



Light of Messiah Ministries

...Bringing Jesus to the Jewish People

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The Miracle of Hanukkah

Most people are unaware of the significance of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival that is so intimately connected with Christmas in many people's minds. In fact a lot of people think that Hanukkah is the Jewish version of Christmas. But that is far from the truth. There is a connection between Hanukkah and Christmas, but it is not one that most would know.

During the first Hanukkah God protected the Jewish people from annihilation by the Syrian Greeks. One hundred and sixty five years later Jesus was born the Jewish Messiah in Bethlehem. Hanukkah is but just one instance of God protecting the lineage of the Messiah Himself!

Let me tell you the story. It is not found in the Bible, but in the Book of Maccabees, a book of the Apocrypha. The story happened, and was written about, between the Old and New Testaments.

Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and nights, starting on the 25th of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar (which is November-December on the Gregorian calendar). **This year Hanukkah begins the night of December 21st and is celebrated through December 28th.** In Hebrew, the word "Hanukkah" means "dedication."

The holiday commemorates the rededication of the holy Temple in Jerusalem after the Jewish people's victory over the Hellenist Syrians in 165 B.C. Antiochus, the Greek King of Syria, outlawed Jewish rituals and ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods.

In 168 B.C. the holy Temple in Jerusalem was seized and dedicated to the



worship of Zeus.

Some Jewish people were afraid of the Greek soldiers and obeyed them, but most were angry and decided to fight back.

The fighting began in Modin, a village not far from Jerusalem. A Greek officer and soldiers assembled the villagers, asking them to bow to an idol and eat the flesh of a pig; activities forbidden by Jewish law. The officer asked Mattathias, a Jewish High Priest, to take part in the ceremony. He refused. **Mattathias, along with Judah Maccabee led a small band of Jewish zealots and against all odds overthrew the Syrian Greek army and retook Jerusalem.** They took the Temple back for the Jewish people.

As legend has it, Judah Maccabee and his soldiers went to the holy Temple, and were saddened that many things were missing or broken, including the golden menorah (candelabra in the Temple). They cleaned and repaired the Temple, and when they were finished, they decided to have a big dedication ceremony. For the celebration, the Maccabees wanted to light the menorah. They

looked everywhere for oil, and found a small flask that contained only enough oil to light the menorah for one day. Miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days. This gave them enough time to obtain new oil to keep the menorah lit. **Today Jews celebrate Hanukkah for eight days by lighting candles in a menorah every night, thus commemorating the eight-day miracle.**

Against all odds the Jewish people were saved. The Jewish people continued as a nation despite attempted annihilation at the hands of the Syrian Greeks. Against all odds. But, God made a promise and He kept it. He promised to always protect the Jewish people from those who would try to annihilate them. Always.

It was because of the miracle of Hanukkah that the Jewish people survived.

God protected the Jewish people. We celebrate! And 165 years later our Savior Messiah was born of a Jewish mother and father, in a Jewish land. **Satan knew that if he could get rid of the Jewish people 165 years before Jesus that he would prevent The Birth.** He could stop God's plan. He tried. He always tries. But God is always victorious. He protected the lineage. He kept His promise.

Hanukkah has three names. It is called the Festival of Dedication, the Festival of Lights, and the Festival of Miracles.

Hanukkah is the Festival of Dedication

We remember and celebrate the fact that God protected the Jewish people and allowed them to retake the holy Temple for his service and worship. Against all odds the Maccabees

won a victory. They rededicated the Temple to the Lord.

Jesus walked in that very same Temple. It was in that Temple where He talked with the rabbis after having wandered away from his parents at the age of 12. It was the Temple He knew and loved. And the Festival of Dedication is mentioned in John Chapter 10 vs. 22. **It was the Feast of Dedication, and Jesus was in the Temple.** In Solomon's colonnade. It was in the same Temple the Maccabees had rededicated to God that Jesus said, "*I and the Father are One.*" They took up stones to stone Him. He overturned the tables in that same Temple. And healed many. But it was His Temple.

During this season we celebrate the One Who became our spiritual Temple when He was born in Bethlehem.

Hanukkah is the Festival of Miracles

Miracle: an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause.

God is a God of the miraculous. During Hanukkah the Jewish people celebrate the miracle of the victory of the Maccabees over their Syrian Greek oppressors. The fact that the Jewish people have survived as a people against all odds is a miracle of God. The existence of the Jewish people is a testimony to the faithfulness of God and to His miraculous protection.

During the season of Hanukkah Jesus said, "I do all of these miracles in the name of my Father, and still you do not believe." Jesus was making the connection between Himself, the Miracle Worker, and the Festival of Miracles.

Those of us who know Jesus celebrate the miracle of His birth during this special season.

Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights

During Hanukkah the Jewish people celebrate the miracle of lights. Jesus knew of the miracle. The meno-



rah in the Temple was unable to be lit. While rededicating the Temple the Maccabees only found one vial of holy oil, enough to keep the Menorah lit for one day. Miraculously the Menorah stayed lit for 8 days, enough time for the Maccabees to make the holy oil they needed.

The Festival of Lights. During this season of the year in Temple times there were lights in the Temple area. **For several weeks during the Festival of Tabernacle and the Festival of Lights, the Temple was illuminated.** Candelabras were lit throughout the city of Jerusalem celebrating God's provision and protection.

It was during this season that Jesus proclaimed, "I am the Light of the World." Jesus celebrated Hanukkah. He knew the significance of the rededication, of the miracles, and of the lights. **And He knew to tell His Jewish people that He was and is the fulfillment of the Festival, of all festivals.**

It is good to celebrate God's protection of the lineage through which Jesus was born. As you celebrate Christmas this year, please remember my

people. **Remember that you are celebrating the birthday of a Jewish savior whose lineage was miraculously protected by God.** And remember that my people need to hear the message of that baby, of Jesus...the Light of the World!

Thank You!

We have had an incredible year. The Lord has blessed our efforts as we have brought the message of Jesus to the Jewish community. **Many Jewish people have come to know their Messiah Jesus through our work and efforts.** It has been an exciting and fruitful year.

We are looking forward to a greater year in 2009. The needs are increasing. Jewish people are asking more questions. And we are here to help answer those questions.

Thank you for standing with us in our efforts to reach Jewish people with the message of Jesus. Your prayers and financial support help to make our ministry possible.

Celebrating His birth,


Murray Tilley
Light of Messiah Ministries

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