

# HANUKKAH

## FEAST OF DEDICATION : FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



**A MINI GUIDE TO ITS HISTORY, SYMBOLS,  
PROPHETIC MEANING, AND TRADITIONS.**

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# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HANUKKAH:



<b>Names of the holiday and quick facts _____</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>History of Hanukkah: the Maccabees vs. Greeks _____</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Restoration of the Temple _____</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Symbols of Hanukkah _____</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Jesus at the Feast of Dedication _____</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Prophetic meaning of Hanukkah _____</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>How to Celebrate the Festival of Lights _____ with your Family</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Related Resources _____</b>	<b>10</b>

# NAMES OF THE HOLIDAY AND QUICK FACTS



## FUN FACTS ABOUT HANUKKAH:

- 1** It is also called the **Feast of Dedication** or **Festival of Lights**.
- 2** The name can also be spelled **Hanukka** or **Chanuka** or **Chanukah** - or a variation thereof. All are technically correct because the name is originally Hebrew: **חֲנֻכָּה**
- 3** This name derives from the Hebrew word for **dedicate** or **inaugurate**.

The Hanukkah story is not recorded in the canon of Scripture (what we call the Bible). It is in the Books of Maccabees, which are in the Apocrypha. Also, the Feast of Dedication is not considered to be a part of the Moedim - the Feasts of the Lord.

Nevertheless, this feast was observed by Jesus.

From its inception, it was a time and season for rededication to God. The name of Hanukkah could refer to the rededication of the Temple at the time of the Maccabean revolt (read more on the next page). But what started the revolt was dedication to the Torah and to the God of Israel.

# HISTORY OF HANUKKAH:

## THE MACCABEES VS. GREEKS



The following events occurred less than 200 years before the life of Yeshua – between the time of Malachi and John the Baptist.

Israel had lapsed into a long period of spiritual decline. The Seleucid emperor, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, overran Israel and desecrated everything the Jewish people considered holy. He erected a statue of Zeus in the Temple and demanded that people worshiped it.

Sadly, many Jews complied. But a family of faithful priests, the Maccabees, revolted. They organized a small military band that miraculously managed to defend the Temple.

At its core, Hanukkah is a celebration of casting Greek influences out of Jewish life and returning to God's instructions for life and worship.

In a word, it is *rededication*. The Jews threw out the foreign invaders, both physically and spiritually.

As the first act of victorious freedom, their eyes turned to the desecrated Temple.

# RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE



**Hanukkah celebrates the Maccabees' victory, culminating in the rededication of the Temple on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev in 164 BC.**

The Temple needed to be cleansed and restored. The Talmud (collection of rabbinic writings) tells us that the large golden menorah with seven lamps was found and returned to its place. Historical legend states only one day's worth of oil could be found with it.

But the process to make new holy oil was week-long. The decision was made to follow the commandments with what they had:

*“And you shall command the sons of Israel that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually.”*

**Exodus 27:20**

They wanted to follow the instructions of Moses even if for just one day. Yet, day after day the flames miraculously kept burning bright. They lasted until the end of the 8th day when the new oil was ready.

Thus, Hanukkah became an eight-day holiday.

# SYMBOLS OF HANUKKAH



## HANUKKIAH

Hanukkah is celebrated with a unique menorah with 9 branches (rather than the usual seven). There are eight candles for each day of the holiday. And then, there is one light that is different.



## SHAMASH

This unique candle has a special role, and its name means servant. It is often positioned higher than the rest, not seldom it is right in the middle. The exclusive job of shamash is to light all the other candles on the Hanukkiah. Only the servant is lit in the upright position, and then he lights the rest of the candles. With each day of the celebration, a new branch is lit.



## OIL

The multiplication of oil is the central theme of the holiday, and it is commonly referred to as the Hanukkah Miracle. It is yet another reminder that God takes the little that we have and multiplies it.

*Gifts, games and fried dishes (to use oil) accompany the celebrations.  
For craft ideas and recipes, go to page 9.*

# JESUS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION



One winter at Hanukkah, we read that Jesus came to the Temple where a 7-branch menorah would have stood. The Apostle John refers to the holiday as the Feast of Dedication, consistent with its Hebrew name (John 10:22-24).

The Jews were remembering a victory of a righteous people over the Greeks... while being under the occupation of Greek-speaking Romans. No wonder the Jews came to Jesus, asking: “if you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

**Jesus had multiplied loaves and fish to feed 5,000 people – just like oil was multiplied in the Temple. He proclaimed Himself “the Light of the world” – right on theme with Hanukkah. Many saw the correlation.**

But while they were looking for earthly solutions, Jesus shifts their focus to matters of eternal value. He tells them that no one will be able to snatch His followers out from the Father’s hand. He was the Deliverer they were looking for, but for a life far beyond the earthly troubles.

While the people were celebrating the dedication of the Temple, Jesus already alluded to a different temple needing rededication to God. That’s us – we are the temple of the Spirit of God that needs to be cleansed and restored.

# PROPHETIC MEANING OF HANUKKAH



At Hanukkah, God used an obscure remnant (the Macabee brothers) to preserve the Jewish people and biblical faith, preparing for Messiah's first coming. The Maccabees' faith is so stirring that the New Testament honors their acts of heroism and martyrdom as well (Hebrews 11:35-38).

The Bible says that after the Temple is desecrated, the spirit of antichrist will be embodied in human form (Daniel 7:22, Revelation 19:11-20). Though the Book of Daniel may have referred to Antiochus specifically, the Book of Revelation came much later.

Many Bible scholars regard Antiochus IV Epiphanes (meaning "Manifest God") as an anti-Christ figure or foreshadow. Yeshua refers to prophecies about Antiochus Epiphanes in the book of Daniel when speaking to His disciples of the future (Matthew 24).

**These prophecies all reflect the same principle: The worship and reign of God is devilishly contested on earth. Ultimately, however, His people are victorious, and His kingdom comes.**

# HOW TO CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Hanukkah is a joyful holiday that can be enjoyed by the whole family. You are invited to celebrate the goodness of God for eight days while remembering the miracles He has done.

The Festival of Lights has prophetic meaning that should encourage rededicating our lives to God and His Word. At the same time, it can be an exciting Bible lesson even for the youngest ones.

To make it more fun, we want to share with you a recipe for Hanukkah latkes and a coloring page of a hanukkiah!



## POTATO LATKES

We cook foods in oil to remember the miracle of multiplication that kept the Temple menorah burning for eight days. A FIRM Member Ministry, [Chosen People Ministries](#) shared with us a recipe for latkes - a famous Hanukkah favorite. [Click here to get it!](#)

## COLORING PAGE

Here is a free coloring page that you can print out at home (courtesy of Crayola). Join the children at Little Hearts Preschool, a FIRM Member Ministry, in this fun activity that commemorates Hanukkah. [Click here to get it!](#)

*If you use the above resources to celebrate Hanukkah at your own home, tag [@firmisrael](#) in your photos online!*

# RELATED RESOURCES



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HANUKKAH, YOU CAN READ OUR ARTICLES BY CLICKING ON THE FOLLOWING TITLES:**

**Hanukkah: Why did Jesus celebrate the Feast of Dedication?**

**Should Christians celebrate Hanukkah or Christmas?**

**Is Hanukkah Prophetic? Foreshadowing Victory in the End Times**

**What Holidays Did Jesus Celebrate? Here is a list!**

The gospel went around the world from Jerusalem, but did you know that today less than 1% of Israel believes in Jesus?

Through monthly giving, you can have an impact on kingdom work in Israel.

Click here to learn about [the Tribe](#).

