

## **Maccabees – Closing Statement**

I speak to you this evening not only as an advocate for Mattathias and Judah, but also from my heart. I know that for some of you, my countrymen and women, this is not an easy case. Nothing less is at stake than the fate of our people. You have now heard Mattathias, and his two sons explain to you why they acted as they did. These were extraordinary times that called for extraordinary men and extraordinary actions. This war we are in is not pretty ... it is not “nice.” In times of war, it is necessary to make choices that we would not and do not make in times of peace – but that does not define who or what we are, or will be. Life, as those who have lived it know, proves to be more complicated than this. When faced with dire circumstances, with genocide, decisive action is called for, for the greater good, to insure our children’s future. We do what is necessary. When the war is won, when the threat to our fundamental existence has been repelled -- as has been our history and our culture -- we can then revert to our

peaceful selves – to who we are, and who we strive to be as a people.

The question before you is ... were the actions of these Maccabees – all of their actions – justified and necessary acts of war? Were their actions not necessary to insure the survival of the Jewish people – to prevent the genocide of the Jewish people? Make no mistake -- we are at war, our enemies are the Greeks and those who have given them aid and comfort. Who are these Greeks? It is they who spoke to us, in the most glowing of terms, of “all being one people,” of promoting philosophy, science and the inner spirit. Nice words, happy talk, but all a disguise for their hidden agenda -- to eradicate every vestige of Judaism. They proceeded cleverly, step by step – promoting high priests swayed by gold and silver, building gymnasiums in our midst.

Then, when all did not flock to their side, they took the next step. They destroyed our Temple – removed its altar – made it unrecognizable. When no one rose in revolt, they were emboldened – so they took the next steps of banning Jewish

observance, forbidding worship, and killing women and children, like Hannah and her sons who dared to defy them. And who stood for them? From the first, it was Mattathias -- only Mattathias -- that is the uncomfortable truth. His action that day, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Kislev, marked the beginning of our revolt. All of his actions were necessary acts of war – a war to free ourselves from the yoke of Greek tyranny. Samuel died because he placed himself in the line of fire. Others like him who gave aid and comfort, in time of war, to our enemies the Greeks, suffered the same fate. Call this “mayhem” if you will. But it is not terrorism – not matter how the state – whom you will hear from shortly – chooses to label it. You cannot pick and choose – if you wish to see Mattathias and his sons protecting our gates, preserving our heritage, then I say you must tell them that you agree that what they have done in the course of war, are necessary acts of war.

The Maccabees’ actions were necessary, all of them, to strike a blow against the Greeks, who had stolen our youth and our future, by forbidding circumcision. How else to declare to these

Greeks and the world that the Jewish people will have a future, that we will not go quietly into the night. The act of circumcising Daniel, who one day will join our armies, was as necessary to our people's survival as Mattathias' striking down that Greek officer and all he stood for. Yes, 2000 years from now, our nations fate may be so secure that Daniel and his parents may have the luxury of choice – a bris or not? And what to serve afterwards. But on this day, at this time, it is not enough simply to answer the Greeks with our swords and our spears – they must also be answered as Mattathias did, to honor what the Torah commands with a pure heart, to strike a blow for our freedom, and for our Jewish laws, and for nothing less than the continuation of the Jewish people.

[By the decision you make, and the vote you cast, this is your chance to stand with Mattathias and his sons so that we, as a people, may live.