

SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES

A STUDY GUIDE OUTLINE

By Walter Cates 4/18/26

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The reign of the family of the Maccabees covers 61 years from 175BC to 134BC. The Second Book of Maccabees covers the span of time where foreign powers are driven out, cleansing of the temple and all idle worshipers are driven out of Juda. Temple worship is restored. This epic occurred in the 7 years from 175BC to 161BC.

The second book of Maccabees was actually written before the first book of Maccabees. It was written in Greek by an unknown writer in Alexandria sometime around 125BC. It was only after the first book was written that it was recognized that an entire journal of the reign of the Maccabees was needed. Jewish tradition states that both books were derived from forgotten and lost historic documents of the time.

MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK

Letters to the Jews in Egypt ([1:1—2:32](#))

Heliodorus's Attempt to Profane the Temple ([3:1-40](#))

Liberation of the Temple ([4:1—10:8](#))

The Acquisition of Religious Freedom ([10:9—15:36](#))

Author's Epilogue ([15:37-39](#))

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

175 BC Antiochus (IV) Epiphanies becomes king of Seleucid Empire (Syria and Persia).

170 Many Jews placate Antiochus by building alters to Greek gods and a stadium dedicated to the pagan gods

168 BC Antiochus tries to eliminate Jewish faith and sends agents throughout the kingdom to deliver the Proclamation.

167 BC: The agent of the king arrives in Jerusalem.

- High priest Matthias kills a Jew who comes forward to worship the Greek god Zeus and kills the agent of King Antiochus and declares that he will only bow to the one true God.

- Then he flees to the wilderness with his sons and several thousand followers.

- The King sends an army into Judah to exterminate the believing Jews.

- The customs and Torah are outlawed. Anyone with a Torah is killed. Women with circumcised children are killed and their children are hung from their necks.

- The army catches up to a group of Jews who refuse to bow to the king and also refuse to resist and are slaughtered.

- High priest Matthias renounces passiveness.

- Matthias prays to the Lord for Devine guidance, calls all able-bodied men to step forward and puts his son Judah in charge.

-The over confident army of the king attacks Matthias and his followers and is defeated and is destroyed.

-This is marked as the start of the revolt of the Maccabees.

166 BC Judah Maccabee succeeds his father as High Priest and leader of revolt.

164 BC Jerusalem is captured by Judah Maccabee. The temple is cleansed and rededicated. Idol worship is condemned and idol worshipers are severely dealt with. Idol worshipers flee Jerusalem.

161 BC Brother Judah is killed in battle and Brother Jonathan takes charge.

