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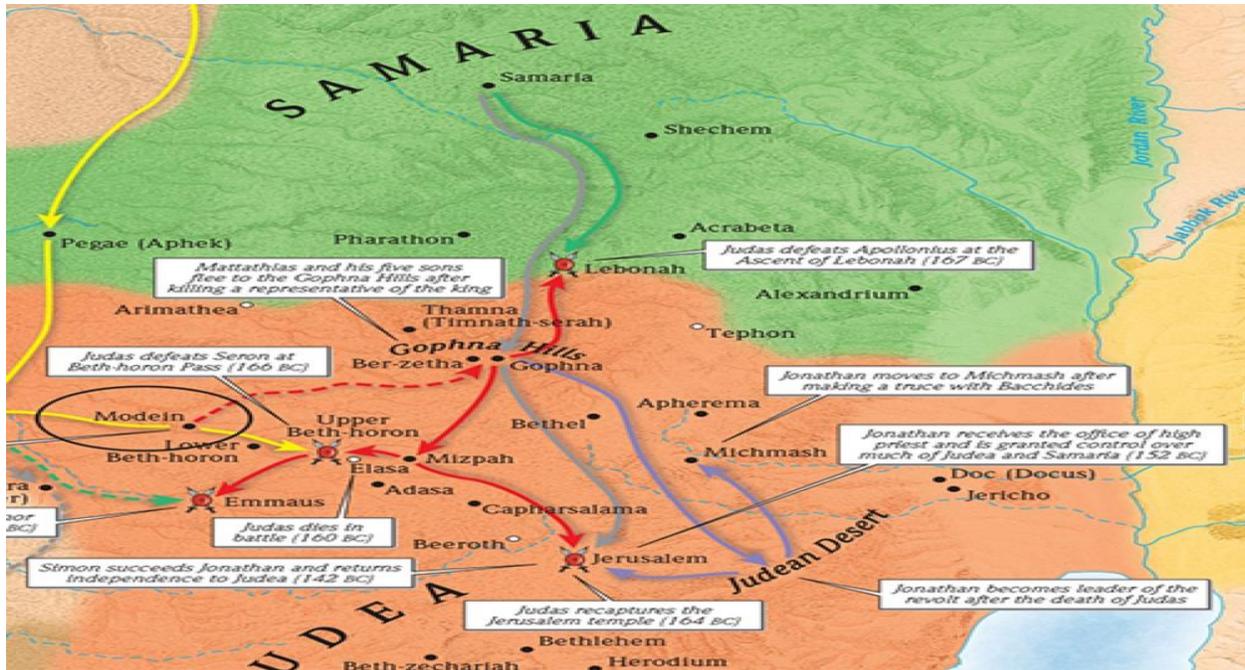
Judah Maccabeus And the Jewish Victory

In Israel's history, many events have led to its freedom in history and many people have helped along the way. Judah Maccabeus is one of those who have helped in Israel's long journey back to the promised land. "Judah Maccabeus, son of Mattathias, leader of the Hasmonean uprising, and brother to four other siblings" (Kaiser and Wegner 2017) "was chosen by his father to lead the Maccabean Revolt" (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). He had outstanding military leadership and knew the land's physical layout well. Before the "Maccabean Revolt", "(Alexander the Great) conquered the Levant and Palestine which included Judea around 329 BCE" (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). After his death, this land would be taken by "the Seleucid Empire", a dynasty of "Hellenistic Kings" (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). "The Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the second temple and Hellenized parts of the Jewish population" (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). The Jewish people had succumbed to the ways of the Hellenization of their land and many even practiced Hellenism. Judah Maccabeus would launch a successful campaign to overthrow Antiochus IV which would lead to the "cleansing of the second temple and the reestablishment of Jewish worship" (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). In order to have a clear picture of the importance of Judas Maccabeus's role in the history of Israel a time period, location, and evidence must be presented along with what Judas Maccabeus accomplished during his campaign against the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes during the "Maccabean Revolt".

The Time Period

In starting with “Alexander the Great”, “The Context of Scripture” (Hallo and Younger 2003), has two texts both cover later periods of (the Seleucid King List) which date Alexander the Great to Demetrius II, ca. 330-125 BCE by “331 BC Alexander outmaneuvered and defeated Darius and took the entire Persian territory” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). “Alexander the Great” brought with him the “Hellenistic Culture” and spread it throughout Asia Minor. “Alexander the Great” ruled according to the “History of Israel” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017), 323 BC and the “Hellenistic culture continued even after according to “The Context of Scripture” (Hallo and Younger 2003) the Seleucid king “Antiochus IV Epiphanes” began his reign 175-164BCE that was a time when things start to change Jews were being persecuted and forced by outlawing Jewish practice which was the start of the “Maccabean Revolt” 167-135 BC Mattathias dying early in the campaign 166 BC Judas Maccabeus taking command” the History of Israel” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). In 167 BC Judas Maccabeus began his campaign and according to “the History of Israel” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017) “On the Twenty-Fifth day of Kislev, in December of 164 BC (1 Macc 4:36-61; 2 Macc 10:1-8) This period became known as the feast of “Dedication” or *Hanukkah*, “The Feast of Lights” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). To understand the difficulty of fighting a war of this sort you must understand the geographical area where the war is being fought. The importance of land to the people of Israel. The location of the campaign makes a difference in how the campaign must be fought. Judas Maccabeus knows this land very well and how to fight in such difficult situations. Judas’s tactics fit his way of fighting very well and give him an element of surprise which goes well for his army,

Geographical Location



The reason Judas Maccabeus was able to defeat the Seleucid Dynasty was that most of the “combat took place in hilly and mountainous terrain” (Bartlett 1998). Judas Maccabeus was an expert in the use of “Guerrilla Warfare” (Bartlett 1998), and on top of that they used their ability to “organize their armies, use diplomatic skills, form alliances and developed the use of propaganda” (Bartlett 1998). The ability to put together that kind of operation to defeat such a powerful army is why Judas Maccabeus was important “(1 Maccabees) “Judas was presented as a new David” (Bartlett 1998). As you can see in the illustration above the many battles Judas Maccabeus and his army fought before Judas recaptured the Jerusalem temple in 164 BC. In many cases, it may be hard to find evidence of Israel’s existence in that timeframe or even if the Revolt took place during that period. The facts and evidence about what and where the Maccabees were and what period that was can be narrowed down and verified by different sources.

Evidence of Existence

In finding evidence I first look to the Bible and then other areas where it can be understood better. The first area is found in (Daniel 11:31) where it was said: “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place there the abomination of desolation”. This makes a direct reference to King Antiochus IV and the pagan sacrifices that were being done in the temple during the second century BCE. This was when regular sacrifices were outlawed by King Antiochus IV and one of the things that lead to the “Maccabean Revolt”. In the “Context of Scripture, 1” (Hallo and Younger, Brill 2003) it refers to the same Scripture (Daniel 11:31) while referring to (1 Macc 1-6; 2 Macc 4-9) Where it mentions the decree of Antiochus IV, the abomination of desolation and the campaigns of Judas “1 Maccabees” (Bartlett 1998). In “1 Maccabees there was a reference made to “Josephus” in Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, Book XII this was what King Antiochus said after he hired mercenaries to help in the war: “But when upon his mustering his soldiers, he perceived that his treasures were deficient”, “Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, Book XII” (Lodge 1602) This was what was said in Daniel 11:31. The path from here was to go for archaeology evidence what better place than “Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology”, and this is what I found: “ Since few archaeological remains from the pre-Herodian period are securely identified and dated, much of Jerusalem’s development can only be reconstructed from literary sources” (Zangenberg 2023). The Israel Antiquities Authority has found a “cave believed to be used by the Maccabees and coins dated 173/2- 168 BCE” (Reich and Shukron 2021) which is more evidence of Judas Maccabeus and Antiochus IV and the Maccabean Revolt. The information given leads to the end conclusion.

Conclusion

In the history of Israel, there have been many times when God save Israel from themselves and used many leaders to accomplish that mission. Judas Maccabeus was one such leader, instead of fearing the influence of a “Hellenistic Empire”, “Judas Maccabeus with only 3,000 men with only 800 would fight against the Bacchides army of 20,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry men”(Bartlett 1998) was a testament to his brilliant fighting strategy of “Guerrilla Warfare” (Bartlett 1998) on top of “his organizing, diplomatic skills, and ability to form alliances and develop the use of propaganda” (Bartlett 1998) Judas Maccabeus for sake of his people fought on. The “Seleucid Empire” was a powerful army that took over from Egypt and forced their “Hellenistic culture”, brutalized, and killed its people, and desecrated their temple was a force to be reckoned with. God had a plan for Judas Maccabeus he would return the remnants of his people back to God. “On the Twenty-Fifth day of Kislev, in December of 164 BC known now as the feast of “Dedication” or *Hanukkah*, “*The Feast of Lights*” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017), Judas Maccabeus did just that. Judas Maccabeus is one of the most important leaders in the history of Israel even though there were many others who fought after him there was none like him who started with very little and gained a lot. Historical records have mentioned him by name and by his deeds. The Jewish world will forever remember him for what he had done for the Jews, “and his brothers went on to finish what Judas started and wanted to do, free the whole nation” (Kaiser and Wegner 2017). Judas Maccabeus was one of the greatest priests to ever lead a “Band of unprofessional fighters to victory” (Kaiser and Wegner).

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