

Hanukkah



“The Feast of Dedication”

An Overview...

Hanukkah is:

- An eight day festival that begins on the 25th day of the month designated on today's Hebrew calendar as "Kislev". This usually corresponds with November/December on the Gregorian calendar.
- A festival that commemorates an important Jewish victory over tyranny.
- Called the "Feast of Dedication" as those who drove out the Greeks cleansed, purified, and rededicated the holy Temple in Jerusalem.
- Mentioned in the Gospel of John as Yeshua was in the Temple courts in Jerusalem (John 10:22-39).

An Overview...

Hanukkah is not:

- ❑ A biblical festival or “appointed time” such as Pesach, Shavuot, etc.
- ❑ A Jewish equivalent to Christmas. In fact, we will see that Hanukkah is the direct opposite of Christmas as it pertains to the battle that rages for the hearts and minds of God’s people against the culture of this world.



The Hanukkah Story

- There sprang from these a sinful offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus, once a hostage at Rome. He became king in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks. In those days there appeared in Israel transgressors of the law who seduced many, saying: "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles all around us; since we separated from them, many evils have come upon us." The proposal was agreeable; some from among the people promptly went to the king, and he authorized them to introduce the ordinances of the Gentiles. Thereupon they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the Gentile custom. They disguised their circumcision and abandoned the holy covenant; they allied themselves with the Gentiles and sold themselves to wrongdoing. (1 Maccabees 1:10-15)

The Hanukkah Story

- ❑ *Antiochus was a king that rose up within the Seleucid Dynasty, one of the four that replaced Alexander the Great upon his death (Daniel 8:5-14, 11:21).*
- ❑ *During this time, Israel found itself buffeted between these competing empires that sought to use her as a natural land bridge between Africa and Europe/Asia, particularly the Seleucids and the Ptolmies.*
- ❑ *Israel was also fighting a culture war as Alexander's conquests had introduced Greek language, thought, custom, and philosophy*

The Hanukkah Story

- After Antiochus had defeated Egypt in the one hundred and forty-third year, he returned and went up against Israel and against Jerusalem with a strong force. He insolently entered the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, the lampstand for the light with all its utensils, the offering table, the cups and bowls, the golden censers, and the curtain. The cornices and the golden ornament on the facade of the temple—he stripped it all off. And he took away the silver and gold and the precious vessels; he also took all the hidden treasures he could find. Taking all this, he went back to his own country. He shed much blood and spoke with great arrogance. And there was great mourning throughout all Israel. (1 Maccabees 1:20-25)

The Hanukkah Story

❑ *After conquest in Egypt, Antiochus returned to Jerusalem and sacked the Holy Temple. Two years later he would later go back toward Egypt but would be stopped by an agent of Rome. When he returned to Jerusalem things went from bad to worse.*

❑ *Daniel 11:29-30*

The Hanukkah Story

- Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and abandon their particular customs. All the Gentiles conformed to the command of the king, and many Israelites delighted in his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath. The king sent letters by messenger to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, ordering them to follow customs foreign to their land; to prohibit burnt offerings, sacrifices, and libations in the sanctuary, to profane the Sabbaths and feast days, to desecrate the sanctuary and the sacred ministers, to build pagan altars and temples and shrines, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, to leave their sons uncircumcised, and to defile themselves with every kind of impurity and abomination; so that they might forget the law and change all its ordinances. Whoever refused to act according to the command of the king was to be put to death. In words such as these he wrote to his whole kingdom. He appointed inspectors over all the people, and he ordered the cities of Judah to offer sacrifices, each city in turn. Many of the people, those who abandoned the law, joined them and committed evil in the land. They drove Israel into hiding, wherever places of refuge could be found. (1 Maccabees 1:41-53)

The Hanukkah Story

- On the fifteenth day of the month Kislev, in the year one hundred and forty-five, the king erected the desolating abomination upon the altar of burnt offerings, and in the surrounding cities of Judah they built pagan altars. They also burned incense at the doors of houses and in the streets. Any scrolls of the law that they found they tore up and burned. Whoever was found with a scroll of the covenant, and whoever observed the law, was condemned to death by royal decree. So they used their power against Israel, against those who were caught, each month, in the cities. On the twenty-fifth day of each month they sacrificed on the pagan altar that was over the altar of burnt offerings. In keeping with the decree, they put to death women who had their children circumcised, and they hung their babies from their necks; their families also and those who had circumcised them were killed. But many in Israel were determined and resolved in their hearts not to eat anything unclean; they preferred to die rather than to be defiled with food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die.

(1 Maccabees 1:54-63)

The Hanukkah Story

- “Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. *(Daniel 11:31)*

☐ *Just at the darkest hour...*

The Hanukkah Story

- “In those days Mattathias, son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, left Jerusalem and settled in Modein...When he saw the sacrileges that were being committed in Judah and in Jerusalem, he said: “Woe is me! Why was I born to see the ruin of my people, the ruin of the holy city—To dwell there as it was given into the hands of enemies, the sanctuary into the hands of strangers?” (1 Maccabees 2:1, 6-7)

The Hanukkah Story

- When soldiers of the king came to his village to enforce the apostasy, Matthias refused, killed an idolator, and a soldier.
- Then Mattathias cried out in the city, “Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow me!” Then he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind in the city all their possessions. (1 Maccabees 2:27-28)
- “By smooth *words* he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action”. (Daniel 11:32)

The Hanukkah Story

- ❑ The Maccabees (Hammers) were joined in the mountains by others to take up a fight against overwhelming odds, but they did not fear or give up even though many died including Matthias.
- When he reached the ascent of Beth-Horon, Judas went out to meet him with a few men. But when they saw the army coming against them, they said to Judas: “How can we, few as we are, fight such a strong host as this? Besides, we are weak since we have not eaten today.” But Judas said: “Many are easily hemmed in by a few; in the sight of Heaven there is no difference between deliverance by many or by few for victory in war does not depend upon the size of the army, but on strength that comes from Heaven. With great presumption and lawlessness they come against us to destroy us and our wives and children and to despoil us; but we are fighting for our lives and our laws. He will crush them before us; so do not fear them.” (1 Maccabees 3:16-22)

The Hanukkah Story

- “Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for *many* days.” (Daniel 11:33)
- In a stunning victory, The Lord overthrew a massive army before a small band of rebels. This was clearly a miracle from heaven!

The Hanukkah Story

- Upon returning to Jerusalem, the Maccabees were dismayed to see the condition of the Temple and set about to cleanse it so that it could be re-dedicated.
- “They rose early on the morning of the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, that is, the month of Kislev, in the year one hundred and forty-eight, and offered sacrifice according to the law on the new altar for burnt offerings that they had made. On the anniversary of the day on which the Gentiles had desecrated it, on that very day it was rededicated with songs, harps, lyres, and cymbals. All the people prostrated themselves and adored and praised Heaven, who had given them success.” (1 Maccabees 4:52-55)

Hanukkah Legends

- Oil
- Dreidels
- Eight nights of gifts
- There is nothing wrong with these legends, however it is clear that the purpose for celebrating the feast is to celebrate the miraculous works of God and the rededication of the Temple. The eight day feast is even meant to correspond to the eight day feast of Sukkot when Solomon consecrated and dedicated the Temple in 1 Chronicles.

Why Celebrate Hanukkah?

- Let's ask everyone to share thoughts that they have as to why they feel it is appropriate to celebrate Hanukkah today!



Why Celebrate Hanukkah?

- Yeshua celebrated Hanukkah as mentioned in John 10:22-39. This is interesting given His line of descent.
- Hanukkah is a story of religious persecution and standing firm in our faith.
- Hanukkah is a festival the light of the world.
- Yeshua probably spoke about Hanukkah in Mark 13:13-16 and Matthew 24:15-18
- Hanukkah foreshadows end times and the antichrist.
- We can celebrate the re-dedication of God's Temple during Hanukkah
- We can be reminded to stand up to a dominate world and Christian culture that puts the traditions of man above the commands of God.