

1 MACCABEES STUDY GUIDE

SETTING THE STAGE

335 BC; Alexander the great rules now rules world. Alexander is sympathetic to all cultures and religions. He sets up an impressive Jewish study in Alexandria and commissions the complete translation of the Septuagint and historic documents of the Jews into the Greek language. The most learned and devout Jewish priests are brought to Alexandria. A void in leadership is left in Jerusalem. The Jews in Judah drift and many worship pagan gods.

323 BC Alexander dies and the kingdom is divided. The divided kingdoms were in a continual state of bickering and war. Judah is part of the Seleucid (Syria/Persian) but lay between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires and their warring often overflowed into Judah.

The next 140 years are blank in Temple history.

1 MACCABEES TIME LINE

175 BC Antiochus (an TIE oh kus) (IV) Epiphanies becomes king of Seleucid (sih-LOO kud) Empire (Syria and Persia).

170 Many Jews placate Antiochus by building alters to Greek gods and a stadium dedicated to the pagan gods

168 BC Antiochus tries to eliminate Jewish faith and sends agents throughout the kingdom to deliver the Proclamation.

167 BC: The agent of the king arrives in Jerusalem.

High priest Matthias kills a Jew who comes forward to worship the Greek god Zeus and kills the agent of King Antiochus and declares that he will only bow to the one true God.

Then he flees to the wilderness with his sons and several thousand followers.

The King sends an army into Judah to exterminate the believing Jews.

The customs and Torah are outlawed. Anyone with a Torah is killed. Women with circumcised children are killed and their children are hung from their necks.

The army catches up to a group of Jews who refuse to bow to the king and also refuse to resist and are slaughtered.

High priest Matthias renounces passiveness.

Matthias prays to the Lord for Devine guidance, calls all able bodied men to step forward and puts his son Judah in charge.

The over confident army of the king attacks Matthias and his followers and is defeated and is destroyed.

This is marked as the start of the revolt of the Maccabees.

166 BC Judah Maccabee succeeds his father as High Priest and leader of revolt.

164 BC Jerusalem is captured by Judah. The temple is cleansed and rededicated. Idol worship is condemned and idol worshipers are severely dealt with. Idol worshipers flee Jerusalem.

161 BC Brother Judah is killed in battle and Brother Jonathan takes charge.

162 BC In battle brother Eleazar is trampled by a war elephant.

157 BC Brother John does not seek guidance from the Lord and is killed in an ill advised attack.

153 BC Brother Jonathan is anointed as High Priest.

142 BC Brother Jonathan is captured & killed. Brother Simon becomes general & High Priest.

141 BC Seleucids (Syrians) expelled from Jerusalem never to return. By this time the treasury of King Antiochus is empty.

138 BC Seleucids grant independence to Judea.

134 BC Brother Simon is assassinated; his son succeeds him as general and High Priest.

The rest of the story will be found in 2 Maccabees.

1 Maccabees Study Notes

The Jewish Talmud teaches that the Holy Spirit departed from Israel after the time of Malachi. There were two Malachi's in the Jewish canon both of whom lived about four centuries before Christ, while the books of the Apocrypha were composed in the vicinity of two centuries before Christ. There are several statements by Rabbis that prophecy ceased in the fourth century B.C. acknowledging that the Apocrypha was written in a period when God had ceased giving inspired writings.

(view entire article <http://www.inplainsite.org/html/apocrypha.html>)

- Chapter 1-2: The hellenization of Judah and the non-violent resistance by Mattathias;
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- Chapter 3-9: Military actions by Judas the Maccabaeon ('battle hammer'): after 166, he defeats the Seleucid armies three times and liberates Jerusalem, where the temple is purified; more operations; Judas' defeat and death in 161;
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- Chapter 9-12: Continued warfare, led by Judas' brother Jonathan (160-143), who, benefiting from wars of succession in the Seleucid Empire, restores the fortunes of the Jewish nationalists and adds to their territories;
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- Chapter 13-16: The third brother, Simon, achieves political independence, and founds the [Hasmonaean](#) dynasty.

The author must have been a cultivated Jew living in Judah, and can be dated to c.100 BCE. The presumed Hebrew or Aramaic original is now lost, but the Greek version, which must have been popular in the [Diaspora](#), has survived and was accepted as canonical by the Christians, until, in the sixteenth century, the scholars of the Reformation preferred to concentrate on those texts of the Jewish Bible that were written in Hebrew.

Find the city of Mode'in

OUTLINE OF 1 MACCABEES (adapted from *New Interpreter's Bible*, 1996)

- I. 1 Maccabees 1:1-2:70, Mattathias
 - A. 1:1-64 The Persecution
 - B. 2:1-70 The Career of Mattathias

- II. 1 Maccabees 3:1-9:22, Judas Maccabeus
 - A. 3:1-9 Hero of the People
 - B. 3:10-26 Judas's First Victories
 - C. 3:27-4:35 Major Seleucid Counterattacks
 - D. 4:36-61 The Cleansing of the Temple
 - E. 5:1-68 Wars with Neighbors
 - F. 6:1-17 The Death of Antiochus IV
 - G. 6:18-63 Attacks Under Antiochus V Eupator
 - H. 7:1-25 The Expedition of Bacchides and Alcimus
 - I. 7:26-50 The Rule of Nicanor
 - J. 8:1-32 The Relationship With Rome
 - K. 9:1-22 The Death of Judas

- III. 1 Maccabees 9:23-12:53, Jonathan
 - A. 9:23-73 Jonathan's Rise To Power
 - B. 10:1-12:53 Jonathan's Rule

- IV. 1 Maccabees 13:1-16:24, Simon
 - A. 13:1-30 Simon Replaces Jonathan
 - B. 13:31-14:3 Judea Gains Independence
 - C. 14:4-49 The Praise of Simon
 - D. 15:1-16:10 Further Seleucid Threats
 - E. 16:11-22 The Death of Simon
 - F. 16:23-24 Conclusion