

~FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION (266)

[Hebrew, *chanuk-kah*']

.. Festival Customs

- The observance of the **Festival of Dedication** Hebrew, *chanuk-kah*' commemorates the recovery of Jewish independence from Syro-Grecian domination and the rededication to Yehowah of the temple at Jerusalem, which had been desecrated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who called himself *The-os' E-pi-pha-nes'* or **God Manifest**.

- He built an altar on top of the great altar on which the daily burnt offering had formerly been presented. [1 Maccabees 1:54-59, AT] On this occasion **Chislev 25,168 B.C.E.** to show his hatred and contempt for Yehowah, the God of the Jews, and to defile His temple to the utmost, Antiochus sacrificed swine on the altar and had the broth he had made from some of its flesh sprinkled all over the temple.

- He also burned the temple gates, pulled down the priests chambers, and carried away the golden altar as well as the table of showbread and the golden lampstand. Later, the temple of Zerubbabel was rededicated to the pagan god Zeus of Olympus.

- Two years later Judas Maccabaeus recaptured the city and the temple. The sanctuary was desolate, weeds were growing in the temple courts. Judas tore down the old defiled altar and built a new altar of unhewn stones.

- Judas had temple vessels made and he brought the altar of incense, the table of showbread, and the lampstand into the temple. After the temple was purged of defilement the rededication took place on **Chislev 25,165 B.C.E.**, exactly three years to the day after Antiochus had made his sacrifice on the altar in worship of the pagan god. The daily or continual burnt offerings were renewed. [1 Maccabees 4:36-54][2 Maccabees 10:1-9, AT]

.. Festival Customs

- The very nature of the **festival** made it a time of great rejoicing. There is some resemblance to the **Festival** of Booths in the manner of its observance. The celebration lasted eight days from Chislev 25 onward. [1 Maccabees 4:59]

- There was a great blaze of light in the courts of the temple, and all private dwellings were lighted up with decorative lamps. The Talmud refers to it as the **Feast of Illumination**. Later on, some had the practice of displaying eight lamps on the first night and reducing the number on each night by one, others starting with one and increasing to eight.
- The lamps were placed near doors leading to the street not only so that they would illuminate the house within but also so that all on the outside would see the light. Accompanying the lighting of the lamps was the singing of songs extolling God the Deliverer of Israel. Josephus says about the initiation of the festival.
- So much pleasure did they find in the renewal of their customs and in unexpectedly obtaining the right to have their own service after so long a time, that they made a Law that their descendants should celebrate the restoration of the temple service for eight days.
- And from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call the festival of Lights, giving this name to it, I think, from the fact that the right to worship appeared to us at a time when we hardly dared hope for it. [*Jewish Antiquities*, XII, 324,325, vii, 7] Laborious work was allowed, as it was not considered a Sabbath.
- There were two former temple dedications, that of the first temple by Solomon and of the second built by Zerubbabel, that were solemnly celebrated after the building work was completed. But there was no anniversary **festival** in commemoration afterward, as there was of this rededication of the second temple by Judas Maccabaeus.
- Unlike the three great festivals, which all males were obligated to attend at Jerusalem, the **Festival of Dedication** could be celebrated in their various cities, as was the case with the Festival of Purim.
- Three times in the year you are to celebrate a **festival** to me. (*Exodus 23:14*)
- You will keep the **festival** of unfermented cakes. You will eat unfermented cakes seven days, just as I have commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, because in it you came out of Egypt. And they must not appear before me empty-handed. (*Exodus 23:15*)
- Also, the **festival** of harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors,

of what you sow in the field, and the festival of ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you gather in your labors from the field. ([Exodus 23:16](#))

- On three occasions in the year every male of yours will appear before the face of the true Lord, Yehowah. ([Exodus 23:17](#))
- As for the Jews that were in Shushan, they congregated themselves on the thirteenth day of it and on the fourteenth day of it, and there was a rest on the fifteenth day of it, and there was a making of it a day of banqueting and of rejoicing. ([Esther 9:18](#))
- That is why the country Jews, inhabiting the cities of the outlying districts, were making the fourteenth day of the month Adar a rejoicing and a banqueting and a good day and a sending of portions to one another. ([Esther 9:19](#))
- And Mordecai proceeded to write these things and send written documents to all the Jews that were in all the jurisdictional districts of King Ahasuerus, the nearby and the distant ones. ([Esther 9:20](#))
- To impose upon them the obligation to be regularly holding the fourteenth day of the month Adar and the fifteenth day of it in each and every year. ([Esther 9:21](#))
- According to the days on which the Jews had rested from their enemies and the month that was changed for them from grief to rejoicing and from mourning to a good day, to hold them as days of banqueting and rejoicing and sending of portions to one another and of gifts to the poor people. ([Esther 9:22](#))
- And the Jews accepted what they had started to do and what Mordecai had written to them. ([Esther 9:23](#))
- For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the one showing hostility to all the Jews, had himself schemed against the Jews to destroy them, and he had had Pur, that is, the Lot, cast, to disquiet them and destroy them. ([Esther 9:24](#))
- But when Esther came in before the king he said with the written document; Let his bad scheme that he has schemed against the Jews come back upon his own head, and they hanged him and

his sons upon the stake. ([Esther 9:25](#))

- That is why they called these days Purim, by the name of the Pur. That is why, according to all the words of this letter and what they had seen as to this and what had come upon them. ([Esther 9:26](#))
- The Jews imposed and accepted upon themselves and upon their offspring and upon all those joining themselves to them, that it should not pass away, the obligation to be regularly holding these two days according to what was written concerning them and according to their appointed time in each and every year. ([Esther 9:27](#))
- And these days were to be remembered and held in each and every generation, each family, each jurisdictional district and each city, and these days of Purim themselves should not pass away from the midst of the Jews and the commemoration itself of them not come to an end among their offspring. ([Esther 9:28](#))
- And Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew proceeded to write with all forcefulness to confirm this second letter concerning Purim. ([Esther 9:29](#))
- Then he sent written documents to all the Jews in the one hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts, the realm of Ahasuerus, in words of peace and truth. ([Esther 9:30](#))
- To confirm these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had imposed upon them, and just as they had imposed upon their own soul and upon their offspring, the matters of the fasts and their cry for aid. ([Esther 9:31](#))
- And the very saying of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written down in a book. ([Esther 9:32](#))
- Throughout the land they assembled in their synagogues with singing and jubilation, carrying branches of trees, while the synagogues and the private homes were illuminated by the many lights. The Jews celebrate this **festival** to the present day.
- **Significance For Christians**

- Jesus visited the temple at the time of the **Festival** of Dedication during the last winter of his ministry, in **32 C.E.** The account reads,
- At that time the **festival** of dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was wintertime. (**John 10:22**)
- And Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon. (**John 10:23**)
- Chislew, the ninth month, corresponds to November-December. It was, of course, common knowledge among the Jews that this **festival** occurred during wintertime.
- Consequently, the mention of winter here may have reference to the state of the weather rather than the season as a reason for Jesus choice of a sheltered place for his teaching, in the colonnade of Solomon. This covered colonnade was on the East side of the outer court of the Gentiles, where many people would gather.
- Well, as the man was holding onto Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at what was called Solomon's colonnade, surprised out of their wits. (**Acts of Apostles 3:11**)
- Moreover, through the hands of the apostles many signs and portents continued to occur among the people, and they were all with one accord in Solomon's colonnade. (**Acts of Apostles 5:12**)
- There is no direct statement in the inspired Scriptures that Yehowah gave Judas victory and directed his repair of the temple, its refurnishing, the making of utensils, and finally its rededication.
- Yet, for the prophecies regarding Jesus and his ministry to be fulfilled and for the Levitical sacrifices to continue until the great sacrifice of God's Son would be accomplished, the temple had to be standing and its services in operation at the time of the Messiah's appearance.
- His disciples called to mind that it is written: The zeal for your house will eat me up. (**John 2:17**)
- And he must keep the covenant in force for the many for one week, and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation, and until an extermination,

the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate. (**Daniel 9:27**)

- **Yehowah had used men of foreign nations, such as Cyrus, to carry out certain purposes as regards His worship.**
- **This is what Yehowah has said to his anointed one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue before him nations, so that I may ungird even the hips of kings, to open before him the two-leaved doors, so that even the gates will not be shut. (**Isaiah 45:1**)**
- **How much more readily might he use a man of his dedicated people, the Jews.**
- **Whatever may be the case, the temple services were observed during the ministry of Jesus Christ. Zerubbabel's temple had been rebuilt or replaced, more elaborately by Herod.**
- **For this reason and because of their dislike of Herod, the Jews usually make mention of only two temples, Solomon's and Zerubbabel's.**
- **Neither in the words of Jesus nor in any of the writings of his disciples do we find any condemnation of the **Festival of Dedication**. It is not, however, enjoined on Christians in the New Covenant.**
- **Therefore let no man judge you in eating and drinking or in respect of a **festival** or of an observance of the new moon or of a Sabbath. (**Colossians 2:16**)**
- **You are scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years. (**Galatians 4:10**)**
- **I fear for you, that somehow I have toiled to no purpose respecting you. (**Galatians 4:11**)**
- **But now Jesus has obtained a more excellent public service, so that he is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant, which has been legally established upon better promises. (**Hebrews 8:6**)**