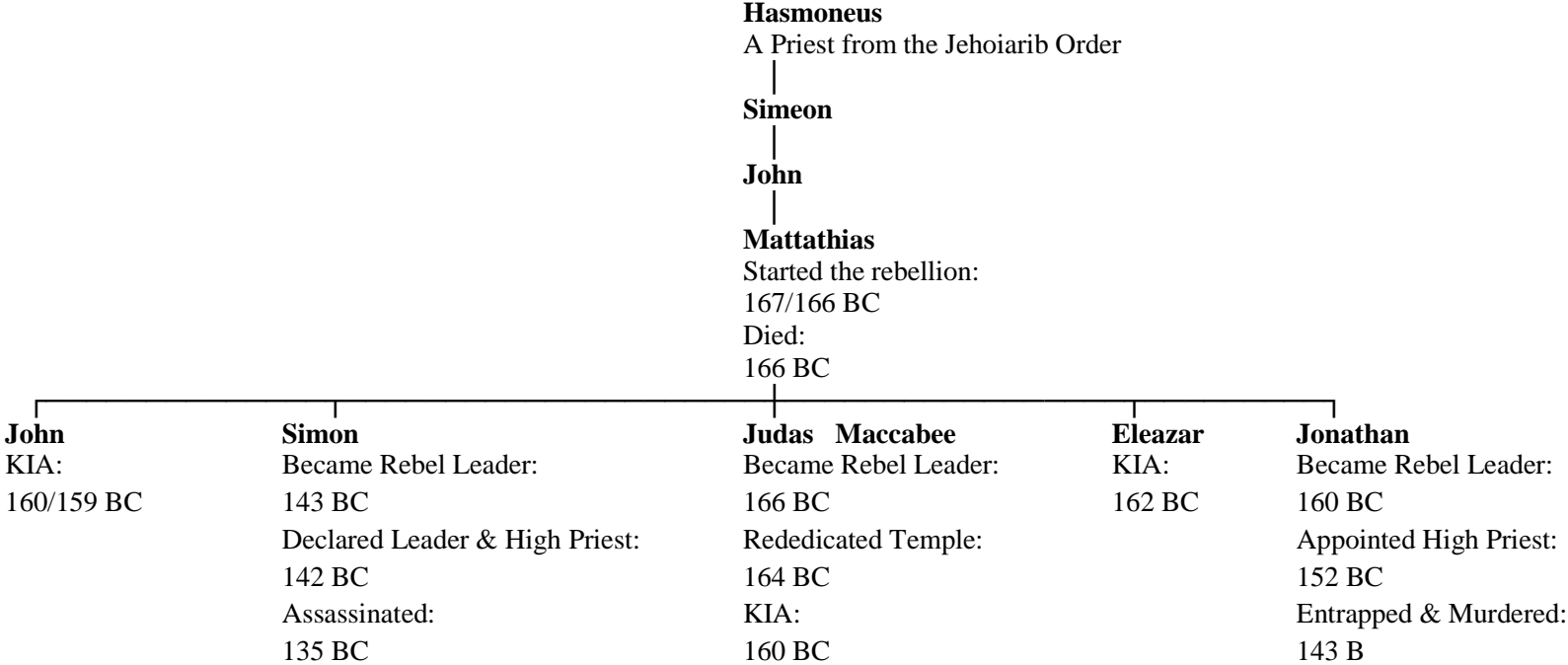


THE ROOT OF THE “HASMONEAN” FAMILY TREE



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE “HASMONEAN” DYNASTY

160 BC **SPRING** Judas Maccabee was killed in a battle with Bacchides, the commander of King Demetrius’ forces. A purge of Judas’ supporters immediately ensued.

“After the death of Judas, the renegades emerged in all parts of Israel; all the wrongdoers reappeared. In those days a very great famine occurred, and the country went over to their side. Bacchides chose the godless and put them in charge of the country. They made inquiry and searched for the friends of Judas, and brought them to Bacchides, who took vengeance on them and made sport of them. So there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.”

1 Maccabees 9:23-27

Judas’ youngest brother, Jonathan, was selected as his replacement. When he and his small army became Bacchides new target, Jonathan sent his oldest brother, John, to the Nabateans (allies living just south of the Dead Sea in the ancient territory of Edom) with much of their supplies. John was ambushed along the way, killed & the supplies confiscated. Jonathan and his remaining brother, Simon, later ambushed and killed those responsible for John’s death during a wedding. (1 Maccabees 9:28-42)

“When Bacchides heard of this, he came with a large force on the sabbath day to the banks of the Jordan. And Jonathan said to those with him, “Let us get up now and fight for our lives, for today things are not as they were before. For look! the battle is in front of us and behind us; the water of the Jordan is on this side and on that, with marsh and thicket; there is no place to turn. Cry out now to Heaven that you may be delivered from the hands of our enemies.”

“So the battle began, and Jonathan stretched out his hand to strike Bacchides, but he eluded him and went to the rear. Then Jonathan and the men with him leaped into the Jordan and swam across to the other side, and the enemy did not cross the Jordan to attack them. And about one thousand of Bacchides’ men fell that day.”

1 Maccabees 9:43-49

Commander Bacchides spent the balance of the year fortifying his hold on Judea.

159 BC **SPRING** The traitor High Priest earned the wrath of heaven by attempting to destroy the wall immediately surrounding the Temple shrine.

“In the one hundred and fifty-third year¹, in the second month, Alcimus gave orders to tear down the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary. He tore down the work of the prophets! But he only began to tear it down, for at that time Alcimus was stricken and his work was hindered; his mouth was stopped and he was paralyzed, so that he could no longer say a word or give commands concerning his house. And Alcimus died at that time in great agony.

“When Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead, he returned to the king, and the land of Judah had rest for two years.”

1 Maccabees 9:54-57

By Jewish reckoning, there was no High Priest for the next seven years.

¹ The Jews counted the 153rd Seleucid Year as Spring 159 BC to Spring 158 BC.

156 BC **PROBABLY SPRING** Bacchides was convinced by the traitor Jews that Jonathan & his followers were now weak enough to be wiped out. When the commander invaded Judea & attempted to eradicate the Jewish rebels he found out otherwise. After many casualties, Bacchides executed those who had informed him the rebels were easy pickings, made arrangements with Jonathan for a prisoner exchange & agreed to permanent truce.

“Thus the sword ceased from Israel. -Jonathan settled in Michmash and began to judge the people; and he destroyed the godless out of Israel.”

1 Maccabees 9:73

152 BC Once again the political landscape of the Middle East shifted dramatically & Jonathan and his rebel forces became significant players in the midst of a great power struggle amongst the Greeks. Jonathan took advantage of the situation to retake control of Jerusalem, lost to the traitor Jews at the time of Judas’ death eight years earlier.

“In the one hundred sixtieth year² Alexander Epiphanes³, son of Antiochus, landed and occupied Ptolemais. They welcomed him, and there he began to reign.

“When King Demetrius heard of it, he assembled a very large army and marched out to meet him in battle.⁴ Demetrius sent Jonathan a letter in peaceable words to honor him; for he said to himself, “Let us act first to make peace with him before he makes peace with Alexander against us, for he will remember all the wrongs that we did to him and to his brothers and his nation.”

“So Demetrius gave him authority to recruit troops, to equip them with arms, and to become his ally; and he commanded that the hostages in the citadel should be released to him.

“Then Jonathan came to Jerusalem and read the letter in the hearing of all the people and of those in the citadel. They were greatly alarmed when they heard that the king had given him authority to recruit troops. But those in the citadel released the hostages to Jonathan, and he returned them to their parents.

“And Jonathan took up residence in Jerusalem and began to rebuild and restore the city. He directed those who were doing the work to build the walls and encircle Mount Zion with squared stones, for better fortification; and they did so.

“Then the foreigners who were in the strongholds that Bacchides had built fled; all of them left their places and went back to their own lands. Only in Beth-zur did some remain who had forsaken the law and the commandments, for it served as a place of refuge.”

1 Maccabees 10:1-14

But the newly arrived Alexander also understood the value of an alliance with Jonathan, so he sent him a letter offering him something special.

“King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, greetings.

“We have heard about you, that you are a mighty warrior and worthy to be our friend. And so we have appointed you today to be the high priest of your nation; you are to be called the king’s Friend and you are to take our side and keep friendship with us.”

He also sent him a purple robe and a golden crown.

1 Maccabees 10:18-20

² The Jews counted the 160th Seleucid Year as Spring 152 BC to Spring 151 BC.

³ Another son of that really bad guy, Antiochus IV.

⁴ Nine years earlier, Demetrius had killed Alexander’s older brother, Antiochus V, becoming King of the Seleucid Empire.

152 BC **FALL: Feast of Tabernacles** Jonathan immediately presented himself as King Alexander's appointed High Priest in Jerusalem. This, of course, caused a great deal of worry for King Demetrius, who made an extravagant counter offer, trying to gain Jonathan's support.

"King Demetrius to the nation of the Jews, greetings.

"Since you have kept your agreement with us and have continued your friendship with us, and have not sided with our enemies, we have heard of it and rejoiced. Now continue still to keep faith with us, and we will repay you with good for what you do for us. We will grant you many immunities and give you gifts.

"I now free you and exempt all the Jews from payment of tribute and salt tax and crown levies, and instead of collecting the third of the grain and the half of the fruit of the trees that I should receive, I release them from this day and henceforth. I will not collect them from the land of Judah or from the three districts added to it from Samaria and Galilee, from this day and for all time.

"Jerusalem and its environs, its tithes and its revenues, shall be holy and free from tax.

"I release also my control of the citadel in Jerusalem and give it to the high priest, so that he may station in it men of his own choice to guard it.

"And everyone of the Jews taken as a captive from the land of Judah into any part of my kingdom, I set free without payment; and let all officials cancel also the taxes on their livestock.

"All the festivals and sabbaths and new moons and appointed days, and the three days before a festival and the three after a festival—let them all be days of immunity and release for all the Jews who are in my kingdom. No one shall have authority to exact anything from them or annoy any of them about any matter.

"Let Jews be enrolled in the king's forces to the number of thirty thousand men, and let the maintenance be given them that is due to all the forces of the king. Let some of them be stationed in the great strongholds of the king, and let some of them be put in positions of trust in the kingdom. Let their officers and leaders be of their own number, and let them live by their own laws, just as the king has commanded in the land of Judah.

"As for the three districts that have been added to Judea from the country of Samaria, let them be annexed to Judea so that they may be considered to be under one ruler and obey no other authority than the high priest.

"Ptolemais and the land adjoining it I have given as a gift to the sanctuary in Jerusalem, to meet the necessary expenses of the sanctuary.

"I also grant fifteen thousand shekels of silver yearly out of the king's revenues from appropriate places. And all the additional funds that the government officials have not paid as they did in the first years, they shall give from now on for the service of the temple. Moreover, the five thousand shekels of silver that my officials have received every year from the income of the services of the temple, this too is canceled, because it belongs to the priests who minister there.

"And all who take refuge at the temple in Jerusalem, or in any of its precincts, because they owe money to the king or are in debt, let them be released and receive back all their property in my kingdom.

"Let the cost of rebuilding and restoring the structures of the sanctuary be paid from the revenues of the king. And let the cost of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and fortifying it all around, and the cost of rebuilding the walls in Judea, also be paid from the revenues of the king."

1 Maccabees 10:25-45

Long story short – Jonathan & the Jews didn't trust King Demetrius & allied themselves instead with King Alexander. The following year (151 BC), Alexander's army, supported by the Jews, won a great battle during which Demetrius was killed.

150 BC King Alexander next made a peace treaty with King Ptolemy VI of Egypt, marrying his daughter, Cleopatra Thea. Shortly after the wedding, the High Priest Jonathan was invited to Ptolemais (located on the coast, nearly 80 miles NNW of Jerusalem) as an honored guest.

“Then King Alexander wrote to Jonathan to come and meet him. So he went with pomp to Ptolemais and met the two kings; he gave them and their Friends silver and gold and many gifts, and found favor with them.

“A group of malcontents from Israel, renegades, gathered together against him to accuse him; but the king paid no attention to them. The king gave orders to take off Jonathan’s garments and to clothe him in purple, and they did so. The king also seated him at his side; and he said to his officers, “Go out with him into the middle of the city and proclaim that no one is to bring charges against him about any matter, and let no one annoy him for any reason.”

“When his accusers saw the honor that was paid him, in accord with the proclamation, and saw him clothed in purple, they all fled. Thus the king honored him and enrolled him among his chief Friends, and made him general and governor of the province.

“And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem in peace and gladness.”

1 Maccabees 10:59-66

147/146 BC Demetrius II (son of the late King Demetrius) invaded lower Syria from Crete. King Alexander immediately pulled back to Antioch, but Jonathan and his Jewish forces resisted the invasion, inflicting great casualties on the invaders.

146 BC While King Alexander was in Cilicia, putting down a rebellion there as well, King Ptolemy VI, sensing an opportunity to expand his own kingdom, marched northward toward Antioch. He forcibly divorced his daughter from Alexander & used her to enter a marriage alliance with Demetrius II. Upon arriving at Antioch he put on the crown of his own kingdom & that of the Seleucid Empire.

145 BC The combined forces of Ptolemy VI & Demetrius II defeated the army of Alexander, who fled to Arabia, where he was killed & his head sent to Ptolemy VI. A few days later, Ptolemy VI died, leaving Demetrius II as the sole King of the Seleucid Empire. Despite complaints from the traitor Jews, Demetrius II considered alliance with Jonathan & the religious Jews very important.

“Although certain renegades of his nation kept making complaints against him, the king treated him as his predecessors had treated him; he exalted him in the presence of all his Friends. He confirmed him in the high priesthood and in as many other honors as he had formerly had, and caused him to be reckoned among his chief Friends.

“Then Jonathan asked the king to free Judea and the three districts of Samaria from tribute, and promised him three hundred talents.

The king consented, and wrote a letter to Jonathan about all these things; its contents were as follows: ...We have determined to do good to the nation of the Jews, who are our friends and fulfill their obligations to us, because of the goodwill they show toward us. We have confirmed as their possession both the territory of Judea and the three districts of Aphairema and Lydda and Rathamin; the latter, with all the region bordering them, were added to Judea from Samaria.

To all those who offer sacrifice in Jerusalem we have granted release from the royal taxes that the king formerly received from them each year, from the crops of the land and the fruit of the trees. And the other payments henceforth due to us of the tithes, and the taxes due to us, and the salt pits and the crown taxes due to us—from all these we shall grant them release. And not one of these grants shall be canceled from this time on forever.

Now therefore take care to make a copy of this, and let it be given to Jonathan and put up in a conspicuous place on the holy mountain.’ ”

1 Maccabees 11:25-37

145-143 BC Trypho, an army commander who (like so many of the Greek soldiers) was not happy with Demetrius II's downsizing of the army, decided to support the right of the very young son of the late King Alexander to be King of the Seleucid Empire. The Jews were courted by the new administration.

"Then the young Antiochus wrote to Jonathan, saying, "I confirm you in the high priesthood and set you over the four districts and make you one of the king's Friends."

"He also sent him gold plate and a table service, and granted him the right to drink from gold cups and dress in purple and wear a gold buckle.

"He appointed Jonathan's brother Simon governor from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt."

1 Maccabees 11:57-59

143 BC But Trypho eventually decided he'd prefer to be the rather than serve one. But he felt that Jonathan & Simon would oppose him, so he decided to deal with them first. First, he orchestrated the capture of Jonathan; then he extorted money & hostages from Simon with promises to release Jonathan; and finally, having no further need of him, he killed Jonathan.

Simon, now the last remaining son of Mattathias, built a monument to his family.

"And Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers; he made it high so that it might be seen, with polished stone at the front and back. He also erected seven pyramids, opposite one another, for his father and mother and four brothers. For the pyramids he devised an elaborate setting, erecting about them great columns, and on the columns he put suits of armor for a permanent memorial, and beside the suits of armor he carved ships, so that they could be seen by all who sail the sea. This is the tomb that he built in Modein; it remains to this day."

1 Maccabees 13:26-30

Simon is considered the first ruler of an independent Judean dynasty – the "Hasmonean" Dynasty.

- In 142 BC, King Demetrius II offered to make peace with him, wiping out all Jewish obligation to the Seleucid Empire & confirming him as the Jewish High Priest.⁵
- The traitor Jews & Greek troops occupying the citadel overlooking the Temple surrendered to Simon on 2*23 of the 171st Year,⁶ permitting it to be cleansed and dedicated to Yahweh.
- 1 Maccabees 14 begins with a poetic tribute to Simon.
- The Romans & Spartans communicated regret over the death of Jonathan & extended renewed offers of friendship to Simon. (1 Maccabees 14)
- On 6*18 of the 172nd Year,⁷ the Jews posted a plaque in his honor.

"The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise, and that he should be governor over them and that he should take charge of the sanctuary and appoint officials over its tasks and over the country and the weapons and the strongholds, and that he should take charge of the sanctuary, and that he should be obeyed by all, and that all contracts in the country should be written in his name, and that he should be clothed in purple and wear gold. None of the people or priests shall be permitted to nullify any of these decisions or to oppose what he says, or to convene an assembly in the country without his permission, or to be clothed in purple or put on a gold buckle. Whoever acts contrary to these decisions or rejects any of them shall be liable to punishment."

1 Maccabees 14:41-45

⁵ "In the one hundred seventieth year [Spring 142-Spring 141] the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel, and the people began to write in their documents and contracts, "In the first year of Simon the great high priest and commander and leader of the Jews."" (1 Maccabees 13:41-42, NRSV)

⁶ Late spring of 141 BC.

⁷ Late summer of 140 BC.