

John Hyrcanus

1 Maccabees 16

by Don Falkos

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Simon's son-in-law was a Ptolemy, an offshoot of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. He was a rich man, proud, and arrogant. He thought he would make a better ruler for Judea than his father-in-law. So he began plotting to kill Simon and his sons.

Simon was traveling from town to town seeing to the needs of the people. He and two of his sons came to Jericho. Ptolemy welcomed them with open arms, pretending to be happy to see them. He hosted a banquet in their honor. But as soon as Simon and his two sons entered the room, soldiers pounced on them and killed them.

Ptolemy informed the king of Syria he had killed Simon. He asked the king to put him in charge of Judea. He bribed the Jewish military commanders in order to gain their support. And he sent assassins to kill Simon's only remaining son, John Hyrcanus.

John was warned, "Ptolemy has murdered your father and brothers. Now he has sent men to murder you." John was stunned at the news. He waited for the assassins to arrive and killed them.

John Hyrcanus succeeded his father, Simon, and ruled for thirty years. He fought in many wars, served as high priest, and continued his father's work in support of the people.

About seventy years after John's death, the Hasmonean dynasty came to an end when its final leader was slain by a man named Herod. Herod was subsequently appointed by the Roman government to be king of Judea and went on to become known as Herod the Great.