

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Community and Faith-Based Organizing and Development Resources

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BRINGING THE LIGHT

By Magidah Khulda bat Sarah

PARTS

Narrator:

King:

Attendant:

General #1:

General #2:

General #3:

General #4:

Greek Officer:

Mattathias:

Judah:

Trumpet-player:

ENTRANCES

Narrator: From “backstage” to center of space at front edge of bimah

King: From “backstage” to throne and sit down

Attendant: From “backstage” to left-hand side of throne

Generals #1-4: On cue from “backstage” to in front of throne

Greek Officer: On cue from “backstage” to

Mattathias: From “backstage” to left-hand of Narrator

Judah: From “backstage” to left-hand of Mattathias

Trumpet-player:

Narrator:

Long, long ago, in the land of Syria, there was once a king named An-tee-o-kus. An-tee-o-kus ruled over the land of Syria with a heavy hand and he made the kings of many other lands pay tribute to him. And then he built a monument to himself, a mighty city that he named An-tee-ock, after himself. The trouble was, the more power he had, the more he wanted.

King:

. . . . [TALKING MOSTLY TO HIMSELF] I want to rule the world! Think of it, my glory will fill the entire world!

Attendant: Anything you say, your majesty.

Narrator: Now, he may have been mighty, but he was also a fool.

King: I think I'll call myself Ee-pih-funnies. It has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

Attendant: What?

King: Ee-pih-funnies. Aren't you listening? It means the God that *is*. Yes [TAKING UP MIRROR, LOOKING INTO IT, AND PRIMPING] It makes a lot of sense. Then all men will worship me as a God. An-tee-o-kus the god. . . .

Narrator: But the Jews had a different name for him.

Mattathias: We call him An-tee-o-kus the madman.

Narrator: Now it happened that in the year 168 before the Common Era, An-tee-o-kiss decided to take revenge on the Jews and the city of Jerusalem.

King: Where are my generals? Get them in here!

Attendant: Yes, your majesty [ATTENDANT HURRIES TO BRING GENERALS FROM BACKSTAGE TO IN FRONT OF THRONE AND ATTENDANT TAKES PLACE AT LEFTHAND OF KING]

King: [WAIT FOR GENERALS TO ARRIVE] I can't stand these Jews that live in the land of Israel. In their heart of hearts, I know, they hate me. I'm sure they are hoping that I will die.

General #1: And you will . . . eventually.

King: What!? What was that!?

General #1: Nothing! [BACKING UP] Nothing, your majesty. . . .

King: We must be clever. These Jews are not like us. They refuse to sacrifice to our Gods. They refuse to obey our laws. But [RUBBING HANDS TOGETHER] I will bring them down. I will put a yoke on their necks. Do you hear me?

Generals: Yes, of course, your majesty. . . . [ATTENDANT ESCORTS GENERALS TO BACKSTAGE]

Narrator: And An-tee-o-kus sent a great army against the Jews. And there was no one to stand up against it. The people were afraid. And the army tore down the walls of Jerusalem. And they broke into the Temple, and robbed it of its treasure. And Jerusalem was destroyed. But this wasn't nearly enough for An-tee-o-kiss. And he called for his generals [ATTENDANT ESCORTS GENERALS FROM BACKSTAGE TO IN FRONT OF THRONE AND ATTENDANT TAKES PLACE AT LEFTHAND OF KING] and said:

King: [WAIT FOR GENERALS TO ARRIVE] ***It's not enough, I tell you!*** I want you to get ***rid*** of the Torah. And get rid of all the schools where the Torah is taught.

Generals: Yes, your majesty.

King: They want to observe the Jewish customs? Let them pay for it with their lives.

Generals: Yes, your majesty.

King: I hereby decree: There is to be no more circumcision. And no one is to keep kosher, either. They will ***see*** what happens when they have to deal with a great and powerful king like me. They want to keep the Sabbath? We will ***make*** them violate it. . . . [SUDDENLY LOOKING AT GENERALS AND RAISING VOICE] ***Do you hear me! Make*** them bow down before our gods. ***Make*** them bring sacrifices to ***our*** gods on ***our*** altars. We will ***see*** who is in charge. . . . [LOOKING INTO MIRROR AGAIN]

Generals: Yes . . . of course, your majesty. . . . [GENERALS AND ATTENDANT BACK AWAY AND LOOK AT EACH OTHER LIKE THE KING IS CRAZY]

King: And send my servants throughout the land to make sure that all this is done. . . . [ATTENDANT ESCORTS GENERALS TO BACKSTAGE]

Narrator: And when they returned [ATTENDANT ESCORTS GENERALS BACK IN TO IN FRONT OF THRONE AND ATTENDANT TAKES HIS PLACE AT LEFT HAND OF KING] the king asked them:

King: [WAIT FOR GENERALS TO ARRIVE] Did you do what I told you?

General #2: Yes, we went from town to town. We destroyed the synagogues. . . .

General #3: **And**, we forced the Jews to bow down before Greek idols and to break the Jewish dietary laws, just like you said.

King: What about the Torah scrolls?

General #4: We destroyed them.

General #1: Anyone who dared to get in our way, we put to death.

General #2: There were a lot who died.

General #3: And we made the Temple of the Jews into a temple to our god “Zooce.” And we put up a big statue of him in the middle of the sanctuary. Then we sacrificed a pig on the altar.

King: **Good!** [ATTENDANT ESCORTS GENERALS TO BACKSTAGE]

Narrator: When the remaining Jews in Jerusalem heard about this they were horrified. And they fled Jerusalem in great numbers until it was like a deserted city. Now it happened that a Greek officer came to the village of Modin [GREEK OFFICER ENTERS FROM BACKSTAGE TO IN FRONT OF MATTATHIAS AND JUDAH] which is not far from Jerusalem. Among those who were gathered there, was a man named Mat-a-thie-us. And with him were his five sons: Yo-hanon, Shee-moan, Judah, Elee-eizer, and Yonatan. And Mat-a-thie-us asked the Greek officer:

Mattathias: Who are you?

Greek Officer: What’s it to **you**? I am here to carry out the decree of An-tie-o-kiss. I am raising an altar to the Greek Gods, and **you** will sacrifice a pig on it.

Mattathias: Us?

Greek Officer: Yes, **you**! . . . Listen, all you have to do is be the first one to worship idols, and then I’ll give you money and a noble title. How about it?

Narrator: And Mat-a-thie-us said:

Mattathias: You may force others to bow to your demands and give up their faith, but I and my family will stay true to the Torah. . . .
[GREEK OFFICER GOES TO LEFT HAND SIDE OF ATTENDANT]

Narrator: And Mat-a-thie-us gathered his people to him and he said:

Mattathias: O my brothers! Let others obey King An-tee-o-kuss if they want. But let us swear that we shall not leave the path of our religion to go either to the right or to the left. Whoever is for God, let him follow me!

Narrator: And he and his five sons, and many others, fled into the hills, where they lived for many years. Then the time came for Mat-a-thie-us to die, for he was very old. And he called his five sons together and said:

Mattathias: O my sons! I must now leave you. And so, I want to appoint a leader over you and over our army. I therefore choose you, Judah. In wisdom and heroic deeds you are like Judah, the son of Jacob. Judah was said to be like a lion, and so are you. May our enemies tremble when they feel your strength. Serve God with all your heart and soul.

Narrator: And saying this, Mat-a-thie-us died [MATTATHIAS GOES BACKSTAGE] and Judah was general in his place. Judah was so fierce in battle that the Jews called him Makabee, which in Aramaic means “hammer,” for he struck at the Greeks like a mighty hammer, blow after blow. And because of his courage, the people found new hope and new courage, and fought with him against the Greeks. For they saw that he was wise and a great leader. When An-tee-o-kus heard about this, he flew into a rage.

King: What! They dare to defy me! I’ll show them.

Narrator: And he again sent for his generals. . . . [ATTENDANT ESCORTS GENERALS IN FROM BACKSTAGE TO IN FRONT OF KING AND ATTENDANT TAKES PLACE AT LEFTHAND OF KING]

King: Have you heard what Judah the Makabee has done to me?

Generals: Yes your majesty.

King: **What are you going to do about it?** He has destroyed all my armies and killed many of my generals. **This must stop! Now! Do you hear me?**

Generals: Yes your majesty.

Narrator: And the king sent army after army against the Jews. And when the Jews saw the great army that was sent against them, they were terrified, but Judah said to them:

Judah: [JUDAH GETS UP ON A CHAIR] It's true. The Greeks are mighty. But **God** is **more** mighty. Do not fear the enemy even though they are many and we are few. Know that God is with us, even though we are weak. . . . [RAISING A FIST INTO THE AIR] **Strengthen your hearts. Take courage!**

Narrator: And he appointed over them leaders of thousands, and leaders of hundreds and leaders of tens. And he told them:

Judah: **My fellow-Jews! Let us fight for the liberty of our people and the honor of our Torah!** If we do not fight, we will all be killed, and our women and children will be sold into slavery. Therefore, we must fight. **Do not be afraid! For the God who led us out of slavery in Egypt will not abandon us!** [JUDAH GETS DOWN FROM CHAIR]

Narrator: And Judah commanded the trumpeters to sound the call to battle. . . . [TRUMPETER PLAYS] And the Jews fought mightily. And they chased the armies of An-tie-o-kiss into the sea. . . . [JUDAH CHASES KING, ATTENDANT, GREEK OFFICER AND GENERALS TO BACKSTAGE. ONCE THEY ARE BACKSTAGE, EVERYONE TAKES A CANDLE FLASHLIGHT, EXCEPT JUDAH. MAKE SURE THAT YOUR FLASHLIGHT IS TURNED ON AND THAT THE FLAME IS FACING THE RIGHT DIRECTION] After the departure of the enemy, Judah assembled the people in Jerusalem [JUDAH ENTERS FROM BACKSTAGE TO BEHIND CLOTH-COVERED STOOL] and he said to them:

Judah: **Let us go up to the House of God and purify it!**

Narrator: And after that, they carefully purified the Temple and threw out all the idols and their altars. Then, they brought in new utensils, and the seven-branched golden menorah [JUDAH TAKES MENORAH UP FROM FLOOR BEHIND CLOTH-COVERED STOOL AND SETS ON STOOL] and they built a new altar. And so, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev, Judah rededicated the Temple. But when they got ready to light the oil lamps of the menorah, and they went to look for the olive oil to light it, they found only one small container of oil. . . . [JUDAH TAKES OUT SMALL PITCHER FROM UNDER STOOL AND PRETENDS TO FILL CUPS ON MENORAH] It was only enough oil for one day. Yet a miracle happened. The oil burned for eight days. And as Judah Makabee looked at the flames flickering in the Menorah, he declared:

Judah: **Every year, from this time forth, let the Jews in every land celebrate these eight days of Chanukah as a joyous feast in gratitude for God's many miracles!** [JUDAH TAKES CANDLE FLASHLIGHT OUT FROM UNDER STOOL, TURNS IT ON AND STEPS BACK INTO LINE OF SINGERS]

Narrator: On the twenty-fifth day of Kislev of each year the Jews were to celebrate the Festival of Lights. They were to burn lights during this time [NARRATOR PICKS UP FLASHLIGHT FROM FLOOR. LIGHTS ARE TURNED OFF OR DIMMED. NARRATOR READS VERY SLOWLY AS SINGERS BEGIN TO ENTER FROM BACKSTAGE TO ACROSS SPACE IN FRONT OF CONGREGATION CARRYING FLASHLIGHT CANDLES, CHOIR JOINS BEHIND THEM] adding a new light each night. . . . [WHEN ALL SINGERS ARE IN PLACE] They were also to sing songs of praise to celebrate the triumph of Israel in the struggle for its freedom. . . . [WHEN EVERYONE IS IN PLACE, ALL SING: LIGHT ONE CANDLE]

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