

Walk Through The Bible

St. Barnabas Parish Church

Wulff and Baillou Hill Roads

Nassau, New Providence,

The Bahamas

20th November 2007

III Maccabees

1. III Maccabees 3:1-30 The Madness of Bitterness

- a. 1-7 When the King notice that some of the Jews were willing to sell their integrity to save themselves from destruction, while others were refusing to give in his wishes for them to give up their laws, customs and way of life, this infuriated him even more. Ptolemy IV was determined more than ever to make an example of them by gathering the Jews in one place and having them put to death. Meanwhile others were spreading malicious rumours that the Jews hated the people who they had to live among because they refused to join in their customs and lifestyle. Despite the Jewish people's good deeds and acts of kindness and righteousness, they were now being labelled in the worse possible terms by those who wanted to find fault with them.
- b. 8-10 There were some Greeks in the city who did business with the Jews who tried to render assistance to them in some form or fashion. They recognized the injustice of the king's decision.
- c. 11-30 The king informed the soldiers of the reasons for his actions. He indicated that he wanted to show goodwill towards all of his subjects by honouring all of the countries in his realm along with their temples. But when he got to Jerusalem, they refuse to let him enter their temple. He believed that he had been slighted by the people of Jerusalem. He considered it an act of defiance on their part, and if they did it to him in Jerusalem then it was only a matter of time before they would defy him in the rest of his realm. In his own country he was determined that their allegiance should be sworn solely to him. The Jews

however had refused his gracious offer in the malice of their hearts and now he was determined to deal with them. He considered them a treat to the well-being of his nation and as such they needed to be rounded up for execution. Anyone who aided them was to be treated in like manner.

2. III Maccabees 4:1-21 Gladness to Some, Sorrow for Others!!!!

- a. 1-10 The decree was greeted with joy by some of the gentiles, but the whole affair was bitter sorrow for the Jews. Jews from every sphere of life were carted off for destruction. Even the elderly were treated unfairly. The Jews were treated as traitors.
- b. 11-15 The king intended to make a spectacle of their deaths. They needed to register all the persons that they were about to kill yet even after forty days the matter was not complete.
- c. 16-21 Meanwhile the king was organizing “drunken feasts” in honour of gods that cannot even answer back or deliver persons. Despite all of his plans both the paper and the pens give out before the registration is complete. The Jews saw it as the hand of God working in their favour.

3. III Maccabees 5:1-51 The Madness of Fighting Against God

- a. 1-9 The king gives orders to the Keeper of the elephants to intoxicate the animals and then set them loose on the Jews in order to trample them to death. The king returned to his feast with his friends who have the same approach as he has towards the Jews. The Jews however spent their time in bonds in prayer.
- b. 10-13 After the animals were prepared, Hermon tried to report to the King. The Lord God had allowed the king to oversleep and the hour passed for the Jews to be executed and therefore they were once again spared.
- c. 14-22 After returning to his “drinking party” the King once again summons the Keeper of the Elephants and orders him to intoxicate the animals in order to carry out his evil plot. That night, they spent devising insults for those doomed to death.
- d. 23-35 Once again the animals are prepared, but this time the King is struck by God in such a way that he does not order the destruction of the Jews, and the king literally tells his “Friends” that the Jews are innocent. One by one his “Friends” return to their daily labour while the Jews rejoice that God has once again delivered them from destruction.

- e. 36-44 Once again the King reconvened the party made the same, the threat is made, but his guests want action. After making a solemn vow that the deed will be done and more to the Jews in Palestine, the "Friends" go away happy.

- f. 45-51 The animals are once again intoxicated and the king and his men prepare to trample the Jews. Meanwhile the Jews seeing the dust-cloud produced by the elephants begin to make what they believe is their final cry to heaven.