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The Feast of

CHANUKKAH

Dedication

What can be learned from this festival that the L-rd has given to us? Many things if we look at it from the perspective of it being a teaching. In this article I will attempt to explain the truths of G-d as laid out in this Festival of G-d.

In the year 323 b.c.e., Alexander the Great fell very ill and knew he was going to die, so he called his generals that were brought up with him and were honorable and divided his kingdom up among them. These generals ruled in the places that Alexander gave to them. As time passed these generals, now kings, died and their sons took their places.

For the purpose of this article we will only look in depth at two of these kingdoms.

Ptolemy (Tol-e-me), Alexander's greatest general, formed a kingdom in Egypt while Seleucus I (Se-loo-kes) ruled over Babylonia and later conquered Syria and much of Asia Minor.

These two kingdoms were known as the Ptolemaic Kingdom and Seleucid Kingdom. Seleucus was killed in battle in 261 b.c.e. He was succeeded by a number of kings. Ptolemy was succeeded by his son Ptolemy II in 283 b.c.e. and the kingdom continues through a number of kings called Ptolemy.

It was during the early Ptolemy kingdom, 285-247 b.c.e., that the Alexandrian Jews translated the Pentateuch into Greek. Today we know this translation of the Tanach as the Septuagint.

In 198 b.c.e. Antiochus III (The Great) captured Yisrael from Ptolemy V. Yisrael was now part of the Seleucid kingdom. Antiochus IV came to power in the year 175 b.c.e. and ruled over the

Seleucid kingdom, which had by this time lost much of its territory and power. Ptolemy VI was ruling in Egypt at this time.

Antiochus IV decided that he wanted to expand his kingdom, so he attacked Ptolemy VI in Egypt. Antiochus pushed his way into Egypt, slaughtering as he went. Ptolemy, being very much afraid of Antiochus, fled and appealed to Rome for help. Rome came to the aid of Ptolemy and drove Antiochus out of Egypt. Antiochus feared the Romans and when they came he did not even put up a fight.

“What can be learned from this festival that the L-rd has given to us?”

The leader of the Roman army came to Antiochus and told him to down his arms, Antiochus asked if he could think about it. The Roman leader drew a circle around Antiochus and said that he could think about it all he wanted but he could not leave the circle until he had made up his mind. Antiochus dropped his weapons and surrendered.

This is spoken of in Daniel 11.29-30 ...

“At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.”

Cyprus is not the little island off the coast of Israel, it is called Kittim in Hebrew and is a term in ancient writing for Rome.

In Yisrael the Jews had a false

report that Antiochus had been killed by the Romans so they were to have a great celebration in the city of Y'rushalayim. After leaving Egypt for fear of the Romans, Antiochus came to Y'rushalayim and on hearing the celebration became furious, and when he came over to the mountain and saw the celebration he was even more furious than before. He took the city without a fight, members of his own party who were within the city opened the gates for him.

He killed many thousands of Jews and took as many captives with him back to Antioch. After two years Antiochus again came to Y'rushalayim in the name of peace, but after getting access to the city he killed many and again took many captives. This time he did not stop at that, he also pillaged the Temple of G-d for the money that was there.

On the 25th day of the Hebrew month Kislev (*November or December*) Antiochus entered into the Holy Place of the Temple of G-d and set up the Abomination of Desolation. This abomination is the one spoken of by Daniel the prophet in Daniel 11.31...

“And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.”

In Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 12 chapter 7, we read that Antiochus stopped the daily sacrifices. It was at this time that he set up the Abomination of Desolation. Antiochus then had a statue erected of the Greek god Zeus (*called Jupiter by the Romans*), he had the face of Zeus removed and his own face put in its place. This is spoken of in Daniel

11.37...

"He shall regard neither the gods of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all."

From the year 168 b.c.e and on all the statues of Zeus was the head of Antiochus. After erecting the statue had a sow pig, the biggest, ugliest and fattest pig he could find sacrificed on the altar of G-d.

The Abomination mentioned of earlier was not the slaying of the pig, although that was terrible in the eyes of the Jews. It was not as bad as having an idol in the Holy Place of the Temple of G-d and having sacrifices offered to it, that would be an abomination to G-d and any pious Jews.

After pillaging the city he took about ten thousand captives with him. He forbade the Jews to worship G-d in the customs of their fathers. He forbade the circumcision of their children and if any child was found to be circumcised they would crucify the mothers and kill the child and hang it around the mothers neck while she hung upon the cross.

Many of the mothers would go mad before they died. They also would throw the circumcised children over cliffs to kill them as their mothers were made to watch and ten the mothers were killed.

They forbade the reading of the Scriptures. If anyone was found with a copy of the Scriptures they perished miserably. To those Jews that followed his decrees he treated well as was prophesied by Daniel in 11.32a...

"Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery;..."

The pious would not forsake the Holy Scriptures, as seen in the latter part of the above mentioned scripture...

"... but the people who know their G-d shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

Daniel 11.32b

but they had no desire to die either, so they came up with a game called dreidel The way they would deceive the Greeks and the impious Jews would be to appear as if they were gambling. The Greeks did not allow the scriptures to be read but they did very much promote

gambling.

The pious Jews would gather in small groups and play the game of dreidel The Jews forbid gambling so they played the game for nuts so as not to offend G-d. When a Greek or an impious Jew was around they would play dreidel but when they would leave, the pious Jews would remove a hidden scroll of scripture and study as someone stood watch.

There is much that we can learn from this act. In many countries throughout time the Scriptures have been outlawed. When this happens we must find our own *ñdreidelò* to use, something that will allow us to continue to read and study the Holy Scriptures, for they are given by G-d and if we must, they are important enough to die for.

This persecution continued for a very long period of time. Antiochus demanded the peoples loyalty, and to prove it he ordered that everyone must sacrifice a pig and eat its fat.

One day the army of Antiochus, led by a general named Apelles, came to the town of Modin where there lived a very pious priest named Mattathias who had five sons, the eldest was named Judas.

The leader of the army compelled Mattathias the priest to be the first to offer a sacrifice, knowing that the others would follow his example. Mattathias refused and said no matter if the other nations follow the decrees of Antiochus or not, he and his sons will not depart from the religious worship of their country.

He had no sooner finished speaking when a Jew in the crowd came and sacrificed as Antiochus had commanded.

Mattathias was so furious that he and his sons rushed up to him with swords in hand and killed the Jew offering the sacrifice and the general Apelles with a number of his solders. He overturned the idol alter and said, "If anyone is zealous for the laws of his country, and for the worship of G-d, let him follow me."

After saying this he fled into the wilderness with his sons. Many others also fled into the desert and lived in the caves. They appealed to them to return but they would not. It was the Sabbath-Day and the Jews would not

even lift a hand to fight back because of their regard for the Sabbath.

About a thousand Jews died that day without a fight, the many that escaped joined with Mattathias, the priest and appointed him their leader. His first act was to tell them that they were to fight, even on Sabbath. He ruled for a year and then died of distemper.

His oldest son, Judas, took his place. Judas was named "Macabee" which means 'the hammer.' Judas took a handful of men who were not warriors and taught them how to fight. He also taught them the Scriptures, and to return to G-d and trust in him. These men, often with less men and weapons, conquered the army of Antiochus at every turn.

Judas told his men that with the victories that G-d has given them they should go up to Y'rushalayim and purify the Temple of G-d, and offer the appointed sacrifices. However, when they had come to Y'rushalayim they found the Temple deserted and its gates burned down.

He told his solders that they should fight against the guards in the citadel until he could purify the Temple. He carefully cleaned the Temple and brought in new vessels; the candlestick, the table of show-bread and the alter of incense. He also hung up the veils and added doors and built a new alter of burnt offering out of stones.

However, when they were ready to fill the lamp stand with oil they found only one vile that Antiochus had not defiled. One vile would only be enough oil for one day.

The oil had a seal placed on it by the High Priest stating that it was in a pure state, if it did not have this seal or the seal was broken, then the oil could no longer be used.

"They forbade the reading of Scriptures"

In faith they lit the lamp stand anyway. This was done on the 25th day of Kislev, the very day that Antiochus had defiled the Temple with the Abomination of Desolation.

The light burned for eight days, this is the miracle at Chanukkah. It took eight days to purify more oil, so G-d kept the lights burning until more oil

could have been made according to His instructions.

To this day the Jews and Messianic Believers, (*those who believe that Yeshua is the Messiah yet keep the customs and festivals of G-d*), celebrate the Festival of Chanukkah for eight days in remembrance of the rededication of the Temple and the miracle that happened there.

“The time to come to G-d is now, not to escape the Tribulation, but because He is G-d and He deserves our praise and worship for no other reason than that, He is G-d”

In the New Testament you will find this festival in the book of John, chapter 10 verses 22-23...

“Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Y’rushalayim, and it was winter. And Yeshua walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch.”

The way you say ‘Dedication’ in Hebrew is ‘Chanukkah.’ Some may say that this festival is not in the Bible as a G-d ordained festival, yet if Yeshua participated in it, it had to be Kosher (*acceptable*). Yeshua would never have anything to do with something that was not good and pleasing to G-d.

What can be learned from this festival of G-d? With this festival we can better see the False Messiah (*Anti-Christ*) in the role that he will play.

There is a saying in Hebrew, “All prophecy is unfulfilled history and all history is unfulfilled prophecy.” What this means is that past history is a look at future events. Look at the history that G-d has given us and you will see a picture of what will happen in the very near future. In the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 1 verse 9 we read...

“That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

This is a very important verse in the Scriptures. It tells us that what has happened in the past is what will happen in the future, for there is nothing new under the sun.

As we look at the Festival of Chanukkah and see what Antiochus did in the past, we can understand what the False Messiah will do in the future, for Antiochus is a picture of the False Messiah.

Let’s look a little closer at what this festival will teach us about the False Messiah and what he will do in the last days. In Daniel 8.17, Gabriel gives Daniel the interpretation of the vision of the little horn...

“So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, “Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.”

This tells us that the vision is for the end times, yet it happened in the days of Antiochus. Why? The reason can be found in the fact that G-d wants us to know His plan so he gave us a little picture of the things to come.

Yeshua also referred to the Abomination of Desolation coming in the future in Matthew 24.15...

“Therefore when you see the ‘Abomination of Desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place” (whoever reads, let him understand),”

This speaks of a future event, not to the Abomination that Antiochus set up. It also refers to the Abomination of Desolation as ‘standing’ in the Holy Place. That is because, as mentioned earlier, the Abomination in the days of Antiochus was the statue of himself, and the Abomination in the future will be a statue of the False Messiah set up in the Holy Place as seen in Revelation 13.14...

“...telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.”

People will be made to worship this idol or die, this is the same as it was in

the days of Antiochus. From the story of Chanukkah we can know that this is the same day that the False Messiah will stop the daily sacrifices and shortly afterwards the believers will flee into the desert. I believe that this will happen on the very same day as it did in the past, Kislev 25.

On Yom Kippur, the year 6007 from creation, Yeshua will return to this earth and His feet will touch the Mount of Olives. He will enter into the Temple that was defiled by the False Messiah. On the very first Chanukkah after His return He will rededicate the Temple to G-d.

By looking at this festival we can see what the False Messiah will do, how he will deceive the Jewish people into making a covenant with him. We can also see what the Abomination of Desolation really is, and how he will stop the sacrifices of G-d. We can even know the very days that these things will happen on. This is not an attempt to set dates, this is using what G-d has given us.

The time is short and we must be ready when the Master comes. We must trim our wicks so we will be ready for the Bridegroom so we will not have to go through the terrible things that G-d has shown us in the Festival of Chanukkah that will happen in the Tribulation Period.

Although what happened to the Jews during Chanukkah is only a small part of what is to come in The Day of Jacob’s Trouble (*Tribulation*), it ought to be enough.

The time to come to G-d is now, not to escape the Tribulation, but because He is G-d and He deserved our praise and worship for no other reason than that, He is G-d. He has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him, through the blood of His Passover, His Kinsman Redeemer, His Messiah, The High Priest who is in the order of Melchizedek who is Yeshua ha-Mashiach.r

Shalom, G-d Bless and Happy Chanukkah,
Steve & Karen Salter