

the redemptive purposes of God that were fulfilled in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ). As long as the Temple stood there remained an expectation of Messiah to come and fulfill God's redemptive plan. The scriptures also point out that the Temple represented Yeshua (Jesus). For Yeshua (Jesus) likened himself to the Temple saying,

"Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up again" (John 2:19 JNT).

The preservation of the people of Israel was the means by which God preserved the prophetic promises of Messiah's coming. One of these prophetic promises is found in Micah 5:1. It says,

"And you, O Bethlehem of Ephrath, least among the clans of Judah, from you one shall come forth to rule Israel for me - one whose origin is from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:1 TNK).

It is evident that the Messiah had to come from the clan or tribe of Judah. When considering this fact, light is shed on the importance of Chanukah in the plan of God. One must consider that if the people of Israel were not preserved, then there would not be a Messiah to bring salvation from sin. The

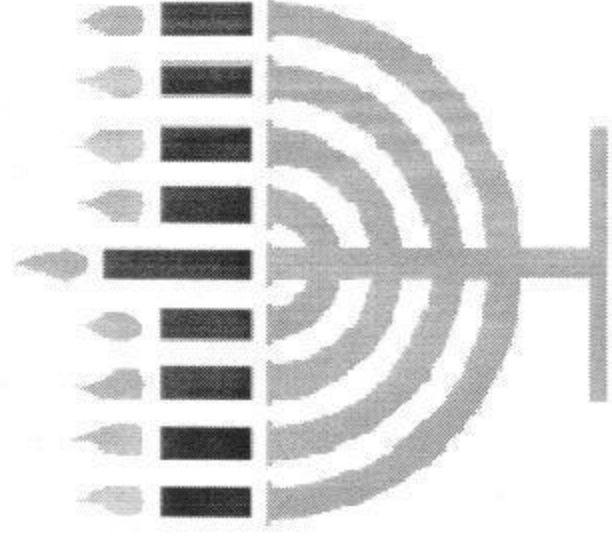
Messiah had to come from the people of Israel.

Another point that must be noted is that Messiah celebrated Chanukah - the Feast of Dedication. Look at John 10:22-23.

"Then came Chanukah (the Feast of Dedication) in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). It was winter, and Yeshua was walking around inside the Temple area, in Shlomo's (Solomon's) Colonnade" (John 10:22-23 JNT).

Therefore, the celebration of Chanukah is significant to the believer because it points to the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) who has brought fulfillment to all that it represents.

CHANUKAH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MESSIAH



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by Dave R. Mode, Jr.

On the 24th day of the month Kislev (the Hebrew month coinciding with November/ December) is the celebration of Chanukah. It is recognized by many as only a Jewish festival. To many non-Jewish believers Chanukah appears to be insignificant in relation to their life in Messiah. Since this is the case, it has become necessary to inform the believer about Chanukah and its relationship to Messiah.

DEFINITION

The word Chanukah is Hebrew meaning "dedication". The name was given to refer to the dedication of the Temple of God.

BACKGROUND

History records in 167-164 BCE that the Greco-Syrian King Antiochus IV set out to Hellenize the Jews. His purpose was to destroy the religion of Israel (the worship of Yehovah) and all the Jews who would not submit to the lifestyle of the Greek culture. In his pursuit to bring the Jews under the banner of Greek paganism, Antiochus had his troops to capture

Jerusalem, enter the Temple of God, and desecrate the alters and holy vessels. Afterward, an alter was erected to the pagan deity "Zeus" and a pig was sacrificed on it in the Temple. Also, idols were set up in the Temple.

A resistance among the Jews arose to take action against Antiochus' onslaught to destroy the worship of Yehovah and the Jews. The resistance came from a village in Judah by a priest named Mattithias and his five sons called the Maccabees (the Hammers). The Maccabees would not submit to becoming paganistic, and fought for the preservation of the worship of Yehovah. They organized small bands of freedom fighters to war against the forces of Antiochus. After three years of war, while being greatly outnumbered, the Maccabees miraculously drove Antiochus' Syrian troops out of Jerusalem and recaptured the Holy Temple. This victory was the first miracle of Chanukah in which the lesser power overcame the greater power.

After the Temple was recaptured, the Maccabees cleansed the Temple of the idols, and made preparation to dedicate it for the worship of Yehovah. When lighting the Menorah (seven branch lampstand), they found that they

had only enough kosher oil to keep the Menorah kindled for one day. In order to keep the Menorah lit continuously, it would take eight days to create a new supply. This was a problem. However, the Menorah was lit despite the lack of oil, and miraculously the one day supply of oil kept the Menorah lit for eight complete days until the new oil was supplied. Therefore, the Temple was "dedicated" (Hebrew=Chanukah) to the worship of Yehovah.

MESSIANIC RELATIONSHIP TO CHANUKAH

Chanukah reflects two major principles within the overall plan of God. Those principles are (1) deliverance (salvation) and (2) preservation.

(1) The principle of deliverance in Chanukah is an important aspect of God's plan. It points to the great deliverer Yeshua (Jesus) who provided a greater deliverance - an eternal deliverance from sin.

(2) The principle of preservation also holds great significance in Chanukah with respect to the Messiah. In Chanukah, two things are preserved. The Holy Temple and the people of Israel. The Holy Temple being preserved was necessary because it represented