



The Zion Letter

The Monthly Newsletter of For Zion's Sake Ministries, Inc.

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Hanukkah: The Certainty of God's Victory Over The Antichrist

People often ask me why I still celebrate Hanukkah as a believer in Yeshua (Jesus). The answer is simple. Yeshua/ Jesus celebrated Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). The Hanukkah story is about the rise of idolatry in pre-Messiah Israel and God's victory over Idolatry according to Exodus 20:3 **"You shall have no other gods before Me" (No idols).**

Hanukkah is the only Biblical holiday that is strictly a New Testament holiday. All other Biblical holidays mentioned in the New Testament originated in the Torah, the five books of Moses. Hanukkah is a message of God's great and miraculous deliverance of His people when they were overcome by a tyrant (sound familiar?). As a Jew, if it was good enough for Yeshua to walk 80 miles from Galilee in wintertime to celebrate it (see John 10:22, Feast of Dedication is Hanukkah), then it's good enough for me! I've always thought how funny it is that the only book of the Bible Hanukkah is mentioned in is John, which is in the New Testament, a book most Jews don't read, yet they celebrate Hanukkah. While Hanukkah is perhaps foreign to most Christians, it is right there in the New Testament. Perhaps some of you are asking why Jews celebrate Hanukkah and why Christians largely do not since it is a New Testament holiday. Honestly, I think most Christians read John 10:22 and do not realize that Jesus was establishing a new winter holiday to believers. As for traditional Jews, they celebrate Hanukkah because the Hanukkah story was told in other historical books such as the books of 1st and 2nd Maccabees in the Apocrypha (Part of the Catholic Bible). More importantly



though, how is Hanukkah relevant to us today? Hanukkah foretells the coming Antichrist and the certainty that he will be defeated and that God's people will be set free! Hanukkah is a prophecy that Yeshua Himself will defeat the real anti-Messiah when He destroys the Beast and the False Prophet (see Revelation 19:19-20). The prophetic theme of the coming anti-Messiah will be the focus of this newsletter.

Hanukkah: A Prophecy of the Coming Anti-Messiah and His certain defeat by the Lord!

The Hanukkah story begins in 171 BC. Antiochus IV, otherwise known as Antiochus Theos Epiphanes (Antiochus the manifestation of God), became ruler of the Seleucid kingdom of Syria. Antiochus was a direct descendant of Seleucus, one of the four Macedonian generals that received one fourth of the empire of Alexander the Great upon his untimely death: **"A mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass," Daniel 10:3-4.** Tiny Israel was part of Alexander's vast empire and was inherited by Antiochus IV when he became king of Syria.

For a while Antiochus was content to allow Israel to remain culturally and religiously Jewish. The priesthood maintained religious government while the Syrians controlled civil government. During this period, the Jews

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were mostly content. Many Jews had fallen away from the God of their fathers and began to chase after the pagan ways of the Syrians called Hellenism (Greek culture/religion). Hellenism was worldly, modern, and materialistic. It offered status, popular acceptance, economic gain, and a high tolerance for immorality. Hellenism probably looked a lot like secular society in the world today. Hellenism came with its own religion, which involved the worship of Zeus, the Greek god of sky and thunder.

Although there were Bible believing Jews in Israel at the time, the spiritual condition of the people was weak at best. Hedonism, greed, and false religion abounded. According to the Apocrypha, the Jewish Hellenists ***“forsook (apostatized) the Holy Covenant and joined themselves to the heathen,” 1 Maccabees 1:15.***

Things took a turn for the worse when Antiochus decided to force his religion on all Jewish people in Israel. Antiochus wanted to unite his kingdom of many peoples and languages by assimilating them into Hellenism. Joshua, the brother of Yochanan, the High Priest was a Jewish Hellenist. He coveted his brother’s position as High Priest. Antiochus gave his approval to a plot by Joshua to murder his brother Yochanan and be installed as the new High Priest. Joshua changed his name to Jason, a Greek name, had his brother killed, and began to desecrate the Holy Temple and the Priesthood. This led to resistance by the remnant of true believers in the God of Israel from amongst the Jewish people.

After an unsuccessful military campaign to conquer Egypt, Antiochus stopped in Jerusalem on his way back to Syria. By this time the high priest was not even of priestly lineage. Humiliated by his failure to conquer Egypt, and running out of patience with Israel’s resistance to Hellenism,



Antiochus took his wrath out upon the Jewish people by ordering them to sacrifice a pig to Zeus upon the altar of the Temple and then sprinkle its blood in the Holy of Holies: ***“They set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar,” 1 Maccabees 1:54.*** Antiochus chose December 25th as the date he desecrated the Temple because it was believed to

be the birthday of Zeus and it coincided with the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. The Roman name for Zeus is Saturn. The pagans had a festival to celebrate the birth of Zeus/Saturn; they called it Saturnalia. This is ancient origin of Christmas. The early church under the emperor Constantin incorporated the birth of Jesus into Saturnalia to please the pagans and bring them into the faith. Google Saturnalia to learn more about the origin of Christmas.

Now back to the abomination of desolation. Antiochus’ soldiers began to kill Jewish people who would not abandon their faith in the God of Israel. Many were forced to eat pork which is considered unclean according to the Law of Moses. Antiochus also abolished the practice of observing the Sabbath, circumcision, and reading the Torah (Bible). He even built an idol in his own image at the Temple in Jerusalem and forced Jews to bow down and worship him as God. Thousands of Jews were martyred for refusing to obey the Syrian tyrant. The Apocrypha gives an account of seven brothers and their mother who was all put to death for refusing to eat swine’s flesh. They were scourged, whipped, maimed, boiled alive and skinned. But they all gave glory to God! With death imminent, one of the brothers said, ***“It is good being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by Him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life,” 2 Maccabees 7:14.*** Long before the coming of Messiah, Jewish believers understood the concept of the resurrection (Daniel 12:2, Job 19:25-26).

When the Syrian forces visited the town of Modin, northwest of Jerusalem, they built an altar to Zeus and found a Jewish man who was willing to offer a pig upon the altar. An aged priest named Mattathias saw this taking place and could not contain his anger so he killed the man and the king’s commissioner who had ordered the sacrifice. Mattathias had seven sons. After his insurrection against the Syrians, Mattathias ***“cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me,” 1 Maccabees 2:27.*** Thus began the revolt of the Maccabees! They formed together a band of freedom fighters in the Judean wilderness. When Mattathias died, his son Judah “Maccabee” (the hammer) became the leader of the revolt. The Maccabees (and other fighters) finally defeated the vast armies of Antiochus IV after three years of warfare and with the help of God. They retook the Temple on Kislev 25, 165 B.C., three years from the day when Antiochus desecrated God’s House. This is the real miracle of Hanukkah. Yeshua (Jesus) would later refer to this Tem-

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ple as *"My Father's House,"* John 2:16. If it were not for the story of Hanukkah and the Maccabees, there would be no Temple, no Jews, no Mary and Joseph, no little town of Bethlehem, no Messiah Jesus.

Antiochus and Antichrist:

The prophet Daniel wrote of the Anti-Christ, ***"the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction,"*** Dan 9:26-27. The events of Hanukkah were prophesied in these words of Daniel. Yochanan, the good High Priest who Antiochus murdered represents Yeshua, the Messiah (anointed one). According to Hebrews 2:17, 3:1, Yeshua is our High Priest. Throughout the Old Testament, whoever legitimately held the office of king or High Priest was a type of messiah. The majority of the Jewish people were content to be ruled by Antiochus (a type of anti-Christ) until he began to force his religion on them. However, by accepting the pagan Antiochus as the legitimate ruler of Israel, the Jewish nation entered into a covenant with Him. It was about the middle of the first seven years of Antiochus' reign that he put a stop to the daily sacrifice. Daniel also said of anti-Christ, ***"He will intend to make alterations in times and in law,"*** Dan 7:25. Antiochus changed the calendar of the Jews, their Holy Days were abolished, and the Law of Moses forbidden which included observance of Sabbath and Holidays, the Bible, circumcision, gathering together, and pretty much anything having to do with worship of the God of Israel.

2Thessalonians 2:3-4 says, ***"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the Day of the Lord) will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the Temple of God, displaying himself as being God..."*** Syrian oppression was a time of tribulation for the saints in those days. Antiochus blasphemed the Most High God and just like the man of lawlessness he took his seat in the Temple of God, displaying himself as being God! History will repeat itself.



The good news is that even though many will suffer, ultimately God's people win!

Those Jews who forsook the Holy Covenant to follow Antiochus and the religion of Hellenism committed Apostasy. Many did this before Antiochus took the mask off and revealed himself as the enemy of God and His people. When Antiochus turned against Israel, he wasted no time in *taking his seat in the Temple of God and displaying himself as being God.* Daniel prophesied the coming of Antiochus and the coming Anti-Christ. Daniel's prophecy is the Hanukkah story.

History has a way of repeating itself. America and Israel today look worldly, materialistic and largely secular much like Israel was during the rule of Antiochus. Is it just coincidence that inflation is skyrocketing, that gas prices have doubled since Biden took office in the country that was the largest producer of fossil fuel in the whole world last year? Is it just coincidence that shortages are predicted and our government tells us we may not get the color coat we want this holiday season, but at least we will get a coat? Well over 100 million Americans are out of the workforce. Where did they go? People pour into our country and are given free everything with no vaccine mandates while American citizens are called domestic terrorists for speaking

out at school board meetings or resisting vaccine mandates. Many of these were yesterday's frontline Covid-19 heroes. Even today, social media is now censoring faith posts and conservative posts as I write.

When a nation forgets about God:

When the people forget about God and His laws, dictators and tyrants will inevitably arise. But just as Israel defeated Antiochus, Yeshua will return to save Israel and defeat Anti-Christ and the false prophet when they are thrown into the lake of fire (see Revelation 19:20). The prophet Isaiah wrote, ***"Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? Surely, thus says the Lord, even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, and the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, and I will save your sons,"*** Isaiah 49:24-25. **Hallelujah!**

Conclusion: There is much more to know about Hanukkah such as its connection to the Millennial Temple and the

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King of Kings who will sit on David's throne in the Temple forever; says the Lord (see Ezekiel 43:4-7). However, we didn't have space in this article. If you would like to learn about the lights of Hanukkah and the miracle of the oil we invite you to join us for our community Hanukkah celebration, Thursday, December 2nd at 7:00pm at our synagogue . located at 580 Norfolk Avenue, Bristol, VA (nd on google maps at: 1128 New Hampshire Ave).



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Thursday, December 2nd at 7:00 pm

580 Norfolk Ave, Bristol, VA
(located on Google maps as 1128 New Hampshire Ave)

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