

## CHANUKAH: THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

### Origins

The word “Chanukah” is Hebrew for “dedication.” The holiday has been named for the rededication of the Temple in 164 B.C. when the Maccabees overthrew the Syro-Greco dominion of Israel and cleansed and rededicated the Temple which had been long neglected and defiled.

The Chanukah story is given in the Books of the Maccabees, which are found in the Apocrypha. It beautifully recounts the loyalty, heroism and ultimately martyrdom, which the Jewish People experienced in that era of Judaism.

The Chanukah story has also been recorded in the “Scroll Antiochus” (Megillath Antiochus), which is in many Orthodox prayer books. Concerning the Scroll of Antiochus:

It was originally in Aramaic in late Talmudic times, and was later translated into Hebrew and into many other languages which Jews spoke. It was the Hebrew translation which became popular and which was read in the synagogue. The custom, however, had died out.<sup>1</sup>

The story of Chanukah is also included in the writings of the Greek historian Polybius (204-122 B.C.).

Alexander the Great had previously conquered “the world” in the Fourth Century B.C. The compelling force behind his advance was his desire to fulfill the dream he shared with his boyhood tutor, Aristotle: cosmic uniformity, one religion, language and culture.

Upon his death, the conquered territories were divided among his four generals. As the years went by, there was much friction between the descendents of the dynastic

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<sup>1</sup> Hayyim Schauss, The Jewish Festivals, (New York: Schocken Books, 1938), p. 236.

domains. The Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt engaged in confrontation. Usually the land of Israel was caught in the middle of these military entanglements for, territorially, Israel served as a buffer zone between the two superpowers.

Palestine was finally conquered by Antiochus the Great in 198 B.C. When his son Seleucus was assassinated in 175 B.C., his younger son Antiochus IV assumed the throne. He immediately launched attacks on the rival kingdom of Egypt, fearing Egyptian retaliation for previous Seleucid aggression. Antiochus IV, the Seleucid king of Syria, was one of the cruelest and tyrannical men of history. He had authority over Palestine and attempted to impose upon all in his domain the Aristotelian ideals of one language, culture and religion (idolatry).

In his fanaticism he issued decrees forbidding Jewish people to keep the Sabbath and holidays, to circumcise their sons. He demanded they abandon Judaism and adopt Greek paganism. Antiochus positioned a Greek god in the Holy Temple and sprinkled swine's blood in the Holy of Holies. The land was garrisoned with officers and soldiers who were to enforce his wishes.

Fearing domestic subversion, Antiochus imposed a cultural totalitarianism upon the peoples he dominated, including the Jews. The Jewish People persisted in maintaining a distinctly Jewish life-style. Antiochus reacted by removing the Orthodox High Priest Onias and then installing in his stead, the High Priest's Greek-minded brother, Joshua.

Joshua (who promptly changed his name to Jason) proceeded in short order to inaugurate a radical policy of Hellenization. Under the citadel of Jerusalem he constructed a gymnasium; he persuaded the Jewish gentry to adopt Greek costume; and under his benevolent eye, the junior priests deserted the service of the sanctuary to engage in Greek sports.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor Herzl Gaster, Purim and Hanukkah, (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950), p. 234.

Many in Israel, particularly the priesthood and aristocratic set, welcomed this trend toward assimilation. Another element called the Pietists or Hasidim strongly resented and actively resisted the pressure to give up the Jewish distinctiveness.

Antiochus meanwhile laid siege to Alexandria but was given an ultimatum by Rome to desist his Egyptian advance. Fearing Rome, he complied. Returning to his kingdom, he desired to now implement a state religion—namely Greek styled idolatry. The major god to be worshipped was Zeus. Antiochus fashioned that he was the physical and visible manifestation of Zeus and therefore his excellency referred to himself as “Epiphanes” (god manifest).

Antiochus issued a decree prohibiting, on pain of death, any expression of Jewish distinctiveness, and ordering the Temple services to be accommodated to the new national religion.<sup>3</sup>

Jewish resistance was great, however, and it was difficult to enforce Antiochus’ evil decrees. Many Jewish People died martyrs’ deaths rather than yield to such debauchery. Fascinating accounts of Eleazer, a ninety-year-old man, and one Hannah, the mother of seven martyred sons, is beautifully told in the Maccabean Books.

But the Jewish People were divided as to how to best cope with this horrendous situation. Finally one family, the Maccabeans, arose to lead the Jewish People out of their confusion. Mattathias, father of the Maccabees, was a priest of Modin. A Syrian officer together with a renegade attempted to force Mattathias to offer a sacrifice to Zeus. But the Book of Maccabees tells us:

Mattathias answered and spake with loud voice: ‘Though all the nations that are under the king’s dominion obey him and fall away each one from the religion of his fathers, yet will I and my sons and my

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<sup>3</sup> Gaster, Purim and Hanukah, p. 235.

brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the Law to depart from our faith either to the right hand or the left.’

Mattathias slew both the officer and renegade Jew and took to the mountains with his sons and many other faithful and courageous Jews. An army was ultimately organized. The eldest son, Judah, became the leader of the army and together with his brethren:

...he fought with gladness the battle of Israel. He battled like a lion and the lawless shrunk from fear of him. He cheered Jacob by his mighty acts, and his memorial is blessed forever. And when all the people feared and trembled at the sight of the great number of the enemy, and said: What shall we be able, being a small company, to fight against so great and so strong a multitude? Judah answered: ‘With the God of heaven it is all one to save by many or by few. And all the people shall know that there is One who redeemeth and saveth Israel.’

It was on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev that the Syrian enemy was driven from the Temple. They cleansed and redidcated the Temple that same day. According to the Maccabean account they:

...celebrated the rededication of the Altar for eight days! And they ordained that ‘the days of the Dedication of the Altar should be celebrated from year to year, for eight days in gladness and thanksgiving...’

Hanukkah thus commemorates the deliverance of our people from the tyrant. It is therefore a happy occasion. We usually celebrate it with games and entertainments, and with the exchange of gifts.<sup>4</sup>

Antiochus Epiphanes had done the Abomination of Desolation (I Mac. 1:54) by offering sacrifice to Zeus Olympios in the Temple on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, 167 B.C. It was exactly three years later the Temple was rededicated.

The First Book of the Maccabees gives the following account of the Rededication of the Temple:

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<sup>4</sup> B.D. Cohon, p. 142.

Then said Judas and his brethren, 'Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary.'

Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up to Mount Zion.

And when they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or in one of the mountains, yea, and the priests' chambers pulled down, they rent their clothes, and made great lamentation, and cast ashes upon their heads, and fell down flat to the ground upon their faces, and blew an alarm with the trumpets, and cried toward heaven.

Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary.

So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law, who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place.

And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned, they thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, and laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in the convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them.

Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former, and made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts.

They made also new vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table.

And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple.

Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make.

Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Kislev, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, and offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings which they made.

Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals.

Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshiping and praising God of heaven, who had given them good success.

And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days, and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise.

They also decked the forefront of the table with crowns of gold, and with shields, and the gates and the chambers they renewed, and hanged doors upon them.

Thus was there very great gladness among the people, for that the reproach of the heathen was put away.

Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Kislev, with mirth and gladness.

The account in the Second book of the Maccabees is as follows:

Now Maccabeus and his company, the Lord guiding them, recovered the temple and the city; but the altars which the heathen had built in the open street, and also the chapels, they pulled down.

And having cleansed the temple they made another altar, and striking stones they took fire out of them, and offered a sacrifice after two years, and set forth incense, and lights, and shewbread.

When that was done, they fell flat down, and besought the Lord that they might come no more into such troubles; but if they sinned any more against him, that he himself would chasten them with mercy, and that they might not be delivered unto the blasphemous and barbarous nations.

Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the Temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Kislev.

And they kept eight days with gladness, as in the feast of tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.

Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto Him that had given them good success in cleansing his place.

They ordained also by a common statute and decree, that every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews.

In the Second rendition of the original Chanukah we see Chanukah was not only a festival of the rededication of the Temple but a second Sukkoth replete with the chanting of the Hallel and the carrying of the lulav.

In neither of these accounts is there any mention of the Festival's name or of special kindling of the Chanukah lights. Lights were lit every day in the Temple. The first party to mention the lighting of a special Chanukah menorah was Josephus—two centuries later.

Following the account in the First Book of Maccabees, he tells of the renewal of the Temple service, and then he adds, 'From that day to this

we observe this festival, and call it 'Lights.' Josephus also strives to give a reason for the name of the festival because freedom glowed and lighted up Jewish life unexpectedly.<sup>5</sup>

The Mishnah says nothing about the kindling of Chanukah lights. Schauss boldly states the lights had nothing to do with Chanukah originally but insinuates the lights aspect was borrowed from a heathen holiday counterpart that had already been somewhat adapted by certain Jewish groups. He further remarks:

The Chanukah lights originated in an old nature festival, that was observed in winter by certain Jewish groups, in the season when the days begin to lengthen. In time the lights were eventually tied up with Chanukah.<sup>6</sup>

There have been many rabbinic traditional interpretations invented to explain the purpose of the Chanukah lights but a review of them is not important for the purpose of this dissertation.

There have been several attempts to prove Chanukah had its roots in some pagan religious tradition and that it was, as other holidays, borrowed and altered for Jewish religious purposes and emphases. These attempts have failed to prove anything. The evidence is Chanukah was entirely its own source.

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<sup>5</sup> Schauss, p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> Schauss, p. 225.

## Historical Development

In antiquity Chanukah was a most joyous feast (I Mac. 5:50-59). Of course, sacrifices were made in the Temple. Greenery, branches, and palms were paraded about and accompanied by hymns (2 Mac. 10:6-8; I Mac. 4:54). Psalm 30 was recited as well as the entire Hallel.

The Mishnah and rabbinical writings tell us that lamps were lit in front of each house, and that the number increased by one a day until the last day of the feast.<sup>7</sup>

Actual celebration of Chanukah among the Jewish People of the Mediterranean countries was at first limited although a promotional campaign was launched to encourage its observance. But it did continue to be celebrated for we find it mentioned in the New Testament in John 10:22 by its Greek name and in Josephus in his Antiquities (XII vii, 7) by the "Feast of Lights."

Chanukah was first celebrated as a festival of joy. It was made a second Sukkoth because Sukkoth had not been celebrated in and about the Sanctuary during the three years of Temple defilement. Chanukah's connection with Sukkoth explains why Chanukah lasts for eight days, why the Hallel is chanted and why there is the waving of palm branches.

There was a deliberate attempt to seriously liken Chanukah to Sukkoth.

The second book of Maccabees stresses the similiarity between the Hanukah and the feast of Tents. It was celebrated on the first occasion, 'in the way they kept the feast of Tents' (2 Mac. 10:6), and the letter 124 B.C. calls it 'the feast of Tents in the month of Kislev' (2 Mac. 1:9). The first book of Maccabees does not make this connection, but the second deliberately underlines its relation to one of the great traditional feasts, in order to secure it a favourable reception in the Egyptian Diaspora. It is, of course, possible that Judas Maccabee himself wanted it to be like the feast

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<sup>7</sup> Roland De Vaux, Ancient Israel, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), p. 512.

of tents, for this was the date on which Solomon's Temple (I Kings 8:2, 65) and the alter which was erected after the Exile (Esd. 3:4) had been dedicated.<sup>8</sup>

But Chanukah was not destined to obtain the significance of Sukkoth no matter how much effort and influence was utilized to make this a reality. In order for Chanukah to become universally acceptable among Jewry it necessarily had to abandon its claim to being a second Sukkoth. In time it obtained its own name (Chanukah) and distinct custom.

The Mishnah makes only allusions to Chanukah because of the rabbis general hostility to the ruling Hasmoneans, the descendants of the Maccabees. Nevertheless, it was commonly celebrated and outlasted the Temple because of its menorah ritual, which made it independent of the Sanctuary.

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<sup>8</sup> De Vaux, p. 512.

**Contemporary Celebration**  
*In the Home*

Chanukah, the Feast of Dedication, is celebrated in both the home and synagogue by the kindling of oil lamps, or as in most circles, with wax tapers. These are lit by the male members of the family although females are not prohibited. A custom developed of presenting gifts to children on Chanukah as a counterpart to the Christian version of Christmas.

Both Chanukah and Purim are considered 'minor' feasts because their celebration does not require abstinence from work. They both are celebrated in the synagogue with the recitation of several additional prayers and in the homes with certain games.

Chanukah begins on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Kislev and lasts eight days. In the home the Chanukah menorah is lit and the following blessing is recited:

Praised be Thou, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the world, who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and bidden us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

Praised by Thou, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, who didst wondrous things for our fathers at this season in those days.

On the first night an additional blessing is recited:

Praised by Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the world, who hast granted us life, sustained us, and permitted us to celebrate this joyous festival.

On the first night of Chanukah the Shammash (servant) candle is lit and is then used to light one single candle. On the second evening the procedure is repeated but two candles are lit. This continues until the last evening eight candles are lit.

The candles are to be lit from right to left—the same direction as Hebrew writing. After the lighting of the candles, the thirtieth Psalm is chanted.

Theodor Gaster offers an interesting explanation for the introduction of the lights into the Chanukah celebration.

The lights are not even mentioned in the Book of the Maccabees. Modern scholars are therefore inclined to think that they had originally nothing whatsoever to do with the festival, but, like the candles of Christmas, represent only an adaptation of the familiar pagan custom of lighting candles or kindling fires at the winter solstice as a means of reluming the decadent sun. The significant thing, however, is that embarrassment over the more militant aspects of Hanukkah caused the Jews to seize upon this purely secular and even heathen custom, Judaizing it by an appropriate legend, in order to divert attention into more innocuous quarters.<sup>9</sup>

We understand then that even at the close of the Second Temple era the custom of lighting a Chanukah menorah was not widely practiced nor deep-rooted in the Jewish community.

In the evening the Chanukah menorah is lit. Idelsohn shares an interesting impact of anti-Semitism upon the Chanukah celebration.

Originally these lights used to be set outdoors as a manifestation of the victory of light over darkness. But through fanatical Medieval oppression the Jews were forced to keep their lights indoors. They had to be content to set them in the windows. Originally big flames were kindled, but Medieval tyranny reduced them to tiny sparks. However, they were never extinguished by all the violent storms, which raged against Judaism through the ages.<sup>10</sup>

Concerning the adding of one candle per evening, Idelsohn insists:

This progression is a symbol of Judaism's belief in the gradual constant increase of intellectual light and of the slow but steady victory of spiritual enlightenment.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gaster, Purim and Hanukkah, pp. 248-249.

<sup>10</sup> Abraham Z. Idelsohn, The Ceremonies of Judaism. (Cincinnati: National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, 1930) p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Idelsohn, The Ceremonies of Judaism, p. 30.

After the kindling of the Chanukah menorah, the hymn “Mooz tzur” or “Rock of Ages” composed in the thirteenth century by a certain Mordecai is sung to a melody popular with German Jews in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The words to “Rock of Ages” are:

Mighty, praised beyond compare,  
 Rock of my salvation,  
 Build again my House of Prayer  
 For thy habitation?  
 Haste my restoration: let a ransomed nation  
 Joyful sing  
 To its King  
 Psalms of dedication!

Woe was mine in Egypt-land  
 Tyrant kings enslaved me,  
 Till Thy might outstretched Hand  
 From oppression saved me.  
 Pharaoh, rash pursuing, vowed my swift undoing;  
 Soon his host  
 That proud boast  
 Neath the waves was rueing!

To thy holy Hill, the way  
 Mad'st Thou clear before me;  
 With false gods I went astray-  
 Foes to Exile bore me.

Torn from all I cherished, almost had I perished  
 Babylon fell  
 Zerubabel  
 Hadst' Thou to restore me!

Then the vengeful Haman wrought  
 Subtly to betray me;  
 In his snare himself he caught-  
 He that planned to slay me.  
 (Haled from Esther's palace, hanged on his own gallows!)  
 Seal and ring  
 Persia's king  
 Gave Thy servant zealous.

When the brave Asmoneans broke

Javan's chain is sunder  
 Through the holy oil, Thy fold  
 Didst Thou show a wonder.  
 Ever full remained the vessel unprofaned:  
 These eight days,  
 Lights and praise,  
 Therefore, were ordained.<sup>12</sup>

A more contemporary rendition of Rock of Ages is as follows:

- (1) Rock of Ages, let our song  
 Praise Thy saving power;  
 Thou, amidst they raging foes,  
 Wast our shelt'ring tower.  
 Furious they assailed us,  
 But Thine arm availed us;  
 And Thy word  
 Broke their swore  
 When our own strength failed us
- (2) Children of the martyr-race,  
 Whether free or fettered,  
 Wake the echoes of the songs  
 Where ye may be scattered.  
 Yours the message cheering,  
 That the time is nearing  
 Which shall see  
 All men free,  
 Tyrants disappearing.

As long as the lights burn, no work is permissible. The indulgence in fames is accompanied by the eating of Latkes (potato pancakes). Coins are often given to the children which is called "Chanukah Gelt."

It is not one of the great Jewish festivals, and bears no aura of sanctity. No special ceremonials have been built around it. There is no cessation of work, except briefly for the women of the household, who cease their labors during the short time each evening when the Chanukah lights burn.<sup>13</sup>

Games are played at Chanukah. In the Middle Ages, arithmetic puzzles were propounded. Card playing which is endorsed by Jewish tradition is enjoyed as well. A

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph H. Hertz, The Authorized Daily Prayer Book, (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 951, 953.

<sup>13</sup> Schauss, p. 208.

cubical top made of clay (or wood, plastic or some other substance) called the “Draydel” had on each of its lateral sides a Hebrew letter. These letters are the first of the words taken from the Chanukah saying, “a great miracle happened there.” This game was first played among German Jews later spreading to all eastern European Jews but the game is not Jewish in origin.

It is customary at Chanukah to eat cheese dishes. This custom dates back into early Chanukah celebration. Pancakes with cheese are eaten and from this all kinds of pancakes are consumed at Chanukah. Schauss informs us of one legend offering explanation for the origin of the consumption of cheese products.

During the Middle Ages Jews explained this custom by connecting it with the story of Judith, which they linked with the story of Chanukkoh. Judith, according to legend, was a daughter of the Hasmoneans, who fed cheese to the leader of the Jewish foes; he became very thirsty and consequently drank much wine. When he became drunk, she beheaded him. For this reason, it was said, Jews eat cheese delicacies at Chanukkoh.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Schauss, p. 234.

*In the Synagogue*

The Synagogue services are the same as usual but the Hallel is chanted and a short insertion is made in the Amidah. The Torah portion read is Numbers 6:22 to 8:4, which describes the dedication of the sanctuary in the wilderness.

The following is the recitation of the blessings of the Chanukah menorah at the evening service in the synagogue.

*The Reader chants the following blessings before kindling the Chanukah lights.*

Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and ordained that we kindle the Hanukkah light.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought wonderful deliverances for our fathers in days of old at this season.

*The following blessing is added on the first night of Chanukah:*

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has given us life and sustenance, and brought us to this happy season.

*While kindling the lights say:*

We kindle these lights to mark the marvelous victories and wonderful liberation which Thou didst achieve for our ancestors at this season through Thy holy priests. During all the eight days of Hanukkah these lights are allowed: we are not permitted to make ordinary use of them, but only to look to them, so as to give thanks to Thee for Thy miraculous saving providences.<sup>15</sup>

In the synagogue morning services for each of the eight days the Hallel (Ps. 113-118) and the Torah portion (Numbers 7) are recited. A brief recounting of the Chanukah story is also included.

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<sup>15</sup> David De Sola Pool, The Traditional Prayer Book for Sabbath and Festivals, (New York: University Books, Inc., 1960), p. 588.

The lesson learned from Chanukah is that righteousness will always prevail over evil, that monotheism is victor over polytheism, that Judaism is superior to idolatry, that God will defend and protect and bring victory for his faithful one—his Chosen ones.

Like all other Jewish holidays, the significance and lessons of Chanukah developed with time and increased Jewish nationalism, religious ethics and philosophy. Some began to teach that Chanukah illustrates the need for ethnic liberty and freedom of expression in a pluralistic society. Some later made out Antiochus Epiphanes to be not merely concerned with political expediency, but with the deliberate promotion of anti-Semitism. The historic facts, however, do not bear out these reasonings according to Theodor Gaster.

The importance of Chanukah has rapidly grown among contemporary Jewry since the beginning of the Zionist movement of the 1890's. In the words of Schauss "Chanukkah is rapidly becoming one of the greatest of Jewish festivals."<sup>16</sup>

*The Significance of Chanukah  
To the Messianic Believer  
In New Testament Light*

Summarizing the elements of Chanukah we recall it is a feast developed during the intertestamental period and was named for the "Rededication" of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus in 164 B.C. The basic means of celebrating Chanukah has traditionally been the lighting of the special Chanukah menorah.

Chanukah historically commemorates not only the rededication of the Temple but also Jewish victory over paganism's assault upon Jewish religion and life-style.

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<sup>16</sup> Schauss, p. 230.

The student of the New Testament recalls when Jesus entered the Temple area on Chanukah in John 10. He claimed to be the Son of God. The prophets had spoken of the Son of God as one who would come and bring light to the darkened world.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

Thus said God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that give thee breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (Isaiah 42:5-7)

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

Those who have received the Messiah have already the messianic kingdom functioning within them (Luke 17:21). The believer then has the light of Messiah Jesus who is the Light of the world to guide in his life.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:21)

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (II Cor. 4:6)

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. (Isaiah 60:16)

Jesus is the Shamash (servant) candle who lights all the other candles so that they too may give off light.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Eph. 5:14)

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. (Matt. 5:14)

The Light of Jesus has the ability to dispel darkness and break the dominion of evil. The believer is free from the overwhelming nature of darkness and free to walk in the light of God.

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. (Eph. 5:8)

That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. (Phil. 2:15)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. (Rom. 13:12)

Ultimately, in the New Jerusalem, Jesus shall be the light.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Rev. 21:23)

The believer should rejoice in the realization that the Light of God in the person of Jesus has touched him with the fire of God and set him ablaze for truth and

righteousness. The entirety of the believer's eternal future shall be characterized by and filled with the One who is the Light of the world.

*Additional Recommendations for Church Celebration*

Since Chanukah normally comes two or three weeks before Christmas, the celebration of Chanukah may be a tremendous drawing card for attendance during the usually poorly attended early weeks of December. Perhaps a Sunday evening service would be most appropriate. If the celebration does indeed coincide with the regular Chanukah week, be certain to light the correct number of candles for that particular evening.

Chanukah menorahs and candles are easy to acquire. If one does not know of a nearby Jewish bookstore where one may acquire these, he may purchase them at the gift shop of a nearby synagogue or Jewish community center. They are also readily available online.

To enhance enthusiasm, allow the children of the congregation to light one candle each. Distribute Chanukah gelt, which are gold paper-wrapped chocolate coins to the children. Announcing these two elements in previous services will assure a pastor of good attendance. As wisdom would indicate, have members of the congregation prepared special Chanukah treats like "latkes" for a refreshment and fellowship period following the service.

