

Chanukah Notes 2015

The chronicles of Chanukah are found in the Apocrypha, specifically in 1st and 2nd Maccabees. When we look for the miracle of the oil in these pages, that miracle isn't there. The legend of the oil lasting for 8 days doesn't show up in any writing until the 2nd century CE in the rabbinic writings. What we do learn from the Maccabees is there were many miracles leading up to and beyond Chanukah or the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

1st Maccabees 2; 1 – 27 tells us of the beginning of the revolt and how 1 man and his family did not abandon the Creator. Mattathais (Greek) or Matsisyahoo (Hebrew) not only refused to be “the first to be like ever one else” he killed the first Jewish man who was willing to sacrifice to a pagan god and then killed the Greek officer who was forcing a strange religion onto the Hebrew people.

2nd Maccabees 10; 1 – 9 reveals that the 8 day celebration was a mirror image of the Sukkot festival (feast of Tabernacles) and was celebrated with all of the trapping of that feast except for living in Sukkot for 8 days.

To gain more understanding we can look to Josephus, the first century historian who many will refer to instead of the Bible. (Even though his history mirrors Scripture) In the Antiquity of the Jews book 7 section 323 he details the Chanukah festival and in section 319 he gives a reason for it to be called lights. They did light the Menorah in the Temple along with the fires on the alters.

There are many lessons and many miracles surrounding Chanukah, the faithful few defeating overwhelming odds and many others. For Christians to ignore Chanukah would be to deny the history of the Christian religion. Without God using the Maccabees to defeat the Greeks there would have been no Jerusalem as Yeshua (Jesus) knew it, there would have been no temple for him to teach in and there would not have been a culture that even remembered God had promised a Messiah. Christians and Jews are all indebted to the Maccabees for standing with God and leading the Hebrew people to defeat the Greek army, without them where would we be today?