

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The World

1. The vast Greek empire of Alexander the Great had been broken up into 4 parts governed by Alexander's generals.
 - a. The son of one of the generals was Antiochus IV, called Epiphanes (meaning "manifested god").
2. Under Antiochus the Greek Empire was spreading into Israel.
3. Antiochus was known for persecuting the Jews.

B. The Jews

1. Two camps had developed
 - a. The Hellenists, who favored incorporation of Greek custom into Jewish culture
 - b. The Traditionalists, who followed Torah and were intent on keeping it pure.
2. Civil war was imminent.

II. THE BASICS

A. Antiochus Epiphanes stepped in to force the Hellenization of Israel.

1. Began systemized persecution of the Jews
 - a. Outlawed the practice of Judaism
 - b. Forbad Temple sacrifices
2. Desecrated the Temple by installing a statute of Zeus and began swine sacrifices on the pagan altar
3. Broadcast the desecration by widening the scope to neighboring towns

B. Soldiers arriving in Modin required the elderly priest named Matathias to engage in the desecration.

1. Thought if they got leaders to comply others would succumb
2. Matathias refused and refused to let others comply in his place.

C. Matathias' family, the Maccabees, initiated a guerilla war and defeated Antiochus

1. Returned independence to Israel
2. Cleansed the Temple and rededicated it to God.

III. THE THEMES

A. Rededicate our personal temple

1. The cleansing and rededication at Hanukkah is a foreshadow of the greater cleansing and rededication at the End of Days
Our bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. 1Corinthians 3:16-17)

For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." (2Corinthians 6:16-17)

2. We must be diligent at daily rededication.

B. Cultivate a Godly legacy

1. A single extended family, and others, brought about the restoration of an entire nation.
2. They took a stand for their Godly values
3. We can find similar expressions in our current venues
 - a. Refuse to enter situations involving vulgar language or content
 - b. Say grace at mealtime even in public settings
 - c. Talk about our faith
 - d. Hold to higher values
4. Edmond Burke: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”
 - a. When we see evil we must speak up against it.

C. Learn to expect the miraculous

1. One day's purified candle oil lasted for the full eight-day Rededication ceremony.
2. Following the narrow path builds the expectation that God will use our small efforts as seeds for the miraculous

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 5:13-14)

D. Develop endurance during difficulty

1. Persecution of Godly people is coming.
2. Must be practiced and prepared so as to survive when it does come.
3. Small trials are presented by God to help train us

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)

E. Shine our light

1. The Maccabees rose up to defend their faith
2. We also are called to be witnesses

You are the light of the world....In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14,16)
3. In the entirety of our lives we should consider ourselves to be “on mission”
 - a. Are we revealing Jesus to the world?
 - b. Can they tell we are different?

IV. THE BLESSINGS

- A.** Entering into the Festivals each year gives opportunity to re-center our lives in Yeshua.
- B.** Deciding to stand on the Covenant helps us resist the world's everyday intrusions and deceptions.
- C.** Following Yeshua in real time means we are developing “muscle memory” to help us through coming persecution. Rehearsing each year strengthens and prepares for His return.
- D.** All of the Festivals are God's Festivals. Following them is an expression of our love for Him.
- E.** All the festivals, including Hanukkah, are prophetic pictures of the Messiah who is the reality and fulfillment of each of them.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that [are] to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17)