

## **Bacchides Departs**

1 Maccabees 9:23-73

by Don Falkos

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The king's representative, Bacchides, appointed many godless people to positions of power in Judea. Their main objective was to dismantle the loose organization of rebels that had formed around the now deceased Judas Maccabeus. Whenever followers of Judas were discovered, they were brought to Bacchides, who delighted in torturing them.

As a result of this persecution, the rebels became even more determined in their efforts. They selected Jonathan, the brother of Judas, as their new leader. Jonathan, with help from his brothers Simon and John, continued the guerrilla tactics instituted by Judas.

John was guarding the supplies one day when he was attacked and overcome by a tribe of nomads. The supplies were stolen, and John was murdered. At about that time, this tribe was celebrating a politically important marriage. Jonathan and Simon attacked, killing many in the wedding party and looting everything of value. The wedding turned into a funeral, and the wedding music into a funeral dirge.

Through some brilliant maneuvering on the part of Bacchides, Jonathan and his army found themselves encircled with no way of escape. But they fought like a cornered animal, killed over a thousand enemy troops, jumped into the Jordan River, and got away almost completely unscathed.

In another attack, Bacchides was once again roundly defeated. As with each of his predecessors, he gave up trying to overcome the Maccabean Revolt. He agreed to a treaty with Jonathan and went home to Antioch with his tail between his legs.