

FEASTS (Moedim): Chanukah Four: 4 Candles (Festival of Lights).

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Chunukah 4:

Numbers 7:30-41.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben
31 gave his offering: one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a meal offering;
32 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
33 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
34 one male goat for a sin offering;
35 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.
36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon
37 gave his offering: one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a meal offering;
38 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense;
39 one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
40 one male goat for a sin offering;
41 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two head of cattle, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old: this was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

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(1 Maccabees 13:1-53 NAB-A) :

. Simon Takes Command. .

When Simon heard that Trypho was gathering a large army to invade and ravage the land of Judah, and saw that the people were in dread and terror, he went up to Jerusalem. There he assembled the people and exhorted them in these words: "You know what I, my brothers, and my father's house have done for the Torah and the sanctuary; what battles and disasters we have been through. It was for the sake of these, for the sake of Israel, that all my brothers have perished, and I alone am left. Far be it from me, then, to save my own life in any time of distress, for I am not better than my brothers. Rather will I avenge my nation and the sanctuary, as well as your wives and children, for all the nations out of hatred have united to destroy us." As the people heard these words, their spirit was rekindled. They shouted in reply: "You are our leader in place of your brothers Judas and Jonathan. Fight our battles, and we will do everything that you tell us." So Simon mustered all the men able to fight, and quickly completing the walls of Jerusalem, fortified it on every side. He sent Jonathan, son of Absalom, to Joppa with a large force; Jonathan drove out the occupants and remained there.

. Deceit and Treachery of Trypho. .

Then Trypho moved from Ptolemais with a large army to invade the land of Judah, bringing Jonathan with him as a prisoner. But Simon pitched his camp at Adida, facing the plain. When Trypho learned that Simon had succeeded his brother Jonathan, and that he intended to fight him, he sent envoys to him with this message: "We have detained your brother Jonathan on account of the money that he owed the royal treasury in connection with the offices that he held. Therefore, if you send us a hundred talents of silver, and two of his sons as hostages to guarantee that when he is set free he will not revolt against us, we will release him." Although Simon knew that they were speaking deceitfully to him, he gave orders to get the money and the boys, for fear of provoking much hostility among the people, who might say that Jonathan perished because Simon would not send Trypho the money and the boys. So he sent the boys and the hundred talents; but Trypho broke his promise and would not let Jonathan go. Next he began to invade and ravage the country. His troops went around by the road that leads to Adora, but Simon and his army moved along opposite him everywhere he went. The men in the citadel sent messengers to Trypho, urging him to come to them by way of the desert, and to send them provisions. Although Trypho got all his cavalry ready to go, there was a heavy fall of snow that night, and he could not go. So he left for Gilead. When he was approaching Baskama, he had Jonathan killed and buried there. Then Trypho returned to his own country.

. Jonathan's Tomb. .

Simon sent for the remains of his brother Jonathan, and buried him in Modein, the city of his fathers. All Israel bewailed him with solemn lamentation, mourning over him for many days. Then Simon erected over the tomb of his father and his brothers a monument of stones, polished front and back, and raised high enough to be seen at a distance. He set up seven pyramids facing one another for his father and his mother and his four brothers. For the pyramids he devised a setting of big columns, on which he carved suits of armor as a perpetual memorial, and next to the armor he placed carved

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ships, which could be seen by all who sailed the sea. This tomb which he built at Modein is there to the present day.

. Judea Gains Independence. .

Trypho dealt treacherously with the young King Antiochus. He killed him and assumed the kingship in his place, putting on the crown of Asia. Thus he brought much evil on the land. Simon, on his part, built up the strongholds of Judea, strengthening their fortifications with high towers, thick walls, and gates with bars, and he stored up provisions in the fortresses. Simon also sent chosen men to King Demetrius with the request that he grant the land a release from taxation, for all that Trypho did was to plunder the land. In reply, King Demetrius sent him the following letter: "King Demetrius sends greetings to Simon the high priest, the friend of kings, and to the elders and the Jewish people. We have received the gold crown and the palm branch that you sent. We are willing to be on most peaceful terms with you and to write to our official to grant you release from tribute. Whatever we have guaranteed to you remains in force, and the strongholds that you have built shall remain yours. We remit any oversights and defaults incurred up to now, as well as the crown tax that you owe. Any other tax that may have been collected in Jerusalem shall no longer be collected there. If any of you are qualified for enrollment in our service, let them be enrolled. Let there be peace between us." Thus in the year one hundred and seventy, the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel, and the people began to write in their records and contracts, "In the first year of Simon, high priest, governor, and leader of the Jews."

. The Capture of Gazara by Simon. .

In those days Simon besieged Gazara and surrounded it with troops. He made a siege machine, pushed it up against the city, and attacked and captured one of the towers. The men who had been on the siege machine jumped down into the city and caused a great tumult there. The men of the city, joined by their wives and children, went up on the wall, with their garments rent, and cried out in loud voices, begging Simon to grant them peace. "Do not treat us according to our evil deeds," they said, "but according to your mercy." So Simon came to terms with them and did not destroy them. He made them leave the city, however, and he purified the houses in which there were idols. Then he entered the city with hymns and songs of praise. After removing from it everything that was impure, he settled there men who observed the Torah. He improved its fortifications and built himself a residence.

. Simon Regains the Citadel at Jerusalem. .

The men in the citadel in Jerusalem were prevented from going out into the country and back for the purchase of food; they suffered greatly from hunger, and many of them died of starvation. They finally cried out to Simon for peace, and he gave them peace. He expelled them from the citadel and cleansed it of impurities. On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the year one hundred and seventy-one, the Jews entered the citadel with shouts of jubilation, waving of palm branches, the music of harps and cymbals and lyres, and the singing of hymns and canticles, because a great enemy of Israel had been destroyed. Simon decreed that this day should be celebrated every year with rejoicing. He also strengthened the fortifications of the temple hill alongside the citadel, and he and his companions dwelt there. Seeing that his son John was now a grown man, Simon made him commander of all his soldiers, with his residence in Gazara.

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!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 14:1-49 NAB-A) :

. Capture of Demetrius. .

In the year one hundred and seventy-two, King Demetrius assembled his army and marched into Media to obtain help so that he could fight Trypho. When Arsaces, king of Persia and Media, heard that Demetrius had invaded his territory, he sent one of his generals to take him alive. The general went forth and defeated the army of Demetrius; he captured him and brought him to Arsaces, who put him in prison.

. Eulogy of Simon. .

The land was at rest all the days of Simon, who sought the good of his nation. His people were delighted with his power and his magnificence throughout his reign. As his crowning glory he captured the port of Joppa and made it a gateway to the isles of the sea. He enlarged the borders of his nation and gained control of the country. He took many enemies prisoners of war and made himself master of Gazara, Beth-zur, and the citadel. He cleansed the citadel of its impurities; there was no one to withstand him. The people cultivated their land in peace; the land yielded its produce and the trees of the field their fruit. Old men sat in the squares, all talking about the good times, while the young men wore the glorious apparel of war. He supplied the cities with food and equipped them with means of defense, till his glorious name reached the ends of the earth. He brought peace to the land, and Israel was filled with happiness. Every man sat under his vine and his fig-tree, with no one to disturb him. No one was left to attack them in their land; the kings in those days were crushed. He strengthened all the lowly among his people and was zealous for the Torah; he suppressed all the Torahless and the wicked. He made the temple splendid and enriched its equipment.

. Diplomacy with Rome and Sparta. .

When people heard in Rome and even in Sparta that Jonathan had died, they were deeply grieved. But when the Romans heard that his brother Simon had been made high priest in his place and was master of the country and the cities, they sent him inscribed tablets of bronze to renew with him the friendship and alliance that they had established with his brothers Judas and Jonathan. These were read before the assembly in Jerusalem. This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent: "The rulers and the citizens of Sparta send greetings to Simon the high priest, the elders, the priests, and the rest of the Jewish people, our brothers. The envoys you sent to our people have informed us of your glory and fame, and we were happy that they came. In accordance with what they said we have recorded the following in the public decrees: Since Numenius, son of Antiochus, and Antipater, son of Jason, envoys of the Jews, have come to us to renew their friendship with us, the people have voted to receive the men with honor, and to deposit a copy of their words in the public archives, so that the people of Sparta may have a record of them. A copy of this decree has been made for Simon the high priest."

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After this, Simon sent Numenius to Rome with a great gold shield weighing a thousand minas, to confirm the alliance with the Romans.

. Official Honors for Simon. .

When the people heard of these things, they said, "How can we thank Simon and his sons? He and his brothers and his father's house have stood firm and repulsed Israel's enemies. They have thus preserved its liberty." So they made an inscription on bronze tablets, which they affixed to pillars on Mount Zion. The following is a copy of the inscription: "On the eighteenth day of Elul, in the year one hundred and seventy-two, that is, the third year under Simon the high priest in Asaramel, in a great assembly of priests, people, rulers of the nation, and elders of the country, the following proclamation was made: "Since there have often been wars in our country, Simon, son of the priest Mattathias, descendant of Joarib, and his brothers have put themselves in danger and resisted the enemies of their nation, so that their sanctuary and Torah might be maintained, and they have thus brought great glory to their nation. After Jonathan had rallied his nation and become their high priest, he was gathered to his kinsmen. When the enemies of the Jews sought to invade and devastate their country and to lay hands on their temple, Simon rose up and fought for his nation, spending large sums of his own money to equip the men of his nation's armed forces and giving them their pay. He fortified the cities of Judea, especially the frontier city of Beth-zur, where he stationed a garrison of Jewish soldiers, and where previously the enemy's arms had been stored. He also fortified Joppa by the sea and Gazara on the border of Azotus, a place previously occupied by the enemy; these cities he resettled with Jews, and furnished them with all that was necessary for their restoration. When the Jewish people saw Simon's loyalty and the glory he planned to bring to his nation, they made him their leader and high priest because of all he had accomplished and the loyalty and justice he had shown his nation. In every way he sought to exalt his people. "In his time and under his guidance they succeeded in driving the Gentiles out of their country, especially those in the City of David in Jerusalem, who had built for themselves a citadel from which they used to sally forth to defile the environs of the temple and inflict grave injury on its purity. In this citadel he stationed Jewish soldiers, and he strengthened its fortifications for the defense of the land and the city, while he also raised the wall of Jerusalem to a greater height. Consequently, King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood, made him one of his Friends, and conferred the highest honors on him. He had indeed heard that the Romans had addressed the Jews as friends, allies, and brothers and that they had received Simon's envoys with honor. "The Jewish people and their priest have, therefore, made the following decisions. Simon shall be their permanent leader and high priest until a true prophet arises. He shall act as governor general over them, and shall have charge of the temple, to make regulations concerning its functions and concerning the country, its weapons and strongholds, he shall be obeyed by all. All contracts made in the country shall be dated by his name. He shall have the right to wear royal purple and gold ornaments. It shall not be lawful for any of the people or priests to nullify any of these decisions, or to contradict the orders given by him, or to convene an assembly in the country without his consent, to be clothed in royal purple or wear an official gold brooch. Whoever acts otherwise or violates any of these prescriptions shall be liable to punishment. "All the people approved of granting Simon the right to act in accord with these decisions, and Simon accepted and agreed to act as high priest, governor general, and ethnarch of the Jewish people and priests and to exercise supreme authority over all." It was decreed that this inscription should be engraved on bronze tablets, to be set

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up in a conspicuous place in the precincts of the temple, and that copies of it should be deposited in the treasury, where they would be available to Simon and his sons.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 15:1-41 NAB-A) :

. Letter of Antiochus – son of King Demetrius. .

Antiochus, son of King Demetrius, sent a letter from the islands of the sea to Simon, the priest and ethnarch of the Jews, and to all the nation, which read as follows: "King Antiochus sends greetings to Simon, the priest and ethnarch, and to the Jewish nation. Whereas certain villains have gained control of the kingdom of my ancestors, I intend to reclaim it, that I may restore it to its former state. I have recruited a large number of mercenary troops and equipped warships to make a landing in my country and take revenge on those who have ruined it and laid waste many cities in my realm. "Now, therefore, I confirm to you all the tax exemptions that the kings before me granted you and whatever other privileges they conferred on you. I authorize you to coin your own money, as legal tender in your country. Jerusalem and its temple shall be free. All the weapons you have prepared and all the strongholds you have built and now occupy shall remain in your possession. All debts, present or future, due to the royal treasury shall be canceled for you, now and for all time. When we recover our kingdom, we will greatly honor you and your nation and the temple, so that your glory will be manifest in all the earth." In the year one hundred and seventy-four Antiochus invaded the land of his ancestors, and all the troops rallied to him, so that few were left with Trypho. Pursued by Antiochus, Trypho fled to Dor, by the sea, realizing what a mass of troubles had come upon him now that his soldiers had deserted him. Antiochus encamped before Dor with a hundred and twenty thousand infantry and eight thousand horsemen. While he invested the city, his ships closed in along the coast, so that he blockaded it by land and sea and let no one go in or out.

. Rome Supports the Jews. .

Meanwhile, Numenius and his companions left Rome with letters such as this addressed to various kings and countries: "Lucius, Consul of the Romans, sends greetings to King Ptolemy. Certain envoys of the Jews, our friends and allies, have come to us to renew their earlier alliance of friendship. They had been sent by Simon the high priest and the Jewish people, and they brought with them a gold shield worth a thousand minas. Therefore we have decided to write to various kings and countries, that they are not to harm them, or wage war against them or their cities or their country, and are not to assist those who fight against them. We have also decided to accept the shield from them. If, then, any troublemakers from their country take refuge with you, hand them over to Simon the high priest, so that he may punish them according to their Torah." The consul sent similar letters to Kings Demetrius, Attalus, Ariarthes and Arsaces; to all the countries--Sampsames, Sparta, Delos, Myndos, Sicyon, Caria, Samos, Pamphylia, Lycia, Halicarnassus, Rhodes, Phaselis, Cos, Side, Aradus, Gortyna, Cnidus, Cyprus, and Cyrene. A copy of the letter was also sent to Simon the high priest.

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. Antiochus Threatens Simon. .

When King Antiochus was encamped before Dor, he assaulted it continuously both with troops and with the siege machines he had made. He blockaded Trypho by preventing anyone from going in or out. Simon sent to Antiochus' support two thousand elite troops, together with gold and silver and much equipment. But he refused to accept the aid; in fact, he broke all the agreements he had previously made with Simon and became hostile toward him. He sent Athenobius, one of his Friends, to confer with Simon and say: "You are occupying Joppa and Gazara and the citadel of Jerusalem; these are cities of my kingdom. You have laid waste their territories, done great harm to the land, and taken possession of many districts in my realm. Therefore, give up the cities you have seized and the tribute money of the districts outside the territory of Judea of which you have taken possession; or instead, pay me five hundred talents of silver for the devastation you have caused and five hundred talents more for the tribute money of the cities. If you do not do this, we will come and make war on you." So Athenobius, the king's Friend, came to Jerusalem and on seeing the splendor of Simon's court, the gold and silver plate on the sideboard, and the rest of his rich display, he was amazed. When he gave him the king's message, Simon said to him in reply: "We have not seized any foreign land; what we took is not the property of others, but our ancestral heritage which for a time had been unjustly held by our enemies. Now that we have the opportunity, we are holding on to the heritage of our ancestors. As for Joppa and Gazara, which you demand, the men of these cities were doing great harm to our people and laying waste our country; however, we are willing to pay you a hundred talents for these cities." Athenobius made no reply, but returned to the king in anger. When he told him of Simon's words, of his splendor, and of all he had seen, the king fell into a violent rage.

. Victory over Cendebeus. .

Trypho had gotten aboard a ship and escaped to Orthosia. Then the king appointed Cendebeus commander-in-chief of the seacoast, and gave him infantry and cavalry forces. He ordered him to move his troops against Judea and to fortify Kedron and strengthen its gates, so that he could launch attacks against the Jewish people. Meanwhile the king went in pursuit of Trypho. When Cendebeus came to Jamnia, he began to harass the people and to make incursions into Judea, where he took people captive or massacred them. As the king ordered, he fortified Kedron and stationed horsemen and infantry there, so that they could go out and patrol the roads of Judea.

!! End of The Chapter.

(1 Maccabees 16:1-24 NAB-A) :

. Simon tells John to Go Fight for the Nation. .

John then went up from Gazara and told his father Simon what Cendebeus was doing. Simon called his two oldest sons, Judas and John, and said to them: "I and my brothers and my father's house have fought the battles of Israel from our youth until today, and many times we succeeded in saving Israel. I have now grown old, but you, by the mercy of Heaven, have come to man's estate. Take my place and my brother's, and go out and

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fight for our nation; and may the help of Heaven be with you!" John then mustered in the land twenty thousand warriors and horsemen. Setting out against Cendebeus, they spent the night at Modein, rose early, and marched into the plain. There, facing them, was an immense army of foot soldiers and horsemen, and between the two armies was a stream. John and his men took their position against the enemy. Seeing that his men were afraid to cross the stream, John crossed first. When his men saw this, they crossed over after him. Then he divided his infantry into two corps and put his cavalry between them, for the enemy's horsemen were very numerous. They blew the trumpets, and Cendebeus and his army were put to flight; many of them fell wounded, and the rest fled toward the stronghold. It was then that John's brother Judas fell wounded; but John pursued them until Cendebeus reached Kedron, which he had fortified. Some took refuge in the towers on the plain of Azotus, but John set fire to these, and about two thousand of the enemy perished. He then returned to Judea in peace.

. Murder of Simon and His Sons. .

Ptolemy, son of Abubus, had been appointed governor of the plain of Jericho, and he had much silver and gold, being the son-in-law of the high priest. But he became ambitious and sought to get control of the country. So he made treacherous plans to do away with Simon and his sons. As Simon was inspecting the cities of the country and providing for their needs, he and his sons Mattathias and Judas went down to Jericho in the year one hundred and seventy-seven, in the eleventh month (that is, the month Shebat). The son of Abubus gave them a deceitful welcome in the little stronghold called Dok which he had built. While serving them a sumptuous banquet, he had his men hidden there. Then, when Simon and his sons had drunk freely, Ptolemy and his men sprang up, weapons in hand, rushed upon Simon in the banquet hall, and killed him, his two sons, and some of his servants. By this vicious act of treason he repaid good with evil.

. John Succeeds Simon. .

Then Ptolemy wrote an account of this and sent it to the king, asking that troops be sent to help him and that the country be turned over to him. He sent other men to Gazara to do away with John. To the army officers he sent letters inviting them to come to him so that he might present them with silver, gold, and gifts. He also sent others to seize Jerusalem and the mount of the temple. But someone ran ahead and brought word to John at Gazara that his father and his brothers had perished, and that Ptolemy had sent men to kill him also. On hearing this, John was utterly astounded. When the men came to kill him, he had them arrested and put to death, for he knew what they meant to do. Now the rest of the history of John, his wars and the brave deeds he performed, his rebuilding of the walls, and his other achievements- these things are recorded in the chronicle of his pontificate, from the time that he succeeded his father as high priest.

!! . End of 1 Maccabees: Praise Yah! .

!! End of Today's FEAST and Related Scriptures! Praise Yah! (HNV-yet version, in the public domain.)