

CHRISTMAS & THE FEAST OF DEDICATION (CHANNUKAH)

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CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS & THE FEAST OF DEDICATION (CHANNUKAH)

During His lifetime Jesus naturally celebrated the Feast of Hanukkah each year. It was a festive time in the middle of winter with Temple services, lights and gift giving..

One of the pivotal moments of Jesus' ministry took place during the Feast of Dedication. It was during this Feast that He declared openly that He is "the light of the world" and "The Good Shepherd" (a synonym for the Messiah). He then declared that the works the Father did through Him testified that He was indeed the Messiah. It was also on this day the He declared Himself to be the 'light of the world'. (John 9:5).

The Feast of Dedication (Chanukah) was the day when Jesus *definitively* and *openly* proclaimed to Israel that He was and is the Messiah (John 10:25). Dedication (Chanukah) could therefore be also called Messiah Day. It is interesting that the 25th day of December (the western month that corresponds most closely to the Hebrew month of Chislev) Christians celebrate the coming of the Messiah - though they are aware it is not the literal day of His birth. 25th of Chislev, though it is not Jesus' birthday, is indeed Christ day!

Remember Zion

How sad it would be if we celebrate Chanukah today and fail to remember the eternal purposes of God for Jerusalem. Ungodly world leaders today, who refuse to recognize the relevance to the Bible and the uniqueness of the Jewish people, promote a 'politically correct' anti-Semitic anti-Christian agenda.

In every age the testimony of the Jewish faith in the one true God- the God of the Bible has been opposed and persecuted. The feast of Chanukah (Dedication) should remind us of our

responsibility towards the Jewish people, that we stand on their shoulders and that the struggle for the testimony of the God of the Bible will always with us. Like the Maccabees of long ago believers hold fast to the faith recalled at Chanukah (Dedication) and resolve to oppose all forms of anti-Semitism.

Dedicating Our Selves

The scriptures tell believers that their bodies are "temples of the Holy Spirit". (1 Corinthians 6:19) Defilement can come into - these living temples - though worldliness, worldly values and pagan atheistic secular ways. It is appropriate to recognize and remove worldliness from our lives and to cleanse and re-dedicate ourselves at this time of Chanukah to live for the purposes of the Lord.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:1-2)

As we pray for the advance of God's Kingdom we are aware God's work cannot advance without the dedication of His followers. He is looking not only for a Temple but for a dedicated Temple - a Temple made up of living people who dedicate themselves to live for His purposes, follow His direction and live by His ways. The Feast of Dedication is a good time to present our selves to be filled with God's Spirit, cleansed from worldly agendas and ways and dedicating ourselves to live wholeheartedly for Jesus and His calling on our lives.

As we remember the festival of Chanukah let us touch the meaning and the reality behind it. Have a Happy Chanukah and a Happy Christmas!