

## A Maccabean Mandate

*“<sup>23</sup> but we proclaim Messiah crucified—a stumbling block to Jewish people and foolishness to Gentile people, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called (both Jewish and Greek people), Messiah, the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1:23-24)*

We in KS have a Maccabean Mandate. What is a Maccabean Mandate? To uphold, protect and safeguard the truths and law of God for therein is our power. However, to stand for these things puts us at odds even with our own people. The Maccabees were not very popular; in fact they were strongly hated. In the eyes of their fellow Jews they jeopardized Israel’s survival. Conformity was the easier path; do as the Greeks do, do as the king says. We live in a thoroughly liberal and democratically aligned city.

We don’t need things that will make us feel good as much as we need the power of God to enable us to do and be good. The dynamic power of God is made manifest in our desire to die to self by doing the right thing. As Rabbi Noah Weinberg rightly stated: *“Figure out what you’re willing to die for, and then live for it.”* That could have been the motto of the Maccabees and it certainly needs to be our motto since we desire to live for *Yeshua*.

*Hanukkah* celebrates the valor of an elderly priest named *Mattathias*, who along with his five sons valiantly stood up against a powerful foe in defiance. There were things they just would not tolerate – like idolatry, nor would they remain idle and silent while the rest of the nation was willing to abandon God’s heritage and covenant. They were not popular people. God used *Mattathias* and his sons to rally the faithful remnant of that day in the same way He is using the Messianic Jewish movement at this critical hour in human history.

The term, title or name *“Maccabee”* is not a surname; it’s actually an acronym for *Mi kamocho b’elim Adonai*, meaning: *“Who is like You among gods?”* *“Maccabee”* is a statement of ultimate dedication to the One God, the God of Israel. It’s grievous to see the rampant idolatry. The strange irony is that our people celebrate the heroism of the Maccabees while at the same time would reject everything they stood for!

There is an *“Immaculate Deception”* that comes by way of observing eight days that in reality is a contradiction to present day Jewish life. In other words, *Hanukkah* is a victory over the threat of assimilation into a pagan culture, but now we celebrate it while being fully immersed in that pagan culture! *“The Immaculate Deception”* is subtle and it takes place over a course of time. It doesn’t just come on the scene suddenly and people change, no, it comes incrementally, little by little, lie after lie, falsehood upon falsehood until that time when the lie has been spread so far for so long that people accept a lie as truth.

In an article written by Sara Yoheved Rigler, titled *“I Wanna Be a Maccabee,”* she paints an accurate picture of the alluring features of secularism. It gives us some insight into what the Maccabees experienced. She writes:

*For the first 160 years after Alexander the Great’s peaceful takeover of Judea, the Greek Hellenists allowed their cultural influence to gradually win over the Jewish population. The urban elite of Jerusalem adopted Greek language, dress, and artistic and cultural mores, including the hitherto unknown pastime of engaging in sports. The choice of the cosmopolitan residents of Judea to become Hellenists was simply conforming to a world trend. Greek culture, after all, was modern, enlightened, scientific, and universalistic, while Judaism was widely regarded as old-fashioned, tribal, and restrictive. In that era, taking on the Greek lifestyle was a prerequisite to becoming materially successful and culturally sophisticated. They built a sports stadium to the south of the Holy Temple where young Jews, including priests, were competed naked. Many had their circumcision surgically reversed, for the Greeks idolized nature and spurned circumcision, the Jews’ sign of their covenant with God...*

Isn’t this what it’s all come down to? Have you examined the various Jewish websites that equate circumcision to child abuse? Have you noticed how the environmental movement is more of a religion rather than a science? Have you noticed the latest fashions? Have you seen the ill effects of political correctness? Have we not witnessed the declining morality whereby nobody blushes over anything now?

We are the ones who today stand in the same place the Maccabees once stood. While others are going after the current fads and cultural trends we have not turned our backs on the God who revealed Himself to us through the power of a new birth experience: <sup>14</sup>“Now therefore, fear Adonai and worship Him in sincerity and in truth. Get rid of the gods that your fathers had worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt, and worship Adonai. <sup>15</sup>If it seems bad to you to worship Adonai, then choose for yourselves today whom you will serve—whether the gods that your fathers worshipped that were beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will worship Adonai!” (Joshua 24:14-15)

Dr. Martin Luther King brilliantly observed the following: “*The Church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the Church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.*”

Regardless of what the man in the street thinks, Messianic Judaism needs to be a Jewish voice that is unwavering in its spiritual and moral witness to the world! We are the remnant according to faith and I don't say that to be boasting or arrogant – the plain truth is WE KNOW THE MESSIAH! We are doing the work; we are the ones who are fulfilling the call to be a “light to the nations.” Our synagogues are the best places to witness the unity between Jew and Gentile, Jew and Christian, Arab and Jew and it is in our synagogues where His house becomes a house of prayer for all peoples. *Chag Hanukkah Sameah!*