



The Next Stage in 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. HANUKKAH PAST

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 *⁶²Yet 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 25th 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 beforehand 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 (Daniel 8:5-8, 21-22)
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
¹²Then 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).

II. HANUKKAH FUTURE

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)
³³ Those of the people who understand shall instruct many... they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering....³⁵ 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)

III. HANUKKAH PRESENT

A. Leaders Raging Against God's Standards: We presently find ourselves in a place where national and global leaders are plotting to remove God's word and standards from the culture.

1Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3“Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.” ... 10Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. Psalm 2:1-3, 10-12

1. The wicked rulers will ultimately have a brief time of triumph. But, their days are numbered and Yeshua will return, conquer the wicked, and be King over all the earth.

B. Present Challenges: we are to take our stand against syncretistic forces battling against God's standards and to align ourselves with God's Word.

1. Mystery Babylon: This religious/political/financial system will precede the AntiChrist... It will be a religious syncretism with a false justice movement not based on the Word of God.
2. Our Country's Decline: this is something that is very sad for me to see. But it's important for us to see this and to understand our citizenship is in the New Jerusalem and in no earthly nation.

Edward Gibbon . . . in his 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' said that the following five attributes marked Rome at its end: first, a mounting love of show and luxury (that is, affluence); second, a widening gap between the very rich and the very poor (this could be among countries in the family of nations as well as in a single nation); third, an obsession with sex; fourth, freakishness in the arts, masquerading as originality, and enthusiasms pretending to be creativity; fifth, an increased desire to live off the state. It all sounds so familiar." As found in Dr. Francis Schaeffer's *How Should We Then Live?*

3. Deception: When speaking of the end times, Yeshua strongly warned His followers about a coming great deception (Matthew 24:4-5, 11)

C. Taking Our Stand

1. Against Deception: we grow in our knowledge of and commitment to the truth as we stay committed to the truths of the Scriptures, talk to Yeshua, and stay committed to biblical community.
 - a. false prophets will proliferate in the times preceding Yeshua's return (Matthew 24:11). Yuval Noah Harari and other "enlightened" thinkers are presently walking in this.
2. For God's Word: we agree and commit to walk in God's standards as found in the Scriptures.
3. Embracing the Biblical Standard for Sexuality: Biblical standard of sexuality will be the "tip of the spear" in the culture's war against Believers. God's standard for sexuality is that sex is to be reserved for one man and one woman within the covenant of marriage. All other contexts of sexuality, the Bible describes as sin.
 - a. Yeshua further clarifies that God's standard for sexuality is for purity at the heart level (Matthew 5:27-30). We cannot consistently walk in this heart standard without His help.
 - b. When we miss the mark related to God's standard, we are to agree with His standard, repent where we have missed the mark, and move forward with the commitment to align our lives and heart with His ways.
 - c. When taken at the heart-level that Yeshua articulates, all of us as Believers have missed the mark related to God's standard for sexuality and need His mercy and help.

9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (ESV)

- d. See attached appendix.
4. In the Struggle: It's a struggle to walk in God's ways as described in the Scriptures.
- we resist the bad that wars against our flesh:
12Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:12-13)
 - we embrace and walk in the good that God describes. While resisting the bad, we also embrace the good; it's a daily challenge
 - repentance vital*: Yeshua loves you...so repent and turn from your sins; repentance is not a one-time thing but is to be a consistent part of the life of us as Believers.
5. Radical Love and Forgiveness: We are to walk in radical love and forgiveness—even towards our enemies and adversaries who lie about us and act wickedly against us. (Matthew 5:43-48)
6. Expectation of Suffering
Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)
These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 (NKJV)
And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. Matthew 10:38-39 (NKJV)
7. Understand God's Plan: we as Believers will suffer; there will be an ultimate accounting; the wicked will ultimately be punished, and the righteous will be generously rewarded for their faithfulness to Yeshua
- D. Apostasy**: the Scriptures are clear that a significant sign preceding Yeshua's return will be a great falling away of Believers from the true faith.
Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first,
2 Thessalonians 2:3 (NKJV)
- E. Spiritual Preparation**: we would be wise to prepare for the coming difficulty.
- Study those who have endured under great difficulty
 - Rejoice in the midst of suffering (Matthew 5:11-12)
 - Secret History with Yeshua: we have a life-giving, present-tense relationship with Yeshua
 - Have a future focus on Yeshua's triumph and glory that puts present or coming difficulties into perspective
35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:35-36 (NKJV)
16Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 (NKJV)

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY & FURTHER STUDY

Foley, Eric & Richard Wurmbrand. *Preparing for the Underground Church*
Miller, Stephen B. (1994-08-31). *The New American Commentary Volume 18 - Daniel*. B&H Publishing.
Schaeffer, Francis. *How Should We Then Live*.

V. APPENDIX: THE CHURCH AND THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

(Taken from Eric Foley & Richard Wurmbrand's *Preparing for the Underground Church*)

Seventh degree of Satanism: *It is forbidden to forbid* (pg. 21).

It would be through that realm, more commonly called “the sexual revolution” that Satan would seek to level his conclusive blow against the church, deriding it as the greatest forbiddener in history (pg. 23).

But why is the sexual revolution the one revolution capable of a decisive battle against the church in the free world? It is because differences in sexual ethics go much deeper than questions about economics or politics. They go to the heart of our understanding about God and human beings. Christianity does not need particular

political or economic systems in order for it to function. But it does require a particular understanding of sex. (pg. 25).

Sex either humbly and faithfully serves God's purposes, or it accords humans the most arrogant, virulent autonomy (pg. 27).

When science examines sex in this way, as Augusto del Noce notes with concern, "all that is left is vital energy." Any restraint on that vital energy must be regarded as "repressive." (pg. 27).

Supported by scientific and psychological evidence that aimed to prove that sexual repression caused damage to the human person, they defended a "free" expression of sexuality that rejected any moral implications: "sexuality is a pleasurable experience and nothing but that..." (pg. 29).

Peter Liethart says that the battle cry of the sexual revolution is, "Any limit on our drives is an assault on our dignity. Sexual inhibitions are unnatural, every prohibition a threat to human freedom." (pg. 29).

And since sex is the "vital energy" at the center of the person, the physical and emotional experiences of sexuality becomes the locus of personal identity. In an act of liberation from the church's sexual repression, the sexual revolutionary is encouraged to "self-identify" with the physical and emotional characteristics they experience most strongly or attractively (pg. 31).

But the Bible does not call us to amaze and attract the world with the vital energy available to Christians. Instead, it calls us to soberly accept in our bodies the reality of death, not as something to be feared or avoided or denied, but as something to be remembered and meditated on daily so that our focus remains on the new creation, not the present one (pg. 35).

But as Stephen Adubato notes, It is not the romance in marriage that mirrors the relationship between Christ and the church but rather the martyrdom (pg. 37).

Before we seek to teach anyone anything about sex, before we protest the sinful self-creativity of others, we ourselves must repent, submitting our own self-created lives back to God for His redemption while learning what the fullness of the Christian tradition has always maintained about these things (pg. 43).

In the historic Christian faith, "freedom" is not the removal of restraint, as freedom is typically desired in this present fallen age, but rather freedom from sin (pg. 45).

This understanding of freedom as freedom from sin is essential to helping us make sense of what otherwise seems like the very unlovely love of God (pg. 47).

He must set right our desires, which is why we first experience His love not as affirmation but rather as a most painful crucifixion of our flesh. This is because we are wrongly ordered and thus resist Him (pg. 47).

"Brother Wurmbrand had great joy in that concentration camp, but his flesh was not happy, in fact his flesh was miserable the entire time. His flesh suffered but his spirit soared." (pg. 49).

Jesus does not die to save us from His cross-shaped life. Instead, He saves us into it so that it becomes our life, too. It is the only way to His resurrection life (pg. 51).

The love we are called to offer to Christ in return is the love of choosing Christ over all things, including, most fundamentally, ourselves and our desires (pg. 51).

This—the submission of our lesser loves to His greater love, not the submission of His greater love to our lesser loves—is embodied in the underground church around the world today, as it has been in the underground church throughout history (pg. 53).

The underground church is the counterpoint to the sexual revolution. The sexual revolution sacrifices the glory of God in order to uphold its vital energy. The underground church sacrifices its vital energy in order to uphold the glory of God (pg. 53).

"Could it truly be possible for modern men and women to live their lives devoted to Something other than themselves." (pg. 55).