

## Week 31, Lecture 94. <sup>1</sup> Preamble to 1 Maccabees.

### Preliminary Remarks

**Synopsis Updated from last week. [The updated synopsis is added as an Appendix to these online notes.]**

The two introductory letters of 2 Maccabees 1 have been placed in chronological order (124 and 164 B.C.)

We will deal with them when we get to the appropriate time period.

**Chronological References** -- our system of years B.C. -- have been inserted into the outline.

These references come mostly from the notes to the NABRE.

The years are in **bold type highlighted in gray, blue font if based on a note from 2 Maccabees.**

I will confess up front that this "NT guy" is not aware of exactly how these dates are computed.

I am sure that the exact dates are disputed by various scholars, but we have to start somewhere!

### Earliest and Latest Dates, 1 Maccabees.

The earliest reference in 1 Maccabees is to the "12 year reign" of Alexander, from **336 - 323 B.C.**

The last reference is to the rule of John Hyrcannus, from **134 - 104 B.C.**

It is disputed by scholars whether the book is written early or late in his reign.

We will discuss that when we get to 1 Macc 16:23-24.

### Event

I will try to start each lecture with the section from the Chronological Synopsis I hope to cover.

### Preliminary Information

#### I. Preamble

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.**)

### Reference

**1 Macc 1:1-64**

1 Macc 1:1-10

1 Macc 1:7

1 Macc 1:10

### General Comments on this part of the outline.

I have "filled in" the chronology with dates from commentaries and from later in the books.

Sometimes an author, later in the story, will refer back to an event that occurred between Alexander and Antiochus.

### 1 Macc 1:1-10, RSV.

#### **1 Macc 1:1-7. The Reign of Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.)**

After Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated Darius, king of the Persians and the Medes, he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.) <sup>2</sup> He fought many battles, conquered strongholds, and put to death the kings of the earth. <sup>3</sup> He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations. When the earth became quiet before him, he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up. <sup>4</sup> He gathered a very strong army and ruled over countries, nations, and princes, and they became tributary to him. <sup>5</sup> After this he fell sick and perceived that he was dying. <sup>6</sup> So he summoned his most honored officers, who had been

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<sup>1</sup> Lectures are numbered consecutively. Although this is this week's first lecture, its number reflects its place in the **total** sequence.

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

brought up with him from youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. <sup>7</sup> And after Alexander had reigned twelve years, he died. RSV

[I hope to “look over” the Greek, but I am not going to do my own complete literal translation of both books.]

**V. 1, “After Alexander.** Literally, “**And it came to pass** after Alexander . . .”

Most modern translations “smooth over” this archaic idiom.

1 Maccabees is written in the style of much of the narrative parts of the OT.

**He Defeated Darius.** The astonishing victory of the tiny Greek army over myriads of Persians is given one small phrase! The entire campaign all the way to India is summarized in the next verse and a half (2b-3).

**V. 3. His heart was lifted up.** In biblical narrative, it is never a good thing when a human’s heart is “lifted up.” (pride)

**Verses 5-6, The Deathbed Scene.** The “deathbed scene” is typical in Hellenistic historiography.

From the studies of modern historians, we know that this is a vast **oversimplification** of the problem of “succession.”

There were wars among his followers for almost a quarter of a century.

#### 1:8-9. The *Diadochoi*, “Successors” to Alexander (323-175 B.C.)

<sup>8</sup> Then his officers began to rule, each in his own place. <sup>9</sup> They all put on crowns after his death, and so did their sons after them for many years; and they caused many evils on the earth.

**V. 8. His officers.** His *paides*. This can literally mean his “children” -- we get “pediatrics” from the Greek word.

However, from secular history we know that no blood descendants of Alexander ever ruled.

The word *paides* can also mean “servants,” “his boys.”

However, this would not be “servants” in the sense of menials. Hence the translation “officers” (RSV, NRSV, NABRE)

[NETS](#) renders it “servants.” [The link is to the *New English Translation of the Septuagint*]

**Remarks on the Septuagint**, the Greek Translation of the OT.

According to legend it was done by 70 (*septuaginta* in Latin), and is abbreviated LXX, the Roman numeral for 70.

The LXX was “the Bible” for almost all of the authors of the NT; most of them did not read Hebrew!

#### They put on crowns

We have seen that it was only after the assassination of Alexander’s blood relatives that they adopted the title “king.”

#### Remarkable Omission!

The author never mentions that Ptolemaic Egypt had ruled fairly benevolently over Judea for over a century.

Collins<sup>6</sup> notes that for many the main “political question” would be whether to side with the Ptolemies or Seleucids.

The author is an ardent nationalist who considers all foreign domination, no matter how benevolent, as inherently evil.

We will see that this is a significant difference from 2 Maccabees.

#### 1:10. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) Takes Power in the Seleucid Kingdom (175 B.C.)

Seleucus, Alexander’s general, founded the dynasty. There had been several kings named Antiochus. This was #4.

<sup>10</sup> From them came forth a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king [i.e., Antiochus III]; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

**Antiochus Epiphanes** (In Daniel 8:9-19) he is portrayed as the “little horn” with a big mouth.

**Hostage in Rome.** Romans had defeated Antiochus III, and imposed tribute on him; required a son as a hostage.

For some reason Antiochus’ older brother came to Rome to replace him; Antiochus started back home.

On the way he heard that his father had died, so he hurried home.

Through political machinations, he was able to assume kingship **in place of the rightful heir, his older brother.**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John J. Collins, *Daniel, 1-2 Maccabees*, OT Message vol. 15 (M. Glazier, 1981) p. 278.

**Post-Lecture note: I was confused about the relationships. Here is the correct information.**

**Antiochus IV Epiphanes** . . . (175–164 B.C.). Younger son of Antiochus III, he returned from Rome when his brother Seleucus IV Philopator sent his own son **Demetrius** as hostage in his stead, and usurped the throne after Seleucus was assassinated.<sup>8</sup>

So it was his **nephew** Demetrius [not his brother], whom Antiochus IV defrauded of the throne.

**Week 31, Lecture 95. The Epitomist's Preface to 2 Maccabees.**

**CONTEXT. Preliminary Materials**

**I. Preamble**

A. Alexander and the Diadochoi<sup>9</sup>

12-year reign of Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.)

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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>11</sup>

[Romans impose Tribute on Antiochus III (188 B.C.)<sup>12</sup>]

Antiochus IV seizes power (175 B.C.)

1 Macc 1:1-64

1 Macc 1:1-10

1 Macc 1:7

1 Macc 1:10

2 Macc 2:19-32

**II. The Epitomist's Preface**

**Earliest and Latest Dates, 2 Maccabees, ca. 180-160 BC.**

[My notes were in error Here is the correct info. Stop the recording & read this, or read it later.]

As the story begins, Onias III is already high-priest. His dates are 196-175 B.C.

Heliodorus, was minister of King Seleucus IV, reigned from 187-175 B.C.

The first scene is more legendary than historical, but we can imagine it as taking place between 187-175 B.C.

The final battle at Adasa (2 Macc 15:26-36 = 1 Macc 7:43-50) is usually dated 160 B.C.<sup>13</sup>

[In chapter 1 there are two letters prefixed to the history; these earlier of the two is dated from 124 B.C. This letter is was probably not composed by the author of 2 Maccabees, but by someone later.] . . .<sup>14</sup>

**2 Macc 2:19-32, The Epitomist's Preface (RSV)**

<sup>19</sup> The story of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, and the purification of the great temple, and the dedication of the altar, <sup>20</sup> and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, <sup>21</sup> and the appearances which came from heaven to those who strove zealously on behalf of Judaism, so that though few in number they seized the whole land and pursued the barbarian hordes, <sup>22</sup> and recovered the temple famous throughout the world and freed the city and restored the laws that were about to be abolished, while the Lord with great kindness became gracious to them -- <sup>23</sup> all this, which has been set forth by Jason of Cyrene in five volumes, we shall attempt to condense into a single book. <sup>24</sup> For considering the flood of numbers involved and the difficulty there is for those who wish to enter upon the narratives of history because of the mass of material, <sup>25</sup> we have aimed to please those who wish to read, to make it easy for those who are inclined to memorize, and to profit all readers. <sup>26</sup> For us who have undertaken the toil of abbreviating, it is no light matter but calls for sweat and loss of sleep, <sup>27</sup> just as it is not easy for one who prepares a banquet and seeks the benefit of others. However, to secure the gratitude of many we will gladly endure

<sup>7</sup> Note Correction, which immediately follows!

<sup>8</sup> John Whitehorne, "Antiochus (Person)" *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 270.

<sup>9</sup> *Diodochoi* is the Greek word for the "successors" to Alexander the Great. Sometimes called *Diodochi*, the Latin form of the Greek.

<sup>10</sup> NABRE note to 1 Macc 12:7; McEleney, "1-2 Maccabees," *NJBC* 422.

<sup>11</sup> NABRE note to 2 Macc 3:1.

<sup>12</sup> Tribute is the motive for the need for cash by Antiochus IV, see NABRE note to 2 Macc 8:10; also NABRE note to 1 Macc 8:6.

<sup>13</sup> Uriel Rappaport, "Nicanor (Person)," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, p. 1105.

<sup>14</sup> Robert, Doran, "The Second Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in the *New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) 184.

the uncomfortable toil, <sup>28</sup> leaving the **responsibility for exact details** to the compiler, while devoting our effort to arriving at the outlines of the condensation. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> It is the duty of the **original historian** to occupy the ground and to discuss matters from every side and to **take trouble with details**, <sup>31</sup> but the one who recasts the narrative should be allowed to strive for brevity of expression and to forego exhaustive treatment. <sup>32</sup> At this point therefore let us begin our narrative, adding only so much to what has already been said; for it is foolish to lengthen the preface while cutting short the history itself.

**V. 19, Purification.** This is what the feast of Hanukkah remembers.

**V. 20 Epiphanes.** This was the epithet king Antiochus chose for himself. His enemies referred to him as *epimanes* = “thoroughly mad.”

**v. 21, Judaism.** This is the first occurrence of the word in literature.

**v. 21, “Barbarian hordes”** This is a calculated insult.

**v. 23, Jason of Cyrene.** Otherwise unknown. Cyrene was just west of Egypt, and the two were culturally connected.

**v. 23, Five volumes.** The author of 2 Maccabees is giving us a “*Reader’s Digest* version.” The original is lost.

vv. 25, 28, 30. “**aimed to please.**” The author frankly admits that his main goal is not to get the **exact details** right. That is the job of a professional historian. He is writing to give enjoyment.

#### Compare the beginning of Luke (Luke 1:1-4)

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, <sup>3</sup> I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received. (NAB)

#### Luke’s Style

“Since” *eipedēper!* [nowhere else in NT, or in the entire Greek Septuagint]

Usually *ei* or *eipe*. *eipedē* is “fancy.” *eipedēper* is “over the top!”

This is **all one sentence in Greek.**

Luke is claiming the mantle of a Hellenistic historian. He is also showing off a bit: “I can write good stuff!”

But if we compare this to the intro to 2 Maccabees, we can see Luke was fairly modest by Hellenistic standards!

### Week 31, Lecture 96. The Attack on the Temple by Heliodorus, 2 Maccabees 3.

#### Introductory Remarks

I will be relying heavily on Robert Doran’s Commentary.<sup>15</sup>

I am relying on the RSV translation, but will occasionally note others.

#### Snippet from our overall Synopsis

##### III. The Decline of the High Priesthood<sup>16</sup>

A. Episode of Heliodorus

2 Macc 3:1-4:6

2 Macc 3:1-40

B. Simon's Plot against Onias

2 Macc 4:1-6

The author is going to show the high priesthood declined from “holy Onias” to his wicked successors.

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<sup>15</sup> Doran, “Second Book of Maccabees”, in *NIB* (bingdon, 1996) 179-299.

<sup>16</sup> **NABRE Note to 2 Macc 3:3. Seleucus IV, Philopator, reigned from 187 - 175. B.C.** Antiochus IV followed him.

### The Author's Introduction, 3:1-8

While the holy city was inhabited in unbroken peace and the laws were very well observed because of **the piety of the high priest Onias and his hatred of wickedness**,<sup>2</sup> it came about that **the kings themselves honored the place** and glorified the temple with the finest presents,<sup>3</sup> so that even Seleucus, the king of Asia, defrayed from his own revenues all the expenses connected with the service of the sacrifices.<sup>4</sup> But a man named Simon, of the **tribe of Benjamin**, who had been made captain of the temple, had a disagreement with the high priest about the administration of the city market;<sup>5</sup> and when he could not prevail over Onias he went to Apollonius of Tarsus, who at that time was governor of Coele Syria and Phoenicia.<sup>6</sup> He reported to him that the treasury in Jerusalem 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.<sup>7</sup> When Apollonius met the king, he told him of the money about which he had been informed. The king chose Heliodorus, who was in charge of his affairs, and sent him with commands to effect the removal of the aforesaid money.<sup>8</sup> 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.

#### v. 1 High Priest Onias

The author is an admirer of Onias, who is praised by Sirach (50:1-21).

The author intends to show what happens when his less-than-faithful successors get control later in the story.

#### v. 2 Kings honored "the Place"

"The Place" is the Jerusalem Temple, God's dwelling place on earth

Note that there are cordial relations with the pagan governors

The Persians had supported the rebuilding of the Temple destroyed by the Babylonians.

The Ptolemies of Egypt had continued this policy.

Now the Seleucids are following it as well. Last week we read a letter of King Antiochus III, reported by Josephus.

**Note to online students: the text is below.<sup>17</sup> Note the positive relations with King Antiochus III**

Since Judea was a "buffer zone," this was a wise policy -- to cultivate the good will of the locals.

**Letter of King Antiochus III.**<sup>138</sup> "King Antiochus to Ptolemy, sends greetings:--Since the Jews, upon our first entrance on their country, **demonstrated their friendship toward us**; and when we came to their city of [Jerusalem], **received us in a splendid manner**, and came to meet us with their elders, and gave abundance of provisions to our soldiers, and to the elephants, and joined with us in ejecting the garrison of the Egyptians that were in the citadel,<sup>139</sup> **we have thought fit to reward them, and to retrieve the condition of their city**, which has been greatly depopulated by such accidents as have befallen its inhabitants, and to bring those who have been scattered abroad back to the city; . . . I would also have the work about the temple finished, and the cloisters, and if there be anything else that ought to be rebuilt; and for the materials of wood, let it be brought to them out of Judea itself and out of the other countries, and out of Libanus **tax free**; and the same I would have observed as to those other materials which will be necessary, in order to render the temple more glorious;<sup>142</sup> **and let all of that nation live according to the laws of their own country; and let the elders, and the priests, and the scribes of the temple, and the sacred singers, be discharged from poll money and the crown tax and other taxes also**; . . .

<sup>145</sup> And these were the contents of this letter. He also published a decree, through all his kingdom in honour of the temple, which contained what follows: **"It shall be lawful for no foreigner to come within the limits of the temple around about; which thing is forbidden also to the Jews**, unless to those who, according to their own custom, have purified themselves. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 12:138-145 accessed via *BibleWorks*)

#### 4, Simon of the Tribe of Benjamin?

There are manuscript variants. NABRE translates "priestly clan of Bilgah"

His exact position is unclear: "captain" (RSV, NRSV); "superintendent" (NAB, NABRE) *prostates* = "stands up front"

The author does not make clear the exact nature of the dispute. 5-6. Simon appeals to Apollonius, the Governor.

Note that the trouble does not begin with the intervention of pagans. It starts when one Jew appeals against another.

#### V. 6. did not belong to the account of the sacrifices

This would imply that the accounts could be used without sacrilege, in the technical sense.

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<sup>17</sup> Last week I did not lecture. Rather we viewed and discussed a video from "The Great Courses" which concerned the Maccabees.

The Seleucids had been defeated by the Romans. The treaty of Apamea (188) imposed heavy indemnities on them. Simon realized he might be able to use this situation to his own political advantage.

### The Attack on the Temple 3:9-14a

When he had arrived at Jerusalem 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, and he inquired whether this really was the situation. <sup>10</sup> The high priest explained that there were some deposits belonging to widows and orphans, <sup>11</sup> and also some money of Hyrcanus, son of Tobias, a man of very prominent position, and that it totaled in all four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. To such an extent the impious Simon had misrepresented the facts. <sup>12</sup> 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 which is honored throughout the whole world. <sup>13</sup> **But Heliodorus, because of the king's commands** which he had, said that this money must in any case be confiscated for the king's treasury. <sup>14</sup> So he set a day and went in to direct the inspection of these funds.

**9, kindly welcomed.** The author stresses there is no hostility on the part of the Jews to the Gentile overlords. The pious Onias clarifies that the money is in fact “dedicated” -- and that Simon has misrepresented the facts. V, 13, Heliodorus, in effect, replies that “orders are orders.”

### The Cry for Help 3:14b-21

There was no little **distress** throughout the whole city. <sup>15</sup> The priests prostrated themselves before the altar in their priestly garments 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> People also hurried out of their houses in crowds to make a general supplication because the holy place was about to be brought into contempt. <sup>19</sup> **Women**, girded with sackcloth under their breasts, thronged the streets. Some of the **maidens** who were kept indoors ran together to the gates, and some to the walls, while others peered out of the windows. <sup>20</sup> And holding up their hands to heaven, they all made entreaty. <sup>21</sup> There was something pitiable in the prostration of the whole populace and the **anxiety** of the high priest in his great anguish.

**Highly emotional description.** Characteristic of the style of the author of 2 Maccabees

The word *agōnia* is translated as “**distress**” in v. 14, and as “**anguish**” in v. 16.

In v. 21 the cognate verb *agōniaō* is rendered by “**anxiety**,” more literally “agonizing over”

The “agony” of the priests is reflected in the entire population.

Even married **women** (v. 19) normally not involved in public affairs, join the demonstration.

Unmarried **maidens** --securely kept inside the home -- also manifest their distress, but of course not in public!

They modestly do no more than peer through windows.

### The Almighty Lord Defends His Temple, 3:22-30

<sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> Heliodorus went on with what had been decided. <sup>24</sup> But when he arrived at the treasury with his bodyguard, 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. <sup>25</sup> For there appeared to them a magnificently caparisoned horse, with a rider of frightening mien, and it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hoofs. Its rider was seen to have armor and weapons of gold. <sup>26</sup> Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed, who stood on each side of him **and scourged him continuously**, inflicting many blows on him. <sup>27</sup> When he suddenly fell to the ground and deep darkness came over him, his men took him up and put him on a stretcher <sup>28</sup> and carried him away, this man who had just entered the aforesaid treasury with a great retinue and all his bodyguard but was now unable to help himself; and they recognized clearly the sovereign power of God. <sup>29</sup> While he lay prostrate, speechless because of the divine intervention and deprived of any hope of recovery, <sup>30</sup> 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.

### A miraculous vision

Such miraculous events are characteristic of the style of 2 Maccabees, in contrast to the “sober history” of 1 Macc. The idea of a god defending his temple is also found in pagan Hellenistic literature.

### Humiliation

“Scourging” or “beating” was a punishment for common criminals.

That the king’s representative would be so treated was a great humiliation.

All of this takes place **by divine intervention, with no violence** on the part of the local population.

This “pacifist” ideology will greatly contrast with that of 1 Maccabees, who glorifies armed resistance.

### The Effect on Heliodorus, 3:31-40

<sup>31</sup> Quickly some of Heliodorus' friends asked Onias to call upon the Most High and to grant life to one who was lying quite at his last breath. <sup>32</sup> And the high priest, fearing that the king might get the notion that some foul play had been perpetrated by the Jews with regard to Heliodorus, offered sacrifice for the man's recovery. <sup>33</sup> While the high priest was making the offering of atonement, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus dressed in the same clothing, and **they stood and said, "Be very grateful to Onias the high priest, since for his sake the Lord has granted you your life. <sup>34</sup> And see that you, who have been scourged by heaven, report to all men the majestic power of God."** Having said this they vanished. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> And he bore testimony to all men of the deeds of the supreme God, which he had seen with his own eyes. <sup>37</sup> When the king asked Heliodorus what sort of person would be suitable to send on another mission to Jerusalem, he replied, <sup>38</sup> **"If you have any enemy or plotter against your government, send him there, for you will get him back thoroughly scourged, if he escapes at all, for there certainly is about the place some power of God. <sup>39</sup> 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."** <sup>40</sup> This was the outcome of the episode of Heliodorus and the protection of the treasury. (RSV)

### Prayer for Heliodorus

The prayer for Heliodorus underlines the good will of the Jews toward their pagan overlords.

It also takes care of a potential “problem.”

If some pesky historian says he has no record of a king’s minister being thus humiliated, the answer is he was quickly healed.

### v. 33 “**They said.**” (That’s why we read their words together.)

2 “young men” *neania* -- Mark uses the related *neaniskos* to describe the “young man” at the tomb of Jesus (16:5)

They -- like the “two men” in Luke’s empty-tomb story (24:4) are **speaking as a chorus.**

### Function of the Chorus in Ancient Drama.

Let the audience know the import of what is happening on stage.

In Jewish literature (recall Daniel’s visions) this role is often played by a **revealing angel** (*angelus revelator*)

### Vv. 38-40. The Speech of Heliodorus

Of course nobody was “taking notes” when Heliodorus made his final report to the king.

Or at least nobody that the author of 2 Maccabees had access to!

Ancient authors use “speeches” to **insert their own ideology of history**, and in this case, **the author’s theology.**

**God will protect his Temple** (as long as there is a holy high priest like Onias who “hates wickedness