



Happy Hannukah

## A Time of Dedication

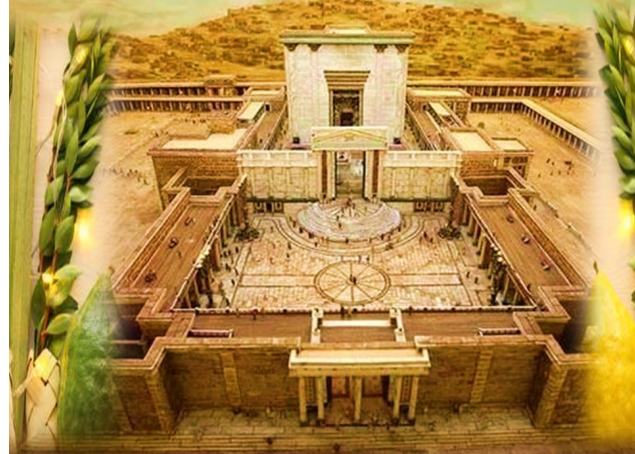
Hannukah is yet another feast that G-d has given to the Jewish people so that they may stop, rest, take comfort and be grateful for all that the Almighty has done and is doing for His people, Israel. Hanukkah means dedication and it's a great time of the year to consider how committed G-d is to keeping His promises to Israel. It is a time to remember how the Maccabees fought to regain possession of their Temple in Jerusalem.

And of course, we remember the legend connected to this victory, the miraculous light which continued to burn for eight days despite having enough oil for only one.



## A Modern-Day Hannukah?

While Hannukah took place almost 2200 years ago, what connections can we make with this holiday and our day today? One common denominator is the Temple. Back in the 160's BCE, during Antiochus' takeover, there was a fervent desire to recapture and rededicate the Second Temple. Why? So that true worship of the G-d of Israel could be reinstated. Today we also see a fervent hope and an ever-nearing reality of having the third Temple rebuilt, in Israel and on the Temple Mount site.



His appearance will not only change the geography of the Land of Israel, *Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; (Isaiah 40:4)* but He will change the geography of the heart as well. *I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their G-d, and they will be my people; (Jeremiah 31:33)*. In both epochs, the deep-seated hope to worship the G-d of Israel is the ultimate drive.

## Anti-Semitism

Another powerful link between Hannukah then and today is anti-Semitism. Antiochus Epiphanes was relentless in robbing the Jewish people of their Scriptures by trying to change its ordinances and laws. Similarly, today we see the rise in anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activities. Though some of us would not dare compare our quiet with what went on 2200 years ago, we need only look back 80 years and see what horrific evil was accomplished against the Jewish nation. With that kind of a threat still so vivid in many a memory, the Jew continues to seek out the Messiah for their ultimate redemption and safety. What might that redemption look like?

If, however, Israel does not repent or follow Torah, then Moschiach will come on a donkey and there will be very difficult times, and great battles before Israel can experience her redemption.



## The Third Temple

Many of the Hebrew prophets spoke of the "last days" when the exiles would be restored to Israel and when the Mishkan (the Temple) would be rebuilt. The construction of this third Temple is very much related to the Jewish hope of the coming of the Ultimate Redeemer, the Moshiach, the King Messiah.



## When and How Would the Messiah Come?

Rabbinical Judaism attempts to answer this by giving two possible scenarios. They teach that the Moschiach will either come as glorious and in the clouds according to the prophecy in Daniel 7:13 or he will come humbly and riding on a donkey according to Zechariah 9:9. They say that Messiah's coming will depend on our actions. If we are kind, walk in faith, give charity and please G-d, then we will have Moshiach come in the clouds, redeeming Israel with little warfare at all. (Babylonian Talmud Sanh. 98a)

The Scriptures do not suggest that we have the option to choose Messiah's method of arrival. The great majority of the Hebrew prophets confirmed the upcoming upheavals that the Jewish nation would face before Messiah comes.

So, will Messiah come on a donkey or in the clouds? He will come both ways irrespective of our behavior. Studying what the Scriptures say concerning the Messiah will shed light on the truth of who he is, why he came first on a donkey and why he will come again in the clouds.



## What are Prophecies?

In G-d's desire for us to know Him better and trust Him more, He gave us prophecies. What do these prophecies do? They help us confirm our faith in a G-d who is accurate, and not bound by time or space.

Prophecies fill up about one quarter of the Scriptures. In fact, G-d Himself uses prophecy as a test to validate Himself when compared to the other false gods. In Isaiah 41:22 G-d says, "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place (testing the idols); as for the former events, declare what they were, that we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming." Prophecy validates the Omniscient One as the inerrant forecaster of the future.

What is also remarkable is how these prophecies are so accurate. The Scriptures have never been proven wrong. It would make sense if one man wrote the entire book and kept the same story going. But in the case of this special book, it was written by about 40 different writers scattered over a period of about 1500 years. The writers could not have collaborated together since they lived in different periods of time. Yet the Scriptures display the unity of a book written by one Author, G-d Himself. That is why it is so trustworthy.

## What are Messianic Prophecies?

While many prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures talk about Israel and the nations, those which speak specifically about the Messiah are called *messianic prophecies*. These, we might rightly call the fingerprints of the Messiah. They are unique to him alone.

Concerning prophecy, it is one thing to predict, which anyone can do and it is quite another for these prophecies to be realized.

The study of prophecy and its realized predictions help us to see how Yeshua (Jesus) is the long anticipated Jewish Messiah. The hanukkiah on the following page lists nine verses which rabbinic and / or ancient Jewish sources have pointed out to be messianic. Let's see how these prophecies have been fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah Yeshua.



## A Scriptural W5 of the Messiah

**Who** is the Messiah? He is a descendant of David from the Tribe of Judah. He is coming twice, first as a tender shoot (*yonek*) then a second time as the conquering King.

**Why** would he come? To bear the iniquity of the Jewish people and the whole world and to establish a supernatural peace in our hearts at his first coming. Then he will establish world peace at his second coming.

**What** is the *messianic hope*? It is a hope that the Messiah will save Israel and all humanity from the effects of sin which began back in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15)

**When** would he come? According to the prophecy in Daniel 9:26, he will come before the destruction of the Second Temple, therefore he has already come! And he is coming back soon (Daniel 7:13).

**Where** would He come from? Micah 5:2 *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*

We believe that Yeshua has already come the first time, fulfilling dozens of messianic prophecies. We believe he is coming again a second time to fulfill the rest of them.

## A Word from the Scriptures

The prophet Hosea said, "My people perish for lack of knowledge" (*Hosea 4:6*) so let's get dedicated to studying more! Let's be as committed as those who risked their lives when running back into burning synagogues to retrieve and save their treasured scrolls. These Scriptures are precious because they testify concerning G-d's perfect plan and reliability in helping us see the truth.

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*Shalom Ariel*

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# HAPPY HANUKKAH



חנוכה שמח