

Hanukkah: The Miracle of Light

Hanukkah is the last feast in the Jewish calendar and tells a remarkable story of the deliverance of Israel from the control of the Syrians in 164 B.C. The Syrians had assumed rule of the area through a political and military struggle after Alexander the Great had died.

In their wake, they sought to assimilate the people into their Hellenistic culture (ancient Greek culture or ideals) and way of life with no exceptions, dealing ruthlessly with anyone who would oppose them. Had they been completely successful, they could have threatened the very environment that brought **Messiah** into the world.

Not only did they ransack the holy temple of God, desecrating all of its contents, but they actually sacrificed a pig to their Greek god Zeus on the temple altar, which naturally repulsed all of the Jews, owing to their strict dietary laws, where the pig was considered most unclean.

The **Jews** were outraged, and a priest named Mattathias and his five sons took up against several Syrian soldiers and killed them, which sparked a revolt. Being completely outnumbered, they utilized guerilla-style warfare tactics, first in the hill country and then throughout the land. They met with surprising success, and their faith in the God of Israel inspired the nation to take back their own country, despite the odds that were against them.

In the month of Kislev (December), they reached **Jerusalem** and took back the temple. In restoring the menorah, which symbolized the light of God, they only had enough oil to last for one day, as it took eight days to prepare new oil. However, the oil miraculously lasted for eight days. This

event demonstrated two miracles of God: the first to deliver His people and the second to lighten His temple.

The temple was restored and rededicated to G-d, and a new holiday was established called Hanukkah (Hebrew for *dedication*) to remind Israel of these miracles. **Hanukkah** was not one of the original Jewish feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23, as it had not happened yet. However in light of its significance, its prophetic picture through Daniel, as well as God's intervention, it became part of the Jewish calendar and has been celebrated ever since by Jews and some Christians all over the world.

In fact Yeshua/Jesus celebrated this holiday and forever connected its significance by reflecting His own messiahship through the feast (John 10:22-39). Isn't it interesting that in every Jewish holiday, we can see the character of God's love and light for mankind? And nowhere is this clearer than through the Hanukkah celebration that we see the light of the world.

Isn't it fascinating that the very last miracle recorded in the Jewish calendar is a miracle of light to foreshadow and tell us of the great Light that was to come into the world?

On **Hanukkah** itself, Yeshua/Jesus, the great Light of the world, went into the temple area giving perhaps one of the only teachings where He actually refers to Himself as the Messiah and asks the Pharisees to review His credentials by acknowledging the miracles He had performed to provide authenticity as to who He said and claimed to be in the flesh. And if you look carefully, please note the very next miracle recorded that Yeshua performs (in John 11) is life from the dead by raising Lazarus and foretelling the world of His **resurrection** and life (John 11:25-26).

There is no greater **miracle** in this world than the gift of God's one and only Son, and so there is also a beautiful

connection that exists between Hanukkah and Christmas, as Hanukkah truly foretells of the great Light that was to come into the world. As believers in Yeshua, both Jew and Gentile alike, we have the liberty to celebrate these holidays that remind us of God's faithfulness and deliverance of His people.

Hanukkah is observed using a menorah, which is a candlestick that holds nine candles, one for each day of the miracle and the ninth, called the *Shamash*, which actually means *servant*. On each day, the Shamash candle is lit and used to light the other candles, increasing one each day until the last day, when they are all lit. Gifts are given and special foods are eaten, usually those cooked in oil.

May His great **light** and His servant's heart lighten us and cause us to show His presence and His glory to the world.

Happy **Hanukkah**, everyone!

Grant Berry is a Jewish believer in Yeshua/Jesus and author of The New Covenant Prophecy and The Ezekiel Generation. He has founded Reconnecting Ministries with the specific focus to help the church reconnect spiritually to Israel and considers it vital to the kingdom of G-d in the last days. His message focuses on the unity, love and healing that the Father wants to bring between Jew and Gentile yet clearly points out the differences and misunderstandings between the two groups. Now is the time to look more carefully into this mystery to make way for healing and reconnection in the Spirit. For more information, please visit .