

## Chanukah – The Feast of Dedication

*“Train (נָחַן) up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov 22:6)*

The root word (נָחַן) used in this Scripture is the very same root word for the Feast of Dedication, that is, Chanukah. According to Strong’s Dictionary, 2596 (נָחַן) *chanak* is a primitive root; properly, to narrow; figuratively, to initiate or discipline. It is translated in the KJV as: to dedicate, train up. The Hebrew Dictionary renders it as to inaugurate, to consecrate, to dedicate and to educate. In other words, we are supposed to inaugurate, consecrate, dedicate and educate our children in the *way of G-d (Haderech Adonai)*. We also need to embrace Chanukah as a feast that celebrates that commitment.

*In the books of the later prophets, world history is envisioned as consisting of four epochs, in each of which a major power holds sway over Eretz Yisrael and the Jewish nation. These ‘Four Kingdoms’ are: (1) Babylon, (2) Greece, (3) Medea and Persia and (4) Edom-Rome. These four periods will be followed by the a fifth, in which the world will achieve perfection and the Kingdom of God will be established by the King Messiah.*  
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The Four Kingdoms and the Sabbatical Reign of Messiah is not only a *Christian’ concept* but is and has been primarily a Jewish concept predating the birth of *Y’shua* by several decades. According to the *Torah*, the first kingdom to spoil Israel was *Amalek*, the enemy of Israel, followed by other Gentile nations. He saw ‘Amalek and made this pronouncement: “*First among nations was ‘Amalek, but destruction will be its end.*” (Num 24:20)

*Rambam* explains that the concept of the Four Kingdoms is not meant to embrace all of mankind’s history, but is to include, in outline form, the history of the Jewish exile (*Diaspora*). Therefore only the kingdoms considered responsible for the exile are mentioned. Other nations, no matter how great their might, are not named. Babylon, responsible for the first exile, is the first of the Four Kingdoms. Persia, successor to the Babylonian empire, is considered the second kingdom and Greece the third, because it succeeded Persia. Rome is identified as the fourth kingdom for two reasons: (1) its conquests included *Eretz Yisrael*; and (2) it was directly responsible for the subsequent expulsion and exile from the Land.

The ArtScroll reference adds: “*So long as no new empire arises which, by its conquests, can be considered successor in toto to Rome’s power, we are still considered to be mired in the “Roman’ exile. Though Islam later conquered Eretz Yisrael, the Arabic empire did not succeed Rome in the scope of its conquest. Furthermore, Rome’s influence in the formation of the Arab and Turkish empires also allows them to be considered extensions or outgrowths of the Roman empire.*” That Christianity is under Roman influence in is an understatement! Further, all Christian denominations trace their roots to the Catholic Church. This is why many Messianic Jews do not call themselves ‘*Christians*’ even though we are believers in *Y’shua* as the Messiah of Israel. Messianic Jews, and in particular, we in *Kol Simcha*, do not consider ourselves an outgrowth of the Christian movement, but rather a rebirth of the Messianic Judaism practiced by the Messiah and His disciples (*talmidim*, the *kehilat* in the Book of Acts), which predates the formation of the Catholic Church in 323 AD. Messianic Judaism is the practice of ‘completed’ Judaism as practiced by *Kefa* (Peter), *Sha’ul* (Paul), *Ya’akov* (James), *Yehudah* (Jude) and all the disciples of the first century. As such, we in Messianic Judaism are not a denomination nor a movement whose roots can be traced back to the ‘Church of Rome.’

Jewish literature further defines the role played by the fourth kingdom. Again the ArtScroll reference states: “*In the vision seen by Daniel in Chapter 7, Rome undergoes a metamorphosis from the secular power of the old empire into the religious power of Christianity. The struggling faith adopted by the mighty empire, originally by Constantine I (Constantine the Great in 323 AD) and later by his successors, grew up to utilize its unique position as state religion of the Roman Empire and moved on to a period of unprecedented growth. Its power, whether temporal or spiritual, eclipsed that of kingdom and empires, thus throughout our exile, the Fourth Kingdom is represented by the Christian Church, conceived of, despite all its diverse forms, as one unit*”

*The Body of Messiah, if it is to be the real Body of Messiah Y'shua, must renounce its Roman roots, repent, and discover its Jewish roots. Galatians 4:26 states that Jerusalem is the mother of us all. So how can children of the same mother maintain that they are unrelated? The fact is Y'shua is Jewish. The entire talmidim, Sha'ul, even Luke and Apollos are all Jews. The Bible is a Jewish book! Christianity has this all wrong! The non-Jewish believers are to be grafted into a Jewish tree! There is no Gentile tree!*

### Synopsis of Chanukah

As we look into the history and celebration of *Chanukah*, is it not true that we need a “Rededication?” Is not our day in many ways similar to the times of these events? In fact, since we have been in “Roman times” and that which is first shall be last and God requires that which is past (compare with Ecc. 3:14,15; Matt. 19:30 and 20:16) then as we advance in history and time, we also retreat in history. The time before the coming of Messiah and the Tribulation are best understood by the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes—the times of *Chanukah*.

*“Blessed are you, Savior of Israel, who stopped the rush of the champion by the hand of your slave David, and delivered the camp of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan, the son of Saul, and his armor-bearer. In like manner, shut up this camp in the hand of your people Israel, and let them be ashamed of their army and their horsemen. Make them cowardly and melt the boldness of their strength, and let them tremble at their destruction. Strike them with the sword of those that love You, and let all who know Your name praise You with hymns.”*  
1 Maccabees 4:30

When *Judah Maccabee*, his family and the loyal Torah-keeping Jews of the 160's BCE fought against the Greeks, they fought more than a war for land. They fought for their freedom to be the people G-d had chosen them to be. They fought for their religious freedom! *Antiochus Epiphanes* had ordered pigs to be sacrificed in Jerusalem's Temple—they were to be cooked, the meat fed to the priests, and the juice poured on the altar. It is not hard to imagine the mess and the stench that must have been in the altar of G-d where no unclean animals had ever been sacrificed. The sanctuary of *Elohim* had been desecrated, desolated, and ruined... Eventually G-d gave the victory and the Jews recovered the Temple site. 1 *Maccabees* 4 describes the scene:

*“And Judah said, ‘Now that our enemies are crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it.’ And the whole army gathered together, and they went up to Mount Zion. And they found the sanctuary desolated and the altar polluted...and they tore open their clothes and uttered great lamentation and covered themselves with ashes, and fell on their faces to the ground, and when the ceremonial shofarim sounded they cried to heaven...And on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the ninth month, Kislev, they rose at dawn and offered a lawful sacrifice on the new altar of holocausts which they had made. The altar was dedicated, to the sound of zithers, harps and cymbals, at the same time of the year and on the same day on which the*

*pagans had originally profaned it. The whole people fell prostrate in adoration, praising to the skies Him who had made them so successful. For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar, joyfully offering holocausts, community sacrifices and thanksgiving. They ornamented the front of the Temple with crowns and bosses of gold, repaired the gates and the storerooms and fitted them with doors. There was no end to the rejoicing among the people, and the reproach of the pagans was lifted from them. Judah, with his brothers and the whole assembly of Israel made it a law that the days of the dedication of the altar should be celebrated yearly at the proper season, for eight days beginning on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month Kislev, with rejoicing and gladness.”*

### **Who were the real enemies?**

Some historians suggest that the Greek-Syrians, though they were certainly the Judeans’ foreign enemy, were not the Israel’s greatest enemy. Instead they suggest that “the villains of the story of *Chanukah* were the Jewish Hellenizers—a group of Jewish aristocrats who wished to form a Greek-polis, a Greek state. When segments of the people loyal to the *Torah* opposed these Hellenizers, they called upon their powerful supporter, *Antiochus Epiphanes*, to back them with Syrian troops. According to this view the real enemies were fellow Jews who sought assimilation in the form of Hellenization—thus, assimilation has always been the number 1 enemy of the people of Israel. Assimilation into the world has also been the number 1 enemy of the body of believers.

### ***Yeshua never attended Christmas but celebrated the Feast of Chanukah (Dedication)***

Consider the events and context given in *Yochanan* (John) chapter 10 at the time of *Yeshua*:

*“Then came Chanukah in Yerushalayim. It was winter, and Yeshua was walking around inside the Temple area, in Shlomo’s Colonnade. So the Judeans surrounded him and said to him, “How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us publicly!” Yeshua answered them, “I have already told you, and you don’t trust me. The works I do in my Father’s name testify on my behalf, but the reason you don’t trust is that you are not included among my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, I recognize them, they follow me, and I give them eternal life. They will absolutely never be destroyed, and no one will snatch them from my hands. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all; and no one can snatch from the Father’s hands. I and the Father are one.” Once again the Judeans picked up rocks in order to stone him. Yeshua answered them, “You have seen me do many good deeds that reflect the Father’s power; for which one of these deeds are you stoning me?” The Judeans replied, “We are not stoning you for any good deed, but for blasphemy—because you, who are only a man, are making yourself out to be G-d [Elohim].” Yeshua answered them, “Isn’t it written in your Torah, ‘**You people are Elohim**’? If he called ‘Elohim’ the people to whom the word of Elohim was addressed (and the Tanakh cannot be broken), then are you telling the one whom the Father set apart as holy and sent into the world, ‘You are committing blasphemy, just because I said, ‘I am a son of Elohim’? “If I am not doing deeds that reflect my Father’s power, don’t trust me. But if I am, then, even if you don’t trust me, trust the deeds; so that you may understand once and for all that the Father is united with me, and I am united with the Father.” One more time they tried to arrest him, but he slipped out of their hands.” (Yochanan (John) 10:22-39)*

When *Y’shua* affirmed his divinity (I and the Father are *echad*), he did so after first reminding the audience of the fact that “*the reason you don’t trust is that you are not included among my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, I recognize them, they follow me, and I give them eternal life.*” The parable of the Good Shepherd was given during the time of Chanukah! Being sheep that *sh’ma*, i.e., make themselves known, and follow the L-rd are the kind of sheep He is looking for in this Feast of *Chanukah*. Consider His words in Yochanan 10:8-20

*“All those who have come before me have been thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the gate; if someone enters through me, he will be safe and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, life in its fullest measure. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, since he isn’t a shepherd and the sheep aren’t his own, sees the wolf coming, abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf drags them off and scatters them. The hired worker behaves like this because that’s all he is, a hired worker; so it doesn’t matter to him what happens to the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own, and my own know me— just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father—and I lay down my life on behalf of the sheep. Also I have other sheep which are not from this pen; I need to bring them, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock, one shepherd. “This is why the Father loves me: because I lay down my life—in order to take it up again! No one takes it away from me; on the contrary, I lay it down of my own free will. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This is what my Father commanded me to do.” Again there was a split among the Judeans because of what he said. Many of them said, “He has a demon!” and “He’s meshugga! Why do you listen to him?” (John 10:8-21)*

### ***It is time for our very own Chanukah—the temple of the Ruach Elohim is defiled!***

What defiles a person? Is it what he eats, is it how he dresses, or is his religiosity? Let us look into the pages of the *B’rit Chadasha* and in the words of our *Mashiach*.

*What makes a person unclean is not what goes into his mouth; rather, what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him unclean! ... But what comes out of your mouth is actually coming from your heart, and that is what makes a person unclean. For out of the heart come forth wicked thoughts, murder, adultery and other kinds of sexual immorality, theft, lies, slanders... .These are what really make a person unclean, but eating without doing n’tilat-yadayim does not make a person unclean. (Matt 15:11, 18-20)*

*Yeshua answered them, "Yesha’yahu was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites - as it is written, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. Their worship of me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.’ "You depart from G-d's command and hold onto human tradition. Indeed," he said to them, "you have made a fine art of departing from G-d's command in order to keep your tradition!"*

*Thus, with your tradition which you had handed down to you, you nullify the Word of G-d! And you do other things like this." Then Yeshua called the people to him again and said, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand this! There is nothing outside a person which, by going into him, can make him unclean. Rather, it is the things that come out of a person which make a person unclean!" When he had left the people and entered the house, his talmidim asked him about the parable. He replied to them, "So you too are without understanding? Don't you see that nothing going into a person from outside can make him unclean? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and it passes out into the latrine." (Thus he declared all foods ritually clean.) "It is what comes out of a person," he went on, "that makes him unclean. For from within, out of a person's heart, come forth wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, arrogance, foolishness. All these wicked things come from within, and they make a person unclean." (Mark 7:6-9; 13-23)*

*We are aware that Torah is not for a person who is righteous, but for those who are heedless of Torah and rebellious, ungodly and sinful, wicked and worldly, for people who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral - both heterosexual and homosexual - slave dealers, liars, perjurers, and anyone who acts contrary to the sound teaching. (1 Tim 1:9-10)*

*To all who are themselves pure, everything is pure. But to those who are defiled and without trust, nothing is pure - even their minds and consciences have been defiled. They claim to know G-d, but with their actions they deny him. They are detestable and disobedient; they have proved themselves unfit to do anything good. (Titus 1:15-16)*

*See to it that no one misses out on G-d's grace, that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble and thus contaminates many, and that no one is sexually immoral, or godless like Esav, who in exchange for a single meal gave up his rights as the firstborn. (Heb 12:15-16)*

*So too the tongue is a tiny part of the body, yet it boasts great things. See how a little fire sets a whole forest ablaze! Yes, the tongue is a fire, a world of wickedness. The tongue is so placed in our body that it defiles every part of it, setting ablaze the whole of our life; and it is set on fire by Gei-Hinnom itself. or people have tamed and continue to tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures; but the tongue no one can tame - it is an unstable and evil thing, full of death-dealing poison! With it we bless ADONAI, the Father; and with it we curse people, who were made in the image of G-d. Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing! Brothers, it isn't right for things to be this way. (James 3:5-10)*

*And S'dom, 'Amora and the surrounding cities, following a pattern like theirs, committing sexual sins and perversions, lie exposed as a warning of the everlasting fire awaiting those who must undergo punishment. Likewise, these people, with their visions, defile their own flesh, despise G-dly authority and insult angelic beings. (Jude 1:7-8)*

### **Are we supposed to defile G-d's Temple?**

*Don't you know that you people are G-d's temple and that G-d's Spirit lives in you? So if anyone destroys G-d's temple, G-d will destroy him. For G-d's temple is holy, and you yourselves are that temple. (1 Cor 3:16-17)*

*These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; they follow the Lamb wherever he goes; they have been ransomed from among humanity as firstfruits for G-d and the Lamb. (Rev 14:4)*

*Nothing impure may enter it, nor anyone who does shameful things or lies; the only ones who may enter are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev 21:27)*

### **Do we have any defiled temples out there?**

I raise my hands with yours. Let us gather around the altar, and seek the L-rd while He may yet be found. Let us ask *Y'shua* to cleanse us, cleanse our hearts, cleanse our minds, cleanse our bodies, cleanse our spirits. Let us approach the throne of grace and seek to be purified with the Blood of Messiah *Y'shua*. Let the lights of *Chanukah* illuminate our bankrupt condition as the light of the pure oil of the Messiah's love burns and woos us back into perfect relationship with Him. *He being merciful forgives iniquity and does not destroy...*