

**THE  
AGE OF THE MACCABEES**

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CHAPTER I

**SKETCH OF JEWISH HISTORY AFTER THE RETURN FROM  
CAPTIVITY.**

BEFORE entering on our main subject, it is desirable that we should take a brief retrospective glance over that part of the earlier history which lies between the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon (538 BC) and the commencement of that which we may call the Maccabean period.

The decree of Cyrus (538 BC) seems to have been acted upon with all speed by a portion of the Jews resident in Babylon. That portion, however, doubtless consisted of the less well-to-do and those who had formed no very close ties, commercial or otherwise, with the locality in which they had grown up. Many had acted to the full upon the advice given them by Jeremiah (29. 5-7), and, to borrow a Jewish phrase which has been applied to the present case, the bran returned, the fine flour was left behind in Babylon.

Thus it came to pass that the returned exiles were the more easily reduced to inactivity by the difficulties which speedily came upon them in their attempts at the renovation of their old home. Mainly through the hostility of the Samaritans on their offer of cooperation being repulsed, but perhaps in some degree owing to the absence of royal favor on the part of Cyrus's two successors, Cambyses and the Pseudo-Smerdis, the work of restoration was for more than nine years (529-520 BC) in abeyance. In the year 520 BC, however, two years after the accession of Darius, the heartening which their prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, sought to give them, and the efforts of Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel, evoked renewed energy. Darius's approval was obtained, and four years later the Temple was dedicated to the service of God.

There is little or nothing to record in the way of history until, in 458 BC, Ezra is sent by Artaxerxes to Jerusalem and finds it in a ruinous condition. The nature of the rule exercised there had been changed, and the policy of exclusiveness reversed, probably at an early date in the intervening period. The priests, in whose hands lay all the guidance of the community, evidently exercised a sway which, while seeking to conciliate their non-Jewish neighbors, was harsh towards their poorer fellow countrymen. Ezra took a line which certainly did not err on the side of laxity. He had not, indeed, the practical ability of Nehemiah, but he could at any rate, as Graetz says, "pray and arouse the feelings of others". This he did to some purpose, and it is to his influence that we are to ascribe the establishment of the written Law as henceforward the rule of faith for his people, as well as the rigid exclusiveness which was to be the national safeguard then and subsequently. Nehemiah arrived twelve years later. The wretched condition to which he found the city reduced has been thought to point to a reaction against an amount of strictness for which his countrymen were unprepared. Whatever may have been the cause or causes of the disastrous state of things found by Nehemiah, there appeared everywhere the need of an energetic administration such as he was well able to supply. On the completion of Nehemiah's task Ezra's name, which

has disappeared for a while from the record, returns, he instructs the people in the Law, and takes part in the dedication of the walls.

From the time of Megabyzus may be dated the gradual break-up of the Persian power. In particular, Egypt, about 405 BC, threw off the foreign yoke, and was not resubjugated till 344 BC. The geographical position of Judea must have exposed it to the predatory attacks of armed forces, or to a guerilla warfare no longer repressed by the wide-reaching rule administered hitherto by imperial power. Egyptian kings and satraps of Phoenicia, in a common hostility to the control which Persia still sought to exercise over the remoter provinces of the empire, made the inhabitants of Judea to be unpleasantly familiar with their own troops, as well as with the Greek mercenary soldiers in the pay of both parties.

A fresh trouble also assailed the Jews, this time on the religious side. Artaxerxes II (Mnemon, 405-358 BC) had adopted an idolatrous and licentious worship, hitherto unknown to the Persians, and insisted on its acceptance by all his subjects. On the Jews resisting the image-worship which the king thus imposed, he is said to have banished many of them to Hyrcania, on the shores of the Caspian. Bagoas (or Bagoses), who had profited by his opportunities as military commander in Syria and Phoenicia, established himself in power at Jerusalem. The severity of his rule is shown by the daily exaction of 50 drachmae for each lamb offered in the Temple precincts.

Artaxerxes III (Ochus), who succeeded to the Persian throne in 358 BC and reigned for 20 years, was a strong ruler, suppressing revolts in Egypt, which in this reign became again a province of the empire (344 BC), as well as in Phoenicia and Cyprus. Much suffering accordingly still fell to the lot of the inhabitants of Palestine. Orophernes, a conspicuous leader in this war, was probably the original of the Holophernes of the Book of Judith.

Artaxerxes III died by violence in 338 BC, and after the short reign of his son Arses (338-335), Darius III (Codomannus) came to the throne (335-331 BC). The year following his accession marks the beginning of the end. In that year Alexander entered Asia by the Hellespont, in 333 he won the battle of Issus, and in 331 finally overthrew Darius at Arbela. Most of the time between these two battles was spent by Alexander in establishing his authority in Phoenicia and Egypt. He besieged and captured Tyre and Gaza. The Jews on this occasion refused to furnish him with a contingent of troops or with provisions, pleading their oath of loyalty to Darius. In this connection his visit to Jerusalem is related, a visit which, if it took place at all, has doubtless been much adorned by legendary detail. "And when he [Jaddua, the high priest] understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession with the priests and the multitude of the citizens ... Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head, with the golden plate whereon the name of God was engraved, approached by himself and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest. The Jews also did altogether with one voice salute Alexander and encompass him about... Parmenio ... went up to him and asked him how it came to pass that when all others adored *him*, he should adore the high priest of the Jews. To whom he replied, I did not adore *him*, but that God who hath honored him with this high priesthood; for I saw this very person in dream in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia,

exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and give me the dominion over the Persians ... And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him and he came into the city; and when he went up into the Temple, he offered sacrifice to God ... and when the Book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he ... bade them ask what favors they pleased of him: whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute in the seventh year. He granted all they desired; and when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylonia and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired”.

The high priest here referred to has been variously identified with Jaddua, as above, or his son, Onias I, or his grandson, Simon the Just. Be this as it may, Alexander's tolerance as here displayed quite accords with his general policy of cosmopolitanism in matters of faith.

There were, however, special reasons for the favor shown by Alexander to the Jews. Their “trading connections over the world, combined with the regular journeys of the 'Dispersion' to Jerusalem, made them invaluable friends to him as guides to his intelligence department. From them too did he learn the passes into Egypt between the marshes and deserts, and they must have announced to the Egyptians his liberality towards their religion, and his graciousness towards those who submitted promptly and unreservedly to his commands”. Many of these Jews were settled by him in Alexandria, and received rights equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks in that city.

Judea now was made to form part of the satrapy of Coele-Syria, and the headquarters of the governor, Andromachus, were placed in Samaria. There speedily followed a revolt, probably inspired, in part at least, by jealousy of the favor shown by Alexander to the Jews. Andromachus was burned alive; and Alexander hastened back from Egypt to avenge the death of his representative, and continued to mark the difference of his attitude towards the Samaritans and their hereditary enemies at Jerusalem by planting in the city of the former people a Macedonian colony. Thenceforward, and till Alexander's death, the affairs of Coele-Syria seem to have been conducted in peace.

Had Alexander lived to employ the practically unlimited resources which lay to his hand in the empire which he had won, for the purpose of extending his power westward into Europe, the history of the world would in all probability have been changed, and the power of Rome crushed at an early stage of its existence. As things were, upon the great king's death (June 13, 323 BC), not one of his generals was of sufficiently conspicuous merit to stand out as an acknowledged successor. Hence there arose a period of varied conflicts which continued for forty-five years.

The kingdom of the Seleucids, with which the main portion of this historical sketch will be so closely connected, does not yet come into view. Seleucus its founder was at the time of Alexander's death only about thirty years of age, and thus was unable to assert as yet his claims against those of the older commanders. Perdikkas, the senior officer of the household at the time, became regent and took the central management. The chief of his rivals were appointed to the government of various provinces with full

military power. This arrangement is said to owe its origin to Ptolemy I (Soter), son of Lagus, who himself took Egypt, and worthily earned out his duties as its ruler, founding a dynasty which was destined to have much influence upon the welfare of men of Jewish race.

The reason probably of his choice of a province, and certainly of his success in maintaining himself against invasion, was the security afforded from an attack by land, and, as regards a great stretch of its coast, from the sea as well.

“Even the Romans were exceedingly afraid of this peculiar and isolated position, owing to the power it conferred on its ruler, and so they took special care to let no ambitious or distinguished person assume so unchecked an authority”. Any Egyptian ruler, having the wisdom to secure the support both of the priesthood, who treasured the traditions of power and wealth, and also of the military caste, who were very jealous of the introduction of foreign mercenaries, might count on holding a position of exceptional strength against the forces of rival sovereigns!

An early attempt of Ptolemy to extend his dominion was, while occupying Cyprus by the way, to seek the subjugation of the whole of Coele-Syria, which in the partition of Alexander's Empire had fallen to Laomedon. The Jews declining to submit, Ptolemy approached Jerusalem with an army on the Sabbath, professing that his intentions were peaceable, and that he merely desired to offer sacrifice, as Alexander had done before him. On obtaining permission he seized upon the city and carried many of the inhabitants captive, while others voluntarily accompanied him.

Egypt appears to have had four immigrations of this sort under his rule. It appears that he, unlike the others of the Diadochi with whom the Jews were brought into contact, was popular with that nation. The causes of this were probably twofold: (1) The Jews' traditional friendliness on the whole to Egypt, as opposed to the sentiment ever entertained towards their Asiatic conquerors; (2) the fact that Seleucus, contrary to Ptolemy's policy, made a point of establishing a multitude of cities founded on the Hellenic type, repugnant in many respects to genuine Jewish feeling. Egypt had the further advantages of great fertility, and of the facilities which such a city as Alexandria afforded for carrying on commerce on an immense scale.

Some of those whom he thus transferred to Egypt he employed in his army; for in spite of his readiness to conciliate, so far as was possible, the native military caste, he could not forego the employment of some foreign troops. Others settled as civilians in Alexandria (founded about eleven years previously) with full rights of citizenship. For the next few years Judea was the scene of conflicts of varying issue between the forces of Ptolemy and those of Antigonos, one of Alexander's generals. The latter, however, was slain at the decisive battle of Ipsos (301 BC), whereupon the victors divided his possessions among themselves. The fate of Judea and Samaria is somewhat obscure. Palestine and Coele-Syria may have become at this time an Egyptian province. On the other hand, the foundation (circ. 300 BC) of Antioch by Seleucus as his capital must have rendered Ptolemy's grasp of Coele-Syria, to say the least of it, uncertain. On the whole, it would seem that Judea was under Egyptian sway for the next eighty years. The deaths of the last three of the Diadochi, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy I, almost synchronized. The last named was succeeded in 285 BC by his son Ptolemy II (Philadelphus), who had however reigned for the two previous years conjointly with his father. His wars with Syria and extension of the Egyptian rule in that direction had an

important bearing upon Judea through the encouragement which he gave to the Greek element in the cities bordering upon that country, such as Gaza, Joppa, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Samaria, and Scythopolis. The new king “built Philadelphia on the site of the ancient Rabbah of the Ammonites, Ptolemais on the site of Acco, Philoteria on the Lake of Gennesaret”. We shall see in the next chapter the great influence which these cities soon began to exercise upon Judean ways of thought and living.

On the death of Philadelphus, which took place in 247 BC, his eldest son Evergetes (Ptolemy III) came to the throne. Josephus relates that on one of the occasions when his Syrian wars brought him to the neighborhood of Jerusalem, he “offered many sacrifices to God, and dedicated to Him such things as were suitable”. “With the third Ptolemy, all the virtues of that great race, except, perhaps, the taste for patronizing learning, seem to take their departure”.

In the course of his reign (about 230 BC) there came into prominence Joseph, a nephew of the high priest Onias II, and grandson of Simon the Just, being son of the Tobiah who had married the daughter of Simon. He attained his position from his exceptional strength of purpose and the acquisition of great wealth. By the skilful carrying out of ambitious aims this man obtained paramount authority from both a military and a financial point of view in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. He came to the front at a time when his uncle Onias was coquetting with Seleucus II (Callinicus) of Syria and refusing to pay to Egypt the annual tribute of twenty talents. Joseph addressed the people in the court of the Temple, secured their enthusiastic support, as well as that of Athenion, the Egyptian envoy, and having also raised a loan from the Samaritans, met Evergetes near Memphis, and established himself in his special favor. He held office till his death (208 BC), and constituted himself throughout a formidable rival to the high priestly power, both by the riches which he amassed during his twenty-two years of office, and by the almost absolute power which the support of Egypt secured him. That he had “stripped the flesh from all Syria and left only the bones”, was a remark which was made about him in the presence of Philopator.

Philopator (Ptolemy IV), who succeeded his father in 222 BC, a year earlier than the commencement of Antiochus the Great's reign, after defeating the Syrian forces at Raphianear Gaza (217 BC), and thereby regaining Palestine and Phoenicia, is said to have visited Jerusalem. “While attempting, in spite of the protests of the high priest and people generally, to enter the Holy of Holies, he was seized with a fit and carried away by his attendants. It is impossible to say what substratum of fact lies under the subsequent highly colored details as related in the same connection, viz., how the king showed his spite against the Jews of Alexandria, and how in commemoration of their deliverance by providential interpositions a feast was established. This last must of course have had some historical origin, and probably points to the fact that in spite of the hostility shown towards them for some reason by Philopator, they succeeded in regaining or obtaining “the privilege of Alexandrian citizenship by payment of a large sum of money, of which the memory rankled in their hearts, and caused them to regard him as a national enemy”. We can assert with confidence that Philopator earned the hostility of that people, and that they looked back upon his reign as one of oppression and injustice.

Philopator's death (205 BC) was speedily followed by the breaking up of the kingdom of the Nile outside Egypt proper. The next ruler was Philopator's son,

Epiphanes, aged but six years, and by no means equal to a contest with Antiochus III (the Great), who had succeeded Seleucus III (Soter) as king of Syria in 221 BC. As part of a scheme for the subjugation of Egypt entered into between Philip V of Macedon (accession 222 BC) and Antiochus, the latter advanced for the purpose of seizing Coele-Syria. Scopas, an Aetolian, was the leader of the forces sent against him from Alexandria. After some signal successes, that general was defeated by Antiochus at Mount Panium.

The Jews, still cherishing the hostility to Egypt which had sprung up during the reign of Philopator, favored the Syrian monarch, and became included in his kingdom; and, although Scopas, returning somewhat later from Egypt, ravaged the country, dismantled the fortresses, and caused much bloodshed, Antiochus (in 198 BC), receiving ready aid from Jerusalem in the shape of provisions for his troops, proceeded to reconquer the territory, and finally brought it under the Syrian sway. Ten years previously, Joseph, the powerful satrap of Coele-Syria, had passed from the scene. His seven sons by his first wife were bitterly opposed to Hyrcanus, his son by a second union. The latter seems to have inherited his father's ambition as well as his intellectual ability, and early acquired favor at the court of Philopator. On one occasion while returning thence to Jerusalem, Hyrcanus was murderously attacked by his brothers, slew two of them in a skirmish, and being received coldly by his father on his arrival, returned to take up his abode for the time in Alexandria, from which place in the years that followed he exerted, we may be sure, all the force at his disposal, to keep in check the growing power of Antiochus in Palestine. The other Tobiades, as they were called, that is to say, the other sons and the grandsons of the satrap Joseph, were on the side of Syria. Hyrcanus preserved his fealty to Egypt, although his power to render that kingdom any effectual aid in recovering Syria seems to have been practically nil.



CHAPTER II.

**THE CONDITION OF PALESTINE FROM THE RETURN TO THE  
ACCESSION OF ANTIOCHUS THE GREAT.**

THE vitality of the Jewish patriotic spirit seems to have been preserved throughout the period of the Exile. There was a continuous faith in the prophecies that within the space of about two generations the banished would return and take up the broken thread of national existence in their own land. It is true that comparatively few availed themselves of Cyrus's permission. The descendants of the captives made by Babylonian conquerors preferred, as far as the majority were concerned, not to renounce the ties they had formed within the great city in Mesopotamia. But the enthusiasm of those who accompanied Zerubbabel across the wide plains which lay between them and Judea, is plainly marked in later Biblical literature!

It was clearly impossible that such shrunken numbers should attempt to spread themselves over the whole of the land which once was theirs, or even over Judea. Perhaps it was not altogether a misfortune that they were thus compelled to concentrate their strength, and support each other's courage in the difficulties which faced them. They were recruited by many of their nation, who actually within their country or in its immediate neighborhood had waited patiently the fulfillment of their patriotic hopes. Proselytes also were not wanting in the building-up of the community.

In many points their religious life had undergone a change during the years of exile. The first and most prominent of these changes consisted in the disappearance of idolatry and the abhorrence of its memories. That reformation, which both prophetic denunciations and the efforts of such kings as Hezekiah and Josiah had been able only very partially to effect, had been once and for ever accomplished. After they had come to be familiar during the years of captivity with idol worship as practiced at Babylon, this form of sin disappeared from the Jewish nation.

On the other hand, even as early as the time of the prophet Malachi, there are found traces of the skeptical and discontented spirit, whose existence is dealt with in a more developed form in the Book Koheleth (Ecclesiastes). The problem involved in the prosperity of the wicked presented difficulties which, as we can see, both in the Persian and Greek periods, keenly tried men's faith in an over-ruling Providence. The saying of men of Malachi's day "Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delighteth in them", and "Where is the God of judgment?" finds its echo in the words of the Preacher, "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness". *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*, must have represented the attitude of many minds, which failed to accept the faith expressed in the concluding words of the book last quoted, "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil".

To the Exile also we may with some confidence trace the beginnings at any rate of that rule which the individual conscience came to have among the more spiritually minded members of the race. Such narratives as those of Daniel or of Susannah show that when they were written there was an audience to be appealed to, who would not fail to sympathize with the resolve to risk life itself in faithful adherence to duty.

Again, prayer assumed a new position. This feature is illustrated in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as well as Daniel and elsewhere. With the enforced suspension of sacrificial offerings during the Captivity, the more spiritual forms of worship acquired a prominence, which they retained after the Return. Synagogue services were established here and there as need arose. In Jerusalem there was now joined with the animal and other offerings in kind, a ritual consisting of psalms and prayers, the latter doubtless for a time at least unrestricted by any hard-and-fast form.

Moreover, almsgiving acquired prominence. He that displayed this form of charity was considered to have thereby so amply acquitted himself of his religious obligations that his gifts became worthy of being described by the word "Righteousness", without further qualification.

Once more, the Jewish outlook upon the world, hitherto so narrow, became somewhat less circumscribed. They were now reestablished, not so much upon a national as upon a religious basis. They are henceforward "Judeans", but the word has not a strictly racial significance. It does not exclude a willingness to embrace all who would receive their faith and unite with them in worship of Jehovah. The Exile had so far familiarized them with the thought of the extent of humanity, that they were ready to picture to themselves the acceptance of their religion by the other kingdoms of the earth.

The impression made upon the Jewish mind through the wealth and luxury affected by the higher classes in Babylon is manifest from the description of the king's palace in the Book of Esther. The signal honor with which the Jews treated that book may indeed be ascribed to its relation of the overthrow of their would-be oppressors, and the triumph secured them by an overruling Providence working through the good fortune and resolution of a Jewish maiden. But it also shows the pleasure which they felt in dwelling upon the description of the magnificence exhibited in the appointments and surroundings of an Oriental court.

The purity of the Persian mode of worship, the absence of all grossness in the way of sacrificial offering, and the identification of Truth with the Deity in the Zoroastrian creed, had an undoubted effect upon the Judaism of post-captivity days. The elaborate purificatory rites, characteristic of later Judaism, arose in large measure from customs which had become familiar to the nation during its sojourn in Babylon. "The veneration for the holy fire which was kindled from the sacred naphtha fountains of Persia by the Caspian Sea, penetrated into the Jewish traditions in the story that, when Nehemiah rekindled the consecrated fire of the Temple from the stones of the altar, he called it *naphthar*, giving it a Hebrew meaning, a cleansing, though many call it *nephi*."

The development of the Jewish doctrine of angels at this period of their history may also be connected with Persian influences. In that country's faith the hierarchy of celestial intelligences had been set forth with much elaborateness. But although the two religions thus had much in common, the Jewish teaching on the subject possessed a decided advantage in leading the way towards the light to be thrown upon angelic offices by Christian revelation. In the Persian religion there seems little, if any, trace of

an interest taken by angels in the affairs or the well-being of men; while such books as Daniel and Tobit show heavenly guardians appointed for the surveillance and protection alike of individuals and of states.

It is, however, specially worthy of note in this connection that the dualism which was so prominent a feature of the Zoroastrian religion fails to find a counterpart in Jewish teaching. The rival powers of good and evil are never placed by the latter on anything like a footing of equality. Satan is represented as subordinate in position, though having in some sort access to the courts of heaven; and as making his assaults upon the human race only by permission of a higher power. The words of the LORD'S message, "I form the light ... and create darkness" express the attitude of the Jew in this matter in direct antagonism to that of the worshipper of Ormuzd, who gave coordinated powers to Ahriman. The "adversary", the opposer of God and man, was the main idea in the mind of the Jew, when he thought of an evil agency as personified; not the one who makes calumnious accusations, not the "slanderer", but the power which, within the limits allowed him by the Most High, makes for *unrighteousness*.

But the characteristic which penetrated most deeply into the national life of the post-exilic people was the reverence and study bestowed on the Law, viewed as an absolute rule of conduct, and an inexhaustible storehouse of precepts applicable without exception to every circumstance of life. Ewald, comparing the working out of this conception in detail with the elaborate literary structures of the schoolmen and with other modern labors of a juristic character, points out that "the difference between the legal movement over which Ezra presided and its modern parallels lies chiefly in this simple fact, that the former found in every ancient law which it worked up the immediate presence of the holy itself, and therefore treated it with the utmost awe and the most scrupulous care, and with admirable patience made the most strenuous efforts possible to secure the legal obedience, and, by that path, the outward sanctity of man".

But this identification, or close conformity, of the things which were required by the Law, and holiness of life, soon worked out in many instances to the natural result of contentment with the careful discharge of duty, ceremonial and other, and failure to recognize the vital power derived from unity with the Divine source of sanctity. Moreover, when the yoke of the Law, thus interpreted, became over burdensome to the individual, recourse was had, especially among the higher ranks, to various devices by which an equivalent in the shape of money or other offerings was held as a release in full from more irksome demands.

It is very significant, as Ewald shows, that, as ceremonial developed, and ritual holiness became more and more emphasized in the national life, the Divine author of the Law came to be looked upon as further and further removed from direct spiritual contact or converse with His people, so that the highest of His names became completely disused, and for 'Jehovah' was invariably substituted in utterance one of the common titles, Adonai, El, Elohim, Heaven, or later, the simple expression, The Name.

The prophetic period of Israel's history had been fraught with deep benefit to their spiritual life. Moral, as contrasted with mere ceremonial, holiness had been powerfully enforced upon the nation before, and even after, the Exile. But when the last of the prophets had protested against the sins of the ecclesiastical leaders of the time, and had pointed once more to the immutable bases of morality, this teaching more and

more lost its hold and was practically to a large extent forgotten, while formality in ritual established itself as the all-sufficient substitute.

Comments such as the above on the religious and social condition of the people during the period which followed the Return are necessarily of a somewhat impersonal character. When once the generation which saw the labors of Ezra and Nehemiah had passed away, there is a singular lack of any conspicuous figure.

We may assume that the Persian power kept up at least a nominal control through its governor, who seems for a while at any rate to have lived within Jerusalem. It is probable, however, that the Jews were left pretty much to themselves as regards administrative functions. Their position between two rival powers like Persia and Egypt must have exposed them to occasional depredations from contending forces. At the same time the condition of the people themselves, as portrayed for us by Malachi, was in many respects lamentable. The enthusiasm which marked the return from the Captivity had evidently died away after a very few generations. The priests were chargeable with, peculation, adultery, and crimes of violence. They mocked at purity either of ritual or life, and found the observance of the Law a weariness. On the other hand, there were still to be found a few faithful ones, an inner circle whose spirituality of mind caused them to cherish the worship of God, and listen to His prophet. For them the Messianic hope was not extinguished. Yet even they were willing to a large extent to merge that hope in the watching for the messenger who should herald His approach. On the appearance of Elijah the Prophet—for so they named him who was to come in the spirit and power of the Tishbite of old—not only should the Jewish nation be at harmony with itself, and the hearts of parents and children turned towards one another, but the worship of the true God should be diffused through the nations. “From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts”.

As there was no great scope for political energy at this period, and no leader at once possessed of ability and of patriotic instincts to enter upon any schemes for directing the relationship between the Jews and their neighbors, the best interests of the nation were naturally centered upon religion. Even the Samaritan schism no doubt had its influence in this direction. The enquiry had to be faced, “What is the essential difference between us and other nations or even that community which worships on Mount Gerizim?” And the answer was found in the minute study of the Torah, and the elaboration of endless minutiae in the form of precepts intended to provide for all conceivable combinations of circumstances. This process of framing elaborate directions and thorny restrictions, this making of “a fence to the Torah”, commenced now, and continued for centuries to be the ruling passion of religious spirits. Thus the scribe element in the nation acquired a vast importance. This may be seen in the position (referred to above) which such matters as prayers, fasting, and alms obtained in the life of the people, as shown, *e.g.*, in Tobit, Judith, and other books of the Apocrypha.

The high-priestly power had always been an important factor in the life of the Jewish people. In important crises, before and after the establishment of the monarchy, it had discharged a most important function. It was only to be expected that, aided by the hereditary character of the office, its lofty traditions, and the popular enthusiasm for the Law—of which, on its ceremonial side, the priests were the natural guardians—the high

priest should acquire during this period, even independently of any claims to distinction from personal excellence, a powerful position as a leader.

The high priests, as we might expect, were not slow to perceive the advantages which their position gave them. We are not without instances in which they made use of their power for unworthy purposes. On the other hand, about twenty years after the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty there arose in Judea a conspicuous high priest, Simon the Just (circ. 300—290). “In an age deficient in great men, he appears like a lofty and luxuriant tree in the midst of a barren country, the only high priest who restored the priesthood to honor”. His repairs of the city-walls and of the Temple, his introduction of a much-needed and constant supply of water, and his other merits are set forth in the eulogy bestowed on him in Ecclesiasticus (ch. 50). From him the study and practice of religion received a strong impulse. “The world”, he said, “subsists on three things: the Law, the service in the Temple, and acts of love”.

The injunction, “bring up many disciples”, attributed to “the men of the Great Synagogue”, reflected the spirit which even now prevailed. Schools for the instruction of the young in the written and unwritten traditions of the Law sprang up in Jerusalem and elsewhere, and there the pupils of the wise were instructed by the scribes in the ever-increasing mass of decisions (*Halachah*) and illustrative tales (*Haggadah*) which culminated later in the compilation of the Talmuds of Jerusalem and Babylon.

The fervid admirers of the Torah and its developments were only strengthened in their faith with regard to its all-embracing efficacy as a rule of life and morals by the laxity and indifference which they saw around them. As we noticed in the last chapter, it is probably in part to the prevalence of legalism that we are to ascribe the tendency to support the earlier Ptolemies against the Seleucid dynasty. Although a Hellenizing party is scarcely discernible in the political life of Judea till towards the close of the third or beginning of the second century BC, the policy of the Macedonian conqueror must have at once acted in this direction. That policy was, as we have noticed, in accordance with what was the general Hellenic instinct, to plant Greek colonies in the various towns which came under his rule, so as gradually to introduce the language and manners of Greece throughout the empire. It is clear how effectual were the means thus adopted by him and carried out by his successors, for the Hellenization of his wide dominions. In particular, the planting of Greeks in such cities as Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Joppa, and the founding of new cities in attractive localities, such as Anthedon and Apollonia, would have an influence, more or less gradual, on their Jewish neighbors. That influence was of a twofold character. On the one hand, to those whose training or temperament disposed them firmly to resist all change, and to cling closely to Jewish models in thought and practice, the Greek laxity in belief and habit was simply a thing which called for unqualified censure. On the other hand, the necessary acquisition of the language of the settlers for purposes of commerce and general intercourse had given, as we shall see, by the time of Antiochus, if not earlier, a hold to the Greek element, which implies a considerable antecedent period of growth. Accordingly in, and even before, Maccabean times we shall find a strong party, in the majority at Jerusalem, in favor of Hellenism, while in stout opposition to them was the party which upheld the Law as the only rule of life, and clung to the ideal as taught by the scribes. The premature violence of Antiochus Epiphanes, forming the occasion of the outbreak of the Jewish wars in the second century BC, was the cause which enabled the minority, headed by Judas and his

brethren, through their vehement appeal to the patriotic and religious sentiment, to gain the day against the force of numbers.

CHAPTER III.

**THE HISTORY FROM THE ACCESSION OF ANTIOCHUS THE  
GREAT TO THE TIME OF THE MACCABEAN REVOLT  
(222-108 BC)**

POLYBIUS chose the year 221 BC for the opening of his great history of the civilized world, because in his opinion it marked a curious turning-point in the affairs of men. Several of the greatest monarchs of the world died at that time—Antigonus Doseon, Ptolemy Evergetes, Cleomenes. Antiochus III of Syria was only just come to the throne, a mere youth, and other inexperienced youths, Ptolemy Philopator and Philip V ascended the vacant thrones. To those who expected a Roman invasion it must now have seemed inevitable, and at this time the Romans could have conquered the empire of Alexander with no difficulty. But suddenly there arose for them too the cloud in the west; Hannibal was before Saguntum, and crossed the Ebro, and for the next twenty years they were struggling for bare existence against the mighty Carthaginian. So then the interference of Rome was stayed, and Hellenistic life was allowed another generation of development.

We have already touched upon the position of affairs in Egypt and Judea during the earlier years of the long reign of Antiochus the Great (221-175 BC). As we have seen, he did not establish his power in Jerusalem till twenty-four years later. Although the Hellenizing party in the city was strong enough to assure him of support, things were different elsewhere. The Jews in the country parts were much harassed by the exactions and depredations practiced by the troops of the rival claimants. Owing to the wise administration of Aristomenes, an Acarnanian, virtually governor of Egypt during the infancy of Ptolemy Epiphanes, Antiochus III, after his decisive victory over the Egyptians at Panion, on the upper Jordan, made peace with the king, and undertook to give him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, and with her Coele-Syria and Palestine as her dowry. In the meanwhile, however, it was arranged that the taxes should be divided between the two kings, thus practically subjecting the people to a double amount of oppression.

Antiochus at first treated the Jews with much consideration, causing their religious scruples to be respected, and even directing that the city walls and the Temple should be repaired. On the whole, Jewish feeling at this time was decidedly against Egypt; and, in general, it may be said that association with a kingdom like that of the Seleucids, who ruled over such very various nationalities, would naturally present a certain amount of attraction, as against Egypt, the character of whose government would be likely to permit much less of elasticity. Ptolemy Philopator (*ob.* 204 BC) by the severe imposts which he enforced had alienated the nation, and they sided consequently with the Syrian power. There appear to have been more Jews in Antioch and its neighborhood than were to be found in Alexandria itself. From Babylon two thousand families had been transferred to Phrygia and Lydia; in fact, the Jews were nearly the most numerous nationality within the Syrian kingdom. We are told in the Second Book of Maccabees (8. 20)—and probably the story is true, with some amount of exaggeration in detail—that eight thousand

Babylonian Jews had gained a victory for Antiochus over an army of Galatians of fifteen times their own size.

The seven sons of Joseph, the leader of the Egyptian party, by his first wife, who were named after their paternal grandfather the sons of Tobiah, formed the champions of Hellenism during the time of Antiochus III. Their half-brother, Hyrcanus, on the other hand, inherited his father's policy, and by his ability and social qualities became, as we have already seen, a *persona grata* at the Egyptian court. There he acquired much wealth, which, on the death of his patron Philopator, he transferred in part to the Temple treasury for security, while with another portion he erected for himself on the eastern side of Jordan, not far from Heshbon, a costly castle, in which he took up his abode as representative of the Egyptian interest in those quarters. Domestic broils between him and his brethren constantly led on to civil disorder, and the state of the country was deplorable enough during the earlier part of Antiochus the Great's reign, while desultory attacks from their old enemies the Idumeans, Philistines, and Samaritans, added to the troubles of the nation.

Antiochus suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Roman general Lucius Scipio near Magnesia in 190 BC, a blow which involved the loss of much territory and money, as well as of his fleet. We now for the first time hear of his son, Antiochus Epiphanes, whom he was compelled to send to Rome as a hostage, to remain (as it turned out) thus confined for thirteen years.

In order to pay the excessively heavy impost which the Roman power inflicted, Antiochus betook himself to robbing temples, and the resentment and tumult which was brought about by his attack upon the temple of Bel at Elymais was the cause of his being slain there, 187 BC. His son, Seleucus Philopator, succeeded him and reigned in an uneventful manner for about eleven years. He devoted himself to finding the money which Rome continued to demand, while the Jews remained, in a manner, subjected to both the Egyptian and Syrian kingdoms.

The chief incident connected with Jerusalem during Seleucus's reign was the attempt of Heliiodorus to seize upon the Temple treasures. An official, described as "steward of the Temple", named Simon the Benjamite, in order to curry favor with Seleucus, informed Apollonius, governor of Coele-Syria, that there was much wealth to be had for the capture. He reported the matter to Seleucus, who, hard pressed for means wherewith to pay the heavy demands of the Romans, sent his chief minister, Heliiodorus, to Jerusalem. The Second Book of Maccabees (ch. 3) relates the terror that took possession of the city on the arrival of the Syrian envoy, and the subsequent incidents, at least in the form which the memory of them assumed several generations later. "The priests, prostrating themselves before the altar in their priestly garments, and looking toward heaven, called upon him that gave the law concerning deposits that he should preserve these treasures safe for those that had deposited them. And they that were in the houses rushed flocking out to make a universal supplication, because the place was like to come into contempt. And the women, girt with sackcloth under their breasts, thronged the streets, and the virgins that were kept in ward ran together, some to the gates, others to the walls, and some looked out through the windows". Thereupon appeared a horse "with a terrible rider" clothed in armour of gold, and two young men who scourged the impious intruder, at length laid prostrate, "speechless and bereft of all hope and deliverance". The high priest offers a sacrifice of propitiation. Heliiodorus too



makes vows, offers sacrifice, and returns to the king. “And when the king asked Heliodorus what manner of man was fit to be sent once again to Jerusalem, he said: If thou hast any enemy or conspirator against the state, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him back well scourged, if he even escape with his life; because of a truth there is about the place a power of God”.

The high priest above-mentioned was Onias III, who succeeded his father Simon II in 198 or 195 BC. He was a prominent member of the Assidean sect, and remarkable for his holiness of life and close observance of the Law. As a ruler, he aimed at strict impartiality between rival factions. He supported Hyrcanus in his use of the Temple as a place of security for the treasures which he had obtained through siding with Egypt, while, although he was viewed with hostility by the Hellenistic party led by his own brother Jason, he seems to have been regarded, for a while at least, with much favor by Seleucus. At length, however, owing to the continual slanders of Simon the Benjamite, who remained at the Syrian court, Onias, in the interests of his people, proceeded to Antioch, where he abode for some years. Soon after his arrival there Antiochus Epiphanes obtained permission to terminate his thirteen years' detention at Rome. On his arrival at Antioch he found that his brother was dead, probably murdered by Heliodorus, who had assumed the throne. Epiphanes banished the murderer, and thus unexpectedly obtained the kingdom (175 BC), Demetrius, son of the late king, and thus the rightful heir, being now a hostage at Rome. This arrangement met with the favor of the Roman power, which, on the principle *Divide et impera*, had for its interest to sow dissensions among members of a royal family, and thus gain over kingdoms which still retained more or less of independence.

Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) reigned 175-104 BC. “He was by nature a genuine despot, eccentric and undependable, sometimes extravagantly liberal and fraternizing with the common people in an affected manner; at other times cruel and tyrannical”. The latter side of his character is made abundantly evident by his treatment of the Jews. The former qualities are brought out in detail by Polybius in his history, who there speaks of him as “madman” rather than Epiphanes, (*magnificent*). He was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Hellenism, and his great purpose was to introduce Greek worship and practices throughout his dominions, not sparing any amount of violence or religious persecution, should they be needful to attain his ends. The feuds which prevailed in Judea of themselves would have attracted his attention. He received, however, a direct appeal from the Hellenizing party there, who pointed out that Hyrcanus was still collecting taxes in the neighborhood of his castle in the interests of Egypt.

Hyrcanus committed suicide, and Antiochus seized his property. In his need of money he proceeded to plunder the Temple, a proceeding which would fall in well with his natural dislike of the stricter party among the Jews. Jason, brother of Onias, who had been acting as high priest since the latter had taken up his abode at Antioch, undertook, on condition of his being confirmed in the possession of that office, to provide amply for the king's pecuniary needs, and to encourage Hellenism in every way in Jerusalem. In pursuance of this arrangement, “seeking to overthrow the lawful modes of life, he brought in new customs forbidden by the Law”, the very priests hurrying from their sacrifices to the contests conducted in the Greek manner in a gymnasium below the citadel. Many sought to efface the marks of circumcision. “The Greek cap”, a broad-brimmed hat, such as appeared on the figure of Hermes (Mercury), was ordered to be worn by the noblest of the young men. A festival in honor of Hercules was celebrated

every fourth year at Tyre, and to this Jason sent a money contribution. But the courage of his messengers failed them, and when it came to the point, they asked that the money should be applied to the fitting out of additional vessels for Antiochus's fleet.

Jason held office for three years (174—171 BC), and his influential position is shown by the fact that when Antiochus in 172 BC paid a short visit to Jerusalem, he was received with acclamations and a torchlight procession.

Jason's tenure of power however was, after all, far from secure. Menelaus, brother of Simon the Benjamite, was sent to Antioch with some of the promised money. He took the opportunity of outbidding Jason and thus obtained his office; but his attempts at fulfilling the pecuniary obligations which he had thus incurred, by rifling the Temple-stores and carrying off its sacred vessels, procured him not only the rebuke of the aged Onias, soon afterwards slain (171 BC), but arraignment before the king as being the cause of riots in Jerusalem brought about by his sacrilegious conduct. But the attack upon him proved abortive. "Menelaus, through the covetous dealings of them that were in power, remained still in his office".

Antiochus now (170 BC) relying, though without adequate grounds, on immunity from the side of Rome, which was becoming involved in a war with Perseus, king of Macedonia, attacked and defeated Ptolemy Philometor near Pelusium. A report that the king of Syria had been slain brought such encouragement to the enemies of Menelaus, that Jason, who had fled to the Ammonites, returned to the city, and compelled Menelaus to take refuge in the citadel. The report soon proved to be erroneous; Jason's career was at an end; he fled to Sparta and died there unmourned.

The ferocious side of the king of Syria's nature was now fully revealed. He held a three days' massacre in Jerusalem, sparing neither age nor sex. Menelaus himself brought the king into the Holy of Holies, where the latter declared afterwards that he had seen the statue of a long-bearded man (Moses), riding an ass, and with a roll in his hand. He carried off everything of value to Antioch, leaving, as rulers in Jerusalem, Menelaus as high priest and Philip, a Phrygian, as governor. Of the latter it is said that he was "in character more barbarous than him that set him there".

On Antiochus's conduct at this time Prof. Mahaffy comments as follows: "I think his savage outbreak at Jerusalem, where he sacrificed swine upon the altar, defiled the Holy of Holies, and forced all the priests to pollute themselves, must have been caused by some more special personal injuries on their part than the mere resistance to his innovations. Our information is so scanty that we can only guess. In some way the nationalist party in Judaea, and their relations in Egypt, must have thwarted his advance and marred his campaign. We hear that his third advance was slow; had he reached Alexandria but a few days sooner, he might have seized the capital, murdered the royal princes, and then made his peace with the Romans when the game was won. It seems likely that the opposition of the patriotic party in Judea hindered his march, and so caused his signal failure at the moment of victory".

On the occasion of another expedition against Egypt two years later (168 BC), Antiochus was met by a Roman envoy, Caius Popilius Lenas, who handed him the Senate's written order to discontinue the war, and on his hesitation to promise acquiescence, drew a circle around him with his stick on the sand, and required his decision before he stepped across that boundary. At the moment that Antiochus yielded to this peremptory demand, the empire of Alexander may be said to have visibly passed

over to the Romans. But to a man of the king's ferocity of temper the occasion proved one on which he had to wreak his vengeance in some direction, and now, as before, the Jews were the victims. Sending Apollonius, his collector of tribute, with 20,000 men to Jerusalem, he gave command that it should be thoroughly Hellenized. On the first Sabbath after his arrival Apollonius proceeded to carry out his orders. Those who opposed were killed or sold into slavery, and colonists brought in to fill their places. The city walls were demolished, but the citadel was fortified, and the Syrian garrison held it securely through Maccabean times till 142 BC. All distinctively Jewish practices were forbidden, circumcision, the sacrificial system, abstinence from unclean food, even the possession of the sacred Books. On the 15th of Chisleu, *i.e.* late in December, 168 BC, an altar to the Olympian Zeus was placed on the altar of burnt-offering, and ten days later it was hassled by the sacrifice of a sow. The Jews were compelled to keep the festival of Dionysus (Bacchus), crowned with ivy. Violence, including death, was the penalty for detection in the infringement of any of these commands, which were rigidly enforced by officers appointed to see to their observance in all parts of the country. To this time belong the well-known stories of the martyrdom of the aged scribe Eleazar, and of the mother and her seven sons. It was emphatically a time of sifting. "Judah was searched, and that which was unworthy cast out. Waverers turned with rekindled fervor to the God of their fathers. In their hiding-places on the outskirts of the land, the faces of the Chasidim (Assideans) grew stern. The soldiers of Jehovah were ready for battle, waiting in prayer for a God-sent man to lead them".

CHAPTER IV.

**THE MACCABEAN REVOLT TO THE DEATH OF JUDAS  
(168—160 BC).**

IN order to understand the importance of the Maccabean revolt as a specially important epoch in the history of Judaism, we must contemplate it on the one hand in its relation to the establishment of the Law under Ezra and Nehemiah, and on the other hand in its reference to the completion of the literary work which goes by the name of the Mishnah (circ. 200 AD).

When the Temple-worship at Jerusalem was reestablished, there was placed before the pious Jew in detail the ceremonial, as well as other, duties which that Law entailed. The festival celebrations, the sacrifices and other offerings on stated occasions, the tribute to be paid to the priests, and in general the rites necessary to be performed regularly or on special occasions, on the penalty of forfeiting the favor of the Almighty—all these were set forth with particularity, to be carried out with the utmost punctilio. Further, the study of the Law was given in charge to a body of men, the scribes, whose duty should be to enforce its regulations, explain its meaning, and draw such inferences as might be needed in the complicated circumstances of religious duty. Absolute precision was essential in carrying out the requirements of the Law. How should that precision be attained, except by an authorized interpretation? In the course of centuries these guardians of the Law had heaped up a vast number of traditions, more or less directly based on the groundwork of the text which was in their keeping, and intended to provide answers for the variety of questions actually arising, or which might well be expected to arise, touching its requirements. This gradually growing body of decisions, which by the end of the second century AD was formed into the Mishnah (the common basis of the Talmuds of Jerusalem and Babylon), had not of course acquired in Maccabean times the fullness which it afterwards exhibits. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Assideans, and all those who with them placed a high value upon the distinctive religious rites of the nation, were even at this date strong supporters of the sanctity of the ceremonial enjoined, or suggested by inference from that which was enjoined, in the five “Books of Moses” (the Torah). A considerable measure of enthusiasm for the Law already doubtless existed among those who were wholly opposed to the encroachments of the Hellenistic spirit, to which we have referred in previous chapters.

On the other hand, we gather from the general tenor of the history that those who favored Hellenism were in the majority in Judea during the times immediately preceding the Maccabean outbreak. Not only were the Jews compelled from the needs of commerce to acquaint themselves with the Greek language, but it is also evident that the attempts to introduce Greek customs into Judea met with considerable success. If then there had been no violent means used to this end, and things had been permitted to go smoothly on in Judea, as had been the case in Syria and in Egypt, it seems humanly speaking probable that as in the latter cases, so in the former, the Judaism of Palestine would have taken a more or less Hellenistic form. “For it belonged to the very essence of Hellenism that it should dominate and color the modes of religions worship, and at least clothe them in Grecian garments. We find it so in Syria as well as in Egypt”.

But although, as far as numbers go, those who favored Greek ways seem to have been in the ascendant in Judea, the check was sudden and effective. The violent attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to "rush" (in modern phrase) his policy and abolish Judaism at one blow, aroused the spirit which found expression in the Maccabean revolt. "It was just the extreme and radical character of the attempt that saved Judaism. For now not only the strict party of *Chasidim*, but the whole mass of the people, was roused to do battle for the old faith. And the further development of events led to the complete expulsion of Hellenism from Jewish soil, at least in matters of religion. So far as our information reaches, this is the only example of an Oriental religion completely emancipating itself from the influence of Hellenism". It is true that the need in pre-Maccabean days of resisting the seduction of Greek manners had already done something in this direction. None the less did the savagery of Epiphanes bring about the saving crisis of Judaism.

The contemplation, however, of the Maccabean revolt from this point of view must not cause us to forget that its leaders were in constant intercourse with Greeks. Although in one sense those leaders were fiercely Semitic and national in their aims, they were willing to deal in the way of treaties with the Seleucid kings or the Roman Senate, and, as Prof. Mahaffy observes, in a case of the latter kind (circ. 129 BC) "the very names of the ambassadors—Simon, son of Dositheus; Apollonius, son of Alexander; and Diodorus, son of Jason, cultivated men, who doubtless spoke Greek perfectly at Rome—show the worldly side of John Hyrcanus".

We have spoken of the barbarities practiced upon the Jews by order of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the martyrdoms which were the outcome of Jewish heroism. The Assideans and those whom by preaching and example they encouraged to resistance, took refuge, as their forefathers had done, in caves and other hiding-places. At first the Assideans would not permit their followers to defend their positions if assailed on the Sabbath, and we are told that on one such occasion Philip, the Phrygian commander of the Syrian forces, was able to destroy vast numbers of the fugitives by applying fire to the caves in which they had sought refuge.

Hope at last appeared, and the heroism of Mattathias and his family supplied the leadership which was needed by the afflicted nation. He belonged to the priestly family of the Hasmoneans, so called from *Chasmon*, his great-grandfather. He was an old man, and his sons were all in their prime. He had withdrawn from Jerusalem, when the state of affairs rendered it impossible for him to discharge his priestly functions there, to Modin, his home. The emissaries of the king, in the course of their expeditions for the purpose of extirpating Jewish rites, arrived at Modin, and urged Mattathias to sacrifice to Jupiter, promising advancement, if he would comply. When he stoutly refused, on behalf of himself and his family, to forsake the law of his fathers, even should he stand alone in resistance, he saw a Jew step forward to comply with the commissioners' demand. This spark kindled the flame. With his own hand he slew his recreant fellow-countryman, while his sons killed Apelles, the leader, and his soldiers, and destroyed the altar of sacrifice. Thereupon Mattathias summoned all to follow him to the mountains, where he carried on for a year a successful warfare, harassing the enemy, and careful not to meet them in the open, as long as his forces were still untrained to cope with anything like disciplined troops. He persuaded even the more rigid of his followers to give up their scruples as to self-defence on the Sabbath. His adherents constantly increased, and although, as in the times of the Judges and early in the reign

of Saul, they had to live for the most part in hiding-places, they gradually gained experience in warfare, as well as courage from the successes gained in unlooked-for descents upon towns occupied by the enemy, where he slew foes and apostates alike, circumcised the children, and destroyed symbols of idolatry.

In 167 BC, feeling death approaching, he committed the cause to his five sons, exhorting them to be faithful to the charge thus laid on them. Each of them had a distinguishing epithet. John was Gaddis, "the Holy"; Simon, Thassi, "Guide"; Judas, Maccabeus, "the Hammer"; Eleazar, Avaran, "the Beastslayer"; Jonathan, Apphus, "the Cunning". John, as the eldest, was head of the family, but their father, knowing their natural aptitudes, named Simon as the adviser, and Judas the leader in war. The selection was justified by events. Judas showed himself possessed of ability, patriotism, modesty, tactical skill, unfailing courage, and military ardor, and won undying fame among heroes. "He was renowned unto the utmost part of the earth, and he gathered together such as were ready to perish", is the enthusiastic summing up of his merits by the native historian of his times.

After a while spent in completing the training and organization of his men by the same tactics as had been adopted by his father, he soon succeeded in defeating and slaying Apollonius, the commander of the Syrian detachment, and set an example of turning the enemy's arms upon himself, by ever after using the sword which he had thus captured. Not long-subsequently, in the pass of Beth-horon, encouraged no doubt by the memory of Joshua's overthrow of the five kings of the Amorites, he completely routed the army of Coele-Syria under Seron.

Antiochus, roused to indignation by these unexpected defeats, and prevented from avenging them in person by the need of suppressing insurrections against his authority in Parthia and Armenia, entrusted an army of mercenaries to Lysias, his son's guardian. His policy towards the Jews was now changed. Hitherto he had sought to Hellenize them by planting colonists, who should induce them to give up all their distinctive features as a nation, and become absorbed into the Greek world. But now his end was to be obtained, not by absorption, but by annihilation, and his orders were that the Jews should be exterminated, and the land colonized by external troops.

Lysias for this service chose three generals, Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias, with a force variously estimated at twenty thousand and at forty thousand soldiers. His troops were so confident of success that they were accompanied by Phoenician slave-traders, with chains and money ready for the acquisition of the captives on whom they reckoned, and whose price they had already fixed. They proceeded by the coast route to Emmaus (now Amwas), twenty-two Roman miles N.W. of Jerusalem, near the Jaffa road. Judas took up his quarters in the first instance at Mizpah, where in old time, when the nation was in sore need, Samuel had procured for them a victory decisive and with lasting results. Having inspired his followers with enthusiasm by the display of a scroll of the Law, for the maintenance of whose precepts they were about to fight, he led his forces, 6,000 in number, to a position on the south of Emmaus, and thence into the hills. Gorgias, leaving part of the Syrian army in charge of Nicanor, who was commander-in-chief, proceeded by night to the hills to attack Judas's camp. Forewarned of this plan, Judas had withdrawn his men, and, descending under cover of darkness to the plain, appeared at Emmaus, and attacked and destroyed his enemy's position with great slaughter. Gorgias, when day dawned, perceived the camp in flames, and, not venturing

to hazard a conflict with the foe thus flushed with success, withdrew to the Philistine country. The booty, including much gold and silver, proved of considerable value in facilitating the continuance of the struggle. "And they returned home, and sang a song of thanksgiving, and gave praise unto heaven; because His mercy is good, because His mercy endureth for ever".

This took place in 166 BC. In the following year Lysias resumed hostilities, this time leading in person a large army of horse and foot along a circuitous route by way of Idumea. He met with no better success, being completely overthrown at Beth-zur, a town which commands the main road from Beer-sheba and Hebron to Jerusalem, and which played an important part in the Maccabean struggle.

These signal successes put a completely new face upon the Jewish resistance, and a lull in the contest with their oppressors having now set in, Judas proceeded to Jerusalem, where the citadel was still held by Menelaus under the protection of Syrian forces. The deserted sanctuary, idolatrous altars, and images of Zeus and of Antiochus would remind the Jewish leader that much yet remained to be done. The Temple was now thoroughly cleansed of its pollutions. A new altar and new vessels were provided, while a wall with two towers was erected as a defence against attacks from the citadel. We gather that Hellenizing priests were rigidly excluded from taking part in the restoration of the national religion, and doubtless Menelaus, though still titular high priest, had no share in the proceedings. On the removal of the polluted altar, a council of elders determined to place its stones in one of the porches of the entrance court, "until there should come a prophet to show what should be done with them" (1 Macc. 5. 40). In order that the fire for the new sacrifice might come from a source of unquestioned purity, it was obtained by striking stones together. Just three years to the day from the defilement of the altar of burnt-offering by idolatrous sacrifice, the consecration was effected. It was ordained that each year the festival commemorative of this rededication should be held for eight days "with gladness and joy" (1 Macc. 4. 59). Its name to this day is *Chanukah* (Consecration) or the Feast of Lights, the latter symbolizing the reestablishment of the Divine illumination of the Law.

The freedom from active service in the field was, as might be expected, but temporary. The Jews' inveterate enemies, Idumeans and the rest, were as hostile as ever. Judas fortified Beth-zur, and rescued and brought to Judea many of his countrymen who were suffering ill treatment at the hands of their heathen neighbors in Galilee and Gilead or among the Ammonites and Edomites.

Lysias meanwhile, probably from lack of money wherewith to pay mercenaries, left Judea to itself. Antiochus failed in his Parthian expedition, and on his return died in Taba, a Persian city, appointing his relative Philip guardian of his son Antiochus V (Eupator). This appointment of a rival to Lysias (who already held the same office) had the natural result of giving the final blow to the strength of the Seleucid kingdom. Judas ventured under these circumstances to lay vigorous siege to the citadel. Probably through the collusion of Hellenistic priests, whom he had excluded from participation in his restoration of worship, those who held the fortress, McNeal's included, made their escape to Antioch, and urged that strong measures should be taken by the king. Lysias, with his youthful charge, accordingly laid siege to Beth-zur, which was the key of that part of the country. The Sabbatical year (163 BC), in which there could be neither sowing nor reaping, increased their difficulties, and the garrison was reduced to

surrender. Thereupon Judas went out to meet the Syrian troops at Beth-zachariah (between Jerusalem and Beth-zur), but his force, a mere handful by comparison, in spite of prodigies of valor was driven back to Jerusalem, and took refuge in the Temple precincts. Even these would have been carried by assault, had not the advance of Lysias's rival Philip upon Antioch compelled the former to make terms with the Jews and withdraw. In the treaty thus obtained they secured a promise of complete religious freedom, and although, in spite of the terms of peace, the fortifications of the city were razed to the ground, the people had at least gained through their leader the main object for which they had for years been contending. Henceforward accordingly we may observe that the character of the contest was altered. None of the successors of Epiphanes attempted to overturn the Jewish religion by force. The struggle was henceforward primarily within the nation, between the stricter and the Hellenizing parties, the one or the other of them calling in the Syrian power to their aid. At present the national party were in possession. But presently Demetrius (Soter), son of Seleucus IV (Philopator), and thus nephew of Epiphanes, made his escape from Rome, slew his cousin Antiochus Eupator and Lysias, and with the support of the Romans assumed the kingdom of Syria (162 BC). Menelaus had been put to death by Lysias, and Alcimus (or Jakim) named by Demetrius as his successor. The new high priest, with other leaders of the Hellenist party at Jerusalem, urged upon Demetrius that he should relieve them from what they represented as the oppression of Judas Maccabeus. In reply to their request, Bacchides was sent as general to carry out their demands. Alcimus, as a lineal descendant of Aaron, as well as by the assurances which he gave, had secured the support of the Assidean party, who, however, were taught by his treacherous murder of sixty of their number that their allegiance was misplaced. This and a further outrage on the part of the Syrian general Bacchides had the effect of strengthening anew the party of Judas. Alcimus sought additional help from Demetrius, who, in reply, sent Nicanor with a commission to take strong measures against the rebels. After a conference with Judas, and complimentary speeches on the part of Nicanor, there followed a battle at Capharsalama, and another at Adasa, in both of which the Syrian forces were utterly routed. On the latter occasion Nicanor himself fell.

Judas now, fearing the vengeance of Demetrius, sent an embassy to the Roman Senate, who readily tendered their support, in pursuance of their general policy to extend their influence by taking up the cause of one of the parties to a dispute, and so acquiring a footing from which to advance their own interests. In this case their policy was doubtless influenced by their desire to adopt measures at once easy and effective to keep up control over the power to which, in the days of Epiphanes, they had administered so peremptory a cheek by the hand of Popilius Laenas. Their order to Demetrius in pursuance of this treaty, that he should no longer trouble the Jews, came too late. Only about two months after the death of Nicanor, Bacchides, despatched to Judea, inflicted a crushing defeat at Elasa upon Judas, who himself fell in the engagement, and was buried by permission of the victors with his father at Modin.

After all, it is not to be wondered at that even such a hero was unable to maintain his ground permanently against a foe so overwhelmingly superior in numbers. His earlier victories, surprising as they were, may be accounted for in part at least by his powers in strategy. Never afterwards were the Jews successful against their foes, except when the Syrians were themselves weakened by internal dissension.



CHAPTER V.

**FROM THE DEATH OF JUDAS TO THE DEATH OF SIMON III  
(160—135 BC)**

GREAT as was the blank left by the death of the chief leader among the Maccabean brothers, yet the condition in which he left his countrymen was at any rate to be preferred to that from which he had rescued them. Now, as we have said, there was no longer a question of their being compelled to conform to idolatrous customs. Further, they had gained a knowledge of what they could do in the way of resistance to a foreign foe. Self-respect and self-reliance had been to some extent impressed upon them by the victories which Judas had gained by a rare combination of skill, courage, and enthusiastic confidence in his cause as being that of God.

Internal dissensions were however rife, and there was no longer a sufficiently commanding personality to overcome any of the evils of faction. The Assideans, the Hellenists, and the adherents of the three surviving brothers of the Hasmonean family, divided the nation. The first-named, narrow in their sympathies, had no very definite views of policy, except to give a general support to the high priest Alcimus; holding that his Aaronic descent sufficiently counterbalanced his treachery towards them and his undoubtedly Syrian sympathies. The Hasmoneans looked to the treaty which Rome, on the principle of obtaining a hold on the weaker of the two contending powers, had made with Judas Maccabeus.

The Hellenists continued their former aims; they still held the citadel at Jerusalem, where they proved a thorn in the side of their fellow-countrymen.

The sufferings of famine were now added to intestine troubles, and it was evident that only by the efforts of the Hasmonean party could any brighter future be looked for. Jonathan, the present leader, was more of a politician than a general. His brother Jochanan was slain in an attack by a hostile tribe, and Bacchides in the course of a year practically reduced the country to submission to the Syrian yoke. Alcimus, who, apparently with the object of giving the heathen access to the Temple, had ordered the destruction of a line of demarcation which stood between the inner and outer courts, was seized with paralysis and died, owing, as the stricter Jews believed, to the wrath of heaven at his sacrilegious purpose.

For some years (150—153 BC) the Jews were without a high priest, and Bacchides for the first two of them left the country to itself, a circumstance of which Jonathan made good use by seeking to improve his position for taking the offensive. This endeavor of his so far succeeded, that, after a certain amount of strife with both Hellenists and Syrian forces, the land had rest for five years.

But more striking success was now in store, of a character that shows the powerful position which the Maccabean leader had succeeded in acquiring. The Hellenizers evidently failed to command the sympathies of any large number of the people. The Assideans doubtless were in general accord with the party of Jonathan, and

the people over whom he presided at the end of those years of respite had a real claim to be regarded as a united nation. The war of faction had been put down.

Jonathan's supremacy was conceded, and so apparent to Syria that the rivals for power were eager to secure his support.

Balas, son of Epiphanes, bore an extraordinary likeness to Antiochus Eupator, the late king of Syria. He took the name of Alexander, and with the countenance of Attains of Pergamum and Ptolemy Philometor of Egypt in his pretensions, as well as of the Roman Senate, he claimed the Syrian throne. Demetrius, whose cruelties had alienated his subjects, was alarmed, and wrote to secure Jonathan's aid, "with words of peace, so as to magnify him". Balas, on the other hand, successfully capped this attempt by a present of a purple robe and a golden crown; so that he at once became prince in Judea and officiated as high priest at the Feast of Tabernacles, 152 BC, the first of his family who had held that office. Demetrius still endeavored to outbid his rival for Jewish support, and the letter which he now wrote, preserved by Josephus, illustrates the extremely severe character of the taxation which had been imposed by Syria. He says: "I will remit you most of the taxes and contributions which ye paid to my predecessors and myself ... I give you as a favor the value of the salt-tax and the (golden) crowns which ye did bring to me, and my share, even one-third of ground crops, and one-half of the fruit trees, I surrender from today. Also the poll-tax paid by every inhabitant of Judea, viz., Samaria, Galilee, Perea, I grant you in perpetuity." Among further concessions he promises honorable posts in military service, a larger contribution to the Temple expenses, the remission of the annual tax of 10,000 drachma paid by those who came to sacrifice at Jerusalem, and that even Jews settled in Syrian provinces should be exempt on all Sabbaths and festivals, and for three days before and after the festivals, from being called before any court of justice.

Jonathan was prudently deaf to these appeals. Alexander overthrew his rival, who was slain in the battle, and Philometor offering to give the victor his daughter Cleopatra, the marriage was celebrated at Ptolemais, Jonathan being present as a specially honored guest. Jonathan's position henceforward was such that he was able to aim at the extension of Jewish dominion by taking advantage of the political condition of Syria, and obtaining, partly by demand, partly by conquest, such concessions of power or territory as he desired. In the exercise of this general policy he continued to support Alexander Balas when Demetrius II, son of Demetrius I, set himself up (147 BC) as rival claimant for the throne, and he more than once defeated Demetrius's forces, and brought home rich booty. As an acknowledgment of this service he acquired from Balas Ekron and its territory.

In 145 BC, however, Demetrius obtained the throne with the help of Ptolemy, who transferred his daughter Cleopatra from Balas to his rival. Jonathan at this time, trusting that the Syrian forces were sufficiently employed, sought to obtain possession of the citadel at Jerusalem, which still contained a Syrian garrison. Demetrius hearing of this, summoned Jonathan to Ptolemais. The latter, however, was able as a result of that interview to obtain his own confirmation in his dignities, the promise for Judea of freedom from tribute, and the addition of the three Samaritan provinces of Ephraim, Lydda, and Ramathaim—all this apparently on condition that Jonathan should raise the siege of the citadel.

Antiochus VI, son of Alexander Balas, was now brought forward by Trypho (the leader of some troops whom Demetrius had disbanded) as rival king to Demetrius, and thereupon an opportunity was furnished Jonathan to make still further demands as the price of aid. Before, however, effect could be given to these, Demetrius was driven from power, and Jonathan passed over to the side of the new ruler, taking the field on his behalf, while at the same time he sent ambassadors to open up friendly relations with Sparta, as well as to Rome to renew the treaty made in the time of Judas. At this time also the city was refortified and a wall erected so as to cut off the citadel effectually from the rest of Jerusalem. At length, Trypho suspecting, and not without cause, that Jonathan was advancing rapidly towards the step of casting off completely the Syrian suzerainty, treacherously secured the person of the Jewish leader, and after a further exhibition of successful craft in his dealings with Simon Maccabeus, who had taken the command, caused Jonathan to be murdered at Bascama, and returned home.

Simon, on his succession to power (142 BC), reaped the benefit of his predecessor's skilful policy and generalship. All that was needed was to obtain from Syria the confirmation of the concessions made to Jonathan. These were readily granted by Demetrius, who indeed had no power to refuse them, and Simon's position as an independent prince was virtually conceded, though not perhaps in language wholly free from ambiguity. He now proceeded to secure the fortress of Beth-zur and Gazara. The latter was of special importance to obtain, as being on the route between Jerusalem and Joppa, a town which was one of the most valuable acquisitions made at this time, as its trading dues were a source of large income to the Jewish commonwealth. Above all, he at last obtained possession of the citadel itself, and demolished its forts, the Hellenists who occupied it either withdrawing to Egypt, or accepting the new conditions of life in their own country, or lastly, in some few cases where they were unwilling to yield, being put to death for their idolatrous leanings. Public documents were dated from the commencement of Simon's reign (142 BC), as a new era, thus following the example of neighboring independent states. Embassies sent by him to Sparta and to Rome procured promises of friendship and support from both. Prosperity prevailed throughout the land. According to the description of the Maccabean historian, "Then they tilled their ground in peace, and the land gave her increase, and the trees of the plains their fruit. The ancient men sat in the streets, they communed all of them together of good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel. He provided victuals for the cities, and furnished them with all manner of munition, until the name of his glory was named unto the end of the earth. He made peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy: and they sat each man under his vine and his fig-tree, and there was none to make them afraid: and there ceased in the land any that fought against them: and the kings were discomfited in those days. And he strengthened all those of his people that were brought low: the law he searched out, and every lawless and wicked person he took away. He glorified the sanctuary, and the vessels of the Temple he multiplied". One more step was needed to crown the position. The office of high priesthood had been held by Jonathan with the permission of the Syrian power. Simon must assume it at the call of his own nation, and this was done with all due pomp and ceremony in September 141 BC, when it was resolved that Simon should be ecclesiastically, as well as in civil and military affairs, supreme "for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet". Brazen tablets recording the decree were set up in the Temple court. The announcement of this solemn confirmation of the high priesthood in the house of Joarib was made to the Jews resident in Egypt in a carefully worded communication, having regard to the

susceptibilities of men who had not only set up a novel temple in their adopted country, but also had among them a representative of the ancient high-priestly family of Jaddua.

Now that the culmination had been reached, Simon, or rather, probably, the council of chief men over whom he presided, proceeded to issue shekels and half-shekels with the words (in old Hebrew characters) “Jerusalem the Holy” on one side, and on the other, “shekel (or half-shekel) of Israel”, with the number of the year, dating apparently from his consecration to the high priesthood. Emblems of his office were added in the shape of a budding rod, and a cup suggesting incense. Simon’s name does not occur on those extant, of which we have specimens of the years (142—138 BC) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

After several years of peace, during which Simon obtained the renewed expression of Roman goodwill—of value less than doubtful, could men have foreseen the future—he was called upon by Antiochus Sidetes (138 BC) to recognize his authority as successor to Demetrius, who had been defeated and captured in the course of his Parthian expedition. Sidetes, while the contest between himself and Demetrius’s general Trypho was still doubtful, readily confirmed Simon in his independence and immunities. As soon as that leader had been captured and put to death, Sidetes claimed the restoration to Syria of the citadel in Jerusalem and other fortresses on payment of suitable compensation, and followed up his claim by an appeal to arms. Simon, now an old man, sent his sons, Judas and John, to meet the invader between Modin and Ekron. The Syrians were vanquished, and Simon was left in peace by Sidetes during the few remaining months of the Jewish prince’s life. He and his sons, Mattathias and Judas, were treacherously slain at Jericho by his son-in-law Ptolemy, son of Abubus, who had been appointed by Simon civil and military governor of that district. Ptolemy’s ambitious designs, which had prompted him to this deed of violence, were unsuccessful. John, the sole remaining son, was forewarned that Ptolemy’s agents were approaching in order to complete the murderous designs of their master. He hastened to Jerusalem, where he received the support of the people, and succeeded to his father’s position (135 BC).

CHAPTER VI.

**THE REIGN OF JOHN HYRCANUS**

**(135—106 BC)**

THE reign of John Hyrcanus, who now succeeded to the priestly and princely dignities of his father, has been compared to that of Solomon. They both began under troublous circumstances. Both extended the bounds of their country's dominion and its influence over neighboring states, and both, after a period of much prosperity, declined in glory and at length ended with gloom and party strife.

Hyrcanus's first duty he considered to be to avenge the deaths of his father and brothers. Ptolemy took refuge in Dok, near Jericho, where his main defence against capture by siege seems to have been his possession of the person of the mother of Hyrcanus, whom he threatened to hurl from the walls, if extreme measures were resorted to by the besiegers. After a considerable time the approach of the Sabbatical year compelled Hyrcanus to withdraw his forces, whereupon Ptolemy slew his mother-in-law, and fled to the wilderness east of Jordan. We hear of him no more. That Hyrcanus took no further measures against him is sufficiently explained by the need which befell that he should himself sustain a siege from Antiochus III (Sidetes), who approached Jerusalem, laying waste the neighboring country. After carefully investing the city for more than a year, without much progress being made, and both sides apparently suffering from lack of food while the besieged were still sufficiently supplied with water, Hyrcanus turned out all who were incapable of bearing arms, and as they were refused succor from the outside forces many of them perished. At length Hyrcanus asked for seven days' cessation of hostilities in order to keep the feast of Tabernacles. Antiochus's favorable response was accompanied by a present, including offerings of animals prepared for sacrifice. Negotiations for peace commenced, and it was concluded, the Jews agreeing "to deliver up their arms, to demolish the fortifications of Jerusalem, to pay tribute for the towns they had seized outside the narrower limits of Judea, and to give hostages for their good behavior!"

That the towns here referred to (Joppa, Gazara, and others) were not taken from the Jews at this time, when Syria was able to reassert her supremacy, is doubtless to be ascribed to the interference of the Romans, with whom Hyrcanus was in communication, and who, from motives of self-interest, sided, as heretofore, and as usual, with the weaker state.

Hyrcanus soon rebuilt the walls, and we are told that he proceeded also to hire mercenary troops, a novel step which, however little approved by the straiter sect of his countrymen, would at least afford a welcome relief from military service to many of the nation. The money needed for their pay or for the tribute to Antiochus, is said to have been obtained from the tomb of David.

Hyrcanus now accompanied his late foe in the expedition of the latter to Parthia to rescue his brother Demetrius Nicator, who had been forcibly detained there for the last ten years. The Parthian general was defeated, and the king set Nicator free, that

Sidetes might be drawn homewards by the need of protecting himself against his rival. Antiochus was soon afterwards slain in an attack of the enemy on his camp. Hyrcanus, who had been treated with much consideration by Antiochus, now escaped, and on reaching Jerusalem proceeded to take advantage of the strife which followed among claimants for the crown of the Seleucids, to render his country once more independent and to extend its limits.

Nicator, who had designs upon Egypt, was soon defeated, captured, and put to death (circ. 125 BC) by Alexander, nicknamed by the Syrians Zabinas, “the purchased”, who was said by some to be the son of Alexander Balas, by others an adopted son of Sidetes. Antiochus VIII (Gryphus), son of Demetrius Nicator, soon asserted his supremacy over Zabinas (122 BC), and for eight years reigned in peace over a kingdom reduced in size. At the end of this period there followed three years (114—111 BC) of civil war between him and his half-brother, Antiochus IX (Cyzicenus), remarkable mainly for his love of pleasure and sensuality, and apparent desire to pose as a second Antiochus Epiphanes in point of character. Cyzicenus, unlike his two immediate predecessors, ventured to meddle with Hyrcanus, who, however, on the one occasion on which their forces met, inflicted on him a decisive defeat.

Hyrcanus, taking advantage of the helplessness of Syria to check his schemes of extension, obtained forcible possession of considerable districts east of Jordan, as well as of Idumean and Samaritan territory. The Idumeans, who seem to have reaped much advantage from the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (580 BC) in the way of extension of territory northward, now weakened in all probability by the rising power of the Nabateans, who had spread from the south in their wake, were unable to resist the Jewish attack. To them he gave the alternative of exile or the embracing of Judaism. Many of them accepted the latter, and thenceforward such were considered as Jews, but, as we see from Josephus, they were liable to be looked on with some contempt by the Jewish aristocracy, who considered Herod, for example, as only a “half Jew”. “For the first time the Judeans under their leader, John Hyrcanus, practiced intolerance against other faiths; but they soon found out, to their painful cost, how dangerous it is to allow religious zeal to degenerate into the spirit of arbitrary conversion. The enforced union of the sons of Edom with the sons of Jacob was fraught with disaster to the latter. It was through the Idumeans and the Romans that the Hasmonean dynasty was overthrown and the Judean nation destroyed!”

In the Samaritan territory, Shechem and the temple on Mount Gerizim had been already destroyed by Hyrcanus. He now proceeded to plant Idumean settlers in the neighborhood of Samaria. The colonists there received sorry handling. Hyrcanus besieged Samaria, Cyzicenus, with some support from Egypt, vainly endeavoring to divert his attention by ravaging the country around (An ineffective support only. It came from Ptolemy Soter II (Lathyrus), who contributed a force of 6,000 men, but did so in opposition to the policy of the powerful queen-mother, Cleopatra, who had two distinguished Jews, Chelkias and Ananias, the sons of Onias of Heliopolis, for her generals in Palestine, and these were doubtless acting in the interest of the Jews against the Samaritans). After a year’s siege Samaria fell (108 BC) and was completely demolished, the ground on which it stood being cut up into ditches and canals. “When the sons of Hyrcanus [Aristobulus and Antigonus] returned to Jerusalem, the boundary between their father’s kingdom and that of the Syrians was substantially a line running from Mount Carmel on the west to Scythopolis on the Jordan. The authority of the holy

city extended over a larger area than in any previous period since the Exile; and the country was so administered that the people prospered, and the nations outside were either jealous or respectful”.

A stage of advance in the way of personal claims on the part of Hyrcanus was marked by the occurrence of his own name on coins of this time: “Jochanan, high priest, and the commonwealth of the Judeans”; in some even “Jochanan, high priest, and head of the commonwealth of the Judeans”. Thus, while still claiming the priestly character of the government of which he appeared as ecclesiastical head, a distinct step forward was taken in the prominence given to his civil prerogatives.

We now come face to face with two parties destined to take an important position in Judaism. Neither the Pharisees nor the Sadducees are wholly out of relationship to views which we have already noticed as held by important factors of the community. But while they may thus remind us respectively of the Assideans and the Hellenists of the earlier period, the distinctions are also obvious. Those who from their natural bent of mind or from training took the narrowest view as to the duty of exclusiveness, were henceforward known as Essenes. Practicing strict asceticism, and in some cases at least forbidding marriage, these exercised a comparatively slight influence upon the community, with which they generally renounced all connection. The Pharisees, on the other hand, although their rise is not clearly marked, had evidently in Hyrcanus’s day acquired the position of the popular party. They were, however, a religious rather than a political body. To the close study of the Law they added that of the superimposed and elaborated traditions as to its meaning and extent of application. Thus while inheriting the essential ideas of the Assideans, they gave a much more unqualified support to the policy of exclusiveness and national self-assertion which arose naturally out of the success of the Maccabean movement, and they had a real interest in their country’s welfare and prestige. Although closely connected with the scribes, the two were not, at least in later times, coincident. The relation between the scribes and Pharisees “was practically the same as that which exists between teachers and taught. The Pharisees were the men who endeavored to reduce the teachings and theories of the scribes to practice, and all those scribes, who in addition to the written Law also believed in the binding authority of tradition, were Pharisees as well as scribes”.

The Sadducees, on the other hand, may be considered as akin to, or even a branch of the Hellenistic party. They were distinguished, however, by accepting with the utmost loyalty the Pentateuch, although declining to be bound by the traditions which had grown up around it. It may well be, as Ewald says, that the disappearance of the early literature of this school is to be attributed to the disrepute into which it fell politically in Maccabean times. For as the Pharisees were *primarily* a religious, so the Sadducees were rather a political, party. They included the aristocratic families, the generals and others who were disposed to take a laxer view on the subject of exclusiveness, as having mixed more with the outer world, and acquired a knowledge of, and respect for, customs outside those proper to the Jewish race. “The main principle of the Sadducees was that ... good and evil, human weal or woe, depended solely on man’s own choice, and on his knowledge or ignorance. This almost Stoic-sounding principle, which they could easily set themselves to prove by detached passages of the Pentateuch, involved the sharpest contrast with the rigid system which had prevailed from the time of Ezra; but not less so with all true religion. At the same time, it

quicken the impulse of human freedom and activity, places the whole world of sense within its reach, and, while it flatters able minds, seems free from danger so long as the conception of God derived from ancient faith remains unimpaired, and the hereditary morality of the mass of the people is but little shaken. From this point it was but one step further to the denial of the immortality of the soul and eternal retribution, and therefore of the actual existence of angels and spirits; so that in this the Sadducees consciously repudiated what was by no means disclaimed in the Book of the Law, even if it was not sufficiently clearly asserted; and fell into the very doubts from which Koheleth had with difficulty escaped. Moreover, though they accepted the authority of the Law, yet they would only maintain a very independent position with respect to it, and they rejected all the further extensions and statutes of which the dominant school was so fond. This was the natural result of placing their fundamental principle in the merely human resolve to allow no power to determine or hinder their conduct save the civil laws”.

Their repudiation of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body may be closely connected with the Hellenic influence, to which they so readily lent themselves. We are reminded of the Greek view of the matter by St. Paul’s experience at Athens. “Associating continually with those who thus regarded the very notion of the resurrection as incredible, it was but natural that the Sadducees should not believe in it themselves”.

It would be an error to suppose that in all matters where religion or administration was concerned the Sadducees leaned to milder measures than their rivals. “The Sadducees thought that the punishment ordered by the Pentateuch for the infliction of any bodily injury—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth—should be literally interpreted and followed out, and obtained in consequence the reputation of being cruel administrators of justice; whilst the Pharisees, appealing to traditional interpretations of the Scriptures, allowed mercy to preponderate, and only required a pecuniary compensation from the offender. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were more lenient in their judgment of those false witnesses whose evidence might have occasioned a judicial murder, as they only inflicted punishment if the execution of the defendant actually took place”.

So long as the struggle was for religious freedom, as it was in the days of the first generation of Maccabean brothers, the Pharisees were heartily on the side of the rulers. “When this contest had been brought to a successful issue, and Hyrcanus showed that his aim was for the aggrandizement and extension of the Jewish state, and even for his personal glorification as the civil prince, and not merely the chief ecclesiastical personage, their support began to be exchanged to some extent for suspicion and coldness. For all the earlier portion of his rule, however, he contrived to prevent a formal difference from manifesting itself. At length the crisis came.

On the occasion of a banquet to the chief Pharisees, Hyrcanus, perhaps in order to test the sincerity of their friendship, and lead them to make the attack, for which he may have had good reason to think that they were preparing, asked them to mention anything in his conduct which they considered blameworthy. A certain Eleazar ben Povia replied that he should content himself with princely authority and transfer the high priest’s diadem to a worthier head, inasmuch as his mother had been made a captive during an attack on Modin by the Syrians. The charge which this implied was



inquired into and found false. Hyrcanus called upon the Pharisees to inflict punishment for the slander. They condemned their colleague to the penalty assigned to ordinary slander, viz., stripes and imprisonment. The Sadducees suggested that a punishment so trivial in proportion to the offence of making this charge against the chief civil and ecclesiastical ruler showed disaffection on the part of the Pharisees to his rule. He thenceforward withdrew his favor from them, showing his estrangement by various changes in the details of administration, civil offices, as well as those connected with the Temple, being now given to the Sadducees.

This clouded the short remainder of Hyrcanus's days, and proved the commencement of discord and disaster to the nation. His house, indeed, appeared thoroughly prosperous.

“It was because they had devoted such intense labor, and had been proved in the severest crisis, that the Hasmoneans, like David of old, had attained supreme power, which came to them unsought and yet, by the inevitable necessity of circumstances, backed by the acclamation and most earnest cooperation of the people ... Their position as rulers, therefore, was if possible more prosperous, and full of brighter promise for a long-future, than David's had ever been. In John Hyrcanus and his five sons, it seemed that the perpetuity of their house was secured. But collapse was near. Hyrcanus died at the age of sixty, after thirty-one years' rule, in the year 106 BC. Josephus says that “he was esteemed by God worthy of the three privileges—the government of his nation, the dignity of the high-priesthood, and prophecy”. Whatever we think of this last claim, we may at any rate accept it as a sign of the high estimation in which he was held by his countrymen during the greater part of his reign.

CHAPTER VII.

**FROM THE ACCESSION OF ARISTOBULUS TO THE DEATH OF  
JANNAEUS**

**(106—78 BC)**

HYRCANUS, before his death (of which no particulars have come down to us), named his wife as his successor, and his son Judah—better known by his Greek name Aristobulus—as high priest. The latter soon transferred his mother from the throne to a prison, and getting rid of his four brothers in a similar manner, he assumed the title of king, although he did not venture to place it upon the coins struck in his reign. His successors till the time of Pompey continued the regal title. It is doubtful whether he actually was called “Friend of the Greeks”. This, at any rate, expressed his line of action. His Greek leanings, however, did not prevent him from extending the Jewish territory in a northerly direction and Judaizing the inhabitants. The chief event of his reign was this expedition against the Itureans, a large section of whom he compelled to submit to circumcision and conform to the other requirements of the Law. Probably it was mainly Galilee that he thus annexed, extending in this way his country’s dominions northwards, as his father had done into the opposite region. Continued invasions in the same direction would have given the caravan roads leading from the land of the Euphrates to Egypt into the hands of the Judeans, which possessions, combined with the warlike courage of the inhabitants and the defensive condition of the fortresses, might have permitted Judea to attain an important position among the nations.

The accounts which we possess of Aristobulus are in the main drawn from hostile sources. The Greeks, indeed, whose friendship he cultivated, seem naturally to have taken a favorable view of his character. The Pharisees, with whose party he completely broke, did not admit that he was possessed of any virtue. They attribute to him the deaths of his mother and brother, Antigonus. The latter, with, or more probably without, the sanction of Aristobulus, was slain in the palace, and the tragic circumstances of his end are said to have had such an effect on the already weak health of the ruler that his own death quickly ensued (105 BC).

He was succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannaeus. The latter was a Grecized form of the Hebrew Jonathan, with Jannai as an intermediate stage. He and his brothers were released from the prison to which Aristobulus had consigned them, by the widow of the late ruler, Salome or Alexandra. It is almost certain that she gave him her hand in wedlock as well. If so, we see that he did not hesitate to violate the law that the high priest should not marry a widow. This falls in with the general character of his reign, in which the kingly side is much more prominent than the priestly. Simon ben Shatach, however, brother of the queen, soon assumed a prominent position, and thus the Pharisees’ influence was powerful throughout the reign.

Jannaeus inherited the vehemence and warlike inclinations of many of his forbears, without possessing, to an equal extent, the prudence which had characterized the more distinguished of the Maccabees. He succeeded, however, in extending his dominion, with the help of his Pisidian and Cilician mercenaries, and without any very grievous disaster. At this time the rivals for the Syrian throne, Grypus and Cyzicenus,

were too busily engaged with each other to cause him much disquietude in his attempt to acquire a firmer hold upon the coast towns. His troops overran the district of Gaza, while he himself proceeded to carry on a vigorous siege of Ptolemais, a city the possession of which was highly important for trading purposes. A further inducement no doubt consisted in the fact that it contained a large body of Jewish colonists.

At this time (circ. 105 BC) Ptolemy Lathyrus had been driven from Egypt by his mother Cleopatra, the revolution being probably, in part at least, effected by the help of Egyptian Jews, with whose interests Cleopatra had identified herself. Lathyrus, who had taken up his abode in Cyprus, viewing the intestine troubles of Syria, bethought himself of retrieving his own fortunes by the attempt to bring Palestine again under the Egyptian dominion. Ptolemais refused to receive him. Jannaeus sought to keep him in play with friendly expressions, while he sent to Egypt to warn Cleopatra and request aid. Lathyrus, discovering Jannaeus's real policy, attacked and routed him at Asophon, near the Jordan, a success which was followed, according to Jewish (probably exaggerated) tradition, by great cruelties practiced upon the neighboring inhabitants. Soon the combined army and fleet of Egypt, led respectively by Cleopatra and her son Alexander, brought Ptolemy's hopes to a close, and he was obliged to return to Cyprus. The opposition of the Jews in Egypt was the only thing which saved Judea from becoming thereupon subject to Cleopatra's rule. Her army had been despatched under the command of two Jews, Helkias and Ananias. The former had died during the expedition. The latter strongly protested against the annexation, pointing out that his countrymen in Egypt would not be slow to visit upon the queen what they were certain to consider a gross breach of faith.

Jannaeus soon renewed his attempts upon various outlying cities, and with success. He captured Gadara on the Lake of Galilee and other towns, and after nearly a year's siege obtained possession of Gaza (96 BC) through an act of treachery. The resistance was fierce to the end, and the overthrow complete. Before the siege the town was one of the busiest and most prosperous in Palestine; afterwards it was little better than a huge ruin, in which fire and spoliation had done their worst.

On the ecclesiastical side Jannaeus was far from popular. The Pharisees, who had the warm support of the people, were offended at the indifference with which the high priest regarded the details of ritual, to which they attached the utmost importance. Simon ben Shatach doubtless fomented these quarrels, and the stories which have come down to us concerning him, while many of them are childish, and doubtless not without considerable accretions of tradition, yet show at any rate a man who had the skill to secure a powerful share in the conduct of affairs. At length a crisis came. It could only be with deep-seated resentment that pious Jews could look on and see a wild warrior like Alexander Jannaeus discharging the duties of high priest in the holy place, certainly not with the conscientious and painstaking observance of the ordinances regarded by the Pharisees as Divine. Even while he was discharging his priestly office it is said that for the first time they broke out in open rebellion. During the feast of Tabernacles, when everyone taking part in it was required to carry a palm branch and a citron fruit as a festal emblem, Alexander was once, as he stood beside the altar about to offer sacrifice, pelted by the assembled people with the citrons. At the same time they insulted him by calling out that he was the son of a prisoner of war, and was unworthy of the office of sacrificing priest. Alexander was not the man to bear this quietly. He called in the aid of his mercenaries, and 600 Jews were massacred.

Thus unpopular at home, Jannaeus proceeded to gratify his military instincts by leading his hired troops to attack Obedas, king of the Arabians. His enemy outmaneuvered him, shut up his forces in a narrow valley, and defeated them with great slaughter. Escaping to Jerusalem with difficulty, he found his people in revolt, and for the next six years (94-89 BC) he was engaged in civil war, dismissed by Josephus in scarcely more than the statement that "in the several battles that were fought on both sides, Jannaeus slew not fewer than fifty thousand of the Jews". The disfavor with which he was regarded by the majority of his people was counterbalanced in several ways. His Sadducean leaning induced that party to assist him, and they formed by far the wealthiest portion of the community, and could avail themselves besides of the Temple treasury. The provinces on the east of Jordan, which had been taken from Obedas, were restored to him, and this probably secured him from feeling sufficient interest in the contest to intervene. Egypt, as we have seen, owing to the strong Jewish element there, was unable to make use of the divisions in Palestine for any purpose of aggrandizement, while Syria was still distracted by domestic strife.

At length, however, the side opposed to Jannaeus obtained some help from the last-named quarter. Demetrius III (Eucaerus), the ruler of part of Syria, accepted the invitation proffered by the Pharisees, and armies composed, on both sides alike, of Jewish and foreign elements met near Shechem (88 BC). Demetrius was on the whole successful after an engagement in which the loss on each side was severe. Jannaeus withdrew to the mountain country, and was joined by a number, said to have been 6,000, of deserters from Demetrius. They divined the latter's intentions of annexation, and apparently did not desire, whatever might be Jannaeus's faults, that their country should again have experience of the Syrian yoke. Under these circumstances Demetrius hastened homewards, and Jannaeus proceeded to seize and punish with great cruelty those who had maintained so prolonged a resistance to his rule. For the rest of his reign the Pharisees were crushed.

Judea now became for a short time the seat of war between the most powerful of the claimants to the Syrian throne, Antiochus XII (Dionysus) and the Nabatean king, Aretas. The latter, after a victory over Antiochus, vanquished Jannaeus, but was persuaded by concessions of territory to withdraw. For the next three years Jannaeus' success in arms, and in the consequent acquisition of fresh territory for his country, was such, that when in 81 BC he returned to his capital, he was received with enthusiasm by the people who had so long opposed his rule. His health was undermined by a long course of excesses, and while seeking to repress outbreaks of disaffected subjects in 78 BC he died at the age of 49 years.

It was one of the results of the peculiar warfare of the Hasmonean princes that Palestine gradually became studded with fortresses or castles apart from the main seats of their ancient history or civilization, and commanding the passes in which they entrenched themselves against their enemies. Such had been Modin under Mattathias and Judas, and Masada under Jonathan; such was Hyrcaneum under John Hyrcanus; such, under Alexander Jannaeus, was Macherus beyond the Dead Sea, and Alexandream in the mountains between Samaria and the Jordan valley, which subsequently became the recognized burial-place of the later princes of the Hasmonean family, as Modin earlier had been of the first. But Hyrcanus and Alexander were interred, in regal or pontifical state, in tombs which long bore their names close to the walls of Jerusalem. If extent of dominion be a test of prosperity, Jannaeus may certainly claim credit for winning a

considerable number of cities with their neighboring territories. Also, in spite of his carelessness in regard to Pharisaic ritual or traditions, he insisted that those whom he conquered should accept Judaism, on the penalty of devastation of territory and large destruction of life. Accordingly he left the kingdom larger than it had been at any time since the Exile.

This work of conquest however proved at the same time a work of destruction. It did not lead, as once the conquests of Alexander the Great had done, to the furtherance, but to the extinction, of Greek culture. For in this respect Alexander Jannaeus was still always a Jew, who subjected the conquered territories, as far as they went, to Jewish modes of thought and manners. If the cities in question would not consent to this, they were laid waste. Such was the fate which befell the great and hitherto prosperous coast towns and the Hellenistic cities on the east of the Jordan. The Romans, Pompey and Gabinius, were the first to rebuild again those ruins, and re-awaken in them a new prosperity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REIGN OF ALEXANDRA

(78—69 BC)

WHEN Alexander was dying, he is said to have advised his wife Alexandra, on whom the sovereignty now devolved, to cultivate the favor of the Pharisees. According to one account, his words were, "Fear neither the Pharisees nor their opponents, but fear the hypocrites who pretend to be Pharisees, whose deeds are those of Zimri, and who claim a reward like that of Phinehas". Strongly supported by the Pharisees, she succeeded in keeping her kingdom free throughout her reign not only from internal feuds, but to a large extent also from foreign attack. Josephus speaks of her as "a sagacious woman in the conduct of great affairs, intent always on the gathering of soldiers together, so that she increased the army by one-half, and procured a great body of foreign troops, till her own nation became powerful at home and terrible to foreign potentates".

She had two sons, Hyrcanus the elder, an indolent person, who succeeded to the high priesthood, and Aristobulus, energetic and ambitious. The latter she sent upon an expedition against Damascus, which, however, was not fruitful in results of any kind. Danger also threatened on the part of Tigranes, king of Armenia. Alexandra promptly sent him presents, thereby to procure freedom from attack. These might easily have failed to be effectual, had it not been for the fact of the gradual advance of the Romans in Tigranes' direction, and his knowledge that the insatiable legions were watching in the rear. The time was now almost come when the eagles would find their way across the frontiers of Judea itself, and the period of its independence would finally close.

As regards home administration, Simon ben Shatach, who during the reign of Aristobulus had headed the opposition to that king's Sadducean policy and tastes, was now in full favor with royalty. Hyrcanus, the high priest, was a nonentity, and thus the natural supporter of the Sadducean party was helpless. Josephus' remarks of the queen, that "while she governed other people, the Pharisees governed her. She had indeed the name of regent, but the Pharisees had the authority; for it was they who restored such as were banished, and set such as were prisoners at liberty, and, to say all at once, they differed nothing from lords". Writers of later times on the Pharisean side record the traditions of the glories of this period from the point of view of their party. "Under Simon ben Shatach and Queen Salome rain fell on the eve of the Sabbath, so that the corns of wheat were large as kidneys, the barley corns as large as olives, and the lentils like golden denarii; the scribes gathered such corns and preserved specimens of them in order to show future generations what sin entails".

Simon ben Shatach now sought to obtain further support by associating with himself an ecclesiastical officer who, under the title of Nasi (prince), or president of the council, should have the duty of expounding the intricacies of the legal ritual, and deciding knotty points as they might arise. The most fitting person in respect of attainments appeared to be Jehudah ben Tabbai, then resident at Alexandria. Accordingly in a message couched in high-flown language he was invited to accept the post, and in conjunction with Simon completed the enforcement of strictness in Jewish

observances. There was a dispute in later times as to which held the higher office. "Wise men say Jehudah ben Tabbai was vice-president and Simon ben Shatach was prince-president (Nasi). Who is the author of that teaching? For the converse would appear to be the case; because our Rabbis have taught thus, viz., that Rabbi Jehudah ben Tabbai said, May I see the consolation of Israel, if I have not slain a false witness so as to oppose the Sadducees, when they say, False witnesses are not put to death, unless the condemned person shall have been put to death. Simon ben Shatach said to him, May I see the consolation of Israel, if thou hast not shed innocent blood; for behold, wise men have said, False witnesses are not to be put to death, until they are both proved to be false, and they are not beaten, until they are both proved to be false, and they do not refund money, until they are both proved to be false. Forthwith Jehudah ben Tabbai undertook that he would not teach doctrine (Halachah) except in the presence of Simon ben Shatach". This, with the further discussion which thereupon ensues as to the exact meaning of Jehudah ben Tabbai's "undertaking" gives us a glimpse at once of the nature of the discussion, in which he was called on to take a prominent part, and of the style of a large portion of the Talmud, from which the above passage is an extract. Whatever may have been the exact relative position of the two men, their influence upon religions and intellectual life was unmistakable. The ceremonial observances which had been neglected were restored. In particular we are told that the ceremony observed at the Feast of Tabernacles, when water drawn in a golden basin from the well of Siloam was poured as a libation upon the altar, was carried out, accompanied by the most impressive ritual. So at the feast held on the 15th of Ab (August) in honor of the wood offered for the use of the altar, the young men chose white-robed maidens in marriage, as they performed the sacred dance and song. Careful attention was given to education. Schools were established for youths above sixteen, while systematic arrangements were for the first time made for teaching boys below that age. "The schools of Judah may be regarded as the first general attempt on the part of the nation to encourage rabbinical scholarship, and to draw youths of promise to professional careers". No less than eleven different names for schools now came into vogue. "Our principal care", such was the boast of Josephus, dating it from this time, "is to educate our children". "The world", such became the Talmudical maxim, "is preserved by the breath of the children in the schools".

The teaching was doubtless narrow; but viewed in connection with the times, the essay was praiseworthy and patriotic. Improvements in the practice of the law courts and in checking the facilities for obtaining a divorce are also to be ascribed to the same source, as well as the imposition of the half-shekel or temple-tax, in imitation of that which is ordered in Exod. XXX. 11-16. By this last change the religious administration was rendered more independent of the instability necessarily attaching to individual generosity. As long as the voluntary system prevailed, it was suicidal to alienate those who alone were competent to contribute largely; but when a kind of poll-tax had been welcomed by the nation, every Sadducee could be excluded from the Sanhedrin with financial impunity, and the whole ecclesiastical organization of Judaism was rendered independent of their grace or generosity.

Judah ben Tabbai at length resigned his office, owing to his being convicted, according to the tradition, of an error in procedure. Simon succeeded him, and the honor in which he was held is shown by the story that he accepted with Brutus-like sternness and fidelity the paramount claims of law. His son had been found guilty on the evidence

of witnesses, who, ere the place of execution was reached, confessed to perjury. He pleaded nevertheless, with the father's acquiescence, that in the interests of justice the sentence should be executed, lest the general belief in witnesses' testimony should in future cases be shaken.

The position of the Sadducean leaders was indeed a changed one. Aristobulus, however, stood their friend, and induced his mother to appoint them to command the chief fortresses throughout the country, thus getting rid of their presence in Jerusalem. They in return enabled him, when his mother's end drew near, to hire mercenaries, and secure the fortresses on his side. Thereby on her death (69 BC) he easily procured his own succession to the vacant throne.



CHAPTER IX.

**FROM THE DEATH OF ALEXANDRA TO HEROD'S CAPTURE OF  
JERUSALEM**

**(69—37 BC)**

ON the death of Alexandra, Hyrcanus, as eldest son, claimed to succeed to the vacant throne. But he was soon defeated by his warlike brother in a battle near Jericho, and yielding his ecclesiastical position as well, retired into private life after a reign of three months, solaced by the wealth that he had accumulated.

The end of the Maccabean power now approached. Evidently there was no great friction between parties within the state, nor did the Pharisees anticipate any serious change in their position through the accession of Aristobulus II. It was from an Idumean that the attack arose which immediately preceded the establishment of Roman rule in Palestine. The governor of Idumea was a certain Antipater, almost to a certainty a descendant of one of those families whom John Hyrcanus had compelled to accept Judaism. He had a son of the same name, who, being of an ambitious turn, bethought him that he could advance his interests much more successfully with Hyrcanus as nominal ruler, than with Aristobulus as actually at the head of the State. Taking up the cause of the former accordingly, and gaining some influential adherents, he persuaded Hyrcanus, as though in danger from his brother, to flee for protection to Aretas, king of the Nabateans, and obtain his aid in return for large cessions of territory. Aristobulus was vanquished in battle, deserted by many of his soldiers, and obliged to take refuge in the temple-mount. After a blockade of several months, and much privation on the part of the besieged, alike from lack of food and the absence of suitable sacrifices at the Passover feast, which occurred at that time, the siege was raised by the intervention of the Roman Scaurus, whom Pompey had detached for this purpose in the course of the latter's Asiatic conquests. Both brothers appealed to him with presents. Scaurus decided to support Aristobulus and ordered Aretas to withdraw. He was pursued and defeated by Aristobulus, who looked forward to a reign undisputed indeed by his brother, but one from which all independence had been for ever eliminated. Three embassies met Pompey himself at Damascus; viz., from each of the rivals for the sovereignty, and from the Pharisees, the last deprecating the re-establishment of the kingly power in any shape. Pompey, who was on the way to attack Aretas, postponed a decision for the moment, but soon considering that he had cause to doubt the good faith of Aristobulus, he gave up for the time his Nabatean campaign, and turned against him, compelling him to surrender the fortress of Alexandrium, and withdraw to Jerusalem. Thither Pompey followed, learning on his way, to his great satisfaction, that Mithridates, the most dangerous enemy that he had had to encounter, had fallen by his own hand. When Pompey reached Jerusalem, the party of Hyrcanus yielding without resistance, he found that he had only Aristobulus and his followers to deal with. They had secured themselves as they best could in the temple-mount. After a three months' siege the Romans, partly through the rigid observance of the Sabbath-rest by the enemy, forced an entrance. The priests were massacred as they proceeded with their duties at the altars. Twelve thousand Jews are said to have perished.

Although Pompey on this occasion violated Jewish feeling by forcibly entering the Holy of Holies, yet his mode of dealing with the conquered people was far from severe. He left them nominally under the hierarchical government which they desired, nominating Hyrcanus as high priest. A heavy sum of money was exacted and the country was placed under Scaurus, now made Roman governor of Syria. Aristobulus with his sons and daughters, and a large body of other Jewish captives, helped to swell Pompey's triumphal entry to the Capitol.

Pompey had left Hyrcanus, though without the kingly title, as the recognized high priest and still in at least nominal control of the civil administration. The subjection to Scaurus deprived Hyrcanus of all real power, and Gabinius becoming governor a few years later, and taking advantage of a revolt under Alexander, son of Aristobulus, cancelled (57 BC) all the remains of self-government, retaining Hyrcanus in the high priesthood only, and dividing Judea into five provinces, each with its independent assembly or Sanhedrin. Politically Jerusalem ceased to be a centre of rule and influence, and was degraded into the head of a commune; and whatever prerogatives of local government remained, were exercised by an aristocracy, and not even by a titular king, and were recognized or disregarded by the Romans at their will. The work of conquest was made light to their western assailants by the fact that the country was torn with internal strifes, and that the contending parties were so blind to their own interests as to seek protection and help from the strangers. There was no longer any trace left of that spirit which had led the people on to victory a hundred years before.

The capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, and the political results, were noteworthy in more ways than one. Through his "triumph" as a victorious general, the Jewish nation came under the personal cognizance of his countrymen at home, and thus was formed at the metropolis of the world the nucleus of the Jewish colony, which in later years proved so important an element in connection with the beginnings of Christianity in that city. Henceforward the Jew became a well-known person at Rome, and a familiar figure in its literature.

To revert, however, to Palestine itself, we may readily grant that the dispositions made by Pompey and his lieutenant Gabinius, although displeasing doubtless to the national pride of the Jews, were on the whole a blessing to their neighbors. The Jewish dominion was restricted to the limits of the country, as re-occupied after the return from Babylon. The districts over which they had in later times acquired authority must on this change of masters have found the Roman rule much less exacting and severe. Samaria, the commercial cities along the Mediterranean coast, the Decapolis in the north east of Palestine, and many Hellenic communities on the eastern banks of the Jordan, were liberated from a yoke which they detested, and which at times forced Judaism upon them at the point of the sword. Gabinius caused many towns, which had been destroyed by the Jews, to be rebuilt. Among the most important of these were Samaria and Scythopolis. His general policy was, by multiplying such flourishing centres of life, to produce a wholesome rivalry among themselves, and thus diminish the danger of political combination against the Roman power.

The above-mentioned policy had of course the result of depriving Jerusalem of its position as the main centre of influence, and thereby of exasperating those whose interests or sentiment were keenly affected by the degradation. Accordingly on the reappearance of Aristobulus and his son Antigonus in Judea (after effecting their escape

from Rome), many flocked eagerly to their standard. It was, however, only an ill-armed and untrained force that they would command, little adapted to cope with the troops which Gabinius could bring into the field. Aristobulus took refuge in Machaerus, and after a two years' siege was captured and sent back to his Roman prison. The senate, however, which thus confined him, set his children at liberty.

Gabinius, returning (55 BC) from a campaign in support of Ptolemy Auletes, found that Alexander, son of Aristobulus, had made his escape from his Roman guard in Pompey's train, and attempted revolt, which did not long survive the return of the Roman governor.

Meanwhile, political events in Italy had their influence in provinces as remote as Syria. The combination known as the first Triumvirate, consisting of Cesar, Pompey, and Crassus, was formed in the year 50 BC. Of these three Crassus was by far the most wealthy, and decided that by directing his attention to the eastern provinces, he was using the means likely to be most successful in enabling him to outstrip his competitors in the race for preeminence. In an expedition against the Parthians he was defeated and slain. Before proceeding thither, he had, unlike his colleague Pompey, plundered the Temple, and thereby incurred the enmity of the Jews. They once again rebelled, and the moment seemed an encouraging one. Cassius, whom the death of Crassus placed in command, although he had but 10,000 men under him in the whole of Syria, crushed the revolt, sold 30,000 Jews as slaves, and put the leader of the insurrection to death (52 BC). Antipater, who advised this measure, was a farsighted and prudent statesman. He perceived that, in the interests both of his own ambition and of the people over whom he was placed, he was bound to cultivate the friendship of Rome, and therefore of that candidate for the supreme power whose fortunes were for the time uppermost.

In 40 BC began the civil wars through which was effected the change from republican to imperial Rome. During these twenty years, from Cesar's crossing the Rubicon down to the death of Antony, 40-30 BC, the whole Roman history was reflected in the history of Syria and also in that of Palestine ... During this short period Syria and Palestine changed sides and owned new masters no less than four times. Like the other portions of the Empire, Judea had to submit to the severest exactions, in order that the strife might be maintained among the would-be autocrats of the world.

The death of Julia, Pompey's wife and daughter of Cesar, ended the alliance between the two. They promptly sought to secure respectively the eastern and the western provinces. Pompey landed in Egypt, and was immediately murdered. Cesar, who arrived soon afterwards at Alexandria, was hemmed in, compelled to burn his ships, and blockaded in one quarter of the town both by land and sea. Antipater with his accustomed prudence adopted Cesar's side, and showed himself a valuable ally, going to the rescue with 3,000 soldiers, and inducing the Alexandrian Jews to support the Roman cause.

After rendering the most efficient service in many respects, he received a becoming reward, a large portion of which, to do him justice, consisted in the acquisition of valuable privileges for his people. It was doubtless through his advice that Cesar rejected the claims of Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus, to the Jewish sovereignty. Antipater continued, as always, to support Hyrcanus, feeling no doubt that he was too incapable to be at all dangerous to his schemes. Caesar accordingly confirmed the latter in his high priesthood, and made the office of "ethnarch" to be

hereditary in his family. He secured the Jews in the possession of their temple-tax, and freed them from any such demands for military service as might interfere with the requirements of the Law. They were made autonomous as regards their own affairs. Joppa and some other coast towns were restored to them. The Roman garrisons were withdrawn. Permission was given that the walls of Jerusalem, destroyed by Pompey, should be rebuilt. Antipater was given the charge of the kingdom, received immunity from all taxation, and was made a Roman citizen.

The benefits conferred by Cesar on the Jewish people were by no means confined to Palestine. In accordance with his general policy to encourage contentment among provincials, and to honor such customs as did not in his opinion go beyond harmless prejudices, he allowed the Dispersion in Asia Minor freedom to practice their religion, while to those in Egypt, for whom the possession of such a privilege was no novelty, he granted Roman citizenship. Of all peoples under the sway of Rome at this time the Jews, we are told, were the most vehement in lamenting his death.

In Jerusalem, Hyrcanus was of course, as before, nominal ruler, and a mere puppet in the hands of Antipater. The latter, through the advantages procured by his means for the people, of which not the least apparent consisted in the rebuilding of the walls now in course of completion, had obtained the utmost popularity with the multitude. They realized that to him the material prosperity of the country and the immunities which they enjoyed were mainly due. But to the upper classes he was an object of hatred. Party strife continued, and the combatants failed to see the obvious truth that independence as against such a power as Rome was impossible, even were the nation agreed among themselves, and that the benefits which Antipater had procured to them were the utmost which could be looked for.

Judea, during this troubled time, had to suffer much, but it was due to the wisdom of Antipater that she did not suffer more. To his honor it must be said that he made the utmost of the difficult and perilous circumstances in which the Jews were then placed, and by abandoning a hopeless struggle with Rome obtained the most favorable conditions possible for the people whose interests he had in charge. Personal ambition, no doubt, entered into his calculations—it is an element in the character of almost everyone who aspires to rule—but the important fact remains that he possessed a clearer view of the times in which he lived, and utilized his knowledge in the performance of far greater services to the Jewish nation than the Jewish aristocracy who reviled and opposed him. By futile insurrections and by fostering discontent the aristocracy added vastly to the miseries of the population. By their opposition to the Romans they were in reality throwing themselves across the path of the Divine purpose, which was working itself out in history by binding the Mediterranean peoples under one form of civil rule, as a preliminary to the advent and propagation of the Christian faith.

The Sadducees never ceased to contrast Antipater as an outsider with the Maccabean family, and the glories won for the nation by its earlier members. The Pharisees resented his slighting treatment of the Sanhedrin, and of their tenets generally. They sought to attack him through his sons Herod and Phasaël, whom he had made governors respectively of Galilee and Jerusalem. The former (the future “Herod the Great”), a clever and ambitious youth, aged probably twenty-five at this time, had already done good service in his northern province by exterminating the bandits who had invested that region. His enemies at Jerusalem took advantage of his executing one

of these miscreants to induce the weak Hyrcanus to summon him before the Sanhedrin, to whom at that time was reserved the power of life and death. Herod came, but overawed the assembly by his showy appearance and armed retinue. Hyrcanus *ex officio* presided. The names of two others of the judges are preserved, Shemaiah and Abtalion, famous among Rabbis. The following utterances of theirs are preserved in *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*: “Shemaiah said, Love work; and hate lordship; and make not thyself known to the government. Abtalion said, Ye wise, be guarded in your words; perchance ye may incur the debt of exile, and be exiled to the place of evil waters; and the disciples that come after you may drink and die, and the Name of Heaven be profaned”.

Although among the most renowned Jewish scholars of their day, their wisdom was scarcely of so practical a character as to add strength to the tribunal, which seems to have been in considerable awe of the accused. When there appeared an imminent danger that the authority of the court would be openly defied, Hyrcanus adjourned the trial, the accused withdrew, and in place of holding himself in readiness to obey any further summons, marched with hostile intent against Hyrcanus. He was with difficulty persuaded by his brother Phasaël and by Antipater to relinquish his warlike purpose, and return to Galilee.

After a short-lived recovery of power in Syria by the party of Pompey, Cesar’s assassination (March 15, 44 BC) gave Antony the leadership. Cassius, whom Cesar had appointed proconsul of Syria, proceeded to that province, after assisting in the murder of his chief. He levied seven hundred talents upon Palestine, by way of contribution to war expenses, and in default of prompt payment of this heavy exaction, seized and sold as slaves the inhabitants of several Jewish towns. Herod, who fortunately for himself was able to pay the 100 talents which were his share of the impost, was made procurator of Coele-Syria.

Antipater’s position had at this time become insecure through the rising power of one named Malichus, as to whose origin little or nothing is known. Through bribery he procured Antipater’s death by poison at a feast given by Hyrcanus (43 BC). Herod obtained permission from Cassius to avenge his father’s murder, and availed himself of it by means of hired assassins.

After the defeat at Philippi (42 BC), Cassius committed suicide. Turbulent times followed in Palestine. Roman troops had been withdrawn to supply the needs of those contending for the rule of the Empire. It is clear that the Jews as a whole had by no means even now accepted the Idumean sway. Phasaël had to put down an insurrection in Jerusalem, while Antigonus made an abortive effort to recover the kingdom for the Maccabean family, and though worsted by Herod in an encounter on the borders of Judea, and driven from the country, yet he managed for a while to retain some hold upon the northern part of Palestine.

The same spirit was shown, though in more peaceable fashion, by the repeated complaints made against the sons of Antipater by representatives of the upper classes before Antony, who was for the time master of the eastern part of the Roman world. He refused to act upon their wishes, confirmed Phasaël and Herod in their position, and proceeded to lay a severe impost upon Palestine as upon other provinces, in order to defray the expenses alike of his warlike operations and his luxury.

A Parthian invasion of Syria was made use of by Antigonus as affording him another opportunity of recovering his hereditary rights. He was already established within Jerusalem, and his followers engaged in street encounters with those of his opponents, when the Parthians, appearing before the walls, invited Phasaël and Hyrcanus to go out to the camp of Barzaphanes, the satrap in command, for the purpose of arranging terms. They fell into the snare, and were at once thrown into prison. Phasaël there committed suicide. Hyrcanus's ears had been cut off by the direction or the act of Antigonus, in order that on account of this mutilation there might under no circumstances be a resumption of his position as high priest; and he was thereupon led by the Parthians into exile. Herod meanwhile had succeeded in making his escape from Jerusalem, and after various wanderings reached Rome.

This probably was the most critical period of his eventful life. But fortune speedily smiled on his ambition. The triumvirs, Antony and Octavian, who had just been forced by the legions, weary of fighting, to patch up a reconciliation, united to do honor to the fugitive. At their motion the Senate (40 BC) nominated him king of Judea. He did not hesitate to offer sacrifice after the manner of the pagan ritual on entering upon office. Thus within a week of his arrival the exile found himself with a crown upon his head, and the power of Rome at his back. So far his task was an easy one. He now had to seek to add to the name the reality of power.

The Parthians (40 BC) had allowed Antigonus to call himself both king and high priest. His position, however, was a precarious one. He bought off for the moment the hostility of the representative of Rome in Syria, P. Ventidius, but failed to create any enthusiastic following for himself in his kingdom. Herod, on the other hand, though received with some support, found that the general attitude both towards him and his rival was one of indifference. This was the case even on the part of the Roman troops, who were in the pay of Antigonus for the purpose. Herod at first devoted himself to the difficult task of subduing the bandits who still infested Galilee; but it was not till he had had an interview with Antony, at Samosata, and thereby had obtained more active support from this all-powerful source, that he was able to prosecute with effect his purposes against Antigonus, in whose favor Galilee had declared. Now, however, after a rapid and successful progress through the country parts, he laid siege to Jerusalem (37 BC). During the time while engines of attack were in course of erection, he celebrated his marriage with Mariamne. She was his second wife, a grand-daughter of Aristobulus II, and thus a descendant in the fourth generation of John Hyrcanus. It is probable that he intended by this union of the rival families—his own and that of the Maccabees—to render the position which he now claimed more acceptable to the people at large.

After a little more than eight weeks Herod, with the help of the Roman general, Sosius, captured the city. Pillage and slaughter followed. It was only by lavish gifts that Herod succeeded in dismissing the Romans from Jerusalem, and persuading them to leave the country. Antigonus pleaded for mercy at the feet of Sosius, who spurned him, calling him Antigone. He took him to Antioch, where Antony soon after caused him to be beheaded. Herod could now contemplate the final ruins of the Maccabean dynasty. After a three years' struggle he had entered upon his kingdom with the full support of the arbiters of the world.

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