



## An Overview of Hanukkah & The Coming Hanukkah Story

*Say to the cowardly: "Be strong; do not fear! Here is your God; vengeance is coming." God's retribution is coming; He will save you...Joy and gladness will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee. Isaiah 35:5, 10*

### I. INITIAL HANUKKAH THOUGHTS

#### A. Purpose

1. Provide a **brief overview** of Hanukkah
2. Discuss the **themes** of Hanukkah
3. Give examples of why **all Believers are invited** to celebrate Hanukkah
4. Explain the **benefits** of celebrating this festival
5. Give practical examples of **how to take part** in this festival
6. Better **prepares us for the future** by describing the Hanukkah story yet to come

#### B. Introduction to Hanukkah

1. Personal Stories: My past history with Hanukkah
2. Relevant to Believers: Hanukkah is relevant to us all as Believers (not just for the Israelites).
3. Next Festival on the Prophetic Clock: The Bible indicates that there will be a playing out of the Hanukkah story once more. The coming Hanukkah story will precede Yeshua's return.
4. Not a Holy Convocation: God does not command us to observe it.
5. Yeshua Probably Celebrated Hanukkah: While the Scripture doesn't allow us to be dogmatic, as a Jewish man, Yeshua probably participated in Hanukkah.
  - a. Though not a Mosaic festival, Yeshua was recorded as being in Jerusalem for this festival in John 10:23; Yeshua used the Hanukkah festival season to provide the venue for the first public acknowledgement of His Messiahship and deity.

#### C. Our Posture

1. Truth...& Revelation: It's a matter of both; it often takes time for each of us to have a revelation of the truth. None of us have a full revelation of the complete truth which should lead us to have....
2. Gracious Attitudes: Let's keep our attitude gracious and non-judgmental.
3. Not a Substitute for Christmas: Though both festivals occur at the same time of year, they both have distinctly different themes and observances. *Interesting sidenote*: The overwhelming majority of Christian scholarship believe that Yeshua was not born on December 25.

#### D. Benefits to Hanukkah Observance

1. Biblical Fulfillment: It is the fulfillment of Daniel 11 & mentioned in John 10:23 & perhaps in Hebrews 11:32-39.
2. Israeli Identification: It allows us to have a greater identification with the Israeli people.
3. Blesses Families/Congregations: It allows a time for families and communities to come together around common themes to be strengthened and encouraged.
4. Remembers Godly Heroes: the festival allows us the time to commemorate godly heroes. We can emulate the noble parts of their lives in the midst of our own present and yet-future challenges.
5. Allows a Focus on Godly Themes: on a yearly rhythm the festival allows us the opportunity to incorporate godly themes into our lives and in our community.
6. Readies Ourselves for a Future Hanukkah Story: the Bible clearly indicates that the past Hanukkah story is a foreshadowing of a "greater Antiochus" yet to come. This will occur during the three and a half years that directly precedes Yeshua's second-coming.
7. Dress Rehearsals: Our observance of the festivals are dress rehearsals of what is to come

<sup>16</sup>Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- <sup>17</sup>things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Messiah. Colossians 2:16-17

## E. Basic Hanukkah Themes

1. Retelling the Story: There is much benefit to simply telling the story.
2. Redemption: Remembering Our Redemption: Yeshua as the servant candle and light of the world. Every Believer has had his/her heart “lit by Yeshua.”
  - a. This is the festival of lights and Yeshua claimed to be the ultimate Light: as the light of the world (John 8:12).
3. Rededication: Rededicating Our Temples: this festival commemorates saying yes to God and no to assimilation with the world.
  - a. Hanukkah means “dedication” and commemorates the rededication of God’s Temple; we as Believers are also referred to collectively as the temple of God and need consistent rededication too.
4. The Miraculous: Experiencing the Miraculous; One of the descriptors of Hanukkah was “a great miracle happened here.”
  - a. We also are called to follow God in doing the right thing and building an expectation that God will meet our small sincere efforts with His miraculous power.
5. Comforting the Oppressed: Identifying and standing with those who are suffering.
6. Cultivating a Godly Legacy: One godly family turned the tide of a nation.
7. Endurance in Tribulation: This story will play out again.
  - a. Hanukkah is a reminder for us to attain endurance and to be faithful to the end.
  - b. Hanukkah gives us examples of those who were faithful unto death under intense pressure.
  - c. *As Believers, we will suffer*: “All who live godly in Yeshua will suffer persecution” 2 Timothy 3:12
  - d. “The disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Yeshua’s sake” Acts 5:41
8. Shining Our Lights: We are called to be witnesses.
  - a. Yeshua claimed in Matthew 5:14 that we as Believers are the light of the world. He was declaring that we are “on mission” and are called to be lights pointing to Him in this dark world.

## II. THE PAST HANUKKAH STORY

**A. Overview:** “They tried to kill us, we won, let’s eat.”

### B. The Basic Story of Hanukkah

1. Oppression
  - In 168 BCE, the Jewish Temple was taken by Syrian-Greek soldiers. The emperor Antiochus dedicated the temple to Zeus, setting up a statue of Zeus in the temple and defiled the Temple further by sacrificing pigs on the altar.
  - Then in 167 BCE, Antiochus oppressed the Jewish people further by making the observance of Judaism illegal—forbidding them from observing their biblical practices and holy days under the threat of death. He also ordered all Jews to worship Greek gods.
2. Resistance

1 Maccabees 1:62 <sup>62</sup>*Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to refuse unclean food.*

  - Jewish resistance began in the village of Modin, near Jerusalem. Greek soldiers forcibly gathered the Jewish villagers and told a village leader to bow down to an idol and eat the flesh of a pig. Once the leaders acquiesced, the people were most likely to follow. A Greek officer ordered Mattathias, a priest and leader in the village, to comply to their demands, but he refused. When another villager stepped forward to cooperate on Mattathias' behalf, the priest became outraged. He drew his sword and killed the villager, then turned on the Greek officer and killed him too. His five sons and the other villagers then attacked the remaining soldiers, killing all of them. They fled to the hills and though vastly outnumbered they took action and started a guerrilla war against their foreign oppressors.
3. Triumph & Celebration

- The small band eventually conquered the oppressors and came to Jerusalem with the intent of cleansing and rededicating the temple. Upon doing this, they had an 8 day celebration; which became known as Hannukah (or the Feast of Dedication) which was initially celebrated as a sort of delayed festival of tabernacles. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of Chislev (which became the first night of Hanukkah), they dedicated the altar and offered a sacrifice.

### C. The Prophetic Backdrop

1. 3 Important Stories of triumphant Israeli national events where God spoke prophetically beforehand.
  - a. Passover: God spoke to Abraham about this time (Genesis 15:13-14)
  - b. Hanukkah: God spoke specifically to Daniel (Daniel 8 & 11)
  - c. The Coming Hanukkah Story: there are over 150 chapters in the Scriptures where the majority of that chapter is about the times surrounding the second coming of Yeshua.
2. Prophetic Revelation: There are two specific places in Daniel where he receives revelation from YHWH pertaining to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.
  - a. Daniel 8:9-14 (23-26--seems to include a foreshadowing of the coming Anti-Messiah?)
  - b. Daniel 11:21-35
    - i. “Daniel 11 has enormous theological value. First, the reality of the God of the Bible is demonstrated. Campbell relates: “In the first 35 verses there are at least 135 prophecies which have been literally fulfilled and can be corroborated by a study of the history of the period.” (Miller, 312-313).
    - ii. Daniel’s description of the military and political intrigue of the Greek empire is so accurate, that secular historians (who do not accept that prophecy exists) assume that the Book of Daniel must have been written five hundred years after the fact! Avner Boskey
    - iii. God disclosed this historical summary to the prophet to prepare the Jewish people for the coming crisis—Antiochus's persecution. Biblical revelations of the future are given by the Lord to his people to exhort faithfulness, to encourage during difficult days, and to comfort in suffering (Miller, 234).
    - iv. When Alexander came into Jerusalem before conquering the Persians and the known world, the priests met him and pointed out in the book of Daniel how they believed Alexander fulfilled that story.
3. Affirms the Scripture’s Supernatural Revelation: there is a God in heaven who reveals these matters. God is omniscient and omnipotent and has supreme knowledge and power over history.
  - a. God knows the future
  - b. God plans the future
  - c. God reveals the future
4. Gives Believers Confidence for the Future: since the previous prophecies have been fulfilled, the subsequent promises of deliverance and triumph will just as assuredly come true.
  - a. When we know the future, Believers stand firm
  - b. God’s people will do exploits
    - i. Judas Maccabeus would (most likely) have been familiar with Daniel and it would have inspired him to godly action
  - c. God’s people will bring understanding (Daniel 11:33-35)
  - d. God’s people will endure suffering: God’s honest as He speaks of the future
  - e. God’s people will be refined: suffering (if not wasted) can produce great fruit in God’s people
  - f. God’s people will find rest and will ultimately be victorious; God has marked this final day

### D. Hanukkah Story Specifics: 1 Maccabees 1-4 provides a more detailed description of the Hanukkah story

### E. Yeshua Fulfills this Festival

1. Yeshua’s Conception: Yeshua was most likely conceived at this festival and was born nine months later at the feast of Tabernacles
2. The Light of the World: This is the festival of lights & Yeshua claimed to be the light of the world

<sup>12</sup>Then Yeshua again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." John 8:12

3. Future Replay of the Story: Yeshua will return as conqueror to culminate another playing out of the Hanukkah story. Yeshua stated that the story of Hanukkah will happen again (Mark 13:13-16; Matthew 24:15-18). He will destroy a second and more powerful "Antiochus" (the Antichrist) at His return (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

### III. A PRESENT REMEMBERING & CELEBRATION

**A. Enter In** (just do it): We will never walk out these festivals perfectly, but we can start observing them and improve by doing a little more each year.

1. The Bible states that we are to make Israel jealous by our coming to salvation, walking in supernatural love, and walking out those things (including the festivals) that God has given to His covenant people.

*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.* Romans 11:11

**B. Practical Suggestions** (for those starting out):

1. Get (or make your own) hanukkiah and buy enough candles to light your hanukkiah each night of Hanukkah.
2. Ask God what Hanukkah traditions you can establish.
3. Procure resources that will help you understand Hanukkah more fully and be able to enter in to the celebration.
4. Buy special crafts, decorations, and music to commemorate the season.
5. Focus on the spiritual themes of the time and ask God for greater revelation of these truths.

**C. Celebrate:** Party & celebrate with others

### IV. A FUTURE HANUKKAH STORY

**A. Prophetic Factors**

1. Double Reference/Fulfillments (Type): In the case of a type, or a typical prediction, the seer's eyes are fixed on the closer of the two events exclusively. In other words, details of the prophecy are completely satisfied by the earlier event or person. Yet scripture states (either in the original passage or elsewhere) that there is also a subsequent event or person foreshadowed by the prediction (McCallum).
2. Gaps "Telescoping": When the prophet predicts one event or person, followed without notice by a reference to a later event or person, it constitutes a "prophetic gap." It should be noticed in this case, that the predictive material referring to the later event will not fit the earlier event. Neither will the description of the earlier event fit the later event. There are very few pure gap prophecies (McCallum).
  - a. Isaiah 11:1-5; 61:2-3 (Luke 4:16-30); Daniel 7; Daniel 11:20-45; Matthew 24; Mark 13
3. Non-linear Prophecies: future prophecies are intermixed throughout the Scriptures and are not in chronological order—even in the same biblical book.
  - a. Chiasmic Structures: they are largely foreign to a western understanding
4. Takes a Diligent Searching Out
  - a. Observing the festivals provides a consistent, annual time to look at the biblical prophecies that point forward to the time directly preceding Yeshua's return. These happen three times a year [Fall festivals, Hanukkah, Purim].
5. Future Things: We're searching out future things. In light of this, it is important to maintain a humility and teachability as we prayerfully study these things.
6. It's God's Idea: God put these things in the Scripture because presumably He felt like they would be important for us to know.

**B. The Anti-Messiah:** a religious, political leader more successful than any other leader/world conqueror in history (Daniel 7, 8:24-26; 11:21-45; 2 Thes. 2:1-12; Revelation 13)

1. The Coming Wicked Ruler: A coming most wicked ruler (the AntiChrist) that has many of the same characteristics as Antiochus
2. He Will Defile the Temple: He will defile the temple in Jerusalem as well as wearing down the saints

3. He Will Prosper for a finite 3.5 year timeframe (Rev. 13:5)
  - a. He will persecute, wear down, and kill the saints (Rev. 13:7)
  - b. He will demand worship (Rev. 13:15)
  - c. He will have supernatural signs and wonders (2 Thes 2:9), be resurrected from the dead (Rev. 13:3, 12), and call fire down from heaven in conjunction with the false prophet (Rev. 13:13)
4. Yeshua Conquers Him: The Greater Judah Maccabee (Yeshua the Messiah) will come to conquer the Anti-Messiah (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).
5. Future Temple Cleansing: There will be another cleansing and restoring of a future temple after the Antichrist is destroyed

**C. The Abomination that Causes Desolation** (taken from Mike Bickle’s teaching notes)

*3Don’t be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. 4He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4*

1. Partial Fulfillment (in Daniel 11:31)
2. Future Fulfillment: Yeshua called His people “to see” the abomination of desolation, and then pointed us to the book of Daniel to grasp the main Old Testament idea behind it (Mt. 24:15). In the New Testament, our understanding is greatly expanded by what John (Rev. 13) and Paul taught (2 Thes. 2).
- <sup>15</sup>“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup>“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...<sup>21</sup>then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been...” (Mt. 24:15-21)
3. The Central Event: Yeshua made it clear that Daniel’s “abomination of desolation” is the central event that helps us to understand His view of the end times. Yeshua only identified this one specific political event, which will let His people know that they are in the generation of His return and that the Great Tribulation has started. There are many implications associated with this key event.
4. Restoration of the Temple Services: In order for the Antichrist to put an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, Israel must be a nation, with Jerusalem under its jurisdiction, and the temple must be built on its original site (Solomon’s temple), functioning with sacrifices according to the law of Moses.
  - a. One major obstacle to the temple being rebuilt is that Al-Aqsa Mosque (Islam’s third most holy site) and the Dome of the Rock are standing on the perceived original Temple Mount site (original site of Solomon’s temple). Someone must bring peace to the Middle East before this can happen.
  - b. The abomination of desolation is the single key event that Yeshua highlighted to help us understand many other events that will be connected to this terrible abomination.
5. Biblical References: The abomination of desolation is referred to eight times in the Scripture. Daniel used a form of this phrase four times (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), two passages quote Yeshua’s use of the phrase (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14), and it is described by Paul (2 Thes. 2:3-4) and John (Rev. 13:12-18).

**D. Prophetic Markers**: These items will need to be fulfilled before Yeshua’s return.

1. Gospel Fulfillment: The Gospel must be successfully brought to every people group before the end will come (Matthew 24:14)
2. Temple Rebuilt: The temple must be rebuilt in order for the Antichrist to defile it.
3. Jewish Leaders Call Out for Yeshua: Jewish Leaders must call out for Yeshua as the Messiah to return (“Baruch Haba bashem YHWH”) (Luke 13:35)
4. AntiChrist’s Revealing & Great Falling Away: (2 Thess 2:3) the falling away is perhaps related to end-time false teaching related to sexual immorality, idolatry, and rebellion to delegated authorities (2 Peter 2).

**V. WHY SUCH PROMISED DIFFICULTY & JUDGEMENT?**

**A. Battle Over Worship**: There’s a battle between Satan & YHWH over worship—who will we worship?

1. Free-Will Lovers: God has always desired (and will ultimately have [Hosea 2:16, Revelation 22:17]) a “spousal” partnership with humans who choose Him of their own free-will. He provided the opportunity for forgiveness through Yeshua’s sacrifice that is the only entry point (John 14:6) providing a relational

connection between a holy God and a sinful people. Israel was the people who this Promised Seed was foretold to come through. The beginning place of response to God's invitation is for a person to realize their need before Him.

2. The Storms of Difficulty: The free-will opportunity God provides at its most basic level brings about the evil and difficulty in the world. For people to have the opportunity to love God, means they must also have the subsequent opportunity not to love and serve Him—with real consequences for our choices. Otherwise, we are all robots. The resultant storm proceeds from God's gift of free will; it is the collision of high and low-pressure systems. The high pressure of the redeemed who love God and want to walk in His ways colliding with the low-pressure system of those who hate God, His people, and who detest His ways. The clash of these two groups of people is not neutral or passive and always produces a storm. God's intention is that this storm wakes up the people and shakes them off the fence and into one of two clear camps—either to love and serve Him or to hate Him with its resultant negative actions.
  3. Wheat & Chaff: (Matthew 13:36-43) the righteous and the wicked will “grow together” until the time of Yeshua's return.
  4. Wicked Leaders: There are really evil, wicked people who worship Satan and/or have aligned themselves with him. An estimated **200 million people** have been killed by wicked leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone. Atheistic leaders/governments have had the greatest disregard for human life.
  5. The Difficulty and Subsequent Breakthrough is Producing Greater and Deeper Love
- B. Bloodguilt of the Land:** The defiling of the land has judgements associated with it
1. Offering children to Molech (Leviticus 20:1): world-wide abortions of the present-day would correlate to this.
  2. Sexual immorality (Leviticus 18:25; Ephesians 5:3-7)
  3. Mediums/sorcery
  4. If the Israelites not holy, God said the land would vomit them out of the land (Leviticus 18:25)
  5. Israel Violating Sabbath Principles: Captivity tied into violating the Sabbath principles (2 Chronicles 36:21)

## VI. WHY STUDY THIS?

- A. Perfect Understanding in the Times of the End:** YHWH wants His people to know the future and promises that they will have a complete understanding of these coming events before they happen. We will be stabilized and not surprised by what is coming
1. Righteous Prepared: The saints will be aware and prepared with clear understanding (1 Thessalonians 5:4)  
*The anger of YHWH will not diminish until it has finished all he has planned. In the days to come you will understand all this very clearly.* Jeremiah 30:24 (NLT)  
*Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of YHWH is His treasure.* Isaiah 33:6
    - a. *anointed messengers*: there will be anointed individuals who will know the story and will stabilize and strengthen many. (Isaiah 35:4-5; Daniel 12:3)  
<sup>33</sup> *Those of the people who understand shall instruct many... they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering....<sup>35</sup> Some of those of understanding shall fall (martyrdom), to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.* (Dan. 11:33-35)
    - b. *prophetic message*: God speaks to His people about the future through the prophets  
*Certainly the sovereign YHWH does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.* Amos 3:7
  2. Wicked Unprepared: the wicked will not have understanding (Daniel 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9)
- B. Many Negatives** to be aware of and prepared for
1. Great Deception and a Great Falling Away (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
  2. No Other Day Like It: if the days hadn't been shortened (to 1260 days) no one would survive; Jeremiah 30:5-7; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21
- C. Yet Future:** this hasn't happened yet (only prefigured with 586 BC, Antiochus in 168 BC, and 70 AD)

1. Abomination that causes desolation described by Yeshua as something that is yet to happen in the future.
2. The resurrection of the dead has not yet happened.

#### **D. It's Biblical**

1. It's a Part of the Gospel: Yeshua is returning and will rule this earth from Jerusalem with the saints
2. It's Prominent: there are over 150 chapters in the Bible that talk about these coming days. God would not have described these times so predominantly if He didn't want us aware of these times.  
[http://www.mikebickle.org.edgesuite.net/MikeBickleVOD/2008/150\\_Chapters\\_on\\_the\\_End\\_Times.pdf](http://www.mikebickle.org.edgesuite.net/MikeBickleVOD/2008/150_Chapters_on_the_End_Times.pdf)

### **VII. PREPARING OURSELVES FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **A. Cultivate our Personal Relationship with God**

**B. Watch & Pray** (corporately and individually): This involves being a people who study and meditate on the Bible as well as lingering in His presence to talk to Him and listen for His voice.

#### **C. Stay in Biblical Community**

*And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.* Hebrews 10:25

#### **D. Have His Heart's Desire** as our desire:

1. Gospel to the nations/neighbors
2. Compassion on/justice for the widow/orphan/foreigner/the poor (those in need)
3. Love for Israel

#### **E. Understand Suffering's Purpose** and the now & coming glory of God

*18Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.* Romans 8:18-19

#### **F. Yah's Freewill "Inoculation"**: He's providing a multifaceted safety net that will allow our love to grow for Him throughout eternity without violating our freewill.

1. Divine Pleasures: We have the goodness of the joy and pleasures of being with God in His presence as well as experiencing the goodness of what comes with being aligned with His will.
2. Remembering Earth's Difficulties: We have the example of remembering our difficulty of living on earth coupled with His presence and benefits before Yeshua's second coming.
3. Yeshua's Forever Humanity: We have Yeshua who is eternally a Man with scars in His side and hand – it cost God something precious to redeem us.
4. Indwelling Spirit: We have the Holy Spirit indwelling us both now and for eternity
5. Eternal Negatives: We have the eternal example of the rebellious; the eternal smoke rising from the Lake of Fire.
6. Eternal Positives: We experience the eternal bliss and partnership with God.

**G. Summary**: This is doable. We want to be messengers who are not afraid because we interact with the King who is the author of the biblical storyline. We must engage with the Spirit, grow in the biblical message, and do this in community. The message will not penetrate our heart without the help of the Spirit, and we will grow best in this if we are not in isolation. We need community because we cannot make it alone, and we cannot make it without growing in the Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. (Mike Bickle)

### **VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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