

Chanukah: The Feast of Dedication

What does the word Chanukah mean? This word means "dedication." The root of the word is "education" (*Strong's Concordance Number 1456*). This is a festival that educates or teaches about dedicating your "temple" or "life" to God. We all want to learn about the preparation of our "temples" where Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) lives. Our living "temples" are just as important to God today, as His Holy Temple that once stood in Jerusalem. When we celebrate Chanukah, we are not just celebrating a victory that happened in the past, but one that happens in the future, and one that is also happening right now. The story of Chanukah is the story of light growing in the darkness. Chanukah reminds us that we are locked in a struggle with the powers of darkness that seek to snuff out the light of Torah. Yet each night of the festival, our light grows brighter and brighter. Jesus said: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." ([Matthew 5:16](#))

Five Reasons for Christians to celebrate Chanukah:

1. Messiah himself celebrated the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-23). During the Feast it was customary for the whole temple to be illuminated with bright illuminations, and with just such a background Yeshua said: "I am the light of the world; he that follows Me will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."
2. Chanukah is about rededicating God's Temple. If we as believers are God's living temples, don't we also need to rededicate ourselves to the LORD? We need to clean out our sanctuary (our body, our mind) once in awhile and keep it clean!
3. Chanukah is all about being persecuted for righteousness sake.
4. Chanukah is about letting your "light" shine for all to see.
5. Chanukah will prophetically happen again. (Matthew 24)

How to Celebrate - Lighting the Candles and reciting the Blessing

Each night of the eight day festival, we celebrate by reading the story in John about how the Messiah chose Chanukah as the appointed time and place to announce that He is the Messiah, The One whom the Prophets had foretold. At sundown, we light a candle for each night of the festival, adding another candle each successive night so that at the end of 8 days we are burning 8 candles at once. These 8 candles can be as simple as lining up 8 tea lights on a table, mantle or window sill. We recite the following blessing: **"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has set us apart by your commandments, who has kept us in life, sustained us and brought us to this season and now encourages us to kindle the lights of Dedication."**

([Mat 20:28](#)).

The lighting of the candles signifies that Jesus is the only true source of light in our lives. As we see in [John 1:9](#) "There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." Jesus, who is the "light of the world" ([Jn 8:12](#)), came as a servant ([Mk 10:45](#)) ([Mat 20:28](#)) to give light to everyone ([Jn 1:4-5](#)), so that we might become lights to others ([Mt 5:14](#)).

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DAY ONE: Readings from Daniel, Maccabees, and Exodus. Focus upon the faithfulness of YHWH in revealing and fulfilling his prophecy, also the reality of the desecration of the Temple and its significance.

Day One focuses upon the prophecy and history of the events leading to Chanukah as well as the laws concerning the dedication of the altar as found in the Torah. Daniel lived and prophesied from Babylon in the 6th century BCE. The events described in the book of Maccabees took place in the 2nd century BCE. We should note that prophecy may be fulfilled on many levels; in the past, in the present, and in the future. We should not be surprised then by Yeshua's prophecy of a yet future fulfilling of Daniel's words (cp. Matthew 24:15f). At the heart of the feast of Chanukah or Dedication is the struggle against the temptation to assimilate with the world around us for the sake of peace. The Maccabees resisted this pressure with great force.

Daniel 8:1-25

1 Maccabees 1:1-24

1 Maccabees 1:41-54

1 Maccabees 2:15-26

1 Maccabees 3:45-59

1 Maccabees 4:8-11

1 Maccabees 4:37-60

Exodus 29:1-46

DAY TWO: Focus upon Yeshua celebrating Chanukah, cleansing the temple, and revealing that he is the Temple of the living Elohim.

John 10:22-25

Matthew 21:12-17

Mark 11:15-19

Luke 19:45-48

John 2:13-22

DAY THREE: Focus on the reality that as members of the body of Messiah we too become the living Temple of YHWH. What does it mean for us to be the Temple? How does being the Temple affect our choices, our behavior, and our diet? What is the purpose of the living Temple?

Exodus 25:8

Romans 12:5

1 Corinthians 12:27

Ephesians 5:30

1 Corinthians 6:19

1 Corinthians 3:16

2 Corinthians 6:16

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DAY FOUR: Focus on the calling given to the children of Israel to be a Royal Priesthood with Messiah as the head or Kohen Gadol (High Priest).

Exodus 19:5-6

1 Peter 2:9

Hebrews 2:16-17

Hebrews 4:14-16

Hebrews 5:5-10

DAY FIVE: Focus upon the fact that the kohenim (priests) were to offer sacrifices. As the children of Israel and members of the body of Messiah we are part of the Royal Kohenim that is called to offer sacrifices. Therefore like Yeshua Messiah we too are to offer our lives as living sacrifices.

Hebrews 7:27

Hebrews 8:3

Romans 12:1 1-2

Hebrews 13:15

Matthew 10:37-38

Matthew 16:24-25

Luke 9:23-24

Luke 14:27

1 Peter 2:5

DAY SIX: Focus on what it means to be sanctified, distinct, and holy.

Leviticus 10:10-11

Ezekiel 44:23

Leviticus 11:44-45

Leviticus 20:7

1 Peter 1:15-16

2 Corinthians 6:16-18

DAY SEVEN: Focus on the fact that the Creator separated the light from the darkness and yet the light was to illuminate the darkness. What does it mean to be a distinct light in the darkness. It was the Torah that made the children of Israel truly a distinct light to the nations.

Genesis 1:3-4

Exodus 10:22-23

Proverbs 4:18

Proverbs 6:23

Psalms 119:105

Psalms 119:130

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Psalm 147:19-20

Isaiah 2:5

Isaiah 5:20

Isaiah 9:2

Isaiah 42:6

Isaiah 60:1

John 1:5

John 8:12

John 9:5

Matthew 5:14

Ephesians 5:8

DAY EIGHT: Focus on love of YHWH as the motivation of all that we do. We may also focus on obedience to the Torah as the primary expression of our love and worship of YHWH.

Deuteronomy 10:12

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Deuteronomy 11:1

Deuteronomy 30:6

Deuteronomy 30:16

Deuteronomy 30:20

John 14:15

John 14:21-23