

## **Ptolemy at the Temple**

3 Maccabees 1:1 – 2:24

by Don Falkos

copyright 2018 Donald Falkos Storytelling LLC

During the time when Ptolemy IV Philopator ruled Egypt, King Antiochus III of Syria invaded and took over some of his territory. Philopator went to war against Antiochus and defeated him. Philopator visited many of the surrounding towns and made generous donations to the temples of their gods. He thus gained the gratitude and support of the people.

On his way back to Egypt, King Philopator visited Jerusalem and went to the Temple. He offered sacrifices and gave thanks to God Most High. He was impressed with the Temple and wanted to see what it looked like on the inside. His Jewish companions explained, "Your Majesty, only the priests are allowed into the Holy Place inside the Temple. And only the High Priest is allowed into the Most Holy Place, and then only once a year." He didn't believe them, so they read to him the relevant passages from the Law of Moses.

Philopator was annoyed, "After everything I've done for this country, I should be allowed inside whether you say it's all right or not." In boastful arrogance he proclaimed his intension to enter the Temple of God.

The priests blocked his way and prayed.

All the people of Jerusalem gathered at the Temple and prayed.

The High Priest prayed.

And God intervened.

Philopator was struck down, paralyzed and unable to speak. His officers and bodyguards were in a panic, fearing he was about to die. They picked him up and carried him through the crowd, away from the Temple. Philopator recovered. But he refused to apologize. He left Jerusalem livid with rage, spouting angry threats against its people.