

CHANUKAH

Some people may question the inclusion of Chanukah as a remembrance time period that is to be set aside and esteemed in as much as Chanukah is not mentioned in the Torah. However the Tanach reveals that Chanukah is predicted in prophetic writings.

The vision of the prophet Dani'el is an amazingly detailed description of the events surrounding Chanukah as he describes the coming kingdoms that would have an impact upon the nation Yisra'el.

Dani'el 8:21-22: “And the male goat is the sovereign of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first sovereign.” “And that horn was broken and four other sovereigns stood up in its place, but not in its power.”

Verse 21 speaks about Alexander the Great, who conquered the Persians. Verse 22 refers to the four kingdoms that came out of Alexander's empire after his death. Yet we see further specific details in the next three verses.

Dani'el 8: 23-25: “And in the latter time of their (the four sovereign) rule, when the transgressors have filled up their measure, a sovereign, fierce of face and skilled at intrigues, shall stand up.” “And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, and he shall destroy incredibly, and shall prosper and thrive, and destroy mighty men, and the set-apart people.” “And through his skill he shall make deceit prosper in his hand, and hold himself to be great in his heart, and destroy many who are at ease, and even stand against the Prince of princes (Yahweh of hosts) – yet without hand he shall be easily defeated.”

Verses 23 and 24 are a reference to Antiochus who desecrated the set-apart House of Yahweh, destroyed mighty men and the set-apart people of Yahweh. Verse 25 shows that he will consider himself great, destroy many people and stand against Yahweh. According to 2 Maccabees 5:21, we see that in his arrogance, he was brash enough to think that he could make ships sail on dry land and men walk over the sea. It refers to the peace treaties that he made and then broke and at the end he died through a miraculous illness. Please see 2 Maccabees 9:4-10.

Chanukah is mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures with such detail that some scholars have suggested that Dani'el was written after the fact and not prophetically. However we do find that the Prophet Dani'el was included in the Septuagint – LXX when the Greek translation was first made in the 3rd century BCE. What an important time of history to understand.

“This desolation (of the Set-apart Temple) came to pass according to the prophecy of Dani'el, which was given four hundred and eight years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that Temple worship for some time.” Please see Josephus - ‘Antiquities of the Jews’ Book X11 – Chapter V11: 6.

Historical background:

The account of Chanukah is the culmination of a story that began 162 years earlier, with the conquest of the Middle East and Asia by Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE). In 332 BCE, on one of his military campaigns, Alexander conquered Yisra'el, which until then had been a vassal state of the Persian Empire. For the Hebrew people, the encounter of Torah ethics and morality with the pagan creed of ancient Greece proved to be a traumatic shock and a definite clash of cultures, which threatened to undermine the very existence of Yisra'el.

Upon Alexander's death his empire was apportioned to his four major military commanders. These portions developed into four empires: Antiochid, Selucid, Bactrian and Ptolemaic. He had established Greek as the universal language of the East; Greek culture penetrated far into Asia; the trade network and trade routes flourished. These factors induced the enlightened Hellenistic age, prepared the way for Roman rule and assisted the spread of Christianity as a world religion out from the Mediterranean's shore.

After Alexander's death (323 BCE) the Land of Yisra'el became a province of Syria under the rule of the Selucid dynasty. The fanatical persecution by the Selucids is predicted along with the miraculous deliverance by Yahweh! Greek culture was making serious inroads among the Yisra'elites. Many of them, especially those of the wealthy aristocracy, began adopting Greek customs and beliefs. They were called "Hellenists;" and the Greek way of life they followed is called "Hellenism," a term derived from the word *Hellas*, which means "Greece."

In the third century BCE, we see the invention of the Septuagint, meaning "seventy", and often abbreviated by the Roman numeral LXX. Most scholars accept that the earliest translated Greek versions of the Hebrew Tanach were created in the 3rd century BCE in Egypt for Greek speaking Hebrews. It has been shown in history, that at the request of King Ptolemy 11(285-246 BCE) of Egypt, 72 elder scribes of Yisra'el translated the Hebrew Tanach into Greek in seventy days in Alexander Egypt.

When a new king, Antiochus IV (also called Antiochus Epiphanes), ascended to the Selucid dynasty throne in Syria in 175 BCE, the stage was set for a historic confrontation between Hellenist depravity and the defenders of the Torah. Under Antiochus rule, Yerushalayim began to look like a Greek city. Hellenistic Hebrews studied the Greek language, literature, and gradually abandoned the Torah and its suggested lifestyle, eating non-kosher food and participating in worship of the Greek gods. Please see 1 Maccabees 1:1-64.

Anger at the imposed Hellenization came to a head in 167 BCE, in Modi'in, a small town about 8 miles west of Yerushalayim where Mattityahu and his five sons were living.

According to the Josephus - 'Antiquities of the Jews' Book X11 – Chapter V1: 1; Mattitayahu was the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asamoneus, a priest of the order of Joarib, and a citizen of Yerushalayim.

When the forces of Antiochus arrived in Modi'in to erect an altar to Zeus and tried to persuade Mattityahu to offer a sacrifice to their god, Mattityahu declared his loyalty to Yahweh. As he was speaking, a Hellenistic Hebrew approached the altar to offer his pig. Mattityahu and his five sons pulled out the short swords they had been hiding. Mattityahu mounted the altar and killed the Hellenistic Hebrew, calling out, "Whoever clings to Torah and is steadfast in the covenant, let him join me!

"Their act of defiance marked the beginning of a guerrilla war of those loyal to the Torah against the Syrians and the Hellenists. When Mattityahu died the following year, his son Yahudah – Maccabeus became the leader of the rebellion. Please see 'Antiquities of the Jews' Book X11 – Chapter V1: 1-4 and 1 Maccabees 2:1-28.

In the end, Yahudah and his men captured Yerushalayim and marched toward the Beit HaMikdash, the Set-apart place of Yahweh. They were devastated by what they saw: the sanctuary in desolation, the altar desecrated, the walls of the sanctuary breached, grass sprouting in the courtyards – a heart breaking spectacle. Wasting no time, Yahudah issued orders to cleanse the temple, to tear down the altar that had been defiled, and to build a new altar. The men repaired the walls of the sanctuary, purified the set-apart vessels, and built a new makeshift **seven branched menorah** to replace the golden menorah that had been stolen.

On the twenty-fifth of the ninth Hebrew month (Kislev), 164 BCE, and three years to the day after the Syrians and Greeks had defiled the set-apart place and sacrificed a pig to their idol, the Hasmoneans rededicated the House of Yahweh and reinstated the offering of sacrifices to Yahweh in a feast and ceremony of offerings that lasted eight days. Please see 'Antiquities of the Jews' Book X11 – Chapter V11: 6-7, 1 Maccabees 4:1-61 and 2 Maccabees 10:1-8.

When the Hasmonean priests searched for oil for the Temple **seven branched menorah**, they found one jar of undefiled oil, which is said to have lasted for the eight days of the dedication of Yahweh's set-apart place. In 1 Maccabees 4:52-56 we do not see a clear picture of the reason for celebrating for eight days. The miracle of the oil is not mentioned. Most likely the origin of the original celebration at Yerushalayim was based upon the initial dedication of Solomon at the first temple and, as well, the fact that the Hasmoneans were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles late, in the ninth month, as they could not properly do so when they were fighting the Greeks in the hills around Yerushalayim. Every dedication of the Set-apart House of Yahweh was done so in connection with either Pesach-Feast of Unleavened Bread or the Feast of Succot. The historian Josephus indicates that there was a great eight day feast, but gives no glimpse of any miracle relating to the Temple oil. The eight day feast that Josephus refers to could have been the Feast of Succot with the attached eighth day of Shemini Atzeret.

Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon – page #335: As a root verb – the Hebrew transliteration is 'chanach.' There are two meanings – first; to train up a youth as shown in Psalm 22:6 and second; to dedicate or to consecrate as in 1 Kings 8:63. The Strong's number is 2596.

As a noun – n.f. - the Hebrew transliteration is 'chanukah.' The meaning is shown as dedication - consecration. The Strong's number is 2598.

Prior House of Yahweh Dedications:

Dedication or rededication of the first set-apart House of Yahweh in Yerushalayim:

1 Melakim/Kings 8:61-66 – Shelomoh dedicated the House of Yahweh with fourteen days plus the eighth great day. The first seven days were the dedication and the last seven were the Feast of Tabernacles plus the eighth day.

2 Dibre haYamim/Chronicles 7:1-22 – Shelomoh dedicated the House of Yahweh, and honored the Feast of Tabernacles, a total of 15 days.

2 Dibre haYamim/Chronicles 29:1-36 – King Hizqiyahu repaired and cleansed the House of Yahweh eight days and they finished setting it apart by dedication in eight days. His father, King Achaz, had desecrated the House of Yahweh.

Ezrah 6:14-22 – The House of Yahudah Yisra'el was building the Set-apart House of Yahweh and they were pleased and blessed through the prophesying of Chaggi the prophet and Zecharyah (520-518 BCE).

Nehemyahu 8:1-18 – The reading of the Torah, beginning the first day of the seventh month and the Feast of Tabernacles of eight days. Rebuilding of the House of Yahweh was completed in 515 BCE.

The Hasmoneans:

2 Maccabees 5:21-7:42 – The oppression of Antiochus.

2 Maccabees 1:8-10 – The observation of the Feast of Tabernacles in the month of Kislev, the ninth month. This text was written in the year of 143 BCE.

2 Maccabees 2:1-4 – About Yermiyahu hiding Temple articles.

2 Maccabees 10:1-8 - Recovering the Temple on 25th of the ninth month. Recalled that the dedication was like the Feast of Tabernacles.

1 Maccabees 4:36-61 – Cleansing of the House of Yahweh and the rededication.

The Prophecies of Chaggi and Zecharyah:

Chaggai and ZecharYah were the two prominent prophets of Yahweh active during the beginning of the second Temple period.

Chaggai means festal or festive. He was a prophet around 520 BCE.

Chaggai 2:10, 15, 18, 20, 21 and 22

Chaggai issues a challenge to the people of Yahudah to repent and begin building the Set-apart House of Yahweh. The people accept his challenge and prepare the material for building the House of Yahweh.

It is clear, from verses 15 and 18 above, that the construction of the second Temple of Yahweh was to begin on the next day, the 25th of the ninth month. Several hundred years later, that very same Temple was rededicated on the 25th of the ninth month, and the rabbinically ordained holiday of Chanukah was instituted to commemorate the rededication event.

ZecharYah means Yahweh remembers. He was a prophet from 520-518 BCE.

The writings of ZecharYah commence in the second year of the Persian Sovereign Darius, Yet, while Chaggi had emphasized primarily the nationalistic aspects of the redemption process, ZecharYah delivers a more spiritual message.

In verses 18 and 19 of chapter one, we see that ZecharYah sees the four smaller horns of the prophesy in Dani'el 8:21-22. The four smaller empires that come from Alexander's great empire constantly fought among themselves for territorial advantage.

In ZecharYah 2:10 we see the following: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Tzion! For look, I am coming, and shall dwell in your midst," declares Yahweh.

The prophet begins by telling the people to rejoice, as the Shechina of Yahweh is returning. This is followed by a charge to the High Priest, Yehoshua, to be sure to follow the way of Yahweh, His commandments and to work with Zerubbavel. The prophesy climaxes with the vision of the seven branched menorah surrounded by two olive trees; ZecharYah 3:8-4:14.

ZecharYah 4:6; "This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbavel, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Ruach,' said Yahweh of hosts."

In chapter 4:12-14 we see the following: "What are these two olive branches (trees) which empty *golden oil* from themselves by means of the two gold pipes?" And he answered me and said, "Do you know what these are?" And I said, "No my master."

And he said, "These are the two anointed sons of *fresh golden anointing oil of the spirit* who stand beside the Master of all the earth."

The two olive trees of the renewed nation Yisra'el are the tribes of the house of Yahudah and the tribes of the house of Yisra'el - Ephraim, the whole house of Yisra'el. This matter comes to pass when the *fresh* renewed covenant of YirmeYahu 31:31-34 is brought about by Yahweh. In this vision, the two olive trees supply a continuous supply of *golden oil* to the **seven branched menorah of Yahweh**.

ZecharYah 9:1-17: Here we see that Yisra'el will succeed in the future war over the nation of Greece. This is a prophecy about a future war with Greece. Yisra'el succeeded in the Maccabean revolt of 168 B.C.E. against Greece, thus preserving the nation of Yisra'el for the coming of haMashiach. In ZecharYah 11: 4-17 we see that Yisra'el will reject her coming Mashiach and be led astray by false prophets.

Has the Shechina returned to Yisra'el?

Unfortunately, the prophecies of Chaggai and ZecharYah – of prosperity, sovereignty and the shechina returning – were not fulfilled in that generation, nor in the following generations. Even today the temple lies in ruin and Mount Moriah is in the control of gentiles.

We believe that the primary reasons for Chanukah were the military victories over the enemies of Yahweh and the rededication of the Set-apart House of Yahweh. Yet, why is it that we find that Rabbinic Judaism in later generations emphasize primarily the miracle of the eight days of oil?

We must recall the word of Yahweh to Zerubbavel, “Not by might nor power, but by My Ruach haQodesh,” said Yahweh. The dedication of the Set-apart House of Yahweh is a spiritual matter for His redeemed ones.

Should we give esteem to Chanukah by lighting a chanukiah or the seven branched menorah of the Set-apart House of Yahweh?

Chanukiah means a chanukah candelabrum of nine lights.

Menorah ‘eht nehrotahah shev’ah’ means lampstand of seven lamps. Please see Exodus 37:20 & 23.

What is the supernal significance of numbers?

Seven – Denotes Spiritual perfection. It is the number or hallmark of the Ruach haQodesh of Yahweh – the *golden oil* of the Ruach of Yahweh.

The Author and Giver of life - Seven is the number that regulates every period of incubation and gestation in insects, birds, animals and man.

Nine – Denotes Finality of judgment. It is 3x3, the product of which is completeness.

Ibrim 10: 9-10 & 12; Then Yahushua said, “See, I come to do Your desire. O Yahweh ‘Elohim” He takes away the first to establish the second.

10) By that desire of Yahushua, we have been set apart through the offering of the manifested body of Yahushua once and for all.

12) For Yahushua, having offered one slaughter *offering* for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of Yahweh ‘Elohim.

Yochanan/John 8:12 and 9:5: Yahushua declared Himself to be the “**Light of the world.**”

5) While I am manifested in the world, “I am the light of the world.”

Yahushua is the completeness of sin atonement for all time, and for all nations!

Yochanan/John 10:22-23:

At that time the Chanukah came to be in Yerushalayim, and it was winter. And Yahushua was walking in the Set-apart Place, in the porch of Shelomoh.

Chapters 9-10 of Yochanan/John are deemed by Messianic scholars to have taken place during the time of Chanukah.

The editors of the *Artscroll Mesorah Series* state: “**Then the light is kindled to give inspiration, for the light and Ruach of Yahweh must burn brightly in our hearts.**” (Chanukah, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, 1981, pg.104)

Then this above quote, from *Artscroll Mesorah*, is a sense of completeness and a logical conclusion, because Chanukah is a celebration of deliverance and dedication, it has become a time to express praise and thanks for **Yahweh of hosts being hamoshee’ah – the Savior, hamahshiach – the Messiah and the Living Word -Torah through Yahushua and in Yahweh’s Name. For Yahushua, the right arm –Yahweh of hosts is the Redeemer of Sovereign Yahweh.** Please see YeshaYahu/Isaiah 8:10-18 and 44:6-8.

