

THE UNDYING FLAME
CHRIST THE LIGHT IN HANUKKAH–PT 2
JOHN 10:22-24

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Introduction

We began last week to look at the **JEWISH** celebration of **HANUKKAH** that started at **SUNSET** on **SUNDAY** of last week and ended on **MONDAY** of this week.

HANUKKAH is an **eight-day celebration** beginning each year on the **25th** of the **JEWISH** month **KISLEV**, which usually falls in **DECEMBER**.

Although overshadowed by **CHRISTMAS**, **HANUKKAH**, (which is also known as **THE FEAST OF DEDICATION** and **THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**) we said graphically illuminates the **MESSIAH'S** life and ministry.

We looked at **THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HANUKKAH** last week and saw how that it is a festive holiday among the **JEWS** because it commemorates the bravery and resolution shown by the people of **ISRAEL** in the revolt against their heathen oppressors. (Specifically, the **MACCABBEAN** revolt against the **SYRIAN GREEKS** in **167-164 B.C.**)

Although commonly known as the **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**, **HANUKKAH** actually means **DEDICATION!** That's because the **JEWS** liberated the **TEMPLE** and **REDEDICATED** it to the service of **GOD**.

We saw this holiday in the **SCRIPTURES** and saw how **JESUS** was in **JERUSALEM** at the **TEMPLE**, no doubt for the celebration of **HANUKKAH** as recorded in *John 10:22-24* where it is called "**THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.**"

We also looked last week at **THE MENORAH OF HANUKKAH** (the special candelabra associated with the celebration of it. If you missed last week's message let me encourage you to go listen to that or print out my notes and read them.

I don't want to spend a long time in reviewing last week because we have a couple more things regarding **HANUKKAH** that we need to look at.

To begin with tonight let's turn to *Isaiah 42: 1-4*.

III. THE UNDYING FLAME OF HANUKKAH.

Let's pause for a moment at the **MENORAH** and contemplate its meaning. When we look at it, we see a beautiful portrait of our **MESSIAH**. Each candle is specially lit by the **SHAMASH**, the **SERVANT** candle.

SCRIPTURE teaches us that **JESUS**, the **MESSIAH**, is **GOD'S SHAMASH**—the **SERVANT** of the **LORD**.
(Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 20:28)

Philippians 2:5–8—“5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

JESUS, the **MESSIAH**, was and is the **LIGHT OF MEN!**

John 1:4-5—“In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

John 1:9—“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

John 8:12—“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

The **LIGHT OF SALVATION**, which **JESUS THE MESSIAH** is and preached, was sent to both **JEWS** and **GENTILES**. **HE** desires all **JEWS** and **GENTILES** to partake of the **SALVATION HE** provided when **HE** became the **PERFECT SACRIFICE** for the sins of the world.

John 1:29—“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

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Isaiah 9:2—“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

Isaiah 49:6—“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Matthew 12:17-21 (Cf. Isaiah 42:1-3)

And **JESUS**, this **SHAMASH** or **SERVANT**, is the **LIGHT OF THE WORLD!** **HE** is the **TRUE LIGHT** that came into the world and illuminates us all. **HE** is the **ETERNAL** and **UNDYING FLAME**, which spreads its **LIGHT** one candle at a time.

And it is the **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**, the **SHAMASH**, the **ONE WHO** in the **TEMPLE** boldly declared **HIS DIVINE** identity, **WHO** is the true **EPIPHANES**, (meaning “**THE MANIFEST GOD!**”)

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES was a cheap counterfeit whose flame sputtered briefly and then died out.

The rededication of the **TEMPLE** was a turning point in **JEWISH** history. But that magnificent **TEMPLE** no longer stands.

The **NEW TESTAMENT** teaches that each one of us—each individual illuminated by the **SHAMASH, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**—is now the **TEMPLE OF GOD**.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20— “19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God’s”

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2 Corinthians 6:16–18—“16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

How can we **DEDICATE** or **REDEDICATE** this personal **TEMPLE OF GOD?** The answer is found in the two prominent symbols of **HANUKKAH, LIGHT** and **OIL**.

Matthew 5:14-16—“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Do we let our **LIGHT** so shine before men that they glorify our **FATHER** in **HEAVEN?** Or do we choose to hide our **LIGHT** under a bushel?

How is our **OIL** burning? Do you feel like perhaps you are a quart low? Maybe you feel like all you have left is one day’s supply. Burn that today and the **LORD HIMSELF** will supply the **OIL** needed for tomorrow!

Do you recall the song we sang as children?
“Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning, burning, burning,
Give me oil in my lamp I pray.
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning, burning, burning,
Burning till the break of day!”

It is reassuring to remember that the **BIBLE** teaches that more **OIL** is always available when that **UNDYING FLAME** has been ignited in our souls.

IV. HANUKKAH AND JEWISH EVANGELISM.

One of the themes of HANUKKAH is the fight that took place against *“assimilation”* into the GREEK culture! ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES wanted the JEWS to cast aside their RELIGION and ASSIMILATE into GREEK HELLENISM.

The MACCABEES refused to *assimilate* into the pagan GREEK HELLENISTIC culture around them. (Which was a good thing!)

Today, JEWS (especially religious JEWS) strongly oppose *assimilation* into the *“GENTILE WORLD”*. This can be seen even in the very observance of HANUKKAH.

In ISRAEL, this minor holiday is more of a *“children’s holiday”* However, HANUKKAH is a more prominent celebration among JEWISH people in AMERICA because CHRISTMAS is celebrated around the same time.

By elevating the importance of HANUKKAH, it helps prevent JEWISH children from *“assimilating”* into the *“ways of the GENTILES.”*

Understanding this JEWISH mentality may help us in our evangelism when it comes to evangelizing JEWS. To many JEWS, the thought of BELIEVING on JESUS is a step toward *assimilation* with GENTILES.

So, how can we deal with such an attitude? The very first step is to inform them that JESUS was a JEW who came to the JEWS!

Many JEWS first thought about JESUS is that HE was the *“first CHRISTIAN”* (i.e. NOT JEWISH!). They need to see that BELIEVING on JESUS is NOT about them leaving their fellow JEWS and assimilating into the GENTILE population.

It is about understanding and BELIEVING that JESUS is the PROMISED JEWISH MESSIAH, foretold by JEWISH PROPHETS in the JEWISH SCRIPTURES!

We said HANUKKAH is sometimes referred to as the *“MIRACLE OF LIGHTS.”* The JEWISH nation was called to be a *“light to the Gentiles”* according to *Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6*. It is important for JEWS to understand that BELIEVING on JESUS will NOT extinguish their JEWISHNESS but rather make their light to shine based on their faith in JESUS their MESSIAH!

JOHN recorded that JESUS *“was the true light”* (*John 1:9a*). At the *“feast of dedication”* (*John 10:22*), *“Jesus walked in the Temple”* (*John 10:23*) during that celebration of light, HANUKKAH.

This holiday week of HANUKKAH can be used to point JEWS to HIM WHO is truly the *“light of the world”* (*John 8:12*)

CONCLUSION

So, during HANUKKAH each year let us focus on the MENORAH, and remember that we have been illuminated by *THE SHAMASH, THE SERVANT*, and we have an eternal supply of OIL to keep the UNDYING FLAME burning brightly in our hearts throughout the year.

Some parts were adapted from Steven Ger (Th.M. 94), a Messianic Jew, who is founder and director of Sojourner Ministries. He is also the producer of the video, The Unleavened Messiah: A Portrait of Christ in the Passover.

Other parts were adapted from an article by Daniel Abraham, a Jewish believer serving as a Pastor in Israel. That article “Hanukkah: A Miracle Of Lights” was published in “The Everlasting Nation” December 2021