

I MACCABEES 13-16
SIMON AS HIGH PRIEST

Simon is acclaimed leader

¹Simon heard that Trypho had assembled a large army to invade the land of Judah and destroy it, ²and it threw the people into a state of panic. So he went up to Jerusalem, and gathering the people together ³he encouraged them, saying to them, "You yourselves know what great things my brothers and I and the house of my father have done for the laws and the sanctuary; you know also the wars and the difficulties that my brothers and I have seen. ⁴By reason of this all my brothers have perished for the sake of Israel, and I alone am left. ⁵And now, far be it from me to spare my life in any time of distress, for I am not better than my brothers. ⁶But I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children, for all the nations have gathered together out of hatred to destroy us."

⁷The spirit of the people was rekindled when they heard these words, ⁸and they answered in a loud voice, "You are our leader in place of Judas and your brother Jonathan. ⁹Fight our battles, and all that you say to us we will do." ¹⁰ So he assembled all the warriors and hurried to complete the walls of Jerusalem, and he fortified it on every side. ¹¹He sent Jonathan son of Absalom to Joppa, and with him a considerable army; he drove out its occupants and remained there.

Simon (verse 1; see 2:3) commanded the coastal region (see 11:59). Judas having died (9:18), and Jonathan having been captured (12:48), Simon takes over command.

Simon assumes that Jonathan has been killed.

The people's response to Simon echoes the final words of Mattathias (see 2:65ff). In 159 Jonathan was appointed by the followers of Judas (see 9:29-31). The situation has changed by 143. Simon is appointed by the people (verse 8). His first act is to strengthen the walls of Jerusalem (see 12:36-37). He wanted to secure Joppa as a port, and so drove out the local inhabitants, and turned it into a military garrison (verse 11).

Trypho is determined to control Judea. He has with him Jonathan whom he had treacherously captured earlier (see 12:48).

Adida (verse 13), a few ks west of Mo-dein (see map page 63), and recently fortified (see 12:38), guarded the road from Ptolemais to Jerusalem.

Simon does not trust Trypho, but does not want a rumour to start that would see him responsible for Jonathan's death.

Adora (verse 20) is near Marisa (see map page 37), south-west of Jerusalem.

A snow storm in the winter of 143-142 hindered Trypho's plans to relieve the citadel in Jerusalem (verses 21-22).

Since Jonathan is of no further use to Trypho he has him killed (verse 23).

¹²Trypho left Ptolemais with a large army to invade the land of Judah, and Jonathan was with him under guard.

¹³Simon encamped in Adida, facing the plain. ¹⁴Trypho learned that Simon had risen up in place of his brother Jonathan, and that he was about to join battle with him, so he sent envoys to him and said, ¹⁵"It is for the money that your brother Jonathan owed the royal treasury, in connection with the offices he held, that we are detaining him.

¹⁶Send now one hundred talents of silver and two of his sons as hostages, so that when released he will not revolt against us, and we will release him."

¹⁷Simon knew that they were speaking deceitfully to him, but he sent to get the money and the sons, so that he would not arouse great hostility among the people, who might say, ¹⁸"It was because Simon did not send him the money and the sons, that Jonathan perished." ¹⁹So he sent the sons and the hundred talents, but Trypho broke his word and did not release Jonathan.

²⁰After this Trypho came to invade the country and destroy it, and he circled around by the way to Adora. But Simon and his army kept marching along opposite him to every place he went. ²¹Now the men in the citadel kept sending envoys to Trypho urging him to come to them by way of the wilderness and to send them food. ²²So Trypho got all his cavalry ready to go, but that night a very heavy snow fell, and he did not go because of the snow. He marched off and went into the land of Gilead. ²³When he approached Baskama, he killed Jonathan, and he was buried there. ²⁴Then Trypho turned and went back to his own land.

Monument to the Maccabees

²⁵Simon sent and took the bones of his brother Jonathan, and buried him in Modein, the city of his ancestors. ²⁶All Israel bewailed him with great lamentation, and mourned for him many days. ²⁷And Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers; he made it high so that it might be seen, with polished stone at the front and back. ²⁸He also erected seven pyramids, opposite one another, for his father and mother and four brothers. ²⁹For the pyramids he devised an elaborate setting, erecting about them great columns, and on the columns he put suits of armour for a permanent memorial, and beside the suits of armour he carved ships, so that they could be seen by all who sail the sea. ³⁰This is the tomb that he built in Modein; it remains to this day.

It is not clear why Jonathan is not given a eulogy (contrast Judas, 3:1-9; and Simon, 14:28-47; see also Mattathias's last words (2:65-68)).

Simon is following the Greek way of establishing monuments to celebrate victories.

Trypho has the young king, Antiochus VI, murdered, and assumes control. He ruled Syria as a rival to Demetrius II from 142 to 138.

Simon continues to fortify key towns (verse 33; see 11:66; 12:33-34, 38).

Simon turns to Demetrius (verses 34-35).

Demetrius wants Judea as an ally against Trypho and offers considerable concessions, even pardoning Judea's recent support for Demetrius's enemies (see 11:63-74; 12:24-32).

The year is 142. Syria still had garrisons in Gazara and Jerusalem. Judea had not yet been granted full independence, but the concessions were such as to account for the feeling expressed in verse 42. Simon, son of Mattathias and brother of Judas Maccabaeus, is 'the great high priest and commander and leader of the Jews'.

³¹Trypho dealt treacherously with the young King Antiochus; he killed him ³²and became king in his place, putting on the crown of Asia; and he brought great calamity on the land. ³³Simon built up the strongholds of Judea and walled them all around, with high towers and great walls and gates and bolts, and he stored food in the strongholds. ³⁴Simon also chose emissaries and sent them to King Demetrius with a request to grant relief to the country, for all that Trypho did was to plunder. ³⁵King Demetrius sent him a favourable reply to this request, and wrote him a letter as follows,

³⁶"King Demetrius to Simon, the high priest and friend of kings, and to the elders and nation of the Jews, greetings. ³⁷We have received the gold crown and the palm branch that you sent, and we are ready to make a general peace with you and to write to our officials to grant you release from tribute. ³⁸All the grants that we have made to you remain valid, and let the strongholds that you have built be your possession. ³⁹We pardon any errors and offenses committed to this day, and cancel the crown tax that you owe; and whatever other tax has been collected in Jerusalem shall be collected no longer. ⁴⁰And if any of you are qualified to be enrolled in our bodyguard, let them be enrolled, and let there be peace between us."

⁴¹In the one hundred seventieth year the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel, ⁴²and the people began to write in their documents and contracts, "In the first year of Simon the great high priest and commander and leader of the Jews."

⁴³In those days Simon encamped against Gazara and surrounded it with troops. He made a siege engine, brought it up to the city, and battered and captured one tower. ⁴⁴The men in the siege engine leaped out into the city, and a great tumult arose in the city. ⁴⁵The men in the city, with their wives and children, went up on the wall with their clothes torn, and they cried out with a loud voice, asking Simon to make peace with them; ⁴⁶they said, "Do not treat us according to our wicked acts but according to your mercy." ⁴⁷So Simon reached an agreement with them and stopped fighting against them. But he expelled them from the city and cleansed the houses in which the idols were located, and then entered it with hymns and praise. ⁴⁸He removed all uncleanness from it, and settled in it those who observed the law. He also strengthened its fortifications and built in it a house for himself.

⁴⁹Those who were in the citadel at Jerusalem were prevented from going in and out to buy and sell in the country. So they were very hungry, and many of them perished from famine. ⁵⁰Then they cried to Simon to make peace with them, and he agreed. But he expelled them from there and cleansed the citadel from its pollutions. ⁵¹On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred seventy-first year, the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel. ⁵²Simon decreed that every year they should celebrate this day with rejoicing. He strengthened the fortifications of the temple hill alongside the citadel, and he and his men lived there. ⁵³Simon saw that his son John had reached manhood, and so he made him commander of all the forces; and he lived at Gazara.

Gazara was important to control the pro-Syrian coastal cities.

At last, after many attempts, the pro-Syrian garrison in the citadel in Jerusalem is conquered (see especially 12:36).

The date is 28 May 141BC.

Simon's son is John Hyrcanus, who will succeed him as high priest (134-104; see chapter 16).

In late 141 Demetrius led an expedition to the east against the increasing power of the Parthians, who had overrun Media and were moving into Babylonia. Trypho controlled Antioch. Demetrius controlled the rest of the Syrian Empire. At this time Media and Persia (see map page 9) were controlled by the Parthians who lived in the territory south-east of the Caspian Sea. The attacked Babylonia in 141.

In the autumn of 141-140, King Arsaces (Mithridates I of Persia) had Demetrius captured.

¹In the one hundred seventy-second year King Demetrius assembled his forces and marched into Media to obtain help, so that he could make war against Trypho. ²When King Arsaces of Persia and Media heard that Demetrius had invaded his territory, he sent one of his generals to take him alive. ³The general went and defeated the army of Demetrius, and seized him and took him to Arsaces, who put him under guard.

⁴The land had rest all the days of Simon. He sought the good of his nation; his rule was pleasing to them, as was the honour shown him, all his days. ⁵To crown all his honours he took Joppa for a harbour, and opened a way to the isles of the sea. ⁶He extended the borders of his nation, and gained full control of the country. ⁷He gathered a host of captives; he ruled over Gazara and Beth-zur and the citade. Without meeting any resistance he removed their pollution.

⁸They tilled their land in peace; the ground gave its increase, and the trees of the plains their fruit. ⁹Old men sat in the streets; they all talked together of good things, and the youths put on splendid military attire. ¹⁰He supplied the towns with food, and furnished them with the means of defence, until his renown spread to the ends of the earth. ¹¹He established peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy. ¹²All the people sat under their own vines and fig trees, and there was none to make them afraid. ¹³No one was left in the land to fight them, and the kings were crushed in those days. ¹⁴He gave help to all the humble among his people; he sought out the law, and did away with all the renegades and outlaws. ¹⁵He made the sanctuary glorious, and added to the vessels of the sanctuary.

After a hymn of praise of Simon, the author offers an idealised picture of the state of Judea during his nine year rule (143-134).

Both Rome and Sparta recognise Simon.

For the earlier treaty with Rome see 8:17-32; 12:1-4. For Jonathan's embassy to Sparta see 12:2, 5-23.

In verses 20-23 the author cites a document from the archives.

'A thousand minas' (verse 24) is 450 kilograms – a huge amount of gold! The gift may have helped persuade Rome not to recognise Trypho as king of Syria.

¹⁶The report of Jonathan's death reached Rome, and Sparta, and they were deeply grieved. ¹⁷When they heard that his brother Simon had become high priest in his stead, and that he was ruling over the country and the towns in it, ¹⁸they wrote to him on bronze tablets to renew with him the friendship and alliance that they had established with his brothers Judas and Jonathan. ¹⁹And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem.

²⁰This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent: "The rulers and the city of the Spartans to the high priest Simon and to the elders and the priests and the rest of the Jewish people, our brothers, greetings. ²¹The envoys who were sent to our people have told us about your glory and honour, and we rejoiced at their coming. ²²We have recorded what they said in our public decrees, as follows, 'Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, envoys of the Jews, have come to us to renew their friendship with us. ²³It has pleased our people to receive these men with honour and to put a copy of their words in the public archives, so that the people of the Spartans may have a record of them. And they have sent a copy of this to the high priest Simon.'"

²⁴After this Simon sent Numenius to Rome with a large gold shield weighing one thousand minas, to confirm the alliance with the Romans.

²⁵When the people heard these things they said, "How shall we thank Simon and his sons? ²⁶For he and his brothers and the house of his father have stood firm; they have fought and repulsed Israel's enemies and established its freedom." ²⁷So they made a record on bronze tablets and put it on pillars on Mount Zion. This is a copy of what they wrote:

"On the eighteenth day of Elul, in the one hundred seventy-second year, which is the third year of the great high priest Simon, ²⁸in Asaramel, in the great assembly of the priests and the people and the rulers of the nation and the elders of the country, the following was proclaimed to us: ²⁹"Since wars often occurred in the country, Simon son of Mattathias, a priest of the sons of Joarib, and his brothers, exposed themselves to danger and resisted the enemies of their nation, in order that their sanctuary and the law might be preserved; and they brought great glory to their nation. ³⁰Jonathan rallied the nation, became their high priest, and was gathered to his people. ³¹When their enemies decided to invade their country and lay hands on their sanctuary, ³²it was Simon who rose up and fought for his nation. He spent great sums of his own money; he armed the soldiers of his nation and paid them wages. ³³He fortified the towns of Judea, and Beth-zur on the borders of Judea, where formerly the arms of the enemy had been stored, and he placed there a garrison of Jews. ³⁴He also fortified Joppa, which is by the sea, and Gazara, which is on the borders of Azotus, where the enemy formerly lived. He settled Jews there, and provided in those towns whatever was necessary for their restoration.

³⁵"The people saw Simon's faithfulness and the glory that he had resolved to win for his nation, and they made him their leader and high priest, because he had done all these things and because of the justice and loyalty that he had maintained toward his nation. He sought in every way to exalt his people. ³⁶In his days things prospered in his hands, so that the Gentiles were put out of the country, as were also those in the city of David in Jerusalem, who had built themselves a citadel from which they used to sally forth and defile the environs of the sanctuary, doing great damage to its purity.

In verses 27-45, the author is citing a document from the archives.

'Elul' (verse 27) is the Babylonian name for the sixth month (September). The year is 140BC.

Verse 32 begins the list of Simon's deeds.

Verses 41-43 record the authority given to Simon by the Jews. The last phrase in verse 41 is important. Simon does not come from a high priest family. He is given the authority 'until a trustworthy prophet should arise'; that is till God reveals otherwise.

This is a central theme in 1Maccabees, who argues for the legitimacy of the high priesthood of Simon and of his son, John Hyrcanus, and grandson, Alexander Jannaeus.

The decree (verse 48) is, in effect, a new constitution for Judea.

³⁷He settled Jews in it and fortified it for the safety of the country and of the city, and built the walls of Jerusalem higher. ³⁸"In view of these things King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood, ³⁹made him one of his Friends, and paid him high honours. ⁴⁰For he had heard that the Jews were addressed by the Romans as friends and allies and brothers, and that the Romans had received the envoys of Simon with honour. ⁴¹"The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise, ⁴²and that he should be governor over them and that he should take charge of the sanctuary and appoint officials over its tasks and over the country and the weapons and the strongholds, and that he should take charge of the sanctuary, ⁴³and that he should be obeyed by all, and that all contracts in the country should be written in his name, and that he should be clothed in purple and wear gold. ⁴⁴"None of the people or priests shall be permitted to nullify any of these decisions or to oppose what he says, or to convene an assembly in the country without his permission, or to be clothed in purple or put on a gold buckle. ⁴⁵Whoever acts contrary to these decisions or rejects any of them shall be liable to punishment." ⁴⁶All the people agreed to grant Simon the right to act in accordance with these decisions. ⁴⁷So Simon accepted and agreed to be high priest, to be commander and ethnarch of the Jews and priests, and to be protector of them all. ⁴⁸And they gave orders to inscribe this decree on bronze tablets, to put them up in a conspicuous place in the precincts of the sanctuary, ⁴⁹and to deposit copies of them in the treasury, so that Simon and his sons might have them.

¹Antiochus, son of King Demetrius, sent a letter from the islands of the sea to Simon, the priest and ethnarch of the Jews, and to all the nation; ²its contents were as follows: "King Antiochus to Simon the high priest and ethnarch and to the nation of the Jews, greetings. ³Whereas certain traitors have gained control of the kingdom of our ancestors, and I intend to lay claim to the kingdom so that I may restore it as it formerly was, and have recruited a host of mercenary troops and have equipped warships, ⁴and intend to make a landing in the country so that I may proceed against those who have destroyed our country and those who have devastated many cities in my kingdom, ⁵now therefore I confirm to you all the tax remissions that the kings before me have granted you, and a release from all the other payments from which they have released you. ⁶I permit you to mint your own coinage as money for your country, ⁷and I grant freedom to Jerusalem and the sanctuary. All the weapons that you have prepared and the strongholds that you have built and now hold shall remain yours. ⁸Every debt you owe to the royal treasury and any such future debts shall be cancelled for you from henceforth and for all time. ⁹When we gain control of our kingdom, we will bestow great honour on you and your nation and the temple, so that your glory will become manifest in all the earth."

¹⁰In the one hundred seventy-fourth year Antiochus set out and invaded the land of his ancestors. All the troops rallied to him, so that there were only a few with Trypho. ¹¹Antiochus pursued him, and Trypho came in his flight to Dor, which is by the sea; ¹²for he knew that troubles had converged on him, and his troops had deserted him. ¹³So Antiochus encamped against Dor, and with him were one hundred twenty thousand warriors and eight thousand cavalry. ¹⁴He surrounded the town, and the ships joined battle from the sea; he pressed the town hard from land and sea, and permitted no one to leave or enter it.

Antiochus VII is the younger brother of the captured Demetrius II (see 14:3), and son of Demetrius I, who was killed in the summer of 151 (see 10:50).

Once again we have a Syrian ruler seeking the support of the Jews against his rival. The 'traitors' are Antiochus VI (145-142) and Trypho (142-138).

For the 'tax remissions' (verse 5) see 10:26-35; 11:30-37; 13:35-40). The permission to mint coinage (verse 6) was soon withdrawn (see verse 27).

We are in the autumn of 139-138BC (the one hundred seventy-fourth year' since the beginning of the reign of the Seleucids in Syria in 312BC).

Dor was a Phoenician town, south of Mount Carmel, and the best harbour on the Palestine coast (see map page 63).

Simon sent Numenius as envoy to Rome In September 140 (see 14:24). Here we have, from the archives, Rome's response sent to the kings and countries of the eastern Mediterranean. Presumably there were Jews settled in all these centres (see map page 100).

Ptolemy VIII ruled Egypt 145-116BC. He was the brother and successor of Ptolemy VI whose death is recorded in 11:18.

¹⁵Then Numenius and his companions arrived from Rome, with letters to the kings and countries, in which the following was written: ¹⁶“Lucius, consul of the Romans, to King Ptolemy, greetings. ¹⁷The envoys of the Jews have come to us as our friends and allies to renew our ancient friendship and alliance. They had been sent by the high priest Simon and by the Jewish people ¹⁸and have brought a gold shield weighing one thousand minas. ¹⁹We therefore have decided to write to the kings and countries that they should not seek their harm or make war against them and their cities and their country, or make alliance with those who war against them. ²⁰And it has seemed good to us to accept the shield from them. ²¹Therefore if any scoundrels have fled to you from their country, hand them over to the high priest Simon, so that he may punish them according to their law.”

Letter from Rome

²²The consul wrote the same thing to King Demetrius and to Attalus and Ariarathes and Arsaces, ²³and to all the countries, and to Sampsames, and to the Spartans, and to Delos, and to Myndos, and to Sicyon, and to Caria, and to Samos, and to Pamphylia, and to Lycia, and to Halicarnassus, and to Rhodes, and to Phaselis, and to Cos, and to Side, and to Aradus and Gortyna and Cnidus and Cyprus and Cyrene.

²⁴They also sent a copy of these things to the high priest Simon.

Demetrius (verse 22) is Demetrius II of Syria (brother of Antiochus VII (see verse 1). Attalus II was king of Pergamum 159-138. Ariarthes V was king of Cappadocia (162-131). Arsakes was king of Persia and Media (see 14:2).

Myndos is near Halicarnassus. Caria is the coastal district near Halicarnassus and Myndos. Lycia is the coastal district to the west of Pamphylia in map below. Phaselis is on the eastern coast of Lycia. Cos is an island off the coast of Caria. Sidé is on the coast of Pamphylia. Cnidus is on the mainland between Cos and Rhodes

Rome had special interest in these kingdoms since mainland Greece became a Roman protectorate in 146.



The story picks up from verse 14. Antiochus VII, having all but defeated Trypho, no longer feels he needs the Jews, and so goes back on his word (see 15:5-9).

In verse 29 Antiochus could be referring to Azotus (see 10:84), Gaza (11:61-62), Beth-zur (11:65-66), Adida (12:38) and the districts of Samaria (11:28ff).

Simon claims Judea for the Jews (verses 33-34).

²⁵King Antiochus besieged Dor for the second time, continually throwing his forces against it and making engines of war; and he shut Trypho up and kept him from going out or in. ²⁶Simon sent to Antiochus two thousand picked troops, to fight for him, and silver and gold and a large amount of military equipment. ²⁷But he refused to receive them, and broke all the agreements he formerly had made with Simon, and became estranged from him.

²⁸He sent to him Athenobius, one of his Friends, to confer with him, saying, "You hold control of Joppa and Gazara and the citadel in Jerusalem; they are cities of my kingdom. ²⁹You have devastated their territory, you have done great damage in the land, and you have taken possession of many places in my kingdom. ³⁰Now then, hand over the cities that you have seized and the tribute money of the places that you have conquered outside the borders of Judea; ³¹or else pay me five hundred talents of silver for the destruction that you have caused and five hundred talents more for the tribute money of the cities. Otherwise we will come and make war on you."

³²So Athenobius, the king's Friend, came to Jerusalem, and when he saw the splendour of Simon, and the sideboard with its gold and silver plate, and his great magnificence, he was amazed. When he reported to him the king's message, ³³Simon said to him in reply: "We have neither taken foreign land nor seized foreign property, but only the inheritance of our ancestors, which at one time had been unjustly taken by our enemies. ³⁴Now that we have the opportunity, we are firmly holding the inheritance of our ancestors. ³⁵As for Joppa and Gazara, which you demand, they were causing great damage among the people and to our land; for them we will give you one hundred talents." Athenobius did not answer him a word, ³⁶but returned in wrath to the king and reported to him these words, and also the splendour of Simon and all that he had seen. And the king was very angry.

³⁷Meanwhile Trypho embarked on a ship and escaped to Orthosia. ³⁸Then the king made Cendebeus commander-in-chief of the coastal country, and gave him troops of infantry and cavalry. ³⁹He commanded him to encamp against Judea, to build up Kedron and fortify its gates, and to make war on the people; but the king pursued Trypho. ⁴⁰So Cendebeus came to Jamnia and began to provoke the people and invade Judea and take the people captive and kill them. ⁴¹He built up Kedron and stationed horsemen and troops there, so that they might go out and make raids along the highways of Judea, as the king had ordered him.

Trypho escaped the siege of Dor. Antiochus pursued him, but sent his general, Cendebeus, against Judea.

Orthodosia is a Phoenician port near the mouth of the river Eleutherus (see 12:30, map page 81).

Kedron is 16ks south-west of Gazara (see map page 53).

Simon's son, John, was stationed at Gazara (see 13:53).

Simon was probably in his fifties (verse 3).

Modein was where Mattathias and his sons began their revolt (see map page 53).

The Jewish army was hesitant to cross the gully to oppose their enemy who were occupying higher ground (verse 6).

This is the last engagement between the Jews and Syrians recorded in 1Maccabees.

However, in 134BC Antiochus VII, brother of Demetrius II, besieged Jerusalem and forced John to submit. Jerusalem's walls were knocked down.

Antiochus was killed in a campaign against the Parthians shortly afterwards.

¹John went up from Gazara and reported to his father Simon what Cendebeus had done. ²And Simon called in his two eldest sons Judas and John, and said to them: "My brothers and I and my father's house have fought the wars of Israel from our youth until this day, and things have prospered in our hands so that we have delivered Israel many times. ³But now I have grown old, and you by Heaven's mercy are mature in years. Take my place and my brother's, and go out and fight for our nation, and may the help that comes from Heaven be with you."

⁴So John chose out of the country twenty thousand warriors and cavalry, and they marched against Cendebeus and camped for the night in Modein. ⁵Early in the morning they started out and marched into the plain, where a large force of infantry and cavalry was coming to meet them; and a gully lay between them. ⁶Then he and his army lined up against them. He saw that the soldiers were afraid to cross the gully, so he crossed over first; and when his troops saw him, they crossed over after him. ⁷Then he divided the army and placed the cavalry in the center of the infantry, for the cavalry of the enemy were very numerous. ⁸They sounded the trumpets, and Cendebeus and his army were put to flight; many of them fell wounded and the rest fled into the stronghold. ⁹At that time Judas the brother of John was wounded, but John pursued them until Cendebeus reached Kedron, which he had built. ¹⁰They also fled into the towers that were in the fields of Azotus, and John burned it with fire, and about two thousand of them fell. He then returned to Judea safely.

¹¹Now Ptolemy son of Abubus had been appointed governor over the plain of Jericho; he had a large store of silver and gold, ¹²for he was son-in-law of the high priest. ¹³His heart was lifted up; he determined to get control of the country, and made treacherous plans against Simon and his sons, to do away with them.

¹⁴Simon was visiting the towns of the country and attending to their needs, and he went down to Jericho with his sons Mattathias and Judas, in the one hundred seventy-seventh year, in the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat.

¹⁵The son of Abubus received them treacherously in the little stronghold called Dok, which he had built; he gave them a great banquet, and hid men there. ¹⁶When Simon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy and his men rose up, took their weapons, rushed in against Simon in the banquet hall and killed him and his two sons, as well as some of his servants. ¹⁷So he committed an act of great treachery and returned evil for good.

¹⁸Then Ptolemy wrote a report about these things and sent it to the king, asking him to send troops to aid him and to turn over to him the towns and the country. ¹⁹He sent other troops to Gazara to do away with John; he sent letters to the captains asking them to come to him so that he might give them silver and gold and gifts; ²⁰and he sent other troops to take possession of Jerusalem and the temple hill. ²¹But someone ran ahead and reported to John at Gazara that his father and brothers had perished, and that "he has sent men to kill you also." ²²When he heard this, he was greatly shocked; he seized the men who came to destroy him and killed them, for he had found out that they were seeking to destroy him.

²³The rest of the acts of John and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and the building of the walls that he completed, and his achievements, ²⁴are written in the annals of his high priesthood, from the time that he became high priest after his father.

This Ptolemy is Simon's son-in-law. His name suggest that he might be an Egyptian Jew, or that the name was in his family from the time when Judea was under Egypt.

Simon visited Jericho in January 134BC.

Treacherously Ptolemy has Simon, and two of his sons, Judas and Mattathias, killed.

He sent a party to kill John as well, but John (John Hyrcanus) was prepared for them.

The author completes his account in the manner of the Deuteronomist authors of Samuel and Kings by referring to the Annals - this time 'of the high priesthood' (verse 24). These records have not survived.