

### Synopsis of 1 & 2 Maccabees

This synopsis is based on McEleney's article "1-2 Maccabees" *JBC*. 461-486.<sup>1</sup>

Black type indicates the information comes from 1 Maccabees, [Blue type from the outline for 2 Maccabees](#).

Event	Reference	Reference
<b>Preliminary Materials</b>		
<b>I. Preamble</b>		
A. Alexander and the Diadochoi <sup>2</sup>		
12-year reign of Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.)		
High Priest Onias I writes letters to Rome & Sparta (ca. 300 B.C.) <sup>3</sup>		
Ptolemies, Rulers of Egypt, also rule Judea (ca. 310 B.C.)		
Seleucids replace Ptolemies as rulers of Judea (198 B.C.)		
Onias III begins to rule as High Priest (196 B.C.) <sup>4</sup>		
[Romans impose Tribute on Antiochus III (188 B.C.) <sup>5</sup> ]		
Antiochus IV seizes power (175 B.C.)	1 Macc 1:10	
II. The Epitomist's Preface		2 Macc 2:19-32
III. The Decline of the High Priesthood <sup>6</sup>		2 Macc 3:1-4:6
A. Episode of Heliodorus		2 Macc 3:1-40
B. Simon's Plot against Onias		2 Macc 4:1-6
B. Hellenizers	1 Macc 1:11-15	
C. Jason, the High Priest, Introduces Hellenism		2 Macc 4:7-20
Jason becomes High Priest (175 B.C.) <sup>7</sup>		4:10
D. Antiochus is Received by Jason in Jerusalem		2 Macc 4:21-22
E. Menelaus as High Priest (172 B.C.) <sup>8</sup>		2 Macc 4:23-50
C. Antiochus' First Campaign in Egypt (169 B.C.) <sup>9</sup>	1 Macc 1:16-19	
D. Antiochus Despoils the Temple	1 Macc 1:20-24a	

<sup>1</sup> This article is substantially reproduced in the *NJBC*, pages 421-446. **Updated with Dates from the notes to the NABRE**

<sup>2</sup> *Diadochoi* is the Greek word for the "successors" to Alexander the Great. Sometimes called *Diodochoi*, the Latin form of the Greek.

<sup>3</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 12:7; McEleney, "1-2 Maccabees," *NJBC* 422.

<sup>4</sup> **NABRE note to 2 Macc 3:1.**

<sup>5</sup> Tribute is the motive for the need for cash by Antiochus IV, see NABRE note to 2 Macc 8:10. See also NABRE note to 1 Macc 8:6.

<sup>6</sup> **NABRE Note to 2 Macc 3:3. Seleucus IV, Philopator, reigned from 187 - 175. B.C.** Antiochus IV followed him.

<sup>7</sup> **NABRE Note to 2 Macc 3:1 states that the rule the High Priest Onias ended in 175.B.C.**

<sup>8</sup> NABRE Note to 2 Macc 4:23. Menelaus begins his reign as High Priest in 172 B.C.

<sup>9</sup> Date from NABRE note to 2 Macc 5:1.

<b>IV. B. Antiochus Despoils the Temple</b>		<b>2 Macc 5:15-23<sup>10</sup></b>
E. Dirge	1 Macc 1:24b-28	
<b>IV. A. Antiochus Punishes Jerusalem (167 B.C.)<sup>11</sup></b>		<b>2 Macc 5:1-14</b>
F. Apollonius Attacks Jerusalem (167 B.C.)	1 Macc 1:29-35	
C. Apollonius Attacks Jerusalem		<b>2 Macc 5:23b-26</b>
<b>IV. D. Judas Maccabeus in the Desert</b>		<b>2 Macc 5:27</b>
G. Dirge	1 Macc 1:36-40	
H. Antiochus Proscribes Judaism & Imposes Pagan Practices	1 Macc 1:41-51a	
I. The Execution of Antiochus' Edict <b>(December 6, 167 B.C.)<sup>12</sup></b>	1 Macc 1:51b-64 1:54	
E. Antiochus Imposes Hellenism		<b>2 Macc 6:1-11</b>
F. The Epitomist's Evaluation		<b>2 Macc 6:12-17</b>
G. The Martyrdom of Eleazar		<b>2 Macc 6:18-31</b>
H. The Martyrdom of the Mother and Her Seven Sons		<b>2 Macc 7:1-42</b>
<b>II. Mattathias Begins Active Resistance</b>	<b>1 Macc 2:1-70</b>	
A. Mattathias' Lament	1 Macc 2:1-14	
B. Resistance Flares	1 Macc 2:15-28	
C. The Slaughter on the Sabbath and Its Sequel	1 Macc 2:29-41	
D. The Hasideans	1 Macc 2: 42-48	
E. Mattathias' Testament (166 B.C.) <sup>13</sup>	1 Macc 2:49-70	
<b>III. Judas Maccabeus Takes Command of the Struggle</b>	<b>1 Macc 3:1-9:22</b>	
A. Praise of Judas	1 Macc 3:1-9	
B. Judas Defeats Apollonius and Seron	1 Macc 3:10-26	no parallel
C. Antiochus Goes East (Spring, 165 B.C.) <sup>14</sup>	1 Macc 3:27-37	
D. Judas Defeats Gorgias and Nicanor	1 Macc 3:38-4:27	
E. Judas Defeats Lysias at Beth-zur <sup>15</sup>	1 Macc 4:28-35	
<b>V. A. Judas Organizes Resistance to the Persecution</b>		<b>2 Macc 8:1-7</b>
B. Judas Defeats Gorgias and Nicanor		<b>2 Macc 8:8-29, 34-36 [30-33, next]</b>

<sup>10</sup> "Although 2 Mc 5:15-21 places this event after the **second** campaign in Egypt, Dan 11:2-30 (esp. 28) shows it to belong after the **first**." McEleney, "1-2 Maccabees," *JBC*, 466.

<sup>11</sup> NABRE note to 2 Macc 5:1.

<sup>12</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 1:54.

<sup>13</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 2:70.

<sup>14</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 3:37.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Maccabees places this battle **before** the dedication of the Temple. 2 Maccabees places it **after** the dedication of the Temple.

C. Judas' Other Victories [Commentators argue these verses are out of order]<sup>16</sup>

2 Macc 8:30-33?

### The Death of Antiochus<sup>17</sup>

III. H. The Death of Antiochus Epiphanes

1 Macc 6:1-17<sup>18</sup>

V. D. The Death of the Persecutor

2 Macc 9:1-29

### Purification & Dedication of the Temple (Hanukkah)

III. F. The Purification & Dedication of the Temple (Dec 14, 164 B.C.)

1 Macc 4:36-61<sup>19</sup>

V. E. Judas Purifies the Temple

2 Macc 10:1-9

I. B. "Second"<sup>20</sup> of Two Letters to the Jews of Egypt (164 B.C.)

2 Macc 1:10b-2:18

### From the Dedication of the Temple to the Death of Judas (1 Macc 5:1-9:22; 2 Macc 10:10-15:39)

III. G. Judas Battles with Neighboring Peoples

1 Macc 5:1-68

a. Idumea

1 Macc 5:3-5

b. Ammon

1 Macc 5:6-8

c. Gilead

1 Macc 5:9-13, 24-54

d. Galilee

1 Macc 5:14-23

e. The Land of the Philistines

1 Macc 5:55-68

[H. The Death of Antiochus Epiphanes

1 Macc 6:1-17<sup>21</sup>

Already done – see previous page].

I. Siege of the Citadel (Oct. 163 – 162 B.C.)<sup>22</sup>

1 Macc 6:18-27<sup>23</sup>

J. Lysias' Second Campaign in Judah

1 Macc 6:28-63

K. The Expedition of Bacchides and Alcimus (Spring, 161 B.C.)<sup>24</sup>

1 Macc 7:1-25

L. The Defeat of Nicanor (March 27, 160 B.C.)<sup>25</sup>

1 Macc 7:26-50

<sup>16</sup> McEleney, *JBC, NJBC, #27:74*. Doran ("2 Maccabees," *NIB*, 4.249-250) also argues that they are out of order, even though they have been literarily integrated into the context.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Maccabees places this **after** the dedication of the Temple; 2 Maccabees places it **before** the dedication of the Temple. McEleney (*JBC*, 27:38) argues that the order of 2 Maccabees is better.

<sup>18</sup> Belongs **before** the Purification and Dedication of the Temple (III. F.) according to McEleney.

<sup>19</sup> Although 1 Mc narrates the Temple's dedication following the early victories of Judas, the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (6:1-16 and the accession of Antiochus V Eupator (6:17) preceded this event. 2 Mc retains the right sequence. McEleney, "1-2 Maccabees," *JBC*, 469. See also notes to 1 Macc 4:52 and 6:16.

<sup>20</sup> Two letters appear in the Preface of 2 Maccabees (1:1-2:18). This one, the "second" in the text, was actually written 40 years **before** the "first" one (1:1-9).

<sup>21</sup> Belongs **before** the Purification and Dedication of the Temple (III. F.) according to McEleney.

<sup>22</sup> NABRE note to 6:20.

<sup>23</sup> Picking up chapter 6. We did 6:1-17, the death of Antiochus, **before** the Purification of the Temple, where most scholars put it chronologically.

<sup>24</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 7:1-3.

<sup>25</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 7:49.

M. Judas' Treaty with the Romans	1 Macc 8:1-32
N. The Defeat and Death of Judas Demetrius encamps against Jerusalem (April/May 160 B.C.)	1 Macc 9:1-22 9:3 <sup>26</sup>
VI. A. Suicide of Ptolemy Macron	2 Macc 10:10-13 <sup>27</sup>
B. Judas Fights in Idumea	2 Macc 10:14-23
C. "Judas" Defeats Timothy	2 Macc 10:34-38 <sup>28</sup>
D. Victory over Lysias at Beth-zur – the “1st campaign” of Lysias <sup>29</sup>	2 Macc 11:1-15; 12:1
E. Three Letters (164 B.C.)	2 Macc 11:16-21,27-38 [22-26 below] <sup>30</sup>
F. The Battles with Neighboring Peoples	2 Macc 12:2-45
G. Lysias' Second Campaign in Judah (163 B.C.) Death of High Priest Menelaus (162 B.C.)	2 Macc 13:1-26 13:7
E. Letter	2 Macc 11:22-26 <sup>31</sup>
H. The Accession of Demetrius I Soter (161-B.C.) <sup>32</sup>	2 Macc 14:1-2
I. The Hostility of Alcimus <sup>33</sup>	2 Macc 14:3-11
J. Judas and Nicanor	2 Macc 14:12-36
K. The Death of Razis (no parallel in 1 Maccabees)	2 Macc 14:37-46
L. The Defeat of Nicanor	2 Macc 15:1-37a
M. Epilogue of the Epitomist	2 Macc 15:37-39
<b>IV. Jonathan Continues the Struggle</b>	<b>1 Macc 9:23-12:54</b>
A. Jonathan Succeeds Judas as Leader	1 Macc 9:23-34
B. Jonathan Avenges His Brother John	1 Macc 9:35-42
C. Bacchides Ambushes Jonathan	1 Macc 9: 43-49
D. Bacchides Fortifies Judea; Alcimus Dies Alcimus orders Temple destruction (May 159 B.C.) <sup>34</sup>	1 Macc 9:50-57 9:54
E. Jonathan Escapes and Frustrates Bacchides	1 Macc 9:58-73

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<sup>26</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 9:3.

<sup>27</sup> Picking up 2 Maccabees 10. These verses follow immediately 10:1-9, 2 Maccabees' version of the Purification of the Temple.

<sup>28</sup> McEleney, (484) argues that this victory belongs to Simon, and is misplaced. The name "Judas" does not appear in the passage.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Maccabees places this battle **before** the dedication of the Temple. 2 Maccabees places it **after** the dedication of the Temple.

<sup>30</sup> According to McEleney ("1-2 Maccabees," 484), "The three letters in vv. 16,21, 27-33, and 34-38 belong to the peace negotiations following Lysias' campaign. The letter in vv. 22-26 belongs to Eupator's reign). That would put 2 Macc 11:22-26 chronologically after 13:1-26.

<sup>31</sup> "The Letter of 2 Mc 11:22-26 belongs here chronologically." McEleney, "1-2Maccabees," 485.

<sup>32</sup> According to McEleney (446), he ruled from 161-160 B.C.

<sup>33</sup> "2 Mc omits Bacchides' expedition." Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 9:54.

Jonathan at Michmash (157-152 B.C.) <sup>35</sup>	9:73	
F. Alexander Balas Claims Demetrius' Throne (152 B.C.) <sup>36</sup>	1 Macc 10:1-14	
G. Jonathan Backs Alexander Balas, Becomes High Priest (Oct. 152 B.C.) <sup>37</sup>	1 Macc 10:15-50	
H. At Alexander's Marriage, Jonathan is Promoted (151-150 B.C.) <sup>38</sup>	1 Macc 10:51-66	
I. Jonathan Defeats Apollonius, the General of Demetrius II (147 B.C.) <sup>39</sup>	1 Macc 10:67-89	
Rome crushes revolt of Achaean League (146 B.C.) <sup>40</sup>		
J. The Alliance Between Demetrius II and Ptolemy	1 Macc 11:1-13	
K. The Deaths of Alexander and Ptolemy (145 B.C.) <sup>41</sup>	1 Macc 11:14-19	
L. Jonathan's Pact with Demetrius	1 Macc 11:20-37	
M. Trypho's Intrigue against Demetrius	1 Macc 11:38-40	
N. Jonathan Aids Demetrius	1 Macc 11:41-53	
O. Jonathan's Alliance with Trypho	1 Macc 11:54-62	
P. War Between Jonathan and Demetrius	1 Macc 11:63-74	
Q. Treaties of Friendship with the Romans and Spartans	1 Macc 12:1-23	
R. Military Activities of Jonathan and Simon	1 Macc 12:24-38	
S. The Capture of Jonathan	1 Macc 12:39-54	
<b>V. Simon as Leader of the Jews</b>	<b>1 Macc 13:1-16:24</b>	
A. Simon Becomes Leader of the Jews	1 Macc 13:1-11	
B. Simon Blocks Trypho	1 Macc 13:12-24	
<b>VI. C. "Judas" Defeats Timothy</b>		<b>2 Macc 10:34-38<sup>42</sup></b>
C. Simon Constructs a Family Monument at Modein	1 Macc 13:25-30	
D. Simon Joins Demetrius II	1 Macc 13:31-42	
170 <sup>th</sup> year = <b>March 142 – April 141 B.C.</b> <sup>43</sup>	13:41	
E. The Capture of Gazara and the Citadel ( <b>June 3, 141 B.C.</b> ) <sup>44</sup>	1 Macc 13:43-53	
F. Demetrius II Is Captured by the Parthians ( <b>141/140 B.C.</b> ) <sup>45</sup>	1 Macc 14:1-3	

<sup>35</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 9:73.

<sup>36</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 10:1.

<sup>37</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 10:21.

<sup>38</sup> NABRE Note to 1 Macc 10:57.

<sup>39</sup> NABRE Note to 1 Macc 10:67.

<sup>40</sup> Referred to the "Eulogy of the Romans" in 1 Maccabees 8. See NABRE note to 1 Macc 8:9-10.

<sup>41</sup> NABRE Note to 1 Macc 11:67.

<sup>42</sup> McEleney, (484) argues that this victory belongs to Simon, and is misplaced. The name "Judas" does not appear in the passage.

<sup>43</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 13:41.

<sup>44</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 13:51.

<sup>45</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 14:1.

G. The Glory of Simon	1 Macc 14:4-15
H. Renewal of the Alliances with Rome and Sparta (142 B.C.) <sup>46</sup>	1 Macc 14:16-24
Simon expels Seleucid Troops from Jerusalem Citadel (141 B.C.) <sup>47</sup>	
I. Decree of the Jews Honoring Simon (Sept. 13, 140 B.C.) <sup>48</sup>	1 Macc 14:25-49
J. Antiochus VII Grants Simon Privileges & Besieges Trypho (138 B.C.) <sup>49</sup>	1 Macc 15:1-14
K. The Return of the Embassy Sent to Rome	1 Macc 15:15-24
L. Antiochus Breaks His Alliance with Simon	1 Macc 15:25-36
M. John Hyrcanus and Judas defeat Cendebaeus	1 Macc 15:37-16:10
N. The Murder of Simon and His Two Sons (Jan-Feb 134 B.C.) <sup>50</sup>	1 Macc 16:11-22
O. Conclusion to 1 Maccabees	1 Macc 16:23-24
John Hyrcanus, Ruler & High Priest (134-104 B.C.) <sup>51</sup>	16:23-24

#### Later Events

I. A. "First" Letter to the Jews of Egypt (124 B.C.)

2 Macc 1:1-10a

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<sup>46</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 14:16.

<sup>47</sup> Antiochus IV had installed the garrison; it was not until 141 B.C. that Simon expelled it (NABRE Note to 1 Macc 1:33).

<sup>48</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 14:27.

<sup>49</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 15:10.

<sup>50</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 16:14.

<sup>51</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 16:23-24.