

What This Year's Hanukkah Teaches Us About Christ's Second Coming

Last night at sundown, the Hebrew Feast of Hanukkah began. The Feast memorializes the dedication of the Temple in 165 BC, after Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempted to stamp out the Hebrew religion. It also celebrates a miracle where a one day supply of Temple oil lasted eight days. Thus, it is called both the "Feast of Dedication" and the "Feast of Lights".

With the cleansing of the Temple in 165 B.C., the nation of Israel was reborn and the temple and the nation of Israel were made ready to receive the Messiah. However, it was 160 years later that He was born, and 190 years later that He began His ministry. Jesus celebrated the Feast of Dedication and used the occasion to clarify that He was the Messiah while teaching in the temple (see John 11:22-39).

Last week on Dec. 9, we marked a significant date leading to the second coming of Christ. It was 100 years ago on Dec. 9, 1917, that the Turks surrendered Jerusalem to the British. The British mandate ultimately led to the U.N. vote to form Israel 30 years later in 1947, and to the birth of Israel in 1948. Christians all over the world saw the miraculous rebirth of Israel as preparation for the second coming of Christ.

Few Christians expected the return of Christ to be delayed so long after the nation of Israel was made ready. However, if we look back to the formation of Israel in 165 B.C., preparatory to the advent of Christ, then a waiting period of 160 or 190 years is not so surprising. At 100 years, if counting began in 1917 instead of 1948, we would only be halfway through a 190-year wait.

Let us pray over the Feast of Dedication and let us remember

how it made the way ready for the Messiah. The Feast of Dedication also reminds us to purify our hearts, the New Covenant temple of the Holy Spirit, as the second temple was purified in 165 B.C.

And let us also pray that Christians do not get discouraged by the delay in Christ's return, for no one knows the day or the hour.

Instead, let us joyfully add to the numbers of the church and look forward to the day that the number is completed and the Lord returns (Rev. 6:9-11)

Even so, come Lord Jesus. {eoa}

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