

## **An Attempt on the Temple Treasury**

1 Maccabees 1:1-9

2 Maccabees 3:1 – 4:6

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Alexander the Great conquered most of the known world. Just before he died at the age of thirty-two, he divided his empire into three kingdoms and handed them over to his three most honored military officers. Within fifty years, these three kingdoms had developed into powerful dynasties – the Antigonids of Macedonia, the Ptolemies of Egypt, and the Seleucids of Syria.

A hundred fifty years after the death of Alexander, a man named Simon had an argument with Onias the high priest, and out of spite sent a message to Seleucus IV Philopator of Syria informing him of just how much money was being held for safekeeping in the Temple of God in Jerusalem. Seleucus sent Heliodorus, his highest official, to bring back all the money.

Seleucus often paid for the Temple sacrifices, so when his representative arrived in Jerusalem, he was warmly welcomed. But when his objective became known, the entire city went into mourning and pleaded with God for help.

Heliodorus went to the Temple to take the money. God sent two angels to stop him. He was severely injured in the encounter. But Onias the high priest offered a sacrifice and asked God to save Heliodorus, and the Lord spared his life.

Recovered, Heliodorus offered a sacrifice of his own. He went home praising God Most High. Simon, who had started the whole mess, tried to blame Onias for the attempt on the Temple treasury. But Heliodorus assured king Seleucus of the high priest's loyalty, and Seleucus ended Simon's uprising.