

Hanukkah and The Motel 6

People all over the world are lighting menorahs as they celebrate Hanukkah, also known as the Feast of Dedication or the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is the celebration of the recovery of Jerusalem and the rededication of the Second Temple during the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the second century BCE.

The story of Hanukkah includes the legend of the miracle of the oil, which tells us that when the Jews were rededicating the temple, they miraculously found one cruze of oil, which was only enough oil to burn one day in the menorah. The priests, knowing that it would take eight days to produce the special pure oil for the menorah, decided after debate that they would light the menorah even though they knew it would run out of oil and burn out in 24 hours. However, according to the legend, G-D caused the oil to miraculously last for eight days, allowing time for the purification and preparation of oil so that the menorah could remain lit continually.

In order to understand the significance and meaning of this miracle, we have to look back to what the temple really was. If we remember when G-D gave the Torah to Israel, He provided instructions and detailed plans for a tent, the Mishkan (tabernacle), not for a permanent building like Solomon's Temple. It was King David who asked G-D if he could build a permanent temple for G-D; that temple was later built by David's son, King Solomon.

If we look in the Bible, we will see that when G-D referred to the Mishkan, He didn't call it the Tent of Sacrifice or the Tent of Offerings. G-D called the Mishkan the Tent of Meeting. The Mishkan was provided by G-D to Israel as a place of meeting and fellowship. The Mishkan's purpose was never designed by G-D to be focused on our sins and the offerings made because of our sins. It was a place for Israel to build

personal relationship with their G-D.

When we think about it, G-D said the heavens are His throne and the earth His footstool. So G-D didn't need the Mishkan so that He would have a place to live. The Mishkan was solely for Israel. It was a physical home for G-D on earth where His children would be able to come visit Him. Yes, it was a place where animal sacrifices and offerings were made but the primary purpose of the Mishkan was that it was a tent of meeting.

If this is true (and it is), then what does this have to do with Hanukkah and the menorah? Think about the purpose of the menorah for a moment. Did G-D need a menorah in order to be able to see in the Mishkan? No, the light of the menorah was not so that G-D could see. The menorah's light was so that those entering the Holy Place in the tabernacle to fellowship with G-D could see.

Many years later, when King Solomon built the temple, it was built in the pattern of the tabernacle. So it also had a menorah to light the Holy Place, providing light for those who entered the Holy Place to fellowship with G-D. The menorah was not for G-D; it was for us, His people, and the menorah was commanded by G-D to remain lit continually, 24 hours a day. This way, there would never be a time when the tent of meeting would not be well lit and open for a visit.

To use the famous tagline from those Motel 6 commercials, G-D said, "I'll leave the light on for you." This is why the legend of the miracle of the oil is so powerful. In a real way, the people of Israel, as part of their rededication of the temple after it was defiled by pagans, immediately relit the menorah, even though they knew the oil would only last one day. They were making a statement that they understood the temple was not about sacrifices and offerings; it was about fellowship and relationship. They lit the menorah to demonstrate that they were inviting G-D to come back to His

home. They said, "We will leave the light on for You."

To their amazement and delight, and the delight of G-D's people still today, G-D responded by saying, "Nope, I'll keep the light on for you."

Unfortunately, just as the focus of the temple became more focused on the animal sacrifices and rituals instead of fellowship with G-D, Hanukkah has in many ways lost its focus on G-D keeping the lights on for us and has instead become about gifts, presents and sufganiyot (donuts). But it is time that we as believers begin to rebuild the Tabernacle of David and restore the purpose of the tabernacle in our lives.

Today, you and I are in one of the most miraculous times in history as we are experiencing a battle against assimilation and are fighting for a time of rededication. As we experience the prophecies of the end times being fulfilled right in front of our eyes, let me encourage you not to get so caught up in the miracle of the oil that we forget the purpose of the menorah. Don't get so consumed with what is happening around us that you forget to spend time in prayer and fellowship with Our Father. Remember that G-D is still saying, "I'll leave the light on for you." {eoa}

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