

DANIEL

The Rise of the Maccabees

Daniel 11:32

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32 By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

By the Way...

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- Among the orthodox developed a longing for a military, political messiah who would smash the Gentile war machines.
- This is why so many were disappointed and disenchanted with Jesus' teachings and actions.

- The oppressions of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes produced a reaction which stunned Antiochus and surprised many of the Jews themselves.
- **The Hasidim needed a leader.**
- From the obscure village of Modin, one emerged.



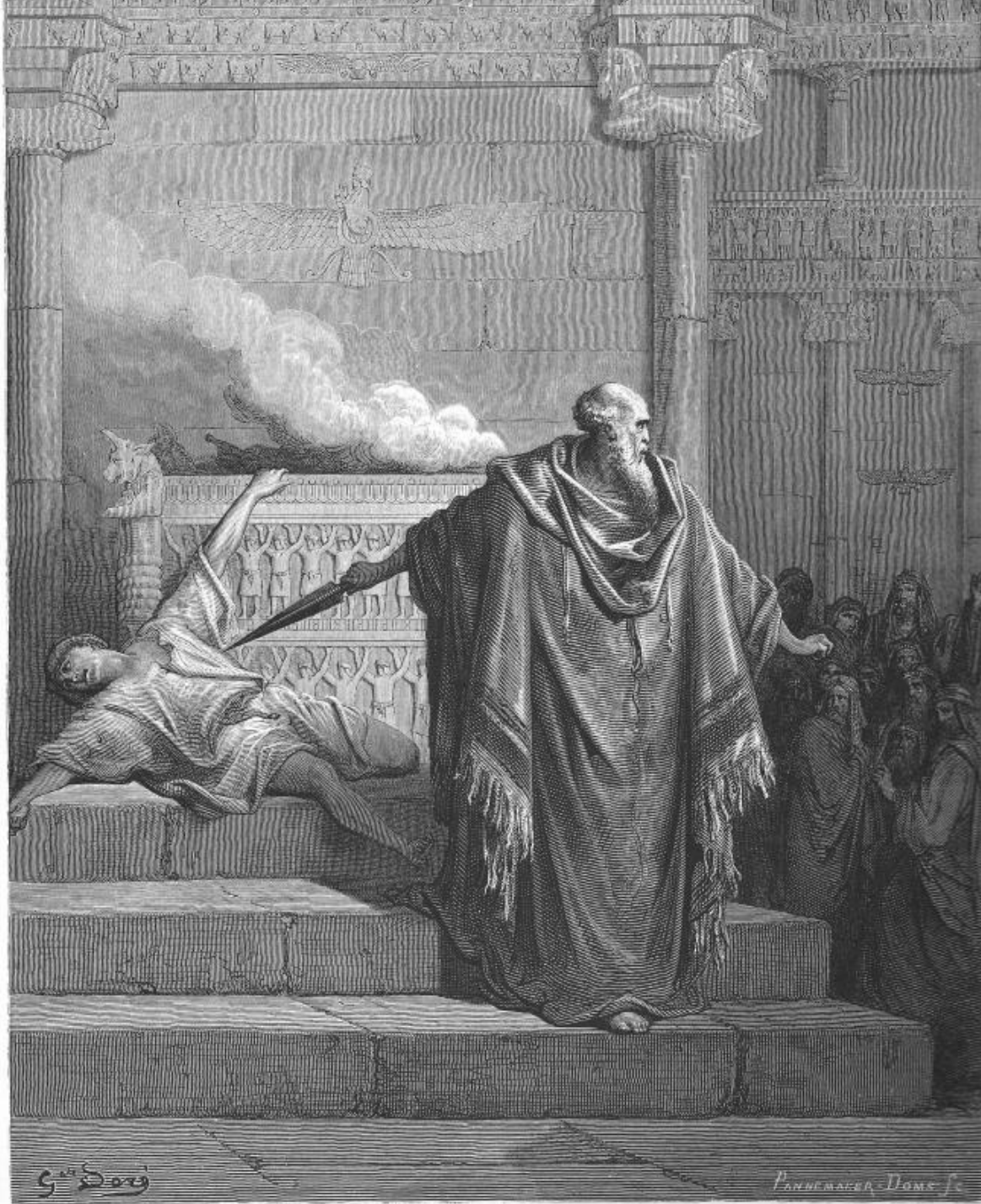
The Breaking Point

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- Tensions reached their pinnacle when a Syrian official tried to force an old priest named Mattathias to offer a pagan sacrifice in the village of Modin.
- **Mattathias refused, and when an apostate Jew volunteered to perform the sacrifice, the old priest killed him and the government envoy, destroyed the altar, and fled into the mountains with his five sons.**

Mattathias the Hero

- Soon the family was joined by other zealots and a guerilla army was formed.
- Mattathias died shortly after, but he had lit the spark for a major insurrection.



The “Maccabees”

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- Leadership of the rebels passed to his son Judas, who was nicknamed Maccabeus, meaning “the hammer.”
- The zealots were defeated in most of the early battles, but their numbers continued to increase.
- One major disadvantage for the Maccabees was the observance of the Sabbath.



In a Surprise Night Attack

Judas basically annihilated the Syrian army at Emmaus and seized enormous stores of provisions, which basically opened the road to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem in Jewish Hands

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- Menelaus and his sympathizers fled, and the Maccabees entered the city and were able to take everything except the fort known as the Akra.
- They entered the Temple and cleansed it of all pagan idols, erecting a new altar to Yahweh.
- The statue of Jupiter (conspicuously resembling Antiochus) was ground to dust.



Beginning the 25th of Kislev

- They observed an eight-day Feast of Dedication, known as Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.
- In this way they celebrated the end of the three-year period of desecration in the Temple.

Peace was Short-Lived

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- The city was besieged, and the Syrians hoped to starve the Maccabees into submission.
- However, during the siege, word came to Lysias, the general, that a large enemy force was marching against Antioch, the Syrian capital.
- Pressed into service there, he offered peace to the Jews.

The Peace Offer

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- Syria would refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Judah.
- Laws prohibiting the practice of Judaism were repealed.
- Menelaus would be removed and replaced by Eliakim (or Alcimus), a mild Hellenizer.
- Amnesty for Judas and his family.
- The walls of Jerusalem must be razed.

The Council

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Maccabean army officers

Scribes and elders of the Hasidim

The goal of the Hasidim was religious liberty, which seemed to be in sight.

Judas, however, was not satisfied with anything short of full political as well as religious liberty.

Peace Terms Accepted

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- The Hasidim were able to outvote the followers of Judas, and peace was achieved.
- Alcimus became high priest; Menelaus was executed.
- Judas and a few of his followers left the city.
- And before long, the fears of Judas were realized.

War Again

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- Alcimus had a number of the Hasidim seized and executed.
- As a result, many loyal Jews turned to Judas again, and the civil war was renewed.
- Alcimus appealed to Syria for aid, and a more formidable force was sent for Judas to contend with.

Meanwhile...

- The Hellenizing Jews adopted a more moderate attitude and won over large segments of the followers of Judas.
- Left with an ill-equipped army of only 800 men, Judas bravely continued the fight.
- He was killed in battle, ending the first phase of the Maccabean Revolt.

After Judas' Death

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- Judas is replaced by his brother, Jonathan, who was operating as high priest for the orthodox Jews.
- He and his brothers flee across the Jordan, and many young Jews join them in the fight.
- They are viewed as patriots.

Meanwhile...

- Antiochus Epiphanes dies suddenly while campaigning against Parthia in 164 B.C.
- According to the scroll of Antiochus, when Antiochus heard that his army had been defeated in Judea, he boarded a ship and fled to the coastal cities.
- Wherever he came the people rebelled and called him “The Fugitive,” so he drowned himself in the sea.

2 Maccabees 9 says:

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But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him with an incurable and invisible blow. As soon as he stopped speaking he was seized with a pain in his bowels, for which there was no relief, and with sharp internal tortures—and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions. Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence, but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews, and giving orders to drive even faster. And so it came about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along, and the fall was so hard as to torture every limb of his body. Thus he who only a little while before had thought in his superhuman arrogance that he could command the waves of the sea, and had imagined that he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, making the power of God manifest to all.

Syria Begins to Crumble

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- And Jonathan shows himself a masterful diplomat, delaying responses to Syria and making treaties with Sparta and Rome.
- When it is all said and done, Jonathan was High Priest, Governor of Judea, and a member of the Syrian nobility.
- Jonathan's brother Simon is made governor of the Philistine coastal area.

In 142 B.C.

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- Jonathan is assassinated by a Syrian general, and was succeeded by Simon, the last remaining son of Mattathias.
- Simon secures a treaty with Rome in 139 B.C. and arranges for the granting of political freedom to the Jews by Demetrius II, the Seleucid king.

Good and Bad

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- The Good News is that Israel is basically autonomous for the first time since 605 B.C.
- The Bad News is that Simon now rules as both religious and political leader, which is never a good combination.
 - Why is this especially ironic?

The ? of the Priesthood

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- The Hasidic party recognized the line of Onias as the legitimate heirs to the Aaronic priesthood, but because the family fled to Egypt during the revolt, their claims were viewed as forfeited.
- According to 1 Maccabees 14, a council of leaders in Israel name Simon “leader and High priest for ever, until there should arise a faithful prophet.”

A New Dynasty

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- They will be called the Hasmoneans.
- Simon was the last of Mattathias' sons, but it is under his rule that the concept of hereditary high priesthood in the Hasmonean family was legitimized.
- In 134 B.C., Simon and two of his sons are murdered by an ambitious son-in-law, but a third son was able to escape—his name was John Hyrcanus.

A New Age

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- The generation that fought for religious liberty was dying; the new generation wanted more.
- **The Syrians recognize Hyrcanus as ruler and withdraw.**
- The Hasidim had supported the Hasmoneans but never aligned with them; the Hellenizers are discredited and assimilate into Jewish society.

The Groups Live On

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The Hellenizers' ideals were
perpetuated in the new party of
the Sadducees.

The ideals of the Hasidim were
perpetuated in the new party of
the Pharisees.

Points to Remember

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- Pharisees were religiously conservative but considered politically liberal.
- Sadducees were religiously liberal but considered politically conservative.

The Pharisees:

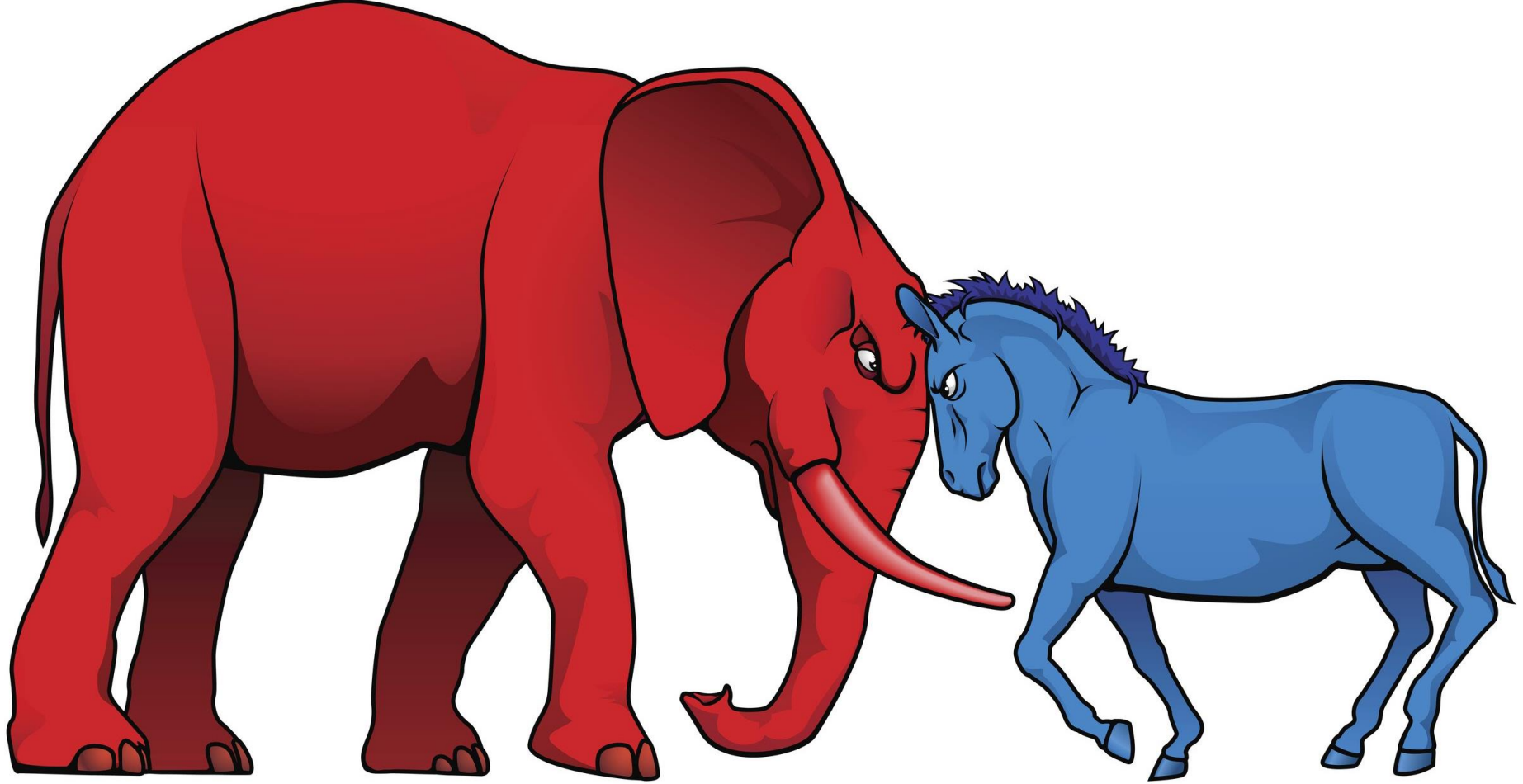
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- Became very legalistic (to a point of pride, arrogance); they did believe in the resurrection of the dead, angels and spirits, etc.
- Officially accepted not only the entire Old Testament Scriptures, but the “oral law” (i.e., the teachings of the fathers concerning the Scriptures) as well.
- Hungry for proselytes

The Sadducees:

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- Remembered primarily for what they did not believe, very non-descript system of belief; most specifically, they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.
- Officially accepted the Torah, primarily because Leviticus demands allegiance to the Temple, which was the source of the Sadducees' livelihood.
- Very exclusivistic, uninterested in proselytes, converts or recruits.



Next Week:

Pharisees,
Sadducees,
and Civil
War

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