

The Hasmonean Dynasty (167 to 37 BC)**Part II: 103 to 37 BC**

REVIEW: Mattathias, a Jewish priest in Modein, killed another Jewish priest who prepared to offer a pig to Zeus in December 167 BC. Then Mattathias killed the Greek political official who stood by forcing the sacrifice. This was the beginning of what is called The Maccabean Revolt. Exactly three years later, under Judas Maccabeus (Mattathias' son), the Jews threw out the Greeks from the Temple Mount (December 164 BC) and "cleansed (rededicated) the Temple" (Hanukkah). Maccabee is Hebrew word for "hammer" *makabah* and an acronym, "**Mi chamocho ba'elim YHWH**"- *Who is like You among the gods!* (Ex. 11:15). The surname (last name) of Mattathias' family is Hasmon. The Hasmonian Dynasty refers to Jewish rule.

Part I (167 to 103 BC)

167 to 160 BC – From *the abomination of desolation* by Antiochus Epiphanes (December 167 BC) to the death of Judas Maccabeus in the Battle of Elasa in 160 BC (I Maccabees 9:18).

160 to 142 BC – From the ascension of **Jonathan** (Judah's brother) as leader of the Maccabees to the removal of Greek soldiers and the Seleucid tax in the land of Judea at Jonathan's death.

142 to 103 BC – From the declaration of Jewish independence under Jewish Maccabean leader Simon, son of Matthias to the crowning of Simon's grandson, Judah **Aristobulus** as not only High Priest but also **King of the Jews** in 103 BC.

Matthias (167-166 BC) – The Jewish priest who began the War for Independence in 167 BC.

Judas Maccabeus (166-160 BC) – During whose reign, Alcimus succeeded Menelaus as high priest.

Jonathan (160-143 BC) – Jonathan assumed the high priesthood. He's killed by Syrian general Tryphon.

Simon (143-135 BC) – Gains independence from the Greeks (142 BC). He is murdered by his son-in-law.

Simon takes the title "ethnarch and commander-in-chief" as well as high priest.

John Hyrcanus I (135-104 BC) – Simon's son and Judea's golden age. In 127 BC, the Pharisees form.

Aristobulus (104-103 BC) – In addition to inheriting the priesthood, Aristobulus declares himself **king**, infuriating the Pharisees who prepared to go to war against Aristobulus.

Part II (103 BC to 37 BC)

Alexandar Jannaeus (103-76 BC)– The brother of Aristobulus and released from prison by his widow, Salome Alexandra, whom he married. Alexandar became high priest and king.

Salome Alexandra (76-67 BC) – Upon the death of her Alexandar Jannaeus, Salome became Queen, but could not serve as high priest, so she appointed her son, Hyrcanus II, as high priest.

Aristobulus II (67-63 BC) --Became king and high priest at the death of Salome. During his reign, Judea lost its independence and came under the rule of Rome (63 BC).

Hyrcanus II (63-40 BC) served as high priest (and king) under Roman rule.

Antigonus (40-37) – served as high priest (and king) after Hyrcanus under Roman rule. When Herod conquered Jerusalem, he sent Antigonus to Rome where he was beheaded.

Aristobulus III (d. 36 BC) – high priest, drowned by Herod at age 17 to finish off the Hasmonians.

The Hasmoneans had violated God's law that said only the family of Aaron (Zadokites) could serve as High Priests and "the house of David" as. The appointment of Jonathan Hasmonian as High Priest (160 BC) caused trouble with the Hasidim, "the pious" Jews, who kept the highest standards of observance and morals. The conflicts between Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes arise between the Testaments.

Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) – after Aristobulus suddenly died after one year of reign, his widow (Salome Alexandra) released his two half-brothers from prison and then married one of them (Alexander Jannaeus) in order to make him king and high priest. Jannaeus wasn't a good high priest. According to the Babylonian Talmud (*Sukkah* 48b) the people pelted him with citrons because he poured out a libation on the ground instead of on the altar as the Pharisees preferred. His unpopularity grew to the point of revolt against him, and for six years (94-88 BC). Jannaeus his own people crucified eight hundred of the main leaders of those who opposed him, and while they were still alive on their crosses he had their wives and children butchered in front of them. Around 90 BC, a group of Hasidim left Jerusalem and began the Qumran Community, writing most of the Dead Sea scrolls (see Appendix 8)

Salome Alexandra (76-67 BC) - was 64 years old when she took the throne and ruled for nine years in Jerusalem. She wisely made peace with the Pharisees who had opposed Alexander Jannaeus for his oppressive policies against his own people. And she kept the Sadducees happy as well. She enjoyed a pretty peaceful reign. She appointed her oldest son, **Hyrcaeus II**, as the High Priest. Her younger son, **Aristobulus II**, was given a minor post in the military, with which he was not content. He bided his time and laid his plans well, so that when his mom passed on (67 BC), he would be ready. During her reign, Herod the Great was born (73 BC), son of Antipater (the Idumean).

Aristobulus II (67-63 BC) – Upon the death of their mother, the two brothers, Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II fought to obtain the High Priesthood and the Kingship. Hyrcanus surrendered on the condition that he be allowed to retire from public life altogether and live on his own country property in peace. Aristobulus agreed. Hyrcanus II left Jerusalem and lived in Petra where he became friends with King Aretas III of Idumea and Antipater (Herod's father). These two Idumeans plotted to promote Hyrcanus as High Priest (over his brother) to gain control in Jerusalem. In 65 BC, Rome conquered Pontus (north of Judea), ending Seleucian rule. Both Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II sought Roman general Pompey's support. Pompey entered Jerusalem in 63 BC and WALKED INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES to see what the two brothers fought over. The Jews never again trusted the Romans. Pompey installed Hyrcanus II as High Priest (and "overlord") of Judea (63 BC). Pompey took Aristobulus to Rome and paraded him in the Triumph of Pompey (61 BC). However, he and his son Antigonus eventually escaped.

Hyrcaeus II (63-40 BC) – During Hyrcanus service as high priest, Antipater served as Hyrcanus trusted aid (Procurator). Antipater's sons, Phasael and Herod, served as military prefects over Judea and Galilee respectively. In 44 BC, Julius Caesar is assassinated in Rome. In 42 BC, Brutus and Cassius on the battlefield of Philippi by Antony and Octavius (later Caesar Augustus). During this time, another country began threatening Rome from the east. The ancient kingdom of Persia (defeated by the Greeks) had reinvented itself into the Parthian Kingdom. They moved west to do battle with Rome. Antony went to Egypt, and in the vacuum left by Cassius' defeat, the Parthians invaded and conquered Syria in 40 BC.

Antigonus (40 -37 BC) – son of Aristobulus, came to the Parthians in Syria and offered them 100 talents and 500 wellborn women to depose his uncle Hyrcanus and install him in that office. Herod found out about it (because it included some of his family and in-laws), and he took them safely to Masada. Herod came back with a Roman army a year later and laid siege to Galilee and then Jerusalem. He eventually defeated the Parthians and sent Antigonus to Rome where he was beheaded. Herod became KING.

Aristobulus III (36 BC) – grandson of Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II, became high priest in 37 BC, but his good looks and popularity threatened King Herod. Herod drowned Aristobulus III in the swimming pool at Herod's palace in Jericho, effectively ending any threat to Herod for the throne of Israel.