

What Do We Know About Hanukkah The Feast of Dedication?

1. How much do we know? Why is it celebrated? What is the story behind it? Just like Passover, the story should and needs to be told.
2. Have you ever thought about the fact that even though the Festival of Hanukkah is mentioned in the **B'rit Chadasha** or the New Covenant, it is for the most part, happily celebrated by Jewish people and ignored by Christians?
3. Yet this holiday was celebrated by Yeshua, who is our example, in Solomon's Temple. This is found in (John 10:22). **And SO**, as believers, we should be happy to celebrate this holiday which began last night and will last for eight days.
 - A. The story of Hanukkah is one of confusion or turmoil and upheaval for the nation of Israel. Yet it reminds the Jewish people or should of the attempt of the Seleucid Greco culture that wanted to wipe out the Jewish people. Against all odds their attempt failed. There is a punch line for the Jewish people during this time. "Avoid merge ring, joining our assimilation at ALL COST."
 - B. The Hanukkah story comes through the apocryphal writings of the **Ha Ma-ka-bim** or Maccabees. Okay, although the book of Maccabee's is not in the Hebrew bible, there are books written

by Jews for Jews, which are valuable and have historical sources and are totally reliable and significant.

- c. The word “**Hanukkah**” comes from the root “**kha-nak**” meaning “to narrow, to discipline or to focus upon”. In English it is “**to dedicate**” or “**train up**”. In other words, we are to “**kha-nak**” our children in the ways of ADONAI.
- D. We as a small congregation need to embrace “**Hanukkah**” as a feast to rededicate ourselves to God and our Messiah “Yeshua”.
- E. **Hanukkah** began yesterday on the evening of the 11th of December and will last for eight days. The story of Hanukkah is both blessed and tragic.
 1. It was 175 years before Yeshua would be born in Bethlehem.
 - a. Israel had a temple and authentic priests serving in the sanitary according to the Law of Moses.
 - b. The temple was built by King Nehemiah and the Priests still sacrificed animals for the sins of the people.
 - b. The last prophets had warned the people that God our Lord was fed up had no joy in their sacrifices. **SO**, because of their disobedience the Prophets fell silent of 200 years.
 2. Israel had fallen into the depth of sin forgetting just about everything connected with God, except the rituals (everything had become traditions); She or Israel was about to be overrun by enemy.

- a. The Seleucid (Se-loosid) Empire – this was a *member of a dynasty of rulers who ruled Asia Minor from 312 to 64 bc, after the death of Alexander the Great's.*
 - b. Now, Alexander the Great had 4 generals who divide the kingdom after his mysterious death in 323B.C.
 - c. An Angel foretold the exact events in --- Dan. 11:2-4 “**A mighty King will arise... but his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the 4 points of the compass**”.
3. General Seleucus סלאוקוס set up his base in Babylon and began ruthlessly extending **his** power.
- a. After 150 years of rule, his dynasty was going down hill fast. (any power vacuum always generates a bloodbath as contenders of the throne kill in order to rule).
 - b. In 175B.C. Antiochus Epiphanies, (which means God Manifested), the brother of the current King killed his nephew the heir and usurped or seized the throne.
 - c. Immediately afterwards, he murdered the High Priest of the Lord – Onias III. Now Onias III was the last direct line of priest from Aaron the brother of Moses.
 - d. Now Antiochus Epiphanies sold the office of the High Priest for money and through his fake puppet Priest ended the form of true and holy worship.
4. In 171 BC Antiochus decided to try and conquer Egypt, but clashed with the armies of the rising Roman Empire.
- a. According to Josephus a rumor spread in Jerusalem that Antiochus was killed in battle. Now the Jews were so elated and ecstatic they organized a revolt and threw out the puppet high priest.

- b. BUT, when Antiochus who was very much alive found out what had happened, he swept through Jerusalem enraged and regained the city and killed some 40,000 Jews. He forced his way into the holy of holies and destroyed the scrolls of the Holy Scriptures.
5. To the shock or disgust or horror of Jewish people – he took a pig and sacrificed it on the altar. He also cooked the pig and sprinkled the broth on all the implements, defiling the sanctuary.
- b. To go further he continued to slaughter the pigs cooked them and gave them to the Jewish Men to eat.
- c. Those who refused to eat; he would cut out their tongues, scalped them, cut off their hands and feet and burned them on the altar. This is in the 1st book of the Maccabees.
6. Continuing, Antiochus forbid Sabbath observance; the study of the bible and circumcision, ALL the laws which were given by God to the Jewish people.

I believe as others that the events about Antiochus resemble or parallel the “Last Days” and are really symbolic. I think Hanukkah commemorates or serves as a memory or foreshadowing of the coming of the Anti-Christ. This is described in Matt. 24:15 by Yeshua when He said; **“When you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, which is spoken of in Daniel, etc.”**

Daniel’s view of these events can be predicted as a double prophecy; it shows up twice in human history. The prophecy has its first fulfillment in the day of Antiochus and will have a second fulfillment in the future speaking of the Anti-Christ. If you really want to get a good look at this, read chapter 8: verses 1-25. of Daniel.

I felt this was so important that I have outline chapter 8 for you. The outline if you wish is on the back table.

GOING ON!

8. Antiochus Epiphanies was and is most certainly a symbol and forerunner of the antichrist,
 - a. The angel Gabriel described in the book of Daniel the coming abomination of a king who would do all these things.
 - b. The deeds of this ruler provided the backdrop for Yeshua the Messiah's description of another king YET TO COME –the antichrist- (Matt. 24:25) who would enter the Temple, call himself God and defile the sanctuary in the last days.
 - c. The fact is that the book of Daniel spoke clearly about Antiochus as successor of Alexander the Great's 4 generals. Critics refuse to this day to believe the text was written before the time of Alexander. **Dan 8:9-27**
 - e. Josephus describes a 3 ½ YEAR WAR. Josephus also describes the desolation of the Temple in accordance, with the prophecy of Daniel which had been made 408 years before in happened.
 - f. The Angel also told Daniel that the Holy place would be trampled for 2,300 evening & mornings.
 - g. This is probably 1500 evening and 1500 morning sacrifices which is about 3 ½ years. This is the time it took for the Maccabees to reconquer Jerusalem and rededicate the Temple in 167- 164 BC.

THE MCCABEES FIGHT FOR THEIR GOD.

1. Out of this whole crisis of the Jewish people, **WHO** risked losing knowledge of the One True God, rose a family of warriors from the priestly line of Aaron.

- a. Antiochus demanded _____ that the priest, Matityahu **אימה** offer sacrifice to Greek Gods.
 - b. Matityahu not **ONLY** refused, BUT killed with his own hands the Jew that stepped forward to do so.
 - c. Matityahu, the aged priest and his 5 sons – Jonathan, Eleazer, Johanan, Judah and Simon lead a spiritual revival, struggling against the secularization and growing paganism of their people. You find this in Daniel which says; **Dan 11:32-36** *“The people who know their God will display strength and take action... yet they will fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity, and by plunder for many days,”*
 - d. Matityahu and his sons were killed just as there were many thousands of _____ Jews. Although greatly outnumbered the Maccabee’s won battle after battle and actually freed Jews people from Syria.
2. Now, Judah (Macabee) with a whole multitude came to Jerusalem. The Temple had been destroyed – plants were growing in Temple and the gates were burned down, because of the desolation. He and those with him started to grieve or lament in their distress.
- a. He carefully purged the Temple by bringing in new vessels, the Menorah, the table of bread and the incense altar which were made of gold.
 - b. He hung up the veils for the doors and the doors themselves,
 - c. He took down the altar and built a new one.
3. THEN on the 25th day of the month Kislev – they relit the lights that were on the menorah, offered incense upon the altar, laid loaves upon the table and offered whole burn offering upon the new altar.

4. SO, Judah and his fellow citizens celebrated what became known today as the Festival of Hanukkah or The Feast of Dedication and the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days.

They;

1. Feasted and honored God.
2. Delighted themselves in psalms and praises and the playing of the harp.
3. They made it a law for future generations, that they should keep a festival celebrating the restoration of the temple for eight days.
4. Yeshua himself went to the Temple on Hanukkah, the feast of dedication . – **John 10:22.**

TALMUD

1. Now in the Talmud, it tells the story about the miraculous oil lasting 8 days and it became a legend, repeated each year until this day. It is a wonderful holiday that Israeli children love to celebrate.
 - a. Today, Hanukkah is called the “Festival of Lights” The menorah of Hanukkah is called the Hanukkah. Dee will talk about the different types of menorahs.
 - b. As the results of the Maccabee’s victory, Israel became again a semi-independent state after 400 years. Free to worship God as the bible instructed.
 - c. Jonathan of the Maccabee’s became the high priest and was killed in battle and then his brother Simon. Many Jews did not accept this or Simon because He was not in the line of David. He was murdered by his own son-in-law John Hyrcanus.

- d. Now, John Hyrcanus the 1st became high priest and a powerful king.
2. John Hyrcanus the 1st was a brave, brilliant leader and energetic leader. BUT he became
- a. Hellenist (which is an adopter of Greeks ways or loving the worldly Greek life style. The very thing his grandfather Matitياهو and family fought to banish.
 - a. 2 parties came out of his reign – the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
 - b. The Pharisees – taught the oral law of the Rabbi's – additional laws by Moses?
 - c. The Sadducees –accepted only the written law – however they began to discredit the concept of life after death.

When we do not believe in the immortality or the accepted moral principles of the soul, the heart is less motivated to keep its relationship with God. The Sadducees were wealthier, more conservative and better connected politically and prone to enjoy the Greek life style and pagan influences. **today's language would describe such a movement as backsliding.**

3. **ONE** single act or event radically affected the Jewish people. Hyrcanus the 1st extended his reign eastward and demanded the Edomites covert to Judaism forcing their sons to be circumcised.
- a. Herod became King (He was an Edomite),– and in becoming king he or Herod beheaded the last of the high priest descending from the Maccabees ending their dynasty.
 - b. He (Herod) was the one that had **NO TROUBLE SLAYING ALL** the babies in Bethlehem when Yeshua was born.

For the next 100 years all the good which had been accomplished by the Maccabees disintegrated. Family members murder and slaughtered each other. Great darkness overtook the descendents which in the beginning brought hope and light onto the people.

More often than not, children murdered and dethroned their parents.

The climates came when Aristobublus (Sadducees) & Hyrcanus II (Pharisees) fought each other and weakened their armies so bad that they were unable to resist or oppose the Roman occupation and had to succumb to them.

MEANING OF HANUKKAH – When there is a Hanukkah --- It is Cleansing and Dedication --- of the Temple of God in the hearts, all of those chosen to be followers of YESHUA, then and ONLY then **TRUE KING OF THE JEWS WHO WILL REIGN OVER ALL THE EARTH!**