

## **Ptolemy's Elephants**

3 Maccabees 5:45 – 7:23

by Don Falkos

copyright 2018 Donald Falkos Storytelling LLC

For the third day in a row, five hundred elephants were made drunk with wine until they were angry and confused. Their keeper tied small swords and knives to their sides and stomachs. They were ready to trample the Jews detained in the hippodrome.

At dawn Ptolemy IV Philopator king of Egypt stormed out of his palace and made his way to the hippodrome. A large crowd had already gathered there to watch the spectacle of this mass execution.

Meanwhile, the Jews were praying, "God Almighty. Show us your mercy. Save us."

Just as Philopator reached the hippodrome with his elephants and his army, God sent two angels to protect the people of Israel. The soldiers became disoriented; Philopator shook with fear; the elephants turned around and started trampling the troops marching behind them.

God once again caused Philopator to forget his plan. And just as he had the previous day, the king praised the loyalty of his Jewish subjects. He immediately set them free and supplied them with a feast lasting seven days. In the hippodrome where they had nearly been executed, they now celebrated the saving power of God.

Before leaving Alexandria these faithful Jews killed all the unfaithful Jews who had turned their backs on the Lord and worshipped the Greek god Dionysus in order to save their own lives. Ptolemy IV Philopator provided safe passage to all the Jews and promised any property that had been confiscated would be returned to them when they arrived back home.