

# HANUKKAH READING PLAN

## WELCOME TO OUR HANUKKAH READING PLAN

As you prepare for the Hanukkah season, use this reading plan as a tool help you grow in wisdom and revelation. Start each night's reading by inviting God's presence to meet with you as you study His word.

### *Preparing for Hanukkah:*

In the days leading up to Hanukkah, we would encourage you to prepare your heart by doing a word study on light. Look up passages in the Bible related to word "light". Journal what you have learned about light in the biblical sense.

### *Hanukkah Readings:*

As you enter into each night of Hanukkah, read one passage\*:

Night 1: Daniel 8

Night 2: 1 Maccabees 1

Night 3: 1 Maccabees 2

Night 4: 1 Maccabees 3

Night 5: 1 Maccabees 4

Night 6: 1 Maccabees 5

Night 7: John 1:1-18

Night 8: John 10:22-30

\*In case you do not have access to the book of Maccabees, we included the passages in the following pages.

Happy Hanukkah!

NJB 1 Maccabees 1

1 Alexander of Macedon son of Philip had come from the land of Kittim and defeated Darius king of the Persians and Medes, whom he succeeded as ruler, at first of Hellas. 2 He undertook many campaigns, gained possession of many fortresses, and put the local kings to death. 3 So he advanced to the ends of the earth, plundering nation after nation; the earth grew silent before him, and his ambitious heart swelled with pride. 4 He assembled very powerful forces and subdued provinces, nations and princes, and they became his tributaries. 5 But the time came when Alexander took to his bed, in the knowledge that he was dying. 6 He summoned his officers, noblemen who had been brought up with him from his youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. 7 Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died. 8 Each of his officers established himself in his own region. 9 All assumed crowns after his death, they and their heirs after them for many years, bringing increasing evils on the world. 10 From these there grew a wicked offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes son of King Antiochus; once a hostage in Rome, he became king in the 107th year of the kingdom of the Greeks. 11 It was then that there emerged from Israel a set of renegades who led many people astray. 'Come,' they said, 'let us ally ourselves with the gentiles surrounding us, for since we separated ourselves from them many misfortunes have overtaken us.' 12 This proposal proved acceptable, 13 and a number of the people eagerly approached the king, who authorised them to practise the gentiles' observances. 14 So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, such as the gentiles have, 15 disguised their circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant, submitting to gentile rule as willing slaves of impiety. 16 Once Antiochus had seen his authority established, he determined to make himself king of Egypt and the ruler of both kingdoms. 17 He invaded Egypt in massive strength, with chariots and elephants (and cavalry) and a large fleet. 18 He engaged Ptolemy king of Egypt in battle, and Ptolemy turned back and fled before his advance, leaving many casualties. 19 The fortified cities of Egypt were captured, and Antiochus plundered the country. 20 After his conquest of Egypt, in the year 143, Antiochus turned about and advanced on Israel and Jerusalem in massive strength. 21 Insolently breaking into the sanctuary, he removed the golden altar and the lamp-stand for the light with all its fittings, 22 together with the table for the loaves of permanent offering, the libation vessels, the cups, the golden censers, the veil, the crowns, and the golden decoration on the front of the Temple, which he stripped of everything. 23 He made off with the silver and gold and precious vessels; he discovered the secret treasures and seized them 24 and, removing all these, he went back to his own country, having shed much blood and uttered words of extreme arrogance. 25 There was deep mourning for Israel throughout the country: 26 Rulers and elders groaned; girls and young men wasted away; the women's beauty suffered a change; 27 every bridegroom took up a dirge, the bride sat grief-stricken on her marriage-bed. 28 The earth quaked because of its inhabitants and the whole House of Jacob was clothed with shame. 29 Two years later the king sent the Mysarch through the cities of Judah. He came to Jerusalem with an impressive force, 30 and addressing them with what appeared to be peaceful words, he gained their confidence; then suddenly he fell on the city, dealing it a terrible blow, and destroying many of the people of Israel. 31 He pillaged the city and set it on fire, tore down its houses and encircling wall, 32 took the women and children captive and commandeered the cattle. 33 They then rebuilt the City of David with a great strong wall and strong towers and made this their Citadel. 34 There they installed a brood of sinners, of renegades, who fortified themselves inside it, 35 storing arms and provisions, and depositing there the loot they had collected from Jerusalem; they were to prove a great trouble. 36 It became an ambush for the sanctuary, an evil adversary for Israel at all times. 37 They shed innocent blood all round the sanctuary and defiled the sanctuary itself. 38 The citizens of Jerusalem fled because of them, she became a dwelling-place of strangers; estranged from her own offspring, her children forsook her. 39 Her sanctuary became as forsaken as a desert, her feasts were turned into mourning, her Sabbaths into a mockery, her honour into reproach. 40 Her dishonour now fully matched her former glory, her greatness was turned into grief. 41 The king then issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each nation renouncing its particular customs. 42 All the gentiles conformed to the king's decree, 43 and many Israelites chose to accept his religion, sacrificing to idols and profaning the Sabbath.

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44 The king also sent edicts by messenger to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, directing them to adopt customs foreign to the country, 45 banning burnt offerings, sacrifices and libations from the sanctuary, profaning Sabbaths and feasts, 46 defiling the sanctuary and everything holy, 47 building altars, shrines and temples for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts, 48 leaving their sons uncircumcised, and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination, 49 so that they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it. 50 Anyone not obeying the king's command was to be put to death. 51 Writing in such terms to every part of his kingdom, the king appointed inspectors for the whole people and directed all the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice city by city. 52 Many of the people -- that is, every apostate from the Law -- rallied to them and so committed evil in the country, 53 forcing Israel into hiding in any possible place of refuge. 54 On the fifteenth day of Chislew in the year 145 the king built the appalling abomination on top of the altar of burnt offering; and altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah 55 and incense offered at the doors of houses and in the streets. 56 Any books of the Law that came to light were torn up and burned. 57 Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practicing the Law, the king's decree sentenced him to death. 58 Month after month they took harsh action against any offenders they discovered in the towns of Israel. 59 On the twenty-fifth day of each month, sacrifice was offered on the altar erected on top of the altar of burnt offering. 60 Women who had had their children circumcised were put to death according to the edict 61 with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were executed with them. 62 Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to refuse unclean food. 63 They chose death rather than contamination by such fare or profanation of the holy covenant, and they were executed. 64 It was a truly dreadful retribution that visited Israel.

#### NJB 1 Maccabees 2

About then, Mattathias son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the line of Joarib, left Jerusalem and settled in Modein. 2 He had five sons, John known as Gaddi, 3 Simon called Thassi, 4 Judas called Maccabaeus, 5 Eleazar, called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus. 6 When he saw the blasphemies being committed in Judah and Jerusalem, 7 he said, 'Alas that I should have been born to witness the ruin of my people and the ruin of the Holy City, and to sit by while she is delivered over to her enemies, and the sanctuary into the hand of foreigners. 8 'Her Temple has become like someone of no repute, 9 the vessels that were her glory have been carried off as booty, her babies have been slaughtered in her streets, her young men by the enemy's sword. 10 Is there a nation that has not claimed a share of her royal prerogatives, that has not taken some of her spoils? 11 All her ornaments have been snatched from her, her former freedom has become slavery. 12 See how the Holy Place, our beauty, our glory, is now laid waste, see how the gentiles have profaned it! 13 What have we left to live for?' 14 Mattathias and his sons tore their garments, put on sackcloth, and observed deep mourning. 15 The king's commissioners who were enforcing the apostasy came to the town of Modein for the sacrifices. 16 Many Israelites gathered round them, but Mattathias and his sons drew apart. 17 The king's commissioners then addressed Mattathias as follows, 'You are a respected leader, a great man in this town; you have sons and brothers to support you. 18 Be the first to step forward and conform to the king's decree, as all the nations have done, and the leaders of Judah and the survivors in Jerusalem; you and your sons shall be reckoned among the Friends of the King, you and your sons will be honoured with gold and silver and many presents.' 19 Raising his voice, Mattathias retorted, 'Even if every nation living in the king's dominions obeys him, each forsaking its ancestral religion to conform to his decrees, 20 I, my sons and my brothers will still follow the covenant of our ancestors. 21 May Heaven preserve us from forsaking the Law and its observances. 22 As for the king's orders, we will not follow them: we shall not swerve from our own religion either to right or to left.' 23 As he finished speaking, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein as the royal edict required. 24 When Mattathias saw this, he was fired with zeal; stirred to the depth of his being, he gave vent to his legitimate anger, threw himself on the man and slaughtered him on the altar.

25 At the same time he killed the king's commissioner who was there to enforce the sacrifice, and tore down the altar. 26 In his zeal for the Law he acted as Phinehas had against Zimri son of Salu. 27 Then Mattathias went through the town, shouting at the top of his voice, 'Let everyone who has any zeal for the Law and takes his stand on the covenant come out and follow me.' 28 Then he fled with his sons into the hills, leaving all their possessions behind in the town. 29 Many people who were concerned for virtue and justice went down to the desert and stayed there, 30 taking with them their sons, their wives and their cattle, so oppressive had their sufferings become. 31 Word was brought to the royal officials and forces stationed in Jerusalem, in the City of David, that those who had repudiated the king's edict had gone down to the hiding places in the desert. 32 A strong detachment went after them, and when it came up with them ranged itself against them in battle formation, preparing to attack them on the Sabbath day, 33 and said, 'Enough of this! Come out and do as the king orders and you will be spared.' 34 The others, however, replied, 'We refuse to come out, and we will not obey the king's orders and profane the Sabbath day.' 35 The royal forces at once went into action, 36 but the others offered no opposition; not a stone was thrown, there was no barricading of the hiding places. 37 They only said, 'Let us all die innocent; let heaven and earth bear witness that you are massacring us with no pretence of justice.' 38 The attack was pressed home on the Sabbath itself, and they were slaughtered, with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of one thousand persons. 39 When the news reached Mattathias and his friends, they mourned them bitterly 40 and said to one another, 'If we all do as our brothers have done, and refuse to fight the gentiles for our lives and institutions, they will only destroy us the sooner from the earth.' 41 So then and there they came to this decision, 'If anyone attacks us on the Sabbath day, whoever he may be, we shall resist him; we must not all be killed, as our brothers were in the hiding places.' 42 Soon they were joined by the Hasidaeans party, stout fighting men of Israel, each one a volunteer on the side of the Law. 43 All the refugees from the persecution rallied to them, giving them added support. 44 They organised themselves into an armed force, striking down the sinners in their anger, and the renegades in their fury, and those who escaped them fled to the gentiles for safety. 45 Mattathias and his friends made a tour, overthrowing the altars 46 and forcibly circumcising all the boys they found uncircumcised in the territories of Israel. 47 They hunted down the upstarts and managed their campaign to good effect. 48 They wrested the Law out of the control of the gentiles and the kings and reduced the sinners to impotence. 49 As the days of Mattathias were drawing to a close, he said to his sons, 'Arrogance and outrage are now in the ascendant; it is a period of turmoil and bitter hatred. 50 This is the time, my children, for you to have a burning zeal for the Law and to give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors. 51 Remember the deeds performed by our ancestors, each in his generation, and you will win great honour and everlasting renown. 52 Was not Abraham tested and found faithful, was that not considered as justifying him? 53 Joseph in the time of his distress maintained the Law, and so became lord of Egypt. 54 Phinehas, our father, in return for his burning zeal, received the covenant of everlasting priesthood. 55 Joshua, for carrying out his task, became judge of Israel. 56 Caleb, for his testimony before the assembled people, received an inheritance in the land. 57 David for his generous heart inherited the throne of an everlasting kingdom. 58 Elijah for his consuming fervour for the Law was caught up to heaven itself. 59 Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, for their fidelity, were saved from the flame. 60 Daniel for his singleness of heart was rescued from the lion's jaws. 61 Know then that, generation after generation, no one who hopes in him will be overcome. 62 Do not fear the threats of the sinner, all his brave show must come to the dunghill and the worms. 63 Exalted today, tomorrow he is nowhere to be found, for he has returned to the dust he came from and his scheming is brought to nothing. 64 My children, be resolute and courageous for the Law, for it will bring you glory. 65 'Here is your brother Simeon, I know he is a man of sound judgement. Listen to him all your lives; let him take your father's place. 66 Judas Maccabaeus, strong and brave from his youth, let him be your general and conduct the war against the gentiles. 67 The rest of you are to enrol in your ranks all those who keep the Law, and to assure the vengeance of your people. 68 Pay back the gentiles to the full, and hold fast to the ordinance of the Law.' 69 Then he blessed them and was joined to his ancestors. 70 He died in the year 146 and was buried in his ancestral tomb at Modein, and all Israel mourned him deeply.

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NJB 1 Maccabees 3

1 His son, Judas, known as Maccabaeus, then took his place. 2 All his brothers, and all who had attached themselves to his father, supported him, and they fought for Israel with a will. 3 He extended the fame of his people. Like a giant, he put on the breastplate and buckled on his war harness; he engaged in battle after battle, protecting the ranks with his sword. 4 He was like a lion in his exploits, like a young lion roaring over its prey. 5 He pursued and tracked down the renegades, he consigned those who troubled his people to the flames. 6 The renegades quailed with the terror he inspired, all evil-doers were utterly confounded, and deliverance went forward under his leadership. 7 He brought bitterness to many a king and rejoicing to Jacob by his deeds, his memory is blessed for ever and ever. 8 He went through the towns of Judah eliminating the irreligious from them, and diverted the Retribution from Israel. 9 His name resounded to the ends of the earth, he rallied those who were on the point of perishing. 10 Next, Apollonius mustered the gentiles and a large force from Samaria to make war on Israel. 11 When Judas learned of it, he went out to meet him and routed and killed him. Many fell wounded, and the survivors took to flight. 12 Their spoils were seized and the sword of Apollonius was taken by Judas, who used it to fight with throughout his life. 13 On hearing that Judas had raised a mixed force of believers and seasoned fighters, 14 Seron, commander of the Syrian troops, said, 'I shall make a name for myself and gain honour in the kingdom if I fight Judas and those supporters of his who are so contemptuous of the king's orders.' 15 He therefore launched another expedition, with a strong army of unbelievers to support him in taking revenge on the Israelites. 16 He had nearly reached the descent of Beth-Horon when Judas went out to confront him with a handful of men. 17 But as soon as these saw the force advancing to meet them, they said to Judas, 'How can we, few as we are, engage such overwhelming numbers? We are exhausted as it is, not having had anything to eat today.' 18 'It is easy', Judas answered, 'for a great number to be defeated by a few; indeed, in the sight of Heaven, deliverance, whether by many or by few, is all one; 19 for victory in war does not depend on the size of the fighting force: Heaven accords the strength. 20 They are coming against us in full-blown insolence and lawlessness to destroy us, our wives and our children, and to plunder us; 21 but we are fighting for our lives and our laws, 22 and he will crush them before our eyes; do not be afraid of them.' 23 When he had finished speaking, he made a sudden sally against Seron and his force and overwhelmed them. 24 Judas pursued them down from Beth-Horon as far as the plain. About eight hundred of their men fell, and the rest took refuge in the country of the Philistines. 25 Judas and his brothers began to be feared, and alarm seized the surrounding peoples. 26 His name even reached the king's ears, and among the nations there was talk of Judas and his battles. 27 The news of these events infuriated Antiochus, and he ordered mobilisation of all the forces in his kingdom, a very powerful army. 28 Opening his treasury, he distributed a year's pay to his troops, telling them to be prepared for any eventuality. 29 He then found that the money in his coffers had run short and that the tribute of the province had decreased, as a result of the dissension and disaster brought on the country by his own abrogation of laws that had been in force from antiquity. 30 He began to fear that, as had happened more than once, he would not have enough to cover the expenses and the lavish bounties he had previously been accustomed to make on a larger scale than his predecessors on the throne. 31 In this grave quandary he resolved to invade Persia, there to levy tribute on the provinces and so accumulate substantial funds. 32 He therefore left Lysias, a nobleman and member of the royal family, to manage the royal affairs between the River Euphrates and the Egyptian frontier, 33 making him responsible for the education of his son Antiochus, until he should come back. 34 To him Antiochus made over half his forces, with the elephants, giving him instructions about what he wanted done, particularly with regard to the inhabitants of Judaea and Jerusalem, 35 against whom he was to send a force, to crush and destroy the power of Israel and the remnant of Jerusalem, to wipe out their very memory from the place, 36 to settle foreigners in all parts of their territory and to distribute their land into lots. 37 The king took the remaining half of his troops with him and set out from Antioch, the capital of his kingdom, in the year 147; he crossed the River Euphrates and made his way through the Upper Provinces. 38 Lysias chose Ptolemy son of Dorymenes, with Nicanor and Gorgias, influential men from among the Friends of the King,

39 and, under their command, despatched forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse to invade the land of Judah and devastate it, as the king had ordered. 40 The entire force set out and reached the neighbourhood of Emmaus in the lowlands, where they pitched camp. 41 The local merchants, hearing the news of this, arrived at the camp, bringing with them a large amount of gold and silver, and fetters as well, proposing to buy the Israelites as slaves; they were accompanied by a company from Idumaea and the Philistine country. 42 Judas and his brothers saw that the situation was going from bad to worse and that armies were camping in their territory; they were also well aware that the king had ordered the people's total destruction. 43 So they said to each other, 'Let us restore the ruins of our people and fight for our people and our sanctuary.' 44 The Assembly was summoned, to prepare for war, to offer prayer and to implore compassion and mercy. 45 Jerusalem was as empty as a desert, none of her children to go in and out. The sanctuary was trodden underfoot, men of an alien race held the Citadel, which had become a lodging for gentiles. There was no more rejoicing for Jacob, the flute and lyre were mute. 46 After mustering, they made their way to Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, since Mizpah was traditionally a place of prayer for Israel. 47 That day they fasted and put on sackcloth, covering their heads with ashes and tearing their garments. 48 For the guidance that the gentiles would have sought from the images of their false gods, they opened the Book of the Law. 49 They also brought out the priestly vestments, with first-fruits and tithes, and marshalled the Nazirites who had completed the period of their vow. 50 Then, raising their voices to Heaven, they cried, 'What shall we do with these people, and where are we to take them? 51 Your holy place has been trampled underfoot and defiled, your priests mourn in their humiliation, 52 and now the gentiles are in alliance to destroy us: you know what they have in mind for us. 53 How can we stand up and face them if you do not come to our aid?' 54 Then they sounded the trumpets and raised a great shout. 55 Next, Judas appointed leaders for the people, to command a thousand, a hundred, fifty or ten men. 56 Those who were in the middle of building a house, or were about to be married, or were planting a vineyard, or were afraid, he told to go home again, as the Law allowed. 57 The column then marched off and took up a position south of Emmaus. 58 'Stand to your arms,' Judas told them, 'acquit yourselves bravely, in the morning be ready to fight these gentiles massed against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. 59 Better for us to die in battle than to watch the ruin of our nation and our Holy Place. 60 Whatever be the will of Heaven, he will perform it.'

#### NJB 1 Maccabees 4

Gorgias took with him five thousand foot and a thousand picked cavalry, and the force moved off by night 2 with the object of attacking the Jewish position and dealing them an unexpected blow; the men from the Citadel were there to guide him. 3 Judas got wind of it and himself moved off with his fighters to strike at the royal army at Emmaus, 4 while its fighting troops were still dispersed outside the camp. 5 Hence, when Gorgias reached Judas' camp, he found no one and began looking for the Jews in the mountains. 'For', he said, 'we have got them on the run.' 6 First light found Judas in the plain with three thousand men, although these lacked the armour and swords they would have wished. 7 They could now see the gentile encampment with its strong fortifications and cavalry surrounding it, clearly people who understood warfare. 8 Judas said to his men, 'Do not be afraid of their numbers, and do not flinch at their attack. 9 Remember how our ancestors were delivered at the Red Sea when Pharaoh was pursuing them in force. 10 And now let us call on Heaven: if he cares for us, he will remember his covenant with our ancestors and will destroy this army confronting us today; 11 then all the nations will know for certain that there is One who ransoms and saves Israel.' 12 The foreigners looked up and, seeing the Jews advancing against them, 13 came out of the camp to join battle. Judas' men sounded the trumpet 14 and engaged them. The gentiles were defeated and fled towards the plain 15 and all the stragglers fell by the sword. The pursuit continued as far as Gezer and the plains of Idumaea, Azotus and Jamnia, and the enemy lost about three thousand men. 16 Breaking off the pursuit, Judas returned with his men 17 and said to the people, 'Nevermind the booty, for we have another battle ahead of us. 18 Gorgias and his troops are still near us in the mountains. First stand up to our enemies and fight them, and then you can safely collect the booty.'

19 The words were hardly out of Judas' mouth, when a detachment came into view, peering down from the mountain. 20 Observing that their own troops had been routed and that the camp had been fired -- since the smoke, which they could see, attested the fact-21 they were panic-stricken at the sight; and when, furthermore, they saw Judas' troops drawn up for battle on the plain, 22 they all fled into Philistine territory. 23 Judas then turned back to plunder the camp, and a large sum in gold and silver, with violet and sea-purple stuffs, and many other valuables were carried off. 24 On their return, the Jews chanted praises to Heaven, singing, 'He is kind and his love is everlasting!' 25 That day had seen a remarkable deliverance in Israel. 26 Those of the foreigners who had escaped came and gave Lysias an account of all that had happened. 27 The news shocked and dismayed him, for affairs in Israel had not gone as he intended, and the result was quite the opposite to what the king had ordered. 28 The next year he mobilised sixty thousand picked troops and five thousand cavalry with the intention of finishing off the Jews. 29 They advanced into Idumaea and made their base at Beth-Zur, where Judas met them with ten thousand men. 30 When he saw their military strength he offered this prayer, 'Blessed are you, Saviour of Israel, who shattered the mighty warrior's attack at the hand of your servant David, and delivered the Philistine camp into the hands of Jonathan son of Saul, and his armour-bearer. 31 Crush this expedition in the same way at the hands of your people Israel; let their troops and cavalry bring them nothing but shame. 32 Sow panic in their ranks, confound the confidence they put in their numbers and send them reeling in defeat. 33 Overthrow them by the sword of those who love you, and all who acknowledge your name will sing your praises.' 34 The two forces engaged, and five thousand men of Lysias' troops fell in hand-to-hand fighting. 35 Seeing the rout of his army and the courage of Judas' troops and their readiness to live or die nobly, Lysias withdrew to Antioch, where he recruited mercenaries for a further invasion of Judaea in even greater strength. 36 Judas and his brothers then said, 'Now that our enemies have been defeated, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and dedicate it.' 37 So they marshalled the whole army, and went up to Mount Zion. 38 There they found the sanctuary deserted, the altar desecrated, the gates burnt down, and vegetation growing in the courts as it might in a wood or on some mountain, while the storerooms were in ruins. 39 They tore their garments and mourned bitterly, putting dust on their heads. 40 They prostrated themselves on the ground, and when the trumpets gave the signal they cried aloud to Heaven. 41 Judas then ordered his men to keep the Citadel garrison engaged until he had purified the sanctuary. 42 Next, he selected priests who were blameless and zealous for the Law 43 to purify the sanctuary and remove the stones of the 'Pollution' to some unclean place. 44 They discussed what should be done about the altar of burnt offering which had been profaned, 45 and very properly decided to pull it down, rather than later be embarrassed about it since it had been defiled by the gentiles. They therefore demolished it 46 and deposited the stones in a suitable place on the hill of the Dwelling to await the appearance of a prophet who should give a ruling about them. 47 They took unhewn stones, as the Law prescribed, and built a new altar on the lines of the old one. 48 They restored the Holy Place and the interior of the Dwelling, and purified the courts. 49 They made new sacred vessels, and brought the lamp-stand, the altar of incense, and the table into the Temple. 50 They burned incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lamp-stand, and these shone inside the Temple. 51 They placed the loaves on the table and hung the curtains and completed all the tasks they had undertaken. 52 On the twenty-fifth of the ninth month, Chislew, in the year 148 they rose at dawn 53 and offered a lawful sacrifice on the new altar of burnt offering which they had made. 54 The altar was dedicated, to the sound of hymns, zithers, lyres and cymbals, at the same time of year and on the same day on which the gentiles had originally profaned it. 55 The whole people fell prostrate in adoration and then praised Heaven who had granted them success. 56 For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar, joyfully offering burnt offerings, communion and thanksgiving sacrifices. 57 They ornamented the front of the Temple with crowns and bosses of gold, renovated the gates and storerooms, providing the latter with doors. 58 There was no end to the rejoicing among the people, since the disgrace inflicted by the gentiles had been effaced. 59 Judas, with his brothers and the whole assembly of Israel, made it a law that the days of the dedication of the altar should be celebrated yearly at the proper season, for eight days beginning on the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislew, with rejoicing and gladness.

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60 They then proceeded to build high walls with strong towers round Mount Zion, to prevent the gentiles from coming and riding roughshod over it as in the past. 61 Judas stationed a garrison there to guard it; he also fortified Beth-Zur, so that the people would have a fortress confronting Idumaea.

#### NJB 1 Maccabees 5

1 When the surrounding nations heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the sanctuary restored to what it had been before, they became very angry 2 and decided to destroy the descendants of Jacob living among them; they began to murder and evict our people. 3 Judas made war on the sons of Esau in Idumaea, in the region of Acrabattene where they were besieging the Israelites. He dealt them a serious blow, drove them off and despoiled them. 4 He also remembered the wickedness of the sons of Baean, who were a menace and a trap for the people with their ambushes on the roads. 5 Having blockaded them in their town and besieged them, he put them under the curse of destruction; he then set fire to their towers and burned them down with everyone inside. 6 Next, he crossed over to the Ammonites where he found a strong fighting force and a numerous people, commanded by Timotheus. 7 He fought many battles with them, defeated them and cut them to pieces. 8 Having captured Jazer and its dependent villages, he retired to Judaea. 9 Next, the gentiles of Gilead banded together to destroy the Israelites living in their territory. The latter, however, took refuge in the fortress of Dathema, 10 and sent the following letter to Judas and his brothers: 'The gentiles round us have banded themselves together against us to destroy us, 11 and they are preparing to storm the fortress in which we have taken refuge; Timotheus is in command of their forces. 12 Come at once and rescue us from their clutches, for we have already suffered great losses. 13 All our countrymen living in Tobias' country have been killed, their women and children have been taken into captivity, their property has been seized, and about a thousand men have been destroyed there.' 14 While the letter was being read, other messengers arrived from Galilee with their garments torn, bearing similar news, 15 'The people of Ptolemais, Tyre and Sidon have joined forces with the whole of gentile Galilee to destroy us!' 16 When Judas and the people heard this, they held a great assembly to decide what should be done for their oppressed countrymen who were under attack from their enemies. 17 Judas said to his brother Simon, 'Pick your men and go and relieve your countrymen in Galilee, while my brother Jonathan and I make our way into Gilead.' 18 He left Joseph son of Zechariah and the people's leader Azariah with the remainder of the army in Judaea to keep guard, and gave them these orders, 19 'You are to be responsible for our people. Do not engage the gentiles until we return.' 20 Simon was allotted three thousand men for the expedition into Galilee, Judas eight thousand for Gilead. 21 Simon advanced into Galilee, engaged the gentiles in several battles and swept all before him; 22 he pursued them to the gate of Ptolemais, and they lost about three thousand men, whose spoils he collected. 23 With him, he took away the Jews of Galilee and Arbatta, with their wives and children and all their possessions, and brought them into Judaea with great rejoicing. 24 Meanwhile Judas Maccabaeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan and made a three-days' march through the desert, 25 where they encountered the Nabataeans, who gave them a friendly reception and told them everything that had been happening to their brothers in Gilead, 26 many of whom, they said, were shut up in Bozrah and Bosor, Alema, Chaspho, Maked and Carnaim, all large fortified towns. 27 Others were blockaded in the other towns of Gilead, and the enemy planned to attack and capture these strongholds the very next day, and destroy all the people inside them on one day. 28 Judas and his army at once turned off by the desert road to Bozrah. He took the town and, having put all the males to the sword and collected the booty, burned it down. 29 When night came, he left the place, and they continued their march until they reached the fortress. 30 In the light of dawn they looked, and there was an innumerable horde, setting up ladders and engines to capture the fortress; the assault was just beginning. 31 When Judas saw that the attack had begun and that the war cry was rising to heaven from the city, mingled with trumpet calls and a great clamour, 32 he said to the men of his army, 'Into battle today for your brothers!' 33 Dividing them into three commands, he advanced on the enemy's rear, with trumpets sounding and prayers shouted aloud.



34 The troops of Timotheus, recognising that this was Maccabaeus, fled before his advance; Maccabaeus dealt them a crushing defeat; about eight thousand of their men fell that day. 35 Then, wheeling on Alema, he attacked and captured it and, having killed all the males and collected the booty, burned the place down. 36 From there he moved on and took Chaspho, Maked, Bosor and the remaining towns of Gilead. 37 After these events, Timotheus mustered another force and pitched camp opposite Raphon, on the far side of the stream-bed. 38 Judas sent men to reconnoitre the camp, and these reported back as follows, 'With him are massed all the gentiles surrounding us, making a very numerous army, 39 with Arab mercenaries as auxiliaries; they are encamped on the far side of the stream-bed, and ready to launch an attack on you.' Judas then advanced to engage them, 40 and was approaching the watercourse with his troops when Timotheus told the commanders of his army, 'If he crosses first we shall not be able to resist him, because he will have a great advantage over us; 41 but if he is afraid and camps on the other side of the stream, we shall cross over to him and the advantage will then be ours.' 42 As soon as Judas reached the watercourse, he posted people's scribes along it, giving them this order: 'Do not let anyone pitch his tent; all are to go into battle!' 43 He was himself the first across to the enemy side, with all the people following. He defeated all the opposing gentiles, who threw down their arms and ran for refuge in the sanctuary of Carnaim. 44 The Jews first captured the town and then burned down the temple with everyone inside. And so Carnaim was overthrown, and the enemy could offer no further resistance to Judas. 45 Next, Judas assembled all the Israelites living in Gilead, from the least to the greatest, with their wives, children and belongings, an enormous muster, to take them to Judaea. 46 They reached Ephron, a large town straddling the road and strongly fortified. As it was impossible to by-pass it either to right or to left, there was nothing for it but to march straight through. 47 But the people of the town denied them passage and barricaded the gates with stones. 48 Judas sent them a conciliatory message in these terms, 'We want to pass through your territory to reach our own; no one will do you any harm, we only want to go through on foot.' But they would not open up for him. 49 So Judas sent an order down the column for everyone to halt where he stood. 50 The fighting men took up their positions; Judas attacked the town all day and night, and the town fell to him. 51 He put all the males to the sword, rased the town to the ground, plundered it and marched through the town square over the bodies of the dead. 52 They then crossed the Jordan into the Great Plain, opposite Beth-Shean, 53 Judas all the time rallying the stragglers and encouraging the people the whole way until they reached Judaea. 54 They climbed Mount Zion in joy and gladness and presented burnt offerings because they had returned safe and sound without having lost a single man. 55 While Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead and Simon his brother in Galilee outside Ptolemais, 56 Joseph son of Zechariah, and Azariah, who were in command of the army, heard of their valiant deeds and of the battles they had been fighting, 57 and said, 'Let us make a name for ourselves too and go and fight the nations around us.' 58 So they issued orders to the men under their command and marched on Jamnia. 59 Gorgias and his men came out of the town and gave battle. 60 Joseph and Azariah were routed and pursued as far as the frontiers of Judaea. That day about two thousand Israelites lost their lives. 61 Our people thus met with a great reverse, because they had not listened to Judas and his brothers, thinking that they would do something equally valiant. 62 They were not, however, of the same breed of men as those to whom the deliverance of Israel was entrusted. 63 The noble Judas and his brothers, however, were held in high honour throughout Israel and among all the nations wherever their name was heard, 64 and people thronged round to acclaim them. 65 Judas marched out with his brothers to fight the Edomites in the country towards the south; he stormed Hebron and its dependent villages, threw down its fortifications and burned down its encircling towers. 66 Leaving there, he made for the country of the Philistines and passed through Marisa. 67 Among the fallen in that day's fighting were some priests who sought to prove their courage there by joining in the battle, a foolhardy venture. 68 Judas next turned on Azotus, which belonged to the Philistines; he overthrew their altars, burned the statues of their gods and, having pillaged their towns