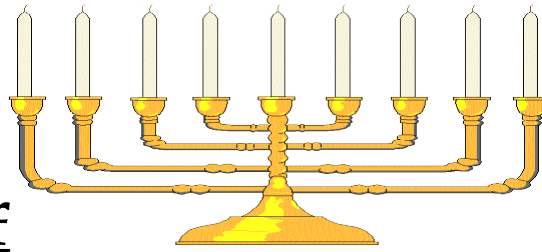


# The Story of



# Chanukah

## Introduction:

### HANUKAH

Hanukah (dedication), commemorates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C. by the Maccabees exactly 3 years after it was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes (**Dan 8:13-14**).

### FEAST OF LIGHTS

An 8-Candle Menorah is lit, one candle each night for 8 nights to recall the Maccabees cruse of oil that miraculously outlasted its supply.

Yeshua observed this feast as is evidenced in **John 10:22**.

Chanukah, the Festival of Dedication or Lights, is celebrated for eight days, commencing on the 25th day of the month of Kislev (December), to commemorate the rededication of the temple for the service of God and the victory over the Syrians and the Hellenist in 165 BCE.

In 334 B.C.E., Alexander the Great conquered Judea and brought to it Greek culture. He didn't force anyone to participate in that culture, but he lowered the taxes for any group willing to accept this way of life. When Alexander died, his empire was divided in four, the Middle Eastern part of the empire was divided into two groups: the eastern kingdom (including modern-day Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon) was called the Seleucid kingdom; the western kingdom (including Egypt) was the Ptolemaic kingdom. These two groups fought one another for political control, and Judea was caught between them.

The Jews of Judea didn't care which group ruled them. They had the Temple, the sacrifices, and the High Priest, who governed the country. It didn't matter to whom they had to pay vassal taxes; the taxes were always too high.

The major political centre of Greek life was the polis, the city, and many of the wealthier Jews succeeded in having Jerusalem recognized as a polis. They changed their dress, their names, and their life-style to those of the Greeks, including customs and religion. The Hellenised Jews took on a Greek worldview. Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> book of Maccabees this conflict grows, there is evidence of a distinction between Judean and Hellenised Jews within the New Testament.

In 169 B.C.E. the Seleucid King Antiochus IV attacked the Ptolemies. He lost. Word got back to Jerusalem that Antiochus was dead. A former High Priest, Jason, saw this as an opportunity to wrench the priesthood from Antiochus's lackey, Menelaus. He set up a revolution in Jerusalem.

Antiochus, of course, was still alive. Furious, he slaughtered a large number of Jews.

Moreover, the King sent agents with written orders to Jerusalem and the towns of

Judea. Ways and customs foreign to the country were to be introduced. Burnt - offerings, sacrifices, and libations in the Temple were forbidden; Sabbaths and feast-days were to be profaned. Altars, idols, and sacred precincts were to be established; swine and other unclean beasts to be offered in sacrifice. They must leave their sons uncircumcised; they must make themselves in every way abominable, unclean, and profane, and so forget the law and change all their statutes. The penalty for disobedience was death. (I Maccabees 1:44-50)

However Antiochus was supported by a significant number of Jews called the Hellenist. The prohibitions established by King Antiochus were intolerable to an other group of Jews called the Chasidim 'faithful' (not related to the modern-day Chasidim). They fought against these decrees, but they needed leadership. They found this leadership in a priestly family, the Hasmoneans.

The Maccabees, sons of the Priestly Hasmonean family which led the Jews in their revolt against the Syrian overlords, entered the Holy Temple in Jerusalem defiled by the Syrian invaders, cleansed it and dedicated it anew to the service of God. Then, in memory of their victory, the Maccabees celebrated the first Chanukah. (Chanukah is the Hebrew word for dedication.)

### **Who were the Hasmoneans?**

The head of the Hasmonean clan was Mattathias. We don't know much about him personally. The First Book of Maccabees reveals that he was a priest who moved from Jerusalem some 40 KM North [or about thirty miles] to Modi'in. Therefore, he probably was not part of the big power priesthood, who had already corrupted the priesthood by this time (as the priesthood was sold to the highest bidder).

When a Seleucid officer ordered Mattathias to participate in a foreign sacrifice (read swine) in Modi'in, he refused and even slew the Hellenistic Jew who came forward to obey the command (and appease the officer). After slaying a Greek officer as well, Mattathias & Sons with his followers fled to the hills, and thus began the Hasmonean revolt. He successfully united the people under his authority. Judah, called Maccabee, 'the Mallet or Hammer', was one of Mattathias's five sons. There is a tradition stating that Judah inscribed on his shield the Hebrew letters **מכבי** 'mem - kaf - beit - yod', which are possibly the first letters of the words, **Malchuto Cohanim Beit Yisrael** meaning **Kingdom of Priest of the House of Israel**. But there are other possibilities like, **Mi Chamocha B'elim Yah** - Who is compared to You among the mighty (gods), oh Lord (Exodus 15:11). The letters by themselves form the word Maccabee.

Antiochus sent down an army to wipe out the revolt. Judah and his revolutionaries defeated that army in the mountains surrounding Jerusalem by using guerrilla tactics. Antiochus sent another, larger army under the famous general Nicanor, but Judah and the revolutionaries defeated his army as well and entered Jerusalem.

## Cleaning and Rededication of the Temple:

After defeating Antiochus's army, the Jews systematically cleaned the defiled Temple in Jerusalem; it apparently took almost a year. Judah declared a great holiday to celebrate the fact that the Temple was again in Jewish hands. In order to make this dedication a big event, the Hasmoneans declared that the ceremony should serve as a reminder of Sukkot, which lasts eight days.

The Books of Maccabees describes Chanukah as the time when the Maccabees celebrated the Feast of Sukkot. They were not able to celebrate the Levitical Holy Day at the proper time, for they were fighting Antiochus IV for control of Jerusalem. And so when they finally secured the Temple and purged it, they rededicated the "Tabernacle of God," and celebrated Sukkot (Tabernacles) on the 25th of Kislev. Chanukah was and is seen as a "Feast of Lights" because Sukkot was also viewed in this manner.

As I mentioned on Sukkot, very large menorahs would be lit all over Jerusalem, and the glow of the city could be seen for miles around. This light was representative of the Shechina Glory of God and the presence of the Holy One in the midst of Israel. The Mishnah Sukkah 5:4, and the Talmud Bavli Sukkah 51a-b state that; *"There were there golden candlesticks with four golden bowls on the top of each of them and four ladders to each and four youths drawn from the priestly stock in whose hands were held jars of oil containing 120 log [168 liters]. From the worn-out drawers and girdles of the priests they made wicks and with them they kindled the lamps. **And there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the place of the water drawing.**"*

Back to history, neither the Seleucids (the Greek power in Damascus) nor many Jews accepted the Hasmonean family as the governing priesthood. As a matter of fact, civil war continued in Judea for twenty years after the first Chanukah. Judah's family was finally victorious. Simeon, Judah's brother, was made High Priest, and Chanukah became a yearly celebration of the Hasmonean victory. The Hasmonean family ruled for a hundred years. During that time, there was a great deal of tension between the Hasmoneans and the sages. As a result, the sages were not particularly interested in maintaining a holiday that commemorated the dedication declared by the Hasmonean family. We find evidence of this power struggle in the traditional legend concerning the eight days of Chanukah.

When the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the containers of oil, and when the Hasmonean family and their followers prevailed, defeating the Greeks, they searched and found only one container still sealed with the seal of the High Priest. It held enough oil for only one day, but a miracle occurred, and the oil burned for eight days. The next year they declared the eight days of the miracle to be a holiday for praise and thanksgiving.

The miracle is only recorded in the Talmud, Shabbat 21b, and it is this miracle that is commemorated by the kindling of the Chanukah lights.

## What does the word Chanukah mean?

The word "Chanukah" means dedication, and refers to the actual rededication of the temple on 25 Kislev 165 BC after the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes IV had desecrated it. Antiochus attempted to force his own Greek culture and pagan religion on the people of Judea, going as far as to erect an altar of Zeus in the Holy Temple, and even sacrificing a pig on the altar. Of course, the Jewish people were outraged, and staged a successful rebellion led by Judah



Maccabee.

### **Chanukah and the Bible:**

Chanukah is not mentioned in the Jewish Bible, as it commemorates an event which took place during the time between the closing of the Tanach (Older Testament) and the writing of the New Covenant Scriptures. However the Prophet Daniel does refer to it.

#### **1. Chanukah and the Prophet Daniel:**

Although Chanukah is not recorded in the Jewish Bible as history, the prophet Daniel foretold the principal historic events. In the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, the Prophet relates a dream he had in the year 551 BC, in the days of Belshazzar king of Babylon. He said he saw a shaggy goat with a conspicuous horn rising up out of the West and flying across the earth to fight with a ram that had figured earlier in the dream. The goat won this battle and "became very great" but the large horn was broken off at the height of his power, and replaced by four smaller horns. Out of one of these horns came another horn, which grew and advanced toward "the Beautiful Land" (i.e., the Land of Israel).

"It vaunted itself against the very chief of the host [army]; on its account the regular offering was suspended, and His holy place was abandoned" "How long will the regular offering be forsaken because of the transgression? . . . For twenty three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." -- Daniel 8: 9-14

In verse 20, the angel Gabriel explains that the ram was the Medo-Persian Empire, and the shaggy goat was the king of Greece, and the large horn the first King. The four horns were the four lesser kings who would succeed him. The angel does not provide the names of these kings, who had not yet been born when all of this was written, yet it is easy to see in hindsight that the "First King" of Greece refers to Alexander the Great, who conquered the known world of his day, overthrowing the Medo-Persian empire (the Ram). History tells us that Alexander died young ("was broken off at the height of his power") and his kingdom was divided into four separate Kingdoms, for our study we will focus on the two of the middle east only, the Seleucid Kingdoms was the Kingdom of Syria, out of which Antiochus Epiphanes arose and advanced against "the beautiful land" and vaunted himself against God, causing the sacrifice to be forsaken. Three years later (2,300 evening and morning sacrifices later), the sanctuary was cleansed and rededicated -- the first Chanukah.

Antiochus added the title of Epiphanies to his name because it meant, "god made manifest." But a lot of people called him Epimanyes meaning "mad man". He was not God's gift to the Jewish people.

[Note: while some verses of chapter 8 relate to a future time as is indicated by the prophet Daniel in verse 26, but also later by Yeshua when he said "So when you see standing in the holy place `the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel let the reader understand) Mathew 24:15 other verses seem to fit this time].

#### **2. Chanukah in the New Covenant:**

By the time of Yeshua, Chanukah had become a recognised Jewish holiday, it is mentioned in the Gospel of John:

##### **[John 10:22-39]**

Now is was the feast of Feast of Dedication<sup>#1</sup> in Jerusalem<sup>#2</sup>, and it was winter<sup>#3</sup>, and Yeshua was walking in the temple, in Solomon's Colonnade<sup>#4</sup>. The

##### **Notes:**

1. The Feast of Dedication or the Festival of lights is Chanukah.

Judeans<sup>#5</sup> gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Yeshua answered, "I told you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all<sup>#6</sup>; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Again the Judeans picked up stones<sup>#7</sup> to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Judeans, "but for blasphemy<sup>#8</sup>, because you, being a man, claim to be God." Yeshua answered them, "Is it not written in your Torah, 'I have said you are gods'<sup>#9</sup>? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came - and the Scripture cannot be broken - what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am the son of God?'<sup>#10</sup> Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.



2. This feast has more of a importance here in Jerusalem than anywhere else in Israel or the Diaspora.
3. The word for "Winter" can mean "wintery" indication that is was a wintery cold day, since Chanukah always falls in winter this seems a possible explanation.
4. John is stating where in the Temple for it seems that the Sanhedrin had a meeting place (Judgement hall) in Solomon's Colonnade.
5. Most Bibles just use Jews here but in context that would make The Jews here, the Judean Jewish Leadership. Keep in mind that this happened after the National rejection mentioned in Matthew 12. And so the Leadership of Israel does not want to acknowledge whether he is the messiah, but how they can do away with Yeshua.
6. "all" Many early manuscripts
7. Where did these stone come from and why were they on the Temple compound?? A POSSIBLE explanation is 1 Macc4:44-46 "And when they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; they thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it; wherefore they pulled it down, and laid the stones in the mountain of the Temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to show what should be done with them."
8. "but for blasphemy" these stone were defiled by unclean strange sacrifice and

"you" proclaimed strange doctrine. This might have been the argument.

9. "gods" based on Psalm 82:6. Yeshua's answer is typical of the first century, I'll give you the truth in parable, but you rejected that, very well lets do it this way. (John 7:15-24, Mark 12:35-37), Psalm 82 refers to the Judges, who were to dispense divine justice [Justice on God's behave].
10. Although Israel is God's corporate son, it was / is considered blasphemy to claim individual sonship.

### **Chanukah lights:**

The most important observance associated with Chanukah is the kindling of the Chanukah lights on the Menorah or Chanukiyah, a nine branch candelabrum. On each night one more light is kindled, beginning with one candle on the first night of Chanukah and ending with eight on the final evening. [this is based on the discussion between various Rabbis' see Shabbat 21a] The lighting is accompanied by the chanting of appropriate blessings and the singing of songs. The ninth branch is reserved for the Shamash, the *servant* light, which is lit first and used to kindle the other lights of the Menorah.

### **Messianic Chanukah Blessing:**

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,  
who has sanctified us in Yeshua, in whose name we light the Chanukah lights.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
asher kidushanu b'Yeshua, asher bismo  
madlikim  
anachnu ner shell chanukah.

ברוך אתה » אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו  
בישוע אשר בשמו מדליקים אנחנו נר של חנכה

### **Torah Reading in the Synagogue:**

Torah portion is Genesis 37:40. This is the story of Joseph and it is rather fitting considering that one of the names of the Messiah is 'the son of Joseph'. The lives of the Messiah and Joseph's have many parallels both are servants (Shammash) raised to rule.

The Haftarah: is Amos 2: 6 - 3: 8. This text is about the Judgment of God "This is what the L-rd God says", the connection is seen in that judgment is poured out on Israel when she is unfaithful, but the story of the Maccabee's teaches us that with faith and action much can be achieved. Yet we still rely on God to do His part (miracle) while we do ours.

### **Rabbinical texts:**

In Pesquita Rabbati, we learn that the Messianic Era was associated with the Feast of Chanukah, when the children of Israel would bask in the light of Messiah and rededicate themselves to the Lord. The Light from the Menorahs set on the hill of Jerusalem could be seen from miles

around, and it beckoned God's people to return to His holy place. This light was representative of the Light of Messiah who would lead us back to God. John speaks to us of the significance of Chanukah as the Feast of Light when he says in verse 1:4, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men... And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." Yeshua spoke of Himself in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world: He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life".

These statements had great significance to the Jewish people at the time of Yeshua and to us as well. They not only fulfill the prophecies of Tanach, but the interpretation of those Scriptures by the sages as well. One particularly significant prophecy found in Isaiah 60:1-2 states, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but upon you the Lord will arise, and His Glory shall be seen".

### **Chanukah Game:**

**Dreidel, or S'vivon.** A spinning top with four letters Nes (miracle), Gadol (great), Haya (happened) and Sham (there, meaning in Israel) therefore the Israeli dreidels replace the Shin [there] for a Pe [here] (see dreidel's). You play with two or more people, spinning the dreidel, when the dreidel lands on

- נ NUN - do **nothing**,
- ג GIMEL - you **get** all the money,
- ה HEH - you take **half** the money,
- ש SHIN - you put in a **Shekel** or whatever you are playing with.



Every Hebrew letter is also a number and the numbers add up remarkably

Nun = 50, Gimmel = 3, Hey = 5, Shin = 300 which equals **358**, this is equivalent to the exact numerical value for the word **Messiah**, Mem = 40, Shin = 300, Yud = 10, Chet = 8 which equals **358**.



### **Chanukah Songs:**

#### **I have a little Dreidel.**

I have a little dreidel, I made it out of clay.

And when it's dry and ready, then dreidel I will play.

#### **Chorus.**

It has a lovely body, with a leg so short and thin,

And when it is all tired, it drops and then I win.

#### **Chorus.**

My dreidel is always playful; it loves to dance and spin.

A happy game of dreidel; come play, now let's begin.

#### **Chorus:**

Oh, dreidel, dreidel, dreidel,

I made you out of clay

And when you're dry and ready,

then dreidel I shall play.

### **Rock of Ages - Maoz Tzur.**

מֵעוֹז צוֹר יְשׁוּעָתִי. לָךְ נֶאֱחָה לְשִׁבְחִי.  
תִּכְוֶן בַּיִת תְּפִלָּתִי וְשֵׁם תוֹדָה נִזְבַּח.  
לְעֵת תִּכְוֶן מִטְבַּח מִצֵּר הַמִּנְבַּח.  
אֲזִי אֶגְמֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר. חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

וְנָנִים נִקְבְּצוּ עָלַי אֲזִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׂמָנִים.  
וּפְצוּ חוֹמוֹת מִגְדְּלֵי וְטִמְאוּ כָל הַשְּׂמָנִים.  
וּמְנוֹתַי קִנְקְנִים נִעְשָׂה גַם לְשׁוֹשְׁנִים.  
בְּנֵי בֵינָה יָמֵי שְׂמָנָה קִבְּעוּ שִׁיר וְהַנְּנִים.

Rock of Ages let our song,  
Praise Your saving power  
You, amid the raging foes  
Were our sheltering tower.  
Furious they assailed us,  
but Your arm availed us

And Your word broke their sword,  
when our own strength failed us.  
(2x)

#### **A more literal translation**

O mighty Rock of my salvation,  
to praise You is a delight.  
Restore my House of Prayer  
And there we shall bring a thanksgiving offering.  
When you will have prepared the slaughter  
For the blaspheming foe,  
Then I shall complete with a song of hymn  
The dedication of the Altar.

Kindling new the holy  
lamps,  
Priests approved in  
suffering,  
Purified the nation's  
shrines,  
Brought to God their  
offering.

And God's courts  
surrounding,  
hear, in joy abounding,

Happy throngs, singing  
songs,  
with a mighty sounding.  
(2x)

Children of the  
Maccabees,  
Whether free or fettered,

Wake the echoes of the  
songs,  
Where you may be  
scattered.

Yours the message  
cheering,  
that the time is nearing,

Which will see all people  
free,  
tyrants disappearing.  
(2x)

#### **Transliteration**

Ma'oz tzur yeshuati  
Lecha na'eh leshabe'ach  
Tikon beit tefilati  
V'sham todah nezabe'ach  
Le'eit tachin matbe'ach  
Mitzar hamnabe'ach  
Az egmor b'shir mizmor  
Chanukat hamizbe'ach

## Chanukah Oh Chanukah

Chanukah Oh Chanukah,

Come light the menorah.

Lets have a party, we all dance the Horah.

Gather round the table we'll give you a treat.

A dreidel to play with and latke's to eat.

And while were playing the candels burn bright, remind us of days long ago.

And while were playing the candels burn bright, remind us of days long ago.



## Food: Chanukah Latkes.

### **Ingredients Needed:**

4 large baking potato's

1 medium large onion

1 cup matzo meal

2 eggs

Garlic powder, salt, pepper to taste

### **How to Prepare:**

- Grate the potatoes and onion.
- Drain off excess water - this is important if you want them to have any consistency later.
- Blend in the eggs.
- Thoroughly mix in the matzo meal (don't even think of using flour!)
- Add garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste. The latkes will be on the salty side already, so use spices in moderation.
- Heat up just enough oil to cover the bottom of a deep frying pan until it begins to sizzle.
- Wet your hands lightly and mould a large spoonful of the latke mixture into a pancake.
- Drop each pancake into the oil. When the edges turn light brown and crispy, flip and cook the other side. (For a low-fat latke, you can bake each pancake for 15 minutes on each side on a non stick cookie sheet at 425<sup>0</sup>deg F / 220<sup>0</sup>deg C.)
- Drain on paper towels.
- Serve them nice and hot with applesauce and/or sour cream.

### **Resources:**

#### **Babylonian: Talmud**

- [Talmud](#)
- [Shabbat, 21a](#)
- [Shabbat, 21b](#)
- [Shabbat 24a](#)
- [Sukkah 46a](#)
- [Mas. Sotah 41a](#)
- [Mas. Rosh HaShana 18a](#)
- [Mas. Baba Kama 62b](#)
- [Gemara](#)

#### **Book of Maccabees:**

Old Testament Apokryphs not inspired!

- [I Maccabees 1:44-50](#)
- [I Maccabees 2:15-28](#)
- [I Maccabees 4:36-59:](#)
- [II Maccabees 10:1-8](#)
- **Josephus's [Antiquities](#)**  
Books 12 and 13,  
[\[For the institution of](#)

- **The life of Jesus the Messiah**

Dr Arnold G.

Fruchtenbaum

[tape series from [Ariel Ministries](#)].

- **The Hanukkah anthology**  
Philip Goodman.  
[Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976].

- **Pesquita Rabbati:**

[A Rabbinic discourses for feasts, fasts, and special shabats].

[Chanukah see 12, 7, 7](#)].

- **The times and life of Jesus the Messiah**  
Dr. Alfred Edersheim.

## **II Maccabees 10:1-8** (not inspired!)

Maccabaeus with his men, led by the Lord, recovered the Temple and city of Jerusalem. He demolished the altars erected by the heathen in the public square, and their sacred precincts as well. When they had purified the sanctuary, they consecrated another altar; then striking fire from flints, they offered a sacrifice for the first time for two whole years, and restored the incense, the lights, and the Bread of the Presence. This done, they prostrated themselves and prayed the Lord not to let them fall any more into such disasters, but, should they ever happen to sin, to discipline them Himself with clemency and not hand them over to blasphemous and barbarous Gentiles. The sanctuary was purified on the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the same day of the same month as that on which foreigners had profaned it. The joyful celebration lasted for eight days; it was like the Feast of Huts (Succoth), for they recalled how, only a short time before, they had kept that feast while they were living like wild animals in the mountains and caves; and so they carried garlanded wands and branches with their fruits, as well as palm fronds, and they chanted hymns to the One who had so triumphantly achieved the purification of His own Temple. A measure was passed by the public assembly to the effect that the entire Jewish race should keep these days every year.

