

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. How did Yanai become king?
2. How did Shimon ben Shetach effect change in the Sanhedrin?
3. Who instituted the present system of community day schools (ישיבה קטנות)?
4. Describe the reign of Salome.
5. How did Rome gain dominance over Judea?

This and much more will be addressed in the thirteenth lecture of this series: "Civil War".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the tape and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book was designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it as well as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series I Lecture #13

CIVIL WAR

I. Antigonos

A. Now when their father Hyrcanus was dead, the eldest son Aristobulus, intending to change the government into a kingdom, for so he resolved to do, first of all put a diadem on his head . . . This Aristobulus loved his next brother Antigonos, and treated him as his equal, but the others he held in bonds. He also cast his mother into prison, because she disputed the government with him, for Hyrcanus had left her to be mistress of all. He also proceeded to that degree of barbarity, as to kill her in prison with hunger; nay, he was alienated from his brother Antigonos by calumnies, and added him to the rest whom he slew. **Antiq. Book XIII 11:1**

B. He died, having reigned a year. He was called a lover of the Grecians, and had conferred many benefits on his own country, and made war against Iturea, and added a great part of it to Judea, and compelled the inhabitants, if they would continue in that country, to be circumcised, and to live according to the Jewish laws. **Antiq. Book XIII 11:3**

II. Yanai

A. When Aristobulus was dead, his wife Salome, who, by the Greeks, was called Alexandra, let his brethren out of prison, for Aristobulus had kept them in bonds, as we have said already, and made Alexander Janneus king, who was the superior in age and in moderation. This child happened to be hated by his father as soon as he was born, and could never be permitted to come into his father's sight till he died. The occasion of which hatred is thus reported: when Hyrcanus chiefly loved the two eldest of his sons, Antigonos and Aristobulus, G-d appeared to him in his sleep, of whom he inquired, which of his sons would be his successor? Upon G-d's representing to him the countenance of Alexander, he was grieved that he was to be the heir of all his goods, and suffered him to be brought up in Galilee.

However, G-d did not deceive Hyrcanus, for after the death of Aristobulus, he certainly took the kingdom and one of his brethren, who affected the kingdom, he slew, and the other, who chose to live a private and quiet life, he had in esteem. **Antiquities Book XIII 12:1**

B.

בארבעה עשר בתמוז עדין ספר גזירות דלא למספד בהון. מפני שהיה כתוב ומונח לצדוקין ספר גזירות אלו שנסקלין אלו שנשרפין ואלו שנהרגין ואלו שנחנקין וכשהיו כותבין אדם שואל והולך ורואה בספר אומר להם מניין אתם יודעין שזה חייב סקילה וזה חייב שריפה וזה חייב הריגה וזה חייב חניקה לא היו יודעין להביא ראיה מן התורה אלא שכתוב ומונח להם ספר גזירות ועוד שהיו בייתוסין אומרים עין תחת עין שן תחת שן הפיל אדם שינו של חברו פיל את שינו של חברו סמא את עינו של חברו יסמא את עינו יהיו שווים כאחד ופרשו השמלה לפני זקני העיר הדברים ככתבן וירקה בפניו שתהא רוקקת בפניו אמרו להם חכמים והלא כתוב התורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורותם. וכתוב ועתה כתבו לכם את השירה הזאת ולמדה זה מקרא שימה בפיהם אלו הלכות ואותו היום שבטלוהו עשאוהו יום טוב. מגילת תענית פרק רביעי

On the fourteenth of Tamuz the book of decrees was removed and is forbidden in eulogies. The Sadducees had this book written and set aside. It contained the list of the crimes that deserved stoning, those that deserved burning, those that deserved beheading, and those that deserved strangling. When they would issue a legal decision they would send someone to check this book of decrees. When they were asked as to the Scriptural source of their decision they were unable to reply . . . The sages told them that it is written in the Torah "The Torah and "Mitzvah" that I have written to guide them." (Shmos 24) It is also written "Write for yourselves the 'Shira' and study it (which refers to Scripture) and place it firmly in your mouths (which refers to 'halachos' the oral law)." (Devorim 31) The day that it was annulled was declared a holiday. **Megilas Taanis Chapter 4**

C.

בעשרים ושמונה בטבת יתיבא כנישתא על דינא: מפני שכשהיו הצדוקין יושבין בסנהדרין שלהם ינאי המלך ושלמינון המלכה יושבת אצלו ולא היה מישראל יושב עמהם חוץ משמעון בן שטח והיו שואלין תשובות והלכות ולא היו יודעין להביא ראיה מן התורה אמר להם שמעון בן שטח כל מי שהוא יודע להביא ראיה מן התורה יהא ראוי לישב בסנהדרין וכל מי שאינו יודע להביא ראיה מן התורה אינו ראוי לישב בסנהדרין פעם אחת נפל דבר של מעשה ביניהם ולא היו יודעין להביא ראיה מן התורה חוץ מזקן אחד שהיה מפטפט כנגדו א"ל תן לי זמן ולמחר אני משיבך נתן לו זמן הלך וישב לו בינו לבין עצמו וכיון שראה שלא היה יודע להביא ראיה מן התורה למחר נתבייש מלבוא ומלישב בסנהדרין גדולה והעמיד שמעון בן שטח אחד מן התלמידים והושיבו במקומו אמר להם אין פוחתין בסנהדרין של שבעים ואחד. וכך היה עושה בהם יום ויום עד שנסתלקו כולם וישבה סנהדרין ישראל על דעתו ובאותו היום שנסתלקה סנהדרין של צדוקין וישבה סנהדרין של ישראל עשאוהו יום טוב. מגילת תענית פרק עשירי.

On the twenty eighth of Teves the Assembly was rightfully constituted. When the Sanhedrin, constituted by Sadducees, was in session together with Yanai (Alexander Janneus) and Salome at his side, there were none of the main body of Israel with them with the exception of Shimon ben Shetach. They (the king, queen, and Shimon) asked of the "Sanhedrin" various questions dealing with different areas of Halacha, but they were not able to cite any sources from the Torah to support their positions. Shimon ben Shetach said to them: "Anyone who is able to support his view with a proper citation from the Torah is fit to sit on the Sanhedrin. However, anyone that cannot is not fit."

Once, a case came before them that they clearly were unable to resolve by bringing a decisive proof from the Torah. One of their elders, however, tried but was challenged by Shimon ben Shetach. The elder said: Give me time to think it through, and by tomorrow I'll answer you. But even after much thought he was still unable to respond to Shimon ben Shetach. Too embarrassed, he did not show up the next day. Shimon replaced him with one of his own disciples. He explained to them that a Sanhedrin must be composed of 71 members and this scholar (his disciple) was the only suitable replacement. One by one he was able to eventually replace the whole Sanhedrin. The day that the process was completed was declared a holiday. **Megilas Tanis Chapter 10**

D.

כד הוה קטיל ינאי (יוחנן) לרבנן שמעון בן שטח אטמינהו אחתיה. יהושע בן פרחיה אזל ערק לאלכסנדריא של מצרים כד הוה שלמא שלח ליה שמעון בן שטח מני ירושלים עיר הקודש לך אלכסנדריא אחותי בעלי שרוי בתוכך ואני יושבת שוממה. אמר שמע מינה הוה ליה שלמא. סוטה מז. (דפוס ישן)

When Yanai (Yochanon) killed out the Rabbis, Shimon ben Shetach was hidden by his sister (Salome). Yehoshua ben Perachia fled to Alexandria in Egypt. When conditions were tranquil Shimon ben Shetach sent to him the following message: "From me, Jerusalem, to you, Alexandria my sister; my husband is dwelling in your midst and I am destitute." He said: "It seems from this communication that it is peaceful (in Jerusalem)." **Sota 47a (uncensored version)**

E.

התקין שמעון בן שטח ... שיהיו התנוקות הולכים לבית הספר. ירושלמי כתובות פרק ח

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב ברם זכור אותו האיש לטוב ויהושע בן גמלא שמו שאלמלא הוא נשתכחה תורה מישראל ... ותיקן שיהו מושיבין מלמדי תנוקות בכל מדינה ומדינה בכל עיר ועיר ומכניסין אותו כבן שש או כבן שבע. בבא בתרא כא.

Shimon ben Shetach instituted that children should go to day school (yeshiva ketana).

Yerushalmi Kesubos Chap. 8

Rav Yehuda said that Rav said the following: May Yehoshua ben Perachia be praised because without him the Torah would be forgotten from Israel ... He instituted that teachers would be set up in every state and city and that the students would be required to go from the ages of six or seven. **Bava Basra 21a**

F.

מעשה שהיה דעבדיה דינאי מלכא קטל נפשא אמר להו שמעון בן שטח לחכמים תנו עיניכם בו ונדוננו שלחו ליה עבדך קטל נפשא שדריה להו שלחו ליה תא אנת נמי להכא והועד כבעליו אמרה תורה יבא בעל השור ויעמוד על שורו אתא ויתיב א"ל שמעון בן שטח ינאי המלך עמוד על רגליך ויעידו בך ולא לפנינו אתה עומד אלא לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם אתה עומד שנאמר ועמדו שני האנשים אשר להם הריב וגו' אמר לו לא כשתאמר אתה אלא כמה שיאמרו חבריך נפנה לימינו כבשו פניהם בקרקע נפנה לשמאלו וכבשו פניהם בקרקע אמר להן שמעון בן שטח בעלי מחשבות אתם יבא בעל מחשבות ויפרע מכם מיד בא גבריאל וחבטן בקרקע ומתו באותה שעה אמרו מלך לא דן ולא דנין אותו לא מעיד ולא מעידין אותו. סנהדרין יט.:-

There was an incident that the slave of king Yanai killed someone. Shimon ben Shetach said to the sages: "Give your attention to this case so that we will be able to adjudicate it." They sent to Yanai: "Your slave killed someone." He sent the slave to them. They sent a another message to Yanai that he should also come, since it is written in the Torah that the owner of a goring ox should be present at the court proceedings. He came and sat down. Shimon ben Shetach told him: "King Yanai stand on your feet and let the witnesses testify against you. Not just in front of us are you standing but in front of the One that said and the world became..." Yanai said to him: "I will listen not to what you say but to what your colleagues say." He (Shimon) turned to his right, but his colleagues pressed (turned) their faces to the ground (downward). He turned to the left, but his colleagues again turned their faces downward (out of fear of Yanai). Shimon ben Shetach said to them: "Men of (intricate and twisted) thoughts! May the Master of thoughts come and punish you." Immediately Gabriel (the angel) came and cast them to the ground and killed them. It was at that time that the ruling of the Mishnah was formulated: A king cannot judge nor be judged... **Sanhedrin 19a-b**

G.

כשירד ינאי המלך להרוג את החכמים ברחו מלפניו והלכו להם לסוריא ושרו במדינת קוסליקוס ונכנסו האויבים עליהם שבאותו מקום וצרו עליהם להרגם והזיעו בהם זיע גדולה והכו בהם מכה רבה והשאירו בהם פליטה והלכו להם לבית זבדאי וישבו שם עד שחשכה וברחו משם ובאותו יום שברחו משם עשאוהו יום טוב. מגילת תענית פרק י"ב

When Yanai attempted to kill the Sages, they fled and went to Syria and dwelled in the area of Kuslikus. Their enemies, who lived in that place, besieged them with the intention of killing them. Suddenly there was a major earthquake which caused a tremendous amount of casualties. There was a remnant of Jews who survived the quake who ran off to Bais Zavdai. They stayed there until nightfall and escaped. The day that they escaped from Bais Zavdai was declared a holiday. **Megilas Taanis Chapter 12**

H. As to Alexander, his own people were seditious against him; for at a festival which was then celebrated, when he stood upon the altar, and was going to sacrifice, the nation rose upon him, and pelted him with citrons, (which they then had in their hands,) because the law of the Jews required, that at the feast of tabernacles every one should have branches of the palm tree and citron tree: which thing we have elsewhere related. They also reviled him, as derived from a captive, and so unworthy of his dignity, and of sacrificing. At this he was in a rage, and slew of them about six thousand. He also built a partition wall of wood round the altar and temple, as far as that partition within which it was only lawful for the priests to enter, and by this means he obstructed the multitude from coming at him. He also maintained foreigners of Pisidia and Cilicia, for as to the Syrians, he was at war with them, and so made no use of them. **Antiq. Book XIII 13:5**

I.

מעשה בצדוקי אחד שניסך על גבי רגליו ורגמוהו כל העם באתרוגיהן ואותו היום נפגמה קרן המזבח. סוכה מ"ח:

There was an incident with a Sadducee that spilled the water of the libation sacrifice on his feet (instead of on the altar) and the people pelted him with their esrogim. That day the altar was damaged. **Sukah 48b**

J. From thence he fled to Jerusalem, where, besides his other ill success, the nation insulted him, and he fought against them for six years, and slew no fewer than fifty thousand of them. And when he desired that they would desist from their ill will to him, they hated him so much the more, on account of what had already happened and when he had asked them what he ought to do, they all cried out, that "he ought to kill himself." They also sent to Demetrius Eucerus, and desired him to make a league of mutual defence with them.

Now as Alexander fled to the mountains, six thousand of the Jews hereupon came together (from Demetrius) to him, out of pity at the change of his fortune; upon which Demetrius was afraid, and retired out of the country; after which the Jews fought against Alexander, and being beaten, were slain in great numbers in the several battles which they had, and when he had shut up the most powerful of them in the city Bethome, he besieged them therein and when he had taken the city, and gotten the men into his power,

he brought them to Jerusalem, and did one of the most barbarous actions in the world to them: for as he was feasting with his concubines, in the sight of all the city, he ordered about eight hundred of them to be crucified, and while they were living he ordered the throats of their children and wives to be cut before their eyes. This was indeed by way of revenge for the injuries they had done him; which punishment yet was of an inhuman nature, though we suppose that he had been ever so much distressed, as indeed he had been, by his wars with them; for he had by their means come to the last degree of hazard, both of his life and of his kingdom, while they were not satisfied by themselves only to fight against him, but introduced foreigners also for the same purpose; nay, at length they reduced him to that degree of necessity that he was forced to deliver back to the king of Arabia the land of Moab and Gilead; which he had subdued, and the places that were in them; that they might not join with them in the war against him; as they had done ten thousand other things that tended to affront and reproach him. However this barbarity seems to have been without any necessity, on which account he bore the name of a Thracian among the Jews; whereupon the soldiers that had fought against him, being about eight thousand in number, ran away by night, and continued fugitives all the time that Alexander lived; who being now freed from any farther disturbance from them reigned the rest of his time in the utmost tranquillity. **Antiquities Book XII 13:5,14:2**

K. After this, king Alexander, although he fell into a distemper by hard drinking, and had a quartan ague, which held him three years, yet would not leave off going out with his army, till he was quite spent with the labors he had undergone, and died in the bounds of Regabea, a fortress beyond Jordan. But when his queen saw that he was ready to die, and had no longer any hopes of surviving, she came to him weeping and lamenting, and bewailed herself, and her sons, on the desolate condition they should be left in: and said to him, "To whom dost thou thus leave me and my children, who are destitute of all other supports, and this when thou knowest how much ill will thy nation bears thee?" But he gave her the following advice, "That she need but follow what he would suggest to her, in order to retain the kingdom securely, with her children, that she should conceal his death from the soldiers till she should have taken that place; after this she should go in triumph, as upon a victory, to Jerusalem, and put some of her authority into the hands of the Pharisees, for that they would commend her for the honor she had done them, and would reconcile the nation to her; for he told her, they had great authority among the Jews, both to do hurt to such as they hated, and to bring advantages to those to whom they were friendly disposed, for that they are then believed best of all by the multitude when they speak any severe thing against others, though it be only out of envy at them. And he said, that it was by their means that he had incurred the displeasure of the nation, whom indeed he had injured. Do thou, therefore, said he, when thou art come to Jerusalem, send for the leading men among them, and show them my body, and with great appearance of

sincerity, give them leave to use it as they themselves please, whether they will dishonor the dead body, by refusing it burial, as having severely suffered by any means, or whether in their anger they will offer any other injury to that body. Promise them also that thou wilt do nothing without them in the affairs of the kingdom. If thou dost but say this to them, I shall have the honor of a more glorious funeral from them than thou could have made for me; and when it is in their power to abuse my dead body, they will do it no injury at all and thou wilt rule in safety. So when he had given his wife this advice, he died, after he had reigned twenty seven years, and lived fifty years within one. **Antiq. Book XIII 15:5**

L.

אמר לה ינאי מלכא לדביתיה אל תתיראי מן הפרושין ולא ממי שאינן פרושין אלא מן הצבועין שדומין לפרושין שמעשיהן כמעשה זמרי ומבקשין שכר כפנחס. סוטה כב:

Yanai (on his death bed) told his wife fear not from the Pharisees or the non Pharisees (Sadducees) but rather from the hypocrites who have the outward appearance of Pharisees. They do the acts of Zimri but seek the reward of Pinchas. **Sota 22b**

III. Salome (Shel Tzion)

A. So Alexandra, when she had taken the fortress, acted as her husband had suggested to her, and spoke to the Pharisees, and put all things into their power, both as to the dead body, and as to the affairs of the kingdom, and thereby pacified their anger against Alexander, and made them bear good will and friendship to him; who then came among the multitude, and made speeches to them, and laid before them the actions of Alexander, and told them that they had lost a righteous king; and by the commendation they gave him, they brought them to grieve, and to be in heaviness for him, so that he had a funeral more splendid than had any of the kings before him. Alexander left behind him two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but committed the kingdom to Alexandra. Now, as to these two sons, Hyrcanus was indeed unable to manage public affairs, and delighted rather in a quiet life; but the younger, Aristobulus, was an active and a bold man; and for this woman herself, Alexandra, she was loved by the multitude, because she seemed displeased at the offenses her husband had been guilty of. **Antiq. Book XIII 16:1**

B. So she made Hyrcanus high priest, because he was the elder, but much more because he cared not to meddle with politics, and permitted the Pharisees to do everything; to whom she also ordered the multitude to be obedient. She also restored again those practices which the Pharisees had introduced, according to the traditions of their forefathers, and which her father-in-law, Hyrcanus, had abrogated. So she had

indeed the name of the Regent, but the Pharisees had the authority; for it was they who restored such as had been banished, and set such as were prisoners at liberty, and, to say all at once, they differed in nothing from lords. However, the queen also took care of the affairs of the kingdom, and got together a great body of mercenary soldiers, and increased her own army to such a degree, that she became terrible to the neighboring tyrants, and took hostages of them; And the country was entirely at peace. The Pharisees desired that she should kill those who persuaded Alexander to slay the eight hundred men; after which they cut the throat of one of them, Diogenes; and after him they did the same to several one after another, till the men that were the most potent came into the palace, and Aristobulus with them, for he seemed to be displeased at what was done, and it appeared openly, that if he had an opportunity, he would not permit his mother to go on so. These put the queen in mind what great dangers they had gone through, and great things they had done, whereby they had demonstrated the firmness of their fidelity to their master, insomuch that they had received the greatest marks of favor from him; and they begged of her, that she would not utterly blast their hopes, as it now happened that when they had escaped the hazards that arose from their open enemies, they were to be cut off at home, by their private enemies, like brute beasts, without any help whatsoever. They said also, that if their adversaries would be satisfied with those that had been slain already, they would take what had been done patiently, on account of their natural love to their governors; but if they must expect the same for the future also, they implored of her a dismissal from her service, for they could not bear to think of attempting any method for their deliverance without her, but would rather die willingly before the palace gate, in case she would not forgive them. And that it was a great shame both for themselves, and for the queen, that when they were neglected by her, they should come under the lash of her husband's enemies; for that Aretas, the Arabian king, and the monarchs, would give any reward, if they could get such men as foreign auxiliaries, to whom their very names, before their voices be heard, may perhaps be terrible; But if they could not obtain this their second request, and if she had determined to prefer the Pharisees before them, they still insisted that she would place them every one in her fortresses; for if some fatal demon had a constant spite against Alexander's house, they would be willing to bear their part, and to live in a private station there. **Antiq. Book XIII 16:2**

C.

שכן מצינו בימי שמעון בן שטח שירדו להם גשמים בלילי רביעיות ובלילי שבתות עד שנעשו חטים ככליות ושעורים כגרעיני זיתים ועדשים כדינרי זהב וצרו מהם דוגמא לדורות להודיע כמה החטא גורם. תענית כג.

In the days of Shimon ben Shetach the rain fell only on Wednesday nights and Shabbos nights (times that people normally stay indoors). The wheat grains grew as large as kidneys, barley grains as large as olive pits and lentils as large as gold coins. They wrapped them up to preserve them as a sign for all generations to show how sin can affect (potential blessing). **Taanis 23a**

D. So Alexandra not knowing what to do with any decency, committed the fortresses to them, all but Hyrkania and Alexandrium, and Macherus, where her principal treasures were. After a little while also, she sent her son Aristobulus with an army to Damascus against Ptolemy, who was called Menneus, who was such a bad neighbor to the city; but he did nothing considerable there and so returned home. **Antiq. Book XIII 16:3**

E. After this, when the queen was fallen into a dangerous distemper, Aristobulus resolved to attempt the seizing of the government; so he stole away secretly by night, with only one of his servants, and went to the fortresses wherein his friends that were such from the days of his father, were settled; for as he had been a great while displeased at his mother's conduct, so he was now much more afraid, lest upon her death, their whole family should be under the power of the Pharisees, for he saw the inability of his brother, who was to succeed in the government.

Now the elders of the Jews, and Hyrcanus with them, went in unto the queen and desired, "That she would give them her sentiments about the present posture of affairs, for that Aristobulus was in effect lord of almost all the kingdom, by possessing of so many strongholds, and that it was absurd for them to take any counsel by themselves, how ill soever she were, whilst she was alive, and that the danger would be upon them in no long time." But she bid them do what they thought proper to be done; that they had many circumstances in their favor still remaining, a nation in good heart, an army, and money in their several treasuries, for that she had small concern about public affairs now, when the strength of her body already failed her. Now a little while after she had said this to them, she died, when she had reigned nine years, and had in all lived seventy three.

Antiq. Book XIII 16:5,6

IV. Civil War

A. Hyrcanus then began his high priesthood on the third year of the hundred seventy seventh Olympiad, when Quintus Hortensius and Quintus Metellus, who was called Metellus of Crete, were consuls at Rome; when presently Aristobulus began to make war against him, and as it came to a battle with Hyrcanus at Jericho, many of the soldiers deserted him, and went over to his brother; upon which Hyrcanus fled into the citadel, where Aristobulus' wife and children were imprisoned by their mother, as we have said already, and attacked and overcame those his adversaries that had fled thither, and lay within the walls of the temple. So when he had sent a message to his brother about agreeing the matters between them, he laid aside his enmity to him on these conditions, that Aristobulus should be king, that he should live without intermeddling with public affairs, and quietly enjoy the estate he had acquired. When they had agreed upon these terms in the temple and had confirmed the agreement with oaths, and the giving one another their right hands and embracing one another in the sight of the whole multitude, they departed; the one, Aristobulus, to the palace; and Hyrcanus, as a private man to the former house of Aristobulus. **Antiq. Book XIV 1:2**

B. But there was a certain friend of Hyrcanus', an Idumean, called Antipater, who was very rich and in his nature an active and a seditious man who was at enmity with Aristobulus, and had differences with him on account of his good will to Hyrcanus.

But now, this younger Antipater was suspicious of the power of Aristobulus, and was afraid of some mischief he might do him, because of his hatred to him, so he stirred up the most powerful of the Jews and talked against him to them privately; and said, that it was unjust to overlook the conduct of Aristobulus, who had gotten the government unrighteously, and ejected his brother out of it, who was the elder, and ought to retain what belonged to him by prerogative of his birth. And the same speeches he perpetually made to Hyrcanus and told him, that his own life would be in danger, unless he guarded himself, and got shut of Aristobulus; for he said, that the friends of Aristobulus omitted no opportunity of advising him to kill him, as being then, and not before, sure to retain his principality. Hyrcanus gave no credit to these words of his, as being of a gentle disposition, and one that did not easily admit of calumnies against other men. This temper of his, not disposing him to meddle with public affairs, and want of spirit, occasioned him to appear to spectators to be degenerate and unmanly; while Aristobulus was of a contrary temper, an active man, and one of a great and generous soul. Since therefore Antipater saw that Hyrcanus did not attend to what he said, he never ceased, day by day, to charge feigned crimes upon Aristobulus, and to calumniate him before him, as if he had a mind to kill him, and so, by urging him perpetually, he advised him, and persuaded him to fly to Aretas, the king of Arabia, and promised, that if he would comply with his advice, he would also himself assist him, and go with him. When Hyrcanus heard this, he said that it was for his advantage to fly away to Aretas. Now Arabia is a country that borders upon Judea. However Hyrcanus sent Antipater first to the king of Arabia, in order to receive assurances from him, that when he should come in the manner of a supplicant to him, he would not deliver him up to his enemies. So Antipater, having received such assurances, returned to Hyrcanus to Jerusalem. A while afterward he took Hyrcanus, and stole out of the city by night, and went a great journey, and came and brought him to the city called Petra, where the palace of Aretas was; and as he was a very familiar friend of the king's he persuaded him to bring back Hyrcanus into Judea, and his persuasion he continued every day without any intermission. He also proposed to make him presents on that account. At length he prevailed with Aretas in his suit. Moreover, Hyrcanus promised him, that when he had been brought thither, and had received his kingdom, he would restore that country, and those twelve cities which his father Alexander had taken from the Arabians, which were these, Medaba, Naballo, Libias, Tharabasa, Agala, Athone, Zoar, Orone, Marissa, Rudda, Lussa, and Oruba.

Antiq. Book XIV 1:3-4

C. After these promises had been given to Aretas, he made an expedition against Aristobulus, with an army of fifty thousand horse and foot, and beat him in the battle. And when after that victory many went over to Hyrcanus as deserters, Aristobulus was left desolate, and fled to Jerusalem; upon which the king of Arabia took all his army and made an assault upon the temple, and besieged Aristobulus therein, the people still supporting Hyrcanus, and assisting him in the siege, while none but the priests continued with Aristobulus. So Aretas united the forces of the Arabians and of the Jews together, and pressed on the siege vigorously. As this happened at the time when the feast of unleavened bread was celebrated, which we call the Passover, the principal men among the Jews left the country and fled into Egypt. Now there was one whose name was Onias (Choni HaMaagal), a righteous man he was, and beloved of G-d, who, in a certain drought, had prayed to G-d to put an end to the intense heat, and whose prayers G-d heard, and had sent them rain. This man had hid himself, because he saw that this sedition would last a great while. However they brought him to the Jewish camp, and desired, that as by his prayers he had once put an end to the drought, so he would in like manner make imprecations on Aristobulus, and those of his faction. And when, upon his refusal, and the excuses that he made, he was still by the multitude compelled to speak, he stood up in the midst of them and said, "O G-d, the king of the whole world. Since those that stand now with me are thy people, and those that are besieged are also thy priests, I beseech thee, that thou wilt neither hearken to the prayers of those against these, nor bring to effect what these pray against those." Whereupon such wicked Jews as stood about him, as soon as he had made this prayer, stoned him to death.

But G-d punished them immediately for this their barbarity, and took vengeance of them for the murder of Onias, in the manner following: While the priests and Aristobulus were besieged, it happened that the feast called the Passover was come at which it is our custom to offer a great number of sacrifices to G-d: but those that were with Aristobulus wanted sacrifices, and desired that their countrymen without would furnish them with such sacrifices and assured them they should have as much money for them as they should desire; and when they required to pay a thousand drachmae for each head of cattle, Aristobulus and the priests willingly undertook to pay for them accordingly, and those within let down the money over the walls, and gave it them. But when the others had received it, they did not deliver the sacrifices, but arrived at that height of wickedness as to break the assurances they had given, and to be guilty of impiety towards G-d, by not furnishing those that wanted them with sacrifices. And when the priests found they had been cheated and that the agreements they had made were violated, they prayed to G-d, that he would avenge them on their countrymen. Nor did he delay their punishment, but sent a strong and vehement storm of wind that destroyed the fruits of the whole country, till a modius of wheat was then bought for eleven drachmae.

Antiq. Book XIV 2:1,2

D.

תנו רבנן כשצרו בית חשמונאי זה על זה היה אריסטובלוס מבפנים והורקנוס מבחוץ. בכל יום היו משלשלים להם בקופה דינרים והיו מעלין להם תמידים. היה שם זקן אחד שהיה מכיר בחכמת יונית. אמר להם כל זמן שעוסקים בעבודה אין נמסרים בידכם. למחר שילשלו דינרים בקופה והעלו להם חזיר. כיון שהגיע לחצי החומה נעץ צפרניו בחומה ונודעזעה ארץ ישראל ארבע מאות פרסה על ארבע מאות פרסה... ועל אותו שעה שנינו מעשה שבא העומר מגנת הצריפין ושתי הלחם מבקעת עין סוכר. בבא קמא פב:

The Rabbis taught that when the (descendants of the royal) house of Chashmonaim were besieging one another, Aristobolus was within (Jerusalem) and Hyrcanus was without. Everyday they would lower dinarim in a basket to the people outside and the people outside would raise up to them the continual offering. There was a certain elder that had expertise in Greek wisdom. He said to them that as long they are doing the service of the Bais Hamikdash they will not be delivered into your hands. Tomorrow let them lower dinarim in the basket but this time hoist them up a pig. When the pig reached halfway up the wall it dug its nails in the wall and the land of Israel shook through its length and breadth 400 parsas by 400 parsas... Regarding that time we learned about the Omer sacrifice that was brought from "Ginas Tzrifim" and the two breads that were brought from "Ain Socher" (places situated quite far from Jerusalem because of the dearth of available grain nearby). **Bava Kama 82b**

E. In the meantime Pompey sent Scaurus into Syria, while he was himself in Armenia, and making war with Tigranes: But when Scaurus was come to Damascus, and found that Lollius and Metellus had newly taken the city, he came himself hastily into Judea. And when he was come thither, ambassadors came to him, both from Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, and both desired he would assist them. And when both of them promised to give him money, Aristobulus four hundred talents, and Hyrcanus no less, he accepted of Aristobulus' promise, for he was rich and had a great soul, and desired to obtain nothing but what was moderate; whereas the other was poor, and tenacious, and made incredible promises in hopes of greater advantages; for it was not the same thing to take a city, that was exceeding strong and powerful, as it was to eject out of the country some fugitives, with a greater number of Nabateans, who were no very warlike people. He therefore made an agreement with Aristobulus, for the reasons before mentioned, and took his money, and raised the siege, and ordered Aretas to depart, or else he should be declared an enemy to the Romans. So Scaurus returned to Damascus again; and Aristobulus, with a great army, made war with Aretas and Hyrcanus, and fought them at a place called Papyron, and beat them in the battle, and slew about six thousand of the enemy with whom fell Pahalion also, the brother of Antipater.

When Pompey had heard the causes of these two, and had condemned Aristobulus for his violent procedure, he then spoke civilly to them, and sent them away; and told them, that when he came again into their country he would settle all their affairs after he had first taken a view of the affairs of the Nabateans. In the meantime, he ordered them to be quiet; and treated Aristobulus civilly, lest he should make the nation revolt, and hinder his return; which yet Aristobulus did; for without expecting any further determination, which Pompey had promised them, he went to the city Delius, and thence marched into Judea. At this behaviour Pompey was angry; and taking with him that army which he was leading against the Nabateans, and the auxiliaries that came from Damascus, and the other parts of Syria, with the other Roman legions which he had with him, he made an expedition against Aristobulus. **Antiquities Book XIV 2:3, 3:3-4**

F. Now there was a sedition of the men that were within the city, who did not agree what was to be done in their present circumstances, while some thought it best to deliver up the city to Pompey; but Aristobulus' party exhorted them to shut the gates, because he was kept in prison. Now these prevented the others and seized upon the temple, and cut off the bridge which reached from it to the city, and prepared themselves to abide a siege; but the others admitted Pompey's army in, and delivered up both the city and the king's palace to him.

But now all was full of slaughter; some of the Jews being slain by the Romans, and some by one another; nay, some there were who threw themselves down the precipices, or put fire to their houses and burnt them, as not able to bear the miseries they were under. Of the Jews there fell twelve thousand, but of the Romans very few. Absalom, who was at once both uncle and father-in-law to Aristobulus, was taken captive. And no small enormities were committed about the temple itself, which, in former ages, had been inaccessible and seen by none; for Pompey went into it, and not a few of those that were with him also, and saw all that which it was unlawful for any other men to see but only for the high priests. **Antiq. Book XIV 4:2,4**

G. Now the occasions of this misery which came upon Jerusalem, were Hyrcanus and Aristobulus by raising a sedition one against the other; for now we lost our liberty, and became subject to the Romans, and were deprived of that country which we had gained by our arms from the Syrians, and were compelled to restore it to the Syrians. Moreover, the Romans exacted of us, in a little time, above ten thousand talents. And the royal authority, which was a dignity formerly bestowed on those that were high priests, by the right of their family, became the property of private men. But of these matters, we shall treat in their proper places. Now Pompey committed Coelesyria, as far as the river Euphrates and Egypt, to Scaurus, with two Roman legions, and then went away to Cilicia, and made haste to Rome. He also carried bound along with him Aristobulus and his children; for he had two daughters, and as many sons; the one of which ran away, but the younger Antigonus, was carried to Rome, together with his sisters. **Antiq. Book XIV 4:5**