

Antiochus Eupator

1 Maccabees 6:18 – 7:4

2 Maccabees 10:9 – 13:26

by Don Falkos

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Lysias had failed to put down the Maccabean Revolt while serving under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. But now he found himself the de facto ruler of Syria and its territories. Since the new king, Antiochus V Eupator, was just a boy, Lysias, a close relative, had been appointed regent.

With the new king at his side, Lysias once again went on the attack against Judas Maccabeus and the people of Judea who remained faithful to the Lord. He hired mercenaries to augment the Syrian army and also acquired a large herd of war elephants.

During the attack, a Judean soldier noticed the largest of the elephants was decked in royal armor. Convinced the king himself must be seated in the howdah on the elephant's back, this brave man fought his way toward the huge beast. From underneath, he stabbed it to death. But the mammoth creature fell on him and crushed him.

The attackers pressed forward all the way to Jerusalem and laid siege to the Temple. Then Lysias got word of a coup back home in the Syrian capital. He and the king beat a hasty retreat. They arrived in Antioch only to discover the situation was even worse than expected.

The coup had been successful. But its perpetrators were immediately wiped out through the timely return of Demetrius, the son of a former Seleucid ruler. Demetrius had already appointed himself king. He had Lysias and Antiochus arrested. Denying them a hearing and even refusing to look at them, he had them executed.

Antiochus V Eupator died at the age of eleven having been the figurehead of the Seleucid dynasty for less than two years.