

Nicanor

1 Maccabees 7:5-50

2 Maccabees 14 – 15

by Don Falkos

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Demetrius Soter of Syria, the latest king in the Seleucid dynasty, had a highly honored military officer named Nicanor who hated the Jews. Demetrius sent Nicanor to Judea to finally put an end to the Maccabean Revolt.

Nicanor sent a message to Judas Maccabeus promising peace, when in actuality he planned to kidnap Judas and force the surrender of his army. But Judas had informants everywhere and learned of Nicanor's deceptive intentions. He politely declined to meet with the man. So Nicanor attacked. Judas and his men were ready as always and dealt their attackers a savage defeat. Nicanor retreated.

He went to Mt. Zion to visit the Temple. The priests greeted him warmly, telling him about the sacrifices they regularly made on behalf of King Demetrius. Nicanor laughed in their faces and presented them with a violent, crude, humiliating gesture, saying "I am going again into battle. If I am not successful in defeating Judas Maccabeus this time, I will come back here and burn this temple to the ground."

When battle was once again engaged, Nicanor was the first to be killed. His men immediately threw down their weapons and ran for their lives. Judas and his army pursued and killed every last one of them and plundered them of all their valuables.

Then they chopped off Nicanor's head and his right hand, which he had used to insult the priests and disgrace the Temple of the Lord. These were taken to Jerusalem and put on display outside the city.