

## **Demetrius Defeated**

1 Maccabees 10:1-50

by Don Falkos

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There was a man from Ephesus in Greece named Alexander Balas who arrived in Judea claiming to be the son of the former Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes and calling himself Alexander Epiphanes. He proclaimed himself to be the rightful king of Syria. It was a deception, but people bought into it thinking, "Anyone would be better than Demetrius." Which goes to show just how short collective memory can be. It had been less than fifteen years since the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and as dreadful as life had been in the dozen years since Demetrius had taken the throne, life during the reign of Antiochus had been far worse.

Concerned for his position, Demetrius made overtures toward Jonathan and his brothers in an attempt to gain their support. "I have done terrible things to your nation. I hope we can let bygones be bygones. I give you permission to build a strong army and to serve as my ally. To show my good will toward you, I order the release of my hostages in Jerusalem."

Not to be outdone, Alexander also made overtures of friendship. He went a step further by appointing Jonathan as high priest. Demetrius countered with incredible offers such as huge reductions in taxes, increased political power, and the release of every Jewish prisoner from all across his kingdom.

Jonathan and his brothers didn't believe a word of what Demetrius promised. They sided with Alexander.

Alexander raised an army and attacked Demetrius. The fighting was fierce, and many were killed. Alexander won the battle, and Demetrius was dead.