

Dedication

December 9, 2020

Chanukah: Dedication

Chanukah, which means *dedication*, is the celebration of the rededication of the temple on December 14, 164 BC after Judah Maccabee (Judah the Hammer) led 10,000 men of Israel, without proper armor or swords, against a trained and chosen army of 60,000 and defeated them. These men fought valiantly and were “ready either to live or to die nobly” (1 Maccabees 4:35) after the Second Temple in Jerusalem was looted and services stopped, observance of the Torah was outlawed, an altar to Zeus was erected in the Temple, circumcision was banned, pigs were sacrificed on the altar, and many other atrocities took place. We celebrate this victory and rejoice during this season with family and friends while remembering that we too must be ready to stand for righteousness. Lastly, one of the most famous exchanges between Yeshua (Jesus) and the Jewish people happened nearly 2,000 years ago during Chanukah;

“It was the Feast of Chanukah at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Yeshua was walking in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. The Judeans therefore came around him and said to him, “How long will you hold us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” Yeshua answered them, “I told you, and you don’t believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name, these testify about me. But you don’t believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I told you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:22-30)

What better way to celebrate this time of dedication than to realize Yeshua, our shepherd, assures us that his sheep hear his voice, he knows them, and they will never perish nor be snatched out of his hand? Be encouraged!

The origin of Chanukah is not about the light lasting for eight days. The legend of the one-day supply of oil miraculously lasting eight days is first described in the Talmud 600 years after the actual events described in the Book of Maccabees. So, below you’ll find the account from both the first and second book of Maccabees to understand the true story and how beautifully it connects us to the joyous festival of Sukkot, celebrated just a few months before Chanukah (Leviticus 23:1-2, 33-44). We’ve included a short history on Chanukah and specific excerpts from this incredible event at the bottom of

this page but you're absolutely encouraged to read the entirety of both books to learn more about the story of the Maccabees here: letswonder.org/book-of-maccabees.

When observing a celebration such as Chanukah, it's important to focus on the true meaning of the day. However, incorporating meaningful traditions can be a wonderful way to enrich and bond with one another during this time of celebration. Below are some ideas which include long-time Jewish traditions and new traditions to enjoy.

Everyday

- **Scripture Reading:** Read and discuss the Scriptures listed on the [Chanukah Dedication Guide](#). We make it a point to prioritize a time within each day to re-dedicate an aspect of our own lives since we are a temple of the living God (2 Corinthians 6:7).
- **Playlist:** Make a music playlist of songs to listen to during the week – a combination of Chanukah songs and songs that remind you of this time of dedication.
- **Make Latkes:** If you make large batches of latkes at a time you may not have to make them every day but can eat them every day ☐
- **Games:** Every night (try) to play a few rounds of Dreidel as a family with wooden coins. Traditionally, many families use chocolate gelt to play dreidel with; however, for those who tend to limit sugar for health's sake, the wooden coins are a good long term option (and can be decorated, too)!

Day 1

- **The Chanukah Story:** Begin Chanukah by reading excerpts from the historical account (1 Maccabees 3:45 – 4:59; 2 Maccabees 1:1-36; 2 Maccabees 10:1-9) and briefly compare it to the most common legends.
- **Movie Night:** Watch a Chanukah movie, such as [Full Court Miracle](#) – a light-hearted and funny modern-day version of the Chanukah story. Although this movie is based on the legend of the miracle of the oil lasting eight nights, hopefully, you can appreciate the relatability and message of faith.

Day 2-8

- **Gratitude:** Choose an activity to each share the things you're grateful for, such as creating a gratitude garland or gratitude scavenger hunt, making a list (individually or as a family, on one collective sheet of paper or in personal journals), select prompts to share your answers with one another, etc.
- **Giving:** Make packages to give to those in need. Homemade or store-bought, a small snack, or a full care package, all accompanied by a card with words of encouragement and hope. Then hand-deliver them, if possible.
- **Night of Praise:** Singing and dancing together – make a playlist

together (one to play during each day of Chanukah, and another to sing, dance, and/or watch during one of the nights).

- **Movie Night:** The movie, [War Room](#), is a family-friendly movie by the Kendrick Brothers to remind us of the power of prayer.
- **Ice Skating:** Skating has nothing to do with Chanukah, but it's something to enjoy for the fun of it during this time of celebration. There are also annual events, such as Chanukah on Ice, which can be fun to attend if there is one in your area.
- **Chanukah Parties:** Host and/or attend gatherings throughout the week so you can celebrate with family and friends.
- **Local Chanukah Event:** There is often a number of annual Chanukah events going on in the community. Try to select one to attend.
- **Dessert:** Last but not least! Make dessert together. Make donuts, spiced apple cider, and get ice cream to enjoy during any of the days of Chanukah, especially your Chanukah Party if you host one. Cookies are also a fun dessert to make together.

Chanukah Dedication Guide

How to use the Chanukah Dedication Guide:

- Print the [Chanukah Dedication Guide here](#). *Make sure your printer settings are set to landscape, print on both sides of paper, and flip on short edge.*
- For each day of Chanukah, you'll see the branch with the day's focus word of dedication and corresponding verses on the back, starting from the center "Dedication" branch, followed by "Be a Light," etc. Feel free to read other Scriptures related to each focus word.
- For each day, you can mark (paint, draw, or color) the candle flame as you'll see already given for the center "Dedication" branch and the first day of "Be a Light"

A Short History on Chanukah

Judea was part of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt until 200 BCE when King Antiochus III the Great of Syria defeated King Ptolemy V Epiphanes of Egypt at the Battle of Panium. Judea then became part of the Seleucid Empire of Syria. King Antiochus III the Great, wanting to conciliate his new Jewish subjects, guaranteed their right to "live according to their ancestral customs" and to continue to practice their religion in the Temple of Jerusalem. However, in 175 BCE, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus III, invaded Judea, at the request of the sons of Tobias. The Tobiads, who led the Hellenizing Jewish faction in Jerusalem, were expelled to Syria around 170 BCE when the high priest Onias and his pro-Egyptian faction wrested control from them. The exiled Tobiads lobbied Antiochus IV Epiphanes to recapture Jerusalem. As Flavius Josephus relates in the Wars of the Jews, 1.1.1.:

...The king being thereto disposed beforehand, complied with them, and came upon the Jews with a great army, and took their city by force, and slew a great multitude of those that favored Ptolemy, and sent out his soldiers to plunder them without mercy. He also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months.

When the Second Temple in Jerusalem was looted and services stopped, Torah observance was outlawed. In 167 BCE, Antiochus ordered an altar to Zeus erected in the Temple. He banned circumcision and ordered pigs to be sacrificed at the altar of the temple:

Now Antiochus was not satisfied either with his unexpected taking the city, or with its pillage, or with the great slaughter he had made there; but being overcome with his violent passions, and remembering what he had suffered during the siege, he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised, and to sacrifice swine's flesh upon the altar; against which they all opposed themselves, and the most approved among them were put to death. Bacchides also, who was sent to keep the fortresses, having these wicked commands, joined to his own natural barbarity, indulged all sorts of the extremest wickedness, and tormented the worthiest of the inhabitants, man by man, and threatened their city every day with open destruction, till at length he provoked the poor sufferers by the extremity of his wicked doings to avenge themselves. (Wars of the Jews, 1.1.2.)

Antiochus's actions provoked a large-scale revolt. Mattityahu (Mattathias), a Jewish priest, and his five sons Jochanan, Simeon, Eleazar, Jonathan, and Judah led a rebellion against Antiochus. It started with Mattityahu killing first a Jew who wanted to comply with Antiochus's order to sacrifice to Zeus, and then a Greek official who was to enforce the government's behest. Judah became known as Yehuda HaMakabi ("Judah the Hammer"). By 166 BC, Mattathias had died, and Judah took his place as leader. By 165 BC, the Jewish revolt against the Seleucid monarchy was successful. The Temple was liberated and rededicated. The festival of Chanukah was instituted to celebrate this event based on the eight days of Sukkot. Judah ordered the Temple to be cleansed, a new altar to be built in place of the polluted one and new holy vessels to be made.

We've included the specific excerpts from 1 & 2 Maccabees that directly relate to the commemoration of the Feast of Chanukah but you're absolutely encouraged to read the entirety of both books to learn more about the incredible story of the Maccabees here: letswonder.org/book-of-maccabees.

1 Maccabees 3:45 – 4:59

(3:45) And Jerusalem was without inhabitant as a wilderness, there was none of her offspring that went in or went out; and the sanctuary was trodden

down, and the sons of strangers were in the citadel, the Gentiles lodged therein; and joy was taken away from Jacob, and the pipe and the harp ceased. (46) And they gathered themselves together, and came to Mizpeh, near Jerusalem; for in Mizpeh was there a place of prayer aforetime for Israel. (47) And they fasted that day, and put on sackcloth, and put ashes upon their heads, and tore their clothes, (48) and laid open the book of the law, concerning which the Gentiles were wont to inquire, seeking the likenesses of their idols. (49) And they brought the priests' garments, and the first fruits, and the tithes: and they stirred up the Nazarites, who had accomplished their days. (50) And they cried aloud toward heaven, saying, What shall we do with these men, and whither shall we carry them away? (51) And your holy place is trodden down and profaned, and your priests are in heaviness and brought low. (52) And, behold, the Gentiles are assembled together against us to destroy us: you know what things they imagine against us. (53) How shall we be able to stand before them, except you be our help? (54) And they sounded with the trumpets, and cried with a loud voice. (55) And after this Judas appointed leaders of the people, captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens. (56) And he said to those who were building houses, and were betrothing wives, and were planting vineyards, and were fearful, that they should return, each man to his own house, according to the law. (57) And the army removed, and encamped upon the south side of Emmaus. (58) And Judas said, Gird yourselves, and be valiant men, and be in readiness against the morning, that you may fight with these Gentiles, that are assembled together against us to destroy us, and our holy place: (59) for it is better for us to die in battle, than to look upon the evils of our nation and the holy place. (60) Nevertheless, as may be the will in heaven, so shall he do. (4:1) And Gorgias took five thousand footmen, and a thousand chosen horse, and the army removed by night, (2) that it might fall upon the army of the Jews and strike them suddenly: and the men of the citadel were his guides. (3) And Judas heard thereof, and removed, he and the valiant men, that he might strike the king's army which was at Emmaus, (4) while as yet the forces were dispersed from the camp. (5) And Gorgias came into the camp of Judas by night, and found no man; and he sought them in the mountains; for he said, These men flee from us. (6) And as soon as it was day, Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men: howbeit they had not armor nor swords such as they desired. (7) And they saw the camp of the Gentiles strong and fortified, and horsemen compassing it round about; and these were expert in war. (8) And Judas said to the men that were with him, Fear you not their multitude, neither be you afraid of their onset. (9) Remember how our fathers were saved in the Sea of Reeds, when Pharaoh pursued them with an army. (10) And now let's cry to heaven, if he will have us, and will remember the covenant of our fathers, and destroy this army before our face today: (11) and all the Gentiles shall know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel. (12) And the strangers lifted up their eyes, and saw them coming near them: (13) and they went out of the camp to battle. And those who were with Judas sounded their trumpets, (14) and joined battle, and the Gentiles were discomfited, and fled into the plain. (15) But all the hindmost fell by the sword: and they pursued them to Gazara, and to the plains of Idumaea and Azotus and Jamnia, and there fell of them about

three thousand men. (16) And Judas and his army returned from pursuing after them, (17) and he said to the people, Be not greedy of the spoils, inasmuch as there is a battle before us; (18) and Gorgias and his army are near to us in the mountain. But stand you now against our enemies, and fight against them, and afterwards take the spoils with boldness. (19) While Judas was yet making an end of these words, there appeared a part of them looking out from the mountain: (20) and they saw that their army had been put to flight, and that the Jews were burning the camp; for the smoke that was seen declared what was done. (21) But when they perceived these things, they were sore afraid; and perceiving also the army of Judas in the plain ready for battle, (22) they fled all of them into the land of the Philistines. (23) And Judas returned to plunder the camp, and they got much gold, and silver, and blue, and sea purple, and great riches. (24) And they returned home, and sang a song of thanksgiving, and gave praise to heaven; because his mercy is good, because his mercy endures forever. (25) And Israel had a great deliverance that day. (26) But the strangers, as many as had escaped, came and told Lysias all the things that had happened: (27) but when he heard thereof, he was confounded and discouraged, because neither had such things as he would been done to Israel, nor had such things as the king commanded him come to pass. (28) And in the next year he gathered together threescore thousand chosen footmen, and five thousand horse, that he might subdue them. (29) And they came into Idumaea, and encamped at Bethsura; and Judas met them with ten thousand men. (30) And he saw that the army was strong, and he prayed and said, Blessed are you, O Saviour of Israel, who did quell the onset of the mighty man by the hand of your servant David, and did deliver the army of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan the son of Saul, and of his armor bearer: (31) shut up this army in the hand of your people Israel, and let them be ashamed for their army and their horsemen: (32) give them faintness of heart, and cause the boldness of their strength to melt away, and let them quake at their destruction: (33) cast them down with the sword of those who love you, and let all that know your name praise you with thanksgiving. (34) And they joined battle; and there fell of the army of Lysias about five thousand men, and they fell down near them. (35) But when Lysias saw that his array was put to flight, and the boldness that had come upon those who were with Judas, and how they were ready either to live or to die nobly, he removed to Antioch, and gathered together hired soldiers, that he might come again into Judea with even a greater company. (36) But Judas and his kindred said, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let's go up to cleanse the holy place, and to dedicate it afresh. (37) And all the army was gathered together, and they went up to mount Sion. (38) And they saw the sanctuary laid desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest or as on one of the mountains, and the priests' chambers pulled down; (39) and they tore their clothes, and made great lamentation, and put ashes upon their heads, (40) and fell on their faces to the ground, and blew with the solemn trumpets, and cried toward heaven. (41) Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the citadel, until he should have cleansed the holy place. (42) And he chose blameless priests, such as had pleasure in the law: (43) and they cleansed the holy place, and bare out the stones of defilement into an

unclean place. (44) And they took counsel concerning the altar of burnt offerings, which had been profaned, what they should do with it: (45) and there came into their mind a good counsel, that they should pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the Gentiles had defiled it: and they pulled down the altar, (46) and laid up the stones in the mountain of the house in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to give an answer concerning them. (47) And they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar after the fashion of the former; (48) and they built the holy place, and the inner parts of the house; and they hallowed the courts. (49) And they made the holy vessels new, and they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings and of incense, and the table, into the temple. (50) And they burned incense upon the altar, and they lighted the lamps that were upon the candlestick, and they gave light in the temple. (51) And they set loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they made. (52) And they rose up early in the morning, on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is the month Kislev, in the hundred and forty and eighth year, (53) and offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burned offerings which they had made. (54) At what time and on what day the Gentiles had profaned it, even on that day was it dedicated afresh, with songs and harps and lutes, and with cymbals. (55) And all the people fell upon their faces, and worshipped, and gave praise to heaven, which had given them good success. (56) And they kept the dedication of the altar eight days, and offered burned offerings with gladness, and sacrificed a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. (57) And they decked the forefront of the temple with crowns of gold and small shields, and dedicated afresh the gates and the priests' chambers, and made doors for them. (58) And there was exceeding great gladness among the people, and the reproach of the Gentiles was turned away. (59) And Judas and his kindred and the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their seasons from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Kislev, with gladness and joy.

2 Maccabees 1:1-18

(1:1) The kindred, the Jews that are in Jerusalem and those who are in the country of Judea, send greeting to the kindred, the Jews that are throughout Egypt, and wish them good peace: (2) and may God do good to you, and remember his covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, his faithful servants; (3) and give you all a heart to worship him and do his pleasure with a great heart and a willing soul; (4) and open your heart in his law and in his statutes, and make peace, (5) and listen to your supplications, and be reconciled with you, and not forsake you in an evil time. (6) And now we here are praying for you. (7) In the reign of Demetrius, in the hundred threescore and ninth year, we the Jews have already written to you in the tribulation and in the extremity that has come upon us in these years, from the time that Jason and his company revolted from the holy land and the kingdom, (8) and set the gate on fire, and shed innocent blood: and we implored the Lord, and were heard; and we offered sacrifice and meal offering, and we lighted the lamps, and we set forth the show bread. (9) And now see that you keep the days of the feast

of tabernacles of the month Kislev. (10) Written in the hundred fourscore and eighth year. THEY that are in Jerusalem and those who are in Judea and the senate and Judas, to Aristobulus, king Ptolemy's teacher, who is also of the stock of the anointed priests, and to the Jews that are in Egypt, send greeting and health. (11) Having been saved by God out of great perils, as men arrayed against a king, we thank him greatly. (12) For himself cast forth into Persia those who arrayed themselves against us in the holy city. (13) For when the prince was come there, and the army with him that seemed irresistible, they were cut to pieces in the temple of Nanaea by the treachery of Nanaea's priests. (14) For Antiochus, on the pretense that he would marry her, came into the place, he and his Friends that were with him, that they might take a great part of the treasures in name of a dowry. (15) And when the priests of Nanaea's temple had set the treasures forth, and he was come there with a small company within the wall of the precincts, they shut to the temple when Antiochus was come in: (16) and opening the secret door of the paneled ceiling, they threw stones and struck down the prince, and they hewed him and his company in pieces, and struck off their heads, and cast them to those that were without. (17) Blessed be our God in all things, who gave for a prey those who had committed impiety. (18) Whereas we are now about to keep the purification of the temple in the month Kislev, on the five and twentieth day, we thought it necessary to certify you thereof, that you also may keep a feast of tabernacles, and a memorial of the fire which was given when Nehemiah offered sacrifices, after that he had built both the temple and the altar.

2 Maccabees 10:1-9

(10:1) And Maccabaeus and those who were with him, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city; (2) and they pulled down the altars that had been built in the marketplace by the foreigners, and also the walls of sacred enclosures. (3) And having cleansed the sanctuary they made another altar of sacrifice; and striking stones and taking fire out of them, they offered sacrifices, after they had ceased for two years, and burned incense, and lighted lamps, and set forth the show bread. (4) And when they had done these things, they fell prostrate and implored the Lord that they might fall no more into such evils; but that, if ever they should sin, they might be chastened by him with forbearance, and not be delivered to blaspheming and barbarous heathen. (5) Now on the same day that the sanctuary was profaned by foreigners, upon that very day did it come to pass that the cleansing of the sanctuary was made, even on the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Kislev. (6) And they kept eight days with gladness in the manner of the feast of tabernacles, remembering how that not long before, during the feast of tabernacles, they were wandering in the mountains and in the caves after the manner of wild beasts. (7) Wherefore bearing wands wreathed with leaves, and fair boughs, and palms also, they offered up hymns of thanksgiving to him that had prosperously brought to pass the cleansing of his own place. (8) They ordained also with a common statute and decree, for all the nation of the Jews, that they should keep these days every year. (9) And such was the end of Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes.