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Bible Story-Kindergarten/Preschool

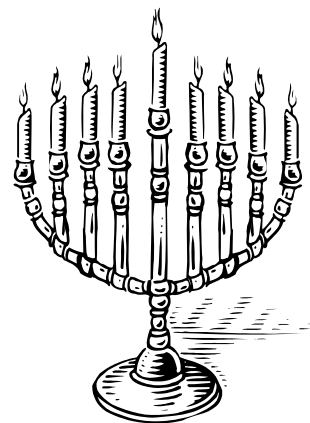
The Maccabees and Hanukkah

1&2 Maccabees



Bible **S**tudy

Hanukkah



The term Hanukkah means dedication and is mentioned in the New Testament in John 10:22. The date of the occasion represents the time when the Maccabees regained control of the Temple in Jerusalem from the pollution introduced by Antiochus Epiphanes. The Temple was thereafter rededicated to the worship of Almighty Yahweh. Although the Feast of Dedication is not mentioned in Leviticus 23 as a commanded convocation, the Assemblies of Yahweh each year remembers the occasion. However, we do not celebrate Hanukkah as a substitute for Chr-stmas as the Jews do. We do remember the Feast of Tabernacles during that time, as we light the lamps each night.

The Feast of Hanukkah (the feast of lights) is said to relate to the inter-testamental era of Judah Maccabeus. It was his valiant effort as a freedom fighter and guerrilla commander of the Jewish resistance forces that succeeded in driving out the Syrian army during the reign of the pagan Antiochus Epiphanes. After Antiochus initiated the apex of insults against the Temple worship in an effort to stamp out the Israelite Faith by sacrificing a young sow on the altar and erecting a statue of himself in the

Temple, the Maccabees fought to drive out the pagan army and cleanse the Temple for the restoration of pure worship. After three years, the Jews were once again in control of Jerusalem and the Temple was cleansed. During the eight days of cleansing, tradition says that a small flask of oil (the only one available) maintained the menorah light.

The account of this period in the history of the Jews can be found in the apocryphal books of Maccabees. The following quotes will give you some

idea of the gravity of the situation they faced.

2 Maccabees 6:1-11
“Not long after, the king sent an old Athenian to force the Jews to forsake the laws of their forefathers and cease to live according to the laws of Yahweh, but to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and to call it that of the OLYMPIAN ZEUS, and to call the one in Gerizim that of ZEUS the Hospitable, in keeping with the character of those who lived there. This harshly and most grievously intensified the

evil. For the heathen filled the temple with profligacy and revelry, amusing themselves with prostitutes and lying with women within the sacred precincts, and bringing into it things that were forbidden. The altar was covered with abominable offerings, which the laws forbade. A man could not keep the sabbath or celebrate the festivals of his forefathers, or admit he was a Jew at all. On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, they were taken by bitter necessity to taste the sacrifices, and when the festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreaths of ivy and march in procession in his honor. At Ptolemy's suggestion a decree was issued to the neighboring Greek towns, that they should adopt the same policy toward the Jews and make them taste the sacrifices, and that they should slay any who would not agree to adopt Greek customs. So anyone could see how their misery was intensified. For two women were brought in for circumcising their children,

and they led them publicly about the city with their babies hanging at their breasts, and then threw them down from the top of the wall. Others who had gathered in caves nearby, to keep the seventh day in secret, were betrayed to Philip and all burned together, because they had scruples about defending themselves, in their respect for the dignity of that most holy day."

1 Maccabees 1:43-67

"Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that they should all become one people, and everyone should give up his particular practices. And all the heathen assented to the command of the king. And many from Israel agreed to his kind of worship and offered sacrifice to idols and broke the sabbath. And the king sent word by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah to follow practices foreign to the country and put a stop to whole burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings at the sanctuary, and to break the sabbaths

and profane the feasts and pollute sanctuary and sanctified; to build altars and sacred precincts and idol temples and SACRIFICE HOGS and UNCLEAN CATTLE; and to leave their sons uncircumcised and defile themselves with every unclean and profane practice, so that they might forget the Law and change all their religious ordinances; and anyone who did not obey the command of the king should die. He wrote to his whole kingdom, to this effect, and he appointed inspectors over all the people, and he ordered the towns of Judah every one of them to offer sacrifice. And many of the people and everyone who was ready to forsake the Law joined with them and they did wrong in the land, and forced Israel to hide in every hiding-place they had. "ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF CHISLEV, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, he erected a dreadful desecration upon the altar, and in the towns of Judah round about they built altars, and at the doors of

their houses and in the squares they burned incense, and wherever they found the book of the Law, they tore them up and burned them, and if anyone was found to possess a book of the agreement or respected the Law, the king's decree condemned him to death. The Israelites who appeared from month to month in the towns they treated with force. ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF THE MONTH THEY OFFERED SACRIFICE UPON THE ALTAR WHICH WAS SET UP ON THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING. The women who had circumcised their children they put to death under the decree, hanging the babies around their necks, and destroying their families and the men who had circumcised them. Yet many in Israel stood firm and resolved in their hearts not to eat what was unclean; they preferred death to being polluted with food or profaning the sacred agreement, and so they died. And Israel suffered intensely."

1 Maccabees 4:42-60

"And he appointed priests that were without blemish and adherents of the Law, and they purified the sanctuary and carried out the stones that had defiled it to an unclean place. And they deliberated as to what they should do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been polluted. And a good idea occurred to them—to take it down, so that it might never be thrown up to them that the heathen had polluted it; so they took down the altar, and deposited the stones in the temple mountain, in a suitable place, until a prophet should come and declare what should be done with them. And they took whole stones, as the Law required, and built a new altar like the former one. And they built the sanctuary and the interior of the temple and consecrated the courts. And they made new holy dishes and they brought the lampstand and the altar of incense and the table into the temple. And they burned incense on the altar, and lighted the lamps on the lampstand, and they lighted

the temple. And they put the loaves of bread on the table and hung up the curtains, and completed all the work they had undertaken.

"And they arose early on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, that is, the month of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, and offered sacrifice according to the Law upon the new altar of burnt offering which they had made. At the time and on the day the heathen had polluted it, it was rededicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. And all the people fell on their faces and blessed heaven which had prospered them. And they celebrated the rededication of the altar for eight days and offered burnt offerings with joy, and offered a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. And they decorated the front of the temple with gold crowns and small shields and rededicated the gates and the priests' quarters, and fitted them with doors. And there was very great joy among the people, and the reproach

the heathen had cast upon them was wiped out. And Judah and his brothers and all the congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication of the altar should be observed at their season, every year, for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev, with gladness and joy."

The rededication of the Temple was a memorable occasion. It is observed today strictly as a Jewish festival. Yahshua the Messiah also attended an observance at Jerusalem, John 10:22-24.

However, this observance was not commanded by Almighty Yahweh in His list of holy days in Leviticus 23. Yahshua the Messiah kept those annual feast days of Yahweh, especially the seven-day observance of the Feast of Tabernacles and the eighth, the Last Great Day (John 7).

Today, even the Jewish authorities express concern about the commercialization of Hanukkah. Orthodox and Conservative rabbis in New York inveigh against the obvious paganism of the decorations and the lavish gifts. Nevertheless, the customs of the Christmas celebration continue to

infiltrate Hanukkah.

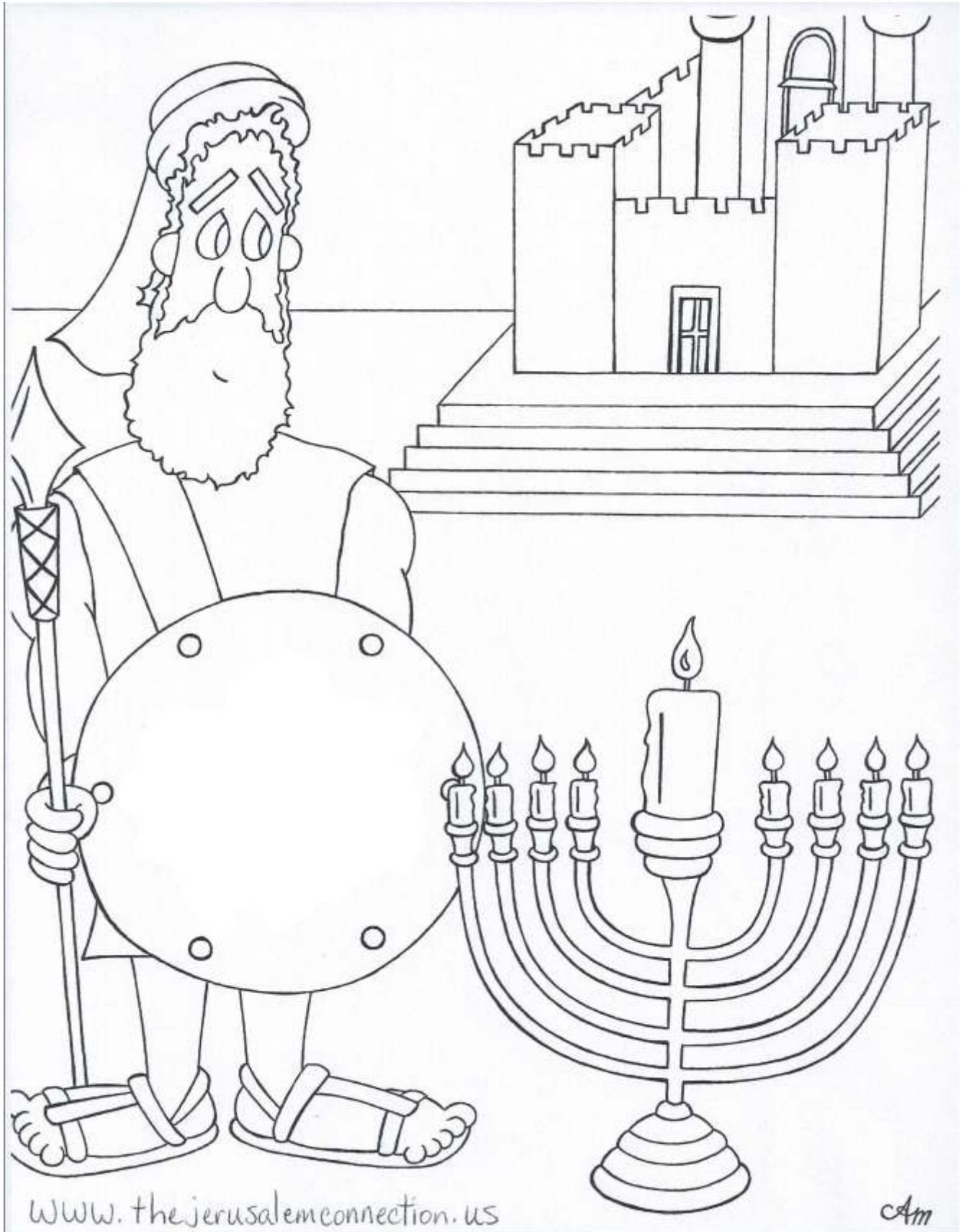
The True Worshiper seeks with all his heart and soul to exit from the Babylonish system, Revelation 18:4. We keep the commandments of Almighty Yahweh and cling closely to the Faith of Yahshua the Messiah, Revelation 12:17 and 14:12. Keeping the commandments of Yahweh includes keeping holy His sacred time of Leviticus 23. Because of the evident pagan contamination of all the winter holidays—both Christian and Jewish—we avoid observing them.



Thanks to Mathathias the priest and his five sons (Judah, who was called Machabeus, John who was surnamed Gaddis, Simon, who was surnamed Thasi, Eleazar, who was surnamed Abaron, and Jonathan, who was surnamed Apphus), the Syrian armies were defeated and Yahweh's True Worship was again established in Jerusalem.

THE MACCABEES AND HANUKKAH

(1&2 Maccabees)



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"And they celebrated the rededication of the altar for eight days and offered burnt offerings with joy, and offered a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. "

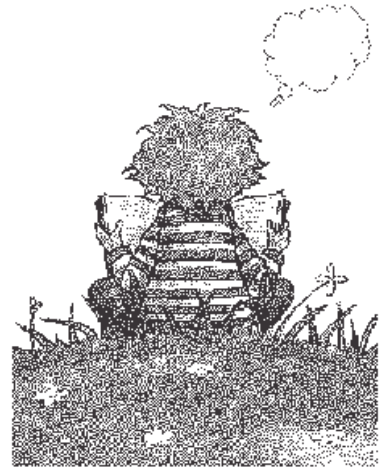
1 MACCABEES 4:56

THE MACCABEES AND HANUKKAH

(1&2 Maccabees)

Using Your Imagination

“Judah and his brothers and all the congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication of the altar should be observed at their season, every year, for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev, with gladness and joy.” 1 Maccabees 4:59



Draw and color a picture of a Hanukkah menorah. Make sure you have 8 small branches (for each of the eight days of Hanukkah) and the one tall branch in the middle (the branch that always is lit).

THE MACCABEES AND HANUKKAH

(1&2 Maccabees)



Answering Questions



1. Should we keep Hanukkah like X-mas?
2. How many days does Hanukkah last?
3. During Hanukkah we are supposed to remember the Feast of Tabernacles. What is your favorite memory from the last Feast of Tabernacles? Draw and color a picture of your favorite memory.