

## A Time of Re-Dedication (Chanukah)

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

The root word (תּוֹנֵן) used in this Scripture is the very same root word for the Feast of Dedication, that is, Chanukah. If we look up the definition of this word, we are supposed to consecrate, dedicate and educate our children in the way of Adonai (*Haderech Adonai*). Chanukah is a festival 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... 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” From the ArtScroll Mesorah Series Chanukah pp. 35-36*

The Body of Messiah, if it is to be the real Body of Messiah Yeshua, 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 Yeshua is Jewish. The entire talmidim, Paul, even Luke and Apollos are all Jews. The Bible is a Jewish book. Non-Jewish believers are to be grafted into a Jewish tree and there is no Gentile tree!

As we look into the history and celebration of *Chanukah*, the Dedication of the cleansed Temple (Rededication), it is true that we often need rededication ourselves. Our current times are similar to the times of these events. Since we have been in “Roman times” and that which is first shall be last, and God requires that which is past (See Ecc. 3:14,15; Matt. 19:30; 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 also understood by the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the times of *Chanukah*.

*“Blessed are you, Savior of Israel, who stopped the rush of the champion by the hand of your slave David, 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 psalms.” 1 Maccabees 4:30*

When *Judah Maccabee*, his family and the loyal Torah-keeping Jews of around 160’s BCE fought against the Greeks, they fought more than a war for land. They fought for their freedom to be the people God had chosen them to be. In other words 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 blood poured on the altar. It is not hard to imagine the mess and the stench that must have been in the altar of God where no unclean animals had ever been sacrificed. The sanctuary of God had been desecrated, desolated, and ruined... Eventually God gave the victory and the Jews recovered the Temple (1 *Maccabees* 4:36-40; 52-59)

*“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.”*

Were the Greeks 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, “*The villains of the story of Chanukah were Jewish Hellenizers – a group of Jewish aristocrats who wished to form a Greek-polis, a Greek state.*” When segments of the people who were 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, it is believed that assimilation has always been the number 1 enemy of the Jewish people and the children of Israel. Assimilation into the world and the world system has also been the number 1 enemy of the body of believers.

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

Isn’t our task to ‘Do What Yeshua Would Do?’ (WWJD). Let us consider the narrative and context given in the tenth chapter of John when *Yeshua* was on the earth – the well-known parable of the Good Shepherd.

*“<sup>22</sup>Then came Hanukkah (literally rededication); it was winter in Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup>Yeshua was walking in the Temple around Solomon’s Colonnade. <sup>24</sup>Then the Judean leaders surrounded Him, saying, “How long will You hold us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us outright!” <sup>25</sup>Yeshua answered them, “I told you, but you don’t believe! The works I do in My Father’s name testify concerning Me. <sup>26</sup>But you don’t believe, because you are not My sheep. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life! They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one.” <sup>31</sup>Again the Judean leaders picked up stones to stone Him. <sup>32</sup>Yeshua answered them, “I’ve shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone Me?” <sup>33</sup>The Judean leaders answered, “We aren’t stoning you for a good work, but for blasphemy. Though You are a man, You make Yourself God!” <sup>34</sup>Yeshua answered them, “Isn’t it written in your Writings (Ps. 82:6), ‘I have said you are gods’? <sup>35</sup>If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), <sup>36</sup>do you say of Him, the One the Father set apart and sent into the world, ‘You speak blasphemy,’ because I said, ‘I am Ben-Elohim’? <sup>37</sup>“If I don’t do the works of My Father, don’t believe Me! <sup>38</sup>But if I do, even if you don’t trust Me, trust the deeds. Then you may come to know and continue to understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father.” <sup>39</sup>Therefore they tried to capture Him again, but He escaped from their hand.” (John 10:22-39)*

When *Yeshua* affirmed his divinity (I and the Father are *echad*), he did so after first reminding the audience of the fact that *“<sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life!”* The parable of the Good Shepherd was given during the time of Chanukah. Being sheep that hear (*shema*) {those that make themselves recognizable by the Lord, and follow the Lord} are the kind of sheep He is looking for in this Feast of Chanukah. Consider His words: *“<sup>8</sup>All those who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate! If anyone comes in through Me, he will be saved. He will come and go and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal, slaughter, and destroy. I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly! <sup>11</sup>“I am the Good Shepherd The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired worker is not the shepherd, and the sheep are not his down. He sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees. Then the wolf snatches and scatters the sheep. <sup>13</sup>The man is only a hired hand and does not care about the sheep. <sup>14</sup>“I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that are not from this fold; those also I must lead, and they will listen to My voice. So there shall be one flock, one Shepherd. <sup>17</sup>“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, so that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father” (John 10:8-18)*