma, two hundred and forty stadia^a distant.

¹⁰ When they had gone nine stadia^a from there, on their march against Timothy, Arabs attacked him, no fewer than five thousand with five hundred cavalry. ¹¹After a hard fight, Ioudas' men, with God's help, were successful, and the nomads, being defeated, implored Ioudas to grant them pledges of friendship, promising to give Ioudas and his men sheep and cattle and to help them in other ways. ¹²Ioudas, realizing that they might indeed be useful in many ways, agreed to make peace with them, and after receiving his pledges, they went back to their tents.

¹³ He also attacked a certain town that was strongly fortified with ^bearthen ramparts^b and enclosed by walls and inhabited by all sorts of nations. Its name was Kaspin. ¹⁴Those who were within, relying on the strength of the walls and on their supply of provisions, behaved most insolent-

^aGk 1 stadion. = 200 meters ^bGk uncertain = Ha

ly toward Ioudas' men, railing at them and even blaspheming and saying what is not lawful. ¹⁵But Ioudas' men, invoking the great sovereign of the world, who without battering-rams or engines of war overthrew Iericho in the days of Iesous, rushed upon the walls like wild animals and ¹⁶took the town by the will of God and committed innumerable slaughters so that the adjoining lake, two stadia^a wide, appeared to be irrigated and filled up with blood.

¹⁷ When they had gone seven hundred and fifty stadia^a from there, they came to ^bthe fortification^b, to the Judeans who are called Toubiaeni. ¹⁸They did not find Timothy in that region, however, for he had by then left the region without accomplishing anything, but a garrison, exceedingly strong, left behind by him in one place. ¹⁹Dositheus and Sosipatros, from among the leaders who were with Makkabaios, marched out and destroyed those who had been left behind by Timothy in the stronghold, more than ten thousand men. ²⁰But Makkabaios arranged the army that was with him in cohorts and set men in command of the divisions and hurried after Timothy, who had with him one hundred twenty thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred cavalry. ²¹When he learned of the approach of Ioudas, Timothy sent off the women and the children and also the other members of the household to a place called Karnion, for that place was hard to besiege and difficult of access because of the narrowness of all the approaches. ²²But when Ioudas' first division appeared and terror and fear came over the enemies at the manifestation to them of him who sees all things, in their flight they rushed headlong in every direction so that often they were injured by their own men and pierced by the points of their own rapiers. ²³Ioudas pressed the pursuit with the utmost vigor, putting the sinners to the sword, and destroyed as many as thirty thousand.

²⁴ Timothy himself fell into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipatros and their men and with great guile he implored them to let him go in safety, because he held the parents of most of them and the brothers of some to whom no consideration would otherwise be shown. ²⁵And when with many words he had confirmed his solemn promise to restore them unharmed, they let him go, for the sake of saving their kindred.

²⁶ Then Ioudas marched against Karnion and the temple of Atargatis and slaughtered twenty-five thousand people. ²⁷After the rout and destruction of these, he marched also against Ephron, a fortified town where multitudes of people of all nationalities lived^c. Stalwart young men took their stand before the walls and made a vigorous defence, and great stores of war engines and missiles were there. ²⁸But the Judeans called upon the sovereign, who with power shatters the might of his enemies, and they got the town into their hands and killed as many as twenty-five thousand of those who were in it.

²⁹ Setting out from there, they hastened to Scythopolis, which is six hundred stadia^a from Hierosolyma. ³⁰But when the Judeans who lived there bore witness to the goodwill that the people of Scythopolis had towards them and their courtesy towards them in times of misfortune, ³¹they thanked them and exhorted them to be well disposed to their race in the future also and went up to Hierosolyma, as the feast of weeks was close at hand.

³² After the feast called Pentecost, they hurried against Gorgias, the governor of Idumea. ³³He came out with three thousand infantry and four hundred cavalry. ³⁴^dWhen they joined battle, ^eit happened^e that a few of the Judeans fell. ³⁵But a certain Dositheus, one of Bakenor's men, who was on horseback and was a strong man, caught hold of Gorgias and, grasping his cloak, was dragging him off mightily. And while he wanted to take the accursed alive, one of the Thracian cavalry bore down on him and broke his shoulder, and Gorgias escaped to Marisa.

³⁶ As Esdris and his men had been fighting for a long time and were weary, Ioudas called upon the Lord to show himself their ally and leader in the battle. ³⁷In their ancestral language he raised the battle cry with hymns; then he charged against Gorgias' troops when they were not expecting it and put them to flight.

³⁸ Then Ioudas assembled his army and went to the city of Odollam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom and kept the sabbath there.

³⁹ On the next day, when the need for it had arisen, Ioudas' men went to recover the bodies of those fallen earlier and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in their ancestral sepulchres. ⁴⁰Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Judeans to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. ⁴¹So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who makes visible the things that are hidden, ⁴²and they turned to supplication, imploring that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out. The noble Ioudas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened as the result of the sin of those who had fallen. ⁴³He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Hierosolyma to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. ⁴⁴For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. ⁴⁵But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead so that they might be delivered from their sin.

^aGk 1 stadion = 200 meters ^bOr *Charax* ^cin it = Ha ^d/^eTr = Ha

13 In the one hundred forty-ninth year word came to Ioudas and his men that Antiochus Eupator was coming with great numbers of soldiers against Judea, ²and with him Lysias, the guardian and chancellor, also^a a Greek force of one hundred ten thousand infantry, five thousand three hundred cavalry, twenty-two elephants and three hundred chariots bearing scythes.

³ Menelaus also joined them and with much hypocrisy urged Antiochus on, not to save the fatherland but because he thought that he would be established in government. ⁴But the King of kings aroused the anger of Antiochus against the sinner, and when Lysias informed him that this man was the originator of all the trouble, he ordered them to take him to Beroea and to put him to death by the method that is customary in that place. ⁵For there is a tower there, fifty cubits high, full of ashes, and it has a rim running around it that on all sides inclines precipitously into the ashes. ⁶There they all push to destruction anyone who is guilty of temple robbery or has committed an excess of other evils. ⁷By such a fate it came about that Menelaus the lawbreaker died without even burial in the earth, ⁸and this was eminently just; because he had committed many sins against the altar^b whose fire and ashes were holy, he met his death in ashes.

⁹ The king, who had become barbarous in his thinking, was coming to show the Judeans the worst things amongst those that had happened in his father's time. ¹⁰But when Ioudas heard of this, he ordered the crowd to call upon the Lord day and night, now if ever to help those who were on the point of being deprived of the law and their country and the holy temple ¹¹and not to allow the people who had just begun to revive a little to fall into the hands of the blasphemous nations. ¹²When they had all joined in the same petition and had implored the merciful Lord with weeping and fasting and lying prostrate for three days without ceasing, Ioudas exhorted them and ordered them to stand ready.

¹³ After consulting privately with the elders, he determined to march out and decide the matter by the help of God before the king's army could enter Judea and get possession of the city. ¹⁴So, committing the decision to the Creator of the world and exhorting those with him to fight bravely to the death for the laws, temple, city, fatherland and constitution, he pitched his camp near Modein. ¹⁵He gave his troops the watchword, "Divine Victory," and with those young men judged best, he attacked the king's pavilion at night and killed close to two thousand men in the camp and stabbed the lead elephant and its rider to death. ¹⁶In the end they filled the camp with terror and confusion and withdrew in triumph. ¹⁷This happened just as day was dawning, because the Lord's shelter helped him.

¹⁸ The king, having had a taste of the daring of the Judeans, made an attempt on their positions through tricks. ¹⁹He advanced against Baithsoura,

was turned back, attacked again, was defeated. ²⁰Ioudas kept sending in to those inside whatever was necessary. ²¹But Rhodokos, a man from the ranks of the Judeans, gave secret information to the enemy; he was sought for and caught and put in prison. ²²The king negotiated a second time with the people in Baithsoura, gave pledges, received theirs, withdrew, attacked Ioudas and his men, was defeated; ²³he got word that Philip, who had been left in charge of the government in Antioch, had revolted; he was perturbed, called in the Judeans, yielded and swore to observe all their rights, settled with them and offered sacrifice, honored the shrine and showed generosity to the place. ²⁴He received Makkabaios, left Hegemonides as governor from Ptolemais to Gerar ²⁵and went to Ptolemais. The people of Ptolemais were indignant over the treaties. In fact, they were so furious that they wanted to annul their terms. ²⁶Lysias took the rostrum, made the defence to the best of his ability, convinced them, appeased them, gained their goodwill and set out for Antioch. This is how the king's attack and withdrawal turned out.

14 Three years later, word came to Ioudas and his men that Demetrius son of Seleucus had sailed into the harbor of Tripolis with a strong army and a fleet ²and had taken possession of the country, having made away with Antiochus and his guardian Lysias.

³ Now a certain Alcimus, who had formerly been high priest but had willfully defiled himself in the times of being separation, realized that there was no way for him to be safe or to have access again to the holy altar ⁴and went to King Demetrius in about the one hundred fifty-first year, presenting to him a crown of gold and a palm and, besides these, some of the customary olive branches from the temple. During that day he kept quiet, ⁵but he seized the right moment for his own folly when he was invited by Demetrius to a meeting of the council and was asked in what condition and counsel the Judeans were he replied to this:

⁶ "Those of the Judeans who are called Hasideans, whose leader is Ioudas Makkabaios, are keeping up war and stirring up sedition and will not let the kingdom attain stability. ⁷Therefore I have been deprived of my ancestral glory—I mean the high priesthood—and have now come here, ⁸first because I am genuinely concerned for the interests of the king, second because I have regard also for my compatriots. For through the folly of those whom I have mentioned earlier our whole people are now in no small misfortune.

⁹ "Since you are acquainted, O king, with the details of this matter, may it please you to take thought for our country and our hard-pressed people as is commensurate with the affable kindness that you show to all. ¹⁰For as long as Ioudas lives, it is impossible for the government to find peace." ¹¹When he had said this, the rest of the king's

^aeach with = Ha ^bGk = bōmos

Friends, who were hostile to Ioudas, quickly inflamed Demetrius still more. ¹²He immediately chose Nicanor, who was the elephantarch, appointed him governor of Judea and sent him off ¹³with commands^a to do away with Ioudas, to scatter those with him, yet to install Alcimus as high priest of the greatest temple. ¹⁴And the nations throughout Judea, who had fled before Ioudas, met Nicanor in flocks, thinking that the misfortunes and calamities of the Judeans would mean prosperity for themselves.

¹⁵ When the Judeans heard of Nicanor's coming and the gathering of the nations, they sprinkled dust on their heads and prayed to him who established his own people forever and always upholds his own heritage by manifesting himself. ¹⁶At the leader's order, they set out from there immediately and met them at a village called Dessau. ¹⁷Simon the brother of Ioudas had encountered Nicanor but had temporarily stumbled because of the sudden perplexity caused by the adversaries.

¹⁸ Nevertheless Nicanor, hearing of the valor of Ioudas and his troops and their courage in battle for their country, shrank from deciding the issue by bloodshed. ¹⁹Therefore he sent Posidonius, Theodotus and Mattathias to give and receive pledges of friendship. ²⁰When they had been fully considered and the leader had informed the multitude and it had appeared that they were of one mind, they consented to the treaties. ²¹They set a day on which everyone was supposed to come to the same place by himself, and a chariot came forward from each side, and they set up seats of honor; ²²Ioudas posted armed men in readiness at key places to prevent sudden treachery on the part of the enemy; so they duly held the consultation.

²³ Nicanor stayed on in Hierosolyma and did nothing out of the way but dismissed the flocks of people that had gathered. ²⁴And he kept Ioudas always in his presence; he was cordially attached to the man. ²⁵He urged him to marry and have children; so Ioudas married, settled down, shared the common life.

²⁶ But when Alcimus noticed their goodwill for one another, he took the treaties that had been made, went to Demetrius and told him that Nicanor was disloyal to the government, since he had appointed that conspirator against his kingdom, Ioudas, to be his successor. ²⁷The king became enraged and, provoked by the false accusations of that thoroughly depraved man, wrote to Nicanor, asserting that he was displeased with the treaties and commanding him to send Makkabaios to Antioch as a prisoner without delay.

²⁸ When the news came to Nicanor, he was confounded and grieved that he had to annul the agreements when the man had done no wrong. ²⁹Since it was not possible to oppose the king, he watched for a good opportunity to accomplish this by a stratagem. ³⁰But Makkabaios, noticing that Nicanor was more austere in his dealings with him and conducted the customary meeting more rude-

ly, concluded that this austerity did not spring from the best motives, gathered not a few of his men and went into hiding from Nicanor. ³¹When the latter became aware that he had been cleverly outmaneuvered by the man, he went to the great and holy temple while the priests were offering the customary sacrifices and commanded them to hand the man over. ³²When they declared on oath that they did not know where the man was whom he wanted, ³³he stretched out his right hand toward the shrine and swore this oath: "If you do not hand Ioudas over to me as a prisoner, I will level this precinct of God to the ground and tear down the altar and build here a notable temple to Dionysus."

³⁴ Having said this, he went away, but the priests stretched out their hands toward heaven and called upon the constant defender of our nation, in these words: ³⁵"O Lord of all, though you have need of nothing, you were pleased that there should be a shrine for your encamping among us; ³⁶so now, O holy One, Lord of all sanctification, keep undefiled forever this house that has been so recently purified."

³⁷ A certain Razis, one of the elders of Hierosolyma, was denounced to Nicanor as a man who loved his compatriots and was very well thought of and for his goodwill was called father of the Judeans. ³⁸In former times, when there was no mingling with the nations, he had been accused of Judaism, and he had risked body and life for Judaism with all possible zeal. ³⁹Nicanor, wishing to exhibit the enmity that he had for the Judeans, sent more than five hundred soldiers to arrest him, ⁴⁰for he thought that by arresting him he would do them an injury. ⁴¹When the hordes were about to capture the tower and were forcing the door of the courtyard, they ordered that fire be brought and the doors burned. Being surrounded, he fell upon his own rapier, ⁴²preferring to die nobly rather than to fall into the hands of sinners and suffer outrages unworthy of his noble birth. ⁴³But in the heat of the struggle he did not hit exactly, and while the masses were now rushing in through the doorways, he courageously ran up on the wall, and in a manly manner, threw himself down into the masses. ⁴⁴But as they quickly drew back, a space opened and he fell in the middle of the empty space. ⁴⁵Still alive and aflame with anger, he rose, and though his blood gushed forth and his wounds were severe, he ran through the crowd, and standing upon a steep rock ⁴⁶with his blood already completely drained from him, he tore out his entrails, took them in both hands and hurled them at the crowd, calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to give them back to him again. This was the manner of his death.

15 When Nicanor heard that Ioudas and his troops were in the region of Samaria, he made plans to attack them with complete safety on the day of rest. ²When the Judeans who were compelled to follow him said, "By no means destroy so

^aletters = Ha

savagely and barbarously but show respect for the day that has been pre-eminently honored with holiness by him who sees all things,"³ the thrice-acursed wretch asked if there were a sovereign in heaven who had ordered the keeping of the sabbath day.⁴ When they declared, "It is the living Lord himself, the sovereign in heaven, who ordered us to observe the seventh day,"⁵ the other one said, "But I am a sovereign also, on earth, and I order you to take up arms and finish the king's business." Nevertheless, he did not succeed in carrying out his abominable design.

⁶ This Nicanor, showing off with all his boastfulness, had determined to erect a public monument of victory over Ioudas and his forces.⁷ But Makkabaios did not cease to trust with all confidence that he would get help from the Lord.⁸ He exhorted those with him not to fear the approach of the nations but to keep in mind the former times when help had come to them from heaven and so to look for the victory that the Almighty would give them.⁹ Encouraging them from the law and the prophets and reminding them also of the struggles they had accomplished, he made them the more eager.¹⁰ When he had aroused their courage, he issued orders, at the same time pointing out the perfidy of the nations and their violation of oaths.¹¹ He armed each of them not so much with confidence in shields and spears as with the encouragement of good words, and he cheered them all by relating a dream, a sort of vision, which was worthy of belief.

¹² What he saw was this: Onias, who had been high priest, a beautiful and good man, of modest bearing and gentle manner, one who was well-spoken and had been trained from childhood in all that belongs to excellence, was praying with outstretched hands for the whole community of the Judeans.¹³ Then in the same fashion another appeared, distinguished by his gray hair and appearance, and of marvelous and most glorious dignity.¹⁴ And Onias spoke, saying, "This man is the one who loves his brothers, who prays much for the people and the holy city—Jeremias, the prophet of God."¹⁵ Jeremias stretched out his right hand and gave to Ioudas a golden sword, and as he gave it he addressed him as follows:¹⁶ "Take the holy sword as a gift from God with which you will strike down your adversaries."

¹⁷ Encouraged by the words of Ioudas, so noble and so effective in arousing valor and awaking courage in the souls of the young, they determined not to encamp^a but to attack bravely and to decide the matter by fighting hand to hand with all courage, because the city and the holy things and the temple were in danger.¹⁸ Their concern for wives and children and also for brothers and relatives lay upon them less heavily; their greatest and first fear was for the consecrated shrine.¹⁹ And those who were left behind in the city were in no small anxiety, being troubled over the attack in the open country.

²⁰ When all were already looking forward to the

imminent confrontation and the enemy was already coming near with the army drawn up in battle-order, the animals strategically stationed and the cavalry deployed on the flanks,²¹ Makkabaios, observing the masses present and the varied supply of arms and the savagery of the elephants, stretched out his hands toward heaven and called upon the Lord who works wonders because he knew that it is not by arms, but as it seems good to God that he procures victory for those who are worthy.²² He called upon him in this manner: "O Master, you sent your angel in the time of King Hezekias of Judea, and he killed fully one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of Sen-nachereim."²³ So now, O Sovereign of the heavens, send a good angel before us to inspire terror and trembling.²⁴ By the might of your arm may those who come with blasphemy against your holy people be struck down." With these words he ended.

²⁵ Nicanor and his troops advanced with trumpets and battle cries,²⁶ but Ioudas and his troops met the enemy with invocation and prayers.²⁷ So, fighting with their hands and praying to God in their hearts, they laid low no less than thirty-five thousand and were greatly gladdened by God's manifestation.

²⁸ When the action was over and they were leaving with joy, they recognized Nicanor, lying dead, in full armor.²⁹ Then there was shouting and tumult, and they blessed the sovereign in the language of the fathers.³⁰ Then the man who was ever in body and soul the defender of his people, the man who maintained his youthful goodwill toward his compatriots, ordered them to cut off Nicanor's head and his hand with his shoulder and carry them to Hierosolyma.³¹ When he arrived there and had called his compatriots together and stationed the priests before the altar, he sent for those who were in the citadel.³² He showed them the vile Nicanor's head and that profane man's arm, which he had boastfully stretched out against the holy house of the Almighty³³ and, cutting out the tongue of the ungodly Nicanor, commanded it to be fed piecemeal to the birds and the rewards of his folly to be hung opposite the shrine.³⁴ And they all offered praise to heaven, blessed the manifest Lord, saying, "Blessed is he who has kept his own place undefiled!"³⁵ Ioudas fastened Nicanor's head to the citadel, visible to all and an obvious sign of the help of the Lord.³⁶ And they all decreed by public vote never to let this day go unobserved but to have the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is called Adar in the Syrian language, marked, the day before Mardochoaios' day.

³⁷ This is how it went with Nicanor, and from that time the city has been ruled by the Hebrews. So I myself will here bring my story to a halt.

³⁸ If it is well written and elegantly dispositioned, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was all I could manage.³⁹ For just as it is harmful to drink wine alone or, again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water produces a delightful taste, so also the style of the story delights the ears of those who read the composition. And here will be the end.

^aadvance = Ha

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