

December 24 2022

## **Introduction: On This Hanukkah – 5783 / 2022**

During the time of the Maccabees, the heroes of the Hanukkah story, there were those in Israel who trusted in God and there were those who sided with the Greek oppressors. The second group of Israelites embraced the Greek culture, although it contradicted the Word of Adonai, and considered themselves “enlightened.” They had Greek art, philosophy, mathematics, and science. Who needed the Word of Adonai?

We read in Acts 6:1

Act 6:1 Around this time, when the number of talmidim was growing, the Greek-speaking Jews began complaining against those who spoke Hebrew that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

We see a division between Greek-speaking Jews and non-Greek-speaking Jews

The division between Greek-speaking and Hebrew-speaking (or culturally Greek and culturally Hebrew) Jews dates from the conquest of Eretz-Israel by Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. He and his successors introduced the Greek language and Greek culture into the lands they ruled. While Hellenistic influence produced such fruits as the Septuagint, Philo of Alexandria and Josephus, "Hebraists" considered the "Hellenists" to have developed an adulterated Judaism which had assimilated elements of the pagan cultures around them-although the Judaism of the Hebrew-speakers had not avoided these influences either. The Maccabean Revolt (see Joh\_10:22) contains elements of intra-Jewish struggle related to this issue. In any case, groups which are different from each other can usually find excuses for deprecating each other.

Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, in which Jews since 164 B.C.E. have celebrated the victory of the Makkabim over Antiochus IV, king of Syria.

This is the earliest mention of the holiday in all literature and the only mention of it in the Bible, since the Tanakh was completed before that date (the book of Daniel contains prophecy about the event celebrated). The apocryphal books, 1, 2, 3, and 4 Maccabees, present historical and other perspectives on what happened.

Antiochus, recently defeated in Egypt, expressed his frustration by attacking Judea, ruthlessly slaughtering men, women and children, and invading the Temple. There he carried off the golden altar, menorahs and vessels; and to show his contempt for the God of Israel he sacrificed there a pig to Zeus. He forbade circumcision, observing Shabbat and keeping kosher, and commanded that only pigs be sacrificed in the Temple; he himself cooked a pig in the Temple and poured its broth on the holy Torah scrolls and on the altar.

It seems that Jews have always been on the short end of the world's stick. Some is due to our own self inflicted wounds in transgressing Adonai and His Word, while at other times it is the world inflicting itself upon the Jewish people. Such a small number of people, yet so highly sought after. In my opinion this conveys the importance of the Jewish people for God's plan and the fear of the adversary of God's plan. That plan being Salvation being made available to the world by the reconciliation of God's provision of Yeshua being a kapparah, an atonement for our transgression and ultimate defeat of the adversary and his deceptive intentions.

My messages about Salvation over the years – it is of the Jews...meaning, Adonai would use this people to bring forth His message of Messiah, forgiveness of sin, righteous living through His Word, Torah and ultimate victory from the adversary.

Sha'ul conveys...

Rom 10:20 Moreover, Yesha` yahu boldly says, "I was found by those who were not looking for me, I became known to those who did not ask for me";

Rom 10:21 but to Isra'el he says, "All day long I held out my hands to a people who kept disobeying and contradicting."

To which Sha'ul asks rhetorically...

Rom 11:1 "In that case, I say, isn't it that God has repudiated his people?" Heaven forbid! For I myself am a son of Isra'el, from the seed

of Avraham, of the tribe of Binyamin.

Rom 11:2 God has not repudiated his people, whom he chose in advance. Or don't you know what the Tanakh says about Eliyahu? He pleads with God against Isra'el,

Rom 11:3 "Adonai, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars, and I'm the only one left, and now they want to kill me too!"

Rom 11:4 But what is God's answer to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not knelt down to Ba`al."

Rom 11:5 It's the same way in the present age: there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

Israel probably has the most documented history and is known by billions of people, in that it is canonized in the most popular book ever printed.

Yet as many look upon Israel and the Jewish people in many different ways, it is not anyone other than the Jewish people that Adonai has made His Covenants.

And yet, Israel would be the object of persecution, at the hands of nations...the very nations

Adonai had conveyed...

Be a light, in other words, be my light to the nations regarding my truth. For He conveys this about His Servant and our Messiah whom we are His witnesses...

**Isa 42:1** "Here is my servant, whom I support, my chosen one, in whom I take pleasure. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the Goyim.

**Isa 42:2** He will not cry or shout; no one will hear his voice in the streets.

**Isa 42:3** He will not snap off a broken reed or snuff out a smoldering wick. He will bring forth justice according to truth;

**Isa 42:4** he will not weaken or be crushed until he has established justice on the earth, and the coastlands wait for his Torah."

**Isa 42:5** Thus says God, Adonai, who created the heavens and spread them out, who stretched out the earth and all that grows from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk on it:

**Isa 42:6** "I, Adonai, called you righteously, I took hold of you by the hand, I shaped you and made you a covenant for the people, to be a light for the Goyim,

**Isa 42:7** so that you can open blind eyes, free the prisoners from confinement, those living in darkness from the dungeon.

Syrian officers were dispatched to enforce these cruel and blasphemous decrees. One day when the Syrian officer in Modi'in commanded Mattityahu HaMakkabi (Mattathias the Maccabee or Hammer), head of a family of cohanim, to sacrifice a pig, he and his five sons killed the first Jew to comply (see Act\_6:1) and then killed the officer and his soldiers. This was the start of a rebellion. After Mattityahu's death his son Y'hudah (Judas) Maccabeus, assembled a number of courageous Jews and led them to victory over the Syrians, first in guerilla warfare, then later in open battle.

We have witnessed such decrees over the centuries as it pertains to the Jewish people. Prior to this time we read of the Babylonian exile and the experiences of the Jewish people in a foreign land.

Kings would establish decrees through the influence of others, time...

**Est 3:7** In the first month, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of Achashverosh, they began throwing pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman every day and every month until the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

**Est 3:8** Then Haman said to Achashverosh, "There is a particular people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people; moreover, they don't observe the king's laws. It doesn't befit the king to tolerate them.

**Est 3:9** If it please the king, have a decree written for their destruction; and I will hand over 330 tons of silver to the officials in charge of the king's affairs to deposit in the royal treasury."

**Est 3:10** The king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the son of Hamdata the Agagi, the enemy of the Jews.

**Est 3:11** The king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, and the people too, to do with as seems good to you."

**Est 3:12** The king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month. They wrote down all Haman's orders to the king's army commanders and governors in all the provinces and to the officials of every people, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language; everything was written in the name of King Achashverosh and sealed with the king's signet ring.

**Est 3:13** Letters were sent by courier to all the royal provinces "to destroy, kill and exterminate all Jews, from young to old, including small children and women, on a specific day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to seize their goods as plunder."

**Est 3:14** A copy of the document to be issued as a decree in every province was to be publicly proclaimed to all the peoples, so that they would be ready for that

day.

**Est 3:15** At the king's order the runners went out quickly, and the decree was issued in Shushan the capital. Then the king and Haman sat down for a drink together, but the city of Shushan was thrown into confusion.

And time again...

**Dan 3:8** But then some Kasdim approached and began denouncing the Jews.

**Dan 3:9** They said to N'vukhadnetzar the king, "May the king live forever!

**Dan 3:10** Your majesty, you have ordered that everyone who hears sound of the horn, pipe, harp, zither, lute, bagpipe and the rest of the musical instruments is to fall down and worship the gold statue;

**Dan 3:11** and that whoever does not fall down and worship is to be thrown into a blazing hot furnace.

**Dan 3:12** There are some Jews whom you have put in charge of the affairs of the province of Bavel, Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go; and these men, your majesty, have paid no attention to you. They do not serve your gods, and they do not worship the gold statue you set up."

**Dan 3:13** In a raging fury N'vukhadnetzar ordered that Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go be brought. When the men had been brought before the king,

**Dan 3:14** N'vukhadnetzar said to them, "Shadrakh! Meishakh! `Aved-N'go! Is it true that you neither serve my gods nor worship the gold statue I set up?"

**Dan 3:15** All right, then. If you are prepared, when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, harp, zither, lute, bagpipe and the rest of the musical instruments, to fall down and worship the gold statue, very well. But if you won't worship, you will immediately be thrown into a blazing hot furnace—and what god will save you from my power then?"

**Dan 3:16** Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go answered the king, "Your question doesn't require an answer from us.

**Dan 3:17** Your majesty, if our God, whom we serve, is able to save us, he will save us from the blazing hot furnace and from your power.

**Dan 3:18** But even if he doesn't, we want you to know, your majesty, that we will neither serve your gods nor worship the gold statue which you have set up."

**Dan 3:19** N'vukhadnetzar became so utterly enraged that his face was distorted with anger against Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go. He ordered the furnace made seven times hotter than usual.

**Dan 3:20** Then he ordered some of the strongest men in his army to tie up Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go and throw them into the blazing hot furnace.

**Dan 3:21** So these men were tied up in their cloaks, tunics, robes and other clothes, and thrown into the blazing hot furnace.

**Dan 3:22** The king's order was so urgent and the furnace so overheated that the men carrying Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go were burned to death by the flames.

**Dan 3:23** These three men, Shadrakh, Meishakh and `Aved-N'go, fell, bound, into the blazing hot furnace.

We have seen constant attempts to suppress the truth of Adonai's Word and by association His people with whom He established His Covenant.

**The official separation of the Jewish heritage from the Messiah came at the Council of Nicea when the Roman empire under Constantine officially instituted "Christianity" as its official state religion. The 1967 edition of The Catholic Encyclopedia, when describing the final decision of the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, quotes the words of the Emperor Constantine, writing to all the churches:**

**"At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Easter was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day And first of all it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin for we have received from our Saviour a different way...And I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your Sagacities in the hope that your Wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome and in Africa, throughout Italy and in Egypt...with entire unity of judgment." (Vol. 5, p. 228). (note 3)**

#### **Canon 20 - Council of Nicea (325 CE)**

**"Forasmuch as there are certain persons who kneel on the Lord's Day (Sunday) and in the days of Pentecost , therefore, to the intent that all things may be uniformly observed everywhere (in every parish ), it seems good to the holy Synod that prayer be made to God standing." (Source Catholic Encyclopedia)**

**From Nicea, having a distinct theological anti-Judaism direction, laid the foundation for anti-Semitic legislation and judgments of later church councils. The Council of Antioch (341 CE) prohibited Christians from celebrating Passover with the Jews, while The Council of Laodicea (364 CE) forbade Christians from observing the Jewish (and biblical) Sabbath.**

#### **Cannon 29 – Council of Laodicea (364 CE)**

**"Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema (excommunicated) from Christ."**

From the Passover to the weekly Sabbath, a "united" decision was made to eliminate anything Jewish from the faith from which its very origins came. To say the decision was unified is open for debate. When you are confronted by the most powerful individual in the known world at the time - (the emperor or Rome), his minions of soldiers and leaders, would there truly be any dissension? This decision is nothing more than anti-semitism at its ugliest. Of the members present at this council, the Jewish bishops (numbering approximately 20) were not invited and therefore not in attendance did not participate, further bringing into question the unity of this decision.

### **Canon 8 - Decision of the Second Council of Nicea (787 CE)**

That Hebrews ought not to be received unless they have been converted in sincerity of heart.

Since certain , erring in the superstitions of the Hebrews , have thought to mock at Christ our God, and feigning to be converted to the religion of Christ do deny him, and in private and secretly keep the Sabbath and observe other Jewish customs, we decree that such persons be not received to communion , nor to prayers, nor into the Church; but let them be openly Hebrews according to their religion , and let them not bring their children to baptism, nor purchase or possess a slave . But if any of them, out of a sincere heart and in faith, is converted and makes profession with his whole heart, setting at naught their customs and observances, and so that others may be convinced and converted , such an one is to be received and baptized, and his children likewise; and let them be taught to take care to hold aloof from the ordinances of the Hebrews . But if they will not do this, let them in no way be received.

Ancient Epitome: Hebrews must not be received unless they are manifestly converted with sincerity of heart. (Source Catholic Encyclopedia)

The belief that anything Jewish, with a foundation in Torah, mocked God, was the thinking of the time. This thought process has continued for centuries with the notion that one who is Jewish must convert to Christianity and denounce their Jewish heritage. Believe it or not, this thinking still exists today. The wall of partition that the Jewish community is accused of reestablishing is the very action being taken as a result of the second council at Nicea.

Other references from the Catholic Encyclopedia relating to the issue of Sabbath include...

In the Apostolic Constitutions , which belong to the end of the fourth century, both the hearing of the Mass and the rest from work are prescribed, and the precept is attributed to the Apostles. The express teaching of Christ and St. Paul prevented the early Christians from falling into the excesses of Jewish Sabbatarianism in the observance of the Sunday, and yet we find St. Cæsarius of Arles in the sixth century teaching that the holy Doctors of the Church had decreed that the whole glory of the Jewish Sabbath had been transferred to the Sunday, and that Christians must keep the Sunday holy in the same way as the Jews had been commanded to keep holy the Sabbath Day. (Source Catholic Encyclopedia)

Although, as we have seen, the Church constituted a worship for itself, it nevertheless retained several memorials of the Jewish religion, which was a preparation for the Christian religion. But even here the originality and independence of the Christian

worship are loudly affirmed. Thus the circumcision, which was the great sacrament of Judaism and as it were its distinctive sign, was rejected by the Church. The Temple of Jerusalem, the religious capital of Judaism, was deserted by the Christians, even by those of Jerusalem, and it was never the center of their worship. They loved to assemble in private houses to hear the Word, to pray, and to have the breaking of the bread. The Jewish feasts were likewise condemned. Neither the feast of Tabernacles, nor that of Lights, nor that of the Dedication, nor that of Purim left any trace in the Christian calendar. (Source Catholic Encyclopedia)

Easter and Pentecost, which kept their Jewish names and even, to a certain extent, their place on the Christian calendar, changed their object, one becoming the feast of the Resurrection and the other that of the Holy Ghost. But what is still more important, as has been said, is that the Church substituted Sunday for the Sabbath. The distinction between clean and unclean animals, which related to Jewish worship, was also rejected in the very beginning. On these questions, therefore, the Church asserted its independence. However, it borrowed certain things from the synagogue. It retained the Sacred Books as the most precious portion of its heritage and at once made them its liturgical books. For they are truly the core and the substance of the Christian liturgical books. The Church also borrowed from the Jews of the Diaspora the form of their meetings in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. At first the Christian meeting, like that of the synagogue, was taken up with the singing of psalms and the reading of the Sacred Books, followed by an exhortation or homily. These are the chief points of Jewish influence on Christian worship. (Source Catholic Encyclopedia)

**We are seeing this again today. The removal, the separation and yes the suppression of Adonai's Word from our lives.**

**We have seen it in the world and yes inside the church as well.**

**What is it about Adonai that causes people to rebel, to move away, to deny???**

**Ultimately it is the Adversary and his deception to Adonai's truth that is the root of this evil.**

On the 25th of Kislev they rededicated the Temple and consecrated a new altar. The ner tamid ("eternal light") was relit, Tradition holds that there was only enough consecrated olive oil to keep it burning for one day, and it would take a week to prepare more. By a miracle of God reported in the book of 2 Maccabees the light burned for eight days, by which time a new supply had been prepared. For this reason Jews celebrate Hanukkah for eight days, starting on Kislev 25, which can fall between November 27 and December 27.

On Hanukkah, we commemorate a time when the Temple was rededicated. Its defiled insides were purged and replaced with a new inside.



Even though there is not a physical Temple standing, there is a Temple that exists for each one of us...

1Co 6:19 Or don't you know that your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you, whom you received from God? The fact is, you don't belong to yourselves;

1Co 6:20 for you were bought at a price. So use your bodies to glorify God.

Prior, Sha'ul lists a multitude of transgressions that ultimately defile the Temple where the Ruach ha Kodesh resides, for which I encourage you to read on your own and know that what you are reading has its origins in Torah.

concluding with...

1Co 6:11 Some of you used to do these things. But you have cleansed yourselves, you have been set apart for God, you have come to be counted righteous through the power of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah and the Spirit of our God.

You have cleansed yourselves...you have dedicated or rededicated yourselves – Hanukkah.

And Sha'ul takes this a step further...

1Co 15:31 Brothers, by the right to be proud which the Messiah Yeshua our Lord gives me, I solemnly tell you that I die every day.

Sha'ul says this as part of what would lead to his conveying of the resurrection and return of Messiah. As Yeshua died once and for all...

Die to self and dedicate yourselves daily to Adonai.

Heb 9:27 Just as human beings have to die once, but after this comes judgment,

Heb 9:28 so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to deliver those who are eagerly waiting for him.

We need to die daily to self and experience His resurrection daily..

In dying to self daily, we are in essence experiencing Hanukkah each day.

Hanukkah means – dedication

Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Temple after its defilement at the hands of Antiochus.

The Temple was purged of all that had been defiled, cleansed and rededicated for service to the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov.

Rom 3:21 But now, quite apart from Torah, God's way of making people righteous in his sight has been made clear — although the Torah and the Prophets give their witness to it as well —

Rom 3:22 and it is a righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile,

Rom 3:23 since all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise.

Rom 3:24 By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua.

Rom 3:25 God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness; because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission] the sins people had committed in the past;

Rom 3:26 and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness.

So, on this Hanukkah, on this Feast of Dedication, let us rededicate ourselves to you Adonai.