

1 Maccabees

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the First Book of the Maccabees using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Historical Books* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||}that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||}and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.
14 Do all thi tioning,¹⁵that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel

Prepare

Read the Introduction to 1 Maccabees, paying particular attention to the *Literary Background*, the *Themes and Characteristics*, and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of 1 Maccabees to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of 1 Maccabees, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on 1 Maccabees as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:11.** Who were the “lawless men” and what were they commonly called? In light of the divine instructions given to Israel, what warning do these words serve to give the reader? While the covenant prohibition is specific to Israel’s conquest of the land, how is the rationale against them also illustrated in 1 Maccabees?
2. **1:14.** What was the gymnasium? How was removing the marks of one’s circumcision seen?
3. **1:24–28.** As the first of many poetic sections in 1 Maccabees, when was this lament composed? What does the allusion to Joel’s call to repentance, along with the nation being “clothed in shame”, show about the author’s viewpoint?
4. **1:54.** How was the “desolating sacrilege” also known? To what does it refer? What does 2 Mac 6:2 record about it? Where else is the abomination of desolation mentioned? To what does it refer there? What does Jesus use this act of Antiochus to describe?

For application

1. **1:1–8.** How does history validate Lord Acton’s saying that “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”? What examples can you think of that might disprove the saying? What virtues would be necessary for one in power to resist its corrupting influence?
2. **1:11–15.** Why do religious people living in a secular culture tend to accommodate themselves to it? What happens to their religious commitments as a result? How is this accommodating tendency reflected in the life of the Catholic Church in our country?
3. **1:41–50.** How do appeals for national unity ring in the ears of a population that is forced to abandon its culture and conform to that of the occupying power? Why is the practice of religion a threat to power?
4. **1:62–64.** In Robert Bolt’s play *A Man for All Seasons*, Thomas More says of himself, “This is not the stuff of which martyrs are made.” What changed his mind? What conditions would bring you to the point of choosing to accept martyrdom rather than submit to evil?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:23–26.** On whose zeal is that of Mattathias modeled? As a leader in the community, what responsibility does Mattathias have? Like Phinehas, who was given a perpetual priesthood (cf. 2:54), what will the line of Mattathias eventually form? What does the likening of Mattathias to Phinehas serve to show, and in contrast with what? While Christ’s New Covenant differs from the Mosaic Law regarding punishment for apostasy, what responsibility do both affirm? What Christian teaching does Mattathias’ defensive war to protect the innocent and restore justice anticipate?
2. **2:27–28.** How does Mattathias’ summons echo the call of Moses and the violent zeal of the sons of Levi? What does the analogy with the Levites, who received the priesthood for their willingness to prioritize God over tribal or familial ties, here foreshadow?
3. **2:39–41.** Since war on the Sabbath was seen as violating the biblical commandment of rest, what justification for Mattathias’ defensive warfare does the author present? What precedent was there for warfare on the Sabbath? How did Patristic readers such as Tertullian understand the Maccabees’ example?
4. **Word Study: Show Zeal (2:50).** By itself, what is the moral value of zeal? How does an analogy like being “fired up” illustrate its meaning, both positively and negatively? How does Scripture thus present both negative and positive examples of zealousness? How does 1 Maccabees show heroes who are zealous in the positive sense? How have Christians throughout the centuries rightly regarded zealous figures like the Maccabees as heroes of the faith? How does zeal apply to Christ’s disciples and even to Christ himself?

For application

1. **2:7.** How do you regard the age in which you live? In what other age would you prefer to have been born? Why do you think the Lord wants you where you are?

2. **2:22.** How do you discern when a law is unjust? What is the obligation of a Christian to obey such a law, and where does refusal to obey find its justification (cf. CCC 2242)?
2. **2:39–41.** What right does a person have to defend his life, even to the point of killing an attacker? When does engaging in legitimate defense become a grave obligation (CCC 2263–65)?
4. **2:50.** At what point in Jesus' ministry did his disciples recall of him that "zeal for your house will consume me" (Jn 2:17)? To what kind of zeal does Christ call his disciples? Have you ever had the opportunity to show zeal for God's house? If so, how have you shown it?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:10–26.** What does the absence of mention in 2 Maccabees of the battles against Apollonius and Seron possibly suggest? Why would such battles also necessitate the taking of spoils?
2. **3:19.** Of what is the use of "Heaven" with reference to God an indirect way of speaking in 1 Maccabees?
3. **3:27–31.** What does the author set as the primary reasons for Antiochus' expedition into Persia? What do other reasons, derived from ancient sources, include? What does the author's focus on Antiochus' actions as they relate to Israel show?
4. **3:46–53.** Why does Judas take the people to Mizpah? What do they consult there and ask for in prayer? As St. John Chrysostom writes regarding their fasting and petitions, of what did the Maccabees remind the people?

For application

1. **3:19.** What expressions does English have to refer to God without mentioning his name? How careful are you to avoid taking the name of God in vain, even casually?
2. **3:29.** Many in our country have overextended their financial resources. What is your attitude to buying on credit or being in debt? What options do you have for handling debt? What do you think God wants of you regarding your indebtedness?
3. **3:47.** In times of national emergency, what is the value of taking time to fast and pray? What does the act of fasting from food add to prayer? What are some occasions on which you have been asked to fast and pray?
4. **3:50–57.** Following their time of prayer for direction, the army prepared for action immediately. In their case, what prompted them not to wait before making a decision? When you are under time constraints and have several options, how do you decide what is the Lord's will if you have not received a clear answer?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:15.** What is another name for Gazara, and where is it? Where is Idumea, and how far do its plains extend? Where are Azotus and Jamnia? For what is Azotus, also known as Ashdod, remembered?
2. **4:30–33.** How does Judas' prayer recall the two examples of David (1 Sam 17) and Jonathan (1 Sam 14:1–14)?
3. **4:46.** To what Jewish expectation does this brief comment allude?
4. **4:52–59.** Three years after the abomination of desolation was erected in 167 B.C., what did Judas complete and institute? From what is the name Hanukkah derived? How is Hanukkah like the feasts of the Temple's dedication under Solomon (1 Kings 8:65–66) and Hezekiah (2 Chron 29:17)?

For application

1. **4:17.** Although his soldiers needed weapons and armor, why did Judas urge them to wait before plundering the enemy's camp? What is delayed gratification? How might a premature celebration over an early victory be dangerous when a larger one looms?
2. **4:24.** What is the most recent personal victory for which you have given thanks? Do your prayers of thanks make use of Scripture (e.g., by quoting verses that come to mind)? How important is Scripture in your daily prayer?
3. **4:30–33.** Read carefully Judas' prayer before a battle where he is vastly outnumbered. What is his level of confidence as he prays? What does he wish upon the enemy? How can his prayer inspire yours as you face an enemy whose strength is greater than yours?

4. **4:52–59.** How long is the Christmas season? How do you and your family celebrate it throughout that period? Why celebrate it for such a long time?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1–8.** By what circumstances are Judas' campaigns in this chapter spurred, and what may have occasioned them? Though Judas assumes the role of a second Joshua, how is the motivation for his battles presented?
2. **5:30.** What war machines did Hellenistic warfare include? How do the Maccabean forces fare with them?
3. **5:46.** What and where is Ephron? What are the reasons for its hostility? On what are Judas' actions here modeled?
4. **5:61–62.** What is the significance of these verses? What are the twofold errors of Joseph and Azariah that brought them and those who followed them to destruction?

For application

1. **5:18–19.** Think of a time when you had to delegate responsibility to a subordinate, whether an employee or even a child in the family. What was the situation? What qualities did you look for? What limitations did you place on the subordinate's role? How did you ensure that the subordinate did as instructed?
2. **5:33.** Recall the tactic of Gideon attacking Midian (Judg 7:18–20). Why would a smaller force attack while crying out with loud trumpets and prayer? Why do attacking soldiers shout as they fight?
3. **5:55–62.** As a child, if you were punished for doing something you were told not to do, what were the consequences? Have you ever been told by the Lord not to do something you had in mind? If so, how well did you obey?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:1–17.** While First Maccabees records the death of Antiochus after the restoration of the Temple in 164 B.C., when do 2 Mac and a Babylonian king list place it? For the author of 1 Mac, to whom does Antiochus serve as a counterexample?
2. **6:28–31.** What forces and what strategy do the king (and Lysias, cf. 6:55) bring to bear? Because the use of elephants by the Seleucid army was banned by Rome in the treaty of Apamea in 188 B.C., what does their violation of this agreement lead the Romans to do, leading to what result?
3. **6:43–46.** Who is the first of the Maccabees to die? How does the author record this event? Whose resolve is evoked by Eleazar's breaking straight through the phalanx to go directly to the enemy's heart? What does St. Ambrose, writing on fortitude, infer about Eleazar's valor?
4. **6:55–61.** Despite its defeats and weakened condition, to what did the nation's faithful observance of the Sabbath year eventually contribute, and how? What are the Seleucids thus forced to grant, corresponding with what promises in Lev 26:7–8?

For application

1. **6:3–9.** Have you experienced setbacks that caused you grief? If so, on hindsight, how significant were they, and how severely did they affect you emotionally? How have you surrendered them to the Lord?
2. **6:12–16.** What is the difference between remorse and repentance? Which of these does Antiochus show? What should be the outcome of real repentance?
3. **6:49.** According to Lev 25:2–7, what is supposed to happen to the land during the sabbatical year? What was the rationale for letting the land lie fallow, according to Leviticus? What goal might a person have in mind who decides to take a sabbatical year for himself?

Chapter 7

For understanding

1. **7:5.** Who is Alcimus, and how does he win the support of the Hasideans? Where has the last of the line of the Oniad family (which traditionally held the high priesthood) gone? Under whom do the Hasmoneans take the high priestly office?

2. **7:26.** Why was Nicanor forced to abandon the covenant he made with Judas? Since the account in 1 Mac passes over this, into what attempt does it go? Where is a longer account of the relationship between Nicanor and Judas given?
3. **7:40.** Where is Adasa situated? How many men is Judas recorded as having here, as compared to the number in 5:20? After the near defeat by Lysias, what has Judas managed to do with his small remaining army?
4. **7:50.** Of what does the phrase “rest for a few days” speak? What did the defeat of Nicanor in 160 or 161 B.C. mean in terms of coming conflict with Bacchides?

For application

1. **7:5.** Would you characterize Alcimus’ desire to become high priest as a noble or an ignoble ambition? What in your opinion turns ambition itself one way or the other? What is your chief ambition in life?
2. **7:11.** Have you ever been approached by someone offering a large prize for a minimal investment? How does such a person try to gain your trust? What should alert you to the possibility of deceit?
3. **7:23.** Look up the articles in the *Catechism* on scandal, referred to in the note for this verse. Why would the conduct of Alcimus be considered scandal? Why is scandal never a private affair? Why is it that, according to some confessors, people will confess sins against every commandment but never the sin of scandal?
4. **7:50.** Why is it that in this life there is never a final victory? In the spiritual life, what victories have you had, and how quickly have they led to further spiritual warfare? What hope is there of final victory?

Chapter 8

For understanding

1. **8:1–16.** What does this positive portrayal of the Romans suggest about the time when 1 Mac was written? By the time of the New Testament, what had Rome become for the Jews? What contrasts between the Romans and the Seleucids were attractive to the Jews? At the same time, with whose expansive tendencies do the Romans’ tendencies share parallels, and how would they prove ominous a century later?
2. **8:17–21.** How is Judas’ finding it to be lawful to make an alliance with the Romans like what Joshua did with the Gibeonites?
3. **8:23–30.** What is an example of how this treaty closely parallels others between Rome and much smaller powers in this period? What do the similar features include?

For application

1. **8:4.** This verse mentions the patience of the Romans. In the context of the preceding verses, what form would their patience have taken? When you face a long-term goal, what benefit will the virtue of patience be to you?
2. **8:5–12.** How does the expansionism of Rome in this period of its history resemble the expansionism of modern superpowers? What do these superpowers claim as motives for occupying countries remote from their own territory? What limitations does Christian teaching place on the use of military force, according to the *Catechism* (CCC 2308–9)?
3. **8:17–21.** Given his military situation, what benefit does Judas see in creating an alliance with a power so far distant from himself? What influence would he expect an alliance with Rome to have on his enemies? By analogy, what influence would you expect a letter from an attorney threatening legal action to have on a personal adversary?

Chapter 9

For understanding

1. **9:5–6.** What is the state of mind of Judas’ troops, even though previously they have won battles against greater odds? Though the text does not provide an explicit cause, what is one proposal?
2. **9:21–22.** What does the death of Judas recall? From what is “How are the mighty fallen” a refrain, and in which book of Scripture do references to a “savior” or “deliverer” commonly appear? Unlike the records of the kings of Judah, which are written in the annals, where are those of Judas recorded?
3. **9:35–42.** What do Jonathan and Simon do in revenge for their brother’s capture? What further details does Josephus’ recounting of these bleak events provide? With what number does this then correspond, and what law does it fulfill? With the death of John, who are the only remaining sons of Mattathias?

4. **9:54.** What wall does Alcimus set out to tear down, acting in line with whose aims? How were the two courts noted in Scripture, and how was the division marked in Herod's temple? In Acts 21:27–36, why is Paul nearly killed because of it? To which prophets is “work of the prophets” likely a reference? What are two examples of the surprising pattern in Scripture of Satan leading people toward pursuing ends that are similar to God's own, but with impure motives and means that are contrary to God's ways? Nevertheless, what does Alcimus' misguided attempt paradoxically foreshadow?

For application

1. **9:7–10.** Faced by such great odds (800 against 22,000), would you have sided with Judas or with his soldiers? How would you evaluate Judas' determination to fight rather than retreat? In the note for verses 7–22, would you agree or disagree with St. Ambrose's assessment of Judas' fortitude?
2. **9:22.** Even if a biographer is an eyewitness to the life of his subject, why must he select which deeds of the subject to record? How do the writers of the four Gospels select which of Jesus' deeds and sayings to report?
3. **9:27.** Read the note for this verse. What would be the value of prophecy for the Jews at this juncture in their history? What would be the value of prophecy in our own day? What do you think the Lord would say to us in our situation?
4. **9:54.** The note for this verse refers to Eph 2:11–22, which describes how Jesus broke the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile by his own blood. According to the *Catechism*, what are the links between Jews and Christians both then and now (CCC 839)? Despite that, what accounts for the hostility some Christians manifest toward Jews?

Chapter 10

For understanding

1. **10:3–5.** Despite Jonathan's residence being in Michmash rather than Jerusalem, what does Demetrius recognize about Jonathan? What twofold reversal does this mark?
2. **10:20.** After the death of Alcimus (159 B.C.), what evidence is there of a high priest in Jerusalem for this seven-year period? From whose line were high priests traditionally chosen? While not from the traditional high-priestly Oniad family, from which tribe do the Hasmoneans appear to have originated? Who were allowed to wear purple, the royal color?
3. **10:25–45.** To what does Demetrius' letter bear witness? How are the Jews addressed here? What fear might the omission of Jonathan's name from Demetrius' letter reflect?
4. **10:30.** Why might the high rate of taxation have been punitively imposed on the Jewish nation? Which three districts are referred to here? When Demetrius declares them to be annexed from Samaria and added to Judea, with what claim does his decree likely correspond?

For application

1. **10:3–6.** If you were in Jonathan's position, what would you think of Demetrius' offer? Even if you distrusted it, how would you take advantage of it?
2. **10:18–21.** What was there about Alexander's offer that might have caused Jonathan to accept it? Since he was already acting as a civil governor, what did the high priesthood add to his role?
3. **10:25–45.** Demetrius' second offer appears to give the Jews everything they could ever want. How do you weigh the benefits and drawbacks of two competing offers such as these? How do you decide whether an offer is too good to be true?
4. **10:60.** Why would Jonathan go to meet two kings “with pomp”? What may he have hoped to gain by doing so? If you were to face an uncertain reception by an authority figure, how would you present yourself so as to communicate yourself to advantage?

Chapter 11

For understanding

1. **11:13.** Of what importance was Antioch in Syria? What does Josephus relate that the people of Antioch, who had come to detest Alexander, did? After gaining both crowns, what did Ptolemy persuade the people of Antioch to do, and why?
2. **11:16.** How did historians in antiquity refer to Arabia? Of whose flight is this likely the direction, and how may it also correspond with a direction that Paul took?

3. **11:38.** As Diodorus records, who convinced the king to disband his troops? Why would this prove to be a serious political mistake for Demetrius?
4. **11:59.** Who is now confirmed by the Seleucids as the region's official governor? What is the Ladder of Tyre? Of which areas would it have completed Maccabean control?

For application

1. **11:9–12.** Of what value to Ptolemy is a woman like his daughter Cleopatra? What say as to her fate might she have had? What does Ptolemy's offer of his daughter's marriage to Demetrius II say about ancient attitudes toward the institution of marriage itself?
2. **11:23–24.** What was the risk that Jonathan faced by meeting with Demetrius II? What risks do diplomats often face when they meet with dictators or hostile rulers?
3. **11:38.** Why would the soldiers whom Demetrius dismissed from service become hostile to him? Even though the kingdom was at peace, what would the rationale be for maintaining a standing army? What danger would a trained group of soldiers without an income pose to the kingdom?

Chapter 12

For understanding

1. **12:5–18.** What is difficult to assess about this letter and the correspondences found elsewhere in 1 Maccabees (cf. chaps. 8, 13–15)? In either case, how would such letters likely have been originally written?
2. **12:7.** Where is a record of this letter to the Jews from Arius given, and what does it assert? How is the Jews' connection with Sparta further illustrated in 2 Mac 5:9? To which Onias is the high priestly reference?
3. **12:9.** To which holy books does the letter most likely refer? According to the prologue of Sirach, what three groupings of books in the Old Testament did Jews recognize?
4. **12:31.** Who were the Zabadeans? What were Jonathan's reasons for attacking them?

For application

1. **12:6.** What opening address were you taught to be correct when you compose a letter to a relative or friend? Why address someone as "Dear" if the person has no relationship with you? How would you begin a business letter when you did not know who was to read it?
2. **12:11.** When you assure others of your prayers on their behalf, how often do you actually pray for them? When others say they are praying for you, do you accept their assurance as fact, or do you dismiss it as a pious thought? Why does the Lord wish us to pray for one another?
3. **12:14–17.** Since the Jews state in their letter that they have been unwilling to trouble their allies for military assistance because they have received divine aid, what is the point of renewing historic treaties of friendship with Rome and Sparta? Why remind an important friend that he is still a friend?
4. **12:43–46.** When discussing offenses against the truth, what does the *Catechism* say about flattery and adulation (CCC 2480)? As illustrated in these verses, how can there be indirect flattery? What is the lie involved here?

Chapter 13

For understanding

1. **13:17–19.** In what way is Simon placed in a nearly impossible situation? What does Simon's fear of the people's judgment force him to do?
2. **Word Study: Deceitfully (13:17).** What does the Greek word *dolos* mean? What does it summarize in 1 Maccabees? In what wide array of contexts does it arise? If deceit is a defining characteristic of the devil, who speaks his own native tongue when he lies, of whom is honesty a hallmark? How is such, indeed, the case with Mattathias and his sons? To what do the Maccabees thus bear witness?
3. **13:27–30.** Who attests to monuments with pyramids in Judea? What purpose do the armor and the carved ships placed on the monuments serve? During what period did the memorial stand?
4. **13:45–47.** How does the siege of Gazara offer a contrast between Jewish and Gentile forces?

For application

1. **13:1–6.** Have you ever faced a situation where you had to assume leadership because no one else would do it? If so, what were the circumstances? What prompted your decision to step into the leader's role?
2. **13:14–19.** Consider Simon's dilemma. What were the issues? What would you have done in the situation? Have you ever had to make no-win decisions, and, if so, what was your rationale for what you did?
3. **13:25–30.** What is the most elaborate burial monument you have ever seen? Why do you think it was built? Why do people build elaborate monuments for themselves and family members? If you had the resources, how would you memorialize your parents and siblings at their grave sites?
4. **13:41–42.** On what did the Romans base their calendars? On what do Christians base theirs? Although Jews, Muslims, and others do not hold the birth of Jesus with the same regard as Christians, why do they use it as the basis of their calendars?

Chapter 14

For understanding

1. **14:12.** Of what does Mic 4:4 speak? With what does this blessing correspond, and what hope may it reflect?
2. **14:41.** With what authority is Simon invested, and what is the significance of this development? Why may this novelty be the reason for the lengthy praise of Simon's deeds? For how long is the authority granted to Simon and his sons presented as continuing?
3. **Topical Essay: Paul and the Maccabees.** On the one hand, what are some striking parallels between Mattathias and his sons and how Paul describes himself within his "former life in Judaism"? On the other hand, what clues do we have that the case may not be so simple? What other clues are provided within the book of 1 Maccabees itself? How does the identification of Jesus as Israel's promised prophet continue after his Resurrection, and how does Paul echo the testimony? How, then, might we deduce that Paul would have viewed the Maccabees after he encountered Christ on the Damascus road? In short, on what does the distinction between Paul and the Maccabean resistance rest?
4. **14:43–44.** Of what are the wearing of purple and gold signs? Though neither Simon nor his son John claimed this title for themselves, who did? In the midst of the nation's celebration of Simon, what two subtle points of caution does this text present?

For application

1. **14:9.** What is the difference between what old and young men treasure in peacetime? For example, why do old men talk of good things, and young men celebrate the glory of war when the land is at peace? In our day, how do the aged and the youth differ in their views of society?
2. **14:25–26.** What is the value for a community of publicly honoring its chief citizens? In our culture, how is honor customarily shown?
3. **14:41.** The note for this verse says that combining religious and political authority in the high priest had not been official policy in Israel. What are the advantages of combining civil and religious authority in such a personage? What are the dangers, both to religion and to political needs? How are these advantages and disadvantages reflected in Church history?
4. **14:48–49.** Where are the founding documents of our central government stored? Although we have the ability to make numerous copies of our constitution, why is it important for us to preserve the original? Since we have no original manuscripts of the Bible, how do we know we have a trustworthy version of the Scriptures?

Chapter 15

For understanding

1. **15:6.** What advantage does the privilege of minting their own coinage grant the Jews?
2. **15:27.** With his opposition subdued, what example does Antiochus VII follow?
3. **15:31.** How much money does Antiochus demand? How does this amount compare with the 300 talents promised by Jonathan to Demetrius II in return for release from tribute?
4. **15:33–35.** To what law does Simon appeal?

For application

1. **15:1–9.** The note for verse 9 says that Antiochus' promise is the same as one made to the Jews by his brother Demetrius II, which was broken. What does the expression "once burned, twice shy" mean to you? If you received a guarantee from a person or an organization that had previously reneged, how would you regard it?
2. **15:16–24.** What seems to have been the purpose of this communication from the Roman consul? Since the letter addresses King Demetrius, and Antiochus is the king's brother, what attention does Antiochus appear to have paid to it? What role might it have played in turning Antiochus against Simon (v. 27)?
3. **15:33–35.** To what does the Church's Code of Canon Law apply? To what does civil law apply? If you were defending the Church in a dispute with the civil government, to which code of law would you appeal? If the latter, how would you use the law to protect the Church's interests?

Chapter 16

For understanding

1. **16:2–3.** Whom does Simon commission to fight for the nation? How many years have now passed since Mattathias' initial revolt, and how old would Simon be?
2. **16:6–10.** What does this passage show about John? How does John show it?
3. **16:23–24.** Of what does this brief summary assure the reader regarding John? What does the reference to the chronicles of John's high priesthood recall?

For application

1. **16:2–3.** When did you first realize that, as an adult, you were responsible for not only your own life but that of your family? How did that realization strike you? What were some of the responsibilities you took upon yourself?
2. **16:6.** What is your philosophy of leadership? As a leader, what are some of the best ways you can use to encourage subordinates to follow your directions? What is "servant leadership"?
3. **16:23–24.** If you have ever thought of writing an autobiography, what would be its purpose? How, for example, might it be of use to your children or other family members? What sort of information would you put in it, and how would you decide which details to omit?