

Chanukah



BY DON ESPOSITO

Chanukah is the Jewish nationalistic day called the feast of lights due to Jews lighting a nine stick candelabra, one each day during the time of their feast. The feast originated with the brave gorilla war fought by Matthias Maccabeus and his 5 sons, Judas, Jonathan, John, Eleazar, and Simon with a band of Jewish nationalists against the oppression by the Syrian army at the time.

Today one can hardly recognize the true heroism fought at that time with all the modern traditions of jelly donuts, latkes (potato pies), and spinning the Dreidel (a top spinning game) all mixed with the evolved tradition of gift giving to try to duplicate the Christian Christmas season.

It is sad that so much tradition and even paganism has been mixed with this commemoration of a very special occurrence in the history of Israel. When Antiochus Epiphanes the Syrian king tried to wipe out the then Jewish nation starting in 171 BC, the Maccabeus under the father priest Mathias fought a gallant and brave campaign against a much stronger opponent in the Syrian army.

After Mathias Maccabeus died his son Judas (also a priest) took over the helm of the revolt. Judah was the third son of Mathias the Hasmonean, a Jewish priest from the village of Modiin. In 167 BCE Mattathias, together with his sons Judah, Eleazar, Simon, John, and Jonathan, started a revolt against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who since 175 BCE had issued decrees that forbade Jewish religious practices. After Mattathias's death in 166 BCE,

Judah assumed leadership of the revolt in accordance with the deathbed request of his father. The First Book of Maccabees praises Judah's bravery and military talent, suggesting that those qualities made Judah a natural choice for the new commander.

In the early days of the rebellion, Judah received a surname Maccabee. Several explanations have been put forward for this surname. One suggestion is that the name derives from the Aramaic *maqqaba* ("makebet" in modern Hebrew), "hammer" or "sledgehammer" in recognition of his fierceness in battle. It is also possible that the name Maccabee is an acronym for the Torah verse *Mi kamokha ba'elim Adonai*, "Who among the gods is like you, O Adonai?", his battle-cry to motivate troops. (Exodus 15:11). Some scholars maintain that the name is a shortened form of the Hebrew *maqqab-ya ḥû* (from *na ḥqab*, "to mark, to designate"), meaning "the one designated by Yahweh".

Much of the modern traditions of Chanukah come from the legend that there was 9 days in rededicating Yahweh's sanctuary and only one day supply of oil and yet the oil never ran out for 9 days. This is simply a legend and never written in 1st or 2^d Maccabees; the very books that tell the whole history of the revolt and what proceeded afterward and was most likely added to the story much later as an urban legend and certainly not a true story that ever really happened .

Lost in the modern traditions of today is the fact that the main point of Chanukah was not in dreidals and urban legends but in the rededication of the very sanctuary of Yahweh, and was even prophesied to happen this way in scripture. The very word Chanukah in Hebrew means '*rededicated*'.

The book of Daniel is primarily a prophetic book that is for the end time (Dan 8:17, 12:9, 13). However, the historical events outlined in the book of Daniel are also a historical setting dating from Babylon, to Persia, to Greece and then Rome. It is also prophesied by Daniel in this setting that the sanctuary of Yahweh would be defiled for 2300 mornings and evenings or 1150 days.

Dan 8:12 And a massive army was given him against the continual sacrifice (Heb 10:14) because of sin. And it threw the truth down to the ground, and it worked and pushed forward.

Dan 8:13 Then I heard a certain holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that one who spoke, Until when is the vision, the continual sacrifice and the devastating rebellious revolt, to give both the sanctuary and the massive crowd to be trampled?

Dan 8:14 And he said to me, **For two thousand, three hundred evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary will be put right.**

There were two daily sacrifices one in the morning and one in the evening each day, so for 1150 days there would not be 2300 of these morning and evening sacrifices as the altar of Yahweh would be defiled.

Interesting enough, when Antiochus Epiphanies defiled the altar of Yahweh by burning a pig on the altar until the day that the Maccabeus retook the sanctuary of Yahweh and rededicated the altar was exactly 1150 days in between, precisely as the book of Daniel predicted, and in turn where the name Chanukah (rededication) came from.

Hanukah is not one of the 7 pre-ordained feasts of Yahweh and is not commanded nowhere in scripture. Hanukkah is meant to reflect on the re-dedication of the sanctuary after it was retaken by the Maccabeus and had been cleansed by the Priesthood. The story of the oil lasting 9 days is not fact, but is actually another tradition of men.

Which brings another more dangerous tradition that is also associated with Chanukah, much more dangerous than jelly donuts, and that is that due to the fabricated urban legend of the olive oil burning for 9 days when there was only one day of oil provided, the Jewish tradition also started making a 9 branch menorah trying to mimic and duplicate the true 7 branch menorah from the sanctuary of Yahweh.

Yahweh was very distinct that no one was to try to mimic any of the set apart holy things of the sanctuary, even including the priest's garments and the incense for burning and the anointing oil that was used. This would certainly include making and reproducing any of the sanctuary furnishes such as the table of showbread and the Menorah, as these were holy and set apart to Yahweh. By making a 9 branch Menorah it certainly violated the principle outlined here.

So how should believers today look at Chanukah? I can tell you from one living here in the land of Israel I am very grieved that memorials such as Chanukah and Purim have become nothing more than worldly holidays and I don't believe any true believer should partake in such worldly antics. On Purim people here in Israel get drunk by command of the Rabbis and also children dress up in all kinds of costumes just like European carnival or American Halloween.

To be honest Chanukah is more of a time of reflection than a time for celebrating, as what is there to celebrate in the Chanukah story as we see that the rededication of the sanctuary of Yahweh did not lead to righteousness, but to the false pharisaical rule that Yahshua Messiah came to rebuke and replace. I do believe that this is a good time of year to reflect on the true meaning of the Chanukah story, which is to see the consequences of sin and to rededicate our lives as Holy vessels to Yahweh in His service and to look forward to the rededicating of the real third sanctuary that Messiah will build when He returns.

Zec 6:12 And speak to him, saying, So says YAHWEH of Hosts, saying, Behold! The Man whose name is THE BRANCH! **And He shall spring up out of His place, and He shall build the sanctuary of YAHWEH.**

Zec 6:13 Even He shall build the sanctuary of YAHWEH; and He shall bear the majesty, and shall sit and rule on His throne. And He shall be a priest on His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between the two of them (King & Priest).

In addition, with the Key of David being revealed this very year what a time to reflect on the true meaning of Chanukah, and to leave the jelly donuts, dreidals, and urban legends to others. May we make this coming year a real turning point in the spiritual sanctuary that Yahshua is creating through His very body, the congregation.

Joh 2:17 And His disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Your house has consumed Me." (Psa. 69:9)

Joh 2:18 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?

Joh 2:19 **Yahshua said to them, tear down this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.**

Joh 2:20 Then the Jews said, This sanctuary was forty six years being built, and do You raise it up in three days?

Joh 2:21 **But He spoke about the sanctuary of His body.**

May the spirit of Yahweh inspire all His set apart elect to be zealous before Him and bear much fruit.